



ORVILLE WRIGHT'S FINAL FLIGHT

Much has been made about the Wright brothers' first powered flights and their contributions to aviation, but little has been said about Orville Wright's last flight.

For the latter part of his life Wright mostly watched from the sidelines as aviation developed from its humble beginnings. In April 1944 the Army Air Force received the first of a number of Lockheed C-69 Constellations. One arrived at Wright Field in Dayton to undergo further flight-testing before it was put into military service. The military invited local officials and the press to take a ride on the airplane, according to a 1968 edition of Skylights newsletter. Not too many people would have been surprised if the 72-year-old Wright had rejected the offer, but something about the Connie must have intrigued him enough to come out into the open.

Once in the air, Wright reluctantly took the controls from the copilot's seat and saw how well behaved the giant airplane was. Back on the ground Wright was asked by a reporter what he thought about the airplane. "I enjoyed every minute, but I let the machine take care of itself. I always said airplanes would fly themselves if you left them alone," Wright said.

The event marked the first time Wright had piloted an airplane in 25 years and also the last time. He died of a heart attack in January 1948.

RUNWAY ETIQUETTE

Avoiding before-takeoff and after-landing dangers

Statistics indicate that the most dangerous portions of flight are the takeoff and the approach and landing phases. During takeoff, airplanes operate at relatively low speeds and at higher-than-normal angles of attack. During approach, airplanes are at relatively slow speeds, and configurations are such that flight is in the most nearly drag-intensive configuration possible. As a result, maneuverability and response during these critical phases of flight are consistently compromised. When something goes wrong during takeoff or landing, not only is the ground very close with little room for recovery, but a pilot's reaction time may also be several seconds long, during which the situation often only deteriorates.

But what about that time on the ground, during start of taxi until occupying the runway for takeoff and the time after landing until engine shut down? These are two often overlooked, but potentially dangerous, parts of every flight.

Prior to takeoff the most obvious situation to avoid is taxiing onto a runway when an aircraft is on short final. In a high-wing airplane this is easy to do because the reduced visibility may

only encourage a pilot to continue, especially if for some reason one is unable to hear the pilot on landing yelling on the radio. This often results in a go-around and an exchange of words later on the ground.

But this problem is not unique to un-towered GA airports only. At airports with control towers, controllers may often tell an aircraft to taxi into position and hold. The controllers are required to advise holding aircraft, departing aircraft and traffic on final of potential conflicts and circumstances. Each airport has its own comfort level for following the rule for how close landing traffic can be when allowing the position-and-hold procedure to be used. From the cockpit, being the guy on final is not a big deal, especially if the weather is severe clear; but there comes a time when one must decide to initiate a go-around even if the tower doesn't direct it, and that is usually after one has descended below 1,000 feet. On the other hand, sitting on the runway for a while, knowing there is unseen traffic on final can result in some very uneasy feelings... especially at night or during periods of reduced visibility. A position-and-hold clearance on a runway being used for landings requires extra vigilance and situational awareness.

Something that does not happen often, but can happen, is a runway change while taxiing for departure. You may or may not know the reason for the change, but this can lead to two distinct problems. For the IFR pilot, there may be a dramatic change in the standard instrument departure procedure. For either the VFR or the IFR pilot, there also may be a change in the departure frequency to use after takeoff. Most of the time, controllers are very good about advising you of the frequency change, but if they are busy or in a hurry, they may forget. So may you. Most of the time, it won't be a big deal, especially if you review and are prepared for the new departure procedure before takeoff; in that case, you'll get the new frequency in flight and change it accordingly. But sometimes, in a rush you will be fumbling around trying to fly, and the additional distraction is just not one that you need. You may not find out until airborne that you not only got an unexpected frequency change but a new heading to fly that you missed as well.

Initiating a takeoff roll when only cleared to position and hold is

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HOTLINES

**Report All Suspicious Aviation Activities:
1-866-AIR-BUST or 1-866-GA-SECUR**

a real danger, especially at an airport with intersecting runways. Traffic may be departing or landing on the intersecting runway. An accident is waiting to happen at a non-towered field if the runway is sloped and a pilot can't see an airplane ahead still on the runway, or on an intersecting runway. This scenario most often occurs with an airplane crossing a runway in use while another is taking off. Vigilance is key!

Takeoffs require some attention inside the airplane. At some point before rotation, be sure to look to verify that engine instruments are normal and the airspeed indicator is working. If there are backup instruments in the airplane, use them to verify status. Don't confuse a quick glance inside the cockpit during takeoff with a normal scan. This one takes less than a second, because a pilot's primary job is to safely steer an accelerating aircraft and still notice developing problems well before rotation speed to ensure a safe abort on the available runway remaining.

Rollout after landing poses its own distinct challenges. Some tower controllers have developed a habit of quickly advising pilots during one of the busiest, most work-intensive phases of flight. The airplanes may still be settling on the wheels, the wind may be causing the tail to weathervane, and a pilot may be working the brakes to achieve the happy medium of a smooth arrival and an expeditious clearing of the runway. At just this time, the controller may start providing instructions about which exit point to use, taxi instructions, and changing to the ground frequency. Respond efficiently but don't forget who is controlling the airplane. If there is any doubt about any instructions, make the next, safest available taxiway. Don't stop on the runway or create an unsafe condition if you can safely avoid it. Not all controllers are pilots, and they forget that your job is to fly first and communicate second. If you don't feel comfortable trying to clear at a certain taxiway, especially one that is not a designated high speed taxiway, then don't. If the guy behind you has to go around, so be it; besides, we can all use the practice.

--SAFETY FIRST--

Do NOT Fuel Or Start Aircraft Inside of Hangars!

An area of great debate over the years is the validity of doing touch-and-go landings. But there are a lot of things that can go wrong during touch and goes. A pilot can: go off the side of the runway; grab the gear handle instead of the flap handle, leading to a (very expensive) belly slide; forget to raise the flaps, which may lead to a very dangerous takeoff attempt that potentially includes a stall; go off the end of the runway; raise the flaps to the wrong setting; or ground loop a tail-dragger.

As opposed to during a takeoff, there is usually very little that the average pilot needs to see on the instrument panel during a landing rollout. Attention should be outside the aircraft in order to maintain directional control. If the aircraft is on the ground to stay, instrument indication problems can wait. During a touch and go and since you are performing a landing and a takeoff simultaneously, decisions must be made quickly, especially the decision to just stop on the runway if something isn't right.

Takeoffs and landings are two very different and very busy times of flight, and sometimes, because of their short duration, we forget just what can go wrong. Put a little thought into the events that take place while you are on the ground and what to expect and how to respond before things start to happen in rapid succession.

HELPFUL POINTS OF CONTACT

For GA operational, facilities maintenance, aviation, newsletter, airfield and SLC Title 16 questions call: Steve Jackson, General Aviation Manager, 647-5532 or e-mail at steve.jackson@slcgov.com.

For hangar lease and repair questions call: Johnathan Liddle, Properties Management Specialist, at 575-2894 or e-mail at johnathan.liddle@slcgov.com.

For aviation security questions call: Connie Proctor at 575-2401.

For gate access problems call: Airport Control Center at 575-2401.

For emergencies call: at SLCIA, 575-2405 at TVY or U42, 911 then 575-2405

For common General Aviation information call the GA Hotline: 575-2443

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The second Saturday of every month, Cornerstone Aviation, located in the Executive Terminal at Salt Lake City International Airport (337 North 2370 West) provides a free lunch and an informative program at 12:30 p.m. It is a great opportunity to share flying experiences and learn new things.
- The first Saturday of each month, Dave Coats' AIR CENTER at Salt Lake Airport II hosts on a fly-in/drive-in breakfast from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. No charge but donations are welcome.

Happy New Year!!

