

# WHAT IS AIRMANSHIP?



Metran Williams

**After more than 35 years working to improve airmanship, Steve Tizzard has a thing or two to say about standards.**

**W**hen Flight Safety Australia asked veteran airman Steve Tizzard whether he would agree to a story about himself for the magazine's "the right stuff" section, his response was sharp and to the point – "... off".

Even though Australia Day saw him get a gong – a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) – for services to the aviation industry, he was reluctant to spruik his achievement.

But when we told him it was an opportunity to say something about airmanship and flying training, he jumped at the chance.

Flying training and airmanship are his passions – and aviation his calling.

Tizzard's Australia Day medal was awarded in part for working tirelessly and "above and beyond the call of duty" for the betterment of general aviation, and particularly for flying training and the aero club movement. Much of his work has been in an honorary capacity.

Like many of his era, he got the bug for aviation early in life – one of his first memories is his awe at the sight of large post-war flying formations. It wasn't long before he got inside an aircraft – he took his first joy flight at the age of seven.

During high school he did just about anything to be close to aircraft, spending most weekends at Wollongong's South Coast Aero Club refueling aircraft, cleaning the hangar and myriad other chores to help the duty pilot.

His first flight was in 1952 in a Dessouter, which is now on display at Launceston Airport.

He was quick to join the military, chasing his dream of becoming an Army pilot. Commissioned from the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville NSW in 1965, he later graduated as an Army pilot before being posted to a flying position in Papua New Guinea in 1967.

In South Vietnam in 1968, Tizzard flew 970 missions and logged over 1100 flying hours as a reconnaissance pilot. In 1969 he graduated as a flying instructor from the prestigious Royal Air Force Central Flying School in the UK.

Then followed a series of training and regulatory appointments for the RAAF at Point Cook: officer commanding of an aviation squadron at Oakey; chief flying instructor at the School of Army Aviation; manager and chief flying instructor at Can-

berra Aero Club; examiner of airmen for the safety regulator; and a three-year stint as Controller, Air Safety in Fiji.

He holds an airline transport pilot licence, command instrument rating and grade one instructor and multi-engine ratings. He also holds low-level aerobatic and formation flight teaching approvals.

As a CASA flying operations inspector, he is now a key member of a joint push by CASA and industry to develop Australia's flying training industry.

With over 11,000 flying hours in more than 100 types of aircraft, and some 2000 pilot tests, Tizzard is more than qualified to comment on flying training standards.

"It seems to me that the standards of instruction have fallen over the years," he says.

"And I think that is related to a reduction in the number of hours of ab initio instruction experience you need before you can get the highest grade of instructor rating. The current requirement is 200 hours, but it used to be 1200 hours. Now that is a big reduction – and it has got to have an impact."

"I do not believe there is anything wrong with the competency standards that are laid down for gaining a pilot licence. But it is worth reflecting that in the 1980s you needed 57 hours flying before you could get your private licence, and in the early 1990s this was reduced to 40 hours with no reduction in syllabus content."

**Flying hours:** He acknowledges that the regulator can only require what is regarded as the minimum safe standard. Requirements for flying hours have been relaxed worldwide over the past 20 years, reflecting a push to reduce the costs of learning to fly.

But according to Tizzard, a real problem emerges when you combine the reduced flying requirements with a decline in the skill base of flying instructors.

"When I trained we had older role models who specialised in flying training," he says.

"Now the instructors are a lot younger and less experienced. Many of them do not see instructing as a career choice, but as a stepping stone towards their goal of becoming an airline pilot."

His concerns about standards of flying instruction are shared by CASA and key sectors of the aviation industry. In response, the safety regulator has formed a flying training industry development group in partnership with industry.

The group, headed by John Willis, technical advisor for the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs, includes Warren Madsen, Keith Morgan, Ron Macgrath, Roger Weeks, Ray Cronin, Ian Ogilvie and Steve Tizzard.

Its aim is to foster the development of the flying training industry through research, education and professional development programs.

**"In the end the right stuff is about having the right foundation, and that foundation depends on good training."**

Already several flying training role specialist positions have been created within CASA to work full-time with the flying training industry.

And Tizzard is finalising an update of the hallowed "Pub 45", the flight instructor manual that was for over 30 years the key reference text for the flying training industry. The rewrite is due to be released mid-year.

He is delighted to see CASA giving flying training a high profile.

"In the end the right stuff is about having the right foundation, and that foundation depends on good training," he says

The goal is good airmanship.

He agrees with the notion put forward by aviation writer Tony Kern that flyers have a separate professional identity beyond their official rank or aeronautical rating. He thinks that most professional aviators intuitively understand the existence of an unofficial hierarchy of airmanship.

In Kern's book, "Redefining Airmanship" four levels of airmanship are discussed. The first is safety, in which a pilot reaches the standards set out by the safety regulator.

The second level is effectiveness. For commercial pilots this is achieved through line checks, and for military pilots through mission qualification. For sports pilots it would be the ability to handle cross-country flying in a range of weather conditions.

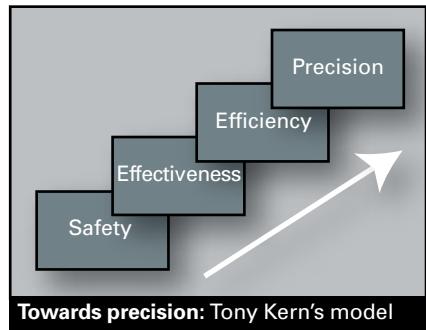
With more effort and skill, a pilot learns to fly efficiently – Kern's third level of airmanship. A higher level of inner discipline is required.

At the fourth level, the aviator, according to Kern, achieves precision – "mastery of the wing". To reach this level, you need a continuing motivation for personal improvement. The reward is complete control and understanding of what you are doing.

While Steve Tizzard thinks Kern's model of airmanship is interesting, he finds it a little academic. He recalls a comment made to him as a student pilot by a senior instruc-

tor at Point Cook in 1966. "Airmanship", the instructor told the young Tizzard, "is common bloody sense around aeroplanes."

What is common sense? According to Tizzard it is born of logic and experience: both the passing on of hard-learned lessons from an experienced group to a younger generation, and through continuous development of skills and abilities.



**Towards precision:** Tony Kern's model of levels of airmanship

Steve Tizzard has a final comment on how things have changed. Professionals in many disciplines often mention how hard things were in their day, but Tizzard says he's glad he's getting towards the end of his career. He thinks that student pilots of today need – it seems – to be accompanied by a psychologist, social worker and a lawyer. He says it was easier in his day.

## IMPORTANT AVIATION SAFETY MESSAGE

### Distress beacon\* technology is changing

Distress beacons save lives by sending emergency signals to satellites.

- Only Digital 406 MHz beacons will be detected by satellite from 1 February 2009. Analogue 121.5 MHz beacons will not be received.
- Digital 406 MHz beacons are detected more quickly and accurately than Analogue 121.5 MHz beacons.

**Make the safe switch to 406**

\*Distress Beacons are also known as Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) and Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs)

For more information see the beacons site at:  
[www.amsa.gov.au](http://www.amsa.gov.au)



Australian Government  
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

