

There are lessons for us to learn.

Safety

First

- Continue recurrent training
- Exercise good judgment
- Maintain personal health
- Maintain proficiency



by Felix Tormes, MD

Decisive Factor for Well Maintained Aircraft "Cost is Not an Option"

We all have entered aviation through different gates. Some were lucky to have been introduced to the world of flight by family, friends or teachers/mentors, others by reading. I know some pilots who literally started small, building and flying model airplanes. Many of us were initiated through the military. My first acquaintance with an airplane had me sitting in the cockpit of a military trainer, but my dreams took wings many years previously while earthbound and landlocked in Manhattan reading the like of James Mitchner's *The Bridges of Toko-ri*, Lindbergh's *We* and Ernie Gann's *Fate is the Hunter*. Whichever course led us to becoming pilots, our perception of the benefits and relative risk involved in flying was, to a great extent, shaped by our earliest flight experiences and instructors. Naval aviation is imbued with its own culture and tradition, and those of us lucky enough to share in the enterprise have had our moments of sheer exhilaration, but early on, we realized there is a *bete noire* that lurks in the corners; airplanes, if mistreated, can bite, and bite you hard. In my first squadron, we had serious accidents and lost pilots. The subsequent civil flight training that I took after my earlier navy introduction stressed the usefulness and safety of flight, and although we saw some bent aluminum, there were no major accidents at our county airport for many years. Still, my previous



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experience in the navy dominated my approach to flying, and left me with a healthy respect for anything with wings, and with a high value on recurrent training and maintenance. As I write this, my Mooney is hard down with a sick motor and it appears that the best option will be rather expensive. All of us come to this junction several times in our flying career, when one is forced to assess whether or not to continue flying, given the ever increasing economic strain of aircraft ownership. My base philosophy has been thus: keep the airplane well maintained, regardless of cost, ... or sell it. And, if you go with a single engine airplane, no compromise on the motor. In my book, a well-maintained single is more reliable than a twin with corners cut.

Nil illigitimae corborundum



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