



Re: "Three Clear-Deck Landings in One" (July '00)

Washington, D.C.—Just finished ravaging the July 2000 issue. I'm currently in a small, mainly civilian office in D.C., chomping at the bit to get back in a cockpit. One story ("Three Clear-Deck Landings in One") jumped out for a couple reasons. First, it was written by an HSL-51 Warlord and former squadronmate. And second, the article begged for further commentary on how one might prepare for such an aircraft system casualty.

The article describes an SH-60B that lost its Automatic Flight Control System (AFCS) halfway into a mission. Of course, this occurred at night, in the goo, with a junior crew, off the back of a small-boy, with no land or large-deck available. In other words, typical Light Airborne Multi-Purpose System (LAMPS) Mk-III ops.

For the uninitiated, when the AFCS on an SH-60B is up and sweet (which is 99.9 percent of the time), flying the Seahawk is like driving a Cadillac with a highly tuned cruise control and an "On Star" button: Your 93-year-old grandma could fly it. On the other hand, during that .1 percent of the time when you lose AFCS, flying the SH-60B is like trying to balance on a greased beach ball in the middle of an ice-skating rink.

The crew in the article did a great job getting a broken aircraft safely back to mother. Good head-work and crew coordination saved a situation that easily could have turned disastrous within a second or two. What could they have done to prepare for such a scenario? How about doing several of their annually required instrument approaches (while in the relatively benign environment of the home-field instrument pattern) with the AFCS off? I'm not sure what instructor or OinC in my fledgling LAMPS days nudged me into this habit, but I've been doing it for several years now. It is an excellent way to keep my instrument scan tuned

and instrument air work smooth and accurate. Properly briefed, it's a safe, efficient way of preparing for no AFCS on that dark night, in the goo, off the boat, with no other landing options available.

Cdr. Dave Tiller  
Operations Research Analyst  
Aircraft Division  
Naval Center for Cost Analysis

#### HTML versus PDF

Regarding your request for feedback on HTML versus PDF versions on the web: I prefer PDF. I can download for future reading and can read the entire magazine without calling up each article separately.

By the way, I am a retired Air Force chief master sergeant (E-9) and ex-maintenance superintendent who has enjoyed reading *Approach* (when I could get a copy) for many years. Even though you naval aviators occasionally take a swipe at those of us in the "baby" service, I have learned and applied many a lesson on the care and feeding of fighters and fighter pilots.

David Hon  
EDNA Technical Support Specialist  
(USAF F-16 Program)  
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

*Other readers prefer HTML, because it is quicker to download, easier to cut-and-paste, and lends itself to word searches. We will continue to put both versions on our site.—Ed.*