

CARELESSNESS

BY LAC CHAS. SHOFNER

"And you, Bungle, one signed out in Harvard No. 2608. I want you to go up and practice all the sequences in preparation for your Wings Test"—Thus spoke Instructor J. Doe to Student Pilot Bungle one bright sunshiny morning in September, year of 1942.

"Boy, oh boy," says Bungle, "been fooling around with 'cross-country's' and instruments and dual so long I'll hardly know how to fly solo. Brother, let me at that phone," and off he goes to get into his parachute and helmet.

In the phone, Bungle is in a big hurry to get off the ground. This is one time they won't cheat me out of 15 or 20 minutes says Bungle. "I'll get away from here in nothing flat." Don't see any of the ground crew around. Oh well, I never saw one catch fire in starting so I'll just get this baby started and get gone. Why wait on them. Ah—there she goes, nothing prettier than the row of a Harvard I've always said anyway."

Let's see now, pitch fine, yep, I think she is already. Flaps down, yep they work O.K.—Say what's that red light coming on for, I know d—well the wobble pump brought her up to 50 lbs. and still is—oh, I forgot to switch the gas on. Lucky I'm not just taking off, I'll say. "Hey you!" shouts Bungle, bawling at one of the ground crew, "how about pulling these chocks. I can't stay here all day—"

"The chocks aren't in place," says the G.D. coming over to the plane. "O.K.," says Bungle, waving his hand. "I'm off," and with a blast of the engine he shoots away from the hangar.

"Great God," says Bungle, coming up to the take-off port, "look at all these guys warming up their engines, if I wait for them I'll be about tenth. I'll just slip out here in front and get away fast. The temperature is 100 anyway, that's warm enough on a hot day like this." "Say, look out you Boob," says Bungle to himself as he just misses another plane easing out onto the runway. "Well, might as well wait for him but if I ease real close behind him, I'm next! Well, there he goes, let's see, gas on, fine pitch, mixture rich—here I go." And down the runway he starts with furious blast of the motor.

"Brother, has this baby got power?" says Bungle, "she took off in nothing flat. Wheels up, throttle back, adjust pitch and trim. Oh! Oh! No wonder she came off so fast, the

trim is all the way back. I thought it felt kinda funny! Oh well, if I'm ever forced down, I'll know how to get it out of a field quick. Believe I'll just make a quick circuit and try another take off—no, I guess not, take up too much time and I want to polish up my roll off, can't understand why I keep spinning out of them," and off he goes to perform various fancy manoeuvres.

Having beaten the aircraft around for over an hour, we now find Bungle on the way in, just outside the circuit.

"Man, that was one good flip," says Bungle, "time's up already so I better go in before the instructor gets mad. Let's see now, which way are they landing now?—Oh, I see, still coming in to the South on No. 1. I'll just skip in here ahead of that fellow crossing upwind, and not have to go around—He's probably just practising landings anyhow and I'm late now.

"It's a wonder some of these guys wouldn't be more careful," says Bungle, "look at that bird making a cross-country circuit. I'll just speed up and get ahead of him, he can still make it anyhow, I think. Not supposed to go 140 in the circuit I know but I got to get in."

Bungle slips ahead of these two aircraft, crowds another one out on the into-wind leg and roars into a rocking-chair landing, pretending not to see the control man at the end of the runway waving the red flag at him. "Good Lord," says Bungle, "that plane ahead of me was almost off the runway anyway. Besides, I'll probably catch it for being late. I've got to get in. Those guys ought not to be so slow anyway getting off the runway."

Bungle taxis up to the hangar, leaves the gas on and the pitch half out of fine, kills the motor, hops out and goes in to Sign In.

"Bungle," says the girl at the control desk, "you forgot to sign the L-14!"

"Good Lord," says Bungle, "you folks are sure fussy about little things that don't amount to a hill of beans."

Flying an aircraft a la "Bungle" manner is definitely a hazard, not only to the pilot himself, but to everyone in the vicinity.

The line of demarcation between criminal negligence and gross carelessness, or just plain carelessness, is so small that it behooves every single one of us who are fortunate enough to be permitted to fly to be ever on the alert every second we are in an aircraft, from starting the motor to bringing the aircraft back to the ground and stopping the motor.

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