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Twin & Turbine (ISSN 1092-6402), USPS 24432 is published monthly by Village Press, Inc. with advertising offices located at 2779 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, Michigan 49686. Telephone (231) 946-3712. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. Copyright 2016, Village Press, Inc. Periodical Postage Paid at Traverse City, MI.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: *Twin & Turbine* is distributed at no charge to all registered owners of cabin-class aircraft. The mailing list is updated monthly. All others may subscribe by writing to: *Twin & Turbine*, P.O. Box 968, Traverse City, MI 49685, or by calling 1-800-447-7367. Rates for the United States and its possessions follow: one year \$15.00; two years \$29.00. Canadian subscriptions are one year \$24.00; two years \$46.00, including GST tax. Overseas subscriptions are one year \$52.00; two years \$99.00, U.S. funds. Single copies \$6.50.

ADVERTISING: Advertising in *Twin & Turbine* does not necessarily imply endorsement. Queries, questions, and requests for media kits should be directed to the Advertising Director, *Twin & Turbine*, P.O. Box 968, Traverse City, Michigan 49685. Telephone 1-800-773-7798. Website: www.twinandturbine.com.

MANUSCRIPTS: *Twin & Turbine* assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or art work. While unsolicited submissions are welcome, it is best to query first and ask for our Writer's Guidelines. All unassigned submissions must be accompanied by return postage. Address queries and requests for Writer's Guidelines to the editor.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes and inquiries to Twin & Turbine, Village Press, Inc., P.O. Box 968, Traverse City, MI 49685.

Contents

NOVEMBER 2023 • VOL. 27, NO. 11

Editor's Briefing

2 NBAA News
by Lance Phillips

4 Stuff Happens
by Kevin Ware

8 Scorpion Bay
by Grant Boyd



4



8

12 Mexico Flying Tips
by Grant Boyd

16 Editor's Pics
by Lance Phillips



20

Owners Corner

20 The Fire Pilot

24 Straight In
by Thomas P. Turner



24

On Final

32 That's Not What Rusty Said
by David Miller

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Photo Courtesy of David Miller

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Editor's Briefing

by Lance Phillips



NBAA News

As we are about to go to press on this November issue, I am fully engaged in the NBAA business aviation convention and exposition in Las Vegas. The convention is one of the best events to network and accomplish business under one roof, and this year's show proved no less.

Rather than clean-sheet aircraft announcements, usually the most exciting, this year, we mainly saw iterative advancements to fielded aircraft designs. Also announced were several milestone achievements showing that successful general aviation products and services can last half a century or more. But the relationships built throughout a career, with colleagues and customers alike, get boosted by meeting in person during NBAA. Those relationships keep this industry moving forward, and the opportunity to see everyone face-to-face is invaluable.

Textron Aviation announced its second-generation CJ3 with updates in the cockpit and the cabin. With Garmin's latest G3000 software, autothrottles, enhanced vision, and advanced connectivity, the CJ3 G2 continues its dominance in the owner-flown and light corporate jet markets. In July, Daher TBM highlighted its 80th delivery of the TBM 960. At NBAA, Daher announced its 500th delivery of the entire 900-series lineup. HondaJet announced the model 2600 in 2021. This year, the 2600 became the Echelon, promising midsize jet performance in a single-pilot light-jet airframe. Pilatus has invested heavily in updating its PC-24 super versatile jet. Beginning with new aircraft deliveries in 2024, Pilatus has extended the payload-range capability to achieve a maximum range with six passengers of 2,000 nautical miles (3,704 kilometers). Pilatus also incorporated an array of new interior amenities, including a large side-facing divan, which converts into a bed.

Two of the more innovative announcements at NBAA came from none other than Cutter Aviation. As I visited Cutter's booth at the show and talked with its owner, Will



Cessna Citation CJ3 G2



HondaJet Echelon



StandardAero recognizes the Pinnacle Air Network



Pratt & Whitney Canada recognizes the Cutter family.

Cutter, he showed me two STC projects planned for 2024. One is a lightweight air conditioning system for Piper's PA-46 aircraft line, including the newest M600, offering better efficiency and cooling. Even more exciting is Cutter's APU project for Pilatus PC-12s and PC-24s. This lightweight onboard APU will solve battery-starting challenges and allow systems operation while on the ground.

Pratt & Whitney Canada recognized Cutter Aviation during a presentation highlighting multiple PT6 achievements. According to Will Cutter, "My granddad met with Mr. Pratt and Mr. Whitney long ago to discuss an efficient and powerful turboprop engine." Today, we celebrate 60 years of this revolutionary powerplant design. During the PT6's 60-year run, it has amassed 1 billion flight hours. Also, Pratt & Whitney Canada and Cutter Aviation celebrate 95 years in business this year.

Thirty years ago, Will Cutter's father co-founded the Pinnacle Air Network, then a robust group of nine Beechcraft dealers. Now, the network includes 17 members across North America specializing in maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO), fixed base operators (FBO), aircraft sales and aircraft charter organizations. StandardAero, Pinnacle's engine MRO partner, recognized the Pinnacle Air Network for achieving 1,500 engine events over the long-time partnership.



Sean Lawson's 310R.

In this month's issue of Twin & Turbine, Kevin Ware tells us how we can avoid when "stuff happens," whether pilot-induced or equipment malfunction. Grant Boyd describes operations in Mexico and takes us to Scorpion Bay, a fantastic location on the Baja Peninsula. I have always loved twin Cessnas, even accomplishing my multi-engine rating in an old, beat-up 310Q model. The Fire Pilot, Sean Lawson, shows how his 310R has brought joy to his life and has made the country much smaller. Thomas Turner's Mastery of Flight column reports on safely incorporating (or not) straight-in approaches. And David Miller shows us how crew coordination can sometimes go awry in On Final.

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Stuff Happens

by Kevin Ware



A tailwheel airplane settles on another GA aircraft after an attempted crosswind landing.

As pilots, we like to think that the 'stuff' will never happen to us, yet it happens to our fellow aviators more often than we like to think.

Some years ago, the board that governs our local port district elected me as a commissioner. Among other things, the Port operates our busy, non-towered local regional airport. In that role, every time there has been an airplane accident at the airport, I get called to the scene, and as a result, I have been surprised by the amount of 'stuff' (often unreported) that I have seen happen.

Over time, I have found the mishaps are most often (but not always) due to lousy pilot decisions. And, it is usually not just one poor decision but a series of them in a row that results in the accident. In hindsight, the outcome is almost predictable. But it is not just 'low-time' private pilots that are afflicted; it can and does happen to any of us regardless of flight time or ratings. Below are a series

of accidents I have been called to over the past couple of years, wherein it will probably be evident to you when the unfortunate pilot decision-making started, and also one where (sometimes to the relief of the pilot) issues related to the airplane itself caused the problem.

In the first example, the pilot was retired, held a private license, was in his late 60s, and had spent the last year restoring a 1950s vintage, fabric-covered, tail dragger airplane to like-new condition. He completed all the right touches in loving detail, including wood paneling on the instrument panel (apparently considered an attractive option at the time) and overhauling the original Franklin engine. Of course, while he had been working on it all year, he had not flown the airplane, nor did he have any significant other time or training in tailwheel aircraft. The day he completed the plane was beautiful, with a 10-knot wind right down the center of the runway, which

was only 100 feet from his hangar. He could not contain his enthusiasm, so he decided to try it.

The first three take-offs were a little wobbly from a directional point of view, but the airplane was lightly loaded and got airborne before anything disastrous happened. The landings were all bouncy, but the landing gear on this particular airplane had good oleo struts, and they helped smooth things out a bit. To the pilot's relief, given his lack of experience, the whole flight was working out very well, and he was starting to think he was quite 'the' pilot. But then, the perpendicular runway, which, because it was much longer and better paved, had an increasing amount of traffic despite the 10-knot crosswind. So, our pilot decided that since the other airplanes were doing just fine on the crosswind runway, he might move over there and join them.

Tailwheel airplanes become entirely different animals in the presence of a crosswind, something he promptly discovered. On his first landing, the aircraft bounced some five feet in the air, and with the crosswind from the right, it started drifting to the left off the runway. He compensated for the drift by applying a lot of right rudder and (inadvertently) a touch of right brake. On the second touchdown, the airplane was closer to the centerline but now headed around 60 degrees off the runway's direction. He decided to go around since the plane was almost perpendicular to the runway center line. Adding full power but without sufficient airspeed, the airplane came back down again, this time on the grass; it then bounced back up again to about 10 feet and, with the engine at full power, ran into the top of an airplane parked on the ramp, adjacent to the runway. Fortunately, the pilot was not hurt, but he had totaled two general aviation airplanes, and the fire department spent a couple of hours cleaning up a 40-gallon low-lead fuel spill.

But, it is not just private pilots.

The commercially licensed pilot had several thousand hours in fixed-gear airplanes but was relatively new to airplanes with retractable landing gear. He decided an efficient, small, single-engine retractable was just what he needed to fly back and forth from his island home, and so after diligently looking for quite a while, he bought one. But, after the purchase, winter weather set in, and he did not fly it much for months.

Finally, a decent day arrived with good weather, and he had some spare time, so he decided to get current. The departure from his home airport went smoothly, and the flight to our airport only took 15 minutes. He was arriving from the west, and it just so happened the wind was negligible; rather than making a proper pattern entry as was his habit, he elected to make a visual straight-in approach from 10 miles out, direct to the east-west runway.

The problem with straight-in visual approaches is that many cues pilots use from pattern flying are absent. For example, pilots lose the habit of lowering landing gear on downwind (or over the initial approach fix if flying



When our routine changes, be extra alert to accomplish all checklist items.

IFR). Things also get forgotten at times when the pilot's routine is changed, especially while on approach and in high workload situations.

Our pilot had everything nicely lined up on his long final. He crossed the approach end of the runway a little fast for reasons he did not grasp, floated about halfway down the 5000-foot runway during the flare, then made a very gentle landing on the fuselage, followed by a quick, sliding stop, all with the gear handle still in the retracted position. We had to close the airport for an hour while we moved the airplane to a local mechanic's hangar. The prognosis was, what with sudden engine stoppage and fuselage damage, that little airplane would never fly again, and the insurance company would total it.

But not just lack of recent flight time results in problems.

The corporate pilot had an ATP with several thousand hours flying the twin-engine, pressurized turbine aircraft. He flew it professionally nearly every day, year-round, for a local corporation. Like often happens in corporate aviation, his day usually started at about 0500 and involved flying construction managers to a site about 500 miles away. He would then wait around all day, trying to nap on the local FBO's frayed, dirty and worn couch, later to fly the return leg late in the afternoon while his passengers drank beer in the back and discussed their business day. The pilot repeatedly made this type of flight and had the whole thing down cold. He memorized everything, including approaches, frequencies, power settings, airspeeds, and even the complete menu at the layover location restaurant. He had done it so often that he complained about it being incredibly dull and was thinking about finding another line of employment.

The weather on this particular return flight was CAVU, and the winds were calm. The runway in use ran to the west, and given he was returning from the east, he elected to make a very long, straight-in visual approach. He came over the approach end of the runway on speed and glide

path, noticing that the power he was carrying was slightly less than expected, something he attributed to the airplane being light. When he reduced power to begin the flare, it seemed the plane floated a bit more than was expected, and then there was this funny 'ting,' 'ting,' 'ting' noise as three of the propeller blades from each engine made gentle contact with the pavement. The funny tinging resulted in him pulling back on the control wheel slightly, which caused the tings to go away entirely. At this point, he suddenly realized that he had forgotten to lower the landing gear in his relaxed and bored state of mind. His next move was his most dangerous one.

Both engines went to full power, and although both were vibrating in a novel fashion, he pulled up and entered the traffic pattern. Hoping no one had noticed, he lowered the gear and began another approach by turning to base and final. This landing attempt, now with the gear extended, went just fine. He pulled the airplane up to the FBO front door only to find the chief pilot standing there, motioning for him to pull the aircraft further forward before shutting down so that when the passengers exited, they would have to walk aft to enter the building. That struck him as odd, as it was company policy to pull up right in front of the door. The line guys opened the aircraft door, and the passengers, seemingly oblivious to what had just occurred, walked the short distance aft to the building, then out to their cars and drove home.

If they had walked around the front of the aircraft, they would have noticed that all three propeller blades on both engines were bent 90 degrees, about one inch from the distal ends. Evident to the chief pilot, who had witnessed the whole thing from his office window, he promptly arranged the towing of the airplane to the maintenance hangar, where it was out of sight. He had another aircraft of the same model pulled out, and the next group of passengers boarded as if nothing had happened. The pilot, however, never flew for the company again. Sometimes, you get what you wish for.

And finally, one mishap where the airplane failed the pilot.

The airplane was an older King Air. The ATP-licensed pilot had nearly 10,000 hours in King Airs. The flight was returning from a sunny south location, and the aircraft's owner and his family were on board as passengers. The weather was about 2,000 feet overcast with five miles of visibility, which resulted in the pilot electing to make a GPS approach. When reaching the initial approach fix (IAF) and still in instrument conditions, the pilot lowered the landing gear, just as the checklist called.

Right after he moved the gear handle, there was a loud 'bang' from somewhere forward of the pilot's seat. Shortly after, both main landing gear showed green lights, but not on the nose. The pilot continued the approach until below the clouds and then asked the FBO on the



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Sometimes our equipment fails us.

Unicom frequency to look at the airplane as he made a low approach. The FBO reported that the nose wheel was retracted, and the pilot then decided to circle the airport in visual conditions. At the same time, he had the owner-passenger in the right front seat run the appropriate emergency checklist. None of the checklist procedures produced a green light for the nose wheel, and the pilot decided to land and hold the nose off as long as possible, ideally until the propellers stopped moving. He accomplished the landing quite well, with the airplane sliding to a stop, nose down on the runway centerline. As it turned out, the chain from the electric motor to the nose wheel mechanism broke. Even though this was not his fault, the pilot was still quite sheepish about describing what happened when I interviewed him at the site. The other pilots hanging around to see what happened described it as, "Well, stuff happens."

Flying requires constant attention, operational currency, and the repeated use of procedures and habit patterns to make it safer. Ironically, experience, repetition and high flight time are not necessarily protective, as they can lead to boredom and accidents. Finally, airplanes are not perfect; machines sometimes break.

Reducing the inevitable 'stuff' that happens is our highest responsibility. Hoping it is the airplane you can blame, not yourself, isn't a solution. We must know our limitations and those of our machine's systems to enjoy our freedom to fly. **T&T**



Kevin Ware is an ATP who also holds CFI, MEII and helicopter ratings, has more than 10,000 hours and is typed in several different business jets. He has been flying for a living on and off since he was 20, and currently works as a contract pilot for various corporations in the Seattle area. When not working as a pilot he is employed part time as an emergency and urgent care physician. He can be reached at kevin.ware2@aol.com.

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Scorpion Bay

by Grant Boyd



Fred Borrelli's 1979 Cessna 421C landing at Scorpion Bay Airport in San Juanico.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF 'SCORPION BAY AIRPORT'

El Aeropuerto de Scorpion Bay is a newly opened airport in Baja California Sur, Mexico, roughly two-thirds of the way between Tijuana and Cabo San Lucas. Two pilots from Southern California, Fred Borrelli and Phil Benham, spearheaded this airport's multi-year development.

"I've been flying twins for almost three decades and have owned seven [Cessna] 310s. When I stepped up into the 421, a cabin-class airplane, I realized it was easy to get behind as I entered my seventies. So, I hired Phil [who also had significant experience flying in Baja], and he has done a great job stepping in on my airplane."

These two figured that an airport would be a much-needed investment in the small pueblo of less than a



The Cessna 421 on the runway.

thousand people, where Borrelli developed an oceanside inn, Scorpion Bay Hotel.

Due to the region's remoteness, the runway is a pipeline to the small fishing village. The membership-only airport serves tourists coming to experience its world-renowned waves. It will be a critical asset in getting needed supplies to Borrelli's hotel, Scorpion Bay Hotel, and others in town.

"It's an interesting story because we are the first new airport in Baja in many years. There were other airports in San Juanico before this, including one in the middle of town, which was not kept up and closed. Another nearby airport was only about 1,800 feet long, with an extreme drop-off into a canyon. I looked into purchasing that one, but there was no way to fill in that drop-off and lengthen the runway. I decided to get 11 hectares, about 27 acres, which would be large enough for what we had planned. It took a lot for me to go to Mexico City, to start at the top under the Secretary of Communications and get a permit to build an aerodrome," Borrelli began.

"Why did I do this? It gets down to one thing. It was about access for my friends and family to a place that



A welcoming party after Fred and Phil landed at the airport.

can be dangerous to get to from the roads. It's 14 hours from San Diego by car, and you go through sketchy places to get down here. I wanted safety for my friends, family, and the community here. God forbid a surfer breaks their neck, or a fisherman runs over their leg with a boat propeller; we can stabilize them and get them out in an aircraft. Before, many people would die trying to get to a clinic by car, which didn't have much to begin with."

It would take nine years from the initial thought of creating an airport to its opening in 2022. Presently, Scorpion Bay Airport boasts a 3,200-foot-long by 200-foot-wide hard-packed caliche (a hardened calcium carbonate material) runway. However, Borrelli and Benham could eventually lengthen it by 1,000 feet and pave it if future demand warrants.

"We began developing the airport in 2013, and it was a lengthy process to complete the runway, with many stakeholders involved. If you don't have the buy-in of all the needed people up front, then it's just not going to happen. We worked hard to keep everybody apprised of what we were doing, even when we had these incredibly long periods of nothing happening. You have to be persistent and keep it going because it takes time in Baja, and if you get too anxious or frustrated, you'll drive yourself crazy," Benham said.

"We had an initial operation date in December 2022 when we flew the 421 and landed here. All the naysayers had to say, 'Wow, they did it!' That was

a huge day for us and set the tone for the future," he enthusiastically added.

There was considerable work required to get to this stage, much more than there would have been for a similar airport in the United States. Government involvement greatly aided the effort, from the federal to the local jurisdiction.

The Scorpion Bay development team consisted of multiple parties, including a local architect, who helped ensure the conceptualization and construction stages went as planned.

"Our architect handled the whole project and was what we would consider a general contractor. Their name is on the project, so they want to ensure it gets built to his specifications. He helped us hire locals so that they would have employment in the region. It was amazing what they did to put the hangars' roofs on, for example, in the middle of nowhere. The guys were using two ropes and a pole; there were no cranes or cherry pickers to hold anything up," Borrelli said.

Benham provided an overview of one of the other challenges they faced when creating the airport's infrastructure and selecting and grading acreage for the runway. The team needed to move local fauna and flora to proceed with the development.

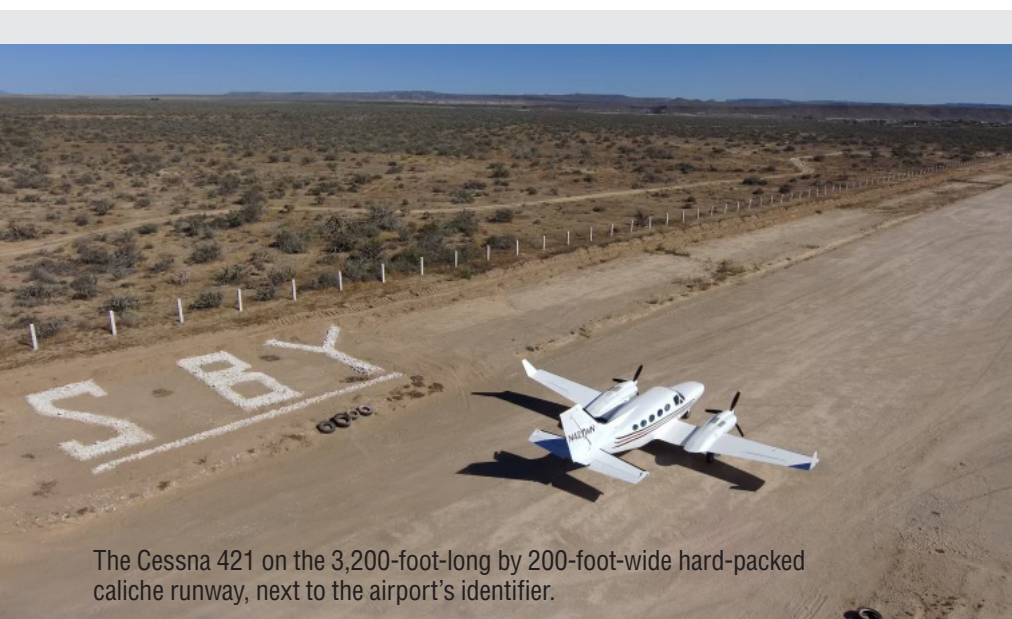
"Our biggest goal with the airport is to develop it with both the social and environmental concerns incorporated from the beginning into the plans. We wanted to have an airport that supports the local community,



that's there for emergency purposes, and we also wanted to be good neighbors and patrons of the environment. One part of our earth-centric basis was moving almost 1,200 plants off this property. Everything needed documenting; there were indigenous lizards, cacti of varying types, and other species. The environmentalists we paid for collected all these rare or under duress species and moved them to another site. We undertook this major effort before ever touching the dirt to create the runway."



Process of removing almost 1,200 plants off the property.



The Cessna 421 on the 3,200-foot-long by 200-foot-wide hard-packed caliche runway, next to the airport's identifier.



Phil surveys the runway, making sure the advertised length is correct.

He continued, describing the construction of the landing surface. "The materials to put the proper surface together for a runway down there are critical. You don't want it to be sandy or rocky, and there is a material called caliche, which is calcium carbonate material out of degraded clamshells. It's very compatible. We were moving all the topsoil off the runway and thought we would have to bring in a lot of caliche, but we found a vein under the surface. It was fourteen inches under the surface, so we mined the caliche ourselves and surfaced the runway. The aviation gods were taking care of us in that regard!"

So far, the pair of aviators note that interest in memberships has been good, although they are currently working to bring the airport to the attention of more pilots. They say

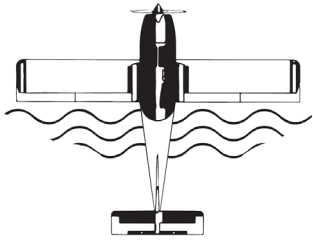


A look inside one of the airport's hangars.

that the leading factor that sets them apart from other international and domestic airports is the care in creating the site.

"We are a legitimate and well-organized group. From the beginning, it was a very well-thought-out project.

Even though we are operating in Mexico, no one can say that we have cut corners or not paid attention to the details. The inspector who came out of Loreto, the comandante (local governing authority for aviation), has been in Baja California for over 35



EL AEROPUERTO DE SCORPION BAY

The airport's logo.

years and has seen dozens of airports built. He told me this is the best-engineered and best-built airport he has seen in his career. We did not fail a single issue on our inspection for our final permit, between the fire extinguishers, the ramp areas, the fencing, the signage, and all of the things that usually get skimmed on," Benham stated.

"Right now, we have our two hangars built, and we are looking to build three more hangars that we currently have planned, with ten more

approved in the future (designed to fit aircraft as large as twin turboprops). We recently purchased a nice VHF radio base and will add an ADS-B node to track aircraft coming to our airport. We also have a runway closure device system that we want to test out soon."

Staffing the airport is surprising to some; it helps to ensure the safety of the pilots and aircraft that fly into the private facility. After all, the safety of those visiting was a foremost concern of Borrelli, who had hinted at the variable levels of personal well-being within the country – while also noting that San Juanico is a sleepy pueblo with "people who have hearts of gold."

"Two full-time staff at the airport went to Loreto and took an airport management course. We are not a port of entry, but now in Baja, you need a flight plan when going from airport to airport. They will be able to manage every flight that comes

in, ensuring that the pilot has a valid pilot's license, the plane is registered to the pilot, and that there is a manifest for everyone on board. We are required under law to monitor these things and provide a monthly report to the comandante. We are proactive in all safety regards," Borrelli concluded. **T&T**

For more information about the airport, including membership opportunities, you may contact the airport at fly@scorpionbayairport.com.

Grant Boyd is a private pilot with eight years of experience in the aviation business, including marketing, writing, customer service, and sales. He holds a bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from Wichita State University and a Doctor of Education degree from Oklahoma State University. He was chosen as an NBAA Business Aviation "Top 40 Under 40" award recipient in 2020.



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Mexico Flying Tips

by Grant Boyd

Safety in Mexico is a foremost concern to tourists, especially those piloting their aircraft to the region. The headlines in the media frequently describe alarming events in the country, causing some to reconsider Mexico as a viable recreation destination. These unsavory reports often describe pervasive issues with drugs and violence, which don't inspire confidence in those who otherwise would have no hesitation flying there.

A recent positive news story came in mid-September when the FAA announced that Mexico returned to "highest aviation safety status." The FAA's press release noted, "To obtain and maintain a Category 1 rating, a country must adhere to the safety standards of ICAO, the United Nations' technical agency for aviation. ICAO establishes international standards and recommended practices for aircraft operations and maintenance." We expect the change to have negligible effects on general aviation. Still, the efforts must be applauded – due to Mexico's commitment to aviation and tourism and strengthening relationships with civil aviation organizations.

Other associations and companies have long kept a pulse on the aviation ecosystem in the country, too, including Air Journey, which leads escorted flying journeys worldwide.

The organization's founder and president, Thierry Pouille, highlighted the challenge of finding twin and turbine operators willing to fly to Mexico. He also explained that this isn't the first time his company has had to overcome a country's public image, as Air Journey helped to shift the dialogue of The Bahamas, mitigating safety concerns for pilots traveling to the nearby islands. Now, it's one of the most coveted destinations for American aviators.

"Mexico's perception is amazing [to me] and reminds me of the stories, at a greater level, about The Bahamas. When Air Journey started, our main focus was the islands of The Bahamas, and you heard all of these tales about what happened there, with thieves stealing planes and equip-



Ranferi Denova

ment. As you dig more into it, you realize that it's a lot of old, overblown tales and stories," he began.

"Back to Mexico, it's different because, in the general press, you get a lot of negative comments on what's happening there. The newspapers carry every negative story, often getting front-page exposure. So, some of the fear is real, but some of it is created as well – in a way. With the perceptions and the fear of the unknown, trying to get people to fly to Mexico is often difficult. For us, though, we will run our



Customs at Santa Bárbara Regional Airport (MM35) in Mexico.

Everyone read online forums about all the crazy stories, and there was a strong perception that if you flew there, your airplane would be stolen or thrown in jail. But the vast majority of all the stories you hear are urban legends. I would say that many of the airports in Mexico are just as safe or safer than your municipal airports here in the United States,” he boldly claimed.

“In Mexico, virtually every airport is guarded 24/7 by the military. Even as a pilot and owner of an airplane, you can’t just walk right up to it. You have to show your identification, pilot’s license, etc. So, it’s heavily regulated and safe, and many of the stories you hear are not true. Situations occur, though, when pilots fail to present the proper documentation. For instance, and I’ve seen this happen

first journey in a long time to Mexico. We have tried two or three times before but never got any takers, not enough to create a journey there.”

Air Journey is leading a trip to the country for the first time in many years this month. The ten-day guided journey, entitled the Hidden Jewels of Mexico, has pilots set to fly their cabin-class aircraft to Cancun International Airport (MMUN), Querétaro Intercontinental Airport (MMQT), and, Mérida International Airport (MMMD) from Palm Beach International Airport (KPBI). Pouille explained that this is a long overdue return to the country Air Journey has been looking forward to for some time.

“Keep in mind, we do go all the way around the world [with our guided journeys] and go to many, many places. We have our guidelines on what an airport needs to be deemed safe. For this upcoming journey, the three airports we will be using meet the guidelines of being ICAO-approved – with 24-hour security and other safety aspects. If we do our groundwork research and work with the local people, as we have, we expect there to be no surprises.”

Ranferi Denova is an instrument-rated pilot who is originally from Mexico. Combining his love for aviation and his homeland, Denova helps pilots fly south of the border through his company, Fly GA Mexico. He hosts an annual fly-out to a different Mexican destination each March to help educate and evangelize fellow pilots about the joys of flying there.

When asked whether it is safe to fly to Mexico without hesitancy, he enthusiastically replies – yes! Why is that?

“Safety in Mexico is a very valid question, and I get asked about it constantly. Before making my first flight there in 2016, I had difficulty finding a flight school, club, or anyone who would let me rent a plane and take it to Mexico.



On the ramp at Aeropuerto Internacional Quetzalcóatl (NLD).

a couple of times if you fly to Mexico with an expired registration or don’t have insurance (at least liability), that’s a big deal. In most cases, they’ll impound your airplane until you can solve the issue, and there will be a hefty fine. As long as you have all your documents in order, it’s easy and safe to fly to Mexico.”

For those who have not flown to Mexico, there is one destination that Denova almost always recommends is Monterrey Del Norte Airport (MMAN). He asserts that this facility, roughly 292 nautical miles southwest of Austin, Texas, is very friendly to general aviation pilots.

“This is one of the easiest airports and cities to visit, especially for those in Texas. It’s an international airport,



A photo taken by Denova from the air near Monterrey, Mexico.

but they only cater to private and military aviation. They don't have airline traffic of any kind. All of the offices for immigration, customs, flight service, and other services are right next to each other, so it's straightforward. Also, the facility is busy enough that someone is always around and willing to help you."

Denova advised some other places pilots should have on their introductory Mexican destinations.

"Once you get your feet wet, I like going to smaller towns. Mexico has this concept called 'magic towns,' 'pueblos mágicos.' They are small towns with cultural charm to them. They are trendy for tourists, safe, and lots of fun."

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To help ensure the flight there goes as planned, Denova has several tips he routinely advises other pilots. Overall, he said a friendly demeanor and willingness to take things as they come are essential traits to adopt before your trip south.

"Always have a friendly attitude, and don't be demanding. Don't be in a rush. Things in Mexico will happen slower than here; that's how it is. Another tip is to prepare as much as possible beforehand, whether with information from several companies focusing specifically on Mexico or with AOPA, which has great information. Prepare all of your documents in order, and I find it useful to prefill as many of them as I can ahead of time, which usually makes the officials happy – because it saves them some time. By being ready, it helps make the process a lot smoother. Finally, if a pilot wants to fly to Mexico and isn't sure about doing it solo, reach out to others with experience to see if they could join and provide their assistance."

Mexico has opportunities to improve its perception among the North American flying public. How can it attract more tourists and those who fly their personal aircraft? Pouille and Denova suggested how perceptions can be changed for the country and described how they can attract more American aviators.

"If we do a parallel with The Bahamas [there is a lot to learn]. The Bahamas Aviation Authority came online for general aviation, not the airlines, and created the

Flying Ambassador program. We now have people in the flying community talking about flying there and bringing groups of pilots to The Bahamas, with help from the government and tourist office. It's a commitment from those groups to bring pilots to the country and show them how beautiful the islands are," Pouille said. He hypothesized that a similar program in Mexico could be value-added in helping to improve perceptions about flying to Mexico.

Denova added, "There are certain people you will not change their mind, period. They are convinced that you can't leave the United States because flying anywhere outside the borders is risky. But what I am doing with the annual fly-outs, at least here in the Texas area, has really changed the perspective of pilots wanting to fly south. Every time someone sees me at a fly-in or pilot gathering, they always come and talk with me about my experiences and what the process is. And often, they come along the next time we fly down there! I love the fact that people are taking an interest in flying to Mexico." **T&T**

Grant Boyd is a private pilot with eight years of experience in the aviation business, including marketing, writing, customer service, and sales. He holds a bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from Wichita State University and a Doctor of Education degree from Oklahoma State University. He was chosen as an NBAA Business Aviation "Top 40 Under 40" award recipient in 2020.



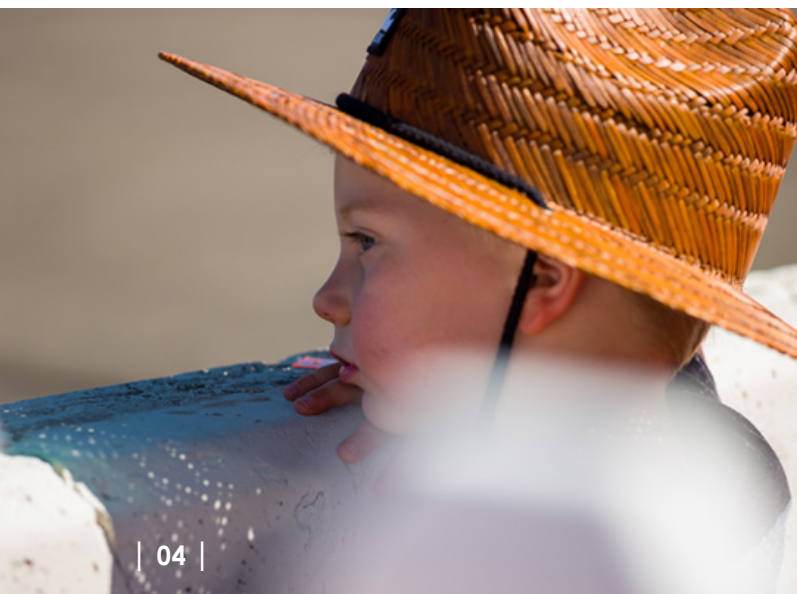
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Editor's Pics

Photos & Story
by Lance Phillips



2023 saw the final National Championship Air Races held in Reno, Nevada. I had the opportunity to attend the last Reno Air Races and took my Leica M10 digital rangefinder along with a vintage Leica 135mm f4 Elmar lens circa 1970. I wasn't sure what to expect from this lens, but I was pleasantly surprised, as you will see in these images.

The Leica M10 came out in 2017 and was the spiritual successor to the brand's M line of analog rangefinders, which started production way back in

1954. The visible design has mostly stayed the same, but the technology going into these small, manually controlled cameras is awe-inspiring.

| 01 | National Championship Air Racing brings all ages to the sport. Radial Velocity #88 is a multi-race winner, here worked on by John Lohmar's team.

| 02 | Fascination of flight starts early. One of the outcomes of National Championship Air Racing is that it draws young people into aviation.

Hiring well-qualified pilots and technicians in the airlines and business aviation is a huge challenge. Building that awe early and establishing a desire to work in our industry is paramount. Air racing does a great job of bringing youth to aviation.

| 03 | Technicians work on a P-51 Mustang racer early in the morning. In the background, we see Dassault Falcon's latest intercontinental business jet, the Falcon 8X. Almost nowhere can you find the newest technology flying with some of the oldest, like in Reno.

| 04 | Inspiring young ones to fly and work on airplanes is a high priority for everyone in the industry. Air racing gets the job done right.

| 05 | Vicky Benzing flies "Lucky Girl" Lancair Legacy #15 above an F-18. Strike Fighter Squadron 122 (VFA-122), also known as the "Flying Eagles," is a United States Navy F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet Fleet Replacement Squadron stationed at Naval Air Station Lemoore in Fresno County, California.

| 06 | Once again, the Super Hornet shows its incredible performance. The vintage Leica 135mm Elmar lens captures the F-18 at full afterburner.

| 07 | *center spread*. The Super Hornet accomplishes a low-level, high-speed pass above the runway. **T&T**



| 05 |



| 06 |





The Fire Pilot



Lawson's 1979 Cessna 310R, which he purchased in October 2019



Sean Lawson, a 310R owner who's commonly known as 'The Fire Pilot.'

PHOTOS COURTESY OF 'THE FIRE PILOT'

"I love airplanes. Two things have always impressed me since I was a kid: planes and fire trucks. I have always looked to the sky, to planes flying overhead. Now I'm a firefighter and a pilot," advised Sean Lawson, a Cessna 310R owner commonly known as The Fire Pilot.

Lawson thought he could never fly because he "grew up humbly" and did not have the disposable income to direct towards flight training. But once he began a career of his own, now a lieutenant with a paid fire department and as the owner of an online public safety equipment distributor, Lawson could finally take to the skies.

His first flight lesson, while only an hour long, reassured him that he could fly. He purchased a Cessna 150 shortly after his introductory flight lesson, the first of the three aircraft he has owned. Now, he's instrument and multi-engine rated, but the Fire Pilot's early aviation days in the 100-horsepower two-seater piston affirmed his love for flight. And he quickly learned flying was more than just a method of getting around. It is a way that he could foster connections with those that he cares for.



The Lawson Family.



Lawson's 1979 Cessna 310R on the ramp at Central Kentucky Regional Airport (KRGa), his home airport.

"What is so important to me about flying is that we are only on this earth for a short time. When people say airplanes are time machines, they are right, and it's amazing. But to me and my family, our airplane allows us to do things and compress time so that I can see them. On social media, the tagline I say is, 'Aviation is not about the planes, the engine, the speed, the altitude, or any of those performance things. It's about people and connecting with them,' he said.

Aviation allowed Lawson to connect with loved ones during a critical time.

"My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago. Flying allowed me to see her easily and enjoy our last days with her. Mom died back in March, and had it not been for aviation and owning this aircraft, those precious moments I spent with her would have been impossible. That's what this is all about. It's about connecting people with people in a manner that this world otherwise sometimes prevents."

The connection with others made Lawson transition from the Cessna 150 into something more capable. He explained that his typical mission is leisure-driven, routinely loading the airplane with his family and heading south to the Sunshine State for multi-day stretches.

"I flew my Cessna 150 throughout Kentucky and had a great time flying it. But I wanted a family airplane, so we looked around. I ultimately settled on a Piper Arrow, a PA-28R-201, with a 200-horsepower engine and a retractable landing gear. So, it wasn't a high-performance airplane, but it was complex. It was a great airplane that I learned a lot in!"

One of Lawson's key learning moments in the aircraft came during the start of a routine flight back home after a brief vacation. The

experience made him wonder whether the Arrow was the best airplane for his mission.

"We took the airplane to Tampa for a weekend to meet a buddy who happened to be down there. Five hours with no autopilot [was not ideal], and we were consistently operating at the maximum performance envelope of that aircraft. The airplane was at max gross [takeoff weight] with my wife, myself, our son, and our luggage with full fuel on board. Leaving Albert Whitted Airport (KSPG) on the hot Florida summer day was probably the most scared I've been in my aviation journey to date," he began.

"I was beyond where I could safely stop. I was probably 75 percent of the way down the runway and was probably, I don't know, 30 knots from

rotate speed. It scared me. Luckily, God was on my side that day, and somehow, those wheels left the ground. That was an eye-opener. If we were to have a family aircraft, I needed one where our normal mission does not regularly put us operating at its maximum performance."

So, after deciding that the Arrow was not the best aircraft for his mission, he began looking for other options. He chose two well-known twins as top contenders – a Beechcraft and a Cessna.

"My mom and dad lived in Eastern Kentucky, in the Appalachian Mountains, and part of aviation so far to that point for me was flying to see them. I wanted to keep doing that, but I considered making that trip. I didn't want to look for a place to land if an engine went out without having another engine to give me an added safety factor. I started researching different airplanes and looked at other YouTube channels that were out there about flying twins. The cost of acquisition for a twin was acceptable.



Purchasing a twin gave Lawson peace of mind at night whenever he would fly in The Appalachians



The 310R, with The Fire Pilot's logo.

I started looking at Barons versus 310s and thought that the Barons have a bit of a premium, just for the name. I was also seeing some performance characteristics of the 310 that superseded those of the Baron 58P. That model was also more expensive, which made no sense to me."

"My A&P also had a 310, which gave me a good feel for the plane. So, I went further down the rabbit hole of the

310 and found a hidden gem of one up in Wisconsin. After a lot of research, I realized that the 'R' model was the best overall performing and the biggest. It was exactly what we were looking for."

The Fire Pilot purchased his 1979 Cessna 310R (serial number 1667) in October of 2019. His first hour of multi-engine time was in the aircraft from Madison,

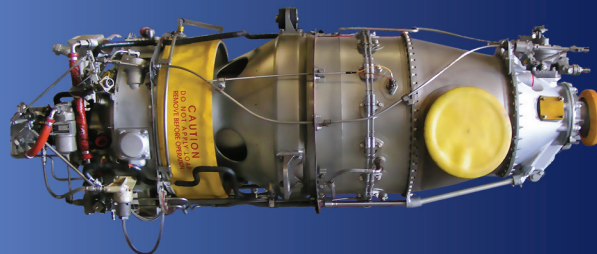
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Wisconsin, where he purchased the plane, to central Kentucky. Shortly into his training, Lawson learned that flying the 310 was quite different from the Arrow he had flown for several years prior. The power and speed were the most the most exciting aspects to learn.

“Right away, I knew that I was hooked. My other two aircraft wouldn’t put you back in the seat [when taking off]. That 310 lets you know there is some power there,” Lawson explained.

“Insurance required that I fly fifteen hours dual in the aircraft. I completed this requirement quickly, in a week or so, but I didn’t simply want to meet the minimum proficiency. I wanted to be good. If you don’t know what to do in a high-performance twin and something goes wrong, it will kill you. Shortly after purchasing this plane, we aspired to fly to The Bahamas. But I wanted to know my airplane [before taking long trips]. I completed an owner-assisted annual and did other things to become acquainted with it, such as reading the POH as thoroughly as possible. Then I just started flying it. That was the ticket; I would fly it with my CFI, skilled friends who are also pilots, and by myself. I wanted to be good in this aircraft, know its systems and intricacies – so that if something did go bad or I needed something to perform as I needed it to, I had the needed proficiency.”

More than half of Lawson’s logged flight time is in the 44-year-old twin, which he flies roughly 100 to 125 hours per year. He’s also learned some lessons along the way – lessons he’s happy to share with others.

“The hardest thing about stepping up to a twin, even from a retractable plane, was how to slow the plane down! You are transitioning roughly from 200 knots to an approach speed of 120-ish. You must do that relatively quickly if you are in a busy terminal environment. The one thing that I missed in my POH is that I could extend the first notch of flaps at about 158 knots. I expected it at my gear speed, which is 139. And getting that thing to slow down that much is a challenging task. You can go back to idle, and it will take you twenty miles to get that slow, and I had done that forever until I realized the flap extension speed.”

Lawson continued, “I was ignorant in my overall assessment of the cost of ownership. I bought the aircraft during Covid when fuel prices were low. I thought filling up for \$2.76 a gallon was great. We could fly wherever, whenever, at that fuel price. Now, prices are almost three times that amount, so operating costs were something that I underestimated slightly. At max performance, the fuel burn is about 16 gallons per hour per side. Thirty-two gallons per hour is thirsty, but when flying at 8,000 to 12,000 feet, I’ll get a speed of around 190 knots, true. You can cover some distance at that speed; you will see endurance of four hours and some change, plus your reserves. I can be in Miami without stopping for fuel, and I have done that mission before. The Cessna 310 is an amazing aircraft.” **T&T**

You can find Lawson’s adventures on the YouTube channel @TheFirePilot.



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Straight In

by Thomas P. Turner



You're inbound on an IFR clearance in visual conditions and are cleared for a visual approach. Do you continue straight in to land? You've canceled IFR or flying VFR, and your direction of flight and the runway alignment are about the same. Do you need to fly the full traffic pattern? Is a straight-in landing even legal? Is it in some way safer? What are the risks and rewards, and how do you manage one and benefit from the others? Let's talk about straight-in landings.

Stabilized approach

A long straight-in supports the concept of flying a stabilized approach.

Being stabilized increases safety and precision as you descend to the touchdown zone. Being unstabilized is often cited as a contributing factor to landing accidents.

But there is no industry-wide consensus on exactly what flying "stabilized" means. Is it a constant-speed descent from five miles out or 1500 feet AGL? 2000 AGL? 1000 AGL? 500 AGL? Is it putting the airplane in the landing configuration, including full flaps, and flying a constant power glide path all the way until the tires touch? Is it about glide path management? None or all of the above?

Often, it's left to a commercial operator to define a stabilized approach

for its pilots. What works for one type of aircraft may not work for another. But what if you're a business or personal pilot flying outside of an environment requiring FAA-approved operations specifications?

The preamble to FAA's Stabilized Approach and Landing Fact Sheet tells us: "A stabilized approach is one in which the pilot establishes and maintains a constant angle glidepath towards a predetermined point on the landing runway. It is based on the pilot's judgment of certain visual clues and depends on the maintenance of a constant final descent airspeed and configuration." The body of the two-page fact sheet does not mention

constant airspeed or configuration again, while it reiterates: “A pilot is flying a stabilized approach when he/she established and maintains a **constant angle glidepath** toward a predetermined point on the landing runway,” with the bold font emphasis being the FAA’s. It goes mainly into the need for a three-degree glidepath and the way to determine vertical speed for that angle of descent and others. The FAA does not suggest when it is appropriate to enter this stabilized condition, but does say, “the approach is more at risk of being unstable when closer to the runway (i.e. 500 feet to 1000 feet height above touchdown (HAT)).”

NBAA’s guidance on flying a stabilized approach is exclusively about glide angle (figure 1). NBAA says “the aircraft should meet stabilized approach criteria no lower than 1000’ (IMC) or 500’ (VMC). It notes that “final flap configuration may be delayed at pilot’s discretion” even below

that height, and that this is done not for landing accuracy or control but to “enhance noise abatement.”

In the slot

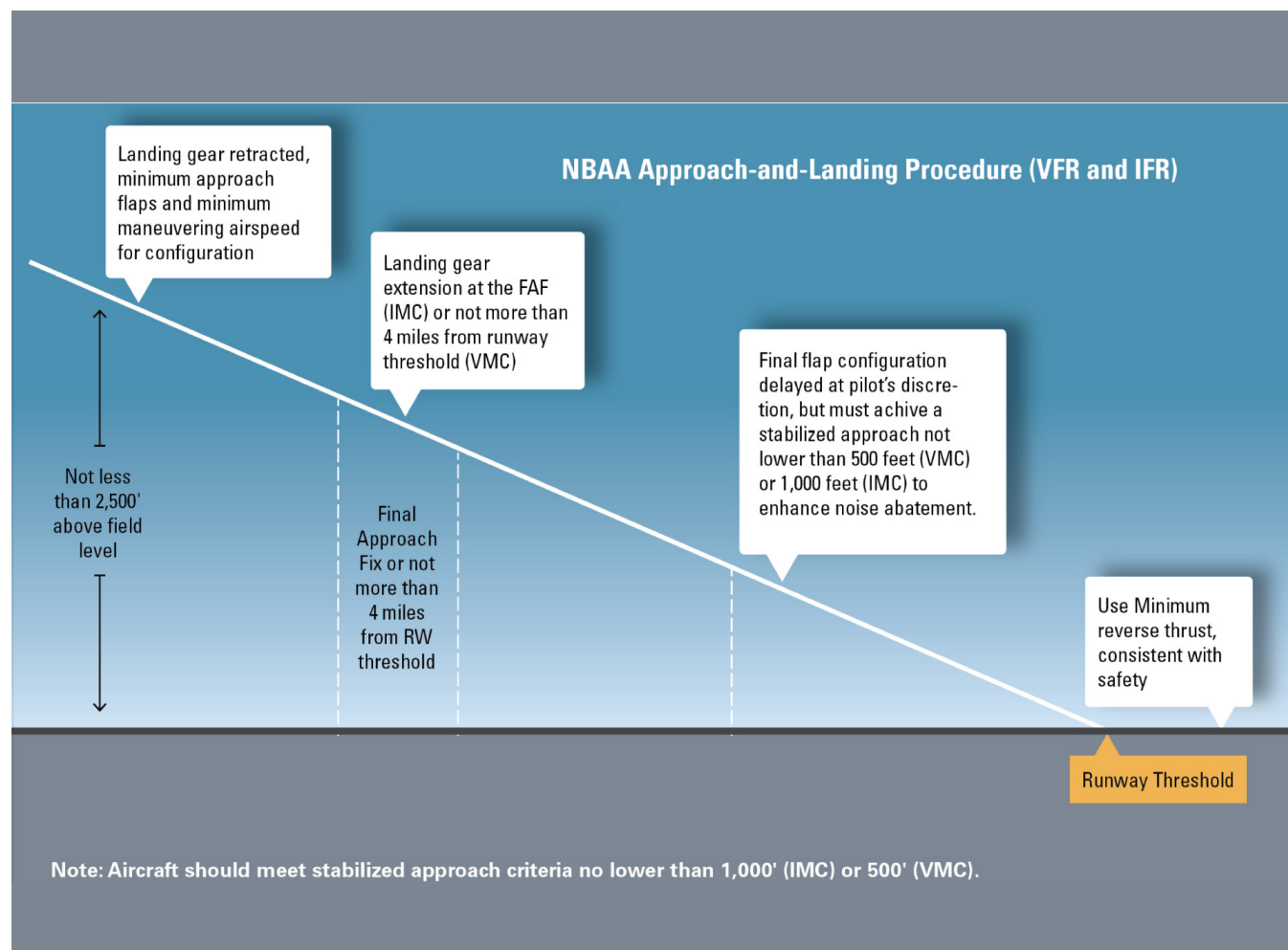
Coming in on a long straight-in, on that stabilized glide angle, it may be more important to be on a trend to a runway threshold speed and configuration. To do this, I self-evaluate whether I am “in the slot.” By this, I mean I continually ask myself, from about 500 AGL to the beginning of the landing flare, if I am:

- **On speed**, or more likely on a trend toward the airplane’s recommended 50-foot short final speed (on a three-degree glidepath toward a point 1000 feet from the runway threshold, I’ll be at about 50 HAT as you cross the runway threshold);
- **On glidepath** to the touchdown zone;
- **In configuration**, perhaps with full flaps to go, and;

- **In alignment** with the runway centerline, with zero sideways drift.

The further out you begin the final approach, the sooner you can make that evaluation and the more time you have to make corrections. Below 500 AGL (about the height where you’d turn final flying a standard traffic pattern), if you’re not in the slot, it’s time to go around. Don’t wait until you’re in the flare to go around.

Meeting the “in the slot” criteria also helps you alight at the proper place without excessive energy. That makes it far less likely you’ll go off the far end of the runway. Runway overruns are usually the outcome when an unstabilized airplane (i.e., one not in the slot crossing the threshold) touches down long beyond the touchdown zone with too much speed (energy) to stop on the remaining surface. A corollary is a pilot who waits too long to make a go-around decision and cannot clear obstacles when he/she finally powers up to climb.



Failure to Mitigate

In August 2022, a Cessna 340 on a long straight-in approach in visual conditions collided with a Cessna 152 in the traffic pattern at Watsonville, California. Preliminary information is the 340 pilot radioed on CTAF that he was about 10 miles out on a long straight-in. The instructor or student in the 152 acknowledged and eventually reported the 340 in sight, apparently far enough out that those on board the 152 felt it was safe to turn base to land ahead of the twin. As the 152 entered final approach, the 340, which initial data shows had as much as a 180-knot ground speed at that point, caught up with and collided with the trainer, with sadly predictable results.

We don't yet fully know what transpired in this tragic event, and we may never know many of the details. But the 152 pilots may have assumed, when they sighted the 340 on a long straight-in, that the twin had slowed to a normal final approach speed. That could have contributed to a decision to turn in front of the 340. Once the C152 was on base, presumably with the traffic still in sight, its crew might have noted its high speed and broken off per the right-of-way rules in 91.113 concerning a collision threat from the right. Had the 340 pilot sighted the 152, it should have broken off its approach and yielded the pattern to the 152 per 91.113's rules for overtaking an aircraft. Unfortunately, several safeguards failed to prevent this collision.

Glidepath guidance

If the runway is served by an approach with vertical guidance, program it in and use it. Look on the approach chart for a notation that the electronic glideslope or glide path does not coincide with a visual glide path. This usually means there are hard-to-see trees or wires below the missed approach altitude and the airport. When there's a discrepancy between visual and electronic glide path guidance, go with the visual.

If you have neither electronic nor visual glide path information, on your visual straight-in, descend to traffic pattern altitude (obstacles permitting) and fly until the point you're just outside where you would have turned final if you had flown a full traffic pattern. From there, fly a constant angle descent toward the touchdown point. Actually, your aim point should be a runway stripe or so before

your intended touchdown point (200 feet on an IFR-marked runway, one stripe and the space between stripes), allowing for a little extra distance you'll cover while flaring.

Control glide path angle while flying in the slot, and you can be safe, accurate and stable on a long, straight-in approach. But what other considerations apply?

Tower-controlled airports

Straight-ins are normal practice at tower-controlled airports. Since the tower is sequencing airplanes for use of the runway, much of the collision risk is removed. Tower is not technically providing separation of airplanes in the air, only on the runway, so continue to aggressively scan for traffic flying straight-in to a towered field. It's wise to keep the runway, empty taxiways, and crossing runways under a close eye since runway incursions are a constant hazard.

Safe to Land

CJP, the Cessna Citation Jet Pilots owner's group, has responded to a high number of runway excursions in the type by creating its award-winning Safe to Land Initiative. Key to Safe to Land training is a focus on stabilized approach criteria and monitoring for the need for an early go-around before the airplane touches down long with too much energy to stop on the remaining runway. Safe to Land was created to "address shortcomings in the traditional stabilized approach criteria [which] have failed to curtail these accidents." CJP notes that "those traditional criteria result in a go-around only 3% of the time" when a go-around should be performed. The initiative breaks the paradigm by adding a yellow zone, a period of time beyond the traditional 1,000 and 500 ft. stable approach gates, where [there is] time to "fix it," while committing to a...point beyond which [the pilot will] commit to go around" (opposite page).

CJP generously makes its safety information available to the public at www.citationjetpilots.com. See if you might adapt the Safe to Land initiative to the type of aircraft you fly.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

Advisory Circular

Subject: Non-Towered Airport Flight
Operations

Date: 6/6/23

Initiated by: AFS-800

AC No: 90-66C

Change:

Nontowered airports

Pilot-controlled (i.e., nontowered) airports are where the risks of straight-in approaches have the potential to outweigh their advantages. There are ways to mitigate the risk and safely mix with the normal pattern traffic—as long as you *fly predictably, see and be seen, and follow the rules for right-of-way. How do you do that?*

First, flying a straight-in approach at a non-towered airport is not illegal. The FAA “discourages” it but then provides suggestions on how it should be done. What does the FAA say?

Advisory Circular 90-66C, Non-Towered Airport Flight Operations, was updated in June 2023 (figure 2). In that update, the FAA specifically added recommendations about straight-in approaches. First, the AC

notes that “The FAA does not regulate traffic pattern entry, only traffic pattern flow.” Except in 14 CFR 91.126, where regulations require complying with the direction of marked traffic patterns *when a traffic pattern is flown*, it’s up to the pilot-in-command to decide how to approach a runway.

The AC continues to say, “To mitigate the risk of a midair collision at a non-towered airport in other than instrument conditions, the FAA does not recommend that the pilot execute a straight-in approach for landing, when there are other aircraft in the traffic pattern. The straight-in approach may cause a conflict with aircraft in the traffic pattern and on base to final and increase the risk of a midair collision.” But it then states, “However, if a pilot chooses to execute a straight-in approach for landing without entering the airport traffic pattern, the pilot should self-announce their position on the



SAFE-TO-LAND Cue Card

Approach/Landing Gates	Gate Callout	Status Call If Stable	Status Call If Unstable
			Repeat Offending Item ▼
1000 ft Configuration Gate	“1000”	“CONFIGURED”	“GEAR, GEAR...” or “FLAPS, FLAPS...”
500 ft Stable Gate	“500”	“STABLE”	“AIRSPEED...200” or “CENTERLINE...200” or “GLIDE PATH...200” or “THRUST...200” or “BANK ANGLE...200” or “VERTICAL SPEED...200”
IFR Minimums Gate	“MINIMUMS”	“GOING VISUAL” or “GOING AROUND”	▼ ▼
200 ft Go-Around Gate	“200”	“CONTINUE”	(If offending parameter still not corrected) “LIMIT, GO AROUND”
Touchdown Zone Gates		Call if Outside Green Zone	Call if At or Past TPL
Down-the-Runway TPL		“FLOATING, FLOATING...”	“LIMIT, GO AROUND...”
Lateral TPL		“DRIFTING, DRIFTING...”	“LIMIT, GO AROUND...”

NOTES: • 10 knots excess speed at threshold increases landing distance required by 20+%.

• High at threshold adds 200 ft for each 10 feet high.

• Floating takes up 180 feet per second.

• Delayed braking uses up 180 feet per second.

• **TPL = LDA – Factored Distance Required +1000 ft.; with a Maximum of 3500 ft.**

• **LDA = Landing Distance Available** (found in A/FD Chart Supplement).

• **Factored Distance Required = Computed AFM distance** for conditions x **1.67** or **x 1.25**.

• Can use **1.25** if vertical guidance available and CJP SOP experience/ proficiency requirements met,
1.67 otherwise.



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V2.0

designated CTAF between 8 and approximately 10 miles from the airport, and coordinate their straight-in approach and landing with other airport traffic.” Importantly, the AC notes: “Pilots choosing to execute a straight-in approach do not have a particular priority over other aircraft in the traffic pattern and must comply with the provisions of § 91.113(g),” those being the rules for aircraft right-of-way.

So, a straight-in approach is not “illegal” it just may not be advisable. That brings us to techniques to mitigate the risks if you choose to fly a straight-in approach.

Fly predictably

If you elect to approach straight in, do so predictably. Fly the expected altitudes—not too high, not too low—while you make the suggested radio calls beginning about 10 miles out. If you’re still IFR talking to Center or Approach, monitor CTAF so you can hear other traffic, and switch over to make radio calls every few miles.

Slow to a normal approach speed several miles out as well, so if others hear or see you, they can predict how long it might take you to conflict with the normal traffic pattern.

See and be seen

Run all your lights, even in daylight. Anything that gives you a chance to improve your visibility is worth it. Realize that you are the anomaly in the pattern, flying a straight-in, so aggressively scan for traffic on downwind and on base. AOPA tells us that the majority of traffic pattern collisions occur at 400 feet AGL or lower on final approach, precisely where you on a straight-in become a conflict hazard with an aircraft on base turning final. ADS-B and other onboard traffic advisory systems greatly boost collision avoidance. However, most nontowered airports are in locations where ADS-B is not required. A surprising number of airplanes flown away from Class B and C airspace still do not have ADS-B on board, so keep up your visual scan.

Right of Way

14 CFR 91.113 codifies the rules of right-of-way for aircraft. An airplane on a long straight-in does not automatically have right-of-way over other aircraft. 91.113 specifically states that airplanes on an instrument clearance in visual conditions (that includes marginal VFR) are not prioritized over VFR airplanes in the traffic pattern. If you are faster than an airplane ahead of you on final approach, that aircraft has the right of way, and you need to go around... even if you’re in a large turboprop or a jet. The faster your approach speed, the more likely you’re the one the regulations say must break off when there’s a conflict.

Practical, but...

Sometimes, a long straight-in approach is your best option. The FAA discourages it, but it is not against regulations, and the FAA confirms that by making suggestions for when you choose not to fly the full pattern.



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It really comes down to you to determine how safe a given straight-in approach will be.

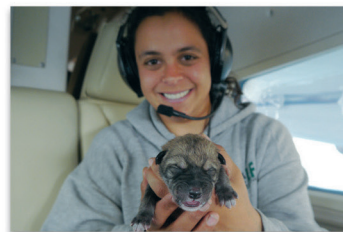
Personally, if I'm flying a visual approach, even on an instrument flight, I'll maneuver to fly the standard traffic pattern almost all of the time. If I do decide it makes more sense to proceed straight in, I'll master the straight-in approach by flying predictably, making an extra effort to see and be seen, hear and be heard; and ready to break it off at any time per the right-of-way rules and good-sense survival skills if a conflict occurs. **T&T**

Thomas P. Turner is the author of the *FLYING LESSONS Weekly* blog (www.mastery-flight-training.com) that inspires pilots to pursue Mastery of Flight.™ A prolific writer, speaker and flight instructor, Tom has been inducted into the National Flight Instructor Hall of Fame.

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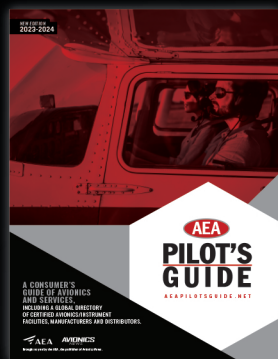
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Ad Index

1st Source Bank	6
340 Vol Pilot	3
AEA	30
Airtex	28
Avfab	29
Blackhawk Aerospace Technologies	Back Cover
CIES Corporation	11
Corporate Angel Network	Inside Back Cover
Covington Aircraft Engines	23
Factory Direct Models	3
Lighthawk	29
Luma Technologies	14
Ocean Reef Club	15
Preferred Airparts LLC	30
Raisbeck Engineering	Inside Front Cover
Select Airparts	7
Turbines Inc.	22
Wingman Med	11
Wings of Hope	7

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That's Not What Rusty Said

"Let's start with the cockpit preparation checklist," I said.

Patty "Battery disconnect switch"

Me "Battery disconnect is guarded and normal."

Patty "Interior switch"

Me "Interior switch is normal."

Patty "Circuit breakers"

Me "Circuit breakers, they look good."

Patty "Ah, wait a minute. That's not how you are supposed to do it."

Me "What do you mean, that's not how I am supposed to do it?"

Patty "Rusty says you need to touch each one of them."

Me "Rusty? Who the hell is Rusty?"

Patty "He's my flight instructor at FlightSafety in Wichita."

Me "You have your own instructor at FlightSafety?"

Patty "Yes, and everyone loves Rusty."

Me "Well fine then. I will touch every circuit breaker!"

Patty "And really, you didn't close the door correctly either."

Me "What the.... I didn't close the door correctly?"

Patty "Yes, Rusty says you have to count all the thingy's in the windows."

Early in our marriage, we agreed that I would make all the big decisions and Patty would make all the small ones. Then, Patty decided she would tell me which decision was big or small. That has worked out pretty well, up until now.

Me "Hey, I am the pilot in command here."

Patty "That's not what Rusty said. He said I should take charge."

Me "Patty, this is not like our car."

Patty "Thank goodness."

Patty "I think I'll just call Rusty right now. I have him on my speed dial."

Me "Oh, that's great. Why don't you just call him collect?"

Patty "I would feel much better if we just checked in with him."

Me "Why don't you just invite Rusty to come fly with us," I shot back.

Patty "That would be a great idea. Then we can compare how you two do things."

Me "Fine, wonderful. Just wonderful."

All of this dialogue occurred in front of multiple cameras and lights. You see, Patty had agreed to be filmed for the Citation Jet Pilot's Companion Course at the annual convention. It was supposed to be a "model" presentation of what a well-rehearsed pre-takeoff checklist should look like.

But after fifty plus years of repressed cockpit feelings, she went totally off script. Then she started laughing. I couldn't get her to stop laughing.

She's still laughing.

A copy of this video is now locked in a vault at the bank where no one can ever see it.

Fly safe. 



David Miller has owned and flown a variety of aircraft from light twins to midsize jets for more than 50 years. With 6,000 plus hours in his logbook, David is the Director of Programs and Safety Education for the Citation Jet Pilot's Safety Foundation. You can contact David at davidmiller1@sbcglobal.net.

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