Air Combat Command

Pilot Safety Award of Distinction

First Lieutenant Peter Henrikson

First Lieutenant Peter Henrikson was the red air F-16 on a flight lead upgrade ride with weather solid from 5,000 to 20,000 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL). While holding at 25,000 feet MSL, he noticed his altitude and airspeed information had disappeared from the heads up display. Shortly after that, his inertial navigation system quit working. After unsuccessfully resetting his Flight Control System (FLCS), 1Lt Henrikson noticed a FLCS warning light on his panel. Realizing the severity of the multiple malfunctions, his flight lead declared an emergency for the flight and began a descent through the weather towards Hill AFB, Utah. While attempting to maintain position on his flight lead's wing, 1Lt Henrikson noticed his speed brakes had also failed. Once below the weather, 1Lt Henrikson attempted to configure his jet for landing, but the landing gear handle would not lower. After going through the checklist, he was able to successfully lower the gear handle. He did not, however, get the three green lights in the cockpit that indicate all three gears were down and locked. While on final approach, he noticed the airplane was not handling normally at final approach speeds. He then saw his leading edge flaps were not extending at all, causing the airplane to buffet on final. 1Lt Henrikson instinctively attempted to extend the flaps manually, however the flaps were completely inoperative. He immediately pushed the power up slightly realizing a significant increase in speed would be required with no leading edge flaps. Despite all these failures, 1Lt Henrikson executed a flawless approach and landing. Once the airplane was at a safe speed, he attempted to engage the nose wheel steering and realized it had also failed. Using only his brakes to steer the aircraft, he was able to stop the aircraft on the runway. 1Lt Henrikson's superior situational awareness and outstanding airmanship prevented the loss of a valuable aircraft.

Sept. 2002

421st Fighter Squadron
388th Fighter Wing
Hill AFB, Utah