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## Skunk Works Mailing List

# Re: Iran rescue Hercules

Date: Mon, 30 Aug 1999 16:03:44 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Mary Shafer  
Subject: Re: Iran rescue Hercules

On Mon, 30 Aug 1999, James Hart wrote:

> Tonight on ITV's 'Tested To Destruction',

> They also showed footage of the first F16 (YF16 on tailfin)takeoff (which  
> occurred during a high speed taxi run)

That's usually referred to as Flight Zero and was the first flight of the YF-16 (the actual F-16 is enough different that they're really not the same aircraft). The plane got into a PIO during the high-speed taxi test and the pilot decided to take off to get away from the hard unforgiving runway. The damage included scraped wingtip and elevon and the cause was having the pilot gains too high (they'd halved the ground-based sim gains even though we'd told them to divide by ten; they ended up dividing the aircraft gains by five, doing just what we'd recommended). They also changed from a fixed force stick to a moving force stick because the lack of proprioceptive cuing was part of the problem, coupled with the too-high pilot gains.

> and the first F16 crash landing  
> (different pilot, gear stuck up).

Where to begin? That wasn't a crash landing, it was a some-gear-up landing, no "crash" about it at all, and only one gear was hung, not all three. I think it was the starboard main and it hung in the gear compartment, rather than coming part way down but not locking. The pilot took it to the grass between the runway and the taxiway at Fort Worth and held the gearless side up until the airspeed bled off considerably and then let the plane down onto the wingtip and inlet. The inlet was damaged, the engine slightly FODded, and the plane was back flying in a couple of weeks at the most (which is proof positive it wasn't a crash). This incident gave rise to the joke, "Q: What's red, white, and blue and eats grass? A: The YF-16." That particular airplane was painted in a flashy red, white, and blue livery, the one used for the YF-16 desk models. I think Alex Wolfe was the pilot, but may be wrong.

Mary

Mary Shafer DoD #0362 KotFR shafer@ursa-major.spdccc.com  
"Some days it don't come easy/And some days it don't come hard  
Some days it don't come at all/And these are the days that never end...."

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