

Flight Test *Safety* Fact



Published for the Flight Test Safety Committee

In This Issue

A recap of the Virtual SETP Symposium asks us to consider whether or not we would rather be “**Lucky, or Good?**” and highlights talks that may interest *FTSF* readers.

Registration Open for Flight Test Safety Workshop– see the theme and link below.

Turbo Talk, in which the FTSC Chairman *quantifies* what we mean by lucky and good.

Recommend our Podcast: listen to the NASA Armstrong electric aircraft test team.

Lucky, or Good?

If you had the chance to attend the recent SETP Virtual Symposium, you would have heard the team at Pax River talk about a Weight on Wheels Failure caution message that posted right after a ski-jump take off. The test team did not think much about the message at the time, but several months later, when one pilot was taking a general knowledge test during his normal evaluation cycle, he realized that a WOW Failure would have prevented the test pilot from executing an emergency jettison, one of the key risk mitigations for the ski-jump testing they had been conducting. SETP recorded this and other presentations and posted them on the SETP website. The talk, “Have You Ever Seen a Rhino Jump? Ski Jump Testing of the Super Hornet” included SETP President Mike Wallace and LT Jonathan Williams, USN. Another notable talk was not technical, but it pulled back the curtain on the training pipeline at Textron: “Creating and Maintaining Experienced Flight Test Aircrew at Textron Aviation,” by Stuart Rogerson. It was a very interesting look at the development of aircrew test team members, and it dovetails nicely with the theme of the coming Flight Test Safety Workshop, which you can read about below.

In Sting’s case, luck prevailed. The question stimulated some healthy discussion, and two questions percolated to the top of the most conversations: Do we know why we succeed (or similarly, what lessons learned do we gain from our successes)? Additionally, how often is luck the reason we succeed or the reason we avoid hazards? One person reminded me that in 2016, Colin “Magoo” Miller said from the SETP main stage, “Many of us say we would rather be lucky than good, but if we thought about it we would actually rather be good than lucky. Of course, sometimes when we think we were good, we were actually lucky.” The respondent finished his train of thought by noting that, “I think that summarizes the problem well.”

How about you: Would you rather be lucky or good? If you have thoughts or charts like Turbo does, we want to hear (or see) them. Send an email to mark@flighttestfact.com, and maybe your letter will be the next issue’s theme.

Registration Open for Flight Test Safety Workshop

The Flight Test Safety Committee will hold a one day "virtual" Workshop on 27 May 2021. The session will include a Tutorial with Technical Presentations and run from 7:00 am - 1:30pm PDT (10:00am - 4:30pm EDT) with breaks scheduled throughout.

High-performing organizations recognize that a Safety Management System (SMS) can provide tremendous safety benefit, but only IF all four components are present, operational and EFFECTIVE. None drive to culture more than Component 4 – Safety Promotion, an organization’s commitment to investing in its personnel and communicating safety information. The 2021 edition of the FTSW Tutorial will take a close look at what comprises industry standards for SMS Safety Promotion and, further, what are the recommended practices that would enable an effective program for flight test organizations.

We will be conducting this vFTSW using Zoom.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register for the Virtual Workshop

Should you have any questions, please contact susan@setp.org.

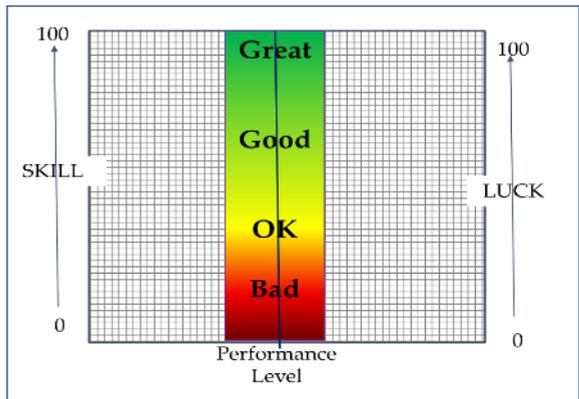
Turbo Talk

Art “Turbo” Tomassetti

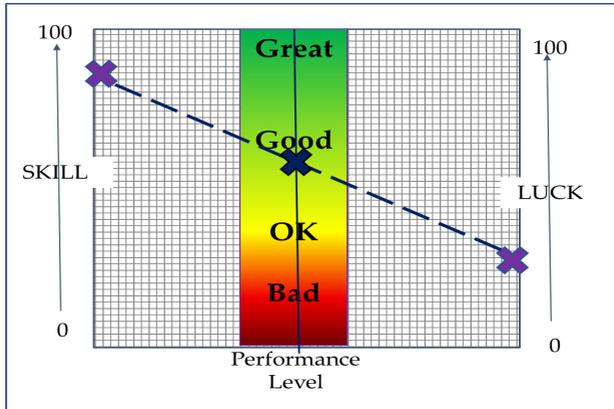
When I previewed the newsletter this month, I immediately was drawn to the title “Lucky or Good.” It resonated with me not only because I have a talk about those two things, but because I still have incidents in my career that I haven’t decided which one applied – was I lucky or good? I know in aviation we are supposed to shy away from the concept of luck lest we start to rely on it. I am sure if I did more analysis, I could find that wee bit of skill or ever so slight misalignment of the holes in the cheese that was responsible, but sometimes I am lazy so “*Luck be an Answer Tonight*” (Yes, I am singing that like Frank Sinatra).

Having thought a lot about the two concepts especially as they apply to high-risk endeavors, I even went so far as to try to make a chart that anyone can use that could help you figure out in advance what kind of day you were having based on your assessed level of luck and skill.

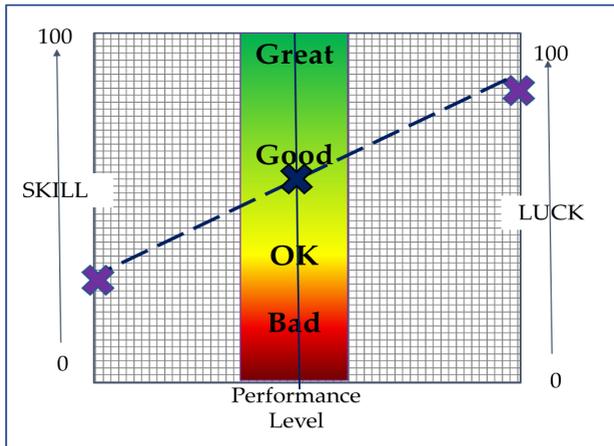
Here is the chart. You start on the left side and put an X at the



level on a scale of 1 to 100 where you assess your skill to be that day - 100 being tremendous 1 being not good. You then go to the right side and do the same thing for Luck. 100 being take me to Vegas and 1 being stuck under a ladder with a black cat on Friday the 13th. You then draw a line connecting those two X's and where that line intersects the middle color graph shows you what kind of flight, commute to work, or day you are going to have. So, with a lot of Skill and a little luck it would look like this (below).

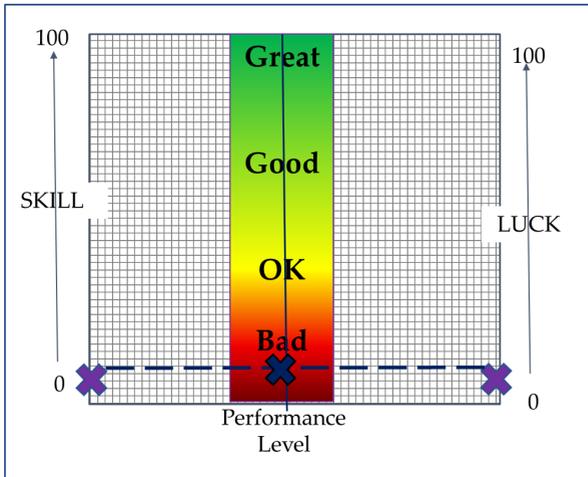


Probably going to be a good day. Of course, the same would be true for a little Skill and a Lot of Luck.



Another good day, but I feel obliged to briefly mention this scenario is a possibility.

Let's just all agree if this is next chart is what your assessment looks like, best to just stay home, use only plastic utensils, and leave the power tools in the garage for the day.



But here is the one big take away from all my time thinking about this. It always comes back to the same bottom line when it comes to skill and luck; **I want both, I'll take either, but...I can only make one.** So, the best thing any of us can do to increase our likelihood of having a good day, safe flight, successful mission is to try to increase our skill.

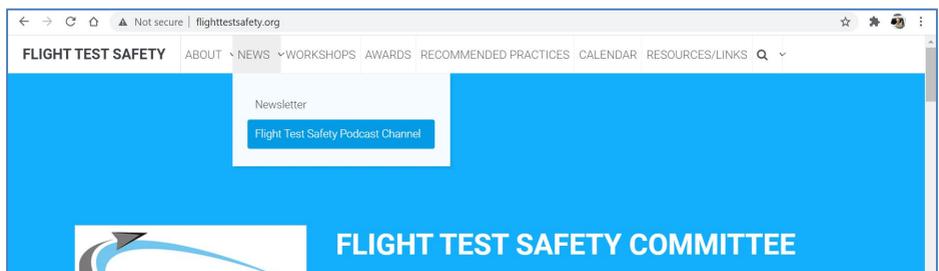
Now we all know lots of ways we can do this. The

formula is pretty simple: 1) Set a goal to improve, 2) Take actions that will improve your skill, and 3) Repeat as necessary until you have a lot of skill. Setting a goal is important because it is a way to hold yourself accountable. Take action like **STUDY, PRACTICE,** and of course **LEARN FROM OTHERS** who have skill.

OK if we are being honest sure we still want to be lucky. Who wouldn't? But if we are really being honest, we know it is our responsibility to be good. We owe that to our team, we owe that to our profession, and we owe that to ourselves.

Recommend our Podcast

Recommend this podcast to a friend or colleague. Sometimes it helps if you pick a specific episode that you think he or she will like, and send a link to the podcast from your mobile phone. The last two episodes have been about the Maxwell electric aircraft test program at NASA Armstrong.



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Connect with us by joining the LinkedIn Group: “Flight Test Safety Committee”

In the next issue we'll talk about margin...It's relevant to the whitespace below, and we need it in our lives. Probably applies to taking risks too.