

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

Graying Pilots

As one myself, I feel qualified to speak on this topic. It's not news to anyone that people are now living longer than ever before. "Baby Boomers" are becoming the largest group of elders in the history of our planet. Since Civil Air Patrol reflects a cross section of our society, we can expect our fair share of aging pilots.

There is both good news and bad news when discussing older pilots. The good news is that they are usually very experienced and must be doing something right or they would not have survived! The bad news is the natural tendency for everything in our universe to decay -- it's called entropy. We are all decaying as we grow older. Our reflexes slow, our eyes and ears don't seem to work as well as they once did. It happens so gradually that some don't even notice. Others notice, but our love of flying makes us deny any deficiency that could threaten our flight status.

This presents a possible threat to our members and our resources. So what do we do? We can't discriminate against age, but we can discriminate

against deficiencies that jeopardize our organization. Introspective individuals are usually able to determine when certain missions exceed their personal limitations. Others allow pride to interfere with this evaluation.

How do you identify a member of the latter group? Be observant. It becomes apparent when someone can't hear correctly or read their charts at night. Do you ground them? Don't rush to judgment; first, understand their issues. They might simply have a cold that's causing hearing problems. Maybe the individual should not fly mountain searches, but could handle a simple transport mission. There are a lot of variables. However, sometimes a hard call has to be made that not only protects our organization, but the individual as well.

Command authority brings with it command responsibility. Don't let an accident occur that you could have prevented -- it will haunt you forever.

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The Glass Cockpit Experience

Technology is wonderful. However, learning to correctly use technological advancements is becoming ever more important. It is critical to know what the new products are capable of doing and how they can be effective in the tasks we need accomplished. For example, the airplane was a technical advancement, but it didn't become a dependable tool that it is without years of trials and tribulations.

The same can be said for the new generation of technically advanced aircraft installed with what is commonly called the "Glass Cockpit".

The "Glass Cockpit" and how we learn and use the capabilities afforded by its technology will affect how safe we are as pilots. This article will focus on the new "glass" aircraft entering the CAP fleet and how we can understand the safe training and operation methods.

According to studies by the AOPA Safety Foundation, the additional learning curve for new avionics adds to the initial training, but the advantages of these efforts are many. With this new technology, the pilot moves from the traditional or stick-and-rudder skills, to a more mental approach. Pilots who successfully acquire this understanding will enjoy the aircraft while gaining situational awareness. Those who do not will find challenges, complexity and a potential for unsafe situations. It is very important to note that while training and gaining experience in these new aircraft we should be careful not to lose our stick-and-rudder skills. This is a challenge for new pilots who are being trained today in aircraft with the new technology and thus did not learn the older stick-and-rudder methods that were once considered fundamental to flying. So what is the real secret to learning this new technology and its safe use, while maximizing its full

potential? When airline or corporate pilots go through this process, they learn that good initial training in the equipment, followed by consistent recurrent training, is critical to effectively learn the technology. As you train on this equipment, you will learn process more information. Only practice and time will help you to become more effective and safe when using the new glass cockpit.

After receiving the initial training in CAP glass cockpit aircraft, you should continue your training with an experienced instructor until you feel comfortable with at least the basics. There are a few companies that provide computer-based continuation training on CD-ROMs that also answer questions that will come up as you use the equipment. The U.S. government has adopted CD-ROM training programs and the U.S. Navy has committed to the same type programs for its fleet of Garmin 530 units installed in their E-2's.

What it comes down to is that initial training and an annual form 5 will not make you proficient in the use of this equipment. Continued training and other learning devices should be utilized. The AOPA Air Safety Foundation found that system and basic avionics training should be done online. Their study showed most pilots do not find the print medium particularly helpful for the advanced avionics systems. Interactivity is required to effectively learn the systems.

The CAP safety culture is to develop a more professional safety management process. One way to achieve that is by the professional approach to safer flying in our new generation of aircraft. For more information on this important safety topic, go to the AOPA website at www.aopa.org/asf/publications/topics

Lt Col Larry Mattiello, CAP
Assistant National Safety Officer

Operation CAPSAFE

Operation CAPSafe is the Safety Department's tool for receiving safety input from the CAP membership nation-wide. Congratulations to the following CAP members for their March 2008 suggestions:

Best Air Safety Suggestion

Personal judgment. As a professional, full-time pilot and a CAP check pilot and flight instructor, I often have to make tough decisions regarding a flight. To help make the correct choice, I ask myself "how would I explain this course of action to an accident investigation board?" If you don't like your answer then don't do it. If it doesn't sound like you can justify your actions to a board of inquiry, then you probably shouldn't be doing it. If, on the other hand, you're within rules and would be happy to discuss your decision to the NTSB or whomever, then you're probably ok. Just imagine yourself sitting in the center of a large empty room on a cold hard wooden chair alone in front of a table of inquisitors second-guessing your decision. Can you describe to them that you made the best choice at the time. Or if you could turn the clock back would you do something differently. If you wish you could turn the clock back, you probably shouldn't be doing it.

Capt Robert Willard, PCR-NV-064

Best Ground Safety Suggestion

Personal limitations. We are always focusing on what our qualifications are and if we are up to date with training. And this is a very necessary activity. One area I think we fail to recognize is to be aware of our personal limitations.

Not looking at our limitations as a weakness or failure but be aware of any areas in which we may cause an unsafe situation for others. It may be a temporary limitation due to illness or fatigue, but we may have permanent limitations in certain areas.

Owning our personal limitations, knowing what our limitations are and not being afraid to say NO I CAN'T DO THAT. This could be seen as a great strength and if one person says "Hey, I can't do that" or "Maybe you should get someone else" others may not be afraid or embarrassed to admit a limitation. Personally, I am mildly autistic. (VERY MILD) But after a full day of being around people during a SAREX or RED CAP, I need to retreat to my room by myself to settle after a full day of stimulation. I'm not afraid to say "No, I don't think I'll go out to dinner tonight, I just need to be alone and rest." I want to be fresh and ready for the next day.

1Lt Amanda Ellison, SWR-OK-024

Visit www.cap.gov/safety for further details on Operation CAPSafe.

Summary of Form 78 Accidents and Incidents Received for February 2008

Aircraft

At about 200 ft AGL a bird went through the prop.

Strong electrical odor. Precautionary landing.

Engine began cycling between running slightly rough with un-commanded small reduction in power.

Precautionary landing

Loss of manifold pressure. The engine continued to run at reduced power.

Landed without incident.

Vehicle

Left turn to park into an empty space. and hit the extreme outer edge of the

right bumper of the vehicle in the next space.

Attempted a reverse "y" turn to exit gate area onto city street. Front left quarter panel contacted concrete pillar and broke a plastic piece of front grill assembly.

Bodily Injury

Slipped on ice patch breaking ankle in two places.

After the mile run cadet became incoherent, and was unable to walk.

Severe dehydration and muscle fiber breakdown.