

Fly By Wire

A section of A-6 *Intruders* was on a low-level flight in a scenic area of a foreign country. After completing a prebriefed simulated attack, the flight leader directed another attack on a "target of opportunity," a small dam in a narrow and rather steep ravine not far from the first target.

The lead pilot was at the pull-up point after the run when he saw power lines directly ahead of his A-6. Both crew members felt a thump. The bombardier/navigator then saw fuel venting from the forward edge of the right wingtip.

The wingman saw lead pull up rapidly and the fuel venting from the wing. Upon returning his attention to the target area, the wingman himself saw power lines immediately in front of him. He started to pull up but decided he could not clear the wires. He pushed the nose down and flew below some cables and above others without striking them.

Both planes made it home but lead's *Intruder* had struck a 7/16-inch-diameter aluminum steel cable which was supported by a pair of 360-foot towers on either side of the gorge. The cable was approximately 750 feet above ground level and was clearly depicted on the appropriate navigational charts.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Woe is me! Will we ever run out of wire cutters? Doesn't happen that much but as sure as the swallows return to Capistrano, somebody's gonna play dodge ball with power lines now and then — and lose.

Even if your vision is 20-20 or better, those slender strings in the sky are tough to see and, on low levels 'specially, tough to hurdle.

Study the charts, know where the lines are, know where you are, and stay above 'em!



DR Doldrums

A T-39 *Sabreliner* had completed extensive rework including installation of an Omega navigational system. The crew launched on a ferry flight over a great expanse of water. En route, the *Sabreliner* lost all navigation aid reception and the compass system malfunctioned. The aircrew became lost and eventually had to ditch the aircraft at sea. Uninjured, all hands egressed successfully and were rescued.

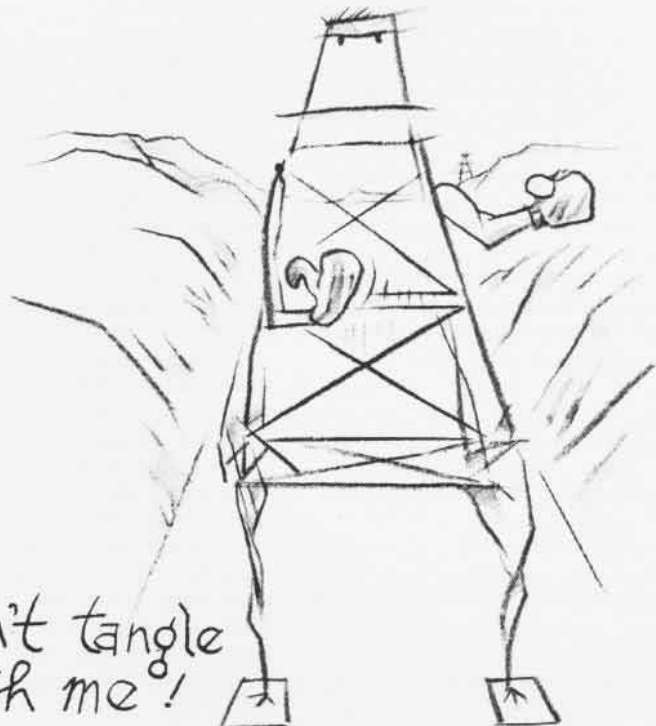


Grampaw Pettibone says:

The accident investigators put it this way. Cause Factor: Aircrew Error. "Lack of fundamental dead reckoning navigation competency."

There was more in the report . . . "poor lost plane procedures, ineffective aircrew coordination, inadequate knowledge of nav systems, poor pre-flight planning."

It's been some time since we've had a mishap where people got lost and had to dump themselves and their bird





clown pilots!



seater noticed ground closure and called, "Watch your rate of descent." The pilot went to military power, then maximum afterburner.

Ahead was a line of trees, about 100 feet tall. The aircraft struck the tops of the trees in a nose-high, wings-level attitude with little vertical velocity. The aircraft managed to land but the left stabilator sustained major damage. The left engine was severely fodded.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Sometimes a minor emergency can turn into a bucket of cobras a la Indiana Jones. I know the *Hornet* is one fine flyin' machine and can do wonders. But it's no better than the human bein's in the cockpit. A 10 to 30-knot overspeed of the gear ain't as bad as hittin' the ground. The guy in the back could have been a little more help, too.

If you think you might have had the same kind of trouble in such a situation, better bone up on emergency procedures. Not too many of us like those squirmin' cobras.

into the drink. Happened a lot in double u double u two. But it was more understandable then.

Tain't very understandable now. Aren't we all supposed to be a lot smarter and better trained? Over land or sea, EXPECT to lose your nav gear! Have a backup plan to get home safe and dry. If it doesn't fail, well, that's all to the better.

except the nose gear remained extended. The pilot reduced power to preclude exceeding airspeed limits for the hung gear. While the main gear were extending, the engines were at idle, the aircraft decelerating. The rear

Tree Top Tangle

A two-seat F/A-18 *Hornet* was scheduled for an air-to-air radar evaluation hop. Prior to takeoff the nose wheel steering failed but troubleshooters had supposedly corrected the problem. The *Hornet* got safely airborne but the gear handle would not move up. The white mechanical stop was visible in the landing gear control panel. The pilot reduced power and depressed the down lock override (contrary to NATOPS), removing the mechanical stop. He raised the gear handle and initiated a right turn.

The flaps were raised from half to auto and everything worked normally



mess

