1. As Christmas approached in 1936, I was in the early stage of my year in the U. of Michigan Glider Club. On this particular day the ground, including runways, was covered with light, fresh snow and light snow was falling from a gray overcast - a whiteout situation! After release from a truck tow, I made a teardrop turn to land in opposite direction on the same runway. As I was closing on the runway I entered a right banked turn to align with it. Soon I noticed the turn had stopped. I tried to steepen the bank, but to no avail. I then realized I was flying with the right wing skid on the ground. Later, the same day, during the climb-out of another pilot there was a loud bang from the aircraft. It was found that a drag wire in the wing had snapped.

2. In about 1940 my Monocoupe 90, a 1930 model, turned over with me in a crosswind. I had been trying, for the first time, to "kick" the drift out just before touchdown, but the aircraft was cleaner than a Cub and didn't touchdown when expected. By the time the aircraft touched I was headed for a ditch at the edge of the runway, so I poured on the coal to go around. I cleared the ditch but the aircraft stalled, hit on the gear and flipped head over heels, hitting again inverted, tail first. Despite my best physical effort I hit hard on my head when I released my belt - a solid lesson! The aircraft suffered very little damage except for the fin and aft fuselage. I worked hard on my crosswind landing technique after that.
3. In 1943 I had my first real emergency after transferring to the MACA piloting staff. I was flying an F4U-1, one of the early versions which had the low cockpit and seat, the birdcage canopy and the low tailwheel. Also, the cowl flap opening extended over the top of the fuselage ahead of the canopy. An hydraulic torquemeter, using engine oil, was installed for power measurements. Suddenly, while flying northwest of Newport News at about 4000 feet, a torquemeter pressure line on the engine face, carrying 400 psi oil, broke. A thick blanket of oil rolled over the windshield and airplane. I had to open the canopy to see outside. I and the cockpit were soon bathed with oil. I had to raise my goggles to see at all. I decided everything was too slippery to bail out safely, so headed for Langley to land. Observers thought I was on fire. As I leaned to the left edge of the cockpit to see a little better for the approach, flying oil and windblast made it difficult. I tried to wipe and pull down my goggles again but the wind took them away. The last time I saw the runway was on the base leg. I had to prejudge the turn into final and the proper descent path. I had to keep my head well inside the edge of the windshield to prevent my left eye from being closed by the wind. As I approached the threshold I judged height and flare by the tails of B-24's on the adjacent taxiway waiting for takeoff. Touchdown was on the runway, wheels first with tail slightly low and with a slight impact. The airplane began to bounce (the very reason the F4U-1 did not qualify for carrier operation originally). The lower I pushed the nose, the more severe the bounce. I then discovered that I had left the throttle cracked and the
bouncing stopped as soon as I closed the throttle fully. I stopped on
the runway, but getting down from the high cockpit, using all the
little steps provided, was hazardous because of the total oil slick.
I realized I had not become nervous or upset -- too busy.

4. In the 1950's sometime (all of my early log books have disappeared),
I went to Ogden AFB (about 5000 feet above sea level) to take delivery
on a Beech C-45 (D-18) from the Depot there. After preliminaries I, my
Chief of Maintenance, and the crew chief from Ogden took off with full
fuel for an acceptance flight. After takeoff at about 300 feet above the
runway the left engine failed with a bang and some smoke. I shut the
engine down, cleaned up the airplane, maintained a straight course with
full power on the right engine at best climb speed and noted about a
100 feet-per-minute climb. The propellers were of the non-feathering
type so the left propeller control had been placed in low rpm position.
I declared an emergency. My first thought was to head for Ogden Municipal
in the valley ahead, but to my dismay snow showers had obliterated
visibility in the valley. I had to turn back. In the turn I could not
prevent loss of altitude. A waiting airplane blocked the most suitable
runway. Finally, when still descending slowly and at about 100 feet,
I decided I had to turn into the field, aiming for the intersection of
the two main runways and bisecting the angle between them. I turned
the airplane as rapidly as possible to conserve altitude, entering
buffeting as I did so, and rolled out with a bare margin in speed. I
then saw wires across my path on the upsloping terrain to the runways.
There was no way to go over them without stalling. I put the nose
down and fitted the airplane under the wires and between the poles.
I came out a few feet above the ground and held the aircraft in ground effect. I gained speed as I climbed along the upslope for about 3000 feet to the runway intersection. I then pulled up, put wheels and landing flaps down, turned onto the runway and made a normal landing. The operations officer didn't believe the story about the wires, so we went out in a staff car to show them to him. The wires were about 20 feet off the ground and, because of the sloping terrain, they couldn't be seen from the ground or tower at operations. Actually, for a few moments, operations thought we had crashed.

5. In examining ways to reduce to a satisfactory level the high adverse sideslip encountered in turn entries with the early HRP-1 tandem-rotor helicopter, it was decided to interconnect roll and yaw controls by installing a clamp in a certain location underneath the floor boards of the cabin. The aircraft seated two pilots in tandem. I installed the clamp when ready for test maneuvers in the air, then got back in my seat. When a turn was initiated I found myself feeding an expanding roll/yaw coupled oscillation which I was unable to damp. In desperation I turned the controls over to the other pilot, got out of my seat and staggered to the hole in the floor, got down on my knees, reached under the floorboards and removed the clamp. Only then did we regain control. It turned out that an unsuspected design error in the basic helicopter's lateral control system resulted in a forced adverse yawing moment with roll control application that had not been allowed for in our method of experiment.

6. On my first flight in my current Monocoupe 90AL-125 in 1972, the engine stopped for good while I was slowing to check stalling speed. I was northwest of Williamsburg and had the airport in sight, but
quickly determined that I couldn't reach it. Several farms below had standing water on them and the furrows were at 90 degrees to the wind. I quickly picked the only satisfactory looking field as it was passing by, although it was small (about 1000 feet across). It was bounded by a road on one side, a woods and a fence on my planned approach side. A 270-degree turn was required. On the far end there was a house with garden and garage to its rear, which placed them across my landing path. A steep gulley lay to my right. I assumed a glide speed of about 65 mph by feel as I had not had a chance to stall the aircraft. I turned over the road, sideslipped through a gap in the trees and over the fence, landed in tall grass headed for the garden diagonally across the field. I found the braking moderately effective and rolled to a stop short of the garage with corn stalks under my left wing. There was no damage.

A preacher lived in the house and arrived home just after I landed, but had not known of the airplane in his yard until I knocked on his door. The driver of a truck had seen my landing and had come back to help. He took me back to Newport News for a mechanic. Without finding the cause of the engine stoppage, the engine ran normally several hours later. The preacher, who volunteered his help, came home immediately after church the next day, Sunday, and mowed a 750-foot runway for my takeoff. While the runway was being mowed the old gentleman who owned the field took me around the country neighborhood in his Lincoln to meet the local folks. Later, the preacher and his family stood waving as I took off.

Before I learned the cause of my engine stoppage it occurred several times again during landing, after which the engine couldn't be started for two hours or more. It turned out that the magnetos were old and had not been replaced at overhaul. The coils were breaking down under hot-soak conditions and would not provide a spark.