



†he Christian Aviator

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For unto us a Child
is born, a Son is
given; and the
government will be
on His shoulder. And
His name will be
called Wonderful,
Counselor, Mighty
God, Everlasting
Father, and Prince
of Peace

Isaiah 9: 6 [NKJV]

WISHING YOU
A BLESSED
CHRISTMAS!

How not to become a statistic this summer

Avoiding Fatal Flying Traps

AS pilots flock to the coast and other holiday destinations recurring fatal flying traps should be avoided at all costs. Awareness is half the battle won whilst a safety conscious attitude can ensure that this Christmas season is not turned into yet another parody of tragedy and error as in previous years.

Some pilots change from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde when taking friends or family members aboard. In our eagerness to treat we might trick them out of their lives.

Alarming few pilots can resist exposing all aboard to a display of their extreme flying skills or the thrill of skimming the earth mere meters above the surface. Legislation and heavy penalties seem to be no deterrent. Statistics keep showing far too many still fail to spot the thin supporting wires between power line pylons, especially those spanning rivers.

Many have no regard for the potential effects of a bird going through plexiglass like a hot knife through butter. Not too long ago a pilot in Botswana was blinded for life when not even a big specimen went through the windscreen on landing. Such peril could not be avoided, but shows just how serious bird strikes can be, even in a low energy flight phase. [Cont. p. 2]



Avoiding Fatal Flying Traps – From p. 1

'Press-on-itis'

Except for the excitement of 'getting there' at last a pilot-owner might be the last one to add finishing touches to a business or practice. Everyone has been kept waiting for a year. Pre-paid holiday occupation dates and arrangements with loved ones add to the urge to get through or around bad weather at all costs. Despite all we've been taught and our best intentions not to fly without checking weather first, we can easily end up in a situation which overwhelms. Under self-induced pressure and with phone lines blocked its natural to base a decision on a phone call to ordinary people at the destination instead of an 'actual report'. Invariably, we all tend to get held up and the weather trend comes as an unwelcome surprise. The urge is often to press on regardless. Especially in Single-pilot Instrument Conditions the added workload of filing an instrument flight plan in flight is too difficult to even contemplate. The easier option seems to 'skim' the initial frontal weather and try out a 'combination of IFR and VFR' flying.

Icing

In extremely hot conditions it could be hard to imagine that super-cooled droplets could be encountered in flight to cause instant icing of the airframe, windscreen and ailerons. In light aircraft turbulence can be so severe that the autopilot cannot cope with the load. The circuit breakers could keep tripping. Under such conditions even a trained pilot could succumb to disorientation, especially if fatigued after a long day's work at the end of a demanding year. Even IFR rated pilots might feel compelled to get down prematurely, looking for a gap in the clouds and then negotiating their way in the shadowy world underneath, wedged between rising terrain and lowering cloud bases.

Accident patterns show many pilots have had an 'instinctive urge' when above clouds in a light plane to commence descent prematurely. Remember, the onus of maintaining adequate clearance with terrain even on a flight plan and under IFR is still that of the pilot. The only exception is when three conditions are met, i.e. that the flight is under IFR, radar identified and under radar control. Very few pilots bother to check the descent gradient against adequate terrain clearance. An Air Traffic Controller (ATC) may issue a clearance, which might seem like an instruction, to descend to a lower level or altitude. Unless the three pre-conditions mentioned above are prevalent, maintaining a proper descent gradient remains the responsibility of the pilot. Conversely, if climbing over high terrain and unless the three pre-conditions prevail the onus is on the pilot to ensure a proper climb gradient as well as adequate terrain clearance is maintained. All over the world and South Africa is no exception ATCs with heavy accents tend to regard clearances as instructions to be enforced at all costs.

Pilots under pressure might not wish to argue or belabor the point, but it does not detract from the fact that the onus of terrain clearance ultimately rests on their shoulders.

Density Altitude

High Density Altitudes (DA) effectively decreases aircraft's ability to perform, causes effective overloading, approach speeds (TAS) to be higher and runways to be effectively shorter. Fuel lines might have vapor locks and fuel pumps 'cavitate'. An engine could be inadvertently flooded. Prudent attention to mixture settings in relation to DA and watching out for the tendency to back-fire when starting over grass which could be tinder dry, could avoid a fire. **Be careful!**

Beware of that Vortex Ring!

YOU can bet your bottom dollar prayers of thanks must have gone up after an EC-130 B4 Eurocopter had crashed in a maize field on Jan. 2, 2016. The 65-year-old private pilot and two passengers came away shaken, but with relatively minor injuries considering what could have happened. According to SACAA report 9511 the pilot had experienced a sense of a severe downdraft. The cyclic and collective had felt very unresponsive. He managed to execute an emergency autorotation and stabilize the speed between 60 and 70 knots. But, a severe 'dust bowl' formed restricting his vision, causing the tail boom to hit first. Nothing abnormal could be detected by the investigation. It was concluded the combination of a steep approach and an unknowingly conducted downwind approach at slow speed with power applied had probably caused the helicopter to descend into its own downwash. With 858 hours and 747 on type the pilot was no rookie. If it could happen to him it could happen to anyone. Do take into account all conditions all the time!



Image: Courtesy SACAA – rep. 9511

HOPE AFTER TRAGIC MISSION FLIGHT



Main photo : The six-seat Cessna 206 medical rescue plane, here with Don Amborski and Gordon Hannah, have flown no fewer than 800 hours the past four years, since donated by the Billy Graham Foundation. Photos – Courtesy: Chitokoloki Mission Hospital Administrator, Gordon Hannah.

A married couple working as volunteers at the Chitokoloki Mission Hospital in the Northwest Province of Zambia tragically lost their lives on June 2, 2012. Dr Jay Erikson and his wife Katrina had just returned from a shopping trip when the six-seat single-engine Cessna 206 medical supply and rescue plane he was piloting collided with power lines over the Zambezi River. The staff and family had their hearts torn out. Everyone’s main concerns were for the wellbeing of the couple’s surviving baby daughters who had not accompanied them.

Photo below: Mere days before the fateful flight. The late Dr. Jay Erikson and his wife Katrina, here with the bay daughters

Please visit www.chitokoloki.com

Four years later Gordon Hannah, administrator of the hospital is able to report the couple’s two baby girls taken back to the US “...were added to the family of Jay’s sister and are doing well in Spokane, Washington. She and her husband already had three of their own. The girls have settled in very well and only the oldest has maybe some faint recollections of her time in Zambia. They are both doing very well and the last time we were in the US I was able to visit them.

“Our new Cessna 206, donated by the Billy Graham Foundation has also been going really well and we have clocked about 800 hours since acquiring it from SIM in Kenya. We are very pleased to have a pilot by the name of Chris Brundage who is out full time as a pilot missionary and the plane is quite busy with several weekly flights bringing supplies and personnel in and out to the hospital. We are now able to continue with the medical flights as well taking doctors to hospitals and clinics where there are no doctors or need of specialty cases”. [Despite the tragedy and sacrifice of many over more than a century lives are still being saved in the literal and spiritual sense of the word – Ed.]



Left: Bereaved family members had to travel two days from the other side of America to attend the funeral and collect the girls. [The hazard which high tension wires and the invisible suspension lines present to pilots cannot be highlighted enough – Ed]

VALID PILOT'S MEDICAL NO GUARANTEE

A recently released SACAA accident report on the fatal micro-light aircraft crash near Melkbosstrand in the Western Cape on Sat., August 8, 2015 points to pilot incapacitation as the most likely cause of the crash in which two occupants died.

The 66-year old pilot who had lost control of the two-seat plane was suffering from advanced stages of atherosclerosis of the coronary artery. According to report CA18/2/3/9461 the only restriction was corrective lenses and medical certificate was valid till Dec. 31, 2017.

Declined

The pilot was originally declined a licence as he was diagnosed with adult on-set diabetes mellitus type 2. He was referred to a treating doctor and later returned with proof of control. He was then found to be fit. He returned for renewal of his licence on Dec. 19, 2014. His report indicated he had been to hospital after an episode of dizziness.

A brain scan was attached stating no pathology could be found explaining the cause of dizziness. His diabetes was controlled and he was on secondary prevention treatment. The blood results were within range of the pilot's age. He was declared fit on Dec. 19, 2014 until Dec. 31, 2017. However, the results of the neurologist report later called into question the declared medical fitness of the pilot. Individuals with high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes are at higher risk developing the condition.

[The onus rests on pilots to manage their health and fitness – Ed.]

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TT 2500 SMOH 500 | 2000 TBO | Original brown velour seats; King Audio Panel, King KX 170B Nav.Com, Icom 200 Com 2; King KR87 ADF, King KT76 Transponder (C); No Damage History. Part 91 – Private | 115 knots

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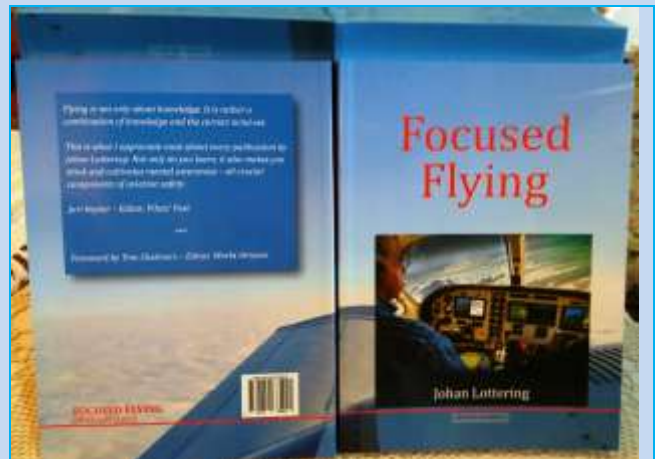
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