

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

The National Safety Officer's Briefing

Col Albert Scott Crossfield and James Steven Fossett. They are our "Everyday Heroes Performing Missions For America." These men, each with many thousands of hours of flight experience, all have one thing in common. They are both human and as such are held to the same human frailties and standards as each of us.

We look at these men and others we may choose to use as mentors, father figures or even heroes when we make the choice to pattern certain aspects of our lives after them. What attributes do these people show that seemingly put their goals and achievements far above the norm and make us fantasize ourselves in their position?

Let us take a look at each of these men. Scott Crossfield was a fighter pilot during WWII, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in aeronautical engineering. In 1950 he joined the NACA, now NASA, was the first man to fly at twice the speed of sound, and flew the X-15 on 14 of its 199 total flights. Crossfield also worked with North American as systems director of test and quality assurance in the company's Space and Information Systems Division where he oversaw quality, reliability engineering and systems test. He was also Eastern Air Lines' vice president for research and development and later senior vice president for Hawker Siddeley. Crossfield had hoped to eventually pilot one of the craft into space, however, the USAF would not allow it, and

gave strict orders which basically amounted to "stay in the sky, stay out of space." Scott Crossfield died in the crash of his personal Cessna 210 on 19 April 2006.

James Steven Fossett set 116 records in five different sports, 60 of which still stand. On 3 September 2007, Steve Fossett disappeared in a single-engine Bellanca Super Decathlon. The search operation for Fossett was called off on 2 October 2007.

These two men are related through their love of flying. They each have many years and thousands of hours of flight experience. Why, then, did they each suffer a mishap doing the thing they enjoyed most, flying? I am sure that neither of them planned their mishap; therefore; we must look for other reasons that have previously caused others to suffer mishaps and will probably cause many more unless we can isolate that cause.

Some of the major reasons for aircraft mishaps are overconfidence in one's capabilities, lack of situational awareness and the lack of regularly honing the skills obtained while earning pilot qualifications. It has been stated that pilots will never be as sharp as the day they prepared for a flight check. From that point on there is a constant degradation of those finely honed skills used for that flight check.

Is it overconfidence in stressing realism by flying up a canyon to demonstrate your, and the aircraft's, ability to skillfully make



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that 180° turn? Is it overconfidence in breaking minimum altitudes on an approach because “I know that I can make a safe landing? Minimums are for those that do not have my skill level.” Attitude has everything to do with your safety and longevity.

When was the last time you heard “watch this” or “we don’t need to perform a preflight or engine run up, we will be able to reach the people in distress sooner.” This places you and your crew in the position of being another victim instead of the rescue team.

Does every flight include a short field, soft field or crosswind takeoff or landing technique? When was the last time that you took a safety pilot along so you could practice your IFR techniques, stalls, steep turns or ground reference maneuvers?

Few of us have the flight experience of these two men. And looking at that fact

we have to look inside ourselves; if it can happen to these men with their far superior experience, how can we expect to remain safe as we fly? Here are a few suggestions that you might use:

- Leave your egos at home – they have no place around aircraft.
- Maintain situational awareness – never go anywhere that your brain has not gone five minutes before.
- Maintain your proficiency – it is easy to stay current, but are you proficient?
- Always use the risk management process – this must be the first step of any flight and could save your life.
- There is no substitute for safety. As the adage goes, “There are old pilots and there are bold pilots; but there are no old, bold, pilots.”

Lyle E. Letteer, Col, CAP
National Safety Officer

Editor’s Comments

As we begin a new year, I will be focusing upcoming issues of the *Sentinel* on how we can better serve our membership through the art, discipline and science of being safe. 2007 was a terrible year in safety, with our membership experiencing mishaps from hangar rash to fatal aircraft accidents. The CAP safety team is already working very hard on ways to improve our focus on safety, on how we get the messages to you and on whether we are utilizing the right individuals from the local unit level on up to be safety officers.

Col Lyle Letteer has been asked by our National Commander to step back in and lead the safety process. He has already tasked the region safety officers to bring new and fresh ideas to the safety team. I will continue to request you, the membership, to contribute safety articles, ideas and any other suggestions that might benefit the membership. I thank those of you who have contributed through the year

and I know we have some very talented members on the CAP safety team.

So watch for some very interesting and sincerely honest articles concerning safety and the cultural approach we will use to manage safety challenges. These will include a study I am currently conducting with the aviation insurance industry on “glass” cockpit safety, Ego’s and Attitudes, and the assertive conscience.

There will be articles on safety reporting, trend monitoring, communication, CAP’s flight release officer responsibility, proactive safety leadership, ego busting, crew resource management (CRM), situational awareness, and the safety management system process. There will be articles from aviation safety to cadet safety as well as everyday safety concerns. This is your safety newsletter. Be part of it!

Larry Mattiello, Lt Col, CAP
Editor-Sentinel
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Tips for Safe Winter Heating

Install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms ensuring they have batteries with a proper charge. CO is known as the “silent killer” since it is invisible, colorless, and smoke alarms do not detect it. Changing batteries on a regular schedule can be a life saving effort.

CO exposure may begin with flu-like symptoms such as shortness of breath, headache, dizziness, or simply feeling overwhelmed by fatigue. Feeling better when you go outside, then feeling worse again when you come indoors, may be a symptom of CO poisoning. Seek immediate medical attention and make the necessary repairs.

CAP members should have their central home heating systems, fireplaces, wood burning stoves, kerosene, electric or gas space heaters inspected by professionals for tune-ups, cleaning, and repairs. Never use the oven or range for a back-up heating system nor should you use charcoal or gas grills indoors. Electric generators should always be installed outdoors.

Make certain any heating equipment you use has been appropriately installed and is legal to use in your home area. Use equipment that has been tested and approved by independent laboratories, such as UL, CSA or ETL.

Space heaters should be at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn and it is important to keep small children and pets away from heat sources to prevent them from being burned. Children should never be allowed to move heaters or change their settings.

Purchase a portable heater that comes with a protective guard in front of the heating elements or flames, and makes sure it turns off automatically if accidentally tipped over. It is good to have an indicator light on a portable heater to display when it is plugged in or turned on.

Do not dry blankets, clothing or shoes on space heaters.

Inspect power cords for damage such as cracks, fraying, or plugs with cracked or loose connections.

Do not place power cords under carpets or rugs or in places that may present a tripping hazard.

Heaters should always be on a floor, not a tabletop or other furniture. Most heaters are not certified for moist places, so read the manufacturer’s specifications carefully.

Gasoline can never be used in kerosene heaters. It is only safe to use 1-K kerosene in kerosene heaters. You may contact the National Fuel Funds Network at (202) 824-0660 to obtain further information. Beware of possible previous use of a gasoline container. Always fill kerosene heaters outside when they are shut off and cooled down.

Never try to put out a kerosene fire with water or blankets; call 911.

Make sure all fuel-burning equipment is properly vented to the outside in a clear, unobstructed manner, with special attention to fallen leaves or snow/ice blocking the venting area.

Portable gas space heaters should be equipped with an oxygen depletion sensor (ODS) that detects dangerous reduced levels of oxygen in the usage area. Light a match before turning on the gas for a pilot to avoid explosions. Do not touch electrical switches if you suspect a gas leak to avoid producing a spark and explosion.

Make sure fireplace or wood stove flues are open before lighting. Chimney sweeps remove dangerous creosote build-up and inspect or repair defects in such heating devices.

Always use a sturdy fire screen and dispose of ashes, when cooled, in a metal container.

Trim low hanging tree limbs near a chimney and only use well seasoned fire wood to avoid the oil or toxic substances that come from soft woods and paper products.

Keep an operative ABC type fire extinguisher in your home and familiarize yourself with its use.

CAP members need to conduct a yearly home safety inspection, that would include

a clean-up by removing unnecessary trash or paper, and disposing of old fuel chemicals (like solvents, paints, etc.).

Cathy Carter, 1Lt, CAP

Summary of CAPFs 78 Received at NHQ CAP for November 2007

Aircraft

Turkey vulture swooped down and hit aircraft.

Rough engine shortly after takeoff.

C-182 crashed. Two fatalities.

Aircraft in hangar not chocked and rolled forward. Adjacent hangar door opened and hit aircraft.

During preflight, prop-wash from another CAP aircraft blew the door closed smashing SM's left index finger.

Vehicle

Van parked in repair shop. Rear window

apparently shattered from noise caused by a passing F-16.

Bodily Injury

Cadet had difficulty breathing during mile run and later reported numbness on her extremities.

SM descending stairs fell striking left forearm.

SM stung on right forearm by small scorpion.

Captain tripped over tree root striking head against corner of building.