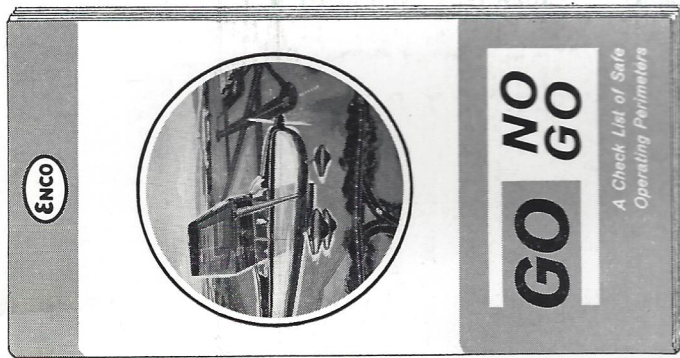


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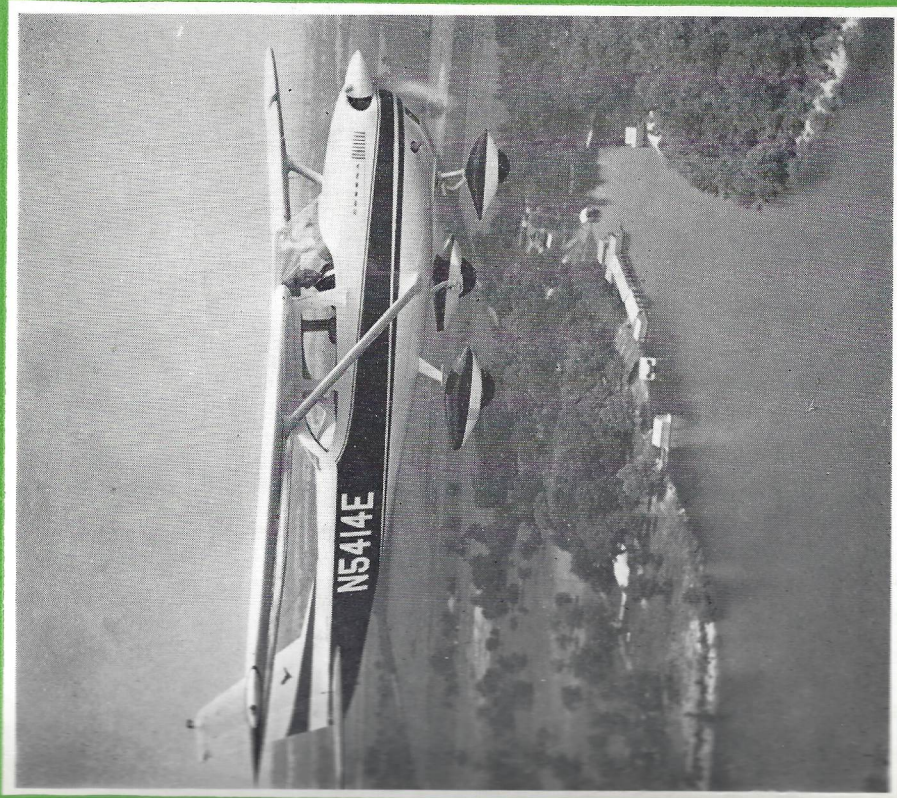
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AIR FACTS

ness again.

And I would like to say here that there is something about British-airline trained radio technicians that I wish Americans could copy. I don't know how they do it but with nothing more than a screw driver and a volt meter they appear to accomplish just about as much as we do with our great banks of test equipment, and do it much quicker and with no fuss at all. Maybe the answer is that the human brain isn't as obsolete as we like to think, if only we get into the habit of using it.

Next morning was cold and gusty with fat black clouds flying low overhead. We filed IFR for Geneva and found when we were airborne that the en route frequency was 127.9, which we did not have. Apparently in England you don't have any alternate frequencies because Traffic Control then told us to keep below 4000' and off airways.

He seemed nervous and called us at three minute intervals asking our position, although if his radar was working he knew where we were much better than we did. Finally, since we could almost see blue sky overhead, we asked permission to go on top.



Traffic Control replied, "Since you do not have the proper frequency I cannot give you an IFR clearance, but I can tell you that there is nothing above you." Which was a very nice way to handle it, and we went up into the sunshine at 5000, cancelled our flight plan, and flew direct to Switzerland.

France was all clear. We flew right over Paris, across the plains to Dijon, and over the low ranges to Geneva with Mont Blanc towering unbelievably above the haze level.

Cointrin is a beautiful airport and we wished the English, who keep London so firmly segregated, could see it. There are jets from all over the world coming and going: Pan-Am, BOAC, Ethiopian Airlines, Air India, Pakistan, Libya—and buzzing in and out among them were students in Cubs practicing take-offs and landings and a flock of Cessnas on passenger hops. Even at home we don't have anything like it.

Our last flight was up to Neuchatel where Beech has its European agency and from there Louise returned to Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, and I continued on my way south.

# Resolution

By

RICHARD L. COLLINS

**R**IGHT after Christmas we were southwest bound out of Trenton at 8,500—on top, with snow falling on the West Virginia mountains from the clouds below us. The winds aloft were fierce, about 60 knots right on the nose, but it was clear and smooth where we were riding and the AltiMatic on the Comanche was doing a very fine job of flying. With nothing to do except watch out for other airplanes, and scan the panel occasionally, our thoughts turned to the age-old question of New Year's resolutions.

Resolutions are easier to break than they are to make, and during the course of our airborne meditation we couldn't come up with one we felt we could live with. We did decide to stick with it for a while, though, and at least try to think of a resolution to apply to our flying.

Our inspiration came a couple of days later while we were talking to Claud Holbert, president of Central Flying Service, the Beech dealer in

Little Rock. Claud has had a little extra time lately, and has been able to do some instructing—an activity dear to his heart. He has, in multi-engine instructing, come up with something that we think is a pearl of wisdom. It is that if, in drilling students on single engine procedures, you present them with an emergency situation and tell them to hurry up and get the house in order the average reaction time is three seconds, and they will take the wrong corrective action about 50% of the time. If you present the same situation and tell them to take their time in instituting corrective action, the reaction time is the same three seconds, but they nearly always do the right thing.

It sounds simple. Simple enough to build a New Year's resolution around, so we made one—to take our time in our flying activities, and not to hurry in 1963.

Claud Holbert probably won't recognize his idea by the time we get through working it around to



our north, uphill take-off might have been one of those hairy affairs where we would have been staggering for what would have seemed like five minutes after take-off.

**Only 50%**

After we were off and established on course we did, though, remind myself that if we hadn't been in such a rush to get off in the first place, and had spent a little more time studying the layout of the airport and the wind while warming up to taxi, we would have probably made the proper decision the first time, and thus saved the time spent taxiing about and lecturing to myself. This thought brought a slight blush and a grade of only 50% for our first encounter with the new resolution. It also lent more credibility to Claud Holbert's idea. We had induced an error by mentally insisting that we were in a hurry to get off.

**Test # 2**

Our second major test of the resolution came on a flight from Little Rock over to Dothan, Alabama. It was weather this time. The weather along most of the route was about 1,000 overcast, except for Dothan which was down to 600 overcast. The weatherman said the tops shouldn't be over four

and the place from which we were departing was off the beaten path, we wanted very much to make it a VFR flight.

So, we were in a hurry to get off. After we got the engine started and were waiting for it to warm up a bit we pondered for a moment over which way to take off in view of the crosswind. From a quick look at the wind sock a north take-off looked like the thing, so when we were ready to taxi we sped to the south end of the field—in a hurry. When we got there and lined up for take-off we realized that it was going to be an uphill take-off with a strong cross wind, and with higher obstructions to clear than we would have on a south take-off. Also, a moment spent studying the wind sock showed that the wind actually was favoring a south take-off. So, we pinched ourself, delivered a short sermon on our 1963 modus operandi, and taxied slowly to the north end of the field and enjoyed a nice, unrushd south take-off—downhill, and over considerably lower obstructions — a much better operation.

The extra time used for the entire process couldn't have been more than a few minutes. In those minutes the weather couldn't have become a lot worse, and our south take-off had been uneventful, where

fit our resolution. We think that this idea is something that can be a great aid to multi-engine pilots in their formative stages, and thereafter, but what we want to do is fit it into all our flying—single or multi-engine, VFR or IFR.

The most notable thing found in living with our new resolution is that we almost have to talk to ourselves at times in order to stick with it. It might sound like we are a bit daft to people who don't understand what is going on, but it works.

### First Test

The first test came soon after the resolution was made. We were on a small, 1,700 foot strip with the Comanche. The weather was deteriorating rapidly—it had started raining and there was a pretty stiff crosswind blowing across the strip. The ceiling was still high, about 4,000 feet, but the way the rain was increasing we knew the visibility would soon be below VFR minimums. In that our destination was enjoying much better weather,

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to five thousand most of the way but in the Dothan area there was a possibility of multiple layers and some rain. The forecast was, however, for conditions to generally become better along the entire route, and Dothan was forecast to break open at about the time we planned to arrive there.

So, a test of the resolution. If we had been inclined to be in a hurry we would have gone on top right after leaving Little Rock (it was 2,500 scattered there), flown on top all the way to Dothan if possible, and we would have started working on a descent clearance about 75 miles out if the forecast clearing had not come true. If at any time the weather looked doubtful for honest VFR on top we could have procured a clearance while riding. That way there would be no time consumed on the ground figuring out and filing an IFR flight plan and waiting for a clearance.

But that's the hurry way. We decided instead to file and fly an IFR flight plan—then if the weather turned sour we would have all our ducks in a row and all our paper work in order. We filed the most unlikely route ever on an IFR flight plan: Little Rock direct Greenwood; direct Meridian; direct Evergreen; direct Dothan. There just aren't any airways that go

down through there anywhere near a straight line between the two points. When we filed we had visions of controllers screaming, and then diabolically working out a routing that would stay on airways, and wind all over the Southeastern United States.

### So Kind

Somebody in Memphis Center must have looked kindly on our good intentions of the day, though, as when our clearance came back it was so simple: "ATC clears 7840P to the Dothan airport, via flight planned route, maintain 5,000."

The flight was great, and so was the weather. We could have done it without an IFR flight plan, but all the way it was reassuring to know that if the clouds did become layered and it started raining we wouldn't be throwing paper all over the cabin and hurrying to get some sort of flight plan filed, and a clearance back. Our resolution was still in one piece.

### New Joisey, You'll

A few days later we were air-filing a VFR flight plan after departing an FSSless airport. This has always been a bad experience for us, as they practically want your life history, and they never seem to understand what we say. Maybe it's

FEBRUARY 1, 1963

our Arkansas/New York/Alabama/New Jersey accent that slays them. Anyway, while filing the flight plan we took a little extra time on the things that usually have to be repeated three or four times, and the FSS got it all on the first try. The things we have always had trouble with are: our name—this time we spelled it out the first time; and aircraft home base—there has always been something mysterious about "Mercer County Airport, Trenton, New Jersey." This time we used the code letters, TTN, and the phonetic alphabet. If an FSS is satisfied with "Tango Tango November" as our home base we are too, even if it does sound more like a South Sea island than an airport.

### Our Fault?

What we came up with was that maybe it wasn't the FSS stations fault, it might have been ours. A phone call always seemed to us like the quickest way to get the weather, but maybe they misunderstood our request over the phone. In that Dothan we could surely spare the ten or fifteen minutes it would require to stop in and take a good look at the sequences, forecasts, area forecasts, and winds aloft. So, we did it that way last time. It took only a few minutes and was entirely painless.

### Pre-Flight

We have always thought that we

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Another benefit of our resolution came when we were in Dothan, Alabama. Our policy in departing there previously had been to call the FSS on the phone, tell them we were about to depart, give our destination, and inquire as to what the weather might be. This has brought many and varied responses over the years—from the simple word "terrible" to excellent briefings. You can't expect FSS people to be flawless geographers, weathermen, and public servants at all times, but once in a telephone briefing for a flight up the east



## AIR FACTS

did pretty well on pre-flight inspections—except possibly when it was raining, cold and windy, or maybe when we were in a big hurry. We are now trying to do better on that, and in that we have been having intermittent gas gauge trouble on the Comanche we find it very settling to take the extra time for a look in each tank before take-off to make sure they are full. This works another way, too. In the 62 Comanche there is one gas gauge for all four tanks. It shows the fuel level in the tank selected, but there are also buttons at the other selector positions to check the fuel level in those tanks. The hitch on this is we don't imagine most people check the gauge on the other tanks before take-off, and if you have four and baggage aboard you would want the aux tanks empty. If a gas man inadvertently filled all tanks when you said mains, or if you forgot and told them to fill it up, the take-off performance might be a shade on the surprising side.

So, now we double check the tanks to see what fuel is in them.

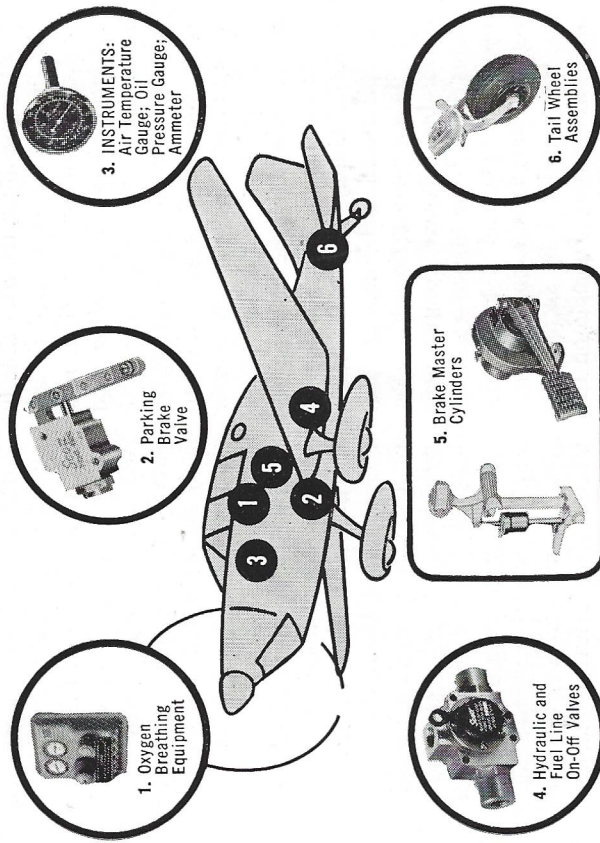
We also check the gas caps carefully. The Comanches, and a lot of other airplanes, use the rubber type caps with the latching handle that can adjust the snugness of the cap in the neck. One day right after take-off we noticed we were leaving a vapor trail behind the left wing. At the next stop we checked the left tank area to see what could have caused it, and someone had loosened the left main cap to make it easier to get in and out. It was so loose that it was just sitting in the filler neck. How much gas we lost we don't know, but any is too much.

All this fuel checking bit is something we should have been doing all along, and we always did it except when in a mad rush, or after an en route fuel stop—now we intend to do it every time. It's all part of the pre-flight, for which we have allocated at least an extra few minutes. If we check the airplane carefully before leaving we know for sure there is oil, and the cap is on tight, that the airplane hasn't been damaged in the hangar, and that everything is ship shape. One other thing a good pre-flight insures is that when the starter is engaged there won't be that metallic rwang that comes when a propeller contacts a tow bar. That might sound far fetched but it has

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**AIR FACTS**

So, an extra minute on the doors couldn't really be called wasted.

happened to a lot of people, and some of them more than once.

### While Boarding

After pre-flight, the next time in the line of events we find ourself under the influence of our new resolution is while boarding, and immediately thereafter. While boarding we walk by the baggage door, and that is a good time to take a second look and make sure it is tightly closed and locked. After we are seated in the airplane we now try to take an extra moment to make absolutely certain the cabin door is closed and firmly latched. This might seem a little heavy on doors, but baggage compartment doors have been known to come open in flight and a lot of the lighter items in the compartment can be pulled out by suction—to the consternation of people on the ground as well as the owner of the items. Improperly latched cabin doors, especially on low wing airplanes, have a habit of popping open right after the airplane becomes airborne, and more than one pilot has, when a door popped open, closed the throttle and landed on the remaining runway to close the door—but only after moving the gear switch to the up position.

### Red-handed

The last time we flew we caught ourself red-handed in a violation of our resolution—something that we really never were aware of doing. We were taxiing merily to the runway, across a ramp that isn't exactly cluttered but enough so to demand attention, and we found that while taxiing we were paying as much or more attention to such items as setting the clock, checking the trim, setting the altimeter and DG, and generally running a cockpit check while taxiing instead of watching where we were going. This also tripped us after a landing. Before we turned off the runway we found that we had run the elevator trim back to neutral, shut off the electric fuel pump, raised the flaps, and turned off the rotating beacon—as if we were in a hurry to get everything secure before even turning off the active. In applying the resolution we are now going to try to do nothing while rolling except watch where we are going.

Resolutions are all alike—they are easy to break. We intend to stick with this one. At least we are going to try.



*Pireps are valuable.*

## Elkins Interlude

By

DAVID PAGE

**D**ID YOU ever fly in there? I had to recently and was grounded by weather for two nights and a day. It's a nice little West Virginia mountain town, with a good airport (2 paved runways), a Weather Bureau station and a Flight Service Station. The people are very happy and friendly, and I can highly recommend Kay's Motel and Phil's restaurant.

Also, you have missed half your life if you haven't heard the Junior High School band perform after supper on the closed off main street—shades of "Music Man"!

However, this piece is really not about Elkins — it's intended to stress the importance of paying attention to pireps.

My wife and I had decided to fly down to Hot Springs, Virginia for a long weekend. Prior to a morning departure I personally visited the Weather Bureau at Cleveland and talked to an able airways forecaster whom I have

known for some years. I learned that an extensive high pressure area centered in northern Pennsylvania dominated the Eastern part of the country. A rather weak cold front, which contained scattered showers and thunderstorms, was approaching the Cleveland area from the northwest but was not due to arrive until late in the afternoon.

The weather on the direct course from Cleveland to Hot Springs, Virginia was scattered clouds at 4500 feet with a possibility of very widely scattered air mass thunderstorms developing over the Allegheny Mountains in the afternoon. No frontal activity of any kind was indicated, nor was a line of thunderstorms forecast. Winds aloft were from the West-Northwest at 15 knots.

I filed a VFR flight plan with the Cleveland Flight Service Station and asked for flight following service with watch stations at