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Skyraider Sentinel

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Skyraider Aviation Welcomes New Club Members!

- Bill Boerder
- David Fetter
- Torrey Jaspers
- Michael Minneman

This Month in Aviation History



May 21, 1927 – On this date, Charles Lindbergh completed his historic non-stop flight across the Atlantic. The flight had captured the imagination of the American public like few events in history. Citizens waited nervously by their radios, listening for news of the flight. When Lindbergh was seen crossing the Irish coast, the world cheered and eagerly anticipated his arrival in Paris. A frenzied crowd of more than 100,000 people gathered at Le Bourget Field to greet him. When he landed, less than 34 hours after his departure from New York, Lindbergh became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

“You can always tell when a man has lost his soul to flying. The poor bastard is hopelessly committed to stopping whatever he is doing long enough to look up and make sure the aircraft purring overhead continues on course and does not suddenly fall out of the sky. It is also his bound duty to watch every aircraft within view take off and land.”

— Ernest K Gann, 'Fate is the Hunter', 1961

THERE'S SOMETHING UP HERE! ...and other emergencies

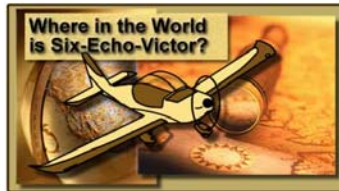
By Dennis Moss

In the summer of 2005 I had the pleasure of teaching a 13-year-old girl to fly gliders. The young lady in question, Amelia by name, and yes, that is her real name, is the daughter of a well-known soaring pilot, and has helped her dad at numerous soaring contests as a bona-fide crewmember. She's quite pretty, and wise beyond her years. A straight "A" International Baccalaureate student, she is extremely poised and has no trouble carrying on meaningful conversations with any group of adults. I like to say she was 13 going on 31. With a pedigree like that, it's no surprise that she took to soaring like the proverbial duck to water.

(See EMERGENCY Page 2)



Where in the World is Six-Echo-Victor?



Skyraider Aviation is pleased to announce the kickoff of a new summer contest, entitled "Where in the

World is 6EV?" This friendly competition will pit club member against club member in a battle to see who can visit the most airports in a two-month period. Beginning June 1st and ending July 31st, students and pilots will

earn points for every new airport they visit. At the end of the contest, fabulous prizes will be awarded in a number of categories. See the full details at the web site listed below.

www.skyraideraviation.com/where-in-the-world.html

“Dennis! There’s something up here!”

(EMERGENCY From Page 1)

One July afternoon we were up in the Solitair, the soaring club’s 2-33 look alike, enjoying a fine afternoon of thermals. Amelia was up to her usual fine standards, and we were circling in 3-knot lift at 8000 feet in preparation for her to practice stalls and steep turns. I was in the back (instructor’s) seat, relaxed and looking for traffic when Amelia suddenly said “Dennis! There’s something up heere!” in a tone that’s usually reserved for people who find severed horse heads in their bed. That got my attention!

To me, “up here” meant “in the sky” – i.e.: we had a traffic conflict! I sat bolt upright, said, “I have it”, took the controls and started looking everywhere to find the traffic. This process took about ½ second. I was just about to ask Amelia where the traffic was when she let out a short, sharp, scream, raised her hands in front of her face, turned her head to the right with her eyes scrunched closed looking like she was prepared for impact. At that point, a small (1/2 inch long) grasshopper flew over her left shoulder and landed on my chest.

My first thought was one of relief. My second thought was “I wasted a half pound of adrenaline on this?” Amelia was busy screaming, “Get rid of it! Kill it! Kill it! Get rid of it!” so I opened the window and gave the wee beast his first sky diving lesson.

So, why do I bring this up? Well, not to embarrass Amelia, that’s for sure. She soloed three months later, only three days after her 14th birthday. She would have soloed on her birthday, but the weather was bad & schedules didn’t mesh. I only wish I had started as early as she did, and that I had been as good as she is when I started. No, the reason I bring this up is to ask the question – what is an emergency?

Instructors (myself included) have a

tendency to teach emergencies as sort of a set piece Kabuki theatre. For this emergency you do this. For that emergency you do that. It’s not by accident (no pun intended) that we do this. People have died finding this stuff out. The pilots that have lived through an emergency, such as engine failure, passed the information - and the procedures that they used - on to the next generation of pilots, so they wouldn’t have to discover them on their own. So, when the engine quits, we pretty much know what to do. Same thing with lost, fire in flight, flight into instrument conditions, etc. I can tell you from experience that the procedures for engine failure work. I’ve had five of them (six if you count the ultra-light) and I’m here to talk about it.

So, what is an emergency? I would say “anything that endangers the outcome of the flight”. For a 13-year-old girl, this could mean a grasshopper in the cockpit. If the aircraft is low enough, like during landing, and the distraction large enough, the pilot can forget about his/her main obligation – fly the aircraft – and end up in a very dangerous situation while attempting to deal with a problem that is normally less than lethal. Not a wise idea. Also, lest you think I’m picking on teenage girls, I once saw a Cessna 182 abort a takeoff at 50 feet above the runway. The pilot pulled the power, dove toward the runway and forced the plane on at about 100 mph, he then ran off the end of the runway and came to a stop in a cloud of dust with the brakes locked. The 40 some year old pilot then baled out of the door with the engine still running.... because there was a bee in the cockpit. In his defense, he said he was allergic.

So what do we do when the unexpected, unusual, totally weird emergency comes our way? Well, once again thanks to those that have gone before, I know the answer:

AVIATE

FLY THE AIRCRAFT. If the plane is flyable, fly the plane. If all you can do is keep the wings level and the nose up, then do that. Keeping the airplane under some semblance of control is sometimes *all* that matters. I remember reading about a Spitfire pilot in the battle of Britain that survived a miraculous crash landing after being shot up in a dogfight. He was on fire, the engine shot up, and most of his controls shot away. Yet he managed to set down in a potato field and was rescued by local farmers after his aircraft slid to a stop. When asked how he did it he said "I just tried to keep the wings level and keep the nose from dropping through. I knew that if I could just do that I would only *probably* die in the crash, but if I couldn't, I would *certainly* die." While most of us won't get shot down in a dogfight, the lesson here is very simple - **never give up.**

NAVIGATE

FIND SOMEPLACE TO LAND. You're up there. You want to be down here. Where's the nearest REASONABLE piece of real estate big enough to land on? Now is the time to prioritize. How bad is the emergency? If you're low on fuel, and suspect you have a fuel leak, an airport 10 miles away could be reasonable. Just keep track of what fields and roads lie between here and the airport that are available for landing just in case you guessed wrong. Use common sense – stay high until you can glide to the airport etc.

On the other hand, if you're on fire, the field right below you is probably close enough. Time is of the essence and getting down and away from the flames is now your first priority.

COMMUNICATE

TELL SOMEONE YOUR PROBLEM, IF THERE'S TIME. This is the last on the list for a reason. Bernoulli makes

airplanes fly, not Marconi. People on the ground can seldom rescue you. That's your job. But they can help....sometimes. If you're lost, they can help locate you. If you have system problems, they might be able to find someone who can give advice. If you have to land right away they can send help to the landing site.

121.5 MHz is the international VHF distress or 'guard' frequency, but if you're on a frequency that's well utilized and you know that other people are listening in, you may want to let them know about your problem before you go to VHF Guard. Then if the fecal material and the air circulation unit collide before you can contact someone on 121.5 mhz at least you know that someone has been informed of your problem.

Here's a little exercise that can help in times of trouble; during those spare moments when you have nothing to do, play "what if?" Using the formula of Aviate, Navigate, Communicate, give yourself some emergency scenarios like engine failure, smoke in the cockpit, lost etc. and think about how you would respond to these emergencies. Be inventive – emergencies are seldom what you think they will be. Practicing in your mind will help a lot if the real deal ever comes along. Try not to be Walter Mitty, but imagine yourself staying calm while dealing with the crisis. You may want to imagine that you'll morph into Tom Cruise when the chips are down, but the truth is that real emergencies are scary, adrenaline producing events and Kenny Loggins music is never in the background when they happen. I believe that mentally practicing staying calm helps considerably when the real deal comes along.

Finally, read. Lots. One of the best books about dealing with emergencies isn't a textbook at all, but it is one of the most enjoyable aviation books I've

*AVIATE
Fly the Aircraft*

*NAVIGATE
Find Someplace to
Land*

*COMMUNICATE
Tell someone your
problem, if there's time.*

ever read. Find a copy of "*Fate is the Hunter*" by Earnest K. Gann. I think it should be required reading for anyone who flies.

As a gift, and to sew the seeds of emergency planning, I'll leave you with a list of some emergencies that I know have happened in real life. Some have happened to me, some to friends of mine. I know they are all survivable, 'cause no lives were lost in the process. How would you handle them? Have fun!

Bird strike. Took out the windshield and injured the passenger.

Smoke in the cockpit. Heavy electrical smoke right after takeoff.

Partial loss of power. Sucked an exhaust valve in a 4-cylinder engine at altitude.

Bad Vibes. Airplane suddenly started shaking – very badly.

Critters in the cockpit. Snakes on a plane! Also bees, wasps, & a mouse.

Weird noises. Sudden very loud banging on outside of airplane.

Frozen Controls. Literally. Snow blew into wing and melted while airplane was on the ground. Froze again at altitude & froze the control cables for ailerons.

Partial loss of controls. Right rudder cable went dead after takeoff. In a tail-dragger no less.

Oh yeah....how did I get Amelia trained for emergencies so that I was comfortable with her soloing? Simple, I loaned her my copy of *Fate is the Hunter* and then repeatedly stressed the need to fly the glider at all times, no matter what's happening. Then one bright and shiny August afternoon when we were at 200 feet on tow after takeoff, and I could see that she was working hard to stay in position in the turbulence, I stuck my finger in my mouth, leaned forward and gave her a "Wet Willie". The shocked scream that resulted from this little action made the glider cockpit about three times louder than any power plane I've ever flown, and the look I got when we landed is probably responsible for a few of my gray hairs, but her hands never left the controls, and the glider stayed glued behind the tow plane. Makes me proud.