

Rec'd 4/11/02

Locket No. _____ Official Exh. No. XXX
In the matter of PFS

Cole, Jack

From: Gene Frank [vf111@myexcel.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2002 7:32 AM
To: Cole, Jack
Subject: Re: People/Structure Avoidance

Staff IDENTIFIED ☒
Applicant ✓ RECEIVED ☒
Intervenor _____ REJECTED _____
Other _____ WITHDRAWN _____
DATE 4-11-02 Witness _____
Clerk L. Shindurling

A FIVE-MINUTE FLIGHT TO REMEMBER
11 Aug 61

It was a beautiful morning as I taxied out to the runway as a spare with a flight of four F-100D's. The wx was clear with no wind. We were configured with two 450 gal tanks for an exercise in North Carolina. When # 2 aborted I filled in. We lined up on the runway for single ship takeoffs with 5 sec spacing. On run up everything looked good and I released the brakes and went burner. I broke ground about 4500 ft and raised my gear. As I pulled the flaps up at 160 knots, I heard a pop and the stick shook. I also got a trace of fumes across my eyes. I held my 160 knots and looked over the instruments. All was good for 5 or 10 seconds, then the first compressor stall, (almost knocked my feet off the rudder pedals), the RPM started dropping with each compressor stall, both fire-warning lights came on. I looked out the front and saw that I was headed for the big white farmhouse about a mile off the runway. I rolled into about a 30-degree bank to the left away from the house and the a/c shuddered, looked over the side and thought I had enough altitude, (it didn't make any difference I couldn't ride it in.) I reached down and pulled the handle. The canopy went ok, but I couldn't find the trigger for the seat, I looked down and had to slide my hand down the side of the seat because my fingers were too short. I pulled the trigger from that awkward position and I went for a ride. I lost my brand new Lombard helmet as I cleared the canopy. Then I felt the lanyard pulling on the d-ring of my chute. All of a sudden I stopped tumbling and I saw green and blue and the rim of my chute. I got it made!!!!!! Looked over and saw the a/c hit and it looked like it zeroed the house. I looked down and was coming down beside a pecan tree. I hit the ground and stood up until the survival pack hit me in the back of the knees. I sat down and undid my chute. I started for the house, had to wade through a marshy place and climb the fence to the highway. As I got down off the fence a guy grabbed me and wiped the blood off my face from a small cut when my sunglasses went with my helmet.

I asked the guy if anyone in the house was hurt, from where I was thought I got the house, he said he didn't think so. The compressor section was lying against the fence about fifty feet from the back door, where the lady of the house was ironing in the kitchen. Approximately 100 yards from where I hit.

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The chopper landed in the lot next to the house, and I crawled in. They took me to base ops, where Col. Shintz, and Col. Everest were waiting on me. He asked me what happened and I told them the engine came unglued. Total damage consisted of 13 Pecan trees, two young heifers, and one possum. The Air Force paid dearly for those Pecan trees. The accident board asked me only one question, why didn't I jettison my drop tanks? It would have been one more step to my ejection, and I didn't have time. The cause of the accident was, a pigtail off of the bottom of the afterburner section. I blew the skin off of the aircraft, just forward of the tailskid, which was found at the 6700 foot marker on the runway. The pigtail was leaking fuel, which ran up under the engine, and when I rotated it caught fire. The board figured I got out at 250 feet, and as the shoot was rebounding I touched. The ejection seat was guaranteed to 500 feet and above. When looked through the windscreen it looked like a strafing pass on the house at very slow speed. There is no doubt that the turn caused the a/c to miss it, even though the force of my ejection turned the a/c back towards the house. The thing that saved me was a positive angle of attack even though the a/c had quit flying when I ejected. That afternoon I was at the bar and Col Shintz walked over and set a double scotch and water in front of me and said, heres to the best decision made on England AFB today.

Hope this helps you out,
If you need to edit feel free and if you need anything else let me know.
Logged 5 min. and no landing.

Vernon E. Frank (Gene)
Lt. Col. USAF Ret.

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