

20th Fighter Wing Association

Newsletter



1 November 2023



Welcome all ranks and AFSC's



The purpose of the Association

To preserve the military history and foster esprit de corps of past and present members of the 20th Fighter Wing and all previous and subsequent military iterations of that organization. Membership in the Association will be open to past and present members of the 20th Fighter Wing, their spouses and such other persons who have an interest in the affairs of the Association.

2022/2023 Board Members

Gino Passaro – President	Steve Homoki – Vice President
Dave Roberts – Chaplain	Ron Obernier – Secretary
Art Sevigny – Historian	Missi Zender-Sakach – Treasurer
Steve Brown – 2025 Reunion	
???????????? – 2027 Reunion	
Missi Zender-Sakach – Past Reunion Chair	

A Warm welcome to our new Board Members – Missi Zender - Sakach – Treasurer and Steve Homoki – Vice President!

Secretaries Report

20 Fighter Wing Association

August 2023



Association Members

The following is a report on the current health of the association.

1. Number of Members 246

Active 189

Active 86+ - 18 Life

Members - 28

Associate 10

Associate 86+ - 1

Note. 86+ and Life Members do not pay dues.

2. New Members since November 2021- 34

3. Loss of Members.

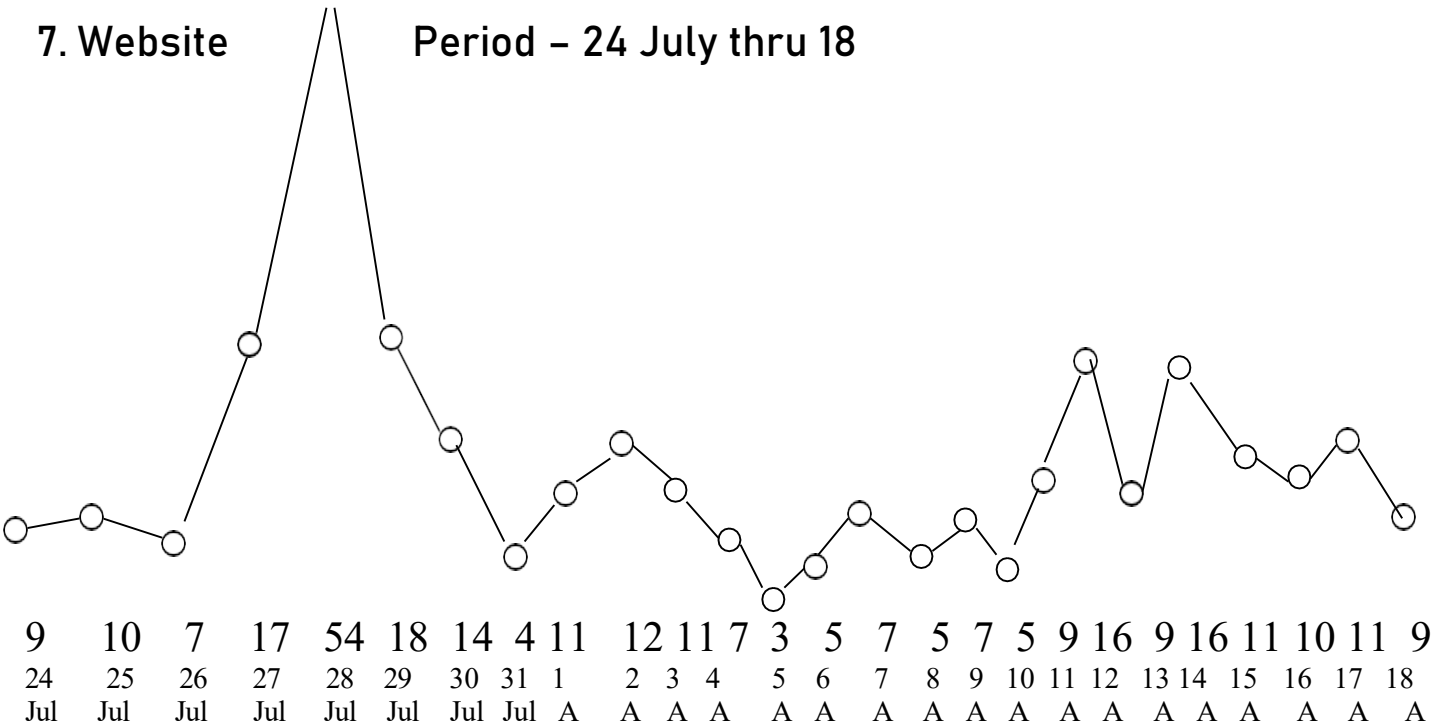
Death Notifications since October 2021- 29. This number includes members (active and past), Wives, and individuals who once belonged to the association.
Members removed from the Active Member List due to non-payment of dues -13
Members Removed at their Request – 5
Members removed due to loss of contact - 4

4. Members who have paid dues up to 5 years in advance

Paid thru 2024 -102
Paid thru 2025 - 56
Paid thru 2026 – 35
Paid thru 2027 – 18
Paid thru 2028 – 1

5. Members without e-mail addresses – 6

6. Website. Every aspect of the website is current and up to date. Our Webmaster has posted every change in a timely manner and continues to charge us \$35 per hour. This is due to us being a military and non-profit organization. The regular rate is \$75 per hour.



1st line is the number of sessions on that day
2nd line is the day of the month of the session.
3rd line is the month of the session (Jul-August).

337 Sessions

529 Page Views

32 Seconds average per
Session 227 Total Users

Country viewing the website.

302 US

13 India

9 UK

3 China

2 Canada

2 Germany

2 Netherlands

1 Belgium

1 France

1 Russian Federation

8. The By-Laws have been updated and a copy can be found in the 2023 Members Roster

Treasurer's report from 1 January 2022 to 30 September 2023

2023 Post-Reunion Newsletter

1 January to 31 December 2022

Bank Balance January 1, 2022: **\$24838.08**

2022 Receipts:

Dues Collected:	5600.67
History Books Sold:	104.08
Donations Received:	20.00
2021 Reunion Refund (\$2000 Seed)	3637.04
Total Receipts:	\$9361.79

2022 Expenses:

State of FL Registration	70.00
Newsletter Expenses-Ron Obernier	\$145.00
20 th FW Awards and Plaques	1099.26
2023 Reunion Banners	480.00
Webmaster Services-Deborah Lundgren	562.88
2023 Reunion Speaker Gift	62.04
Dues Refunded	20.00
History Book Sales Postage -Sevigny	120.02
Bank Fee	6.00

Total Expenses: \$2565.20

Bank Balance 12-31-

22: \$31652.29

1 January to 30 September 2023

Bank Balance 1 January 2023: **\$31652.29**

2023 Receipts:

Dues Collected: 3119.42

Donations Received (\$466.28 Reunion) 701.02

Total Receipts: \$3820.44

2023 Expenses:

State of Florida Registration 70.00

Newsletters & Rosters - Ron Obernier 649.63

Webmaster Services-Deborah Lundgren 291.55

Reunion Gifts 174.17

Postage Reunion History Items – Seigny 186.33

UK Heritage Center – 79th Banner 83.72

Total Expenses: \$1455.40

Bank Balance 9-30-23: \$34017.33

2023 Estimated Receipts: 1 Oct to 31 Dec 2023

Receipts: Dues Collected 1400.00

2023 Reunion Closeout 600.00

History Books Sold 50.00

Total Receipts: \$2050.00

2023 Estimated Expenses:

Newsletter & Web Services 400.00

20th FW (3) Awards, Plaques, Trophy Update 1650.00

History Book Postage 30.00

Recruitment Expenses 200.00

Total Expenses: \$2280.00

Estimated Bank Balance 12-31-23 \$33787.33

Projected Receipts and Expenses Next Two Years

1 January to 31 December 2024

Estimated Bank Balance January 1, 2024: \$33787.33

2024 Estimated Receipts:

Dues Collected: 4100.00

History Books Sold: 50.00

Donations Received: 40.00

Total Receipts: \$4190.00

2024 Estimated Expenses:

State of Florida Registration 70.00

Newsletter Expenses-Ron Obernier \$550.00

20th FW Awards (3), Plaques, Trophy Update 1650.00

Webmaster Services-Deborah Lundgren 700.00

History Book Sales Postage-Seigny 25.00

Recruitment Expenses 200.00

Total Expenses: \$3195.00

Estimated Bank Balance 12-31-24: \$34782.33

1 January to 31 December 2025

Estimated Bank Balance January 1, 2025: \$34782.33

2025 Estimated Receipts:

Dues Collected:	4000.00
History Books Sold:	50.00
Donations Received:	40.00
Reunion Seed Money Returned-Steve Brown	2000.00
Total Receipts:	\$6090.00

2025 Estimated Expenses:

State of Florida Registration	70.00
Newsletter Expenses-Ron Obernier	\$550.00
20 th FW Awards (3), Plaques, Trophy Update	1675.00
20 th FW Award Travel (1) to Reunion	700.00
Webmaster Services-Deborah Lundgren	700.00
2025 Reunion Seed Money-Steve Brown	2000.00*
2025 Reunion Gifts	250.00
Postage for History Books-Sevigny	440.00
Recruitment Expenses	200.00
Total Expenses:	\$6585.00

Estimated Bank Balance 12-31-25: \$34287.33

*This amount received back into account after Reunion 2025.

Estimated Balances Next Three Years

Year	EoY Balance
2018	16023.16 A
2019	21541.70 A
2020	25540.90 A
2021	24838.08 A
2022	31652.29 A
2023	33787 E
2024	34782 E
2025	34287 E

E = Estimated, A = Actual

Jerry Fetter

Treasurer, 20th FWA

New Members Since June Newsletter

Master Sergeant Oliver Jaeger. Oliver was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 20th EMS from 1984-86.

LtCol (Ret) Steve Webber and wife Lisa. Steve was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 79th TFS from 1980-83. He flew the F-111E.

LtCol (Ret) Derek Jones and wife Connie. Derek was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 77th TFS from 1985-87. He flew the F-111E.

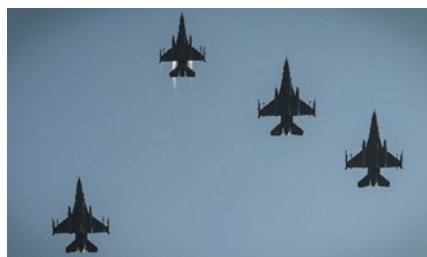
Col (Ret) Richard Tedesco and wife Terry. Richard was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 79th TFS from 1981-84. He flew the F-111E.

E4 Oscar Castelo and wife Penny. Oscar was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 20 Combat Support Sq. from 1970-73. He supported the F-111.

Col (Ret) Gavin Ketchum and wife Debbie. Gavin was a member of the 20th at Upper Heyford and was assigned to the 77TFS from 1990-92. He Flew the F-111.

If I have missed anyone this time round, please let me know so that I can include them in the next newsletter.

Fallen Heros



This Listing contains only those warriors identified to the Association since the last newsletter.

Colonel Ronald Francis Kozma He Flew the F-111 and was assigned to the 474 TFW at various times during his career.



Col Percy Dennis (PD) Leonard (retired). Percy served his country at Upper Heyford from 1968-1971. He was assigned to the 55th and 77th and flew the F-100. Percy was a long-time member of the association and was 81 years old.

Gordon Amsler, 474 TFW associate member. While Gordon was not in the 20 FW, he flew F-100s and F-111s and had planned to attend this year's reunion.

***This article was sent to the Oxford Mail on 15
September 2023***

A Day of Tragedy and Sacrifice

It is now nearly thirty years since RAF Upper Heyford ceased to be an operational United States Air Force base. In 1950 the first Americans arrived to upgrade the airbase for use by nuclear-capable bombers, the front-line deterrent to any aggression from Soviet Russia during the Cold War. Today the airbase is the thriving new community of Heyford Park but memories of 'Little America' endure and especially that tragic day: 17 September 1992.

The residents of Upper Heyford village and the surrounding area were quite resigned to, if less than content about, the noise of F-111E strike aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford. The Americans tried to avoid flying at the weekends and at night if possible but the ageing aircraft, now over twenty years old, were forced to follow flight paths which took them directly over people's homes.

The sound of the approaching F-111E 68-0052 of the 55th Tactical Fighter Squadron, returning from a routine training flight, was nothing unusual. The pilot, Captain Jerry Lindh, was highly experienced with over 750 flying hours. Born in New Jersey, he joined the USAF in 1988 and came to Heyford in 1990. He was a veteran of the First Gulf War in Iraq and his appointments with the 55th TFS included acting as training officer.

Sitting next to Captain Lindh was Weapons Systems Operator (WSO) Major David Micheal McGuire, known as 'Mike,' from Pennsylvania. He too was a Gulf War Veteran and had completed a tour at RAF Lakenheath, in Suffolk, as well as instructing on the F-111 at Mountain Home AFB. He came to Heyford in 1990 and had 1,500 flying hours on the F-111.

Master Sergeant Cjd Vries, 20th Engineering Maintenance Squadron, USAF, witnessed what happened next, *"Heard the radio traffic between crew and tower. The aircraft turned too tight on approach and was being told he was too low and to go round. The aircraft did not abort the approach but applied power too late. The F-111E had a low power to weight ratio. The aircraft hit the approach lights and impacted the ground. The lights were mounted on poles to make them level with the end of the runway. This was due to the slope of the*

land. The WSO pulled the ejection handle and the capsule separated from the aircraft. The aircraft was too low. Also, the push gear had been pushed into the bottom of the capsule when it struck the ground. It damaged the capsule rocket motor."

The F-111 had hit the ground about 52m (170 feet) short of Runway 09. Slewng sideways, it went through the perimeter fence and stopped just short of houses on the other side of Somerton Road.

The F-111 was not fitted with ejector seats. Instead, it had a detachable escape capsule which separated from the aircraft by using a rocket motor and then deployed a parachute before landing. As Master Sergeant Vries recalled, Major McGuire launched the capsule too late, the sliding aircraft was not level, and the damaged rocket motor did not fire the capsule high enough to allow the parachute to deploy. Both Major McGuire and Captain Lindh died of their injuries.

Could they have survived the crash by ejecting sooner?

Robert Menzies, Chair of Upper Heyford Parish Council, dedicated a memorial in the grounds of St Mary's Church with the words, *"Had they ejected their aircraft would most likely have crashed into the village causing an unknown number of deaths and injuries on the ground. They decided to remain with the aircraft and try to get clear of the village. This must be one of the clearest examples on record of men of outstandingly high moral principle sacrificing themselves for the benefit of others."*



A bit of History by Art Seigny

IF YOU CAN'T SHOOT THEM DOWN THEN KNOCK THEM DOWN

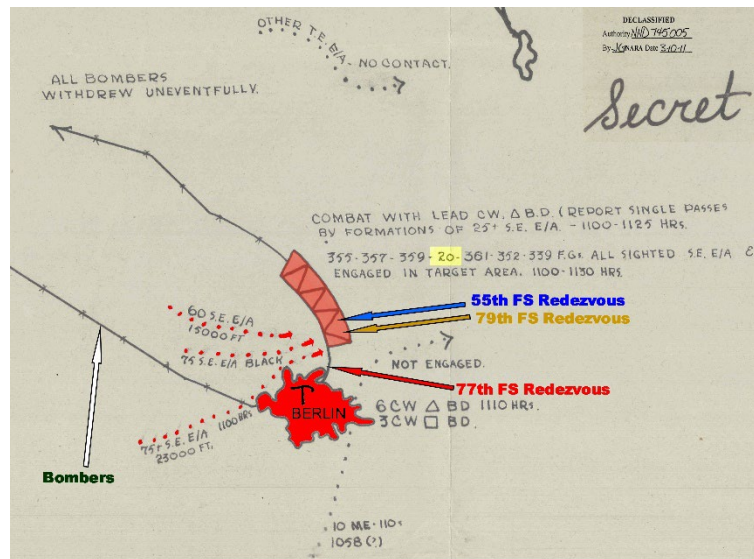
On the 24th of May 1944, the 8th Air Force dispatched ten combat wings of B-17s escorted by 18 fighter groups to attack targets in Berlin. The specific targets included a railway station, German Air Ministry, Foreign Office, Chancellery and Gestapo Headquarters. The 20th Fighter Group was tasked with providing withdrawal support for four of the combat wings.

The 20th launched its mission at 0850 hrs. with 51 P-38Js of which four turned back early. The Luftwaffe didn't take too kindly to the attack on the capital. When the 20th reached the rendezvous at 1110 hrs., 15 miles northwest of Berlin, the bombers were under attack by 100+ Bf109s. On the 24th of May 1944, the 8th Air Force dispatched ten combat wings of B-17s escorted by 18 fighter groups to attack targets in Berlin. The specific targets included a railway station, German Air Ministry, Foreign Office, Chancellery and Gestapo Headquarters. The 20th Fighter Group and FW190s with another 20 Bf109s providing top cover for their attacking fighters. The 55th and 79th rendezvoused with three combat wings of B-17s and the 77th with the last combat wing egressing from Berlin.

Shortly after the 55th and 79th took up their positions, about 30+ Bf109s made a second pass. The two squadrons climbed to engage the attacking fighters and successfully drove them off by breaking up their formations. All claims for the day were with the 79th with two destroyed and three damaged, all 109s.

Major Delynn E. Anderson, the 79th's Commander, took the squadron up to engage the incoming fighters. He fired a short burst at a 109 in a head-on attack from 500 yards to 100 yards scoring strikes on the 109 and claimed it as damaged. (Maj Anderson had a long association with the 20th. He joined the Group at March Field in March 1943, took command of the 79th from May through September 1944 then rotated back to the USA. In 1948 he returned to the 20th as Commander of the 77th from April through November and then again as Commander of the 79th around January 1951 through June 1951.)

Lt Stevens was in Yellow Flight when the 109s came in at his six o'clock high. The



flight called break, Stevens broke 180° and in the process, lost his left engine. After recovering, he spotted a P-38 at 8 o'clock and he then turned to join the formation. At this point a 109 came up directly in front of him then half rolled. Stevens fired with no strikes then turned 180° and spotted another 109 attacking the formation of P-38s. Stevens closed and fired at 500 yards at about 90° deflection and observed hits on the cockpit. He then fired on a third 109 that was going up at about 60° with no observed hits. He claimed one damaged 109.



Capt Ilfrey and Crew Chief, TSgt Burgess inspecting damage caused from collision

While in a tight turn, Lt Watson engaged an attacking 109 from about 500 yards with no observed hits. He then came up dead astern of another 109 and opened fire at 700 yards observing strikes but was forced to break off the attack as several 109s were attacking him from behind.

The real excitement of the day came from Capt Jack Ilfrey. Jack achieved ace status while serving in North Africa in 1942-43 with the 94th Fighter Squadron. He returned to the States after completing his tour. While stateside he served as an instructor pilot before being reassigned to the 20th FG in April 1944. On this day he was leading Red Flight in the 79th when the squadron was bounced by the 109s. The squadron flew into defensive Lufbery circles. Jack was in a tight turn to the right to counter incoming fire. During this, Jack got off a short burst at a 109 from 500 yards at 60° with 250 mph indicating and he observed hits. Jack was forced to immediately turn left to evade a 109 engaging him. He executed a

360° turn and as he straightened out, he spotted a 109 at 1 o'clock coming almost head on slightly to his right. He executed an evasive maneuver to avoid a collision, but his right wing hit the 109. Jack ended up losing about three or four feet off his wing and was thrown into a spin. He recovered from the spin and joined a box of bombers. The 109 was not so lucky as it went into an out-of-control spin and was on fire. Squadron members confirmed that both aircraft he engaged in went down in flames. Jack and his wounded P-38 hobbled home with the bombers. Jack arrived back at home base so late he was listed as MIA.

Jack was an interesting character. He commanded the 79th for a brief time as a 2nd Lt. The story goes that one night he was out celebrating his promotion to Major with five of his nearest and dearest squadron mates. Well, when the dust settled, Jack, as the senior officer in this band of merry men, ended up being charged with an unauthorized trip off base, unauthorized use of a Jeep, overloading a Jeep (six individuals), speeding, assault on an MP (not Jack), urination on the street (not Jack) and rioting in the Jail House. Jack and the 20th's Commander ended up before General Doolittle. When the meeting ended Maj Ilfrey became 2nd Lt Ilfrey. Years later Jack would say he had a lot of respect for Doolittle since he understood that "I wasn't real Army!!

20th Fighter Wing News

What to expect

Ian Lenahan

Portsmouth Herald

Although this happened last month, I selected it to show the paint scheme on the 20th F-16 demo aircraft and to inform the Association that the 20th is still showcasing its stuff! Gino

PORTSMOUTH — Thunder Over New Hampshire Air Show, Pease Air National Guard Base.

The pilots and flight members of the air show's headlining act, the U.S. Air Force F-16 Viper Demo Team of the 20th Fighter Wing, Shaw Air Force Base.



The Thunder Over New Hampshire Air Show was held Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 9-10.

Joining the F-16 Viper team were the New Hampshire Air National Guard's KC-46A tankers, the Vermont Air National Guard F-15 Eagle, the KC-135 Demo Team from Fairchild Air Force Base, the U.S. Special Operations Command Pura Commandos, aerobatic pilot Rob Holland, the N.H. Army Guard UH-60 Blackhawk, aerobatic pilot

Kent Pietsch, the P-51C "Mad Max" with pilot Lou Horschel and the Smoke-N-Thunder Jet Truck.

Reunion 2027 at Shaw?

A big thanks to Bill Hoge who introduced me to Col Kevin 'Flint' Hicok the current Vice Commander of the 20th Fighter Wing. In our correspondence he and the Commander were keen on exploring the possibility of having our 2027 reunion there at Shaw AFB, the current home of the 20th Fighter Wing. For those members who attended the 100th anniversary of the squadrons you will recall the great acceptance and special events put on by the 20th. If this comes to fruition, we need to have max support from our members on attending. So, stay tuned as events unfold on this effort.

Golf Tournament at Shaw

On another effort to get the Association recognition at Shaw, the Association sponsored two golf foursomes at Shaw's Octoberfest Golf Tournament which

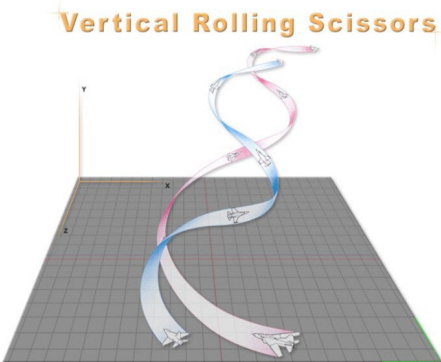
was held on 13 October at Carolina Lakes Golf Course on Shaw. A big thanks to our member Ellis Sharadin for the heads-up on this event.

Our efforts to rekindle a close relationship with the current and former F-16 members of the 20th requires the assistance of all members. We are not doing this for ourselves but for the Association's continued existence to provide the warriors who serve and have served in the 20th a venue for staying in touch and enjoying the comradery of their military service.

From our Members

The following was submitted by Bob Vosburgh. Bob was in the 77TFS in the early 80s and some may recall him as the author of the Vosburgh MQF which was used by many crewmembers to study for annual check rides. I know for sure the SEFEs used them! Many of us had follow on assignments after our 20th tour and Bob recounts one of his experiences.

One training ride in the AT-38 brought unexpected challenges. I was on my 10th Basic Fighter Maneuvers Ride. It was a flight where I was to fight an instructor, Captain Fox, on my own. The program allowed what were called Sand Baggers to ride in the back seat to get a bit more exposure to flying fighters. On this mission, a weapons system officer, Lieutenant Jordan, accompanied me. He sat through the instructor's briefing, and I followed that with a crew briefing. My bottom line was that I was being evaluated and expected him to be dead silent and not interfere with my flying in any way. As it turned out he REALLY interfered!



In these one-versus-one engagements the objective is to position your airplane behind the opponent to affect either a simulated missile or gun shot. Since both aircraft attempt to pull to the "6 o'clock" of their opponent it often resulted in a vertical helix called a vertical rolling scissors (see illustration). These engagements typically end with a "knock it off" call. The call was mandated when we slowed during the vertical fight.

The AT-38 was barely maneuverable, pretty much ballistic, at slow speeds of around 150 knots. The other critical component of this situation is the sensitivity of the J-85 engines. These engines were originally designed for a cruise missile called the Quail, designed to be dropped from the wing of a B-52. The Air Force modified the engine by adding an afterburner for the T-38/AT-38B. They were efficient and a good fit for the AT-38 but were

susceptible to compressor stalls at lower airspeeds at high altitude. The rule of thumb was to not even touch the throttles if above 30,000', under .9 Mach.

We flew to the practice area, named Beak Bravo, in under 10 minutes. We set up a half dozen fights, and I thought we were doing very well. While engaged in the final air-to-air fight, in a vertical rolling scissors, my instructor had a slight advantage (3-9-line advantage) and was behind and to the left of our airplane. Our aircraft were quickly decelerating, as we approached 30,000'. Captain Fox called "knock it off, one knock it off." I responded, as trained, replying "two knock it off."

Lt Jordan lost sight of Captain Fox. He was looking for the leverage needed to look over his left shoulder and, without thinking, put his left hand on the throttles, inadvertently moving them! This caused both J85 engines to compressor stall. Shit!

I'd pulled both throttles to the off position to clear the compressor stalls.

A few seconds later our airplane was ballistic, unloaded to zero g and we were floating in our seats. At the apex, our airspeed indicated zero knots. If you can imagine a dart thrown straight up, coming to a stop, and then rotating 180 degrees to straight down, that's identically what happened. I've done it several times in the AT-38 and the zero-g, 180-degree end-to-end swap is exhilarating.

We needed an airspeed of around 300 knots at an altitude at, or below, 26,000' to restart the engines. I had sight of Captain Fox, his engines still in full afterburner, as he started his recovery from vertical to level/horizontal flight. During the silence, I took the opportunity to confirm Lt Jordan had his hands on his lap and that he'd keep them there. We passed Captain Fox 90 degrees nose low, at around 25,000'. I'm not sure he noticed as he was probably looking for us to appear in formation off his right or left wing.

There are two ways to restart the AT-38B engines. You can move the throttles to idle and push the two start buttons, much like when starting in the chocks on the ground. The in-flight alternative is pushing the throttles to the full afterburner position which activates the electronic ignition (spark plugs). I did both!

The engines showed signs of restarting around 250 knots indicated, with the aircraft descending rapidly over Ruidoso, NM. I gingerly pulled the nose up and through the horizon and left the engines in full afterburner to expedite our return to the proper formation position. Back in position, Captain Fox looked at us and stared for an uncomfortably long period of time. On the short ride home from Beak Bravo I tried to think through how I was going to tap dance out of this likely failed lesson. I knew Captain Fox would ask why we were slow returning to the formation position. I decided the only path to not failing the ride would be a call on my part that included "safety first." I asked

Lt Jordan to "sit down and color and not open his mouth."

Captain Fox went through the debriefing with a poker face and said I'd done well in the half dozen engagements. He then asked me to explain why I was late to recover to the formation position. I told him I wanted to ensure we had safe separation during the recovery after the knock it off call. By the time he'd fallen off to the left, we'd lost control effectiveness and sat through the vertical recovery. I remembered, from academics, that the engines were very sensitive if below 300 knots and approaching 30,000'. This was all factual.



We had sight of him as we waited for 300 knots airspeed before recovering to level flight. This caused a slower recovery and, in hindsight, was perhaps too conservative. But! We were safe.

Captain Fox went into instructor mode and shared we could have started the recovery from vertical around 250 knots, albeit gingerly, as he'd done. I said, "Thank you sir, I understand." Then, I was silent. He said he'd be giving me a slight downgrade, from a 5 to a 4 on my grade sheet, for the slow recovery.

Despite the ordeal, I managed to pass the ride with one downgrade. As we walked out, Lt Jordon was silent. With a smile I said, "I know where you live." He nodded that he understood.

Submitted by Jim Foley:



UK Airfields • Follow

Suggested for you • 19h •

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The X-15 Cruise Baseloop in one of the old Barrack Blocks at RAF Upper Heyford. They are now demolished. - at [RAF Upper Heyford](#).

