



## Coolstone Does a Pitchelmann

Coolstone was one of the favored. He was on alert. It had been so long since he had been through an actual scramble that he really wasn't worried about pulling it. All he knew for sure was that he was going to sit in the alert hangar for 24 hours. He was looking forward to catching up on his reading, his writing, and his ping pong. Right now, he was just sitting with his fearless WSO, Two, and the other crew, who were on alert with him.

As usual, they were in a highly technical discussion about the F-101's capability. The other alert pilot was telling the Rock, "When I first started flying the 101, I was very, very careful. My breaks were cross-countries in themselves. Needed 1500 pounds from initial to final. Now that I have considerably more experience in the machine, 150 hours, I have found that it's a real good aircraft, a real performer."

Now the Rock didn't quite have 100 hours in the 101, and he still was very, very careful. But he had talked to many of the old heads, and they, too, were favorable in their comments about the 101.

"Probably nothing will beat it to 20 grand," one of them had said. And Coolstone believed it. It was difficult not to if you had ever made a burner climb on a cold day.

"Yes, I know what you mean," he told the other alert pilot. "I used to be very, very careful with it also. But now that I have had some experience, I have been able to do most anything in the 101 that anyone else can do in any other aircraft."

"Ever try an Immelmann?" the other pilot asked in a whisper. The WSOs overheard, however, and both of them became completely attentive to the conversation.

"An Immelmann?" said the Rock incredulously. "No, and I don't think that I will either."

"They're a cinch," said his friend. "Just get it up to 450, 20 thou and pull it up and over. You don't even need burners. You finish up wings level, 280 knots, maybe even 300."

"I don't think we're supposed to do Immelmanns," said Coolstone. "I thought they were prohibited."

"Yeah," said his friend, "but what do the old folks know anyway? I'll bet they've never even tried one."

"Have you tried one?" said Coolstone with a great deal of awe showing through. "Have you really tried an Immelmann in this bird?"

"One," snorted his friend. "I've done dozens. Absolutely no problem. Four-fifty, 20 thou, no burner, pull it up at about four Gs, let it kinda come on over till the nose is falling through, and just roll it upright. End up at 280 minimum."

His friend's WSO looked just a little green as he said, "I've never been with anyone who even did a loop in a 101, let alone an Immelmann."

"Yeah," said Coolstone Two, "neither have I, and I want no part of either one."

But Coolstone  
One's eyes were  
shining in  
admiration. He said  
to his friend,  
"You've made  
loops, too, I  
gather?"

"Naturally," said  
his friend. "Loops  
are easier than  
Immelmans. Now  
that I've done a few  
of them, I go in at  
20 and come out at  
20. A perfect circle."



"Now that I've done a few of them, I go in at 20 and  
come out at 20. A perfect circle."

"With burners?" asked the Rock.

"No burners," said Friendo. "Who needs them with 450 at  
the start?"

"Wow!" said Coolstone. "What a machine!" To himself, he  
thought, "I didn't know that Friendo was that good."

The two WSOs, who had been extremely quiet during the last  
portions of the conversation, also didn't think that Friendo, or  
Coolstone for that matter, was that good, and both mentally  
noted that whenever the schedule paired them with either of  
these pilots again, they were going to try a trade at all costs.  
Rumor had it that one WSO paid \$50 to get out of a flight  
with a specific pilot. That's what it cost him to make a trade.

The flying talk dwindled, and routine alert duties took over.  
The 24 hours passed very slowly. There were no scrambles on  
this tour, either.

About three days later, Coolstone was scheduled for a high-  
altitude intercept sortie, and he was paired with Two, the

same WSO who had pulled alert with him. It seemed they would probably be a crew as long as they were assigned to the squadron.

Coolstone One had absolutely no objections to this. He had flown with Two enough to know that he was pretty good on the scope and he was a good companion on a cross-country. As they sat drinking coffee, waiting for the briefing to begin, Two was attempting to talk One into a cross-country for the following weekend.

"Look," he said, "you get the airplane. We'll leave Friday night, come back Sunday night, get a few hours in, and if we stop at the right places, I'll practically guarantee you..."

"Look," said One, "I'm not really interested this weekend. I've got a few things lined up for myself. And besides, I'm a little short. We don't get paid until next week."

"Look," said Two, "if you put in for the airplane and we get it, I'll even lend you some money, and you'll never regret it if we go to the right places. And besides that, you'll be a big hit with ops. They try to scatter these 101s all over the country on the weekends to get flying time, and our maintenance doesn't have to work on them."

"Well," said One, "I might, but if I borrow the money from you, then I'm going to have to pay it back."

"All right, all right," said his WSO. "I'll pay for the trip. It's on me."

"Boy, you really are eager to go, aren't you?" said One. "I'll have to think it over. I just can't see it right now."

"You won't regret it," said Two. "I promise you that."

The two of them went into the briefing room and met with the other crew that they were paired with. The mission was for a front snap, then high co-altitudes, followed by a formation recovery. The alternate mission was instruments.

One and Two preflighted, got strapped in, and cranked up. When One checked in, he found that the other 101 was going to abort. One contacted the SOF and was told to go ahead and fly the alternate mission. One and Two were all for that since the worst part of the mission was already over (they thought) - the briefing, the preflight, and the strapping in. They got airborne in a minimum of time. One decided to climb to altitude and burn down some fuel prior to shooting a few GCAS. He checked in with the controller and was cleared to do most anything that he wanted to do at most any altitude he cared to do it. He leveled at 30 and was immediately bored.

"Not much of a set," said Two. "Even the altitude line is weak. Good thing we didn't have a target."

"It must really be bad," said One. "Usually, when we don't have a target, YOU have the best set you have ever seen and can't believe your bad luck in not being able to run a few."

They groaned along for three or four minutes, then One told Two, "Guess I'll do a few rolls just to keep my hand in."

He turned the RLS off in preparation because he didn't want anything to interfere with his tricky stick action.

"Roger," said Two, and he immediately began storing loose objects, tightening straps, and checking his seat pins. He had rolled with One before. Sometimes the rolls became pretty spectacular.

One pulled it up sharply and rolled once (to the left, of course). He hesitated, wings level, and rolled it again. He climbed back up to 30 and tried to figure out how he had lost 5,000 feet and 50 knots.

"Pull harder and roll faster," he told himself. "That must be what's wrong."

Around they went again, hesitated, did another. Then he climbed back up to 30. He decided that chandelles were his thing anyway. He dove the airplane, honked back, got the horn, released a little, and ended up at about 37.

"Not bad," he said to himself. "Not bad at all."

Over the interphone, he heard Two. "You're pretty hot today," said Two. "A Tiger all the way."

Two immediately regretted his remarks, for One said, "By golly, I believe I'll try one of those Immelmans. We'll do it just like Friendo told me. Twenty thou, 450, three and a half to four Gs, let it come over real good and roll it up. No burner."

"You know," said Two, "some of us have been talking over that Immelmann business. There are lots of people that don't think that it's possible without burners and a lot more airspeed and a lot lower altitude at the beginning.... And besides, you shouldn't do it anyhow."

"Oh, come on," said The Rock. "Friendo has done dozens of them. He says that it's easy. He ends up at 280 on top, no problem at all."

"Yeah," but said Two, "you've never done one, and he may be ... just may be exaggerating a bit."

"Look," said One, "I've got it in the old arm. If Friendo can do one, I can do one. If we get in trouble, I'll just zero G it around and fly out of it. The book doesn't say you can't do an Immelmann at all. It doesn't say anything about it. If you were going to have trouble, it would say so. The book doesn't cover a loop, either. If the Immelmann works out okay, I'll try a loop too."

"Oh boy," said Two. "Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy."

"Here we go," said One as he advanced the throttles to military and dove for 20 thou. As he leveled at 20, he saw that

he had about 480 knots, even more than he needed, which he pointed out to Two. One loaded the airplane up to almost four Gs. Then he caught what looked like a pretty good airspeed bleed.

"Better use the burners," he said to himself and plugged them in. As he was approaching near vertical and at about 35,000, he saw that the airspeed, to his horror, was at 200 knots, going down rapidly, with no indication that it was going to slow down - let alone stop. He experienced a sinking sensation, a quick lessening of the G level,

"We've pitched up," he shouted to Two.

"Forward stick," said Two as One firewalled it.

The resulting negative Gs were pretty spectacular. Both One and Two came out of their seats a lot, but Two was better off because of his preroll preparation. The nose was definitely headed for the horizon, but as it passed through about 20 degrees, nose up, the aircraft did what had to be a quick snap roll (flip, for our Canadian friends) to the right. The snap roll was so fast that both One and Two's gyros tumbled. One lost the stick for a moment, but, fortunately, he got it right back again.



"Full forward," said Two.

One already had it there. The aircraft quit rolling, and the nose had dropped to about 45 degrees below the horizon. The airspeed was building up and was at about 150, but One felt no negative Gs. He pushed the stick forward harder, if that was possible. At 170 knots, the bird snap rolled again.

"What was that?" said Two. "Why did it do that? Didn't you neutralize when you felt the negative Gs?"

What negative Gs?" said One. "I didn't feel a thing."

"I did," said Two, "and I'm beginning to feel them again. Get the stick back."

Sure enough, the bird was again nose down with the airspeed building and over 150. The Rock was still holding the stick full forward.

"My gosh," he thought, "I guess I do feel negative Gs," and eased the stick back.

"Ten thou," said Two, getting himself ready to go.

"Don't go. Don't go," said One. "I've got it now. I've got it now." One let the airspeed build up to over 300 before he even started a pull-up. He leveled at about four, took several deep breaths, turned the RLS back on, and called for clearance to enter the GCA pattern.

"Did you get the chute out?" asked Two. "I didn't say anything about it."

With a quick glance at the handle, One saw it was still in.

"Nope," he said, "I guess I just didn't get around to it."

"It's not surprising," said Two very dryly. "You've got to be fast to pitch up twice and recover twice in 20,000 feet. Boy, what was it with you on that first recovery? Didn't you feel those negative Gs? I was hanging by the straps, something terrible."



"I was numb," said One. "I didn't feel anything." Then he started to feel something - but it was more of a burn. "Dozens of them, Friendo said he had done. Nothing to it, huh? Forty-five, 20 thou, no burners. I even used burners. No way."

"Look ole buddy-buddy," the Rock said to Two. "Let's kinda keep this quiet. As a matter of fact, let's not tell anybody about it at all."

"Well-l-l-l-l ..." said Two uncertainly, "Well-l-l-l-l-l, I don't know. Friendo might have told someone else the same thing he told us, and some other stup... er, pilot, may believe him and try it himself."

"I'll take care of Friendo," said One. "I'll politely mention to him that I'll personally kill him if he doesn't backtrack and admit to everyone that he has never done a loop, an Immelmann, a steep turn, a roll, or a climb of over 10 degrees, and he's probably the biggest pussy cat who ever flew a 101."

"Well, okay," said Two, "but I'm still not certain we shouldn't tell. I think that maybe I'll ..."

"Okay, okay," said One. "Where do you want to go this weekend, and how much is it going to cost me?"