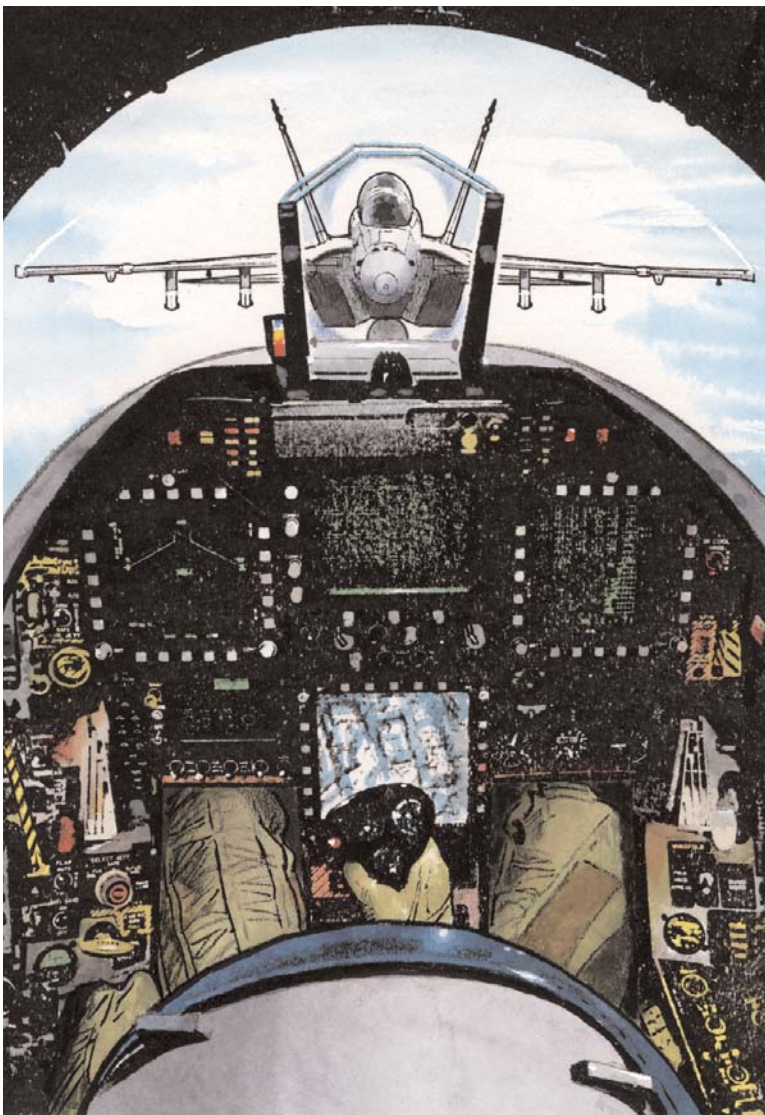


GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Illustrations by *Ted Wilbur*

Super Hornet Snafu

Acting as Red Air, a division of Super Hornets launched from home base on an ACM hop against a division from the same squadron. Although the flight had been briefed as a full-up ACM mission, during the transit to the warning area, one of the pilots realized he was not, in fact, ACM current. Resultantly, the Super Hornet flight lead transmitted over the main control frequency that the division would be limiting their turns to no more than 180 degrees. Although acknowledgment was not received from the rest of the flight or the opposing fighters, the lead assumed he'd been heard and pressed on with the mission.



On the first run the lead sections merged and engaged. After 180 degrees of turn the lead pilot called, “knock it off,” but again the rest of the flight did not acknowledge the call. The trail Red Air section merged with the trail fighter section and all four aircraft engaged. After exceeding 180 degrees of turn, the Dash 4 Red Air aircraft found itself merging head on with the Dash 3 fighter aircraft. Neither called direction of pass and a few seconds later the two Super Hornets collided, killing all four aircrew members.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Dang blame it! A lot of assuming goin' on with this one. The flight lead assumed the rest of the flight heard him when he modified the training rules in flight. The flight lead assumed the rest of the flight heard his first “knock it off call.” Two pilots assumed they saw each other and that one of them would take action to avoid the midair. And the squadron’s skipper assumed his command would automatically practice flight discipline without his say-so. There’s a stone hollow’s worth of distance between assuming and verifying with positive comms and solid guidance. And as we know ’round where I now hang my helmet, that distance is best not navigated without a well-built bridge.

GLOC Shocker

A Hornet pilot launched on a day carrier qualification proficiency flight. Following a normal catapult shot and Case 1 departure, the pilot climbed to altitude to burn off some



gas. Since he had a lot of gas to get rid of to get to max trap and not much time to get rid of it, the pilot selected full afterburner and began a series of hard turns to keep his speed down. At just over 10,000 feet he pulled into a 60-degree dive, presumably to start his profile back into the Case 1 recovery pattern. At the bottom of the dive, the pilot pulled back on the stick hard enough to cause a G-induced loss of consciousness and the jet crashed into the sea. The pilot was killed.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Jumpin' jehoshaphat! GLOC during CQ? The last thing most aviators think about during a CQ evolution is pulling Gs (although I have seen some woolly passes over the years). But as proved here, even a simple burn down can turn into a disaster if the crew forgets that the air machine is always vulnerable to the laws of physics.