

Roll Me Over

by

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“Bend them, break them, crash them; we’ve got over a hundred aircraft on the tarmac just waiting for you young birdies to cut your teeth in flying. You babies have got to learn to crawl before you can walk, and walk before you can run!” The instructor paused to look at his flock of featherless birds. “DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME!?” he screamed as loud as he could.

As a group they responded, “YES SIR!”

“During the Great War we learned an important lesson!” he continued, “We learned that new pilots die easily!” The old Bulldog stayed quiet for a moment, letting what he’d yelled sink in. Calming his rhetoric, he took the time to look at each of them individually.

“You flyboys now know exactly how to take off, turn, and land again. You have learned what a stall is and how to recover from it. You also learned what a spin is and how to recover from that. You have soloed and done all of this by yourselves otherwise you would not have graduated to this next level. In order to stay alive in combat you are going to have to know how to maneuver your aircraft. This is not an option! Straight and level in a dogfight makes you a flying bullseye. So... the very first maneuver you will attempt is rolling your aircraft.”

He smiled an evil smile. “We will now do the Roll Song. You will learn this song... and sing this song... until you are dreaming and singing it in your sleep. I will sing my instructions, and when

I point at you, you will sing the chorus. This way I will be sure that my instructions are ingrained in your walnut sized brains.”

This said, the flight instructor twirled his finger in the air and yelled out ‘Roll!’, where upon his twenty students belted out,

“Roll me over, in the clover,
Roll me over, lay me down, do it again.”

*You can take off, you can fly
But if you crash, then you die.

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*Straight and level you must go
Not too fast and not too slow

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*Pull the stick back ever so slight
Get her nose up for the flight

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*Move the stick out towards the right
Adjust your nose ever so slight

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*Watch your instruments and the sky
Stay sharp or you will die

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*With your left wing at twelve ‘o’ clock
Keep your speed up or you’ll drop

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*With your left wing at three ‘o’ clock
Stick forward or you will drop

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*With your wing at six ‘o’ clock
Stick back to center like its your cock

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

*With your wings back at level

Check your six against the Devil (here the old Boxer pointed at himself)

Roll me over in the clover do it again.

(And now the instructor joined his students for the final chorus.)

“Roll me over, in the clover,
Roll me over, lay me down, do it again.”

The instructor waved his paws to make them understand the song was done and then bellowed,
“When you roll, you are rolling around what?”

“The axis of the airplane,” the twenty yelled back.

“Which is the fastest way to roll?”

“With the propeller.”

“Why is that?”

“You’re rolling with the engine torque.”

Placing his paws behind his back the old warrior paced back and forth in front of the group and then told them, “Today you will take your aircraft to eight thousand feet and only roll to the right. You will also only do single rolls. When you get this down pat... then you will learn to roll the other way.”

“So you want us to join the navy?” yelled out one of the airmen. This brought buckets of laughter from his mates.

That cost him fifty pushups and the group a five mile run... but it was worth it.