

While flying a day functional check flight (FCF) off the South Carolina coast, LtCol. Karl D. Brandt faced multiple emergencies. During the 500-knot roll checks, his FA-18 had dual, bleed-air warning lights. He completed the NATOPS boldface procedures and immediately headed back to MCAS Beaufort.

During his RTB, the left fire light came on. He secured the engine, and he did not see any smoke or fire. About 10 miles from the airfield, with only his right engine operating, the right fire light illuminated. Again, he checked for visible secondaries and found none. Because of his projected approach path over the city of Beaufort, and with both bleed-air-warning lights and both fire-warning lights on, he flew a modified, visual straight-in approach to runway 32. While avoiding the city as much as possible, he configured the aircraft for landing at three miles on short final. He made a single-engine, short-field arrested landing. Postflight analysis confirmed a fire in the keel area of the aircraft.

For his performance, LtCol. Brandt was awarded the Air Medal.

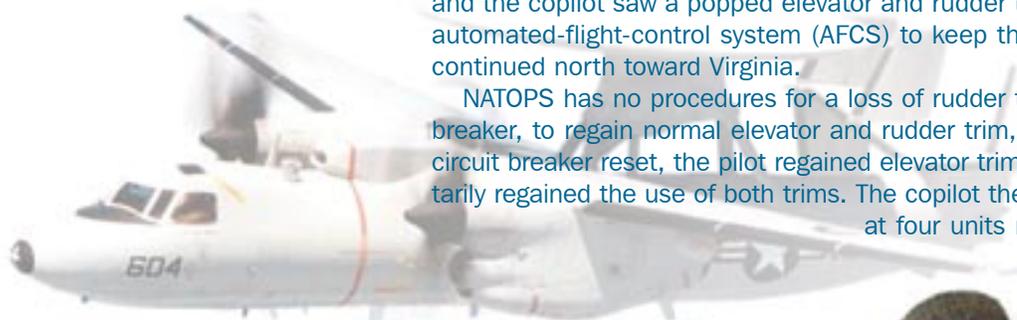


BRAVO Zulu

Bear Ace 602 departed NAS Jacksonville en route NS Norfolk, following a mid-week cross-country flight. After leveling off at FL240, the pilot felt a loss of elevator and rudder trim, and the copilot saw a popped elevator and rudder trim circuit breaker. The pilot engaged the automated-flight-control system (AFCS) to keep the airplane in balanced flight. The aircrew continued north toward Virginia.

NATOPS has no procedures for a loss of rudder trim. The crew decided to reset the circuit breaker, to regain normal elevator and rudder trim, on the approach to NS Norfolk. With the circuit breaker reset, the pilot regained elevator trim, but not rudder trim. The copilot momentarily regained the use of both trims. The copilot then lost the use of rudder trim, which stuck at four units right. The pilot maintained balanced flight with manual rudder inputs and with help from the copilot.

The aircrew declared an emergency to expedite their recovery. As they transitioned to the landing configuration 10 miles from the field, the rudder trim ran out over six units fully right. The pilots continued the approach using differential power while applying over 100 pounds of force on the rudder pedals to keep the Hawk-eye in balanced flight. The aircrew recovered at NS Norfolk. The postflight maintenance inspection showed a seized rudder-trim actuator.



From left to right: LCdr. Elton "Thumper" Parker, Lt. Matt "Gucci" Thomas, Ltjg. Trace "Turtle" Head, LCdr. Rob "Chachi" Polvino.

