

Lieutenant Colonel Michael H. Weaver is inducted into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishment demonstrating exceptional bravery on June 18, 1991.

Lt Col Weaver was assigned as a pilot of the A7D aircraft assigned to the 112th Tactical Fighter Group, Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. On June 18, 1991, he departed Greater Pittsburgh on a two-ship, low-level surface attack mission. Twenty minutes after takeoff and one-third of the way into his low-level route, Lt Col Weaver had only a split second to react to avoid striking a large bird. Instinctively, he began an immediate climb, but it was too late. Flying at 300 to 400 feet at 450 knots, a five pound turkey vulture impacted directly on the A7's radome.

The collision was violent causing the radome to disintegrate with a loud explosion. The aircraft's situation deteriorated upon entering instrument weather conditions. The collision produced a continuous loud noise which made it difficult to ascertain the condition of the single engine. Compounding the situation was erroneous airspeed and altitude indications caused by physical damage to the aircraft's single engine. With the airspeed indicating 190 knots and decreasing in a 10 degree climb, Lt Col Weaver started preparations for a possible ejection.

The situation improved when Lt Col Weaver was able to confirm positive climb and accurate ground speed. Lt Col Weaver decided to return to Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. Lt Col Weaver observed debris flying past the windscreen and suspected foreign object damage to his aircraft's single engine. Despite continuing problems, Lt Col Weaver piloted his fighter in a close-in precautionary landing pattern to an uneventful landing.

Upon inspection, the engine was found to have suffered extensive foreign object damage with engine failure imminent.

The calm, methodical and expeditious handling of this inflight emergency by Lt Col Weaver and textbook coordination between him and the flight lead enabled him to avoid a potential disaster. The professional skill and superb airmanship of Lt Col Weaver in an emergency situation are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Lt Col Weaver reflect great credit upon himself, the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and truly warrant his induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.