

## An F-15 pilots in-flight collision account

A simulated dogfight training took place between two F-15D's and four A-4N Skyhawks over the skies of the Negev, Israel... "At some point I collided with one of the Skyhawks, at first I didn't realize it. I felt a big strike, and I thought we passed through the jet stream of one of the other aircraft. Before I could react, I saw the big fireball created by the explosion of the Skyhawk. The radio started to deliver calls saying that the Skyhawk pilot has ejected, and I understood that the fireball was the Skyhawk that exploded, and the pilot was ejected automatically. There was a tremendous fuel stream going out of my wing, and I understood it was badly damaged. The aircraft flew without control in a strange spiral. I reconnected the electric control to the control surfaces, and slowly gained control of the aircraft until I was straight and level again. It was clear to me that I had to eject. When I gained control I said: "Hey, wait, don't eject yet!" No warning light was on and the navigation computer worked as usual; (I just needed a warning light in my panel to indicate that I missed a wing...)," My instructor pilot ordered me to eject. The wing is a fuel tank, and the fuel indicator showed 0.000 so I assumed that the jet stream sucked all the fuel out of the other tanks. However, I remembered that the valves operate only in one direction, so that I might have enough fuel to get to the nearest airfield and land. I worked like a machine, I wasn't scared and didn't worry. All I knew was as long as the sucker flies, I'm gonna stay inside. I started to decrease the airspeed, but at that point one wing was not enough So I went into a spin down and to the right. A second before I decided to eject, I pushed the throttle and lit the afterburner. I gained speed and thus got control of the aircraft again. Next thing I did was lower the arresting hook. A few seconds later I touched the runway at 260 knots, about twice the recommended speed, and called the tower to erect the emergency recovery net. The hook was torn away from the fuselage because of the high speed, but I managed to stop 10 meters before the net. I turned back to shake the hand of my instructor, who had urged me to eject, and then I saw it for the first time -  
no wing!"

This is definitely a testament to modern combat aircraft design. I figure the fuselage acting as an airfoil, a high thrust to weight ratio and two engines (differential thrust) helped in this impressive feat.

