

10-1-07

## Training

The first order of business this month is to congratulate **Wendell Carmack** for accomplishing his **Solo Flight** on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Wendell took his first training that day and soloed the same day. Well-done Wendell!! Tom Treese (trainer) gets an “at-a-boy” too!!

Also, we want to congratulate **John Baxter** who flew for the first time in 17 years under the watchful eye of Bob Marsh. John was an accomplished RC pilot years ago and we want to welcome him to CVA and back to the fun of flying

The primary topic for this month is “**Why do we need Training?**” Well, the best way I know to answer that question is with a true story...my story...self-deprecating though it may be. To most of our experienced pilots, this may only be a bit humorous, but hopefully to a few potential new pilots who read this (those with the sense to think and learn before they act) it may have significant benefit. It may save time and frustration as well as an airplane or two. If this column accomplishes that it will have been worth the effort.

My RC flying started with a nearly indestructible Aerobird Commander two channel electric toy that I flew in a field in North Carolina. You can hardly do any damage with one of them unless you (or your friend) fly it right into someone’s car and dent the door!!! Somehow it came to pass that I decided to step up to a “real” plane. One of the advertisements suggested I buy this neat warbird....and, not to worry; it had all this training stuff attached which I could later remove. All that stuff would make it slow and easy to learn! At this point I didn’t even know where I would fly it! But, since I had experience racing slot cars, go-karts, drag cars, sailboats, autocross, and a variety of other things, what was to stop me from flying these little planes????? Uh-Oh!!!

Once I found and joined CVA, I was impatient, and since I couldn’t seem to find one of our training staff (in the dead of winter), I’d go ahead and start learning by myself. Well, I’d just start by learning how to taxi. I was smart enough to know that a tail-dragger is sometimes difficult to keep straight. I also knew I wasn’t supposed to fly, but surely its OK to taxi!!

And so, on a cold day I don’t even want to remember, I commenced to practice taxiing. Left to right. Right to left. Over and over. Better and Better. Faster and faster. Got that down pretty good! And then...on about the twentieth pass.... **Oh-my-gosh**, the poor little warbird was about 10 feet above the ground past the end of the runway and heading toward route 5!!! Worse yet... “what’s this, its rolling over and climbing at the same time????” “Must need to trim it or something”. “Where are those silly little trim switches?” “How can you fly this thing and find those little switches at the same time?” “Which way do I push the switch?” “Which way is the plane going anyway?” All those

questions and many more came into my mind in about the first 15 seconds. I definitely felt “behind the curve”.

The “flight” must have lasted about 2 minutes and covered most of John’s 900 acres. The few club members there must have been totally entertained (or horrified) to watch the out-of-control gyrations that little plane went through. I’ll always appreciate that they didn’t just bust out laughing! Thanks, guys! But, you can guess the ending. The little warbird didn’t land as gracefully as it had taken off! No, it landed (crashed) on the other side of the large dirt pile to the south after one of many, many uncontrolled loops!

The good news is, no **one was hurt**, and no one’s property was damaged. Also, it being winter, the dirt was soft, thick mud, and other than breaking off the front bulkhead with the engine and mount attached there was virtually no other damage. We were able to make a new bulkhead and the plane lives to this day. It now has more than 130 “missions” to its credit. But, **I was lucky. That flight was dangerous!!!**

The moral of this story, in case you laughed (or cried) so hard you missed it:

**No matter how much experience you have with other hobbies, and no matter what the advertisements say...it is imperative for a new pilot to get help from the club training staff!!!! It’s a matter of safety and it’s a matter of good sense!**

I think it is also important for each of our members to direct potential new pilots to a member of the training staff or to me as training coordinator so that we can help them avoid the kind of mistake I made and to further reduce the chance for accident or injury. I ask the club members to take an interest in doing this, and I ask the club to forgive my stupidity of a while back.

John Backes has written a lot in “Pilot Talk” about things to do to improve our skills as pilots.....so.....

Remember to try something new each time you fly!

Steve Klute  
*Training Coordinator*