BRAVO Zulu

Lt. Paul Carelli
LCdr. Tim Drew

Lt. Carelli (pilot) and LCdr. Drew (copilot) were making a night, straight-in approach to NAS North Island when their S-3's trailing-edge flaps locked at 5 percent. After orbiting overhead, they planned to make an arrested landing and received clearance to land on runway 36.

At 2,500 feet, while maneuvering to the runway, the aircraft made a gradual, uncommanded pitch-up. After verifying that this movement didn't come from a pitch-trim run-away, Lt. Carelli saw the elevator-bias cockpit gauge oscillating, indicating a possible failure in an important part of the longitudinal flight-control system. The crew ran through NATOPS procedures for uncommanded pitch-roll-yaw, but the aircraft pitched nose down and lost nearly 600 feet. Then it pitched nose up and continued to pitch up and down, plus or minus 15 degrees at 30 degrees per second, all the while losing altitude.

With nearly 270 degrees of turn remaining to line up on the runway, Lt. Carelli determined he couldn't make it. He told tower he would try for runway 29, the inactive runway. The controller replied that the short-field gear wasn't rigged and that there was a truck on the runway. LCdr. Drew acknowledged this report and asked to have the truck removed. Lt. Carelli touched down at 150 knots between the 5-board and 6-board, engaging the long-field gear at 100 knots.

Postflight analysis revealed that a shorted wire in the flight-mode selector panel made the pitch axis of AFCS intermittently engage and disengage, resulting in the uncontrolled condition.

VS-41

SEA CONTROL SQUADRON 41

VFA-115

During a night, air-to-air sortie from a carrier, Lt. Brooks faced multiple emergencies and unfamiliar configurations. His aircraft developed a hydraulic system 2A (HYD 2A) failure and leading edge flap (LEF) lockout. He set up for a half-flap approach and lowered the landing gear with the emergency system. He had to fly the approach at less than 7 degrees alpha (approximately 160 KCAS) because of the problems with the leading edge flap (it was split and extended less than 10 degrees). After extending the landing gear, he flew his first approach to a bolter (a result of the increased approach speed, higher wind over the deck, and unfamiliar alpha required, which meant that minor, longitudinal, stick inputs rapidly flatten out the approach). Since the landing gear had been extended after the HYD 2A failure, Lt. Brooks couldn't retract them. Committed to dirty bingo numbers, he tanked in the dirty configuration by extending the inflight refueling probe, using the emergency method. After tanking at 225 KCAS, with the landing gear down, he flew a flawless approach to an OK 3-wire.

Lt. David Brooks

BZs require an endorsement from the nominating squadron's CO and the appropriate CAG, wing commander or MAG commander.

In the case of helo dets, the CO of the ship will suffice. A squadron zapper and a 5-by-7 inch photo of the entire crew should accompany the BZ nomination. Electronically-submitted photos must be at least 300 dpi. Please include a squadron telephone number so we can call with questions.