



I just finished reading the October 2003 *Approach* magazine and saw your “Mishap-Free Milestone” page that lists various squadrons, their years of safe flying, and total hours. I noticed VAW-115 was mentioned and that they are celebrating 18 years of accident-free flying. I mentally started to protest this fact because I thought, “They just had an accident in 1985.”

After doing the math, I chuckled, but then the sobering reality of that August when my friend Chris Mims died in an E-2 off USS *Midway* (CV 43) came rushing back. Those thoughts coupled with the comments by Radm. Brooks in his commentary about the hard numbers of casualties in accidents over the past five years. I thought, “Those numbers have names” and families who go to memorial services like the one I attended in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, shortly after Chris’ death. That was my first hard “gut check” about the realities of life and death as an aviator and the accidents that can happen.

I’ve been a part of some form of aviation for almost 20 years now, and I’ve seen the great strides in making flying safer. There have been constant improvements to NATOPS, the enhanced GPWS system, and TCAS (traffic-alert and collision-avoidance system) on the airliner I used to fly. I applaud your continuing efforts to make the unnecessary deaths fewer and farther between, and I also applaud the admiral’s goal of dramatically decreasing the death rate in accidents. Keep up the good work.

Cdr. John Clubb (Ret.)

Mishap-Free Milestones

VAQ-140	18 years	27,489 hours
HS-48	8 years	
HMH-36	14.5 years	10,000 hours
VFA-137	12 years	
VFA-115	9 years	
HS-15	7 years	22,500 hours
VFA-195	21 years	90,000 hours
VAQ-128	6 years	8,860 hours
HS-2	18 years	56,226 hours
HMLA-369	12 years	70,000 hours

BROWNSHOES IN ACTION COMIX

"The kind real aviators like"
by Cdr. Ward Carroll

One Day in the Safety Department...

All right, lets's make this
safety stand-down a real
grabber.

Yeah, there's nothing
worse than the same
ol' safety routine.

It's
snoozola.



We need to really give
the message some oomph!

Time to think
outta the box.

Let's raise the
bar of the presentation,
go totally Siegfried
and Roy.



OK, that was a respectable
nod toward innovation. We'll
just have the aircrew play
NATOPS jeopardy like we
always do.

Whew! Thank god.
I'll go find the
game board for
the front of the
ready room.

I actually
scared myself with
my aggressive
approach to change
just then...

