PILOTS ADMIT THE CRAZIEST THINGS THEY'VE SEEN IN THE COCKPIT

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Every time we step on an airplane, we can't help think of all the things that could go wrong. Although usually it's all smooth sailing (or "flying") aside from some occasional turbulence, it seems like airplane workers do their best to cover up any mishaps. A recent Reddit chat asked pilots to reveal the craziest thing that's ever happened mid-flight, and their responses might surprise you.

1. When your pilot mentions air traffic, there might have been a close call with another plane.

"The pilot flying the other plane was just not talking to anyone on the radio, while lingering in a place she had indicated she was leaving more than 10 minutes prior, all below radar coverage, in uncontrolled airspace. We got her on TCAS (traffic collision avoidance system) at the last moment (I think she finally turned on her transponder), and I did some aggressive maneuvering to avoid a plane we never did actually see. I am sure we passed within a quarter-mile of her at the same altitude. I was flying an air ambulance at that time. My medical crew had no idea until we told them."

2. If radios aren't used properly, there might be surprises.

"When I was a fairly new private pilot, I was taking a cross-country flight to visit some friends in another state. I had to pee so I landed at this tiny, deserted, single-runway airport in rural Iowa to take care of business. There wasn't a soul around, and no chatter on the radio at all. When going to take back off, there were still no signs of life, and nothing but silence on CTAF (common traffic

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advisory frequency). Like a good boy, I still announced every action on CTAF, from taxi to takeoff. I announced my takeoff, and began my roll. As soon as I rotated and began my climb, I saw an ultralight lift off perpendicular to the runway on a direct collision course with me. We must have seen each other at the same time, I banked away, he pulled up hard. We didn't come that close to colliding after that, but it was closer than I cared to be."

3. Small fires can happen.

"My granddad used to be a pilot, and he has told me a few stories. One in particular that stuck with me was that a napkin caught fire. He calmly threw it on the ground and stepped on it, causing the fire to burn out."

4. Pilots have to fight for what they believe in.

The same commenter shared another story about his grandpa: "He also told me a story where he asked the airport staff for more fuel. They refused, he insisted, they refused. After a long time of arguing back and forth my granddad just tells them 'either you give me more fuel or don't fly.' (This was back in the day that less people were pilots, so he couldn't really be replaced.) They caved and give him more fuel. When my grandfather arrives at the destination, he doesn't get a permit to land so he has to fly to the closest other airport. He never would have made it without the extra fuel."



5. Mistakes happen — especially on the runway.

"It was a pretty foggy day at JFK, but it might have been somewhere else. He was the pilot on a 747 and was lined up for take off. He gets the go-ahead from the tower and goes full throttle. Meanwhile, the tower also gave the all-clear to land for another 747 on the crossing runway. Just as he gets to V2 (rotate) the other 747 comes out of the fog and had decided to go around so they were just pulling up again but still low over the runway. This guy pulled back hard on the yolk and kicked full left rudder to get as tight a turn as he could. Somehow he managed to miss the other

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plane by literally a few feet, and without stalling at about 30 feet above the runway."

6. Your plane can come alarmingly close to another aircraft.

"One time I was on a plane and saw another flight pass right under us ... I could even make out what airline it was it was so close..."

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