



GO-ROUND

ALDINGA AERO CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Editor: John Chambers

Limited Panel.

Last month's club comp, 'Limited Panel', leads one to ponder on the decisions facing a pilot who discovers an instrument (or instruments) inoperable or operating intermittently. Such decisions would probably revolve around the pilot's rating - VFR or IFR - whether the instrument(s) was/were found to be faulty before or during flight, the weather forecast for the flight (or proposed flight), the terrain along which the flight was planned, and available safe landing areas in the area or areas over which the flight was planned.



The following story details a situation in which the pilot made the wrong, and ultimately fatal, decision -

Homeward Bound

The pilot had about 2,500 hours in his log book, 2000 hours in the type he was flying, of which 215 were "simulated instrument flying" (under the hood), and 250 in actual instrument conditions. In recent times, he had logged around 175 hour per year, and was certainly 'current' for this flight. At the time of his departure, the weather was marginal VFR, but the pilot filed an IFR plan at 10,000 feet for a 2 hour, 18 minute flight. About an hour into the flight, the pilot contacted ATC, advising he was "having a little trouble with the artificial horizon" (AH) but would continue the flight VFR. Fifteen minutes later, he decided to divert to another, closer airfield, and sought an IFR clearance to the new destination. This was provided at 8,000 feet.

The Predictable Occurs

Approximately 20 minutes from his new destination, the pilot reported "ops normal" - that was the last contact. Over the course of a few minutes, radar plots indicated that the aircraft made several alternating turns, whilst the altitude fluctuated between 7,900' and 8,200' and the ground speed varied between 137 knots and 179 knots. The last recorded altitude was 7,200 feet. Accident investigators immediately suggested that the radar data and sudden loss of radar contact suggested an in-flight breakup of the aircraft caused by pilot-induced manoeuvres. Weather radar images indicated that the aircraft was in an area of IMC with light to moderate precipitation.



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Final Report

Small portions of the aircraft's interior were found floating in an oil slick off the coast. The majority of the aircraft was never recovered. The final report concluded that the accident was caused by "the pilot's improper decision to continue the flight in instrument conditions after experiencing an attitude indicator malfunction."

The Lesson

Whilst a club comp involving limited instruments, whilst flying a circuit in VFR conditions and accompanied by a 'safety pilot', at our airfield can be an interesting but completely safe experience, think very hard before commencing or continuing any flight with malfunctioning or non-functioning instruments.

Know Your Fellow Member - David Ellis (Part two). (Last month we left David about to start training as an RAAF pilot at Point Cook).

The biggest shock to me as going from 30 deg in Weipa to freezing at Point Cook, it being in July. Weeks passed with drilling & lectures. Finally the day came to take lessons in a Winjeel, and I can tell you that sitting in one for the first time was daunting. A ground handler tightened my harness so much I could not move my torso. Up we went and did some basic flying - straight & level stuff. We'll do some aerobatics he said - he had a whale of a time doing loops, hammer-head stalls, barrel rolls and snap rolls, while I experienced unpleasant forces for the first time. The aerobatics made me airsick. My sick bag was in the zippered pocket on my lower leg, and while trying to undo the zip with one hand and remove my oxygen mask with the other, neither the zip nor the mask would undo. I threw up in my mask. I had to pull it away from my face, whereupon the contents went everywhere. On landing I was told I had to clean up the mess.



After a few lessons I knew I was in over my depth. I think I was overwhelmed by the complexity of the aircraft, the procedures in starting the engine, the handling of throttle, mixture and prop, the use of rudder in barrel rolls, unlocking the tailwheel, changing to the correct radio frequency when at such and such a place - you name it. Only half of the class made it through Point Cook.

I found out later that, normally, it's 50 hours on Winjeel's before going onto Macchi's at Pearce. For some reason it was decided that my course would do just 15 hours at Point Cook before moving on, and in that time trainee pilots were expected to perform aerobatics, take-offs, landings, forced landings, some nav stuff, and perhaps solo. The next course went back to the 50 hour formula. On being told I was washed out, I cried and cried. I soon thereafter had to sit in with what I think were psychologists for them to try and ascertain how their selection methods failed to weed me out earlier. If you have read Tom Wolfe's book "The Right Stuff", you will know how I felt to be left behind.



My previous employer took me back on board and I spent the next three years learning the driller's trade. It was remote work, living in tents, caravans or motels with not much to spend money on. One night I thought 'I'll be a dentist' - after all they drill holes, and short ones at that; live at home; get well paid etc. However, I didn't have the grades to get in, so I enrolled in an adult education school to repeat a year of high school. My results were good enough and I was accepted into Dentistry at

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the Uni of Qld. My first year was a blur - here I was socialising for the first time in my life, playing rugby, joining the Miami SLSC and getting a bronze medallion, surfing, working in a pub two nights a week, and taking flying lessons at the Redcliffe Aero Club. Whoops - fell into the same old trap - got in but didn't work hard enough to stay in. Failed Biochemistry - twice, and it was all over with that episode of my life. I switched over to Science, but by year's end ran out of money and enthusiasm. I did get my restricted PPL, but didn't fly again until the mid 1980's.

Feeling very dejected again, I set off by road to "see Australia". I ended up in Perth, just about penniless, but found work drilling water bores for homes. That led me to find out about drilling for oil in the NW shelf, and getting myself into that game. I got work, but only to fill in for someone who was injured or away on a course. I ended up getting full-time work with what is called an oil-field service company, doing wireline logging. I stayed with them for 33 years and worked in 15 countries. I got my fill in flying about in planes and helicopters. Russian aircraft are something else !

In 1985 I was based in Moomba and, on days off, lived in Adelaide. Here Mara & I met and married. I bought a Drifter at Tintinara and practised flying it there, before dismantling it for trailer-ing it about. Back then there were no licencing or registration requirements that I knew of. Teach yourself to fly and don't go above 500 feet was about it. I thought my type of flying was not welcome at airports, so it was often a case of towing the trailer out somewhere and asking the farmer if I could use a paddock. I came unstuck on Yorke Peninsular when, just after taking off and banking right, I struck a SWER (single wire, earth return) line. That put me on a RFDS flight to Adelaide. The farmer hid the pieces from the electricity workers and I reported my injuries being due to a motorcycle accident. It transpired that that farmer had built his own aircraft (must have been the 20's or 30's) and it was the first aircraft to fly to Kangaroo Island. He busted it on landing, and he and it never flew together again.



I rebuilt the Drifter, but it was a drag assembling, dismantling and towing it about, so I eventually sold it. Low hours.

Life moves on, and the house had to be paid for etc. My last overseas stint was in Sudan, and I was getting a 'living coefficient' that just about doubled my wage. I decided to put some of it to use in taking up flying again. By now I was living at Maslin Beach. In 2008 I ended up at Aldinga airfield and obtained a Ra-Aus pilot certificate. I thought it would be cheaper to buy rather than hire a plane, so I bought a Jabiru J250, sight unseen. Wrong! All the same, owning it and flying it and using it like I do is very satisfying, but I won't claim to love flying. I dare say I would if someone else was paying for what I desire from flying, which is experience in varied types and conditions. I mostly read auto-biographical books of airmen & women. PG Taylor is the aviator I most admire amongst a hundred others who leave me in awe of them.

Tony 'Discovers' Blinman. *(Thanks to Tony Human for this contribution)*

After two failed attempts to fly to Blinman in the northern Flinders Ranges due to weather, we were finally on our way after exhaustive examinations of synoptic charts and a final check with Aviation Meteorology.

Departure was made into a crisp morning light north-easterly wind, with a cloud base of 3,000 feet .On clearance from Adelaide, we climbed to cruising altitude of 8,000 feet and then were vectored several times to clear Adelaide and resume our planned route. The forecast wind was 30 knots from the S/E, however we had a groundspeed of 150 knots with 27 knots from the N/W.

Cloud cleared from adjacent Port Wakefield and we enjoyed the spectacular scenery of the

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Flinders Ranges including Wilpena Pound and the strata of the ancient sea bed.

With a flight time of 2 hours, 15 minutes, we arrived at the airstrip at Blinman that is situated in the local race track and is clearly visible from the air. With an elevation of 2,000 feet, it could be the highest airstrip in S.A. The two dirt runways are in good condition, but we had fair weather only.

On arrival, we were met by Caroline from the North Blinman Hotel, who we observed on approach, driving down the runway clearing sheep and the odd kangaroo.

After settling into our Motel and enjoying refreshments at the Blinman Hotel, we walked around the Blinman Copper Mine and were aware of the difficulties facing the miners in the 1880's.

Next day we enjoyed a conducted tour of the geological sites and the many gorges of the district. The five hour tour included morning tea & lunch, with spectacular views of the ABC mountains - we were even fortunate to observe yellow-footed wallabies in their natural habitat.

A highlight of the tour was to see the Golden Spike, a geological event that occurred during the ice age.

Departure at 11 am the following morning, and at a cruising altitude of 7,000 feet with a light northerly, we were again vectored over St. Vincent Gulf to arrive at YADG after a flight time of 2 hours.

Our July Meeting.

The July comp was "Emergency Landing". Pilots were tasked with climbing to 2,000 feet over the airfield, pulling power to idle to simulate an engine failure, and conduct a glide approach to land on Rwy 03, as near as possible but beyond a (marked) simulated threshold.

Four pilots were scheduled to take part, but Terry Cahalan was "scratched" due to a flat battery in the syndicate's Jabi. Winner was Phil Patterson (5 metres beyond), second David Ellis (30 metres beyond) and third Evan John (50 metres beyond).

Diary Dates.

Sunday 5th August - "Flying Footy" comp, with pilot briefing at 1000 hours, followed by the usual BYO BBQ from 1200 hours and a committee meeting from 1300 hours.

Sunday 12th August - This meeting is the Club's AGM. A complimentary barbeque lunch will be provided to all members and their guests from 1200 hours, followed by the AGM from 1300 hours.

Sunday 9th September - This is the date of our annual "Battle of Britain Commemoration" comp when our brave pilots take to the skies to protect us from attack by the Hun. Pilot briefing at 0715. There will be a complimentary breakfast provided to all members and their guests from 1000 hours.

Sunday 7th October - "Cross Country" comp. Pilot briefing at 1000 hours, lunch from 1200 hours and committee meeting from 1300 hours.

