



April 2009

Volume 8, Issue 3

NEXT MEETING:

May 9, 9:00am @ Alexandria Airport

In This Issue:

Mike Reilage reminds us that we're all human and we need to check ourselves out as well as our aircraft.

Nyal Williams offers us some thoughts on proper procedures and checklists.

Calendar -

April	18	9:00am	Board Meeting at Alexandria Airport
May	9	9:00am	Membership Meeting at Alexandria Airport
	16-17		Winch Weekend
	23-24		Winch Weekend
	30		Public Fly-In
June	20	9:00am	Board Meeting at Alexandria Airport
July	18	9:00am	Membership Meeting at Alexandria Airport
August	22	9:00am	Board Meeting at Alexandria Airport
September	19	9:00am	Membership Meeting at Alexandria Airport
October	17	9:00am	Board Meeting at Alexandria Airport
November	1		Last Day of Regular Flying Season
	19	7:00pm	Membership Meeting and Elections
December	17	7:00pm	Board Meeting
January 2010	9 or 16		Winter Banquet

Reminder

The Alexandria Airport has changed Unicom frequencies. We have received authorization from the FCC to operate a new Unicom station with frequency of **123.05 mhz.**

SOARING BEGINS:

Mike Rielage

Safety Committee Chair

We have our pre-season safety meeting to update the membership on new procedures and remind ourselves of “good” habits.

I flew flights with Dale Igram and am comfortable returning to the flight instructor pool. The most difficult part was getting the new knee into the rear seat of the Blanik. Do you need a flight review? How about just a warm-up to the season? Need new glasses?

Nyal Williams reminded us that we need to carry an official photo ID in addition to our pilot certificate when we act as pilot-in-command.

Have you set an objective for your soaring season? Accomplish your solo? Complete your private glider certificate? Learn cross country soaring techniques? Accomplish a badge element or two? Add your commercial glider rating? Or you can just have fun – and keep your current skills tuned up.

An important alert for us older folks is in order. During the past year when I was lecturing for Purdue University, we reviewed in class some information regarding the age of pilots involved in general aviation accidents. The information was obtained directly from the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) accident data base.

In 1995, the age group representation in the pilot population was consistently within 2 percentage points of the age group representation in general aviation accidents. Within the 2006 information, the percentage of the pilot population in the age groups below age 39 was more than 5 percentage point less than their involvement in aircraft accidents. The age 40-59 group was within 2%, but their age group representation in accidents was higher. The age group over age 59 was at 17% of the pilot population in 2006, but was involved in 29% of the general aviation aircraft accidents.

Analysis of why can be very complex. The caution should be that, as we get older, it is very possible for us to develop poor habits, or lessen our skills to a point that can be a problem. I had a significant layoff that did lessen my skills. I will be careful to get up to speed before letting students go as far as I did before my layoff before I take over the aircraft.

Where do you stand? Enjoy a safe soaring season.

Five Things
by
Nyal Williams

Some things need constant re-emphasis. Here at the opening of a new season, I'll cover five; they are: Patterns, Check Lists, Situational Awareness, Personal Minimums, and Ceilings.

PATTERNS

The pilot should have completed the landing check list before entering the pattern so that complete attention can be given to traffic and flying the airplane.

According to the Soaring Safety Foundation, landing accidents still account for the most accidents glider pilots have. These divide into two categories, the pattern and the final approach. .

Problems with patterns are caused by focusing on

- Initial Point
- Following rigidly a prescribed pattern path regardless of altitude, wind, or traffic.

The pilot's primary consideration should be to arrive safely at the touchdown point. Both the IP and the pattern itself should be adjusted as necessary to arrive at this place.

Pilots often have the downwind leg too close to the runway, especially with a crosswind coming from the right side, across the runway to the downwind leg. The glider should be far enough away to allow a real base leg. The turn to this leg is a decision point; here we decide whether we are a bit low and should angle in toward the runway a bit, or whether we are a bit high and should angle out from the runway a bit in order not to arrive too high on the final approach.

Traffic scanning is particularly important in the pattern, both to the left and to the right, especially before turning, and turns in the pattern should be ideally at a 45 degree bank angle; this makes a stall/spin accident less likely.

Such a turn requires just 5 seconds; attention should be focused entirely on the yaw string and the airspeed during this short period. This action will further insure against stall/spin accidents. The yaw string can be over to the outside of the turn; it must never, whatever, be over to the inside of the turn. If you see it move there, press on the outside rudder immediately, or steepen your bank while keeping your speed up.

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Turns to final are often started too late. This turn should begin shortly before getting in alignment with the runway. Waiting too late to start the turn will require more than a 90 degree turn to get back in alignment. This so-called “button-hook turn is at the lowest altitude, where wind shear can stall the lower wing and initiate a stall/spin. It is the mark of a good pilot not to overshoot the runway extension line.

Problems with final approaches are caused by

- Being too far away
- Being too low
- Being too slow

It is better to be too close, or too high, or too fast than to be far away, low, and slow. Flying the approach leg with about 2/3 spoilers gives the pilot more ability to overcome wind shear gradient. Plan your approach to be a bit high, in the upper half of the traditional approach cone rather than what you think is in the middle of it. If you are too high you can use more spoilers as necessary, or even speed up to come down faster.

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(If you speed up, keep the spoilers open while you bring the nose back up into normal attitude; this will bleed speed off quickly. Be prepared to reduce spoilers a bit, if necessary, just before the flare.)

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Note that on a gusty day or a day when the head wind drops, your speed will drop off as the wind dies; “the bottom will drop out.” Do not believe that a lessening headwind will help you to get across the boundary – it takes time to accelerate!

In strong wind conditions more speed is required for just this situation. It is possible in strong shear conditions that lost speed at low altitude cannot be recovered. Excess speed can be bled off with spoilers and a slightly nose up position; parasitic drag will help that situation. Keep approaches higher and speeds up on your approaches.

CHECKLISTS

- = We are not an organization primarily of young members. We must use written check lists to protect ourselves and our equipment from harm, as well as our friends and the public. We should use check lists for rigging, check lists for pre-flight and launching, and also for landing.
 - Check lists should be read aloud. Hearing your voice helps to focus on the task and assure that it is completed. That is why your grandfather talked to himself while he was working; it helped him stay focused. It also aids memory because another of your 5 senses is stimulated.
 - You must not only read the checklist, you must touch the object to which it refers. It is easy to read right past an item and not really give it attention, especially with such things as “Undercarriage,” when you sometimes fly a glider without retractable gear. Say aloud and touch every item on your lists.
 - The landing check list should be memorized. It is not useful to try to fumble with a check list when attention should be focused outside as much as possible. Memorize this list and step through it touching every item before you radio to enter the pattern.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

- 6 As we age we begin to focus more narrowly on our task at hand and to give less attention to the bigger picture that surrounds us. As pilots we need to be aware of this tendency and to keep our “attention scan” moving around our environment, both in the air and on the ground watching for all sorts of traffic, live, vehicular, as well as aircraft and weather.

It is extremely difficult to change our unconscious behavior, but we can do it if we constantly remind ourselves to develop this habit of always scanning on the ground as well as in the air. Arrive at the airport with the conscious intention to be alert to your surroundings; it could save untold misery!

PERSONAL MINIMUMS

- 3 Published minimums are legal requirements. They do not necessarily provide the level of safety needed for every pilot who is flying. We should each have our own personal minimums that we will not violate.
 - Visibility limits are 3 miles for VFR; I won't fly under 4 and usually not under 5; I'm not really happy unless it is 7 or better.
 - How low will you thermal before you break it off and land?
 - How close to another glider will you allow yourself in a thermal?
 - How low will you allow yourself to be before picking an area or a particular field to land in?

- Do you need more time than the 8 hours legal requirement between bottle and throttle?
 - How much cross wind will you allow yourself for a launch or landing?
- A Find a quiet moment and work out some wise margins for yourself and commit yourself to keeping these margins as a pilot. They can be re-visited as you gain proficiency, experience, and currency.

CEILINGS

- = A corporate pilot in Muncie is my good friend; he is a person who might well be recruited as a member of this club. This man expressed to me one evening at dinner just how fearful it is for him letting down from the west on a week end and breaking out to find a glider at cloud base. He has done this many times, and he said that his greatest fear was for pilots not from this area and who don't know about the gliders. Most of the IFR traffic into Muncie comes from the west. Remember, glider operations are depicted on sectionals, but they are not depicted on enroute charts or jet route charts. Be most careful about cloud bases, and if you are prone to fudging, please avoid that impulse.

Got an idea for a Wing Tips article? Or a good photo from the field? Don't be shy! Write it up and send it to our Wing Tips editor, Chris Hall at bestbrain@aol.com. Deadline for our May issue is May 13.