

RJet and I were RTB in an F-4 from an exercise out in W-532. We had made a couple of successful intercepts and were bingo fuel. I'm sure you all remember that the F-4 was proof positive that if you put enough thrust on a brick you could make it fly. Thus, the higher bingo from down in the south. It was still daylight as we crossed the coast somewhere around VBG when I noticed that the fuel seemed to be decreasing a little faster than usual for cruising at FL260. There is a little deviation from the report below. At first, we declared min fuel to FAT, then a short time later we went min fuel to Lemoore. Then, after that it was emergency fuel to Lemoore.

As we started the descent, we were running the fuel leak checklist, I didn't notice that the Sun had set and it got dark quickly. When we were finally about 15 miles from the runway, I realized that I didn't see the runway lights and asked tower if the lights were full bright. He said yes, they were and about that time I realized that my dark visor was still down. Once I got that squared away. I felt a bit sheepish having to ask tower to turn the lights down.

As we were just about to touch down, I checked the fuel one last time. It read 250 lbs. The gage tolerance just happened to be +/- 250 lbs, so I wasn't sure if there was anything left in the tanks or not. We made the turn-off where the fire trucks were and were met by a fireman who signaled for me to shut down immediately. At the same time the rest of the fire crew were running toward us with the hoses going.

We had planned to make a normal exit from the jet, but I told RJet that it looked like they knew something that we didn't. At that point we made it an emergency egress and took off running across the grass in the infield. About 50 yards away from the jet, we turned around to see what was happening, only to see what looked like a Texas rainstorm coming out of the bottom of the jet. It was fuel.

I talked to Jim Blinn from the fuel shop the next day and he said that when they checked the fuel tanks that night there was enough gas to get us to the end of the runway on a go-around, and that was it.

As it turns out, the line that feeds the afterburner fuel pump broke. That hose is about 3" in diameter and is under 60 psi. It would not have been a problem if the

break was downstream from the pump, but in this case, it was up-stream so the gas was simply pumped overboard.

Someone from the engine shop tracked me down the next day to let me know what had happened. He also said that he didn't know why, but we should have had an engine fire, too. I asked, "Why is that?" and he replied that the afterburner fuel pump where the break was, is mounted at the **front** of the engine. The fuel had flowed through the engine bay and completely cleaned the engine and engine compartment. F-4s are notorious for catching fire with things like this. So, I guess we were lucky that night, both on having just enough to get to a runway and getting there **not** on fire.

A couple of days later, after the fuel and engine guys had done their magic, I was informed that since I left the jet at Lemoore it was my responsibility to finish the flight and bring it home. "Who's in my back seat," I asked. "Nobody" was the reply. "You're solo." Solo in an F-4? Never heard of such a thing! 😊

Uneventful trip home, except that I had to work the radio all by myself...

UNCLASSIFIED									
DTG/RELEASER TIME			PRECEDENCE		CLASS	SPECAT	LMF	CIC	ORIG/MSG IDENT
DATE-TIME	MONTH	YR	ACT	INFO					
	SEP	84	RR		UUUU				
MESSAGE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS									

FROM:

TO:

SUBJ: CLASS C (HAP) FLIGHT MISHAP PRELIMINARY REPORT, F-4D,

84-09-05, 144FIW-08

1. 5 SEPT 84, 1940 PDT, NIGHT
2. NLC TACAN RADIAL 230'/080
3. F-4D, 65-0740
4. AUG, TAC, ADTAC, 144FIW, FRESNO AT, CA
5. CLASS C (HAP) FLIGHT MISHAP
6. NONE
7. A. [REDACTED] 1115F 29 SQDN PILOT
- B. [REDACTED] 35 SQDN WSO.
8. N/A

9. A. INFLIGHT LOSS OF FUEL: AIRCREW WAS PARTICIPATING IN AN AIR DIVISION EXERCISE AND HAD COMPLETED ONE INTERCEPT AGAINST THE FAKER AIRCRAFT. WITH FUEL REMAINING AT 5900 LBS, RTB WAS REQUESTED, AND AIRCRAFT ARRIVED OVER THE HAND-OFF POINT WITH 4400 LBS REMAINING. CHECK IN WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH OAKLAND CENTER AND FLIGHT CLEARED FOR STANDARD INSTRUMENT RECOVERY. APPROXIMATELY ONE MINUTE LATER THE

DISTR:

DRAFTER TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL, PHONE

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL AND PHONE

G.R. SPARKS, COL, SE AV 949-9175

SIGNATURE

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

UNCLASSIFIED

DATE TIME GROUP

UNCLASSIFIED

DTG/RELEASE TIME			PRECEDENCE		CLASS	SPECAT	LMF	CIC	ORIG/MSG IDENT
DATE-TIME	MONTH	YR	ACT	INFO					
	SEP	84	RR		UUUU				

MESSAGE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

FROM:

TO:

PILOT NOTED THE FUEL REMAINING INDICATED 2900 LBS. IAW THE AIRCREW CHECKLIST, A FUSELAGE FUEL LEAK CHECK WAS ACCOMPLISHED AND MINIMUM FUEL WAS DECLARED WITH OAKLAND CENTER AND A REQUEST DIRECT TO LEMOORE NAS. APPROXIMATELY 60 MILES FROM LEMOORE NAS FUEL REMAINING WAS NOW READING 2200 LBS, AIRCREW ELECTED NOW TO TREAT THE PROBLEM AS A FUEL LEAK AND DECLARED AN IN-FLIGHT EMERGENCY. AT 25 MILES WITH 1600 LBS OF FUEL REMAINING A MINIMUM FUEL DESCENT WAS MADE AND AIRCRAFT MANEUVERED FOR A LEFT BASE TURN TO LAND ON RUNWAY 32L. A HIGH TURN TO FINAL APPROACH WAS MADE AT 1½ MILES AT WHICH TIME FUEL FUMES WERE NOTED IN BOTH COCKPITS AND FUEL REMAINING INDICATED 100 LBS. NORMAL LANDING WAS ACCOMPLISHED AND AIRCRAFT WAS TAXIED CLEAR AND SHUT DOWN WITH 50 LBS REMAINING. AIRCREW MADE A NORMAL EGRESS AS CRASH RESCUE PERSONNEL WERE WASHING DOWN THE TAXIWAY FOR LEAKING FUEL. INVESTIGATION CONTINUES.

10. A-H. PENDING.

11. PENDING.

12. PENDING.

STR:

AFTER TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL, PHONE

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL AND PHONE

G.R. SPARKS, COL, SE AV 949-9175

SIGNATURE

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
UNCLASSIFIED

DATE TIME GROUP