

A Young Carrier Pilot Gets His Feet Wet

By Harry Kraemer

The carrier-based fighter pilot faces a lot of challenges throughout his/her career. However, landing on the carrier may be one of the toughest and most demanding. Imagine lining your aircraft up with a small pitching runway and going to full power as you touch down in case you miss the arresting gear. The

touchdown and stop within seconds is just a routine landing on a carrier! A mechanical problem with the aircraft just adds to the excitement, as a young aviator named Bob Lunsford found out Sept. 16, 1944.

It was during the invasion of Palau Island, and Lunsford was flying Combat Air Patrol. He took off in an FM-2 from the carrier Saginaw Bay at 12:30 on that day, with full ammunition and enough fuel for about six

hours. It was Lunsford's second day in combat, so naturally he was eager for some action. His flight was assigned to fly air patrol over the carrier, which they did until about 2:30. In a letter home about the patrol, he wrote, "To circle around doing nothing is very tiresome."

They decided to have a look at some Japanese held territory. They were flying at 8,000 feet, looking the situation over, when

all of a sudden the air was full of anti-aircraft fire. "Naturally that peeved us, for the Japs to start shooting, so we peeled off and went down shooting. We headed for the gun emplacements and made them run like hell."

As Lunsford pulled up and started climbing out, anti-aircraft fire blew up beneath his aircraft. It jolted the plane and shook him up. Boy, that was close, he thought. He looked his aircraft over and found no visible damage. After a photo pass, the flight decided it was time to return to the carrier.

Lunsford and his flight were circling the carrier as it turned into the wind for their landing. One by one, each plane lowered its tail hook — every plane except Lunsford's. The anti-aircraft fire must have damaged his tail hook.

"I pulled and pushed, and I kicked and I cussed, but the damn thing still wouldn't come down," Lunsford said. By then, it was about 5 p.m., and Lunsford was just about sweating blood. Desperate, he tried everything. He even used a small knife he had to cut and unscrew anything and everything he could find around the tail hook release mechanism without result.

Lunsford knew this meant a barrier crash on the carrier or a water landing. The stories about the sharks that patrolled the area worried him about a water landing, and besides that, he could see them. It was as if the sharks were waiting for him. He thought about going to a nearby airfield, but had heard over the radio that it was still held by the Japanese.

He was told by the carrier to shoot up most of his ammunition to make his plane lighter and less dangerous for landing. As a last resort, he took his pistol and tried to shoot the tail hook cable in two (hoping that it would free fall once the cable was cut). That just made a lot of noise in the cockpit and put holes in the wings.

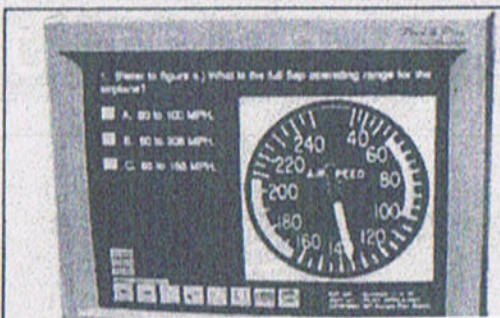
With fuel running low, the carrier radioed Lunsford to prepare for a crash landing on the ship. He released the emergency cockpit enclosure release and off went the canopy. As he prepared his plane for a crash landing on the carrier, he was told that they now wanted him to land in the water next to a nearby destroyer that would pick him up. (A barrier crash on the carrier could put the carrier out of

commission for a while, and the ship's captain did not want that.) That was not what he had wanted to hear.

He thought if he survived the water landing, if he could get out of his plane before it sank, then came the sharks. "I could just see

Directory of Computer Test Sites

FAA	FCC	IS CET	ASNT	Food Safety Manager	Nokia	AAFCS		
NV	Boulder City Air Excel Las Vegas Aviators N Las Vegas Aerleon Inc. Reno Reno Flying Service	702.293.3600 702.648.5581 702.647.6100 775.856.5800	Levelland Liberty Hill Lubbock Mesquite Roanoke	Levelland Aviation C.F.C. Aviation Stratos Aviation Mesquite Flight Pilot Training Center	806.894.7328 512.355.3156 806.765.8138 972.222.9734 817.430.0661	Spokane Spokane Vancouver Wenatchee Yakima	Custom Aviation Spokane Community Aero Maintenance Wings of Wenatchee Noland Decoto	509.533.1016 509.533.8085 360.735.9441 509.886.0233 509.248.1370
NY	Farmingdale Flushing Malone Monticello Oriskany Rochester Ronkonkoma Saranac Lak Scotia Utica Wappinger	Select Aviation College of Aeronau Computer Designs T.M.L. Aircraft KeyFlite Academy Bill Law Mid Island Air Servic Adirondack Testing Richmor Aviation Galaxy Aviation Richmor Aviation	San Antonio San Antonio San Antonio San Marcos Spring Waco Wichita Falls Cedar City Orem Salt Lake Ci	Alpha Tango Stinson Flight Center Wright Flyers Gryphon Aviation Helicopter Services Texas State College Kickapoo Airpark Aero West Utah Valley State Academy Testing Cen	210.828.4480 210.924.6634 210.820.3800 512.396.2212 281.370.4354 254.867.2604 940.766.3234 435.586.2682 801.222.8269 801.537.1537	WI Madison N Richmond Oshkosh Wausau Wisc Rapids WV Bridgeport Bridgeport Fairmont Wheeling Wiley Ford	Base Aviation Wisconsin Aviation Mike Demulling Kodiak Aviation Wausau Flying Servic Wings KCI Aviation Robert Byrd Aero Fairmont Testing Ser Ohio Valley Flight Cumberland Air	262.642.4374 608.249.2189 715.246.7735 920.237.0091 715.848.6000 715.424.3737 304.842.3591 304.842.8300 304.366.6042 304.277.1660 304.738.9671
OH	Cincinnati Cincinnati Cincinnati Cleveland Cleveland Defiance Middletown Norwalk Richmond Ht Washington Xenia Zanesville	Cincinnati Flt Train Digitest Computer Great Oaks Institute Miami Valley Career Cleveland Air Sports TAS Aviation MVA Flight Training N.O.F.A. T & G Flying Center Economic Op Apsco Testing Service	VA Charlottesville Lynchburg Manassas Richmond Roanoke	Aero West Aviation Blue Ridge Flight Virginia Aviation Manassas Aviation Dominion Aviation Lawson Center Tech	435.674.1000 804.978.2114 804.237.8420 703.361.0575 800.366.7793 540.853.6547	Austria Canada Canada Canada England England France France Germany Hong Kong Japan Jordan Puerto Rico Puerto Rico Singapore Saudi Arabia UAE Virgin Islands	Wiener Neustadt, Aeronautx Toronto, Academy of Learning Ottawa, Night Hawk Winnipeg, Academy of Learning Staverton, American Aviation Lincolnshire, SoloFlight Le Bourget, Flight Safety Paris, Seagull School Siegburg, AeroShop North Point, Wings of Asia Osaka, Orient Aviation Amman, Royal Jordanian Aquadilla, AeroBoringu San Juan, Isla Grande Air Transport Training Jeddah, ZIDI Aviation Dubai, The Network Center St.Thomas, Ace Flight	2622.842.570 416.234.8973 819.771.5054 204.478.8884 1452.857.757 1652.688.833 33.149.921.919 33.666.991.93 49.2241.381007 852.297.90867 0729.22.8803 0092.648.7495 787.890.5400 787.722.1160 65.346.0311 966.26502955 971.433.11212 340.776.4141
OK	Altus Enid Norman Tulsa Tulsa	Altus Flying Service Northwest Aero Airman Flight School Christiansen Aviation Spartan Sch of Aero	VA Virginia Bea Weyers Cave Everett Gig Harbor Kent Lakewood Olympia Puyallup Seattle Seattle Seattle Snohomish	AV ED Ground School Tidewater Tech Valley Testing Center The Fourth R Regal Air Zephyr Aviation Crest Airpark Clover Park Tech Glacier Aviation SpanaFlight AeroFlight Executive Simulator Training Wings Aloft Snohomish Flying Ser	703.237.2565 757.363.2121 540.234.9789 360.752.0501 425.353.9123 253.851.8083 253.631.7100 253.589.5513 360.705.3214 253.848.2020 206.762.6376 206.241.1854 206.763.2113 360.568.1541	OR Corvallis Hillsboro Sun River	Avia Flight Service Airman's Proficiency Sun Air Tech Aviation	541.757.2842 503.648.2831 541.593.1860 570.457.3400
PA	Avoka Beaver Falls Bellefonte Blue Bell Coatesville Easton Indiana New Castle New Cumber Philadelphia Philadelphia Pittsburgh Reading Shipperville	Beaver Falls Bellefonte Airport Wings Flight Services Chester County Aviati Moyer Aviation Tuorinsky Testing Haski Aviation Harrisburg Jet Center Hortman Aviation VIA Air Pitts Inst of Aeron Reading Flite Acdmy Clarion County Air	PA Columbia Greer Myrtle Bch	Aviation Testing Svc Davisco CompuDirect	803.771.7915 864.579.8820 843.293.2667			

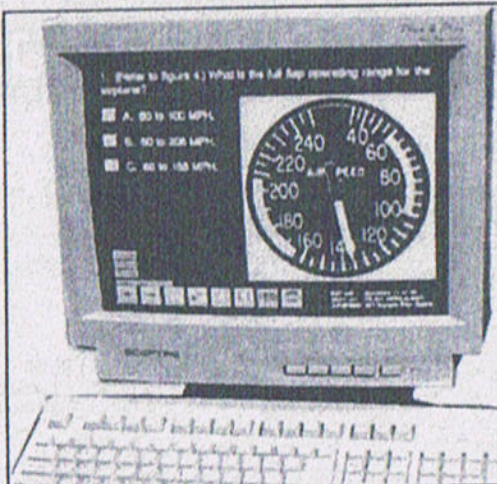


OH	Cincinnati	Cincinnati Ft Ram	513.871.8000
	Cincinnati	Digitest Computer	513.521.4444
	Cincinnati	Great Oaks Institute	513.612.5847
	Clayton	Miami Valley Career	937.854.6364
	Cleveland	Cleveland Air Sports	216.241.2127
	Defiance	TAS Aviation	419.658.4444
	Middletown	MVA Flight Training	513.423.5757
	Norwalk	N.O.F.A.	419.668.7424
	Richmond Ht	T & G Flying	216.289.5094
	Washington	Center Economic Op	740.335.5416
	Xenia	ApSCO Testing Service	937.374.1886
	Zanesville	Zanesville Aviation	800.842.6389
OK	Altus	Altus Flying Service	580.482.9393
	Enid	Northwest Aero	580.233.4531
	Norman	Airman Flight School	405.329.1008
	Tulsa	Christiansen Aviation	918.298.6650
	Tulsa	Spartan Sch of Aero	918.831.5354
OR	Corvallis	Avia Flight Service	541.757.2842
	Hillsboro	Airman's Proficiency	503.648.2831
	Sun River	Sun Air	541.593.1860
PA	Avoka	Tech Aviation	570.457.3400
	Beaver Falls	Beaver Aviation	724.843.8600
	Bellefonte	Bellefonte Airport	814.355.7407
	Blue Bell	Wings Flight Services	215.628.3339
	Coatesville	Chester County Aviati	610.384.9000
	Easton	Moyer Aviation	610.258.0473
	Indiana	Tuorinsky Testing	724.463.1527
	New Castle	Haski Aviation	724.652.5546
	New Cumber	Harrisburg Jet Center	717.774.0145
	Philadelphia	Hortman Aviation	215.969.0311
	Philadelphia	VIA Air	215.677.3377
	Pittsburgh	Pitts Inst of Aeron	412.462.9011
	Reading	Reading Flite Acdmy	610.376.5447
	Shipperville	Clarion County Air	814.226.9993
SC	Columbia	Aviation Testing Svc	803.771.7915
	Greer	Davisco	864.579.8820
	Myrtle Bch	CompuDirect	843.293.2667
	Rock Hill	Carolina Ft Centers	888.386.3596
	Simpsonville	Carolina Aero Cert	864.228.9588
	Winnboro	Kaz-Air-Inc	803.635.3086
SD	Huron	Skyways Limited	605.352.9262
	Watertown	Lake Area Tech	605.882.6311
TN	Knoxville	Knoxville Flight Ctr	865.573.8359
	Memphis	Downtown Aviation	901.353.9151
	Memphis	State Tech Institute	901.333.4170
	Nashville	Bakers Sch of Aero	615.361.6787
	Nashville	JMA Aviation Corp	615.365.3218
	Nashville	Zeller Aircraft	615.350.5023
TX	Abilene	D & F Marketing	915.795.9333
	Arlington	Bourland Flight	817.417.5160
	Arlington	Int'l Aviation&Travel	817.784.7000
	Bedford	Universal Testing	817.684.8378
	Big Spring	US Flight Acdmy Int'l	915.264.7335
	College Stat	Preiss Aviation	979.260.7627
	Dallas	Aviation Maintenance	214.333.9711
	Dallas	Dallas School of Aero	972.991.3048
	Dallas	Int'l Aviation&Travel	972.387.0553
	Dallas	Universal Testing	972.818.8378
	Danbury	Salaika Aviation	979.922.8162
	Fort Worth	Eagle International	817.740.1300
	Fort Worth	Tarrant Cty Jr College	817.515.7199
	Houston	Fletcher Aviation	713.649.8700
	Houston	Lentz Enterprises	281.922.6181
	Houston	Link Testing Inc	281.280.0077
	Houston	The H Compnay	281.530.6947
	Hurst	Airline Flt Dispatcher	817.281.2290
	Ingleside	Aviation Academy	361.776.3011
	Irving	Jet Test	972.929.9008
	La Porte	Harvey & Rhn	281.471.1675

VA	St George	Aero West Aviation	435.674.1000
	Charlottesville	Blue Ridge Flight	804.978.2114
	Lynchburg	Virginia Aviation	804.237.8420
	Manassas	Manassas Aviation	703.361.0575
	Richmond	Domination Aviation	800.366.7793
	Roanoke	Lawson Center Tech	540.853.6547
VA	Vienna	AV ED Ground School	703.237.2565
	Virginia Bea	Tidewater Tech	757.363.2121
	Weyers Cave	Valley Testing Center	540.234.9789
WA	Bellingham	The Fourth R	360.752.0501
	Everett	Regal Air	425.353.9123
	Gig Harbor	Zephyr Aviation	253.851.8083
	Kent	Crest Airpark	253.631.7100
	Lakewood	Clover Park Tech	253.589.5513
	Olympia	Glacier Aviation	360.705.3214
	Puyallup	SpanaFlight	253.848.2020
	Seattle	AeroFlight Executive	206.762.6376
	Seattle	Simulator Training	206.241.1854
	Seattle	Wings Aloft	206.763.2113
	Snohomish	Snohomish Flying Ser	360.568.1541

INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS

Austria	WienerNeustadt, Aeronautx	2622.842.570
Canada	Toronto, Academy of Learning	416.234.8973
Canada	Ottawa, Night Hawk	819.771.5054
Canada	Winnipeg, Academy of Learning	204.478.8884
England	Staverton, American Aviation	1452.857.757
England	N. Lincolnshire, SoloFlight	1652.688.833
France	Le Bourget, Flight Safety	33.149.921.919
France	Paris, Seagull School	33.666.991.93
Germany	Siegburg, AeroShop	49.2241.381007
Hong Kong	North Point, Wings of Asia	852.297.90867
Japan	Osaka, Orient Aviation	0729.22.8803
Jordan	Amman, Royal Jordanian	0092.648.7495
Puerto Rico	Aquadilla, AeroBoringu	787.890.5400
Puerto Rico	San Juan, Isla Grande	787.722.1160
Singapore	Air Transport Training	65.346.0311
Saudi Arabia	Jeddah, ZIDI Aviation	966.26502955
UAE	Dubai, The Network Center	971.433.11212
Virgin Islands	St.Thomas, Ace Flight	340.776.4141



Take your FAA & FCC exams on the most user-friendly system available, developed by pilots, for pilots, to make your test-taking experience as easy as possible.

- ★ On-screen, full-color, easy-to-use graphics automatically show you the illustrations.
- ★ On-screen flight computer and calculator.
- ★ No computer skills required. Instant results.
- ★ It's easy. Same-day walk-in testing available.
- ★ Visit us at www.lasergrade.com. Take a practice exam. Find your nearest test site.
- ★ To become a LaserGrade Test Site or have us administer your test, just call us.

Call 1-800-211-2754

LaserGrade

YOUR COMPUTER TESTING SPECIALIST

LaserGrade
COMPUTER TESTING

1-800-211-2754

(Outside US, 360-896-9111)
Get more information and take a demo test by visiting us on the Internet at www.lasergrade.com

Call us for the site closest to you.

To be a LaserGrade Test Site, or to have us administer your test, call us.

about the sharks that patrolled the area worried him about a water landing, and besides that, he could see them. It was as if the sharks were waiting for him. He thought about going to a nearby airfield, but had heard over the radio that it was still held by the Japanese.

He was told by the carrier to shoot up most of his ammunition to make his plane lighter and less dangerous for landing. As a last resort, he took his pistol and tried to shoot the tail hook cable in two (hoping that it would free fall once the cable was cut). That just made a lot of noise in the cockpit and put holes in the wings.

With fuel running low, the carrier radioed Lunsford to prepare for a crash landing on the ship. He released the emergency cockpit enclosure release and off went the canopy. As he prepared his plane for a crash landing on the carrier, he was told that they now wanted him to land in the water next to a nearby destroyer that would pick him up. (A barrier crash on the carrier could put the carrier out of

commission for a while, and the ship's captain did not want that.) That was not what he had wanted to hear.

He thought if he survived the water landing, if he could get out of his plane before it sank, then came the sharks. "I could just see those sharks making a meal on my own drum sticks." With his gas gauge showing less than five gallons of fuel remaining, time was running out. He started to throw everything out of the cockpit to reduce the risk of being hurt by flying objects.

"I came across a mirror in the plane, and when I looked in it, I saw a contorted face with streaks of sweat and dry lips looking at me as if to say, 'you poor *****', let's see you get yourself out of this mess."

The destroyer turned into the wind, so Lunsford could land parallel to it into the wind. With his seatbelt tightened, gear up, and full flaps, he started down. Just above the water, he leveled off and eased back on the throttle. Slower and slower. At around 60 miles per hour, he cut the switch and hoped for the best.

Just before touchdown, he started to fire his guns, which helped to slow the plane even more and lessened the force at impact. It was 5:58 p.m. when Ensign Lunsford hit the water with a big splash. With his plane sinking fast, he had only one thing on his mind — Get out fast! He tried to get his life raft out, but the cockpit was already filling with seawater. He decided to abandon ship without it. With his Mae West inflated, he floated and watched his airplane sink. It wasn't long before the destroyer had a crew on the way to pick him up. He spent the night on the destroyer and was returned to his carrier the next day.