



Admiral's Corner

From Commander, Naval Safety Center



men who regularly perished in their flying machines. But that was 50 years ago.

Naval aviation has come a long way since 1955. Through this journey, *Approach* magazine has guided our Navy and Marine Corps aviation professionals with information, statistics, and a bit of humor. Most of all, *Approach* has given us a place to share our stories, our misdeeds, and our adventures, to make us better, safer and more effective. This sharing of stories, which had its origin with the *Anymouse* reports, also has bonded naval aviators – past and present – to one another and to the profession itself. With this special bond comes the responsibility to take care of each other.

This 50th anniversary issue only can provide a sampling from past issues. As you step through each decade, we want you to reflect on how naval aviation has improved over the years. Since *Approach* came on the scene, we've developed NATOPS, the angled deck, the mirror, Fresnel-lens and IFLOLS systems, field arresting gear, and ejection seats. The chart to the right indicates the progress we've made and lists a few of the events that influenced the reduction in mishaps. The mishap rates, fatalities, and aircraft losses from the mid-1950s were at unacceptable levels. Just as we currently strive to reduce our mishap rates, the professionals who follow

We used to lose a plane or two every day and hold memorial services every week for our young

us also will consider our current numbers too high, and we should as well! That's how it should be: raising the bar and continually improving.

From Vietnam to the Cold War, and now with the global war on terrorism, the face of naval aviation has changed with newer aircraft and generations of young aviators. In another sense, though, it's really the same: professionals, well trained and focused on carrying out the mission. Success depends on people doing their jobs, day after day, in the safest possible manner.

Approach magazine and all the professionals who have contributed to it over the years have left their mark on the safety culture of naval aviation. Your stories are a valuable part of the legacy we leave for the next generations of aviators. Many thanks for all your contributions.

RADM George Mayer

