

## **Military Maxims**

**The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in aviation are:**

**"Why is it doing that?"**

**"Where are we?"**

**"Oh Shit!"**

**"Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers."**

**"Though I fly through the valley of death, I shall  
fear no evil. For I am at 80,000 feet and climbing."  
At entrance to old SR-71 base in Japan**

**"You've never been lost until you've been lost at Mach 3."  
Paul F.Crickmore (test pilot)**

**"The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire."**

**"There are more planes in the ocean than submarines in the sky."  
--Old carrier sailor**

**"If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage,  
it's probably a helicopter -- and therefore, unsafe."**

**"When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane you always  
have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash."**

**"Without ammunition, the USAF would  
be just another expensive flying club."**

**"What is the similarity between air traffic controllers  
and pilots? If a pilot screws up, the pilot dies;  
If ATC screws up, .... The pilot dies."**

**"Never trade luck for skill."**

**"Airspeed, altitude and brains. Two are always  
needed to successfully complete the flight."**

**"Mankind has a perfect record in aviation;  
we never left one up there!"**

**"Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a  
flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries."**

**"Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding or doing anything about it."**

**"The Piper Cub is the safest airplane in the world; it can just barely kill you."**

**Max Stanley (Northrop test pilot)**

**"A pilot who doesn't have any fear probably isn't flying his plane to its maximum."**

**Jon McBride, astronaut**

**"If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible."**

**Bob Hoover (renowned aerobatic and test pilot)**

**"Never fly in the same cockpit with someone braver than you."**

**"There is no reason to fly through a thunderstorm in peacetime."**

**--Sign over squadron ops desk at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1970**

**"If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to."**

**Basic Flying Rules:**

**"Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, trees and interstellar space. It is much more difficult to fly there."**

**"You know that your landing gear is up and locked when it takes full power to taxi to the terminal."**

**As the test pilot climbs out of the experimental aircraft, having torn off the wings and tail in the crash landing, a rescuer asks the bloodied pilot,**

**"What happened?"**

**"I don't know," the pilot's replies, "I just got here myself!"**

**--Attributed to Ray Crandell (Lockheed test pilot)**

**"It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed."**

**--Air Force Manual**

**"A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you**

**quite unpopular in what's left of your unit."  
--"Aim towards the Enemy."**

**Instruction printed on US Rocket Launcher:  
"When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend."  
-- U.S. Marine Corps**

**"Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate.  
The bombs are guaranteed to always hit the ground."  
--USAF Ammo Troop**

**"If the enemy is in range, so are you."  
--Infantry Journal**

**"Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword  
obviously never encountered automatic weapons."  
--General MacArthur**

**"Try to look unimportant; they may be low on ammo."  
--Infantry Journal**

**"You, you, and you ... Panic. The rest of you, come with me  
-- U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt.**

**"Tracers work both ways."  
-- U.S. Army Ordnance**

**"Five second fuses only last three seconds."  
--Infantry Journal**

**"Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last,  
and don't ever volunteer to do anything."  
-- U.S. Navy Swabbie**

**"Bravery is being the only one who knows you're afraid."  
--David Hackworth**

**"If your attack is going too well, you're walking into an ambush."  
--Infantry Journal**

**"No combat-ready unit has ever passed inspection."  
--Joe Gay**

**"Any ship can be a minesweeper. Once."**

**"Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do."  
--Unknown Marine Recruit**

**"Don't draw fire; it irritates the people around you."**

**"If you see a bomb technician running, follow him."  
--USAF AmmoTroop**