AVIATION POETRY'S HALL OF FAME

Honor Roll

Aviation Poetry by World Famous Aviators and Others

Dedicated to all who have captured the true spirit of flight.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
APHOFHR is unlike many other fields in the humanities. It is composed solely of famous aviation poets who have written of their own or other’s flying experiences in striking verse. There are never any membership dues, solicitations for money, advertisements, fund raisers or other financial schemes associated with the APHOFHR. Such funding is neither needed, nor accepted, as it is a totally self-sufficient, not-for-profit enterprise. The APHOFHR is beneficent with the single object in mind to honor a select few who have excelled in writing unique aviation poetry deemed worthy enough to be passed to posterity for generations to come. It serves for the useful enjoyment of those who fly or dream of flight.

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HIGH FLIGHT
by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr.
1922 - 1941

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds -- and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of -- wheeled and soared and swung

High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untresspassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, Jr., an American, was 18 years old when he went to Canada in October of 1940, during World War II, and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. Upon completion of his pilot training, he was deployed to England to participate in the Battle of Britain. On December 11th, 1941, at 19 years of age, he was killed when his Spitfire collided with another aircraft inside a cloud while on a training flight. The fatal accident occurred near the airfield at Scopwick, Lincolnshire, England. Several months before his death, he composed his immortal sonnet "High Flight." Fortunately, he mailed it to his parents in the United States on the back of a letter he had written to them. In the letter, he stated, "I am enclosing a verse I wrote the other day. It started at 30,000 feet and was finished soon after I landed."
COURAGE

by Amelia Earhart
1897 - 1937

World Famous Aviatix
First woman to fly the Atlantic solo; set several other flying records
First president of the 99s, which she named for the original number
of charter members

Courage is the price that Life exacts
for granting peace.
The soul that knows it not
Knows no release from little things:
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter
joy can hear
The sound of wings.
How can life grant us boon of living,
compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant
hate
Unless we dare
The soul's dominion? Each time we
make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold the resistless
day,
And count it fair.
Science, freedom, beauty, adventure:
What more could you ask of life?
Aviation combined all the elements I loved.
There was science in each curve of an airfoil,
in each angle between strut and wire,
in the gap of a spark plug
or the color of the exhaust pipe.
There was freedom in the unlimited horizon,
on the open fields where one landed.
A pilot was surrounded by beauty of earth and sky.
He brushed treetops with the birds,
leapt valleys and rivers,
explored the cloud canyons he had gazed at as a child.
Adventure lay in each puff of the wind.
I began to feel that I lived on a higher plane
than the skeptics of the ground,
one that was richer because of its very association
with the element of danger they dreaded,
because it was free of the earth
to which they were bound.
In flying, I tasted the wine of the gods
of which they could know nothing.
Who valued life more highly,
the aviators who spent it on the art they loved,
or these misers who doled it out,
like pennies through their ant like days?
I decided that if I could fly for ten years
before I was killed in a crash,
it would be a worthwhile trade
for an ordinary lifetime.
attempt to win the $25,000 Orteig Prize, which had been offered by New York hotel businessman Raymond Orteig for the first non-stop flight between New York, NY, and Paris, France. Lindbergh helped design the Ryan monoplane that he was to fly. The plane was named the "Spirit of St. Louis." On his way to New York from California where the plane was built, Lindbergh established a record for flight time between San Diego, CA, and St. Louis of 14 hours and 25 minutes for the 1,500 mile journey. After a brief layover, he flew to New York, establishing another record for transcontinental flight time. On May 20, 1927, Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, NY, for Paris, France. On May 21, 33 1/2 hours later, Lindbergh landed the "Spirit of St. Louis" at Le Bourget Field near Paris. He had flown over 3,600 miles and became the first to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by the U.S. Congress and the first-ever Distinguished Flying Cross by the U.S. government. Later in 1927, Lindbergh flew to a number of Latin American countries as a goodwill ambassador for the U.S. government. While in Mexico, he met Anne Spencer Morrow, daughter of the American ambassador. They were married on May 29, 1929. In 1930, Lindbergh taught his wife to fly. She became the first woman in America to earn a glider pilot's license. Later that year, she earned her pilot's license. During the next few years, Anne was his co-pilot, radio operator and navigator. Despite his status as a civilian adviser to the U.S. Army and Navy in the Pacific, during World War II, Lindbergh flew fifty combat missions, and worked on developing new technologies to aid military pilots in combat. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Lindbergh a U.S. Air Force Brigadier General. Lindbergh continued to be a consultant to both the U.S. military and commercial enterprises, including Pan American Airways. In the late 1960s, he became a spokesman for a variety of environmental conservation causes. He earned the nickname, "Lucky Lindy," for his many exploits. Charles Lindbergh died of cancer in 1974 at his home on the Hawaiian island of Maui. He wrote of his love of flight in prose in 1927. This passage has been referred to exclusively as a quotation until it was finally recognized as also being prose poetry.
One distant ray of light  
Was all he asked  
The pilot  
Lost o'er a world of buried mountains  
and dead lakes

The night had lost him blindly  
In its swirling spate of storm cloud  
Like a dark nightmarish carnival  
Thronging closer and closer about him

His lust for light sent him climbing  
Through the trap that closed again beneath him  
Till the clouds shed their slime of shadow  
And he moved into starlit tranquility
ARE ALL THE AIRPLANES IN?

by Nancy Robinson Masters
World Class Aviatrix, Writer, Poet, Historian, Lecturer, TEA Certified
One of the most successful children's book authors in the U. S.

I think oftentimes as the night draws nigh
   Of an airport on the hill,
Of a runway wide and bordered with grass,
   Where the airplanes taxied at will.
And when the night at last came down,
   Hushing the whirling din,
Masters would look around and ask,
"Are all the airplanes in?"

'Tis many and many a day since then,
   And the airport on the hill
Echoes of pilots who've come and gone,
   And the runway is never still.
But I see it all as it used to be,
   And tho' many the voices have been,
In the old north hangar, I hear Masters ask,
"Are all the airplanes in?"

I wonder if as the shadows fall
   On his hair now turning gray,
As he steps aside as men must do
   For new pilots to come the way,
If forgotten they'll pass him while calmly he stands,
   Eyes focused upon the wind,
And quietly he'll ask tho' no one may hear,
"Are all the airplanes in?"
TO FLY

by Dr. Paul E. Garber
1899 – 1992

Curator at Smithsonian Institution Air and Space Museum
Historian Emeritus of the Smithsonian Museum
Ramsey Fellow of the National Air and Space Museum

To fly, Dear God in Heaven, to fly,
To see Thy world from Thy vast sky,
To pilot my airplane high and low,
To ride the wind wherever I go.

To climb through dark clouds - then
Suddenly a burst of light and the sun I see,
Climbing higher, I look below
And see that the clouds are white as snow.

I know that the world is way down there
But I'm above all worldly care,
Onward I fly, alone, serene,
Immersed in a wonderful, beautiful scene.

But then, alas, I must go down again,
To earth's gray shadows, to mankind's domain,
But my heart is enriched, my soul lifted high,
Because - for a while - I was up in Thy sky.
**THEY HAVE NOT WHOLLY DIED**

by Paul E. Garber, 1/28/86
1899 - 1992

Icarus braved the skies toward the sun
but wax-held wings let go,-- his life was done.

Lilienthal in broken glider laid;
his last words, "Sacrifices must be made."

Tom Selfridge, brave Army Lieutenant, he,--
first airplane pilot to die tragicly.

Harriett Quimby from her airplane seat
was thrown upward and outward,--death complete.

Cal Rodgers, first to fly our continent's span
survived many hard landings,--what a man!

But then his controls jammed, he couldn't fly,
into the surf he crashed, and thus to die.

Wiley Post, Will Rogers, many more,
Grissom, Chaffee, White,--deaths we deplore.

And now another seven end their days,
their lives vanished in a horrible blaze,

But yet, the paths of progress lie ahead.
There will be other heroes,--some be dead,

We cannot let this cruel tragedy
end all our efforts. Striving we must be.

Onward and upward, constantly to try,
learning more about earth, sea, and sky.

Dear Heavenly Father, take into Thy care
these dear friends whose lives ended way out there,

And tell them we are grateful that they tried
to advance science. They've not wholly died.
Our admiration and love will remain.
We'll carry on. The world will richly gain.

New knowledge evermore we'll try to find.
We thank all heroes, trying, for mankind.
THE COPilot

by Captain Keith Murray


I am the copilot. I sit on the right.
It's up to me to be quick and bright;
I never talk back for I have regrets,
But I have to remember what the captain forgets.

I make out the flight plan and study the weather,
Pull up the gear, stand by to feather;
Make out the mail forms and do the reporting,
And fly the old crate while the captain is courting.

I take the readings, adjust the power,
Put on the heaters when we're in a shower;
Tell him where we are on the darkest night,
And do all the bookwork without any light.

I call for my captain and buy him cokes;
I always laugh at his corny jokes,
And once in awhile when his landings are rusty
I always come through with, "By gosh, it's gusty!"

All in all, I'm a general stooge,
As I sit on the right of the man I call "Scrooge";
I guess you think that is past understanding,
But maybe some day he will give me a landing.

A second more humorous version of this poem (with only slight word changes as sung on Oscar Brand's popular CD entitled THE WILD BLUE YONDER) is called THE LOUSY COPilot.
The boundary lamps were yellow blurs
Against the winter night,
And I had checked the last ship in
And snapped the office light
And paused a while to let the ghosts
Of bygone days and men
Roam down the skies of auld lang syne
As one will now and then ...
When fancy set me company
A red checked lad to stand
With questions gleaming in his eyes,
A model in his hand.

He may have been your boy or mine,
I could not clearly see,
But there was no mistaking how
His eyes were questioning me
For answers which all sons must have
Who build their toys in play,
But pow'r them in valiant dreams
And fly them far away;
So down I sat with him beside
There in the dim lit shed,
And with the ghost of better men
To check on me, I said:

"I cannot tell you, Sonny Boy,
The future of this art,
But one thing I can show you, lad,
An old time pilot's heart;
And you may judge what flight may give
Or hold in store for you
By knowing how true pilots feel
About the work they do;
And only he who dedicates
His life to some ideal
Becomes as one with his dreams
   His future will reveal.

Not one of whose wings are dust
   Would call his bargain in,
Not one of us would welsh his part
   To save his bloomin' skin,
Not one would wish to walk again
   Unless allowed to throw
His heart into the thing he loved
   And go as he would go;
Not one would change for gold or pow'r,
   Nor fun nor love nor fame,
The part he played and price he paid
   In making good the game.

And of the living ... none, not one,
   Regrets the scars he bears,
The sheer uncertainty of plans,
   The poverty he shares,
Remitted price for one mistake
   That checks a bright career,
The shattered hopes, the scant rewards,
   The future never clear:
And of the living ... none, not one,
   Who truly loves the sky,
Would trade a hundred earth bound hours
   For one that he could fly.

If that sleek model in your hand,
   Which you have brought to me,
Most represents the thing you love,
   The thing you want to be,
Then, you will fill your curly head
   With knowledge, fact and lore,
For there is no short cut which leads
   To aviation's door;
And only those whose zeal is proved
   By patient toil and will
Shall ever have a part to play
   Or have a place to fill."

And suddenly the lad was gone
   On wings I could not hear,
But from afar off came his voice
In studied tones and clear,
A prophet's message simply told
For this is what he said
And why his hand will someday lead
Formations overhead:
"Who wants to fly has got to know:
Now two times two is four:
I've got to learn the first things first!"
...I closed the hanger door.
BECAUSE I FLY

anonymous

Because I fly
I laugh more than other men
I look up and see more than they,
I know how the clouds feel,
What it's like to have the blue in my lap,
To look down on birds,
To feel freedom in a thing called the stick...
Who but I can slice between God's billowed legs,
And feel then laugh and crash with His step
Who else has seen the unclimbed peaks?
The rainbow's secret?
The real reason birds sing? Because I Fly,
I envy no man on earth.
THE BOMBERS

by Sarah Churchill
Winston Churchill's daughter

Whenever I see them ride on high,
Gleaming and proud in the morning sky,
Or lying awake in bed at night,
I hear them pass on their outward flight;
I feel the mass of metal and guns,
Delicate instruments, deadweight tons,
Awkward, slow, bomb racks full,
Straining away from downward pull,
Straining away from home and base,
And try to see the pilot's face,
I imagine a boy who's just left school,
On whose quick-learned skill and courage cool
Depend the lives of the men in his crew
And success of the job they have to do;
And something happens to me inside
That is deeper than grief, greater than pride,
And though there is nothing I can say,
I always look up as they go their way
And care and pray for every one,
And steel my heart to say,
"Thy will be done."
THE AEROPLANE

by Gordon Boshell

I sweep the skies with fire and steel,  
My highway is the cloud,   
I swoop, I soar, aloft I wheel,   
My engine laughing loud;   
I fight with gleaming blades the wind   
That dares dispute my path,   
I leave the howling storm behind,   
I ride upon it's wrath.

I laugh to see your tiny world,   
Your toys of ships, your cars,   
I rove an endless road unfurled   
Where the mile stones are the stars,   
And far below, men wait and peer   
For what my coming brings,   
I fill their quaking hearts with fear   
For death...is in my wings.
I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years behind seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.
untitled

by Charlie Williams
Former U. S. Navy pilot; advanced CFI;
retired from the FAA; a pilot’s pilot

Sailplane
Gracefully tapered
Gliding, soaring, climbing
Mind is at peace
Silence

*****

Airship
Outdated antique
Cruising, mooring, tethered
Dinosaur of the sky
Nostalgia.

*****

The trainer skimmed over the ground,
The instructor hollered "Go around!"
The student hesitated,
The instructor waited,
We all heard a crashing sound.
THE MAN WILL NEVER FLY
MEMORIAL SOCIETY THEME SONG

by Dick Jordan

(Sung to the tune of The Man on the Flying Trapeze)

1st Verse
Now, back in December of Nineteen-O-Three,
The Wright brothers came to Dare county to see
If they could defy the Law of Grav-i-ty
By trying to make like a bird.
They had looked the world over for just the right spot
With breezes and sunshine and sand
Where it wasn't too cold and it wasn't too hot,
And there's always a soft spot to land.

Chorus
Oh--fill up your glasses, and let's have a round
For Wilbur and Orville, those men of renown,
Who taught us to fly without leaving the ground,
And that's what we're doing tonight.

2nd Verse (same tune)
On that fateful morning in Nineteen-O-Three,
A million mosquitoes assembled to see
If Wilbur and Orville would make history,
But the plane never got off the ground.
The mosquitoes flew over and covered the wing
In formation, symmetric and neat,
Then they all flapped their wings and carried the thing
All of one hundred and twenty feet.

(Repeat chorus)

3rd Verse (same tune)
The his'try books tell us the Wright brothers flew,
But they failed to prove that the story is true
So we must give credit where credit is due--
The true facts, at last, can be told.
They discovered a bottle of Kill Devil Rye,
They uncorked it and passed it around;
Soon the brothers were flying but not in the sky, 'Cause the plane was still tied to the ground.
THE AIRPLANE PILOT

by e. rowan s. trimble
PIioneer PoET IaUREAT oF AViATIoN PoETRY

Honorary Doctor of Letters, Philosophy and Aviation Science
This poem is dedicated to Billy Masters, the pilot’s pilot, who is a recipient of the FAA’s Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

I fly through oceans and waves of air,
Like a captain who sails upon the sea,
And ride on outstretched, fragile wings
To the open doors of infinity.

I level my ship on a distant horizon
And follow the curve of the earth below
I defy the grip of weight and gravity,
And challenge the weather as a friendly foe.

I speed along the untamed sky
To the tune of a whistling wind,
Beyond the reach of hovering clouds,
Far above where birds ascend.

I adventure to the limit of heights
Where invisible streams are flowing,
Or drift along some uncharted course
When gentle breezes are blowing.

I leave below all troubles and woes
To find a safe place above it all,
And glimpse at what the Creator sees
From the other side of Heaven's wall.

I fly my craft in the boundless space
And appear to observers a vanishing dot;
But to those stranded on the ground below,
Up here is home to the airplane pilot.
These - three airplanes, all pilots must fly
Above Mother Earth, in the mind's eye;
One is called "Present;" the second, "Past,"
And the third called "Future" is the last.

The "Present" is lifted on silver wings;
Its powerful engine both hums and sings;
It's a sturdy craft, and the boundless sky
Is its native province to discover and fly.

The "Past" is logged with eager hours
Between the heights and earthbound towers;
The lights were bright and runways new
And horizons level where this craft flew.

The "Future" is clouded with Yesterday;
Its fabric is cracked and stays that way;
Its gears are weak and frame unsound,
And most of its instruments are all unwound.

These - three airplanes, all pilots must fly
Above Mother Earth, in the mind's eye;
One is called "Present;" the second, "Past,"
And the third called "Future" is the last.
VAGABOND PILOT

by e. rowan s. trimble

The clouds are beckoning the eye
To slip somewhere upon the sky,
And my heart and soul yearn to go-
Exactly where, I do not know.

The runway's clear, and what is more,
The airplane's at the hanger's door;
The wind-tee and a meadow lark
Only reset a fire, a spark.

The blue skies are calling for me
To visit on their peaceful sea,
But I'm not sure that I should go-
Old men stay on the ground below.

So I'll think and dream just a bit
About this flame that is lit;
And if I suddenly disappear,
Who will notice that I'm not here?
WATCHING LIGHTS
ABOVE AND BELOW

by e. rowan s. trimble

Whose sky this is the stars can tell-
He lives out there where all is well;
I wonder about the mysterious deep,
About its secrets while others sleep.

My friends must think it's very strange,
To ponder on things beyond our range,
But the beauty captures the inward soul
And asks for answers of life's goal.

They seem content to dream of flight,
To slumber in darkness without a light,
   -The only other object up here
Is a silky cloud that's floating near...

The ground is covered with twinkling things,
   -But I must care for human beings
And make this long and arduous flight,
While others sleep in the dark of night.
I WAR ONE ONE DAY

by e. rowan s. trimble

I war lookin' up at heaven,
A-watchin' them modurn airplanes
Wit engins an' wings a-flyin'
An' sun on them thar winder panes;
When I seed them planes a-soarin',
An' them thar sounds I learnt so well,
I clim a buildin' to see 'em,
So's whats a-doin' I cud tell;
Lots other foks war a-standin'
An' a-starin' thar toward th' sky,
An' all 'em was awed an' peerin',
A-harkin' wit a-squented eye;
Down they cam' closter an' closter,
Them engins jest roarin' a-way,
A-divin', a-turnin' they came,
Roarin' right by us thar that day;
Al' at onct they be a-climin'
Ta th' clouds a-clear out uv sight;
An' that fetched me back to meh youth,
At a-field whar th' Gennies'd light;
I'd clim on them shakin' ole frames
An' roar down them trails uv hi-grass,
A-hopin' n-prayin' them days
They'd git offin th' ground reel fass!
T'was in them times flyin'machines
Warn't 'xactly what they is right now;
An' you'd havf ta rid'em like a hoss
Ta git 'em up 'n down som-how;
An' them people would star an' look,
Jest like we're a-doin' right here,
An' wondur what we'd think of next,
Us fools a-livin' without a-fear...
THE FINAL CYNOSURE
OF FORT WOLTERS

by e. rowan s. trimble

The Army's training helicopters filled
The air with cyclic pitch, while pilots,
charted
For duty over mesas, flew—though stilled
By whirling rotor blades; and, now, imparted
"Farewells" have turned the windmills
counter-started,
In proud salute, for helix-winds must leave
The Fort, to honor men with peaceful hearted
Hedonics; compassed space, to fly and weave,
Is passed from Wolters' care with skyward
eyes to steeve.
Ah, yes! I have done many thousands of things,
While swinging under my shroud lines and strings;
The peace and quiet and whisper of the free air
Are not found any place else like up there;
I've even mocked at Death and cursed at Hell,
As through the sky and past the Earth I fell;
I've kicked and turned, and laughed and shouted out,
And chased the devil himself in a rout!
Even da Vinci with his old "tent roof"
Would have envied my being so aloof!
Lenormand, the first, didn't jump in vain,
But Garnerim, too, would have felt fain
Had he ever watched my every glee,
As the kids and crowds watched and thrilled at me.

My 'chute and I have been very good pals-
Something like moms and dads, or guys and gals.
I can tell that you'd just never believe
How truly great it is to fall and weave
Through the space, under a 'chute on the sky,
Enjoying life and being up so high;
You see, hanging there I am "NOW" and sound,
For all the troubles are here on the ground;
I'm rough about some of the things I do,
But that's the price of escape, and freedom, too...
What I see on such short trips is great art-
Spread below are sights which capture the heart...
Ah, yes! I have done many thousands of things,
While swinging under my shroud lines and strings;
The peace and quiet and whisper of the free air
Are not found any place else like up there.
"Tell me, Dad, how does
Your aeroplane fly?,”
   My son asked
With glee in his eye;
"And, being a bard,
   You," said he,
"Must tell how it’s done
   In poetry."
Though shaken a bit
   By the request,
I thought I'd try
   It as a test--

Over the foil, flows the air,
Creating a low pressure there;
   Under the wings
High pressure brings
   A shift we call lift.
From above and below,
   It speeds, and it slides,
Till at last, the craft rides
   High on the pressure's flow.
And having once begun
Then comes time for the fun,
As the craft flies the breeze
   To upward, airy seas,
Through skies, light and dark,
   Floating like a bark
Through clouds, over-the-top,
Beyond a snowy mountain peak,
   Just a short hop,
Some thrill to seek.

Now the craft's soaring
With the engine roaring,
There floating, turning in the sun,
Its struggle for flight done,
It's entered the open space
   In which it can suspend
At a leisurely pace
Till time to descend.
The windy air blows,
Or evenly flows,
Whipping or steady
And changing when ready.
A turbulent front goes
Rising and falling,
Swinging and crawling,
Passing or stalling;
But in the spacious sky,
My aeroplane and I
Explore:

Daringly, blaringly,
Gladed and bladed,
Unaided, cascaded,
Promenaded, serenaded,
Sleighing and praying,
Obeying and surveying,
Through pages and gages,
Rampageous and courageous,
Aching and quaking,
Scaling and sailing,
Availing and prevailing,
Aiming and flaming,
Acclaiming, exclaiming,
Planing and straining,
Airy and glary,
Gracing and racing,
Outpacing and embracing,
Elated and belated,
Greatly and stately,
Blazing and glazing,
Inhalable, exhalable,
Fameless and blameless,
Explainable and sustainable,
Daintily and saintly,
Escapable, reshapable,
Capering and tapering,
Gyrational, sensational,
Vibrational and rotational.
Fatefully and gratefully,
Calculating and penetrating,
Magical and mythical,
Helical and conical,
Whimsical and musical,
Cryptical and mystical,
Arced and sparked,
Barging and charging,
Embarking, disbarking,
Gnarling and snarling,
Arty and hearty,
Darting and carting,
Hatched and latched,
Fanned and scanned,
Banging and clanging,
Banked and yanked,
Prancing and dancing,
Chanced and tranced,
Splashing and smashing,
Gasping and grasping,
Favorable and pleasurable,
Crafty and drafty,
Wagger and swagger,
Refracting and contracting,
Protracted and abstracted,
And gallant with talent.

Rallied and tallied,
Ambled and scrambled,
Clamor and stammer,
Random and tandem,
Wrangle and tangle,
Spanning and scanning,
Entrancing and romancing,
Flapless and mapless,
Blaring and flaring,
Tearing and swearing,
Surpassing and harassing,
Battering and chattering,
Spattering and shattering,
Lavishing and ravishing,
Amorous and glamorous,
Bangily, clangily,
Tangily, twangily,
Happily, snappily,  
Capturing and rapturing,  
Barreling and caroling,  
Arrowy and sparrowy,  
Narrowing and harrowing,  
Massively and passively,  
Elastical, gymnastical,  
Emphatical, dramatical,  
Mathematical, systematical,  
Scavaging, ravaging,  
Raveling and traveling,  
Billowy and pillowy,  
Eagle-beaked and apple-cheeked.  
Spied and reeled,  
Dreamed and screamed,  
Peered and seared,  
Steered and veered,  
Domineered, pioneered,  
Squeezed and wheezed,  
Reaching and screeching,  
Skiing and fleeing,  
Appealing and revealing,  
Leaping and sweeping,  
Heaving and cleaving,  
Unbelievable, inconceivable,  
Deflecting and reflecting,  
Sectored and vectored,  
Hauled and called  
Back to the earth, again we descend,  
Like a feather that drifts  
On a cloud of calm wind.  
"And that, my son, is how my aeroplane flies  
High on the heavens, outstretched on the skies."
BROKEN WINGS

by e. rowan s. trimble

On silenced wings,
One other misses the sky
A mere guest of clouds.

Not music of air,
Not heights for earth-bound fabric
Speed the beauties home.

Memories of blue
Spill the colors of the heart,
As whirling blades climb.

Invisible lift
Betrayed the beautiful scene,
Like ice on the skin.

A castle empty
Is strange to disciplined eyes
Where wind lifts the soul.

All time is halted
When yesteryears seek to fly
Frames on horizons.

No dials to unwind;
No beacons to flash the path.
Dreams write the future.

Looking down below,
Thoughts capture one lasting sight
Of freedom above.

Now, ink marks the logs,
Fills wet lines on the last trip
Of the broken wings.
STEADY, PEGASUS, STEADY!

by e. rowan s. trimble

Blue Angel!- Black Bandits are in the sun... Steady, Pegasus, they're making their run... Watch that wind wagon closing on the right... These Widows mean to make this a rough fight... Where are those Blowtorches?...Steady, now, Red... Hit 'em hard- They're rolling in from straight ahead... A kill! A kill! Confirm. She's smoking and burning.... They're tucking tail...She's rolling and turning.... Bought the farm; steady, Pegasus, we're on flak... We gotta get through- you gotta get us back... Keep 'em up tight. Green Hornet's hit on two and four... Sun Ray! Get out! Get out!...Let's even up the score... Shootin' Star, give me cover; he's coming around... Get those bays open. Get on target.. Watch the ground... Okay, she's all yours...three, two, one, Bombs Away! Let's go home. We paid the devils their dues today... Good work, boys. You earned your keep. You were ready... -Green Hornet? Sun Ray? Who got out? -Pegasus, Steady...
Our motto proudly boasted that
"Peace Is Our Profession,"
Yet I never saw its banner flown,
During a funeral procession.
The bombs, the bombers, the air crews
Were there for a single reason:
Keep our beloved country safe
In a world of war and treason!
-So to Vietnam the bombers flew
To replicate the moon,-
Bomb it back to the Stone Age,
But don't win the peace too soon!
The opportunities came and went
To end the war for one and all,
No! -Keep the armament factories going,
It's our motto's glorious call...
What was the purpose of that war?
Was peace our true profession?
The truth was never more earnestly told
Than at burials and confession...
LOVE, WAR AND A DREAM

by e. rowan s. trimble

Let me tell you an enchanting tale,
    Maybe a fable, maybe it's true;
It matters not, but its mystery and plot
    Are painted on skies of blue.

It's a marvelous story, and legend as well,
    Of a wonderful, war-time flyer,
A pilot brave, whose life he gave
    To his girl and powers higher.

It all began, 0, so long ago,
    Way back in the fleeting past,
That Carolette young, where war was flung,
    A love 'cross her heart was cast.

Love was sweet when the gloom of time
    Called her Robin to fight one day;
In a dusty cloud, he flew so proud,
    From a far and dirt runway.

Wing-silver gleamed on Robin's face,
    As his aircraft climbed on high;
The weather was mild, and the pilot smiled,
    As his squadron joined the sky.

Out toward the mountains and valleys green,
    The lonely squadron fanned;
These courageous few, on an evening hue,
    Traveled to a distant land.

Carolette waited, as the months went by,
    Till the tree leaves turned to gold,
And the summer sun, and autumn done,
    She lingered through the winter cold.

She listened in a tower, for the sounds of planes,
    Each day, she waited and sang;
And whole nights through, with a love so true,
    She watched the windsock hang.
And the winds blew strong, and the winds grew still,
   And the winds blew once again;
To the skies a glance, her heart to enhance,
   Her songs were of love and pain.

Then patience gone, she could wait no more,
   The squadron and Robin to find,
Took off in her plane, in clouds and rain,
   And the airfield left behind.

She flew on and on, over mountain and hill,
   Across revelry, rivers and sand,
Past dreamy oceans, and lost emotions,
   To that uncharted, foreign land.

All time was lost, but she flew right on,
   Till she spotted a runway ahead;
Though the journey was long, her love was strong,
   As she passed over the Field of Dread.

To a war-lit coast, at last she came,
   In the midst of a flaming night;
Lying straight below, in a burning glow,
   Was the war-gun's fiery light.

She landed there, and in her dream,
   The squadron was scattered aground;
And slumped and weak, unable to speak,
   Found her love on a grassy mound.

The squadron no more to the air would take,
   No more their planes to fly;
'Twas their last flight, that hellish night,-
   They had died as men will die.

Then Carolette held her Robin's head;
   She kissed his face and hair,
And all night long, she sang a song,
   A story of the nightmare there.

The flash of war still on the sky,
   She gently raised his head,
And sang of her love, to the skies above,-
   And of friends now lying dead.
Her eyes once bright turned misty blue,
She beat the blood-red ground,
For the guns of night, and her far-flung flight,
Filled her head with a thundering sound.

An ache in her heart for her lost love,
No wish to die this way,
Not a murmur or thought, save for the pilots who fought,
It was revenge she wanted that day.

Carolette at once voiced loud a song,
To the Greatest Pilot above,
And sang a sweet prayer, while lingering there,
For life for her dying love.

As her soft words drifted through the air,
And the sun rose high with its heat,
Though weak and pale, with a shout and hail,
Robin suddenly jumped to his feet.

Then Robin lifted his Carolette up,
And took her to the plane,
And with that tender prayer, she sang right there,
Both survived the suffering and pain.

And off to the skies from that war-torn land,
An airstrip came into sight,
Where nature grew, in fullest view,
Kissed by a rainbow's light.

A soft wind blew, as they touched the ground,
And the skies were filled with love;
Their landing was blessed, on the airstrip, "Rest,"
By the Greatest Pilot above.

Then, on with the dream, they headed home,
The legendary flight was done;
They both were free, 'twas plain to see,
Till finally the war was won.

Though Robin's squadron never returned,
Nor their friends from that distant field,
The men who died, in their memories reside,
For that part of the dream was real.
ECHOES

by e. rowan s. trimble

Thinking of many things serene,
Former pleasures come to mind:
   Sun and clouds paint a scene
   Of the times I left behind.
Winter weather stains the skies
   With its wind and rain,
But with summer in my eyes,
I dream of flying, once again;
Waking in the midst of night,
Still by moony thoughts possessed,
I take a chart and start to write
Of days on high when I was blest;
   Over me the memories sway,
   And into Yesterday I climb;
But in echoes I hear them say,
"Another place, another time."
ZEPHYRS

by e. rowan s. trimble

In yon sunset's dying blaze,
The planes prepare to leave,
Cutting through my memory's gaze
   As they interweave.

I crawl into my pilot's seat,
My checklist to run through;
A dozen times I will repeat
   The things that I must do.

From the hanger where I wait
   For the moon to rise,
I watch the planes triangulate
   Through the darkened skies.

Then, climbing slowly, they disappear
   (Where I soon will be),
Like a fleet of ships that steer
   So calmly out to sea.

As the darkness waits the light,
   There's a silence in the air-
   Only zephyrs in the night
      Have touched the clouds high up there.

The planes return, one by one,
   And land with muted sound-
My sudden reverie all done:
   I never left the ground!
LOCKS

by e. rowan s. trimble

Wind 'em up, let 'em fly!
That's what I used to do
With flying models I would build
From sticks, paper and glue.

To the heights upon the sky
Each climbing craft was bound;
The little props would twist and turn,
Till rubber bands unwound.

Then back to earth they'd come, again-
I'd catch them, one by one,
And wind 'em up, and let 'em fly,
Continuing with the fun.

But one did not return one day,
It disappeared from sight;
I could not find a trace of it
So high had been its flight.

This message was penned upon its side:
"The cargo is one locked box.
Inside is HOPE, its key is LOVE,
Won't you unlock its locks?"

Then, later on when I grew up,
A pilot I became;
I'd wind 'em up, and I would fly,
As though a children's game.

And flying above the clouds one day,
I glanced to my left side;
And there it was, that little plane!
On thermals, it would ride.

It looped and turned and spun around,
As though were playing with me,
I knew not what to make of it,
It was quite a sight to see.
That little plane just flew and flew,
   And then it flew away;
It disappeared as it had done
   When I was a boy that day.

Now, other pilots say they have seen
   That lost plane rest supine
Upon a cloud of cotton candy,
   Where they had stopped to dine!

   But true there is a little plane,
"The cargo is one locked box.
Inside is HOPE, its key is LOVE,
   Won't you unlock its locks?"
TOO LOW
by e. rowan s. trimble

We sought excitement when we were young,
    And climbed upon the sky
In wing'd ships and rode the wind
    With mischief in every eye.

The joy, the peace, the happy times,
    The challenge, a pilot's fun,
Became a race with spinning orbs
    Before our flying was done.

Each flight was like the very first,
    A thrill that could not wait,
We wheeled and turned and traveled far,
    Before it grew too late.

The memories made from golden hours,
    We logged most every day,
We now recall with laughing eyes
    As on the ground we stay.

But soon the lowering headwinds blow,
    -Too quick to dust we fly,
Too short the course line far below,
    Too low our flights on high.
THEY WERE FLYING TODAY

by e. rowan s. trimble

We saw the airplanes flying today,
As one of them passed, it seemed to say
"The winds are calm, the skies are clear,
Don't you think you belong up here?"

No doubt, it's where we truly belong,
Up there in the skies of wind and song,
Away from all the future past,
Out there where memories will last.

Yes, you and I hear the engines roar,
And see it all as it was before.
We stand there holding hand in hand,
And watch the airplanes as they land.

We open a sliding hanger door
And walk across its concrete floor;
We walk around our airplane there,
Inspecting with our loving care.

And soon we find we're flying, again,
Though on the ground we still remain;
I look at you and you at me,
Our love of flying is plain to see.

Down here the time has slipped away
And left us stranded below today;
We walked along the grassy tarmac,
Unable to keep from looking back.
THE ONLY PLACE
by e. rowan s. trimble

The only place I understand
Is in the sky above the land,
I break the chains of gravity,
Each time I leave to fly the sea
Above the mountains and the snow,
Beyond the reach of all below,
Above prairies and oceans green,
And desert sand and lakes serene,
Above the trees or lonely town,
And city streets where I'm not bound.
Out here so far above the clouds,
There is no noise of bustling crowds;
All trouble I leave down far below
Where, left to me, I'd never go;
At one with self and Nature's grace,
I'm at peace with the human race;
Dark space awash with deep starlight
Casts its beams on the shores of night;
At home I am with such as these,
Soaring, flying, free as a breeze,
Where friendly birds with me ascend,
And follow when I must descend;
-They understand the only place
Where God and I speak face to face.
And he said to her, "My darling, Would you like to come fly with me?"
And she said to him, "We just met. What is it you want me to see?"

"It's not what I want you to see. It is what I want you to do."
"To do?" she said, "What do you mean?"
"I just want to cloud dance with you."

"That is completely new to me,"
She said with a quizzical eye;
With that they got into his plane, And off they flew into the sky.

Higher, higher, they climbed and climbed
Until they were far out of sight;
The sun went down, the moon came out, And twinkling stars lit up the night.

They soared among the cotton clouds,
So fluffy and soft to the touch;
He weaved the craft around their peaks, And into their valleys, as such.

Suddenly, a runway appeared,
Its boundary lights were all aglow!
There on a cloud was an airfield, Overlooking the world below.

He called the tower for clearance,
And like a feather landed there;
They both crawled from the little plane, And walked on stardust in the air.

Then, music from the hanger played,
A sweet melody so high above;
The two began to hum and dance, At this field called Romance and Love.
They danced and sang the whole night through,
From cloud to cloud, as it would seem,
And then the morning broke the sky,
And ended their high flying dream.

But every night, it is the same,
Just as it was when they first met:
They dream and cloud dance in the sky
At an airfield they can't forget.
COME FLY WITH ME

by e. rowan s. trimble

Come fly with me in dreams so fair,
Beyond this world in candy air,
Where rainbows kiss your smiling face
With tender touch of love's embrace.

On cotton clouds, float back to earth
Where revelry can then give birth
To nectar locked within that part
Known but to you deep in your heart.

Soar with eagles and moonbeams bright,
Ride shooting stars into each night;
   It is a fantasy, I know,
But it will set your heart aglow.

   If only for a little while,
You capture bliss in your sweet smile,
   A memory you'll have to keep,
To free your dreams in nightly sleep.

   No promises or words untrue,
   No regrets to trouble you,
   It can only be what you make,
What you give or away you take...
A NIGHT FLIGHT

by e. rowan s. trimble

I
My heart soars with grace, as an eagle flies;
A mountain and giant cloud bound the land:
I view from my vantage the night’s full moon rise
As from the whisk of a magician's hand;
A billion stars line dark shores and space expand,
All about me they pass in endless files,
O'er the horizon rests an outstretched band
Of snow capped mountains and craggy stone piles
Where ancient empires once spread countless miles.

II
I see reflections on the calm ocean,
Rising with foam waves, like lighthouse towers;
With glistening colored lights of random motion,
Beams dance on the waves with moonlight powers:
So it is tonight, free from earthly care,
I can see from North to South, West to East,
And drink of the cool, clear, unpolluted air;
There is freedom here at the very least,
I partake and deem dignity increased.

III
In God’s beauty, war’s echoes are no more --
With silent buoyancy, like a gondolier,
I ply my airplane toward a distant shore,
Where sweet songs meet always the tuneful ear;
Though Ages are gone, God’s beauty still is here.
Statues fall, arts fade, Nature does not die,
Or concealed thoughts of lost years once so dear,
The pleasant mem'ries of sweet, bygone flowers,
The revel of my youth masks these treasured hours.

IV
High flight still to me casts a spell beyond,
The soul remembers, and the boundless air,
Like mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
That leave my age’d heart in vanished sway;
Youth was a trophy, that much I can say,
Enthusiasm, an object of lore,
These devoted thoughts sweep my heart away --
The hidden aches gone, and life all but o'er,
I see myself walking on that far shore.

V
The thoughts in my mind I dare never say;
In the words of a poet, they create
Allusions of another time and day,
A more beloved existence, which fate
Prohibits at my age, left a state
Of mortal bondage, by the decades supplied,
First exiled, then replaced, time does not wait;
Tending my heart, like a flower that died,
I watered it; still, morning dewdrops cried.

VI
Such was the swift flight of youth’s march to age,
The days passed with hope, the last confession;
And these warm feelings locked in my heart’s cage
Parade before me now in procession;
There were many things never meant to be,
None outshone this fond dream in shape or hue,
None more beautiful than flight is to me,
Not the constellations that I can see,
While racing high within this ecstasy.

VII
I think of youth -- and never let it go;
It came like wind -- and disappeared like dreams;
And wherever it flew – I held on though;
But I can never reclaim youth; still teems
My heart with many a throb that aptly seems
Such as I wished for, and at rare times found;
But I must let go – common reason deems
Such overwhelming emotions unsound;
The voice of age speaks, while bright new thoughts surround;
This airplane of mine is truly a friend,
And I will fly high till I must descend.

VIII
My heart soars with grace, as an eagle flies;
A mountain and giant cloud bound the land:
I view from my vantage the night’s full moon rise
   As from the whisk of a magician's hand;
A billion stars line dark shores and space expand,
   All about me they fill my face with smiles,
O'er the horizon rests an outstretched band
Of runway lights, and I must check my dials:
Soon I will land and put behind these miles.
PILOTS IN DEATH

by e. rowan s. trimble

Dedicated to the Ravens, CAT and Air America Pilots

They knew the risks governed by fate,
   Flying in angered skies above;
They bravely faced the mortal hate
   Of heavenly heights void of love;
Honored duty could not repay
Their costs in blood and endless pain;
   Not accolades or what they say
Could reclaim lost spirits, again.
No moral oath forced them to fight,
   Nor patriot’s duty or crowds;
It was venture and sense of right
That enticed them into the clouds;
With level wings and keen of mind,
They flew without hesitant breath;
The battles fought and left behind
But equalized each pilot’s death.
OUR FLAG STILL WAVES

by e. rowan s. trimble

Nigh beyond, lives a man of might,
Some dim soul to restore to light;
He seldom to his friends disclose,
His pains from war, or them expose.
    A hero to his countrymen,
He soared and flew where few have been;
Far above earth he manned his place,
On his bomb crew, nor turned his face;
He sought no more than duty's call,
    A warrior brave and giant to all;
Greater values his soul to prize,
Ten miles above this earth he'd rise;
    A fearless airman with his crew
Saved our freedoms because he flew;
    He met the foe high in the sky,
If fate should call ready to die;
His home is famed to those in need
He chastens long the sinful's deed;
The much-forgotten airman guest
Can there find peace and honor rest;
The broken have their tales allowed
Though wasted lives they have avowed;
The crippled vet may have his say
And while his battled hours away,
Weep through the night his soul to heal
And share the pain that he may feel;
    And the airman, pleased with his guests,
Has helped the fractured through life's tests;
    He cared not defects or their fault,
His open arms was their firm vault;
    With the handicapped by his side,
He showed them faith and virtue's pride;
    A man of honor at valor's call,
He met challenge for each and all;
For God and country with humble grace,
He made the world a better place.
Though centuries will forget his name,
The world will never be the same;
    He in the wars fought dauntless long,
And in the Cold War just as strong;
Men like him gave their all and best,
    So we today may in peace rest.
When our flag waves in blowy breeze,
Our souls should fall upon their knees,
    With thanks to God for what he did,
To keep us free and our foes rid.
So salute though he has grown dim,
Our flag still waves because of him.
WHY HE FLEW
by e. rowan s. trimble

He was a good and gentle man,
One who always declared, "I can!"
He loved children and taught them games,
-Object lessons about life's aims.

He was an airman in his past,
Who flew to heights and heavens vast;
He raced with birds that flew the sky
Among the clouds that soared on high.

It was from time spent in the air
With caution and attentive care
That from life's parallels he drew
Instructions from the way he flew.

He said, "People'd squint, peer and stare
As I flew by while way up there;
They thought I was a careless fool,
Who had not learned life's safety rule.

And what they saw, yet hardly knew
From their vantage below the blue,
Was that shape of a cross above,
-A silent sermon of God's love.

Far too often, people don't see
What's so obviously meant to be;
Their eyes are focused on their fear
And not on what their hearts might hear."

So ever'where that his plane went,
Its shape symbolized what life meant;
And so he shared his story true
With the children of why he flew.
WHAT THIS PILOT KNOWS

by e. rowan s. trimble

When this pilot flies his airplane through the air and sky's arcing crest,
And navigates among God's wonders, north and south and east and west,
He knows the great joy of leaving earth as his wings begin to climb,
And the blessing to be witness to heaven's promises sublime.

And as he leaves all the worries with the hustling crowds far below,
He flies with an assurance that protective angels with him go;
The steady humming of the engine and horizon's vanished land
Combine to enrich his knowledge of the celestial sights so grand.

In smooth air it feels his airplane is suspended and sitting still,
Though speeding across the boundless sky with his confidence and skill;
All instruments assure that the configuration's needle-straight,
And evenly distributed is the craft's balance with its weight.

He flies along his course-line, according to his charts and flight plan,
While his sharp eyes and trained senses across the skies cautiously scan;
Just the importance of being up there is his to ever claim,
While the memories etch a purpose of his life's most fervent aim.

For now he realizes that he must return to Mother Earth,
He knows that, whatever the risks, flying has proved its valued worth,
And that someday he will takeoff and ascend to heights so renowned,
He'll never again descend to a runway laid out on the ground.
SKY-FEVER
by e. rowan s. trimble
PIONEER POET LAUREAT OF AVIATION POETRY SINCE 1977

I want to fly on the sky again, among the eagles and the wind,
And all I need is an aeroplane and good weather for God to send,
And the tanks filled and propeller whirling and the whole airframe shaking,
And the check-list complete and a smooth runway, safe flight in the making.

I want to fly on the sky again, for restless is the urge inside
That is an old urge and strong urge that’s impossible for me to hide;
And all I need is a steady breeze, and again I’ll soon be flying,
Among the mighty clouds my craft and I joyously will be plying.

I want to fly on the sky again, where the soul above the earth is free,
Where the ducks fly and the geese fly above green forests, blue lakes and lea,
And all I want is a pleasant flight to watch seashores and the plover,
And land with faith and assurance of the Everlasting Flyover.
In high school, I was never invited
To attend a dance, party or social function;
When I wasn't working after school,
I'd hop on my bicycle and ride to a local airport,
It had just a dusty grass strip runway,
But I'd bum rides with pilots going anywhere.
Sometimes, they would be going only one way,
And I'd have to try to find somebody flying back.
I learned to fly at that long ago ghost of an airfield,
I was a Senior Air Scout, and that meant I could fly,
At 16, I was flying Cubs, Air Knockers, Swifts,
Staggerwings, Fairchilds and just about anything
That I could twist some joy stick time out of
Because I had very little money,
And flying was a very expensive hobby.
Before I finished high school, I'd been to see
The Red River meanders through Louisiana,
The mountains and lakes in Arkansas,
The Mississippi carries steam boats south to the Gulf,
And dozens of other places that all the dancers,
Party goers and socialites could not dream of.
I had seen the shadows of cows and horses
From the air where the world looked like cotton candy
When in or weaving between the huge cumulus clouds,
Those giants that dwarfed a tiny airplane, like a fly.
There was a sense of freedom of being up there
That the earthbound could never appreciate.
"You been flying, again?!," I would be chided.
"Go ahead. Get yourself killed, but I've tried to warn you,"
came the bellows from my uncle's trembling words.
My grandmother would just say, "If you die flying, I
suppose you will die happy. Go fly, Sonny Boy."
And that I did. I died happy the day I had to quit flying.
It was like being chained to the stump of an old tree,
I'd look up at the birds and talk to them, and say,
"You were invited to fly. So was I."
THE PIONEERS

by C4C Robert C. Brogan

Ever since I was a child
I've always wanted to fly,
And everyday I'd dream of men
who soared across the sky.

These pioneers would give their lives
so men like you and me,
Could guard this Nation's borders
so its people would be free.

These men would fly their aircraft
through every twist and turn,
And some would even push so hard
Their aircraft crashed and burned.

When the heroes left for work
their wives would often pray,
That God would see them through the dangers
they would face that day.

The child whose Dad had perished
may often wonder why.
The day will come when he will know,
the day he learns to fly.
FLYER’S PRAYER

by Patrick J. Phillips

When this life I'm in is done,
   And at the gates I stand,
My hope is that I answer all
   His questions on command.

I doubt He'll ask me of my fame,
   Or all the things I knew,
Instead, He'll ask of rainbows sent
   On rainy days I flew.

The hours logged, the status reached,
   The ratings will not matter.
He'll ask me if I saw the rays
   And how He made them scatter.

Or what about the droplets clear,
   I spread across your screen?
And did you see the twinkling eyes,
   If student pilots keen?

The way your heart jumped in your chest,
   That special solo day-
Did you take time to thank the one
   Who fell along the way?

Remember how the runway lights
   Looked one night long ago
When you were lost and found your way,
   And how, you still don't know?

How fast, how far, how much, how high?
   He'll ask me not these things
But did I take the time to watch
   The moonbeams wash my wings?

And did you see the patchwork fields
   And mountains I did mould;
The mirrored lakes and velvet hills,
   Of these did I behold?
The wind he flung along my wings,
   On final almost stalled.
And did I know it was His name
   That I so fearfully called?

And when the goals are reached at last,
   When all the flying's done,
I'll answer Him with no regret-
   Indeed, I had some fun.

So when these things are asked of me,
   And I can reach no higher,
My prayer this day - His hand extends
   To welcome home a Flyer.
LORD, GUARD AND GUIDE
THE MEN WHO FLY

by Mary C. D. Hamilton

Mary C. D. Hamilton wrote this verse in 1915 which was made into a hymn. It has been amended and modified many times by others for special use. For example, it is the official hymn of the USAF. The most prominent additions follow the original poem.

Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
Through the great spaces of the sky;
Be with them traversing the air
In darkening storms or sunshine fair.

Thou who dost keep with tender might
The balanced birds in all their flight,
Thou of the tempered winds, be near,
That, having Thee, they know no fear.

Aloft in solitudes of space,
Uphold them with Thy saving grace.
O God, protect the men who fly
Thro’ lonely ways beneath the sky.

AMEN

AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS

In U. S. Naval Aviation circles, an additional verse is often added to the traditional hymn. It was rearranged by others about the time of World War II as follows:

Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
Through the great spaces in the sky.
Be with them always in the air,
In darkening storms or sunlight fair;
Oh, hear us when we lift our prayer,
For those in peril in the air!
Aloft in solitudes of space,
Uphold them with Thy saving grace.
Thou Who supports with tender might
The balanced birds in all their flight.
Lord, if the tempered winds be near,
That, having Thee, they know no fear.
Mary C. D. Hamilton (1915)

Due to the hymn's association with the U. S. Navy, other verses have been written for various subdivisions and special circumstances of naval service, including the
MARINES:
Eternal Father, grant, we pray,
To all Marines, both night and day,
The courage, honor, strength, and skill
Their land to serve, thy law fulfill
Be thou the shield forevermore
From every peril to the Corps.
-J. E. Seim (1966)

SEABEES:
Lord, stand beside the men who build,
And give them courage, strength, and skill.
O grant them peace of heart and mind.
And comfort loved ones left behind.
Lord, hear our prayers for all Seabees,
Where'er they be on land or sea.
—R. J. Dietrich (1960)

THE MERCHANT MARINES:
Lord, stand beside the men who sail
Our merchant ships in storm and gale
In peace and war their watch they keep
On every sea, on thy vast deep.
Be with them Lord, by night and day
For Merchant Mariners we pray.
—Wynne McClintock
Wife of former USMMA Superintendent VADM
Gordon McClintock, USMS)

THE COAST GUARD:
Eternal Father, Lord of hosts,
Watch o'er the men who guard our coasts.
Protect them from the raging seas
And give them light and life and peace.
Grant them from thy great throne above
The shield and shelter of thy love.
—(1955) CWO George H. Jenks, Jr., USCG

DIVERS AND SUBMARINERS:
ord God, our power evermore,
Whose arm doth reach the ocean floor,
Dive with our men beneath the sea;
Traverse the depths protectively.
O hear us when we pray, and keep
Them safe from peril in the deep.
—David B. Miller (1965)

ANOTHER SUBMARINER VERSE:
Bless those who serve beneath the deep,
Through lonely hours their vigil keep.
May peace their mission ever be,
Protect each one we ask of Thee.

Bless those at home who wait and pray,
For their return by night and day.
—Reverend Gale R. Williamson (date unknown)
NAVAL NURSES:
O God, protect the women who,
In service, faith in thee renew;
O guide devoted hands of skill
And bless their work within thy will;
Inspire their lives that they may be
Examples fair on land and sea.
—Lines 1-4, Merle E. Strickland (1972) and adapted by James D. Shannon (1973); Lines 5-6, Beatrice M. Truitt (1948)

ANTARCTIC AND ARCTIC SERVICE:
Creator, Father, who dost show
Thy splendor in the ice and snow,
Bless those who toil in summer light
And through the cold Antarctic night,
As they thy frozen wonders learn;
Bless those who wait for their return.
—L. E. Vogel (1965)

SPACE TRAVEL:
Almighty ruler of the all
Whose power extends to great and small,
Who guides the stars with steadfast law,
Whose least creation fills with awe—
Oh grant Thy mercy and Thy grace
To those who venture into space.
—Robert A. Heinlein (1947) as part of his short story "Ordeal in Space."

Eternal Father, King of Birth,
Who didst create the Heaven and Earth,
And bid the planets and the Sun
Their own appointed orbits run;
O hear us when we seek Thy grace
For those who soar through outer space.
—J. E. Volonte (1961)

THOSE WOUNDED IN COMBAT:
Creator, Father, Who first breathed
In us the life that we received,
By power of Thy breath restore
The ill, and men with wounds of war.
Bless those who give their healing care,
That life and laughter all may share.

CIVILIANS:
God, Who dost still the restless foam,
Protect the ones we love at home.
Provide that they should always be
By Thine own grace both safe and free.

O Father, hear us when we pray
For those we love so far away.
—Hugh Taylor (date unknown)
U. S. ARMED FORCES:
Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
   And those who on the ocean ply;
Be with our troops upon the land,
   And all who for their country stand:
Be with these guardians day and night
   And may their trust be in Thy might.
—Author Unknown (1955)

AND THE COMMISSIONING AND DECOMMISSIONING OF A SHIP:
O Father, King of Earth and sea,
   We dedicate this ship to thee.
In faith we send her on her way;
In faith to Thee we humbly pray:
O hear from Heaven our sailor's cry
   And watch and guard her from on High!
—Author/date Unknown

And when at length her course is run,
Her work for home and country done,
Of all the souls that in her sailed
Let not one life in Thee have failed;
But hear from Heaven our sailor's cry,
   And grant eternal life on High!
—Author/date Unknown
AN AIRMAN'S GRACE

By Father John MacGillivary
1923 – 1995

Chaplin, Royal Canadian Air Force

Lord of thunderhead and sky
Who placed in man the will to fly,
Who taught his hand speed, skill and grace
To soar beyond man's dwelling place.

You shared with him the eagles view,
    The right to soar as eagles do,
    The right to call the clouds his home,
And grateful through your heavens roam.

May all assembled here tonight,
And all who love the thrill of flight,
    Recall with twofold gratitude,
Your gift of Wings, Your gift of food.

Amen

Father John MacGillivary was a COPA member and pilot. He owned four aircraft, during his lifetime, -a De Havilland Tiger Moth which he donated to the EAA and was placed in the Museum in Oshkosh; a Miles Hawk M2W; a De Havilland Puss Moth, which was restored as a replica of CF-PEI, an aircraft flown by one of Canada's leading female aviation pioneers, Louise Jenkins; it is now in the National Aviation Museum in Ottawa; and a Taylorcraft BC12D. Father John MacGillivary was a native of Nova Scotia. He lived in Antigonish, during his retirement. He died in February of 1995.
FLAK ALLEY

by W.D. Royster

Dedicated to the Bomber Crew 60, 499th Bomb Group, 879th Bomb Squadron, 20th AF, Isley Field, Saipan Island, 1944 -1945

Silver wings in the moonlight
Smiling swiftly through the night.
With a rendezvous with destiny
Before the morning light.

There's a place called Fuji Ami
Where the bombing runs begin.
It's a straight line to the target
Will we stand on earth again?

There’s a place we call Flak Alley
The combat crews all dread,
Where the shells burst all around us
Someone down there wants us dead.

Fiery fingers reach to grab us
As the searchlights scan the sky.
Then we are caught in their clutches.
We can't escape them, though we try.

Shrapnel then explodes around us
As the shells light up the night.
We can feel the aircraft shudder,
Then continue in its flight.

We continue onward, forward.
'Til we hear the bombardier say,
The words that we are waiting for,
As he announces, "Bombs away!"

Then the Zeroes are coming at us
At last, now we can use our guns.
They harass us to the coastline
As we fly toward the Rising Sun.
Yes, our plane is badly wounded
But we still hear the engines drone.
Still we pray that we will make it,
It's 15 hundred miles to home.

We can hear our engines labor
As we struggle through the night.
We still pray that we can make it
We have not yet won this fight.

Silver wings now in the daylight
And we have our base in sight.
Soon we will come in for a landing.
We'll not forget this bitter night.

What a blessing! What a feeling!
As we start to earth again.
Still it is a short lived pleasure,
Tomorrow we must go out again.

We don't fight for fame or glory.
We have done this job for pay.
I have flown for 18 hours
And I earned five bucks today.

W. D. Royster is said to be an humble man and an accomplished poet and writer. He is also a bonafide American hero. He flew 31 combat missions in B-29 bombers while serving in the 20th AF, during WW II and was wounded while in perilous aerial combat with the Japanese. He received a chest full of medals and ribbons in recognition of his valor and devotion to duty along with the other members of his flight crew. Among the decorations that characterized his heroism were the Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart. He will be remembered as having been among THE GREATEST GENERATION; for such courageous Patriots kept America free for posterity.

Remember: Freedom is not free.
Bird’s Eye View

Flying the "Big Stick"

by W. D. Royster

I went to the war in a seat facing aft,
All I could see was what was behind our craft,
And as we sailed on through the open blue,
I had a bird's view of World War Two.

I could see the Zeros rise from the ground,
And I could see the flak burst all around;
I could see the searchlights scan the sky,
And I could watch the phosphorous bombs on high.

I saw a Zero spiral to the ground,
Later a B-29 followed him down;
It didn't always happen like we wanted it to,
But I had a bird's view of World War Two.

I heard flak rattle against the ship,
I thought we might have a one-way trip;
The plane steadied itself and went on its way,
And we would live to fight still another day.

At Iwo Jima, the crew called to me,
They all knew I'd be the first one to see
If our bombs hit the target, -that was their wish-,
But I had to tell them we only killed fish.

On March nine and ten, a promise we kept,
We hit Tokyo while the city slept;
The Japs found out to their dismay,
You don't mess around with the U. S. of A.

The fires that I watched lit up the night,
The flames soon reached a tremendous height;
Over one-hundred and fifty miles away,
I could still see the glare over Tokyo Bay.

I know that I had the best seat in the war,
I could lean back and listen to the engines roar;
I was proud as punch, and everyone knew
I had a bird's eye view of World War Two.
SONG OF THE VALKYRIE

by unknown Marine pilot

This poem was said to have been found in the wreckage of a Marine fighter that was shot down over New Ireland, during WW II. Its name may have been in reference to the music in Richard Wagner's The Ride of the Valkyries (German: Walkürenritt), the popular term for the beginning of Act III of his opera Die Walküre. If not, it may have been in reference to The Battle Song of the Valkyries known as Darradarljod. It is often said of Norse mythology that if one sees a Valkyrie before a battle, he or she will die in that battle.

I have skimmed the ragged edge of lightning death, And torn from bloody flesh of sky a thunder song; Across the nakedness of virgin space, I've blistered my frozen hand in feathered ice, And dared angelic wrath to smash The snarling will of my demon steed; Far above sun-glint on winded spume, High executioner of laws no man has made, I've welded Samurai knights into fiery tombs And hurled them down, like the plumed Minoan, Far down the searing heights to punch Their livid crates in the sea; "Enemies," you say. They were not mine, More than blood brothers, I swear, With tawny skin and warrior eye, Bushido-bred for hell-strife joy; Much closer my kin, my race than those Who cud-chew their lives can ever be; "War-lover," you say, "Sadist, psychotic," That sick cycle of canned clich is masking Your lust for eternity fettered to time; Go, epigonic pygmies, make peace with hell; Drag the myths of our ancient might Through the miserable muck of a cringer's dream; What could you know, Who have never heard The soaring song of the Valkyries, Felt thunder-gods jousting with livid peaks: You, who have never dared to walk the razor Across the zenith of your peevish soul?
Leo Hymas has been an aviator for many years. What is most remarkable is the fact that his poem literally has been out of this world. His friend, Don Lind, was an astronaut who carried a copy of THE PILOT with him on the Space Shuttle Challenger when it flew SKYLAB 3 around the earth 110 times. What greater tribute could be made to the spirit of flight that he has captured and so generously shared with the world's aviation community?

Someday we'll know where the pilots go
When their work on earth is through
Where the air is clean and the engines gleam
And the skies are clear and blue.

They have flown, with the engine’s moan
As they climbed to the great beyond
And taken delight at the awesome sight
Of the world spread far and ‘yond

And how they love, and are beloved,
But their love is most for air
With wings spread out, they still fly out
And leave their troubles there.

How near to God, these men of sod
Who come near danger’s door;
They are real, not made of steel
He knows who goes before.

Yet not alone, above their home
When the earth is out of sight,
They make their stand, He takes their hand
And guides them through the night.

He knows these things, of men and wings
And they are surely true;
He’ll give a hand to such a man,
Because He’s a pilot, too.
The two poems, **REMEMBERING RUTH** by Patricia "Trish" Shaw, and **THE PILOT'S PRAYER** by Betty Jo Mings, that follow are a joint memoriam to Ruth Deerman. Trish was Ruth's close friend, while Betty Jo was her sister. **THE PILOT'S PRAYER** was especially composed for a speech that Ruth made in her capacity at the time as International President of the Ninety Nines. Ruth Deerman was born June 17th, 1915, and passed away May 6th, 2006.

A true pioneer aviatrix, she earned her pilot's license in 1944 in El Paso, Texas. That fulfilled her early childhood dream to fly, but that was only the beginning of her efforts to encourage other women to learn to fly and to establish a universal appreciation for aviation among all people. Ruth earned a commercial pilot's license, plus flight and instrument instructor ratings, and advanced ground school and ground school instructor ratings. She flew helicopters (was Whirly Girl #78) and became a board member of the Whirly Girls. She christened her Cessna 140 the "Cotton Clipper Cutie" that she eventually donated to the War Eagles Air Museum in Santa Teresa, NM, where it hangs from the ceiling near other of her memorabilia. She was a charter member of the El Paso Ninety-Nines and also helped establish the El Paso Aviation Association. She was a spot-landing champion, navigation master and born-to-be aviatrix. Many did not know that she always removed her shoes and flew barefoot. She enjoyed being first, and she managed to fill her home with aviation trophies. She with her co-pilot **RUBY HAYS** won the 1954 All-Women Transcontinental Air Race (known as the "Powder Puff Derby"), flying from Long Beach, California, to Knoxville, Tennessee. While serving as the International President of the Ninety-Nines, she introduced the term for "significant others" as the "49½s." She also coined the term for pilots in training as "66s" but that has been changed to "FWPs." The words that she loved and that captured her spirit were from Bing Cosby's famous song, DON'T FENCE ME IN. Because of her pioneering achievements, Ruth Deerman is a name to respectfully remember in aviation history.

**REMEMBERING RUTH**

by Patricia "Trish" Shaw

There's a memory

There's a memory

A vision in the sky---

There's a twinkle

A twinkle from her eye.

There's a smile,

invincible-----

just like her style.

There's a tenderness, a caring

A presence of honor-bearing.

In the memory, light clouds roll away

revealing Ruth's face: radiant as day!

With propellers awhirling---

She could be flying or even whirlybirding.

We know it is she---

why, she's as shoeless as can be!

With Cotton Clipper Cutie

she climbs majestically---

away from earth and on to victory.

An aviator of extraordinary degree,

Our Ruth has departed for a destination heavenly.

So open up those pearly gates---

Ruth's arrival all heaven awaits!
A PILOT'S PRAYER
by Betty Jo Mings

Dear Lord, I ask for guidance as
I chart my course through life;
And help me find Your flight plan, that
Will conquer pain and strife.

I know there is no lapse rate in
The warmth of Your great love.
Keep open, free and clear my lines
Of guidance from Above.

And as I face the slips and skids
Of daily life, I pray
My turn coordinator will
Stay centered on Your way.

But most of all, remind me You're
The Pilot In Command,
And I'm a flight crew member, held
In Your protective hand.
Harry Winston Brown was born in Amarillo, Texas, on May 19th, 1921. He became a fighter pilot in the USAAF on August 15th, 1941, and was stationed at Wheeler Field, Hawaii. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Brown had the distinction of being one of five American pilots to score victories by shooting down one Japanese Val and damaging another while flying a P-36. He scored another victory by shooting down a Japanese Oscar over New Guinea in 1943 while flying a P-40. Flying as flight leader for a fighter group called “Satan’s Angels,” he scored the first three victories for his group and later shot down three more enemy aircraft while flying a P-38. Following WW II, he served as base commander of McGuire AFB, New Jersey, and retired from the military in 1948. While in the reserves, he completed his Master’s Degree at the University of Denver and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His aerial combat tally record was 6 confirmed kills, 1 probable and 1 damaged. He was awarded the Silver Star for valor, the Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster and an Air Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters. He wrote a number of aviation poems, but this one honors his friends who were killed.

HADES SQUADRON
by Harry W. Brown
1921 - 1991

The world seemed covered with dripping mist
With walls of dismal grey;
Even the plane seemed to resist
When pulled from the hangar that day.

But everything was soon onboard
And my walk-around begun;
Then I fired it up and taxied toward
My rendezvous with fun.

The mags were checked, prop in low pitch,
My full run-up was done;
Controls were free—the mixture rich,
I began my take-off run.

I lifted the nose and became airborne
Into the overcast;
When that eerie mist was suddenly torn,
And I found myself in the past.

And I was flying a P-38
Stacked in an echelon right;
Hades Squadron was tempting fate
And looking for a fight.

We were at angels twenty, and my Blue Flight
Was lined-up covering the rear;
So I knew that things would be all right,
And I had no sense of fear.
I saw some faces I hadn't seen
   For forty years or so,
Including some that departed this scene
   A long, long time ago.

There was old Nick to lead the way,
   And then Houseworth appeared;
Then Hedrick and Allen and Wenige
   With his blonde mustache and red beard.

And then Kirby, Willie Haning and Johnny Hood,
   Each man a real hero,
Who fought with all the strength he could
   Against a vicious foe.

Those wondrous warriors that I knew,
   Like Harris and Torn McGuire,
Champlin and Monk -Czarnecki, too,
   Verle Jett and Gronemeyer.

And those who lead my element,
   Each one a friend of mine,
Red Herman and Mankin and Francis Lent,
   And Lewis and “Pappy“ Cline.

But the mist soon began to thin,
   And my friends to fade away,
And I found out that I had been
   But an instant along the way.

And then I broke completely clear
   In the brilliance of the dawn;
All those scenes of yesteryear
   And all my friends were gone.

And so I felt a moment's pain
   When returned to reality;
And I hoped I'd see them all, again,
   And that they’d fly with me.

For the bonds of friendship that were wrought,
   On an anvil of adversity,
Were forged forever as we fought
In the skies so valiantly.

Hark! Do you hear it?—the thundering roar
Of engines in the sky?
Someday I want forevermore
To be where those brave men fly.
Elizabeth MacKethan Magid and Marie Michell Robinson entered the September, 1943 class for training in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. While undergoing training at Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas, they became very close friends. They exchanged a promise that if anything ever happened to one, the other would go to be with the bereaved mother, never really believing this promise would have to be kept. After graduation from flight school in 1944, Elizabeth and Marie were stationed together as ferry pilots with the Air Transport Command, Love Field, Dallas, Texas. Later Elizabeth was sent to Cochran Field, Georgia, where she flew overhauled basic and advanced trainers. Marie was sent to Victorville Air Force Base, California, where she flew twin-engine bombers. In October, 1944, Marie was killed in the crash of a B-25. She was nineteen years of age. While waiting for transportation to Michigan for a Memorial Service for Marie, Elizabeth completed her test flying duties for the day. As she soared upward amidst the soft fair weather cumulus clouds, she fantasized that her friend was there. She recalled the happy days training when she, Marie and sky were one—on playful silver wings. But Marie was not there. Elizabeth landed and in a secluded spot in the Operations Room she penned "Celestial Flight" in words that seemed to come from a Source other than herself. As soon as possible Elizabeth caught military flights to Michigan and shared the words of the poem with Marie's mother, thus fulfilling the promise exchanged many months before at a dusty, windswept training field in Texas. WASP members remained civil service employees who did not receive the pay and benefits given to male pilots sharing the same risks. In recognition of this fact, on 23 November 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed legislation providing procedures for former WASPs to be granted veteran status, although with limited benefits. Coincidentally, this was in the same year that the United States Air Force graduated its first female pilots. It was not until 1979 that the WASPs were given discharge certificates, and it was 1984 before they were awarded World War II Victory Medals. Those who had one year's service were awarded American Theater Campaign Medals, also. This story and that of other WASPs are featured at WOMEN OF COURAGE.

CELESTIAL FLIGHT

by Elizabeth MacKethan Magid
1918 - 2004

She is not dead -
But only flying higher,
Higher than she's flown before,
And earthly limitations
Will hinder her no more.

There is no service ceiling,
Or any fuel range,
And there is no anoxia,
Or need for engine change.

Thank God that now her flight can be
To heights her eyes had scanned,
Where she can race with comets,
And buzz the rainbow's span.

For she is universal
Like courage, love and hope,
And all free, sweet emotions
Of vast and godly scope.
And understand a pilot's Fate
   Is not the thing she fears,
But rather sadness left behind,
   Your heartbreak and your tears.

So all you loved ones, dry your eyes,
Yes, it is wrong that you should grieve,
For she would love your courage more,
   And she would want you to believe

   She is not dead.
   You should have known
That she is only flying higher,
   Higher than she's ever flown.
INVOCATION
by Madge Rutherford Minton
WASP Chaplain, 1986
1920 - 2004

For a vision in our youth, Dear Lord
We are much beholden, and with heartfelt
respect we invite Your presence here.
We come to celebrate a score of glorious months
When You blessed us with more courage than caution
and more determined commitment than common sense.
Our vision was to fly, and we hardly considered
That we might fail. Eager and proud; rebellious,
Even arrogant, we defied current mores
And slipped time-hallowed traces.
Our purpose held, and with Your help we achieved
Our hearts’ desire; to serve as pilots in our
Country’s cause; to fly in defense of
Freedom, truth, and human dignity.
Bless, Dear Lord, our comrades untimely dead;
Bless all who fought and all who died
In common cause with us.
We are here to share friendship to revel in past
Glories, and to marvel at our incredible luck.
Years deracinate our fellowship and time
Impedes accuracy;
Dear Lord, forgive us if our memories be gently
enhanced by selective forgetting.
We entertain conjecture of the times when, all alone,
We flew between the sun and citadels of clouds
And watched the shadow of our plane
convoy us on our course --
A dark cross rimmed in fractured light--
A holy wage -- The Pilot’s Cross--
We felt Your Presence than and touched the
Interface between that which may be known
And that which can never be transcended.
You blessed us then; we pray Your blessing now.
Amen
TO G.I. JOE
by e. rowan s. trimble

My time has passed, and I am old,
So there is much that won’t be told;
The war stories that I could tell,
Of comrades who in battle fell
Will rest in silence in my grave,
Among the young who were so brave;
But there is one I’ll share with you:
A pilot, who with me once flew,
He flew against an able foe,
He fought them high, he fought them low;
One day was hit, and down he came,
The enemy had made good their aim;
Burning, his plane fell to the ground,
And deafening was the crashing sound;
Though injured from the wreckage crawled,
He survived and for my help called;
From high above, I saw him there,
Through cloudy bursts that filled the air;
Full flaps, nose high, I landed near,
While pings of bullets pierced my ear;
I taxied within a hundred yards,
And hoped rescue was in the cards;
Mortars and gunfire all around,
I rushed to my friend on the ground;
I dragged him to the rear cockpit
Where for a while he would strapped sit;
Once, again, facing heavy fire,
The risks were great, and things looked dire;
Still, I managed a takeoff roll,
And got airborne from a small knoll;
I flew behind a tree line there,
Then, climbed quickly to higher air;
I landed before it turned night,
Lucky to have survived the flight;
But when the medics took my friend,
His life was gone, left on the wind;
I beat the ground and cursed the earth,
And railed against a pilot’s worth;
Yes, I shed tears, he was my friend,
Someday I hope my pain will end;
For him had come eternal peace,
For me, the war would not yet cease;
He was shipped home with laurels flown,
From all with whom he had once known;
With honor, he was laid to rest,
A warrior who had met a test,
Of courage and devotion true,
Who served the Red, White and Blue;
His name the world will never know,
It might as well be G. I. Joe;
But I am certain of one thing,
He flies with God upon His wing.
SOLO

by Patrick J. Phillips

The earth rolls by beneath my wings,
My mind dwells not on other things,
For as my nose points towards the sky,
I can’t believe I’m going to fly.

The years of waiting over now,
My instructor says that I know how,
And as the spinning wheels break free,
I wish that he were here with me.

Higher, higher the ship is lifting,
Racing thoughts my mind is sifting.
What’s that he said on rate of climb?
I wish we’d done this one more time.

Five hundred feet. It’s time to turn,
There is still so much I have to learn.
Ease the yoke and now the rudder,
The trick is not to make her shudder.

Eight hundred feet, another turn,
This time there’s not as much concern,
Throttle back and trim her out,
Seems there’s less to care about.

Downwind check now, just in case,
Runway’s on the left, some place?
Carb heat on and lots of power,
Oh God I’ve got to call the Tower.

Victoria Tower! I call my name,
Why no answer? Is this a game?
Radio set, I know it’s right,
Settle down, no time for fright.

Crackle, crackle, I hear him talking,
Straight ahead, not time for gawking,
Cleared to land, it’s said and done,
Thank the Lord, I’m number one.
The heart inside me seems to race,
As I ease her onto base,
Power back, she starts to sink,
Easy does it, time to think.

Nose up trim, at seventy knots,
Six hundred feet is all I’ve got.
Turn for final, almost over,
On the blacktop, not the clover.

Hold her level ‘til the last,
My! The runway’s moving fast.
Hold the nose up, gee I’m clever,
Seems she wants to fly forever.

Thump! I’m down! It feels so good,
Nothing to it, I knew I could.
Take heart my friend and have a try,
For now I know that I can fly.
THE ONE NOT TAKEN

by e. rowan s. trimble

TWO airplanes sat to tempt if they could,
And sorry I could not use them both,
As before old and new, staring I stood
And studied one as long as I should,
Thinking about a personal oath:

Then chose the old one, as just as fair,
But having perhaps riskier claim,
Because it did not want for wear and tear;
Though as for the two airplanes there
Had shown both with wings about the same.

As at that moment at the end of day,
It was the oldest had its own style.
Oh, I kept a close check as the safer way!
Recalling how much I had to pay,
Though never doubted it'd suit me for a while.

I shall be flying in this lawn chair with a sigh;
Somewhere in the hot summer months hence,
We two shall converge in my backyard, and I,
I will close my eyes and away will fly,
In the shade of my tall, stockade fence.
PILOT
(Said to be the world’s shortest poem)

by e. rowan s. trimble

I
Fly.
I must fly the heavens again, to the clearest heights and blue sky,  
   And all I ask is an airplane and compass to steer her by,  
   And rudder's kick and whistling wind and takeoff roll shaking,  
   And a clear sight on the sky's face, and a tail-wind breaking.  

I must fly the heavens again, for the call of the vented tide  
   Is a wild call and a loud cry that may not be denied;  
   And all I ask is a clear-air day with all the birds flying,  
   And the mountains and green valleys, and Bald eagles crying.  

I must fly the heavens again, to the free and gallant life,  
To the duck's way and swan's way where the sky's free of worldly strife;  
   And all I ask is a cheerful tale from a smiling colleague-plyer  
   And peaceful rest and thick log about a withered flyer.
HOMEBOUND FLYER

by e. rowan s. trimble

Lay me down under tall pine trees,
Where limbs wave in a gentle breeze;
Where crinkled cones hang, like tinkling bells,
In the scent of green pine needle smells.

To rest within an eternal aureole,
To the lonesome hoots of a wide-eyed owl,
And the sounds of fawns tiptoeing by,
Add music to flapping wings that fly.

Swimming ducks and white-feathered geese,
Impart their quacks and honks of peace
On a pond nearby the dancing pines
And a flora of red roses and vines.

Home is the flyer, home from the skies,
Languishing beyond where a flyer flies;
Grounded to earth, and clouds above,
Pining beneath pines, below eagle and dove.
HOME, AGAIN

by e. rowan s. trimble

The mission was commencing over land and the sea,
The engines from our bomber hummed loud but tenderly,
The squadron flew into the sunset beyond the glowing west,
In anticipation of possibly facing God's boon of rest.

The pilots scanned the horizon where a storm was brewing there;
Just then came a burst of flak, and combat was in the air!
It rocked and shook the airframe till it moaned, creaked and boomed,
As though our lumbering bomber was in the black bursts entombed.

But calm were our aircrews while the winds turned to gales,
And if we made it back we would be telling chilling tales
How some were shot down in battle and fell upon the shore,
Just burning bits of wreckage and ashes in the airborne lore.

With all hell breaking loose, the brave airmen strained their eyes,
As they watched for the fighters in the smoking and freezing skies;
It did not require imagination to see what the end could be,
For no aircraft could fly safely in such an embattled sea.

As two of our bombers fell and crashed beyond our reach,
Some crewmen could not bail out and died in the breech;
We were helpless in the terror, and our hearts grew hard with dread,
As our mission then became a vengeance for our airmen dead.

One plane split in half, and we watched the pieces go down,
Friends yelled on their radios, though in pain and smoke would drown;
Now came enemy fighters belching cannon and machinegun fire,
And getting to our targets became even more dangerous and dire.

We flew on and on through the attacks in those reckless skies,
We fought back with our guns through strained and squinting eyes,
Till finally we reached our IP and the bombardier took control,
"Bombs away!" came the shout through the bloody battle toll.

We hit our targets dead on, but our work was only half earned,
We looked down at burning hell and toward home now we turned;
In the clear and open skies with engines running at full throttle
Each man was alert, breathing heavily from his oxygen bottle.

The bombers left contrails in the high, wide open space,
Above the clouds and the storm below, God's mercy to embrace;
Soon we neared Yokota where our bombers were assigned,
And landed, one by one, props and tired crews to unwind.
The bombs and airmen fell from skies beyond our peaceful sea,
   So the people in our nation could be forever safe and free;
   I was just lucky to make it back after so many missions grim,
   And I still daily pray to return Home again because of Him.

   Those were memories from Korea that I cannot ever forget,
   As I remember those who didn't make it, as an old war-torn vet;
   It's not strange that I should recall days from that bloody past,
   Knowing someday I'll see those friends when my soul is Home at last.
HEADWINDS
by e. rowan s. trimble

A headwind blows upon my face,
As it blew many years ago,
When our planes were in flames shot down
Over the ashes far below;
It was in night, lit like daylight
By the contrails that were aglow.

Oft, I still see the deafening skies,
Cluttered by the bursting flak,
And it was such a hellish time,
I did not think we'd make it back;
The sky's death throes and down below
Were filled with hot flurries of black.

Machineguns roared while cannon fire
Belched out from fighters in the air,
But on we flew toward our targets,
Danger was everywhere,
I never knew another crew,
That showed more bravery when there.

Ghostly terror as some went down
To their final resting place,
For once they crashed and exploded,
There remained not even a trace,
Known but to God, gallant crews died
In the soil of that beastly place.

So it is on Memorial Day,
I remember those fallen friends,
-When duty called, they boldly flew-
And how they met their final ends:
It was in night, those men of flight
Left their monuments on headwinds.
U. S. Air Force Song

by Robert Crawford

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun! (Give 'er the gun now!)
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Additional verses:

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder,
Sent it high into the blue;
Hands of men blasted the world asunder;
How they lived God only knew! (God only knew then!)
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquer
Gave us wings, ever to soar!
With scouts before And bombers galore. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

Bridge: "A Toast to the Host"

Here's a toast to the host
Of those who love the vastness of the sky,
To a friend we send a message of his brother men who fly.
We drink to those who gave their all of old,
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.
A toast to the host of men we boast, the U.S. Air Force!

Zoom!

Off we go into the wild sky yonder,
Keep the wings level and true;
If you'd live to be a grey-haired wonder
Keep the nose out of the blue! (Out of the blue, boy!)
Flying men, guarding the nation's border,
We'll be there, followed by more!
In echelon we carry on. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!
SILVER SHIPS

By Mildred Plew Merryman

There are trails that a lad may follow
When the years of his boyhood slip,
But I shall soar like a swallow
On the wings of a silver ship;
Guiding my bird of metal,
One with her throbbing frame,
Floating down like a petal,
Roaring up like a flame;
Winding the wind that scatters
Smoke from the chimney's lip,
Tearing the clouds to tatters
With the wings of my silver ship;
Grazing the broad blue sky light
Up where the falcons fare,
Riding the realms of twilight,
Brushed by a comet's hair;
Snug in my coat of leather,
Watching the sky line swing,
Shedding the world like a feather
From the tip of a tilted wing.
There are trails that a lad may travel
When the years of his boyhood wane,
But I'll let a rainbow ravel
Through the wings of my silver plane.
Every airplane crash raises alarm,
When people are injured or killed,
They reopen flying’s specter of harm,
And enthusiasm is dampened and chilled.

It begs to ask if there is a better way
To fly than is currently known;
Has desire for speed led us away
And safety escaped as unknown?

Perchance we should look once more
To the birds for the freedom of flight;
Maybe we missed something before,
And didn’t get their physics right.

Accident reports are nearly the same
-Pilot error, weather, structural damage-
They are all part of the flying game,
As expressed by the anomaly’s adage.

But every year, air accidents careen
The imaginations of those who fly:
Are there veiled dangers so unseen
That to fly one must fain to die?

In the interim, there is little choice
Than to accept the risks as they are,
And hail a comfort in which to rejoice:
Flying’s safer than driving a car!
CROP DUSTER

by e. rowan s. trimble

Crop dust if you must, but be mindful of the weather,
And watch those high lines that you don’t them tether;
Spray low as you go, but all safety rules heed,
And keep a sharp eye on your aircraft’s speed.

Crop dust if you must, a sharp turn is a fetter,
To throttle with caution and centered banks would be better;
You may help the tired farmer, who planted all of the seeds,
But use common sense between your wants and his needs.

Crop dust if you must, but balance your time,
As you pass over fields, then go into a climb;
With chemicals eradicate both pest and the weed,
But don’t let the airplane get ahead of your lead.

Crop dust if you must, but stay in clear air,
Exercise due caution, there are hazards out there;
Skip the days when it snows, or high winds or a rain,
’Tis better to wait for clear weather, again.

Crop dust if you must, but always bear in mind,
There’s no profit in dusting if you’re flying blind;
Exercise your trust, but good judgment is a must,
Else you could nose down into a crop’s dust.
WINGED MAN

by Stephen Vincent Benét

The moon, a sweeping scimitar, dipped in the stormy straits,
The dawn, a crimson cataract, burst through the eastern gates,
The cliffs were robed in scarlet, the sands were cinnabar,
Where first two men spread wings for flight and dared the hawk afar.
There stands the cunning workman, the crafty past all praise,
The man who chained the Minotaur, the man who built the Maze.
His young son is beside him and the boy's face is a light,
A light of dawn and wonder and of valor infinite.
Their great vans beat the cloven air, like eagles they mount up,
Motes in the wine of morning, specks in a crystal cup,
And lest his wings should melt apace old Daedalus flies low,
But Icarus beats up, beats up, he goes where lightnings go.
He cares no more for warnings, he rushes through the sky,
Braving the crags of ether, daring the gods on high,
Black 'gainst the crimson sunset, golden o'er cloudy snows,
With all Adventure in his heart the first winged man arose.
Dropping gold, dropping gold, where the mists of morning rolled,
On he kept his way undaunted, though his breaths were stabs of cold,
Through the mystery of dawning that no mortal may behold.
Now he shouts, now he sings in the rapture of his wings,
And his great heart burns intenser with the strength of his desire,
As he circles like a swallow, wheeling, flaming, gyre on gyre.
Gazing straight at the sun, half his pilgrimage is done,
And he staggers for a moment, hurries on, reels backward, swerves
In a rain of scattered feathers as he falls in broken curves.
Icarus, Icarus, though the end is piteous,
Yet forever, yea, forever we shall see thee rising thus,
See the first supernal glory, not the ruin hideous.
You were Man, you who ran farther than our eyes can scan,
Man absurd, gigantic, eager for impossible Romance,
Overthrowing all Hell's legions with one warped and broken lance.
On the highest steeps of Space he will have his dwelling-place,
In those far, terrific regions where the cold comes down like Death
Gleams the red glint of his pinions, smokes the vapor of his breath.
Floating downward, very clear, still the echoes reach the ear
Of a little tune he whistles and a little song he sings,
Mounting, mounting still, triumphant, on his torn and broken wings!
THE FLIGHT PLAN
by e. rowan s. trimble

What is dying?
I am standing on the tarmac,
A plane takes off and climbs into the clouds and air,
It gets smaller and smaller, as I stand watching it,
It quickly fades from view over the ocean's horizon,
And a friend at my side says, "It's gone!"
Gone where?
It's gone from my sight, that's all;
Its silver wings are spread just as wide,
Its fuselage is just as large as when I last saw it,
Its engines are running just as smoothly,
And it's just as able to carry its cargo as before,
Its diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in the plane;
And at that same moment when my friend says, "It's gone!"
There are others at the plane's destination who are watching it approach,
And another voice is heard from the control tower,
"You are cleared to land. Welcome home!" - and that is dying.
THE WISDOM OF ELD
by George Meredith

We spend our lives in learning pilotage,
And grow good steersmen when the vessel's crank!
Gap-toothed he spake, and with a tottering shank
Sidled to gain the sunny bench of Age.
It is the sentence which completes that stage;
A testament of wisdom reading blank.
The seniors of the race, on their last plank,
Pass mumbling it as nature's final page.
These, bent by such experience, are the band
Who captain young enthusiasts to maintain
What things we view, and Earth's decree withstand,
Lest dreaded Change, long dammed by dull decay,
Should bring the world a vessel steered by brain,
And ancients musical at close of day.
AXIOMS OF FLIGHT
Compiled by e. rowan s. trimble
++++++
RULES FOR FLYING

1. Every takeoff is optional. Every landing is mandatory.
2. If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. That is, unless you keep pulling the stick all the way back, then they get bigger again.
3. Flying isn't dangerous. Crashing is what's dangerous.
4. It's always better to be down here wishing you were up there than up there wishing you were down here.
5. The ONLY time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
6. The propeller is just a big fan in front of the plane used to keep the pilot cool. When it stops, you can actually watch the pilot start sweating.
7. When in doubt, hold on to your altitude. No one has ever collided with the sky.
8. A 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. A 'great' landing is one after which they can use the plane again.
9. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
10. You know you've landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi to the ramp.
11. The probability of survival is inversely proportional to the angle of arrival. Large angle of arrival, small probability of survival and vice versa.
12. Never let an aircraft take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.
13. Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everyone keeps talking about might be another airplane going in the opposite direction. Reliable sources also report that mountains have been known to hide out in clouds.
14. Always try to keep the number of landings you make equal to the number of takeoffs you've made.
15. There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are.
16. You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.
17. Helicopters can't fly; they're just so ugly the earth repels them.
18. If all you can see out of the window is ground that's going round and round and all you can hear is commotion coming from the passenger compartment, things are not at all as they should be.
19. In the ongoing battle between objects made of aluminum going hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.
20. Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment.
21. It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.
22. Keep looking around. There's always something you've missed.
23. Remember, gravity is not just a good idea. It's the law. And it's not subject to repeal.
24. The three most useless things to a pilot are the altitude above, the runway behind and a tenth of a second ago.
25. A superior pilot uses his superior judgment to avoid situations that require the use of his superior skill. – Aviation Proverb
MORE RULES OF FLYING

When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.

Blue sea Navy truism: There are more planes in the ocean than there are submarines in the sky.

Never trade luck for skill.

The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in aviation are, "Why is it doing that?", "Where are we?" and "Ooh S--t!"

Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers.

Airspeed, altitude or brains: two are always needed to successfully complete the flight.

A smooth landing is mostly luck; two in a row is all luck; three in a row is prevarication.

Aviation truism: Mankind has a perfect record in aviation; we never left one up there!

If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe.

Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries.

Navy carrier pilots to Air Force pilots: Flaring is like squatting to pee.

Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding it or doing anything about it.

When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something was forgotten.

Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.

Advice given to RAF pilots during W.W. II: When a prang (crash) seems inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity as slowly and gently as possible.

The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you. (Attributed to Max Stanley, Northrop test pilot)

A pilot who doesn't have any fear probably isn't flying his plane to its maximum. (Jon McBride, astronaut)

If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible. (Bob Hoover – renowned aerobatics pilot)
If an airplane is still in one piece, don't cheat on it; ride the bastard down.
(Ernest K. Gann, author & aviator)

Though I Fly Through the Valley of Death I Shall Fear No Evil For I am at 80,000 Feet and Climbing
(sign over the entrance to the SR-71 operating location Kadena, Okinawa).

You've never been lost until you've been lost at Mach 3.
(Paul F. Crickmore - test pilot)

Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you.

There is no reason to fly through a thunderstorm in peacetime
(sign over squadron ops desk at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1970).

The three best things in life are a good landing, a good orgasm, and a good bowel movement. The night carrier landing is one of the few opportunities in life where you get to experience all three at the same time.
(Author unknown, but someone who's been there)

"Now I know what a dog feels like watching TV."
(A DC-9 captain trainee attempting to check out on the 'glass cockpit' of an A-320).

What is the similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies; if an air traffic controller screws up, the pilot dies.

Without ammunition, the USAF would be just another expensive flying club.

Toggle switches on the panel offer a similar choice: a right choice or a wrong choice. A right choice means you have an opportunity to live; a wrong choice means you have an opportunity to die.
(Charlie Williams, CFI)

If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to.

Advice from an old pilot:
1. Try to stay in the middle of the air.
2. Do not go near the edges of it.
3. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

You know that your landing gear is up and locked when it takes full power to taxi to the terminal.

There's nothing more useless than the sky above and the runway behind.
(Colonel Leo A. LaCasse, USAF ret.)

Pull back on the stick to go up. Pull farther back on the stick to go down.

A newly licensed pilot is often stunned to learn that his or her new pilot’s license is merely a ticket for learning to fly.
1. It’s better to be down here wishing you were up there, than to be up there wishing you were down here.
2. An airplane will probably fly a little bit over gross, but it won't fly without fuel.
3. Speed is life; altitude is life insurance.
4. If you're ever faced with a forced landing at night, turn on the landing lights to see the landing area. If you don't like what you see, turn 'em off.
5. Never let an airplane take you somewhere your brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.
6. Too many pilots are found in the wreckage with their hands around a microphone or holding onto a kneeboard. Don't drop the aircraft in order to fly the microphone.
7. An airplane flies because of a principle discovered by Bernoulli, not Marconi.
8. Fly it until the last piece stops moving.
9. No one has ever collided with the sky.
10. Any attempt to stretch fuel is guaranteed to increase headwinds.
11. A thunderstorm is nature’s way of saying "Up yours."
12. Keep looking around, there's always something you missed.
13. Remember, you're always a student in an airplane.
14. Any pilot who does not at least privately consider himself the best in the business is in the wrong business.
15. It's best to keep the pointed end going forward as much as possible.
16. Hovering is for pilots who love to fly, but have no place to go.
17. The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
18. A jet fighter in the air is a dual emergency: Low on fuel and on fire.
19. A single engine jet is a triple emergency.
20. The only thing worse than a captain who never flew copilot is a copilot who was once a captain.
21. A terminal forecast is a horoscope with numbers.
22. The first thing every pilot does after making a gear up landing is to put the gear handle down.
23. A "good" landing is one which you can walk away from. A great landing is one which lets you use the airplane another time.
24. A good simulator check ride is like successful surgery on a cadaver.
25. Good judgment comes from experience. Good experience comes from someone else's bad judgment.
26. An airplane may disappoint a good pilot, but it won't surprise him.
27. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.
28. Things which do you no good in aviation:
   - Altitude above you.
   - Runway behind you.
   - Fuel in the truck.
   - Half a second in history.
   - Approach plates in the car.
   - The airspeed you don't have.
29. A smooth touchdown in a simulator is about as exciting as kissing your sister.
30. There are no old bold pilots.
A FEW QUOTES

I have found adventure in flying, in world travel, in business, and even close at hand... Adventure is a state of mind - and spirit.
-Jacqueline Cochran

I might have been born in a hovel but I am determined to travel with the wind and the stars.
-Jacqueline Cochran

It comes with faith, for with complete faith there is no fear of what faces you in life or death.
-Jacqueline Cochran

To live without risk for me would be tantamount to death.
-Jacqueline Cochran

I decided blacks should not have to experience the difficulties I had faced, so I decided to open a flying school and teach other black women to fly.
-Bessie Coleman

The air is the only place free from prejudices.
-Bessie Coleman

The first lesson is that you can't lose a war if you have command of the air, and you can't win a war if you haven't.
-Jimmy Doolittle

When the weight of the paper equals the weight of the airplane, only then you can go flying.
-Donald Wills Douglas

When you design it, think how you would feel if you had to fly it! Safety first!
-Donald Wills Douglas

Adventure is worthwhile in itself.
-Amelia Earhart

Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace.
-Amelia Earhart

Flying might not be all plain sailing, but the fun of it is worth the price.
-Amelia Earhart

I want to do it because I want to do it.
-Amelia Earhart

To invent an airplane is nothing. To build one is something. But to fly is everything.
-Otto Lilienthal
I have seen the science I worshiped, and the aircraft I loved, destroying the civilization I expected them to serve.
-Charles Lindbergh

I owned the world that hour as I rode over it, free of the earth, free of the mountains, free of the clouds, but how inseparably I was bound to them.
-Charles Lindbergh

If I had to choose, I would rather have birds than airplanes.
-Charles Lindbergh

Is he alone who has courage on his right hand and faith on his left hand?
-Charles Lindbergh

It is the greatest shot of adrenaline to be doing what you have wanted to do so badly. You almost feel like you could fly without the plane.
-Charles Lindbergh

I cut the emergency switch just in time to keep 'Winnie Mae' from making an exhibition of herself by standing on her nose. That would have been fatal to our hopes.
-Wiley Post

As a little boy of eleven, I entered the Cadet Corps. I was not particularly eager to become a Cadet, but my father wished it. So my wishes were not consulted.
-Manfred von Richthofen

I have had an experience which might perhaps be described as being shot down. At the same time, I call shot down only when one falls down. Today I got into trouble, but I escaped with a whole skin.
-Manfred von Richthofen

I honored the fallen enemy by placing a stone on his beautiful grave.
-Manfred von Richthofen

Now I am within thirty yards of him. He must fall. The gun pours out its stream of lead. Then it jams. Then it reopens fire. That jam almost saved his life.
-Manfred von Richthofen

Of course no one thought of anything except of attacking the enemy. It lies in the instinct of every German to rush at the enemy wherever he meets him, particularly if he meets hostile cavalry.
-Manfred von Richthofen

Of course with the increasing number of aeroplanes, one gains increased opportunities for shooting down one's enemies, but at the same time, the possibility of being shot down one's self increases.
-Manfred von Richthofen

One can become enthusiastic over anything. For a time I was delighted with bomb throwing. It gave me a tremendous pleasure to bomb those fellows from above.
-Manfred von Richthofen
The English had hit upon a splendid joke. They intended to catch me or to bring me down.
-Manfred von Richthofen

There were sometimes from forty to sixty English machines, but unfortunately the Germans were often in the minority. With them, quality was more important than quantity.
-Manfred von Richthofen

Aviation is proof that given the will, we have the capacity to achieve the impossible.
-Eddie Rickenbacker

Courage is doing what you are afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you are scared.
-Eddie Rickenbacker

I was always afraid of dying. Always. It was my fear that made me learn everything I could about my airplane and my emergency equipment, and kept me flying respectful of my machine and always alert in the cockpit.
-Chuck Yeager

If you want to grow old as a pilot, you've got to know when to push it, and when to back off.
-Chuck Yeager

Later, I realized that the mission had to end in a let-down because the real barrier wasn't in the sky but in our knowledge and experience of supersonic flight.
-Chuck Yeager

Most pilots learn, when they pin on their wings and go out and get in a fighter, especially, that one thing you don't do, you don't believe anything anybody tells you about an airplane.
-Chuck Yeager

Never wait for trouble.
-Chuck Yeager

Rules are made for people who aren't willing to make up their own.
-Chuck Yeager

There's no such thing as a natural-born pilot.
-Chuck Yeager

You do what you can for as long as you can, and when you finally can't, you do the next best thing. You back up but you don't give up.
-Chuck Yeager

You don't concentrate on risks. You concentrate on results. No risk is too great to prevent the necessary job from getting done.
-Chuck Yeager
Aviate, Navigate, Communicate.

Truly superior pilots are those who use their superior judgment to
avoid those situations where they might have to use their superior skills.

Rule one: No matter what else happens, fly the airplane.

Flying is hours of boredom, punctuated by moments of stark terror.

Fly it until the last piece stops moving.

It's better to be down here wishing you were up there, than up there wishing you
were down here.

An airplane will probably fly a little bit over gross but it sure won't fly without
fuel.

Believe your instruments.

Think ahead of your airplane.

I'd rather be lucky than good.

The propeller is just a big fan in the front of the plane to keep the pilot cool.
Want proof? Make it stop; then watch the pilot break out into a sweat.

If we are what we eat, then some pilots should eat more chicken.

I'd rather be a chicken than a turkey.

Without fuel, pilots become pedestrians.

Regards engine power: Lots is good, more is better, and too much is just
enough.

If you're ever faced with a forced landing at night, turn on the landing lights to see
the landing area. If you don't like what you see, turn 'em back off.

A check-ride ought to be like a skirt, short enough to be interesting but still be long
enough to cover everything.

Standard checklist philosophy requires that pilots read to each other the actions
they perform every flight, and recite from memory those they need every three years.

Experience is the knowledge that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.
(The wisdom that enables us to recognize as an undesirable old acquaintance the folly that we have already embraced. — Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary, 1911)

There are some flight instructors where the student is important, and there are some instructors where the instructor is important. Pick carefully.

Speed is life, altitude is life insurance.

No one has ever collided with the sky.

Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.

It's better to be down here wishing you were up there, than to be up there wishing you were down here.

One peek is worth a thousand instrument cross-checks.

Experience is a hard teacher. First comes the test, then the lesson.

Always remember you fly an airplane with your head, not your hands.

Never let an airplane take you somewhere you brain didn't get to five minutes earlier.

If it's red or dusty don't touch it.

Don't drop the aircraft in order to fly the microphone.

An airplane flies because of a principle discovered by Bernoulli, not Marconi.

Cessna pilots are always found in the wreckage with their hand around the microphone.

If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger, if you pull the stick back they get smaller.

To go up, pull the stick back. To go down, pull the stick back harder.

Hovering is for pilots who love to fly but have no place to go.

Flying is the second greatest thrill known to man.... Landing is the first!

Every one already knows the definition of a 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. But very few know the definition of a 'great landing.' It's one after which you can use the airplane another time.

Definition of 'pilot': The first one to arrive at the scene of an aircraft accident.
The probability of survival is equal to the angle of arrival.

There are two types of tail wheel (or retractable gear) pilot, those who have ground-looped (landed gear up) and those that will.

If you've got time to spare, go by air.
(More time yet? Go by jet.)

IFR: I Follow Roads.

There are old pilots, and there are bold pilots, but there are no old bold pilots.

You know you've landed with the wheels up when it takes full power to taxi.

If you don't gear up your brain before takeoff, you'll probably gear up your airplane on landing.

Navy carrier pilots regards Air Force pilots:
"Flare to land, squat to pee."

Air Force pilots regards Navy carrier pilots:
"Next time a war is decided by how well you land on a carrier, I'm sure our Navy will clean up. Until then, I'll worry about who spends their training time flying and fighting."

Navy pilots regards Air Force formation flying skills:
"Same way, same day."

The three best things in life are a good landing, a good orgasm, and a good crap. A night carrier landing is one of the few opportunities to experience all three at the same time.

A kill is a kill.

He who sees first, lives longest.

Fighter pilots make movies, attack pilots make history.

In thrust I trust.

Jet noise: The sound of freedom.

I had a fighter pilot’s breakfast - two aspirin, a cup of coffee and a puke.

Those who hoot with the owls by night, should not fly with the eagles by day.

Fly with the eagles, or scratch with the chickens.

It only takes two things to fly, airspeed and money.
Forget all that stuff about thrust and drag, lift and gravity, an airplane flies because of money.

Do you see that propeller? Well, everything behind it revolves around money.

The similarity between air traffic controllers and pilots?
If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies.
If ATC screws up, the pilot dies.

The difference between a duck and a co-pilot?
The duck can fly.

I'm from the FAA, and I'm here to help.

A smooth touchdown in a simulator is as exciting as kissing your sister.

A helicopter is a collection of rotating parts going round and round and reciprocating parts going up and down - all of them trying to become random in motion.

Helicopters can't really fly - they're just so ugly that the earth immediately repels them.

Helicopters don't fly. They beat the air into submission.

Chopper pilots get it up quicker.

Helicopters don’t fly; they just vibrate against the earth and the earth rejects them into the air.

Helicopters are for people who want to fly but don't want to go anywhere.

A four-time loser: the fellow who went to Texas A&M, joined the Marines, flew helicopters, and was hired by Braniff.

It's better to break ground and head into the wind than to break wind and head into the ground.

The owner's guide that comes with a $500 refrigerator makes more sense than the one that comes with a $50 million airliner.

If it doesn't work, rename it. If that doesn't help, the new name isn't long enough.

Federal Aviation Regulations are worded either by the most stupid lawyers in Washington, or the most brilliant.

Flying is not Nintendo. You don't push a button and start over.

The six P's:
Proper Preparation Prevents Piss Poor Performance.
The future in aviation is the next 30 seconds. Long term planning is an hour and a half.

Life is lead points and habit patterns.

Gravity: killer of young adults.

I'm not speeding officer -- I'm just flying low.

The only thing that scares me about flying is the drive to the airport.

Young man, was that a landing or were we shot down?

Sorry folks for the hard landing. It wasn't the pilot's fault, and it wasn't the plane's fault. It was the asphalt.

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

Three things kill young pilots in Alaska - weather, weather, and weather.

Please don't tell Mum I'm a pilot, she thinks I play piano in a whorehouse.

Pilots believe in clean living. They never drink whiskey from a dirty glass.

Never ask a man if he is a fighter pilot. If he is, he'll let you know. If he isn't, don't embarrass him.

FAA Regulations forbid drinking within 8 feet of the aircraft and smoking within 50 hours of flight. Or is it the other way around?

'Please see me at once' memos from the Chief Pilot are distributed on Fridays after office hours.

Fly low and slow and don't tip on the turns.

An accident investigation hearing is conducted by non-flying experts who need six months to itemize all the mistakes made by a crew in the six minutes it has to do anything.

Things which do you no good in aviation:
Altitude above you.
Runway behind you.
Fuel in the truck.
A navigator.
Half a second ago.
Approach plates in the car.
The airspeed you don't have.

It is far better to arrive late in this world than early in the next.
You start with a bag full of luck and an empty bag of experience. The trick is to fill the bag of experience before you empty the bag of luck.

The more traffic at an airport, the better it is handled.

If man were meant to fly, God would have given him baggy, Nomex skin.

If God meant man to fly, He'd have given us bigger wallets.

If God had meant for men to fly he would have made their bones hollow and not their heads.

What's the difference between God and pilots? God doesn't think he's a pilot.

Will Rogers never met a fighter pilot.

To err is human, to forgive is divine; neither of which is Air Force policy.

Flying is not dangerous; crashing is dangerous.

You can land anywhere once.

Flying is the perfect vocation for a man who wants to feel like a boy, but not for one who still is.

There are four ways to fly: the right way, the wrong way, the company way and the captain's way. Only one counts.

A good simulator check ride is like successful surgery on a cadaver.

Asking what a pilot thinks about the FAA is like asking a fireplug what it thinks about dogs.

Crime wouldn't pay if the FAA took it over and would go bankrupt if an airline management did.

I want to die like my grandfather did, peacefully in his sleep. Not screaming in terror like his passengers.

Trust your captain .... but keep your seatbelt securely fastened.

An airplane may disappoint a good pilot, but it won't surprise him.

Winds aloft reports are of incomparable value - to historians.

Any pilot who relies on a terminal forecast can be sold the Brooklyn (or London) Bridge. If he relies on winds-aloft reports he can be sold Niagara Falls (or The Tower of London).
The difference between flight attendants and jet engines is that the engine usually quits whining when it gets to the gate.

The friendliest stewardesses are those on the trip home.

Out on the line, all the girls are looking for husbands and all the husbands are looking for girls.

The most nerve-wracking of airline duties: the flight engineer's job on a proving run flown by two chief pilots.

Good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment.

Being an airline pilot would be great if you didn't have to go on all those trips.

Aviation is not so much a profession as it is a disease.

The nicer an airplane looks, the better it flies.

Why did God invent women when airplanes were so much fun?

If it fly's, floats, or fucks; it's always cheaper to rent than to buy.

Renting airplanes is like renting sex: It's difficult to arrange on short notice on Saturday, the fun things always cost more, and someone's always looking at their watch.

Jet and piston engines work on the same principle: Suck, squeeze, bang, blow.

Modern air travel would be very enjoyable ... if I could only learn to enjoy boredom, discomfort and fatigue.

You can always depend on twin engine aircraft. When the first engine quits the second will surely fly you to the scene of an accident.

The real value of twin engine aircraft is it will double your chances of engine failure.

CAUTION: Aviation may be hazardous to your wealth.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it; if it ain't fixed, don't fly it.

A mechanics favorite: It's not a leak, it’s a seep.

And another: If it won't budge force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.

If it’s ugly, it’s British; if it’s weird, it’s French; and if it’s ugly and weird, it’s Russian.

The worst day of flying still beats the best day of real work.
A male pilot is a confused soul who talks about women when he's flying, and about flying when he's with a woman.

About aerobatics: It's like having sex and being in a car wreck at the same time.

New FAA motto: We're not happy, till you're not happy.

A grease-job landing is 50 percent luck; two in a row are entirely luck; three in a row and someone's lying.

There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing: Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

It's a good landing if you can still get the doors open.

First, listen to the question the student asked, then listen to the question he didn't ask and then figure out the question he really meant to ask.

Airspeed, altitude, or brains; you always need at least two.

A ground school instructor understands piloting the way an astronomer understands the stars.

Every ground school class includes one ass who, at 5 minutes before 5, asks a question requiring a 20-minute explanation.

Gravity, it's not just a good idea, it's the law.

The Law of Gravity is not a general rule.

You can only tie the record for flying low.

Flying at night is the same as flying in the day, except you can't see.

It at first you don't succeed, well, so much for skydiving.

Is that a fuel cup in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?

It is easier to cope with a single in-flight problem than a series of minor ones. Real trouble must be swallowed in small doses.

It's no wonder England serves beer warm, Lucas manufactures most of their refrigeration equipment.

It is said that two wrongs do not make a right, but two wrights do make an aeroplane.

When starting an aviation career it is not unusual to be overwhelmed, terrified, suffer from lack of confidence and be just plain scared. As experience grows,
self confidence replaces fear . . . but after a time, when you think you have seen it all, you realize your initial reactions to flying were correct.

Passengers prefer old captains and young flight attendants.

A captain with little confidence in his crew usually has little in himself.

The only soul more pitiful than a captain who cannot make up his mind is the copilot who has to fly with him.

The sharpest captains are the easiest to work with.

The only thing worse than a captain who never flew as copilot is a copilot who once was a captain.

Be nice to your first officer, he may be your captain at your next airline.

A copilot is a knot head until he spots opposite direction traffic at 12 o'clock, after which he's a goof-off for not seeing it sooner.

A captain is two flight engineers sewn together.

Everything in the company manual - policy, warnings, instructions, the works - can be summed up to read, 'Captain, it's your baby.'

Nothing is more optimistic than a dispatcher's estimated time of departure.

Clocks lie; an 18-hour layover passes much quicker that an 8-hour day.

Any pilot who does not privately consider himself the best in the game is in the wrong game.

As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you and one of them will be:
  a. One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight.
  b. One day you will walk out to the airplane not knowing that it is your last flight.

It is always better to have $C_{t} > C_{d}$. Or more plainly, thrust should exceed drag.

Definition of a Goonie Bird pilot: A man with an interest in aviation but a basic fear of flying.

For those who don't care, fly military air.

Without ammunition the USAF would be just another expensive flying club.

Unofficial grading standards for low level navigation:
You can't be lost if you don't care where you are.

Jets airplanes are just an expensive way of changing JP-4 into noise.
It's best to keep the pointed end going forward as much as possible.

Assumption is the mother of all screw-ups.

If assholes could fly, this place would be an airport.

The average pilot, despite the sometimes swaggering exterior, is very much capable of such feelings as love, affection, intimacy and caring. These feelings just don't involve anyone else.

It's better to die than to look bad, but it is possible to do both.

If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to.

Helicopters are really a bunch of parts flying in relatively close formation; all rotating around a different axis. Things work well until one of the parts breaks formation.

Flying is better than walking. Walking is better than running. Running is better than crawling. All of these however, are better than extraction by a Med-Evac helicopter, even if this is technically a form of flying.

If God had intended man to fly, he would have given him enough money for a Bonanza.

If God had wanted me to fly, he would have made me flush riveted.

Two of the most dangerous things in the world are a South Georgia pulpwood truck, and a doctor in a split tail Bonanza.

The three most dangerous things in aviation are a doctor in a Bonanza, two captains in a DC-9, and a flight attendant with a chipped tooth.

What do you call a pregnant flight attendant? Pilot error.

Son, you let a stew ride your lap, next thing you know she'll want to talk on the radio. Then she'll want to land the plane. Give a woman an inch, she'll want the whole twelve. Thank God.

Nothing flies without fuel, so let's start with some coffee.

One of the beautiful things about a single piloted aircraft is the quality of the social experience.

What separates flight attendants from the lowest form of life on earth? The cockpit door.

The three most common phrases in airline aviation are "Was that for us?" "What'd he say?" and "Oh Shit!" Since computers are now involved in flying, a new one has been added: "What's it doing now?"
If an earthquake suddenly opened a fissure in a runway that caused an accident, the NTSB would find a way to blame in on pilot error.

Tell someone you work for another airline and he'll tell you how much better yours is.

The most sensitive mechanism in modern aviation is the shower control in a layover hotel.

If flying were the language of man, soaring would be its poetry.

You only need a glass ship to make up for the wooden pilot.

Gliding is to power flying as seduction is to rape.

Any attempt to stretch fuel is guaranteed to increase headwinds.

Any comment about how well things are going is an absolute guarantee of trouble.

A terminal forecast is a horoscope with numbers.

A thunderstorm is never as bad on the inside as it appears on the outside. It's worse.

Below 20, boys are too rash for flying; above 25, they are too prudent.

Son, I was flying airplanes for a living when you were still in liquid form.

I give that landing a 9 . . . on the Richter scale.

Most airline food tastes like warmed-over chicken because that's what it is.

I hate to wake up and find my co-pilot asleep.

Everything is accomplished through teamwork until something goes wrong, then one pilot gets all the blame.

In a world in which we are all slaves to the laws of gravity, I'm proud to be counted as one of them freedom fighters. Skydive!

If it ain't Boeing -- I ain't going.

Let's make a 360 and get the hell out of here!?!?

Don't trust nobody and don't do nothing dumb.

One who flies with fear encourages fate.

It's easy to make a small fortune in aviation. You start with a large fortune.
If it doesn't work, rename it; if that doesn't help, the new name isn't long enough.

Pilots are just plane people with a special air about them.

There I was at forty thousand feet when the autopilot jumped out with the only parachute on board and left me with nothing but a silk worm and a sewing kit.

There I was at 15,000 feet with nothing on the clock but the maker's name - and that was on the back and peeling.

There I was, fog was so thick I couldn't see the instruments. Only way I knew I was Inverted was my flying medals were in my eyes. But I knew I was really in trouble when the tower called me and told me to climb and maintain field elevation.

The RF-4E Phantom - living proof that if you put enough engine on something . . . even a brick could fly.

When the last Blackhawk helicopter goes to the bone yard, it will be on a sling under a Huey.

Flying helicopters is like masturbating. It feels good while you’re doing it, but you’re ashamed to tell anyone afterwards.

The three biggest lies in Army aviation:
1. You're the only crewmember available.
2. Don't ask me; I'm not the regular crew chief.
3. Wait right here, Sir. The crew bus is on it's way.

If you don't know who the world's greatest fighter pilot is... It ain't you.

Better to be on the ground wishing to be in the air than in the air wishing to be on the ground.

Keep the shiny side up and the greasy side down.

Don't forget to keep the blue side up.

When you're sitting in the rubber raft looking up where your airplane used to be, it's too late to check the flight plan

A fool and his money are soon flying more airplane than he can handle.

Some pilots will make an emergency out of a bad magneto check. Others, upon losing a wing, will ask for a lower altitude.

What's the difference between a first officer and a duck?
The duck can fly.
Definition of a complex airplane: landing a tail dragger on pavement with a 20 knot quartering crosswind.

When a forecaster talks about yesterday's weather, he's an historian; when he talks about tomorrow's, he's reading tea leaves.

The main thing is to take care of the main thing.

Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding it.

A thunderstorm is Nature's way of saying, "Up yours."

Learning a little about flying is like leading a tiger by the tail -- the end does not justify his means.

In the aviation business, you can't something for nothing. But if you aren't careful, you'll get nothing for something.

The last thing every pilot does before leaving the aircraft after making a gear up landing is to put the gear selection lever in the 'down' position.

Remember, you're always a student in an airplane.

Keep looking around; there's always something you've missed.

Fuel in the tanks is limited. Gravity is forever.

Never trust a fuel gauge.

Try to keep the number of your landings equal to the number of your takeoffs.

Takeoffs are optional. Landings are mandatory.

Son, if you're trying to impress me with your flying, relax. Most of the time, I can't even impress myself.

**Flight Instructor Favorites**

* You don't know what you don't know.
* Much of what you think you know is incorrect.
* Together, we must find out why you don't know what you don't know.
* It is practice of the right kind that makes perfect.
* You will never do well if you stop doing better.
* Students never fail, only teachers do.
* A student's performance is not so much a reflection on the student, as it is on the instructor's ability to teach.
* Learning is not a straight line up... let the teacher set the standards of performance.
* Much of learning to fly is to unlearn preconceptions and habits.
* The way you are first taught and learn a procedure is the way you will
react in an emergency. It's important to learn right the first time.
* Unlearning is a very necessary and difficult part of learning to fly.
* You learn according to what you bring into the situation.
* Being prepared for a flight saves you money by saving time.
* Given the choice, make the safe decision.
* If you must make a mistake, make it a new one.
* One problem is a problem, two problems are a hazard; three problems create accidents.
* Trusting to luck alone is not conducive to an extended flying career.
* We progress through repeated success; we learn through our mistakes.
* An instructors knowledge is proportional to the mistakes he's made.
* Good habits deteriorate over time.
* Accidents happen when you run out of experience.
* Self instruction is the garden that raises bad habits.
* Our failures teach us. If you want to increase your chances of success double your failure rate.
* ... almost always. Nothing is always.
* Luck will do for skill, but not consistently.
* The nice thing about a mistake is the pleasure it gives others.
* You're only young once, but you can be immature forever.
* Flying, like life, is full of precluded possibilities.
  Can't do... won't do... shouldn't do...
* What you know is not as important as what you do with it.

Why an Airplane is Better Than a Woman (or a Man).

* Airplane skin doesn't wrinkle as badly.
* Airplanes don't take forever to warm up.
* Airplanes like to do it inverted.
* It's easier to get 'trim' in an airplane.
* You can keep an airplane from stalling.
* Airplanes can be turned on by a flick of a switch.
* An airplane won't slap you for being a 'bush pilot.'
* You don't always have to be on top to ride an airplane.
* An airplane doesn't ask you to put on a raincoat before entry.
* An airplane's thrust to weight ratio is higher.
* You can easily leave an airplane before sunrise.
* Airplane exhaust fumes smell better.
* Airplanes lose weight faster.
* An airplane does not get mad if you 'touch and go.'
* An airplane's performance is seldom hindered by weather.
* An airplane will not get mad if you ride someone else's airplane.
* An airplane's cockpit is cleaner.
* You can calculate the peak performance of an airplane.
* An Airplane is easy to roll over.
* You can still activate a fifty year old airplane.
* Up to five people can ride in the cockpit of an airplane.
* Airplane's last longer.
* Airplane's don't droop after many years.
* You can always tell when an airplane is going to give out.
* An airplane moves when you tell it to.
* An airplane will kill you quick . . . a woman takes her time.
* An airplane does not object to a preflight inspection.
* An airplane will let you use your dip stick anytime you want.
* Airplanes don't make you 'pull-out' to eject.
* You can change the looks of an airplane.
* Airplanes come with manuals.
* A 747 can keep you up for 14 hours.
* Airplanes have strict weight and balance limits.
* When you put fuel into an airplane, it does not spit it out.
* Airplanes curves never sag.
* Airplanes last longer.
* Airplanes don't get pregnant.
* You can fly a airplane any time of the month.
* Airplanes don't have parents.
* Airplanes don't whine unless something is really wrong.
* You can share your airplanes with your friends.
* If your airplane makes too much noise, you can buy a muffler.
* If your airplane smokes, you can do something about it.
* Airplanes don't care about how many other airplanes you have flown.
* When flying, you and your airplane both arrive at the same time.
* Airplanes don't care about how many other airplanes you have.
* Airplanes don't mind if you look at other airplanes, or if you buy airplane magazines.
* If your airplane is too loose, you can tighten it.
* You don't have to be jealous of the guy that works on your airplane.
* You don't have to deal with priests or blood-tests to register your airplane.
* You don't have to convince your airplane that you're a pilot and that you think that all airplanes are equals.
* If you say bad things to your airplane, you don't have to say you're sorry before you can fly it again.
* You can fly an airplane as long as you want and it won't get sore.
* Your parents don't remain in touch with your old airplane after you dump it.
* Airplanes always feel like going for a ride.
* Airplanes don't insult you if you are a bad pilot.
* It's always OK to use tie downs on your airplane.
* Your airplane never wants a night out alone with the other airplanes.
* Airplanes don't care if you are late.
* You don't have to take a shower before flying your airplane.

We spend our lives in learning pilotage,
And grow good steersmen when the vessel's crank!
-George Meredith, 1828 - 1909
The Greatest Lies in Aviation

* I'm from the FAA and I'm here to help you.
* Me? I've never busted minimums.
* We will be on time, maybe even early.
* Pardon me, ma'am, I seem to have lost my jet keys.
* I have no interest in flying for the airlines.
* I fixed it right the first time, it must have failed for other reasons.
* All that turbulence spoiled my landing.
* I'm a member of the mile high club.
* I only need glasses for reading.
* I broke out right at minimums.
* The weather is gonna be all right; it's clearing to VFR.
* Don't worry about the weight and balance -- it'll fly.
* If we get a little lower I think we'll see the lights.
* I'm 22, got 6000 hours, a four year degree and 3000 hours in a Lear.
* We shipped the part yesterday.
* All you have to do is follow the book.
* This plane outperforms the book by 20 percent.
* We in aviation are overpaid, under-worked and well respected.
* Oh sure, no problem, I've got over 2000 hours in that aircraft.
* I have 5000 hours total time, 3200 are actual instrument.
* No need to look that up, I've got it all memorized.
* Sure I can fly it -- it has wings, doesn't it?
* We'll be home by lunchtime.
* Your plane will be ready by 2 o'clock.
* I'm always glad to see the FAA.
* We fly every day -- we don't need recurrent training.
* It just came out of annual -- how could anything be wrong?
* I thought YOU took care of that.
* I've got the field in sight.
* I've got the traffic in sight.
* Of course I know where we are.
* I'm SURE the gear was down.

Basic Flying

1. Try to stay in the middle of the air.
2. Do not go near the edges of it.
3. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there.

Low Flying

In days gone by, I've proved my worth
By zooming low across the earth;
I've buzzed the valleys and mountain ridges,
I've flown my craft beneath the bridges;
I've looped and spun and rolled my wings,  
I've sung the songs that pilots sing;  
I've tried most stunts, it must be said,  
Yet never learned to use my head;  
So here's a toast - To you and me!  
But you drink both, I'm dead...you see.

Pilot Toast

The clouds may float across the sky,  
The bee may kiss the butterfly,  
The sparkling wine may kiss the glass, and you my friend . . .  
Farewell.

Here's to the wine,  
Here's to the glass,  
Here's to the girl with the pretty . . .  
Teeth.

— Bite into my wing and don't say anything but '2,' 'bingo,' and 'Lead, you're on fire.'

— Briefing to a novice USAF wingman: stay close, acknowledge channel changes, tell me when you're out of gas and let me know if there is something wrong with my aircraft. Otherwise, shut up.

— Son, your wife's legs have more time in the air than you do.

— Son, I've got more time sitting on the lav in this airliner than you have total time.

— welcome to a new co-pilot from an old captain. Also heard as "I've got more time in the flare . . ." and "I've got more time in the bunk . . ."

— Throttle back son, you're not going to make the boat go any faster.

— Air Bosses on aircraft carriers to flight students on initial carrier qualifications who stay at maximum power after they have been jerked to a stop by the arresting gear.

— You've got to land here son, this is where the food is.

— Unknown landing signal officer to carrier pilot after his 6th unsuccessful landing.

— Tower, <a/c call sign>, three in the breeze, over the trees, last hop for a full stop.
— Phrase U.S. Navy student pilots in Pensacola could say on their last hop - if they said it without messing up they'd get an 'above' rating on radio comms.

— I ran out of altitude, airspeed and ideas all at the same time.

— When asked why he ejected. Attributed to Tony Lavier, Chuck Yeager, and just about every other well-known test pilot.
A FEW MORE OBSERVATIONS BY PILOTS

Flying is a hard way to earn an easy living.

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the airplane, the pessimist, the parachute.

If helicopters are so safe, how come there are no vintage helicopter fly-ins?

Death is just nature's way of telling you to watch your airspeed.

Real planes use only a single stick to fly. This is why bulldozers & helicopters - - in that order -- need two.

There are only three things the copilot should ever say:
1. Nice landing, Sir.
2. I'll buy the first round.
3.

As a pilot only two bad things can happen to you and one of them will.
   a. One day you will walk out to the aircraft knowing that it is your last flight.
   b. One day you will walk out to the aircraft not knowing that it is your last flight.

There are Rules and there are Laws. The Rules are made by men who think that they know better how to fly your airplane than you. Laws (of Physics) are ordained by nature. You can, and sometimes should, suspend the Rules but you can never suspend the Laws.

About Rules:
   a. The rules are a good place to hide if you don't have a better idea and the talent to execute it.
   b. If you deviate from a rule, it must be a flawless performance..
      (e.g., If you fly under a bridge, don't hit the bridge.)

The ideal pilot is the perfect blend of discipline and aggressiveness.

The medical profession is the natural enemy of the aviation profession.

Ever notice that the only experts who decree that the age of the pilot is over are people who have never flown anything? Also, in spite of the intensity of their feelings that the pilot's day is over I know of no expert who has volunteered to be a passenger in a non-piloted aircraft.

Before each flight, make sure that your bladder is empty and your fuel tanks are full!

He who demands everything that his aircraft can give him is a pilot; he that demands one iota more is a fool.
There are certain aircraft sounds that can only be heard at night.

The aircraft limits are only there in case there is another flight by that particular aircraft. If subsequent flights do not appear likely, there are no limits.

Flying is a great way of life for men who want to feel like boys, but not for those who still are.

"If the Wright brothers were alive today, Wilbur would have to fire Orville to reduce costs." -President, DELTA Airlines.

In the Alaska bush I'd rather have a two hour bladder and three hours of gas than vice versa.

It's not that all airplane pilots are good-looking. Just that good-looking people seem more capable of flying airplanes.

An old pilot is one who can remember when flying was dangerous and sex was safe.

Airlines have really changed; now a flight attendant can get a pilot pregnant.

I've flown in both pilots' seats; can someone tell me why the other one is always occupied by an idiot?

Son, you're going to have to make up your mind about growing up and becoming a pilot. You can't do both.

There are only two types of aircraft -- fighters and targets.

The scientific theory I like best is that the rings of Saturn are composed entirely of lost airline baggage.

You define a good flight by negatives: you didn't get hijacked, you didn't crash, you didn't throw up, you weren't late, you weren't nauseated by the food. So you're grateful.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
MILITARY AVIATOR'S SLANG

A — “Alfa”

AAA
Anti-aircraft Artillery. Rapid-firing cannon or machine guns, often aimed by computers and radar.

ACM
Air Combat Maneuvering, or dog fighting.

Admiral’s Doorbell
The yellow button in an F/A-18 cockpit that jettisons all the external stores in an emergency. If you hit it, you’ll be “ringing the admiral's doorbell” to explain why.

AGL
Above Ground Level. An airplane’s altimeter reads height above Mean Sea Level (MSL), the more realistic measurement over land is height Above Ground Level. Most military aircraft have a radar-altimeter, which reads aircraft height above ground level.

Air Boss
Head of the Air Department on board a carrier; he rules the flight deck.

Air Wing
The entire complement of aircraft fielded by the carrier in battle: fighters, attack jets, early-warning planes, tankers, helicopters, antisubmarine patrol craft, etc.

Alert 5
A manned aircraft can launch within five minutes. The Navy has time restrictions as to how long a crew can stand an Alert-5 watch. Similarly, Alert 15, Alert 30, Alert 60.

Aluminum Cloud
The F-14 is so large that it is sometimes referred to by this term.

Angels
Altitude, measured in thousands of feet (“angels fifteen” means 15,000 feet above sea level). Also, a term lovingly ascribed to the rescue helicopter by any aviator who has experienced an ejection and subsequent helicopter rescue.

Anti-Smash
Aircraft strobe, or anti-collision, lights.

Angle of Attack (AOA)
Angle of the wing relative to the forward flight path of the airplane.
On any aircraft, too great an angle of attack will cause the wing to stop flying (stall), as airflow across the upper surface is disrupted.

Angles
Gaining angles on a dogfight opponent involves maneuvering for a shot from astern. The ultimate in an angles fight is an angle of zero — straight up the enemy’s tailpipe.

AOM
All Officer’s Meeting. A vehicle that Commanding Officers use to keep Junior Officers in a central location for a given amount of time to keep them from screwing up his (or her) command tour.

ASW
Anti-submarine warfare.

Atoll, Apex, Acrid
NATO code names for Soviet-manufactured air-to-air missiles.

B — “Bravo”

B/N
Bombardier-navigator; the specific term for the NFO in the A-6 aircraft.

“Back to the Taxpayers”
Where you send a wrecked aircraft.

Bag
Flight suit or anti-exposure suit (“Put on a bag”); as a verb — to collect or acquire: as in, “bag some traps.”

Bag Season
Cold weather or water conditions which require the wearing of anti-exposure gear; which is very restrictive, uncomfortable and unpopular

Bagger
An aviator who manages to obtain more traps or flight time than his squadron mates, usually through dubious means.

Ball
An amber visual landing aid that the pilot uses to adjust aircraft-relative position to a desired final approach glide slope. The primary optical landing device on the carrier.

Bandit
Dogfight adversary positively identified as a bad guy. Hostile aircraft.
Basement
Hangar deck of the aircraft carrier.

Bat Decoder
A sheet of paper carried on all flight operations that is the key to current airborne communication codes.

Bat-turn
A tight, high-G change of heading. A reference to the rapid 180-degree Batmobile maneuver in the old Batman television series.

Beaded Up
Worried or excited.

Behind the Power Curve
Not keeping up with expectations. Technically, any airspeed less than that for the maximum lift-to-drag ratio, which is that portion of the power curve (a graphical plot of engine power vs. aircraft speed) at which the aircraft requires more power to go slower in steady level flight.

Bent
Damaged or broken.

Big Mother
That beautiful butt-ugly H-3 Navy helo that fishes you out of the drink.

Bingo
Minimum fuel for a comfortable and safe return to base. Aircraft can fly and fight past bingo fuel in combat situations, but at considerable peril.

Bingo Field
Land-based runway to which carrier aircraft can divert if necessary.

Birds
Aircraft

Blower
Afterburner.

Blue-Water Ops
Carrier flight operations beyond the reach of land bases or bingo fields.

Boards Out
Speed brakes extended

Boat
Any Navy ship regardless of size. The aircraft carrier is “THE Boat.”

Bogey
Unidentified and potentially hostile aircraft.
Bohica
Bend over, here it comes again.

Bolt, Bolter
A carrier landing attempt in which the tailhook fails to engage any of the arresting wires, requiring a “go-around,” and in which the aircraft landing gear contacts the deck. Otherwise it is a “low pass.”

Boola-Boola
Radio call made when a pilot shoots down a drone.

Booming
Loud, raucous partying (“we were booming last night”); or, fast, exciting flying (“we went booming through the mountains”).

Boondoggle
A great deal, usually obtained at the expense of others. (“Shack is a bagger. That guy went on a coast-to-coast boondoggle cross-country with the skipper, even though we’re almost out of OPTAR for this quarter.”)

Bore sight
Technically, to line up the axis of a gun with its sights, but pilots use the term to describe concentrating on a small detail to the point of causing some detriment to the “big picture.”

Boring Holes through the Sky
Term used to describe what airplanes do as especially applies to airline passengers.

BOREX
A dull, repetitive exercise (a busy, tense one might be a SWEATEX).

Bought the Farm
Died. Originated from the practice of the government reimbursing farmers for crops destroyed due to aviation accidents on their fields. The farmers, knowing a good thing when they see it, would inflate the value of lost crops to the point that, in effect, the mishap pilot “bought the farm.” Student pilots regularly practice emergency landings to farmer’s fields. (This one term must have a bazillion different origins judging from the amount of “corrections” I’ve received. I still like this one - ed.)

Bounce, Tap
Unexpected attack on another aircraft.

Brain Housing Group
Mock-technical term for the skull.

Bravo Zulu
Praise for a good job.
Bubbas
Fellow squadron members; anyone who flies the same aircraft as you do.

Bumping
ACM (Air Combat Maneuvering), also called “bumping heads.”

BuNo
Bureau number, the permanent serial number that the Navy assigns to an aircraft when it is built.

Burner
Afterburner; a system that feeds raw fuel into a jet’s hot exhaust, thus greatly increasing both thrust and fuel consumption.

Buster
Controller term for full military power: to hurry up, go as fast as possible.

C — “Charlie”

CAG
Commander of the air group (coined in the pre-1962 days when they were called air groups — now they’re called air wings) — the carrier’s chief pilot.

Carqual, or CQ
Carrier qualification; a set number of carrier takeoffs and landings required in training and at periodic intervals of all carrier flight crews.

Cat Shot
A carrier takeoff assisted by a steam-powered catapult. A “cold cat,” one in which insufficient launch pressure has been set into the device, can place the hapless aircraft in the water. A “hot cat” — too much pressure — is less perilous, but can rip out the nose wheel assembly or the launching bridle. Once a pair of common problems, but practically unheard of today.

CAVU
Ceiling And Visibility Unlimited: the best possible flying weather.

CEP
Circular Error Probable. The average “miss” distance of ordnance hits from a given aim point, such as a target bulls-eye.

Centurion
An aviator who has made 100 shipboard landings on one carrier, typically a centurion patch is then issued and proudly worn on the flight jacket.

Charlie
The planned landing time aboard a carrier.
Charlie Foxtrot
Phonetics for “cluster-f%*k”

Check Six
Visual observation of the rear quadrant, from which most air-to-air attacks can be expected. Refers to the clock system of scanning the envelope around the aircraft; 12 o’clock is straight ahead, 6 o’clock is directly astern. Also a common salutation and greeting among tactical pilots. Keep an eye on your behind, be careful.

Checking for Light Leaks
Taking a nap, referring to the eyelids

Cherubs
Altitude under 1,000 feet, measured in hundreds of feet (“cherubs two” means 200 feet).

Cold Nose
Radar turned off, also known as “Lights out,” (Navy pilots transmit “My nose is cold” before refueling from Air Force tankers).

COD
Carrier On-Board Delivery aircraft, used to transfer personnel and cargo to and from the carrier.

Colorful Actions
Flat hatting, showing off, or otherwise ignoring safe procedures while flying.

Combat Dump
A bowel movement before flying; also called “sending an Marine to sea”

Cones
Students, short for cone heads: also called nurkin heads, or studs.

Conning
Making contrails.

Contract
Agreements and ground rules, some minor and some life-threatening, between two-man fighter crews or between wingmen.

Crossdeck Pendant
An arresting wire on an aircraft carrier; or the attaching cord between a VertRep helicopter to its externally slung cargo.

D — “Delta”

Dash Two
The second plane in a two-or-more aircraft formation; the wingman.
Deck Spotter
Derogatory term for a pilot who looks away from the ball to peek at the deck.

Delta
When an aircraft arrives at a boat for recovery, this instruction tells the pilot to stay clear and save gas; refers to a holding pattern at the boat.

Delta Sierra
Phonetics for “dumb shit”: describes a stupid action, and erases all previous Bravo Zulus and Sierra Hotels.

Departure
Literally departure from controlled flight, usually brought on in high-performance jets by excessive angle of attack coupled with partial power loss in one engine. All aircraft depart differently, but some anxious moments and some loss of altitude will result before control can be regained. Some jets, most notably the F-4 Phantom, are unrecoverable from certain departures.

Dirty
Aircraft configured for landing with gear and flaps down.

Dot
Refers to how a distant aircraft looks on the horizon, (“I’m a dot” means “I’m out of here”).

Double Ugly
Fond nickname for the enormously capable but less than beautiful F-4 Phantom. See also Rhino.

Double Nuts
The CAG’s bird usually numbered 100 or 00.

Down
Broken, not flying. A sick pilot is “down.”

Downtown
From the 1960s song by Petula Clark, meaning any enemy target area where lots of anti-aircraft opposition can be expected. During the Vietnam War, flying missions into the Hanoi-Haiphong complex in North Vietnam, which was defended by multiple SAM and conventional AAA sites, was referred to as “Going Downtown.”

Drift Factor
If you have a high one, you aren’t reliable.

Driver
Pilot.

E — “Echo”
Echo Range
A corner of the China Lake Naval Weapons Test Center outfitted with ground targets and electronic threat simulators. Many Top Gun training sessions are flown over Echo Range.

ECM
Electronic Countermeasures; systems for jamming or misleading enemy weapons, communications, and radar.

Electric Jet
The F-16 Fighting Falcon, so nicknamed because of its fly-by-wire controls.

ELINT
Electronic Intelligence; the gathering of electronic emissions related to communications, weapons control, or reconnaissance.

Envelope
The maximum performance parameters of an aircraft; flying at the edge of the envelope can be both exciting and dangerous.

F — “Foxtrot”

FAG
Fighter Attack Guy; derogatory term for F/A-18 Hornet drivers.

Fangs Out
When a pilot is really hot for a dogfight.

Fangs Sunk in Floorboard
When a fighter pilot bore sights on a kill but ends up getting shot himself.

FARP
Fleet ACM Readiness Program; a periodic training program presented in the context of the Fleet Air Wing; dog fighting practice with an adversary squadron.

FASO
Flight Physiology Training: recurrent safety training for aircrews directed at emphasizing physiological stressors, conditions, or episodes which might be encountered in flight.

FAST
Fleet Air Superiority Training.

Father
Slang term for shipboard TACAN station. There is a Father on most Mothers.

Feet Wet/Dry
The former means “over-water,” the latter “over-land.”
Fish Bed, Flogger
Also Fitter, Flanker, Fresco Fulcrum, etc. NATO code names for Russian fighter aircraft.

Flat hatting
Unauthorized low-level flying and stunting--thrilling, sometimes fatal, usually career-ending if caught.

Flare
The nose-up landing posture normal for most land-based aircraft. Carrier jets eliminate flare in favor of a slamming contact with the deck. Also the terminal portion of a helicopter autorotation in which rotor speed can be accelerated while reducing rate-of-descent and forward groundspeed.

Fly-by-wire

FM
Abbreviation for “f**king magic”: very high-tech; used to describe how something you don’t understand actually works. The ASQ-8 1 Magnetic Anomaly System works by “FM.”

FOD
Foreign Object Damage. A constant concern on airfields and carrier decks where jet engines operate. Jet intakes can ingest loose objects, and even the smallest item — a rock, a bolt — can seriously damage jet turbine blades.

Fox One, Fox Two, Fox Three
Radio calls indicating the firing of a Sparrow, Sidewinder, or Phoenix air-to-air missile, respectively.

Fur ball
A confused aerial engagement with many combatants. Several aircraft in tight ACM.

G — “Golf”

G. G-loading, G-rating
High-performance aircraft subject airframes and occupants to centrifugal forces far beyond simple gravity. One-G equals normal gravity; a pilot and plane pulling 4-Gs in a turn will feel forces equal to four times the weight of gravity.

G-suit
Nylon trousers that wrap around the legs and abdomen. Filled automatically with compressed air in high-G maneuvers, the G-suit helps prevent the
pooling of blood in the lower extremities, thus retarding the tendency to lose consciousness. Also known as “speed jeans.”

Gaff Off
Ignore.

Gate
Afterburner. see also Zone

Gigahertz and Nanoseconds
Highly technical, detailed, and hard to understand (“It’s getting down to gigahertz and nanoseconds.”)

Gizmo
A piece of technical gear (also doodad, thingamabob, or hog-ha)

Glove
The huge wing root of the F-14 Tomcat, housing the mechanism for moving the variable-geometry wings. Also, Tom Cruise notwithstanding, fireproof gloves are always worn by military pilots regardless of the outside temperature.

Go Juice
Jet fuel or coffee.

god
The authority, boss, or person with full responsibility; also descriptive of a pilot’s prowess (“He’s an ACM god”)

Goes Away
What something does when you hit it with a missile.

Gomer
Slang for a dogfight adversary, the usage stemming from the old Gomer Pyle television show.

Goo
Bad weather that makes it impossible to see; in the clouds.

Goon Up
Screw up.

Gouge
The latest inside information. Also the poop, the skinny. A summary of important information.

Greaser
A very smooth landing. No bounces. No bumps. AKA “grease-job landing”
Green Apple
The control knob for the cockpit’s emergency oxygen supply.

Greenie Board
Prominently displayed squadron scoreboard where the landing signal officers rate the pilots’ carrier landings (any color other than green is bad). Also called the “weenie board.”

Gripe
A mechanical problem on an aircraft. An “up” gripe means you can still fly, a “down” gripe means you can’t.

Gut Bomb
Any of the (limited) variety of single-handed culinary delights found in the wardrooms or mess decks on the boat.

H — “Hotel”

Hamburger Helper
The bombardier-navigator (B/N) or radar intercept officer (RIO).

Hangar Queen
An aircraft that suffers chronic “downs”; hangar queens are often pirated for spares for the squadron’s other aircraft, so when the aircraft leave the carrier at the end of the cruise, the maintenance officer normally flies the hangar queen because he knows which parts have been taken (the “queen’s” ejection seats are especially well pre-flighted).

Hard Deck
An established minimum altitude for training engagements. Early Top Gun hops honor a 10,000-foot AGL hard deck.

Hawk Circle
The orbiting stack of aircraft waiting to land on the carrier.

Head on a Swivel
Keeping an eye peeled for an ACM adversary; also called “doing the Linda Blair,” for the 360-degree head rotation in the movie The Exorcist.

Heater
Sidewinder missile which homes in on heat sources.

Helo
Universal Navy/Marine term for helicopter. Don’t say “chopper” unless you’re hanging out with the Army.

High PRF
Extremely excitable (PRF is a radar term: pulse repetition frequency).
High Warble
Unduly agitated.

Hinge Head
Slang term for O-4s (LCDR). Legend has it that whenever a lieutenant
makes lieutenant commander, he is given a lobotomy and half his brain
is removed. A hinge is then installed so the brain half may be reinstalled
later (or, in some cases, the other half is also removed).

Hop
A mission, or flight

Hook Slap
When the tail hook of an aircraft landing on a carrier strikes the round down.

HOTAS
Hands On Throttle And Stick. Modern fighters have every imaginable
control function mounted on either the stick (right hand) or the throttle
quadrant (left hand), so that the pilot need not fumble around in the cockpit.

HUD
Heads Up Display. A transparent screen mounted on the dashboard
on which pertinent data from flight instruments and weapons systems
are projected. The HUD eliminates the need to look down into the
cockpit to read instruments.

Hummer
Any ingenious machine — plane, car, or weapon — whose actual name
can’t be recalled. Also “puppy,” “bad boy.” The E-2 Hawkeye early-warning
aircraft is also nicknamed “Hummer,” in reference to the sound of its
turboprop engines.

I — “India”

IFR
Instrument Flight Rules, permitting safe flight in conditions of limited visibility

Indian Night Noises
The ominous creaks, pops, and shudders of an aircraft in flight

In-Flight Engagement
Snagging the arresting wire before the wheels touch the deck. This
can result in damage to the aircraft.

In the Spaghetti
Where you catch the wires.

INS
Inertial Navigation System. A device that, when properly loaded and
aligned, permits the pilot to determine his location anywhere on earth
within a few hundred feet.
J — “Juliet”

Jink
To maneuver violently to avoid a threat.

JO
Junior officer, usually with all the answers.

JO Bunkroom
The JO stateroom, where all the good parties are aboard The Boat

JOPA
Junior Officer Protective Association. The O-3s (lieutenants) and below in a unit that band together for mutual protection. Sometimes called JORC (Junior Officer Retaliation Corps).

JORP
Junior Officer Rest Period. What they do best.

Jock, Driver
Pilot, as in “helo driver,” or “fighter jock.”

Types of jet fuel: the aroma of which makes former aviators nostalgic for flight operations. Usually seen floating on top of a cup of “go-juice.”

Judy
Radio call signaling that your quarry is in sight and you are taking control of the intercept.

K — “Kilo”

Kick the Tires and Light the Fires
Formerly, to bypass or severely shorten the required routine of physically inspecting the aircraft prior to flight. Currently meaning “Let’s get this aircraft pre-flighted and outta here pronto!”

Knife Fight in a Phone Booth
Close-in, slow-speed aerial dogfight with a nimble adversary. Often just called a “knife-fight.”

L — “Lima”

LEAPEX
A jump-through-your-ass project, exercise, or drill. Something silly that needs to be done NOW!

Lethal Cone, Cone of Vulnerability
Area to the rear of the jet’s tailpipe, into which most infra-red missile and gun attacks are ideally launched.
Lights Out
Radar off.

Lost the Bubble
Got confused or forgot what was happening.

Loading/Unloading
Increasing or decreasing angle of attack and G’s

Loud Handle
Lever or grip that fires ejection seat.

LSO
Landing Signal Officer. Squadron member with considerable experience in carrier landings, responsible for assisting others onto the deck and for grading their efforts. Also known as “paddles.”

M — “Mike”

Martin-Baker Fan Club
If you eject, you’re a member (a reference to the Martin-Baker company, manufacturer of ejection seats). An official list of members is maintained.

Meatball
The glide slope indication light that pilots watch when they’re trapping.

Merge, Merged Plot
The point at which aircraft come into contact, after having been vectored toward each other by radar control.

MiGCAP
Combat Air Patrol over ground-attack aircraft to protect against an air-to-air threat.

Military Power
Maximum jet engine power without engaging afterburner.

Mini-Boss
The Assistant Air Boss.

Mort
Killed.

Mother, or Mom
The boat on which you are deployed, and where you launched from.

Mud-mover, Ground-pounder
Low-level attack aircraft such as the A-6 Intruder. The F/A-18 doubles as a fighter and a mud-mover (small amounts only).
Music
Electronic jamming intended to deceive radar.

My Fun Meter is Pegged
Sarcastic comment for, “I am not enjoying this any more.”

N — “November”

NATOPS
The Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization program, responsible for rules and regulations governing safe and correct operation of all naval aircraft. Sometimes means in jest: “Not Applicable To Our Present Situation.” NATOPS manuals are sometimes referred to as “the big blue sleeping pill” in reference to their blue plastic covers.

NFO
An aviator who is an officer but not a pilot; pilots say it stands for “No Future Occupation”; also called the “Non-Flying Object” and “walk-n’-talkin’ navbag.” Sometimes referred to as DAP for “Double-Anchor Puke” (a reference to the crossed anchors on the NFO wings).

NFOD
No Fear of Death.

NFWS
The Navy Fighter Weapons School, a graduate school for fighter pilots. Its universal nickname is Top Gun.

“Nice Vapors”
Comment on an exciting fly-by when high speed at low altitude or high G causes dramatic vapor trails.

No-Load
An underachiever. Named after the process of warming up the catapults before a launch. “Stand clear of Cat 1 while firing no-loads.”

No Joy
Failure to make visual sighting; or inability to establish radio communications.

Nugget
A first-tour aviator.

Nylon Letdown
Ejection and subsequent parachute ride.
O — “Oscar”

OAST
Overland Air Superiority Training. A periodic training exercise conducted over land and integrating all the elements of the carrier’s air wing.

On the Mouse
Talking on the flight-deck radio circuit that uses a headset resembling Mickey Mouse ears.

Opportunity to excel
A disagreeable job without the time or resources to properly complete.

Over sweep
When the F-14, on the ground, sweeps its wings to seventy-two degrees aft making it easier to store.

P — “Papa”

Padlocked
To have a bogey firmly in your sights.

Painted
Scanned by radar.

Passing Gas
What an aerial tanker does.

Pass
The point at which fighters, closing head-on, flash past each other. Also, an attempt at landing.

Penalty Box
If you get a wave off or a bolter, that’s where you go.

Pickle
A device held by the LSO that activates the “cut” light on the lens: as a verb, to drop a bomb or external fuel tank.

Pinging On
Paying close attention to; critical securitization. Also “bugging” as in, “Quit pinging on me.” From Sonar Pinging in helo ASW.

Pinkie
A landing made at twilight between the official time of sunset (or sunrise) and “real” darkness; it officially counts as a night landing, but is cheating; preferred type of “night” landing by 0-4’s and above.
Pit
Rear seat position of the F-14 Tomcat or F-4 Phantom. Also the refueling pit.

PLAT
Pilot Landing Aid Television. A videotape camera that records all carrier launches and recoveries.

Playmates
The pilots of other aircraft on the same mission as you.

Plumber
An inept pilot.

Pointy End
The front of a boat

Popeye
What you are when you’re flying in the goo.

Power Puke or Power Barf
 Projectile vomiting, a symptom of airsickness.

Pole
Control stick.

Prang
To bump, crunch, or break an aircraft.

Pucker Factor
How scary something is.

Puke
Someone who flies a different kind of aircraft than you, as in fighter puke or attack puke.

Punch Out
To eject.

Q — “Quebec”

Quick Fix
Stop-gap measure or computer box change to repair an aircraft quickly.

R — “Romeo”

R2D2
A RIO (a reference to Luke Skywalker’s robot backseater in the Star Wars movies).
Ramp Strike
Landing short in the ramp area, resulting in a crash.

Radome
Streamlined fiberglass enclosure covering a radar antenna.

RAG
Replacement Air Group. Squadron in which newly trained pilots are introduced to, and trained in, a particular aircraft type. The official name is FRS (Fleet Replacement Squadron).

Red Flag
A large mock air war, held quarterly by the Air Force at Nellis AFB, Nevada. Many non-Air Force assets — Navy/Marines, Army, foreign — are invited to participate.

Rhino
Nickname for the F-4 Phantom and now the F/A-18E or -18F Super Hornet. The Phantom was also known as the Double Ugly.

RIO
Radar Intercept Officer. Back-seat crewman in the F-14 Tomcat or F-4 Phantom II.

Rocket One
The skipper.

Roll ’Em
A movie (“What time’s the roll ’em?”) — a nightly social event in the ready room.

Roof
The flight deck on the carrier.

Round down
The very back end of the flight deck, so called because of its rounded shape.

S — “Sierra”

SA
Situational Awareness. An all-encompassing term for keeping track of what’s happening when flying. SA involves knowing what your airplane is doing relative to its envelope, where your adversary is and what he’s up to, where the ground is, the status of enemy threats on the ground, and hundreds of other variables. Loss of situational awareness is often cited as a contributing factor to many military-aviation mishaps.

SAM
Surface-to-air missile.
SAR
Search and Rescue

Scooter
Nickname for the A-4 Skyhawk.

Scope
A RIO.

Section
Two aircraft operating together as a tactical unit.

Shoe
Short for “black shoes,” a derogatory term for non-flying personnel; aviators wear brown shoes.

Shooter
The catapult officer.

Sierra Hotel
Phonetic abbreviation for “shit hot,” high praise; the pilot’s favorite and all-purpose expression of approval.

Slider
A hamburger cooked in aircraft carrier wardrooms with cheese to ensure the grease contest is high enough to guarantee it will slide off the plate in heavy seas.

Smoking Hole
An airplane crash site.

Sniffer
A device on the flight deck that checks that an aircraft is broadcasting IFF transmissions.

Snuggle Up
During formation flight, to close up under the wing of another aircraft.

Sortie
A single mission by one aircraft.

Spank or Shpank
What one does to a lesser opponent in a dogfight.

Speed of Heat, Warp One
Very, very fast.

Speed Slacks, Speed Jeans
The G-suit, which applies pressure to the legs to aid in preventing blackout during high-G maneuvering.
Spooled Up
Excited.

Spud Locker
The part of a carrier where you don’t want to land; it is well down on the fantail, so if you hit it, you are way too low (at least one Navy pilot earned the nickname “Spud” for doing just that).

State
How much fuel you’ve got. Mother requests, “Say your state.” Responded to in the form of hours and minutes of fuel onboard til you fall out of the sky (“splash”). You respond, “State two plus two zero to splash” = 2 hours and 20 minutes of flying time remaining.

Stick-Throttle Interconnect
Mock-tech term for a pilot (also called just a “stick”).

Sweet
Up and working.

T — “Tango”

TACAN
TACTical Aid to Navigation. Navigation aid which provides bearing and distance (slant range) between it and an airplane.

TACTS
Tactical Aircrew Combat Training System. A system of computers, sensors, data pods, and graphic displays that permits real-time depiction of an aerial dogfight. TACTS is an integral element of aircrew training.

Tank
Refuel

Tango Uniform
Polite phonetics for “tits up”; broken, not functioning.

Texaco
An aerial tanker.

Three Down and Locked
Landing gear down and ready for landing. A required confirmation call prior to landing at Air Force bases. Pilots who fly fixed-gear aircraft are known to modify this call as “three down and welded.”

Three-Nine Line
Imaginary line across your airplane’s wingspan. A primary goal in ACM is to keep your adversary in front of your three-nine line.
Throttle Back
To slow down, take it easy.

Tickets
The jobs, billets, and accomplishments you need to climb the totem pole (the tickets get “punched”).

Tiger
An aggressive pilot.

Tilly
The mobile crane on the flight deck used to pick up disabled aircraft and move them.

Tits Machine
A good, righteous airplane. Current airplanes need not apply, this is a nostalgic term referring to birds gone by. By all accounts the F-8 Crusader was a tits machine.

Top Off
Fill up with gas.

TransPac/Lant
To cross the Pacific or Atlantic by aircraft.

Trap
An arrested landing on a carrier, a helo landing into an RSD (rapid securing device)

Trick-or-Treat
If you don’t make this pass. you have to tank or land ashore.

Turkey
Nickname for the F-14 Tomcat (when landing, the movement of its control surfaces makes it look like a turkey).

Tweak
To fine-tune or adjust.

Twirly
Anti-collision beacon on an aircraft.

Two Turnin’ and Two Burnin’
Refers to a P2V-7 in order to capture the flavor of having two Wright R-3350s (turnin’) and two Westinghouse J34 pure jets (burnin’) on takeoff. Jets were later put into standby for a rainy day.

U — “Uniform”
Up
Working, not broken.

Up and Locked
As in “Brain Disengaged.” Derives from that bad thing that happens when you try to make a gear-up approach.

Up on the Governor
When someone is about to have a tantrum (term comes from the device that keeps the engine from over speeding).

Up to Speed, or Up to Snuff
To understand or to know what’s going on.

V — “Victor”

Varsity Play for the Deck
A skillful landing attempt.

VSTOL
Very Short Takeoff and Landing. Also VTOL (Vertical Takeoff and Landing). The AV-8B Harrier is a VSTOL (VTOL) aircraft. Capable of vectoring its jet thrust to shorten its take-off roll or even to rise and descend vertically.

Vulture’s Row
A viewing gallery on an aircraft carrier’s island where you can watch flight operations.

W — “Whiskey”

Warm Fuzzy
Feeling of confidence or security. When things feel right.

Warthog
Universal nickname for the A-10 Thunderbolt II close air support aircraft.

Wash Out
To not make the grade at flight school.

Waveoff
When the LSO orders a pilot not to trap. A mandatory signal, usually a visual (waveoff lights on the lens) or audible command (on the UHF radio) for a pilot to cease his approach and not touch down.

Whiskey Charlie
Phonetics for “Who cares.”

Whiskey Delta
Phonetics for “Weak Dick,” a pilot who can’t cut it. Such a scurrilous term that it’s almost never used.
‘Winder
A Sidewinder missile.

Wingman
Second pilot in a two-plane formation. Responsible for ensuring that his leader’s six o’clock remains clear.

Workups
Putting a ship through certain tests and exercises before going on cruise.

X — “X-Ray”

Y — “Yankee”

Z — “Zulu”

Zero-Dark-Thirty
Technically a half-hour after midnight, but commonly used to describe any event that is scheduled to take place after midnight and before sunrise.

Zone 1
Minimum afterburner in the Tomcat.

Zone 5
Maximum afterburner in the Tomcat.

Zoombag
Flight suit.
**Basic Aerobatic Maneuvers**

Most of these can be entered either erect or inverted, flown backwards or have extra rolls added.

Where appropriate, the Aresti Catalog symbols have been included. Not all the figures are competition figures, and so some do not have diagrams to accompany the description.

Reading the diagrams, a figure begins at the small solid circle and ends at the short vertical line. Inverted flight (negative G) is depicted by dashed red lines. The small arrow indicates a rolling maneuver.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Aresti Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chandelle</td>
<td>Consists of a maximum climb, maximum bank combination to obtain the greatest altitude gain for a given airspeed and at the same time making a 180° course reversal. (Low, positive G maneuver can be performed in all aircraft.)</td>
<td>(Not a competition figure.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban Eight</td>
<td>5/8s of a loop to the 45 degree line, 1/2 roll, 3/4s of a loop to the 45 degree line, 1/2 roll, 1/8s of a loop to level flight (half of the Cuban Eight is called a &quot;half Cuban Eight&quot;, and the figure can be flown backwards, known as a &quot;Reverse Cuban Eight&quot;).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Cuban Eight</td>
<td>From level flight, 5/8s loop to the inverted 45° line, 1/2 roll to erect down 45° line, pull to level flight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse Half Cuban Eight</td>
<td>From level flight pull to the 45° up line, 1/2 roll to inverted 45° up line, then 5/8s of a loop to level flight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hammerhead; Stall Turn**
1/4 loop (pull or push) to vertical, as momentum/airspeed decreases, rudder is applied and the aircraft rotates around its yaw axis, the nose falls through the horizon and points towards the ground, a momentary pause is made to draw the vertical down line, and 1/4 loop to level flight. This figure is sometimes called a *stall turn* which is a misnomer because the aircraft never actually stalls. The maneuver is performed when the airplane decelerates through 20 - 30kts (more or less, depending on the airplane flown) of airspeed. The cartwheel portion of the hammerhead is performed with full rudder and full opposite aileron. Gyroscopic forces from the propeller during the rapid rate of yaw will produce a pitching and rolling moment and a degree of forward stick will be required to keep the airplane from coming off-line over the top. The yaw is stopped with opposite rudder while the ailerons and elevator remain in position, then once the yaw is stopped and the airplane is pointed down vertically, all controls are returned to neutral together.

Although they can be flown left or right in any airplane with the proper technique, a hammerhead is best flown to the left with a clockwise rotating prop, and to the right with an anticlockwise rotating prop (as in a Yakovlev type), due to propeller torque/gyroscopic effects.

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**Immelmann; Roll-off-the-top; Split S**

**Immelmann; Immelmann turn; Roll-off-the-top; half loop, half roll**

1/2 looping up followed by half a roll. There should be no pause between the end of the looping section and the start of the roll to erect flight.

Essentially an Immelmann in reverse. Half roll (from erect to inverted) followed by positive pitch to give a half loop. Converts altitude to airspeed, and reverses direction.

**Split S**

---

**Up lines**
Fly the aircraft so that the fuselage is perpendicular to the ground (along the wings' Zero lift axis). The attitude of the aircraft is judged, not the flight path, therefore the aircraft may drift downwind during a vertical maneuver.

Fly the vertical attitude plus or minus 45°. As for vertical lines the attitude of the aircraft is judged, not the flight path as viewed by a ground observer, which may differ depending on whether the figure is flown into or with the wind, and the wind strength.

**Loop**

A vertical circle entered from straight and erect level flight. A positive pitching movement is used at all points in the loop to draw the circle, so that the airplane canopy is pointing inwards. Both the inside and outside loop are sometimes casually referred to as a 'loop the loop'.

A vertical circle entered from straight and erect level flight, canopy pointing out of the loop. Loop can be above or below the straight and level entry altitude, from erect or inverted attitude. (Draws extreme negative Gs)

Half an outside loop starting from upright, straight and erect level flight. (The pilot pushes the stick forward and draws a half circle in the sky from the top down.)

**English Blunt** is similar to a split S, begins straight and level. Slow first to not exceed the maximum speed at the bottom of the maneuver. Push the nose down to begin the same track as a split S. At the bottom you'll be straight and level inverted. Roll to the upright position. Expect about 3 1/2 G's negative at the bottom. Higher G's if you began the maneuver without slowing the airspeed enough at the beginning. Be wearing shoes with heels to hook under the rudder pedals or you won't be able to keep your feet on the pedals! If you wear eye glasses, tape them to your nose or they'll end up on your forehead.
Spin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flat spin</th>
<th>Inverted spin; Erect spin;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A family of auto-rotational maneuvers, consisting of normal or &quot;flat&quot; spins, either upright or inverted. Two components must exist to spin an aircraft: 1) critical angle of attack (COA), which means that the aircraft is stalled, and 2) yaw.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tailslide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tail slide, the Bell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/4 looping up, straight vertical (full power) until the aircraft loses momentum. The aircraft falls backwards, tail first, until the nose drops through the horizon to a vertical down position. 1/4 loop (push or pull) to recovers to level flight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Snap Roll; Flick roll; Flick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snap Roll; Flick roll; Flick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A family of rapid autorotational or &quot;horizontal spins,&quot; not unlike spins. Rotation is induced by a rapid pitch input followed by rapid yaw input, thus stalling one wing further than the other. This imbalance in lift causes the high speed roll.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Dive:** extreme nose down attitude (not necessarily vertical), resulting in an increase in both airspeed and descent rate.
- **Lazy eight:** 1/4 looping up, wingover (left or right), 1/2 looping down + up, wingover (right or left), 1/4 looping down
- **Lomcovak:** family of auto-rotational, tumbling figures. In all varieties, the aircraft appears to tumble out of control. For example, one style involves the aircraft tumbling (simultaneously) nose over tail and wingtip over wingtip in a negative-g, gyroscopic condition. Introduced by Slovaks such as Ladislav Bezak, and others.
- **Pugachev's Cobra:** the nose of the aircraft is pulled up suddenly. The aircraft pitches up to 90–120° angle of attack. The nose then falls back to the horizontal, and the aircraft accelerates away in the original direction.
- **Kulbit:** post-stall maneuver similar to Pugachev's Cobra, but going to 360° pitch angle, flying a "loop."
- **Roll:** Rotational motion around the longitudinal axis (the nose rotates around its center).
- **Barrel roll:** a combination of a loop and a roll. The flight path during a barrel roll has the shape of a horizontal corkscrew and follows a helical path.
- **Aileron roll:** 360° revolution about the longitudinal axis at maximum roll rate. It consists of a pitch-up followed by a roll which is uncontrolled in the pitch axis, resulting in an initial climb, and then descent to the original altitude.
- **Slow roll**: roll around the longitudinal axis slowly, maintaining level flight by cross-controlling the elevator and rudder inputs.
- **Hesitation roll**: roll around the longitudinal axis, stopping momentarily at various points during the roll. Common variations include a two-point roll, three-point roll, four-point roll, etc...
- **The Scissors**: flying in a zigzagging pattern, either horizontal or rolling.
- **Standing eight**: inside loop, 1/2 roll (inverts the aircraft), inside loop (towards the ground) 1/2 roll on top of the loop
- **Wingover**: left or right 180° tight turn (yaw) at the top of a 1/4 looping (up)
- **Zoom climb**: dive followed by extreme nose up attitude (not necessarily vertical). Consists of an initial airspeed gain resulting in an increased rate of climb, followed by airspeed loss and decreased rate of climb, returning to the original speed and altitude.
- **Falling leaf**: motor off, wings-level stall, allowing the plane to side-slip in one direction, then countering the slip with rudder before a spin develops, allowing it to side-slip to the other direction, countering with rudder again, diving to exit the maneuver.
Aviation Acronyms

For student pilots or those getting ready for BFRs or practical tests, and for general review

Day VFR required equipment:
**GOOSE A CAT**
or **A FAST MOOSE**
or **TOMATO FLAMES**
or **ATOMS x 2**

Gas gauge
Oil temperature
Oil pressure
Seat belts
ELT
Altimeter
Compass
Airspeed indicator
Tachometer

Airspeed indicator
Fuel gauges
Altimeter
Seat belt/shoulder harness
Tachometer
Magnetic compass
Oil pressure gauge
Oil temp. gauge
Safety gear
ELT

Tachometer
Oil pressure
Manifold pressure
Altimeter
Temperature sensor (liquid-cooled)
Oil temperature (air cooled)
Fuel gauge
Landing gear position
Airspeed indicator
Magnetic compass
ELT
Seat belts

Altimeter
Tachometer
Oil pressure
Magnetic compass
Seat belts
Airspeed indicator
Temperature sensor (liquid-cooled)
Oil temperature (air cooled)
Manifold pressure
Strobe light (if plane certified after 3/96)

Night VFR: **FLAPS** or **APES**
Fuses (spares) or circuit breakers
Landing light (if for hire)
Anti-collision lights
Position lights
Source of electricity

Anti-collision lights
Position lights
Electric source
Spare fuses or circuit breakers

IFR required equipment: **GRAB CARD**
or **DECARAT**
Generator
Radios
Attitude indicator
Ball
Clock
Adjustable altimeter
Rate of turn indicator
Directional gyro

Directional gyro
Electric source
Clock
Attitude indicator
Radios
Adjustable altimeter
Turn and slip coordinator

Preflight information required for flights away: **RAW FAT**
Runway lengths
Alternates
Weather
Fuel requirements
ATC delays
Takeoff/landing distance data

Engine-out emergency: **PL(ease!) START**
or **ABCDE**
Pitch for best glide
Landing site
Seat belts
Troubleshoot
Approach
Radios
Turn off

Airspeed
Best place to land
Checklist
Declare
Execute

Partial-panel compass turns: UNOS
Undershoot
North
Overshoot
South

Compass dip: ANDS
Accelerate
North
Decelerate
South

IFR mandatory reports: FAME Performance
Fixes: arriving or leaving
Altitude changes
Missed approach
Equipment: loss or problems
Performance: poor climb/descend, TAS change

Airport sign types: MIDDLR
Mandatory instruction
Information
Destination
Direction
Location
Runway distance remaining

Flight Clearance: CRAFTS
Clearance
Routing
Altitude
Frequency
Transponder
Special

Weather briefing: SACrED WiNd
Synopsis
Adverse conditions
Current weather
Enroute forecast
Destination terminal forecast
Winds aloft
Notams
Weather charts: CoPS WARS
Constant pressure
Prognostic
Surface analysis
Weather depiction
Area forecast (FA)
Radar summary (SD)
Severe weather outlook (AC)

Special use airspace: MCPRAWN (the Scottish shrimp!)
Military Operations
Controlled Firing
Prohibited
Restricted
Alert
Warning
National Security

Aircraft certification categories: TURN PALE
Transport
Utility
Restricted
Normal
Provisional
Acrobatic
Limited
Experimental

NTSB Notification: P-FACTION
Property damage more than $25,000
Fire, in flight
Accident
Collision, in flight
Turbine failure
Illness of crew member
Overdue aircraft
No control: control failure of any sort
Mnemonics

Flight Clearance: **CRAFTS**
Clearance, Routing, Altitude, Frequency, Transponder, Special
Or, more correctly:
**In Clear Deep Rivers And Hot Springs, Fish Swim.**
**ID, Cleared to, departure, routing, altitudes, hold instructions, special, frequency, squawk**

IFR position report: **IPTAFNNR**
**I Play The Accordion For Nothing, No Reason**
or
**I place time above type: next time, next remark.**
**ID, Position, Time (minutes past the hour), Altitude, Flight type, Next report's place and time, Next next report, Remarks**
Example: "Cessna 7126Q, Manchester VOR, 22, 4000, IFR, Lebanon, 54, Burlington next, In clear between layers."
E. Rowan S. Trimble was named Pioneer Poet Laureate of Aviation Poetry and granted membership in the United Poets Laureate International, Quezon City, Philippines, in 1977.