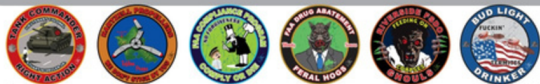


# REBEL



# AIR



## Air Door To Heaven

A Story Of Steep Narrow Steps.

A First Officer Saving A Life.

Of Losing A Friend.

A Tribute To First Officer  
"Toasty"

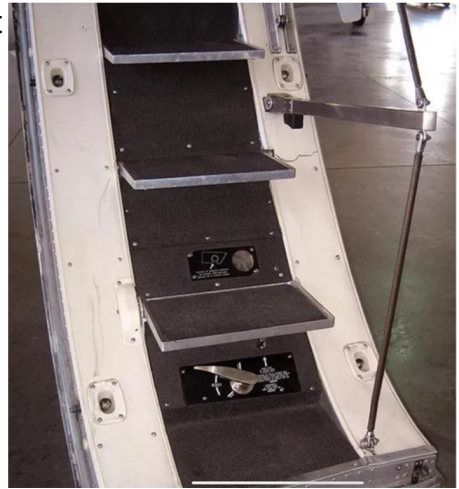
Hello my fellow aviators and beloved mechanics! Welcome to a new series designed to help you with actually doing the job of a pilot. In flight schools you are just taught how to fly the aircraft. What about how to do the job? How to keep your first

flying job? I have not seen, nor have I heard of anyone doing this for you guys. This series is for you!

When most young aviators are interviewing for a position as a First Officer they do not have anything useful to say. Usually the standard lines are, "I can shoot an approach down to minimums." Or maybe, "I am the bad ass of the skies in a Cessna 172!" While these may be true they do not impress seasoned Captains. These Captains are like pretty girls at the bar. Hearing the same lines over and over again. Truly, the autopilot does the majority of all approaches. And the Cessna 172, or whatever you train in, flies nothing like the King Air or the Jet that he needs you to fly.

As a First Officer your main job is client care, comfort, and above all else their safety. If you state that this is your purpose, each and every Captain I have ever met, will suddenly pay close attention to you, and will want to hire you! With that in mind let's give you a good example of what we Captains are looking for in our First Officers.

The most deadliest thing on a corporate aircraft is the air door. Yes, the little steps going up and down. Bet you would never have even thought of that would you? The steps are very narrow and spaced at an awkward angle. Most all of your clients on a corporate flight are people in their 50's, 60's and beyond. Imagine pushing Grandma up and down these steps! Yep! That's your main job Sparky!



These are the air door steps on a King Air. On the jets they are the same...deadly! Notice the safety line. Hold onto this for your life.

Their positions as senior management demands that they constantly attend dinner parties, luncheons, and cocktails parties late into the night with clients. This is where the deals are made. This is their battlefield. This is why you have a great job

flying a jet. As a result your clients have a bit of a tummy on them! Most have not seen their feet in years! How they get their shoes on has always been a mystery to me. For once in my life, I have used good judgement and never asked this question!

Looking at the air door on a King Air you can see how evil it is. But it is only after someone points this out to you do you see it. Being a young aviator you would never give it a second thought. However, to the elderly and slightly obese these are deadly! What do we mean by "*slightly obese*?" Your clients will run around 250 to 350 pounds. So this is a good topic to tell your future employer that you are aware of.

Here is what your duty is my new First Officer! When loading passengers your spot is standing right next to the door. One hand on the safety line/rail, and the other hand at your side ready to spring into action! Make sure the hand on the safety line or rail is hanging on tight! This could make the difference between life and death!

Only one person is allowed on the stairs at a time per the aircraft manual. No weight requirements as the manufacturers know this cannot be controlled. These clients are where they are in life by being pushy, and not listening to other people. Just the way the world works. If you tell them, "*Only one person at a time*" you will usually have two or three people fighting their way up. All three of them on the steps at the same time. Remember your days as a flight instructor, and give up asking right away! Calmly step in front of the stairs blocking the next person from entering. You will feel the person behind you



You will hear a great deal about this guy at the airport! Duck You! MotherDucker! etc. etc.

trying to get you out of their way. **Stand fast cowboy!** After the first person is safely off the steps, turn around with a look of concern, and say sorry for getting in your way sir! This is like saying, “I love you.” It does not have to be sincere at all.

Then move aside and let the next person enter the stairs. Expect a dirty look along with a, “*Get the DUCK OUTTA my way!*” I know, the fowl language you will hear at the airport! But remember as a pilot you will rarely be treated with kindness and respect. Do your job. Do your duty. And most of all know that...**NO ONE CARES!**

While each person is going up the stairs be ready for one of them to miss the steps. Usually if this happens they will fall into the steps, and everything is okay. Just google Biden getting onto Air Force One and you will see what I mean.

If one should fall backwards be ready to stop their fall with your free hand and mostly your body. Use your body to stop them, and use your hand to hold on to them. The other hand should be firmly holding onto that safety line. This is to keep both of you going into the tarmac! Once everyone is safely loaded enjoy the flight! ***The flying is actually the easiest part of this job!***

Upon landing and shut down try to be the first at the door! You are always flying the same people. Some will watch and learn how to open the door. **DON'T LET THEM DO THIS!!** If they do this before the aircraft has decompressed from pressurization the door will violently blow out! This was brought up at a Flight Safety training session. The Flight Safety personnel informed us that this actually happened. When the door blew out it took the passengers arm with it! Can you imagine having that on your resume? You could just say, “*My passengers sometimes give me a hand with the door, but just once....*” Yeah, don't know what to say if this happens. Probably start saying, “Do you want to supersize your order for a large fries with this order sir?” Or maybe, “Do you want a Tall or Venti today?”

Once you open that door quickly get into position at the bottom of the stairs! Remember that these people have to pee!! They will be in a hurry to exit that aircraft! Always reminded me of a cattle stampede. Have that hand holding tightly to the safety line. Watch out of the corner of your eye where the clients



feet are going. Do not stare at the feet as you will freak them out! If you do this you will be greeted with the standard, *“What the DUCK you looking at???”* Maybe a, *“You PoopBird!”* Yep yep!!! Such fowl language you will hear on the flight line! Then there’s my personal favorite! *“Hey Captain! Send this special needs kid back to the flight school in the short bus!”* This one always makes me think of my childhood riding the short bus to school. Ah...childhood memories!

So now you are watching those feet out of your side vision! You see a foot missing that step do not bother with saying anything cowboy! This is a stampede after all! Turn your body to block the fall while holding on for dear life to that safety line! This will be like taking a hit from a NFL line backer! You’re talking about 250 to 350 pounds coming down from heaven above! Smashing into you with absolutely no restraint or control! You will get bruised, you will limp for a couple days, and whatever you do *don’t talk about it!* Unless you want to be mocked, ridiculed, and have your self esteem ripped to shreds in the pilot lounge. Remember the first rule...***DON’T TALK!***



This actually happened to my First Officer Toasty! We were getting the owner of the company back home late at night after a cocktail party. It was late at night with no moon. It was very dark. He was very drunk, and he just missed one of the steps by less than an inch! He fell down from heaven above like a bolt of lightning! Toasty saw his foot missing the step. He instantly sprang into action and took the hit! His hand held tight to the safety line keeping them upright, and the other hand holding this elderly gentleman tight.

Their eyes met. I could hear the belch from our passenger from the cockpit. This belch of half digested Chimichangas, little franks on toothpicks, spicy Thai chicken wraps, green olives in the Martini glasses, and so on. The fragrant aroma that one often smells when visiting Grandpa in the nursing home. This fragrant odor drifting into Toasty’s face. I can still see his left eye twitching from the fumes to this day.

The owner of the company quickly recovered. Toasty was then greeted with kindly, ***“Get your DUCKING hands off me!!!!”*** And then this elderly man went off safely to his home! Our mission was successful. After a long day that only consisted of two or three flight hours we were done. Our success was not due to shooting an approach down to minimums. Nor was it due to the expert



handling and command of that aircraft. It came down to a First Officer holding onto a safety line, with the will and determination to care for his passenger, taking a hit from above.

There is no doubt in my mind that Toasty saved that man's life. Surely, he would have planted his face right into that tarmac. Death would have come from a broken neck. Maybe from a fractured skull. Or maybe just a heart attack from the trauma of the fall. If this would have happened the flight department would have been closed down. The grief and suffering of the family and of the employees making the aircraft undesirable.

For some reason Toasty could not move his arm the next day. The arm that had held onto the safety line. I asked him about it. Toasty looked me straight in the eyes and told me he hurt it lifting weights at the gym. I nodded my head. I was suppressing all the mean spirited jokes, the ridicule, and the mocking I had been rehearsing the night before. I smiled at him with a smile only a bastard Captain can give. Then I just said, "NICEEEEE!!!" Little did he know that it was taking everything I had not to French kiss him with rolling tongue action! I loved that guy! He saved the life of one of my passengers! There is no greater gift you can give to a Captain!



Typical "Captain Smile." Captain's only smile when thinking evil thoughts.

When you are interviewing with a Captain be mindful. You will notice the dull look in the eyes. Waiting for you to tell him about being a bad ass in that piece of crap under powered training plane of yours. That you alone are the sole keeper of all of the FAR's. You will see him take some Captain Candy (i.e. Tylenol Extra Strength) even though it's burning a bleeding ulcer in his stomach. But if you look him straight in the eyes and say, **"Cap, I will keep my mouth shut. And any MotherDucker planning on jumping off your air door to certain death has to go thru me first!"** You will suddenly see something in the Captain's eyes he has not had in years. HOPE.

After getting over the shock of this emotion that he has not felt in years, the next words he will say to you is, ***“Can you start tomorrow?”*** Calmly nod your head and give the Captain an affirmative, ***“Quack!”***



First Officer “Toasty.” Truly his life was a gift to us all.



Toasty was also a swat member and highly decorated peace officer. He was killed in the line of duty while serving with the Gardena Police Department. He has taken the air door to heaven.

If you have time after your busy day. Please say a prayer for this fallen aviator. A aviator who saved lives with the little things he did. One of which was just holding on tight, and taking a hit from heaven above. I pray that you will become such First Officers as Toasty. I miss my First Officer. I miss my friend.



Toasty with his beautiful wife and son. How many lives did he touch? How many lives did he save? Simple acts of attention to duty in the small things. Such small things as noticing when someone has missed a step on an air door.

Please consider supporting my efforts to improve aviation. The flight patches you see are for free. I do ask for a donation if you can give one! Also please consider me for your next flight review. If you can put together a couple of pilots I can come to your airport. Afterwards, I would be happy to speak to your group about the issues we face in aviation. And most importantly what we are doing to fix things! I also donate my instruction time in a twin engine Piper Seneca II. Just pay for the aircraft and any travel expenses. I would love to train you going into class Bravo airports. Like Las Vegas and San Diego! You are the future of aviation, and as such you are most important!

God Bless! Keep Flying Speed!  
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