

The

MAY 2012

TWIN CESSNA

Flyer



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THE 310G AT 50: FOREVER YOUNG
TWIN CESSNA STALL-SPIN ACCIDENTS
TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE: 340 MOVE UP
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TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE

by Eric Barfield, Hope Aviation Insurance



“There I was” at 5,000 feet in our trusty CE182, enroute to Charleston for a client visit. While admiring the Congaree Swamp’s winter-greyled hardwoods from above on this clear December day, the engine went from running like a top to an oil-spewing geyser in the blink of an eye. In fact, as the plume of oil was making its way out of the cowling onto the windscreen, I couldn’t declare an emergency fast enough. Call the President, call somebody, call everybody! We’re not going to make that meeting in Charleston today.



In the blink of an eye, my windscreen was covered with oil. While I made a successful emergency landing, I quickly became a “believer” in twins.

So throttle to idle then a quick check of the “Nearest” feature on the Garmin 430 to confirm that the 9,000 feet of concrete I had passed earlier at McEntire Air National Guard Base was indeed the closest field. Providentially at about ten miles distant, it was within gliding range. After rolling the fire trucks, the tower controller asked if I needed anything and I replied, “Not unless you have windshield wipers.” He didn’t. At least the window was big enough to hang my head out for the landing, Ace-Ventura style. The official cause for the oily mess was that the #3 bearing slipped, causing the front two rods to lose oil pressure. This caused one of those rods to punch a hole in the crankcase, resulting in a very large oil leak. Not being very understanding of

mechanic-ese and too proud to be exposed in a detailed discussion of things mechanical, I just tell folks, “Uh, the engine stopped working.”

It didn’t take long for me to imagine this having happened at night. Or in weather. Or over the mountains. Or when I wasn’t relatively fresh off some in-aircraft training that included simulated engine-out landings. I quickly did the math and now I’m a believer: Two is better than one. This helps explain why the following month I found myself going through Simcom’s initial CE340 course. While I struggled to keep the simulator screen from turning red, a very bright and very patient instructor, Charlie Bukoski, sat somewhere behind me concocting all sorts of nonsense to display on the panel in front of me. A former F-4 driver, and therefore godlike in my eyes, Charlie deserves a medal for putting up with my incessant questions and ham-fisted flying during those few days in January.

On one occasion, Charlie had to “step out for a second” and told me to just keep flying until he got back. Gladly, I thought; stay gone an hour so I can rest. But, of course, it couldn’t be that easy. Sure enough, after a minute or two, the right engine oil pressure goes limp and the temperature is rising. Time to shut her down. When Charlie got back, he innocently asked, “What did you do while I was gone?” I told him how hard it was to shut down a perfectly-running engine. But that’s why the other one is there. Two is better than one. The Simcom training was total immersion and, being away from the distractions of work and home, the perfect environment for learning.

So now I’m all trained up on our CE340 and ready to go, never more to worry about scary engine failures, right? Not so fast. Remember, I learned two is better than one. That’s not only true for motors. To me, it’s also true for pilots. An analysis of our shop’s fledgling SMS data shows our top three risk factors are currency, pressure



I’m fortunate that our company also operates a 340. With my initial training behind me, I’ll be spending whatever time it takes flying with a safety pilot to become “professional”.

and fatigue. Interestingly, we also just learned during a recent safety briefing of two key barriers to professionalism in the cockpit: pressure and fatigue. (Professionalism is on the NTSB’s current Most Wanted List, along with general aviation safety, since GA accounted for 450 of the 472 aviation fatalities in 2010.) For these reasons and more, I will be flying the CE340 “dual only” until I’m more comfortable, have more experience and fly more regularly.

Are there any insurance lessons in all of this? A few, actually:

- Insurance doesn’t respond when you have an emergency landing with no damage. Think of it like this: If you’re driving down the interstate and your car engine seizes, you pull off the road and call a mechanic, not the insurance company. (Insurance only responds if there is bodily



Simcom Instructor and intrepid warrior, Charlie Bukoski. This mission about 40 years ago was likely much easier than the one he had teaching me to fly a 340 in January 2012!

injury or property damage – not mechanical failure alone.)

- Underwriters prefer annual simulator-based training in complex aircraft for good reason. The emergencies that can be safely simulated, the repetition without worrying about engine wear, fuel burn or ATC delays, the ability to take a break, detox and head right back into the simulator or classroom all make for an ideal learning environment. I also recommend some in-aircraft training at the six-month mark as a minimum to help keep you at the top of your game.
- Underwriters give their best rates to two-pilot operations for good reason, too. Even though Twin Cessnas were designed for safe single-pilot operations, taking along a trusted co-pilot on some trips is a good risk mitigation tool to keep in your bag on those days when you discover two might indeed be better than one.



Eric Barfield is a Certified Aviation Insurance Professional (CAIP) with Hope Aviation Insurance, a national aviation insurance brokerage firm specializing in business aircraft. He is a Commercial pilot and currently serves as Vice Chair of the NBAA Safety Committee and Chair of the South Carolina Aviation Safety Council. Hope Aviation operates Cessna 182 and Cessna 340 aircraft.

FROM THE EDITOR

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born in an era when only a competent, well-trained human could safely fly an airplane. Future generations will miss out on the joy and satisfaction that our generation of pilots has experienced. That's sad, but there's no holding back progress.

TETERBORO SAFETY VIDEO

My oldest son graduates from college this month. After that, he heads to New York City for a two-year stint with Teach For America. My wife and I have always liked visiting New York, so we're looking forward to traveling there frequently to visit John. It's about a 2.7 hour flight in the Crusader.

In a prior life, I worked for a New York based company and flew my T310R there often. I tried all the airports in the area: White Plains (KHPN), Long Island (KISP), Teterboro (KTEB), Essex County, NJ (KCDW) and Morristown, NJ (KMMU). Of all of them, Teterboro was the most convenient and the airport I flew into most frequently. Convenient, but busy! Airplanes were shoehorned in at the FBO's. During the

busiest times- Friday afternoon was the worst- you could wait for an hour or more to get a clearance to depart. But now that I'll be flying personally, I'll be better able to avoid the busy times, so I'm pretty certain that when we visit New York, we'll be flying into KTEB. Since it's been a while since I've flown there, I was delighted to stumble across an excellent FAA video designed to brief pilots on the airport and its specific safety procedures. Most useful are the

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