

# *Head-On Avoidance*

*by sick*

The head-on shot is absolutely positively the worst attack you can ever make. You trade a chance for a snapshot for an equal chance that your opponent will gun *your* brains out instead. That's not good odds. And if your opponent happens to be a decent shot, there's a damn good chance he'll put a smoking hole where your cockpit used to be.

On the other hand, we all know that there are situations when a head-on arises. Maybe you are diving on a maneuverable target, and he manages to pull his nose into you as you come into firing range. The key is to know what to do about it... and what *not* to do.

The main thing *not* to do is to take the shot. It isn't worth it, especially in a P-51. It's a low percentage shot, you don't have a good single pass kill probability, and you have a fragile engine that leaks like a sieve any chance it gets. Once you've made a firm decision not to try to get your guns on the target, what then?

The best technique is to roll 45 degrees (an eighth roll) to one side or the other, and pull back. Not too hard though, you don't need a break turn, you just need firm but gentle pressure on the stick. No need to set the stall horn blazing, but get at least 20 degrees of deflection between your nose and the bandit. Ideally, the bad guy will try to force his shot on you, which will cause him to lose a lot of energy trying to bring his nose around. This lets you turn your oblique pull off into an energy conserving high yo-yo, pitchback, or even a hammerhead. You will come back around on the target with both angles and an energy advantage if you do it right - much preferable to a head-on shot.

On the other hand, we all know that there are times when you are over committed to the attack, and you just plain blow it. ACM has gone out the window for whatever reason, and you end up forcing a head on shot, and now you're just desperate not to slam into the guys windshield. Forget tactics, you just don't want to make an airframe sandwich with the guy! At this point, a little counterintuitive thinking is needed. Rather than trying to pull up and away from the target (which will turn you into oatmeal almost every time), push hard forward on the stick until you red out. Really jam it forward, so that you pitch down rather suddenly. Then, as soon as you red out, pull back on the stick, either until you come out of red out, or directly into a full black out vertical maneuver. This negative G pushover will put you under the bandit's flight path, and will avoid the collision 95% of the time. Of course, you will lose energy, angles, and sight of the target, so that when you can finally see straight you will have to reevaluate the fight, but this is preferable to impaling yourself on his spinner.