



**Q: WHY IS PAYING** attention to details an important survival tip?

**A: I'M OFTEN SURPRISED,** though I shouldn't be, how little attention is paid to details. When I receive a parachute for servicing, I can tell a lot about it (and the pilot) just by its outward appearance. If you bring it to me in person I often run you through a practice drill. This gives me the opportunity to explain to you why your parachute is not fitting you properly or why your harness/container is getting an excessive amount of wear. I can then give you suggestions on what to do about it. Remember, your parachute (including the harness/container) must be removed from service after a maximum of 20 years. That's assuming you take proper care of it and have it serviced on a regular basis.

Your survival may be as simple as properly stowing the excess webbing on the leg and chest straps in those elastic keepers. You do have them right? If not, have your rigger install some for you. Just as your rigger has supplies of rubber bands and pack-closing loops, he or she should have elastic keepers in stock for just such a purpose. They should be free or a minimal charge to replace. I typically include them as part of the repack, if they need to be replaced.

So what's all the flap over missing elastic keepers? Well, unstowed webbing flapping around in the wind during a bailout could get caught on some part of your aircraft, preventing egress. Properly adjusting your parachute, making sure there are no loose straps to catch on some part of your aircraft, is important. So is reviewing and practicing your emergency egress procedures until you can do them in your sleep. Don't make a bad day even worse by sticking around in a crippled aircraft any longer than you have to. Paying attention to the smallest details might save you the time needed to get out of your

aircraft with enough altitude to deploy your parachute and give your parachute rigger that well-deserved bottle of his or her choice.

Paying attention to details means noticing when you are distracted by other issues on your mind and you cannot devote your full attention to flying. You wouldn't cross the street without looking both ways. The same can be said for flying. Look both ways before you strap on your aircraft and go flying.

**Q: DO I NEED** a warbird parachute for my warbird?

**A: WHATEVER A CHUTE** is called is not as important as its placarded limitations. Ask before you jump in and buy an expensive cushion. Make sure it fills your requirements. Getting out of an aircraft much above 180 mph will be difficult, if not impossible. Make the decision to bail out as quickly as you can before excessive speed and g-forces make it impossible. Go to my website, [www.SilverParachutes.com](http://www.SilverParachutes.com), and download my deceleration chart. In a nutshell it says that once you egress your aircraft you will slow to 150 mph (a safe deployment speed for most parachutes) within about two seconds. Whether all your body parts and your chute will be there is another matter. Having a properly adjusted parachute and making your bailout decision quickly is almost as

important as pulling the rip cord. Unless you're a full-bodied pilot (i.e., you weigh a lot), a parachute rated at approximately 150 knots indicated airspeed will suit the vast majority of pilots. The real decision, when purchasing an airplane, is whether the parachute will fit into the aircraft and allow you to operate it in a safe manner. Calling it a warbird, glider, or aerobatic parachute is irrelevant.

**Q: HOW DO I** properly route the straps on my parachute that has the aerobatic harness?

**A: EACH MANUFACTURER OF** an aerobatic harness has pictures showing the proper donning of a parachute with an aerobatic harness. However, each year I see pilots putting them on incorrectly. Failure to correctly put on your parachute that has an aerobatic harness could quickly remove you from the gene pool in the event you have to bail out. Even when you put it on correctly (this goes for a conventional harness also), you must make sure it fits you properly and all the adjustments are done correctly and tightly enough to prevent your early departure. The harness does not have to be so tight that it's killing you, but it must be snug enough to prevent you from falling out of it but still allow you to reach the rip cord. An improperly adjusted harness can easily shift during a bailout, and you may not be able to reach or even see the rip cord handle. Photo (1 and 2) shows the proper threading of the webbing on the aerobatic harness. The key is you *must* route the webbing through the loops, in the groin

area, and then cross them (like an X) before you snap them to the clips. In **photo 1** I'm pointing to the loops. Failure to do this can and probably will cause you to fall out of the harness when you deploy your parachute. **Photo 2** shows the inclusion of a removable chest strap. Many pilots mention that when they put their seat belt shoulder straps on, they have a tendency to push the parachute straps off their shoulders, on the aerobatic style harness. The removable chest strap snaps around the vertical-lift webbing of your parachute harness, and when adjusted properly it keeps the portion of the parachute harness that goes over your shoulders from sliding off. This strap was not designed and is no way stressed for the opening shock of your parachute. It's there for your comfort only. Now that you've seen the correct way to put on the aerobatic harness, let me show you two more photos showing how not to route the webbing of the aerobatic harness. I've personally seen pilots putting on their parachutes this way. **Photo 3** goes through the loops, in the groin area, but fails to cross the chest where I'm pointing. **Photo 4** went one step further, the leg straps didn't even go through the loops. The last **photo, 5**, clearly shows the webbing crossing the chest properly, but it fails to go through the loops, in the groin area. These three photos are good examples of ways to leave this life quickly. Please take the time to make sure all your equipment is on and properly adjusted. Just because you don't have an aerobatic harness doesn't mean you shouldn't be keeping an eye on your fellow pilots. You may be in a position to save a fellow pilot's life, by being observant.

Keep safe, fly safely, and have fun. Remember to please keep the questions coming. **IAC**

