

Anatomy of an Accident

As most of you know, I had a severe accident involving one of my planes. The major factor was that I failed to check out the direction of the throttle servo after remounting it. "If it can go wrong, it will go wrong". The second thing was that even though the plane was tied down, it could move backward when the starter was applied, which it did. When the engine started up at full throttle, it came forward enough to get my left hand from below the wrist to the web of the thumb taking all the skin, some bone, and severing an artery.

If this sounds a bit grisly, it was! I was not able to stop the bleeding, even after wrapping the wound in two towels, and applying pressure, which occupied both hands, no way to call 911, or drive a car. I was able to call to my wife and she drove me to the hospital.

Two weeks in the hospital and three operations later, they patched me up enough to come home. Physical therapy is the next step to help me regain use of the thumb. All of this because I didn't use good judgment. We have all done things just as dangerousand gotten away with it.

From now on -- I have decided to say to myself.

"Have I checked everything?"

"Is there any way this prop can get me, or anybody else?"

If you find this a scary tale, that is exactly what I intended. What do you think the out come would have been if, I had waited a few minutes until after my wife had gone to town, as she was supposed to do? There is an excellent chance I wouldn't be here to relate this story. Starting an engine by yourself, without any help close by is inviting the worst kind of trouble. As someone said, "Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't possibly live long enough to make them all yourself."

Lee Crowder

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