

Thomas P. Turner's Mastery of Flight®

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FLYING LESSONS for July 16, 2026

FLYING LESSONS uses recent mishap reports to consider what *might* have contributed to accidents, so you can make better decisions if you face similar circumstances. In most cases design characteristics of a specific airplane have little direct bearing on the possible causes of aircraft accidents—but knowing how your airplane's systems respond can make the difference in your success as the scenario unfolds. So apply these FLYING LESSONS to the specific airplane you fly. Verify all technical information before applying it to your aircraft or operation, with manufacturers' data and recommendations taking precedence. **You are pilot in command and are ultimately responsible for the decisions you make.**

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This week's LESSONS

A tragic crash was [widely reported](#) in aviation and nonaviation media. After attending a Major League baseball game in St. Louis, Missouri, the pilot (father) of a Beech B55 Baron and his passenger (adult son) were killed, and the airplane destroyed. Initial reports are that the airplane, flying visually over the midnight hour, may have encountered thunderstorms. The airplane's [ADS-B track](#) appears to confirm reports the Baron entered a spiral from which it did not recover before impacting the ground.

See:

<https://www.firstalert4.com/2026/07/10/father-son-killed-plane-crash-after-going-cardinals-game/>
<https://globe.adsbexchange.com/?icao=a199c6&lat=38.305&lon=-90.101&zoom=14.0&showTrace=2026-07-10&trackLabels>

The obvious **LESSONS** from the preliminary data revolve around night flight, attempted visual flight into areas of instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), and pilot fatigue. The second-level concerns might focus on **why** the pilot may have decided to attempt the flight, and why he chose to fly VFR instead of on an instrument flight plan under positive Air Traffic control. A tertiary level of **LESSONS** might explore whether flying IFR would have made much difference.

All are valid areas to explore. Unfortunately, we'll probably never have access to a level of detail that helps us go beyond "Loss of Control in Flight (LOC-I): Attempted Night Visual Flight in Areas of Adverse Weather/Thunderstorms" in terms of what actually happened that night.

Without the why it's hard to get beyond "I would never do that!" and "Don't fly visually into thunderstorms in the middle of the night when you can stay overnight and fly fresh the next day." File those obvious considerations away for the next time you need to give yourself a sanity check.

Instead, I thought I'd use this horrible event as a prompt to see what's happened in multiengine piston airplanes in the past two weeks (the lifetime of [FAA preliminary accident/incident reports](#)). Here we go:

1. Beech B55 Baron experience engine issues in cruise flight and crashed in a wooded area. Two serious injuries.
2. Cessna 310 struck a bird during landing. No injuries (except the bird).
3. Cessna 402 pilot "declared an emergency because of the door opening and striking an antenna during takeoff." The airplane landed normally with no injuries.
4. Piper PA30 Twin Comanche "crashed under unknown circumstances and flipped over" during an attempted landing. One minor injury, one serious injury.
5. Tecnam P2006T landed gear up. No injuries.
6. Cessna 421 nose gear collapsed during landing. No injuries.

7. Beech B55 Baron loss of control in flight (the inspiration for this week's *LESSONS*). Two fatalities.
8. Beech B55 Baron crash during takeoff under unknown circumstances. One fatality.
9. Smith Aerostar 601P crash during takeoff under unknown circumstances. Three fatalities.
10. Beech Travel Air nose gear collapse during landing. No injuries.

See <https://www.asias.faa.gov/apex/f?p=100:93::NO::>

What's this tell us? Anything? In this quick, nonscientific sample very preliminary information suggests one known and three likely other engine failure events (although they may have been LOC-I also). The Twin Comanche may have been a dual instructional flight, making a *simulated* engine failure loss of control more likely.

We have three landing gear mishaps, a door opening during takeoff, a bird strike and one (and as many as four) loss of control in flight.

The LESSON, then is to be prepared for engine failure and managing situations conducive to LOC-I. We don't know how many engine failures may have been dealt with successfully these past two weeks, and thus not result in an accident report. If that number is greater to the up to four we have here that tells us chances are fairly good for the prepared pilot. The greater the number of successful outcomes, the better we should feel about our chances if one engine quits.

If the number of successful engine failures is equal or less than the four we know about, that is, most or all engine failures in twins led to an accident, the *LESSON* is very different. This would mean that statistically our chances are not good if we lose an engine in a twin.

The answer is to train hard to be prepared, to uphold the good result or avoid the bad one. **There is no other way** to take the fact that we had four **reported** engine failure accidents in twins in just the last two weeks than to emphasize the need for continued training and vigilance in a piston twin.

The landing gear mishaps emphasize the need for good landing gear procedures and maintenance.

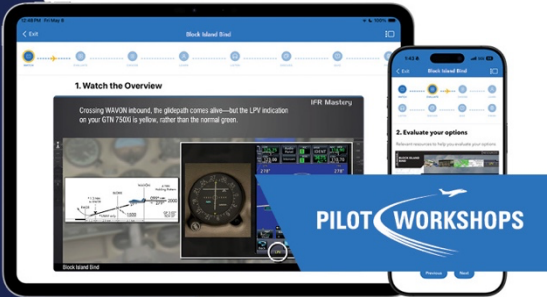
The remaining events each carry their own reminders, most of which are to be ready for the unexpected. That's a *LESSON* for all of us, regardless of what we fly.

Questions? Comments? Supportable opinions? Let us know at mastery.flight.training@cox.net.

What would you do?

The glidepath disappears on an RNAV LPV approach. Would you continue to LNAV minimums? Test your knowledge in this IFR Mastery scenario.

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https://courses.sportys.com/training/portal/pilot-workshop/IFR/scenarios/block-island-bind/overview?utm_source=flyinglessons&utm_medium=emailbanner&utm_campaign=turner26

Debrief

Readers write about recent *LESSONS*:

Reader Jerry Robertson writes about the [June 25 LESSONS](#) on Tak[ing] the Long Way Home:

I have searched high and low in the [Instrument Procedures Handbook](#) for your Rule #6 - **If you don't have a "golden" way out, don't go in.** Since I can find it in there, we need to start a

petition to add it. This might be the most valuable rule I have seen regarding weather and flying IFR. At some point I might relay a story where Rule #6 almost came back to bite us. Thanks as always for your excellent contributions to the aviation community thru your newsletters.

Thank you, Jerry. I will continue to develop that theme in the likely event the FAA does not add my Rule #6 to the IPH. Meanwhile, I look forward to learning from your experience.

See:

<https://thomaspturner.com/flying-lessons-weekly/flying-lessons-for-june-25-2026/>

https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/handbooks_manuals/aviation/instrument_procedures_handbook

I will be working at Oshkosh and not publish Mastery of Flight® or the Beech Weekly Accident Update next week.

I hope to see some of you in Wisconsin. I'll get back to more *LESSONS* and your Debrief insights in two weeks.

More to say? Let us learn from you, at mastery.flight.training@cox.net.

A promotional banner for the National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI). On the left, the NAFI logo is displayed in white on a blue background. To its right, the text "JOIN THE NAFI COMMUNITY" is written in yellow, followed by two yellow arrows pointing right. Below this, a paragraph in white text says: "Become a member today and join 1,000s of others like you who are dedicated to aviation safety and training. NAFI members receive exclusive membership benefits." Below the paragraph is the website "More information: nafimenter.org". To the right of the text is a red button with a white right-pointing arrow and the text "JOIN NOW". On the far right, there is a laptop screen showing the NAFI website's login page, which includes the text "Welcome to NAFI" and "Members, sign in below".

See my.nafimenter.org

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