

# Speaker: Donald Winchester

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My name is Donald Winchester, Commander U.S. Coast Guard, retired. I'm a 1966 graduate of the Academy. I spent a year on the ship Matagorda, a seaplane tender, ocean station vessel out of Honolulu, Hawaii. A year in flight training, '67-'68. My first air station was San Francisco. I was a helicopter pilot, and normally that career path you'll go to Icebreakers within two years. For some particular reason, I never got orders, and then a year goes by, I've got another child and no orders. A year goes by no orders. So, I'd been there four years flying helicopters, so I was also the communications officer, and I'd get these messages select and direct one JG lieutenant to C-130 School. And I'd go see the officer, I was "Ooh, ooh. Send me." "Naw, you're a rotor-head. Get out of here."

So, one night I had the duty, and I took the keys, and I went down to the training office, and I got a C-130 copilot syllabus and a fixed wing instrument check sheet, and I started volunteering for C-130 navigator flights, which was a primary duty for helicopter pilots in those days. And of course, all my contemporaries, they were happy to get out of C-130, so they could stay in the helicopter. And all we did was training flights to San Francisco, basically. Every once in a while there'd be another case, but mostly just training.

So these guys, they'd go out and they'd shoot four, five approaches and landings, then swap seats and then two hours out of the four hours would be taken up, and neither one of them wanted to do anything. They'd go, "Well, how about showing me a hmm?" And they would put me in the seat and then we'd go to a hmm. And then it took me, this was a six-sheet syllabus. There were probably 15 things on each sheet, but six flights, basically. It took me eight months, one at a time, to get all these things checked off. And so then I had to wait for the opportune time.

We had two ops officers, two commanders, at this ... This was a large unit: five C-130s, four HU-16s, and five helicopters. But the two commanders both were gone at the same time, and all of our command duty officers were passed over for commander, all lieutenant senior commanders. So, their care factor was something less than honorable, so to speak. So, I waited until one of the commanders was in

training, and the other one was on vacation, and I went to the acting ops officer and I said, "Jack, schedule me for a fixed-wing instrument check and a copilot check."  
"You got it."

So I got the instrument check out of the way on Thursday, Friday I'm scheduled for my copilot check, and I do all this stuff, you know, my flight planning, I get the weather and do a preflight, and get a clearance, and we go out to the run-up area and we have a prop that's out of limits. Can't fly. And I'm crushed because I know tomorrow these guys are coming back, and my plot is going to be overturned. So, I'm all down and sad, and we're taxiing it back, and the aircraft commander, who was also my department head, he goes, Winnie, what's the matter?" And I said, "It's all over." He said, "What are you talking about? I already called the captain, you're a copilot, you're buying." I said, "But we didn't fly." And he said, "There's nothing on that syllabus that says you have to fly. It says you've got to do a clearance, you got to do a flight plan, you got to check the weather, you got to do a pre-flight and you have to have an emergency. Our emergency was a prop that was out of limits. You're a copilot." I'm, "Yeah!"

So I had to buy. You know, each time you get a new rating, back in those days you had to buy a round of beer for whoever was there. So, now I'm an H-52 Aircraft Commander, and C-130 Copilot. Well, I put in for maintenance training, get selected, and by some strange weather phenomenon, all the events came together at the same time. Air Station Washington was Arlington back in those days. The VIP Unit, where they had a Gulfstream I and a Gulfstream II. They had started out with a rank structure of commander, lieutenant commander, and four lieutenants, six pilots. Because a lot of guys would get their Gulf Stream type rating and go with the airlines, or go to corporate, they said, "Well, we can fix this. We'll send guys that are too old or too senior." So, they wound up with a captain, you know, O-6 CO and O-6 selectee as XO, a commander for ops, and they had one junior, a senior lieutenant that was going to make lieutenant commander, he was never going to sign for an airplane because he was so junior, so they decided they needed a junior engineer, junior to this guy so that he could become an aircraft commander, and then they were going to try and bring the rank structure back down to where it should be.

So, lo and behold, of the 12 guys or so that went to maintenance with me, I was the only one with any high altitude pressurized experience because I was a C-130 Copilot. The other guys were HU-16 and H-52 types. So, I get a set of orders to Arlington, and they're promptly canceled when OSR-2, which was the ops side, they figured out that I was a helicopter pilot, I couldn't fly jets. Engineering says, "We don't have enough engineers to let you mess around with our people." So, they got reinstated, and so here I go. I'm going to Arlington as a helicopter pilot.

Well, the way this works in the Coast Guard, you know, you come in as a copilot, and you go to school, and they, as you get enough time, pretty soon you are one. So, I became an aircraft commander, and then as more junior pilots come in, you're an instructor pilot because there's nobody else. And I had learned how to fly this Gulfstream II, the jet, with sessions in flight safety, in the simulators, and just flying. So, in those days we had a maneuver called the FAA Ballet. You get up to whatever altitude you're going to use. You pick a base heading, usually, a cardinal heading north, east, south or west. The student puts on the hood, so he can only see the instruments and starts doing constant-rate turns, 30 degrees each side of the space heading. And the instructor pilot will give you various selections of flap, speed brake, gear, and you have to keep 160 knots, plus or minus five knots, And base altitude, plus or minus 100 feet. Coordination exercise.

So, in the New England quarter, it's so much traffic there that you can't just go do that, you got to get out of the way, so center sent us out over an Atlantic route from Atlantic City out over the Atlantic Ocean, and we're just going back and forth doing our stuff off-shore. So, I had Bob [Gype 00:07:05] who's a very, very experienced C-130 pilot, but I'm teaching him how to fly a Gulfstream. He taught me how to fly 130s to San Francisco. So, I've got him under the hood, and we're doing the duty. Well, when you lower hydraulic actuators, there's sounds---thunks and noises and airflow changes. So, I had him at a flap setting and I'm lowering the gear, and the gear goes "thunk," but I heard another "thunk" and I looked up, and the airplane yawed and number two engine is spooling down. And he felt it.

He's an experienced pilot, so he yanks off the hood, and he smoothly levels the wings and he starts adding power on the other engine, and I immediately with both

hands, I flip up the gear and the flaps at the same time, and he says, "Oh, shit. We're not getting anything out of this one either." We looked at number one engine, and it's temperature limited, I mean, it's compressor stalled. We've got to shut it down or it's going to burn up. It's over-temp. So, now we're a glider. We're 70 miles offshore, and we're descending. There is no emergency procedure for a double-engine failure in the Gulf Stream at this time. Basically, it's a civilian airplane.

So, we're getting on our oxygen masks, we're looking for a checklist that doesn't exist, I'm squawking on the transponder 7700, which is an emergency. I get on the Guard frequency, one twenty-one five, and call New York Center. And you can edit this later, but the conversation was, "New York Center, Coast Guard 01, we've had a double-engine failure. We're gliding towards [NAVFAC 00:08:46]," which is a facility at Atlantic City. "Declaring emergency." And New York Center says, "Coast Guard, is this a drill?" And I said, "It's no fucking drill." "Roger, Coast Guard, you're clear to NAVFAC." And the altitude, I said, "The altitude is going to be going down. We're a glider." So, we're heading down it, and we did have relight procedures, but we didn't have double-engine failure procedures.

So, we get one relit, we let it stabilize, and the temperature comes down and gets within limits, and then we start using it. Okay. That's working. And then we get the other one and restart it. And we take deep breaths, and we un-declare our emergency and we get clearance back to Washington D.C. well, in the Coast Guard, and military in general, when you have an emergency of some sort, you fess up. You know you tell the truth so hopefully, some day, somebody else will be safe for something like this.

So, I told Bob, you got the radios, you're flying. And I took a legal pad and I started writing everything I could remember, that had happened. And I got done and I put it inside my pocket, and I said, "I got the airplane, I got the radios, and you do the same thing." Later, we compared notes, and it's almost carbon copy because we were both there. It's what happened and it was fresh in our minds. We get back to Washington D.C. and the wheels of justice are turning, so we've got headquarters operations guys, headquarters safety, headquarters engineering, Gulfstream, Rolls

Royce, and flight safety, all on this big conference call.

"Well, what happened guys?" So I start going through the scenario, and this voice in the background, you don't know who's talking but I hear this voice, "That won't fucking happen." And I go, "And who is that, please?" It happened to be a guy named Morgan Cobb, who's the chief pilot for Gulfstream. And another voice says, "Morgan, shut up. Let him talk. Morgan, let's go," because they wanted to hear the rest of the story. Well, the long and the short of it is Gulfstream purportedly sent a crew out to duplicate our flight regime, and nothing happened, so obviously we screwed up and it's all our fault.

So, for the next year, I'm sort of a ... very silent person in flight safety. We go twice a year for recurrent and I learn more at the bar in Savannah, from just listening to these old guys talk, than I ever learned in a simulator or in a briefing. And I would hear rumors of, "Yeah, we lost one too, but we can't say anything. We might lose our job." So, about a year later, there's a airplane down in Australia that had a gear problem. They had to take it from Perth, on the west side to Melbourne, where the maintenance facility was for repairs. And they got a ferry permit from their FAA to fly gear down and they're just flying straight and level at 33,000 feet. "Boom," they lose an engine. Now Rolls Royce and Gulfstream have a problem, because twice.

Somewhere months before or after that, I cannot remember, there was a Mexican Gulfstream II that was going to Europe, and the weather closed in very fast over the continent, and they couldn't get into where they were going. They diverted back to Ireland, and before they could get there, they ran out of gas. Now, they're a glider. Fortunately, when they broke out of the clouds, there was a racetrack right underneath them, and they landed on the back stretch of this racetrack, and the ground is so soft for the ponies, it was a great breaking action, which they needed because they didn't have any reverse and no engines. And no damage done. So, with these scenarios, Gulfstream's got to come up with a double-engine failure checklist, and they got to find out why engines quit.

So ... And I never understood why they didn't find this out in flight tests or in wind tunnel tests, back when they were designing the airplane. But the final saga came

out that at altitudes, where you have high-angle nose up, high-angle of attack or high-angle of incidence, the nose gear door, which is the nose gear and then behind it it's a door, so when the nose comes up it's aerodynamic. That door, if you have a little bit of yaw on the nose, the burble from that nose gear door will blank an engine and cause it to fail. So, finally, maybe I was vindicated that I wasn't such an idiot, after all and that I wasn't so bad, I guess.

Funny, there was never an incident report. We didn't kill anybody, we didn't dent the engine, no property damage, no nothing. And I guess it just became a well-kept secret, because I never heard anything about it, except when I was around was, "Aah." And that's about all I wanted to say, is about my fun time as being a member of the unerring glider society of Air Station Washington.