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NEXT WEEK

• With the Transall C.160 back in produc-tion, Graham Warwick takes a fresh look at this European military transport aircraft.
• We provide a technical description and cutaway of Aerospatiale's new Twin Squirrel six-seat helicopter. • The first flight of the Learfan is imminent; Bill Sweetman reports from Reno on this extraordinary business aircraft.

Drinking and

T

HE parties are over, and how enjoyable they were;
and the United Kingdom
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has warned pilots that "even small amounts of alcohol in the blood produce a measurable deterioration in the performance of skilled tasks."

According to the CAA, blood alcohol concentrations of 40mg/ 100ml are associated with "highly significant increases in the errors committe d by ex-perienced and inexperienced pilots, even in simple aircraft." This is half the legal driving limit, and may typically be the result of one double whisky or a pint of beer.
Alcohol is removed from the body at a relatively constant rate regardless of concentration. This is not the case with marijuana, the dulling effects of which stay much longer and, according to some medical sources, have more permanent effects on the brain cells than do alcohol and tobacco. Anoxi a caused by tobacco-smoking also significantly re-duces pilot performance.
Pilots who are taking tranquil-isers, anti-depressants and seda-tives must not fly, since these drugs can slow down speed of reaction. Similarly, pilots who are taking stimulants such as amphetamines ("happy" pills) may suffer from over-confidence. Caffeine also is a stimulant, and the CAA warns that even exces-sive coffee-drinking has harmful effects.
Anti-histamines, often used in cold cures and for the treatment of hay fever, asthma and aller-gies, can cause drowsiness. This is obviously incompatible with flying, as may be the condition for which the anti-histamines are being taken anyway.
Any pilot who is taking drugs for the relief of high blood pres-sure should not be flying, again for the physical changes which the drug causes, and because of the condition itself.

Pilots who have recently had an anaesthetic should allow 24hr before flying, and should not

the pilot
volunteer as blood-donors while actively flying: the circulation-disturbance, though slight on the ground, can be risky at altitude. Drinking and flying are so pro-fessionally incompatible tha t alcoholic pilots can expect no sympathy from management or the law. But the US Federal Avia-tion Administration has now taken a positive step forward by approving the relicensing and re-habilitation of pilots who have conquered a drinking problem. Self-discipline and the help of colleagues are the best ways to eradicate alcoholism from flying. The disease can be conquered, and pilots deserve redemption as do ex-alcoholics in other profes-sions.
Just a small gin and tonic, thanks. J.M.E.

A Happy New Year

to you all

from the "Flight" staff

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Front cover: This assortment of airlines at Boeing Field, Seattle, introduces J. M. Rams-den's feature on airline efficiency, beginning on page 16.