

KSFO  
Near Midair

Logbook  
Tales

Kramer  
LaPlante

# TWIN & TURBINE

FOR THE PILOTS OF OWNER-FLOWN, CABIN-CLASS AIRCRAFT

SEPTEMBER 2025 \$3.95 US  
VOLUME 29 NUMBER 9



The Rocket Launcher:  
**Riley 65**

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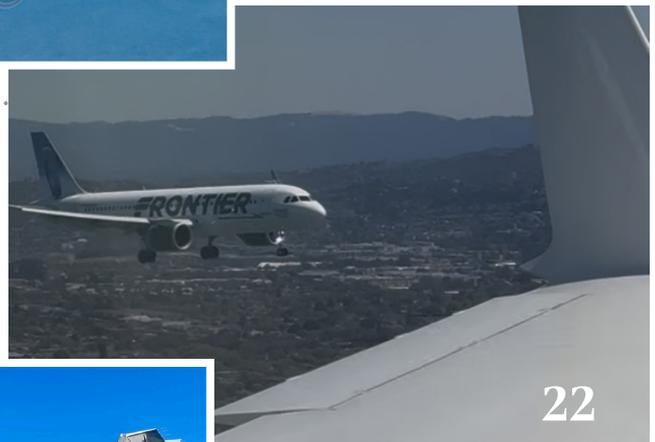
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*Courtesy of Matt McDaniel*

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# Editor's Briefing

by Lance Phillips



## Danny Hughes



Danny Hughes is a friend and colleague who has spent his career helping others in our aviation industry. He has been an A&P mechanic for almost 50 years and an IA for nearly 10 years. For much of his career, he has been supporting Pratt & Whitney Canada customers through Pratt's HSI Roadshow, service center sales, and field service representation.

I have known Danny since 2021. He oversees scrap reports and cost estimates for engine work that operators can use to reduce some of their costs. Danny is a liaison between a major engine overhauler and its customers.

This year, Danny has experienced extreme health-related challenges resulting in mounting medical expenses and a need to update his house for accessibility after the loss of a leg. To assist with these challenges, I have started a GoFundMe campaign to help Danny with his urgent needs. It's a great opportunity for those in our aviation community to support one of the key players keeping us flying.

Thank you for considering giving to our Danny Hughes campaign. Please scan the QR code below to visit our GoFundMe page. Donations are greatly appreciated.

[lance@twinandturbine.com](mailto:lance@twinandturbine.com)



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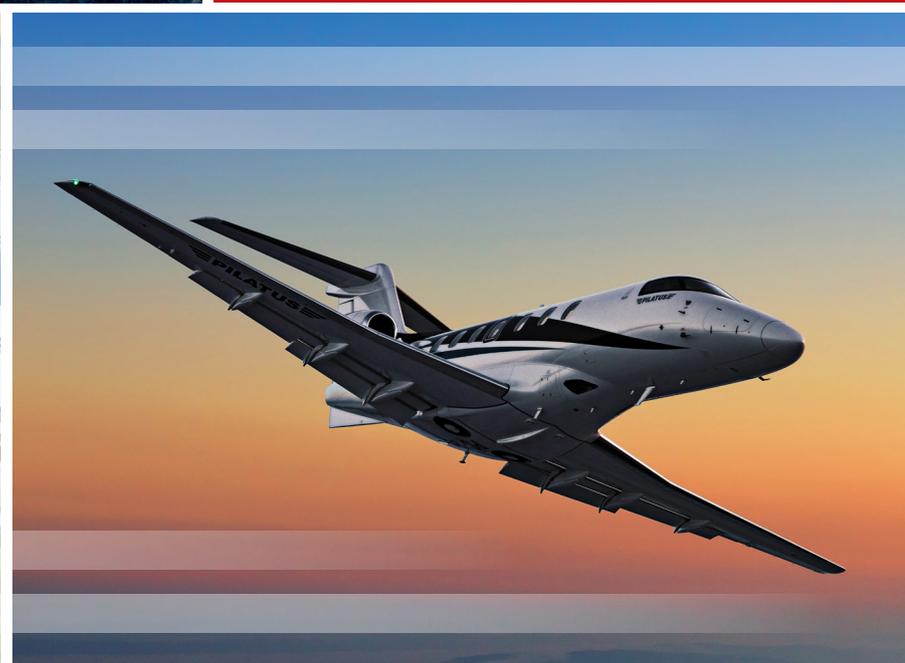


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# What Tale do your Logbooks Tell?

by Lawrence Searcy

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| Birth Date | SEPT. 7, 1941                                 | LFIA                          | 8/18/60     | 1424243-LF |
| Height     | 5' 11"  | INSTRUMENT                    | 9/30/61     | 1424243    |
| Color Hair | BROWN   | COMMERCIAL ROTORCRAFT         | 11/10/61    | 1424243    |
| Color Eyes | BROWN   |                               |             |            |
| Weight     | 180   |                               |             |            |
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I sat in my office looking at the credenza against the wall, and decided to pick up my dad's old logbooks on display. They were next to the model Pan Am Boeing Stratoliner that my father-in-law gifted to me, exhibited among other airplane memorabilia I've assembled from my dad and grandfather, with a few items from my own flying. I pick them up periodically, read through them, and often learn something new about my father's flying career in the 1960s and 1970s. His logs conjure up the smell of old airplanes and create a nostalgia for when I was a young boy and would fly with my dad. Somehow, the logs from later in his career are lost, so I only have the earliest entries. While I love



the walk down memory lane, there is an emptiness to the logs. For some reason, my dad put almost no narrative in the comments section.

My dad lost his medical when I was six or seven years old due to a brain tumor. The antiseizure medication prescribed after the successful removal of the tumor was not compatible with flying. His flying was over, and for the rest of his life, it was like someone had taken away one of his senses. It will happen to all of us as we age, but the crime for him was that it happened when he was in his mid-30s. He continued to fly periodically with friends (and with me later in life), but the right seat and designation as “co-pilot” could not fill the void of what had been lost.

We talked a lot about flying over the years, but not so much about particular missions. I hoped that going through his flight logs again would shine some additional light on the type of flying he did. I am lucky to have photographs showing him with a plane and friends or family about to depart (or maybe just arriving) from a trip. Luggage, maybe a shotgun or a fishing pole lying next to the plane, gave a hint of the adventure, but there was no accompanying narrative. Many of these photos are similar, each one with my dad in his cowboy hat, a twin-engine airplane in the background, and hunting or fishing items waiting to be loaded into the plane. To gain some perspective on these photographs, I have turned to his logs and tried to match the date on a photograph with a date entry in his logbooks. Unfortunately, the logbook comments are minimalistic.

His logs do tell a tale, just not one with many facts. Truthfully, it's a boring story. I have four complete logbooks with entries before he lost his medical. These tell me that he was a commercial, instrument-rated, single, multi-engine, and rotorcraft pilot. But I already knew that. The logs also tell me he was rated in a Twin Beech, Piper Aztec, Piper Apache, Lockheed Loadstar (L-18), the Bell 47, Ercoupe, Hiller 12-B (a machine that looks like it should never leave the ground), and many other planes and helicopters. Some of this I also already knew.

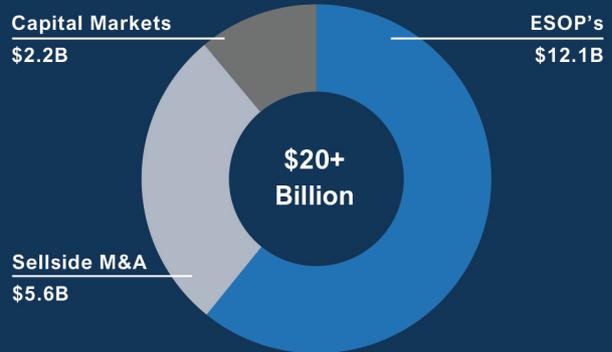
He flew commercially for a private company and worked cattle from a helicopter for our family ranch and others. Other than that, his logbooks met the requirements of the FARs but had little other information. For instance, a common entry was something like “Airwork”, “familiarization”, “Aerobatics”, or “cross country-Texstar” (the company he flew for). There is nary a mention of who he was with or why they were going somewhere. No information about the weather, the airport, who he met along the way, or why he was going. There simply was very little about his daily flying life other than the occasional more descriptive entry.

For instance, in March and April 1961, there is a series of entries that read “flew to airshow,” then “loop and snap rolls” in a Ryan PT-22. Then an entry flying an Ercoupe with 1:00 hours listed in “solo” that says “X-country parachute jump 2500' static line.” I'm not sure from the entry who jumped out of the plane. The most interesting of all the entries is September 1, 1961, from Marfa to Alpine, Texas, and then on to San Antonio with an entry that says “charter (with

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| 8/26   | STINSON-SAT      | LOCAL       | BOEING B2               | 58X                | L7C    | 180  | 44120          | 23505 | 9:15                                     | 6:85  | 40                                       | 41   | 05    | 04   | 00      | 41  | 14 | 50 | 570 | 50 | Normal Maneuvers & CLAS Rem 9210000 |
| 8/27   | INTL-SAT         | "           | PIPER PA28              | 1275P              | L7C    | 165  |                | 1:00  |  | 1:00  | 1:00                                     | 1:00 |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    | (1)                                 |
| 8/27   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | "           | PIPER PA28              | 57914              | KUMMER | 150  |                | 1:00  |  | 1:00  |  |      |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    | acrobatics                          |
| 8/28   | "                | "           | PA28                    | 1275P              | L7C    | 150  |                | 1:15  |  | 1:15  |  |      |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    | (5) A Robinson CFI 1215044          |
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| 8/31   | STINSON-SAT      | LOCAL       | "                       | "                  | "      | "    |                | 1:15  |  | 1:15  |  |      |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    | (7) A Robinson CFI 1215044          |
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| 9/1  | AMERICAN AIRWAYS | STINSON-SAT | "                       | "                  | "      | "    |                | 2:10  |  | 2:10  |  |      |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    | "                                   |
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dead body"). What? I have to know more. But sadly, no one is still around who remembers the circumstances. Four complete logbooks, and these are the only slightly more colorful entries.

I am now reading a lot of articles about the benefits of electronic logbooks and how they have limitless space, are not vulnerable to being lost (unless you cannot remember your password), how they tally hours automatically, and calculate currency in an instant. But who is ever going to read them? Who will grab your iPad a generation from now and learn more about you as a pilot and your adventures in the air and on the ground?

When I first started flight training, I purchased the Gleim starter package that came with a flight bag, study

materials, an EFB, and a logbook with a few pages in it. It was the all-in-one "I'm a pilot trainee" calling card. The bag was always in my car with me, just in case an instructor called with a cancelled flight and wanted me to fill the void. On a trip to Houston with my wife, I went to the car in the morning to find our window smashed and the Gleim bag missing, along with my very first logbook. Those first, few, and precious hours of flight time were gone and could not be recovered. My instructor pieced together what he could, but my personal observations of the discovery flight and initial hours in the air were lost to the Houston streets.

You would think that because of that experience, I would now only argue for electronic logbooks. But you would be wrong. I use my logbook for so much more than what the

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| 2/14   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | LOCAL            | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  | 366235         | 14256 | 5:49                                     | 25  | 46                                       | 25  | 87    | 46   | 48      | 58  | 20 | 35 | 75 | 60 | 48 | 25 | 45 Altimeters & Fuel gauges                   |
| 3/16   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | AMERICAN AIRWAYS | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  |                | 1:15  |  | 1:15  |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | flights RAER EGR 17 MARK AIRCRAFT             |
| 3/17   | RAER             | LOCAL            | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  |                | 2:0   |  | 2:0   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 8.9 split and fly by over RANDOLPH AFB (300') |
| 3/17   | RAER             | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  |                | 2:5   |  | 2:5   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | loop & steep rolls                            |
| 3/18   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | LOCAL            | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  |                | 4:5   |  | 4:5   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | altimeters                                    |
| 3/19   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | STINSON-SAT      | RYAN-PT22               | 57914              | KUMMER | 165  |                | 4:5   |  | 4:5   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | Towlegs                                       |
| 3/24   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | STINSON-SAT      | TRAVELER                | 87382              | L7C    | 175  |                | 3:0   |  | 3:0   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | aircraft                                      |
| 3/26   | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | PIPER PA28              | 1275P              | L7C    | 150  |                | 3:0   |  | 3:0   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | from 1800' (static line)                      |
| 4/1  | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | PIPER PA28              | 1275P              | L7C    | 150  |                | 2:30  |  | 2:30  |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | flights RAER EGR 17 MARK AIRCRAFT             |
| 4/2  | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | TRAVELER                | 87382              | L7C    | 175  |                | 1:00  |  | 1:00  |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | instructor (J. JOHNSON)                       |
| 4/3  | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | HEADQUARTERS-SAT | TRAVELER                | 87382              | L7C    | 175  |                | 3:0   |  | 3:0   |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |    |    |    |    | X-country PARACHUTE JUMP 3500' STATIC LINE    |
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| 8/28   | "                | "           | PA28                    | 1275P              | L7C    | 150  |                | 1:15  |  | 1:15  |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    |                                     | (5) A Robinson CFI 1215044 |
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| 9/1  | AMERICAN AIRWAYS | STINSON-SAT | "                       | "                  | "      | "    |                | 2:10  |  | 2:10  |  |     |       |      |         |   |    |    |     |    |                                     | "                          |
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| 5-28   | REPOWLO     | LOCAL     | WHEELER 128     | 64440              | REPOWLO | 200            | 45         | 45          | 45                                       | 45  | 45    | 45   | 45   | 45   | 45      | 45 | airwork                                      |
| 5-28   | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 5-29   | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 5-31   | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 6-2  | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 6-5  | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 6-7  | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | work in cattle (R. Wood in aircraft with me) |
| 6-11   | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | airwork                                      |
| 6-16   | SAT         | LOCAL     | RAMM 172        | 57114              | KUMNER  | 165            | 45         | 45          | 45                                       | 45  | 45    | 45   | 45   | 45   | 45      | 45 | work in cattle                               |
| 6-18   | REPOWLO     | LOCAL     | WHEELER 128     | 64440              | REPOWLO | 200            | 45         | 45          | 45                                       | 45  | 45    | 45   | 45   | 45   | 45      | 45 | airwork                                      |
| 6-19   | "           | "         | "               | "                  | "       | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "  | work in cattle                               |
| THE RECORD ON THIS PAGE IS CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT. |             |           |                 |                    |         |                |            |             | CARRY TOTALS FORWARD TO TOP OF NEXT PAGE |   |       |      |      | ENTER IN THIS COLUMN DETAILS OF ANY SERIOUS DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT. IF MORE SPACE THAN THAT PROVIDED ABOVE IS NEEDED FOR ANY DETAILS OF FLIGHT INSTRUCTION OR AIRCRAFT DAMAGE, USE PAGES PROVIDED IN BACK OF BOOK. |         |    |  |
| PILOT: _____ ATTESTED BY: _____                        |             |           |                 |                    |         |                |            |             | 44450473574:40 997 05                    |   |       |      |      |  |         |    |  |

| DATE   | FLIGHT FROM | FLIGHT TO   | EQUIPMENT FLOWN |                    |        | CLASSIFICATION |            |             | DURATION OF FLIGHT                       | BREAKDOWN OF TRIP TIME INTO CLASSIFICATIONS |       |      |      |  | REMARKS |      |                                      |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|----------------|------------|-------------|--|---|-------|------|------|--|---------|------|--------------------------------------|
|  |             |             | PILOT           | CERTIFICATE NUMBER | ENGINE | H. P.          | INSTRUMENT | INSTRUCTION |  | DAY   | NIGHT | DUAL | SOLO |  |         |      |                                      |
| 8/26   | STANSON-SAT | LOCAL       | BOEING BA       | 587                | L7C    | 180            | 1:00       | 1:00        | 1:00                                     | 1:00  | 1:00  | 1:00 | 1:00 | 1:00   | 1:00    | 1:00 | Normal maneuvers to CEF Rem 92253505 |
| 8/27   | INTL-SAT    | "           | WHEELER 128     | 64440              | L7C    | 165            | 1:00       | 1:00        | 1:00                                     | 1:00  | 1:00  | 1:00 | 1:00 | 1:00   | 1:00    | 1:00 | airwork                              |
| 8/27   | HEBARK-SAT  | "           | WHEELER 128     | 64440              | KUMNER | 150            | 1:00       | 1:00        | 1:00                                     | 1:00  | 1:00  | 1:00 | 1:00 | 1:00   | 1:00    | 1:00 | airwork                              |
| 8/28   | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 8/29   | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 8/30   | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 8/31   | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 8/31   | STANSON-SAT | LOCAL       | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 9/1  | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 9/1  | "           | "           | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| 9/1  | HEBARK-SAT  | STANSON-SAT | "               | "                  | "      | "              | "          | "           | "  | "   | "     | "    | "    | "  | "       | "    | airwork                              |
| THE RECORD ON THIS PAGE IS CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT. |             |             |                 |                    |        |                |            |             | CARRY TOTALS FORWARD TO TOP OF NEXT PAGE |   |       |      |      | ENTER IN THIS COLUMN DETAILS OF ANY SERIOUS DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT. IF MORE SPACE THAN THAT PROVIDED ABOVE IS NEEDED FOR ANY DETAILS OF FLIGHT INSTRUCTION OR AIRCRAFT DAMAGE, USE PAGES PROVIDED IN BACK OF BOOK. |         |      |                                      |
| PILOT: _____ ATTESTED BY: _____                        |             |             |                 |                    |        |                |            |             | 447202724510:15 700 20                   |   |       |      |      |  |         |      |                                      |

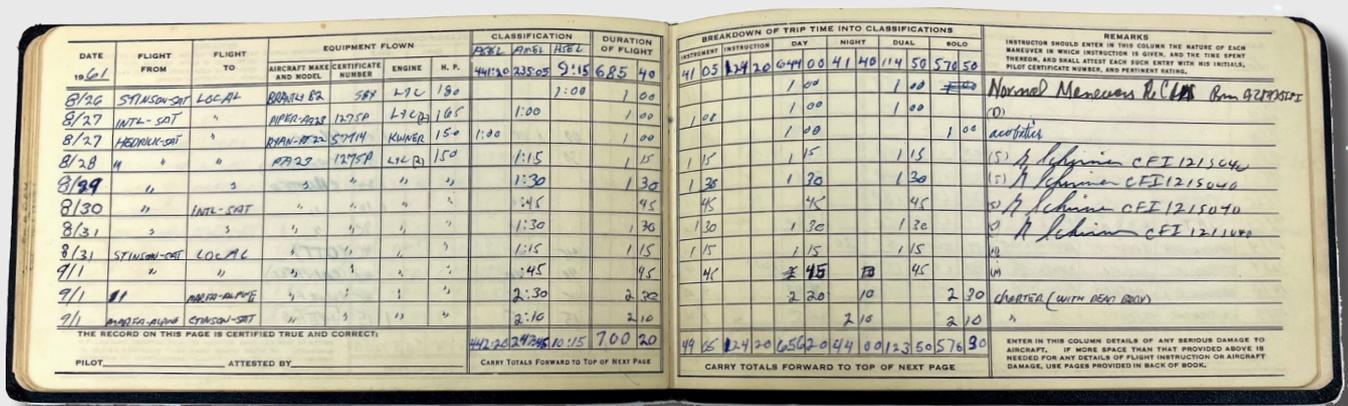
federal regulations require. I use it as a diary – documenting who is with me in the plane, the weather, what restaurants we visited on the ground, how many fish I did or did not catch, and anything of interest from the trip. In some instances, with a particularly memorable experience, I write a full narrative and tuck it in an envelope in the front of the logbook. I imagine that one day, my grandkids will pull these narratives out of that envelope and get lost in my experiences long after I am gone. Or they won't. But I sure did, even with the small amount of information in my dad's narratives.

I picked up one of my own logbooks and read through it when writing this article. The entries brought back so many memories – taking my kids to camp, taking my wife and some friends to the Bahamas, moving my girls into college, and flying to Port Aransas, Texas, with my son on a weekend just to fish for a few hours.

I feel the same way about electronic logbooks as I do about the camera on my iPhone. There is so much in there that no one will ever see. I read an article recently that says we are no longer imprinting memories on our brains because we are always taking a photo or video with our phones. Our brain just assumes we do not need to store that memory because it is stored on the external device. Our memories of events now fade faster because of this.

We have a tradition in my family that my sister started, where we put a bowl of photographs in common areas around our house. I actually print photos from my camera roll and add the prints to the bowl. It amazes me how many friends sit next to the bowl and browse through the photographs, sifting through years of memories, even though the photos are of strangers. Conversations start, and others move in closer while the story of the photograph is told. It is intimate and sincere, and another moment that should be mentally imprinted.





The same is true with my logbooks that sit alongside my father's logs in my office. Pilots and non-pilots alike pick them up and browse through them. They look at the entries and ask questions about the places the plane has taken me and my family. No one is ever going to pick up your ForeFlight electronic logbook and browse through it. I'm not saying not to keep an electronic record. Actually, I'm an advocate for both. Keeping both adds about 5 minutes to your day after each flight.

I have nothing so interesting as flying a dead body across West Texas, but I do have a few gems to be discovered by anyone who might want to browse through the years of my flying life. If a young pilot asked me what to write in the

descriptions in his logbook, I would answer simply "everything". Write down your observations of the weather, the plane, the people, and whatever you think you might want to talk about later. Who knows, one day your grandchild may be sitting on your lap and ask what it's like to be a pilot. You won't have to make up a bedtime story. Instead, you can pull out your logbook and tell a real fairytale. **T&T**

**Lawrence S. Searcy Jr** is a 1300-hour private and instrument-rated pilot with TBM 700A (current), Mooney M20J (prior), and Piper Malibu Mirage (prior) experience. Lawrence is an avid pilot, flying approximately 130 hours a year for business and pleasure throughout the United States.

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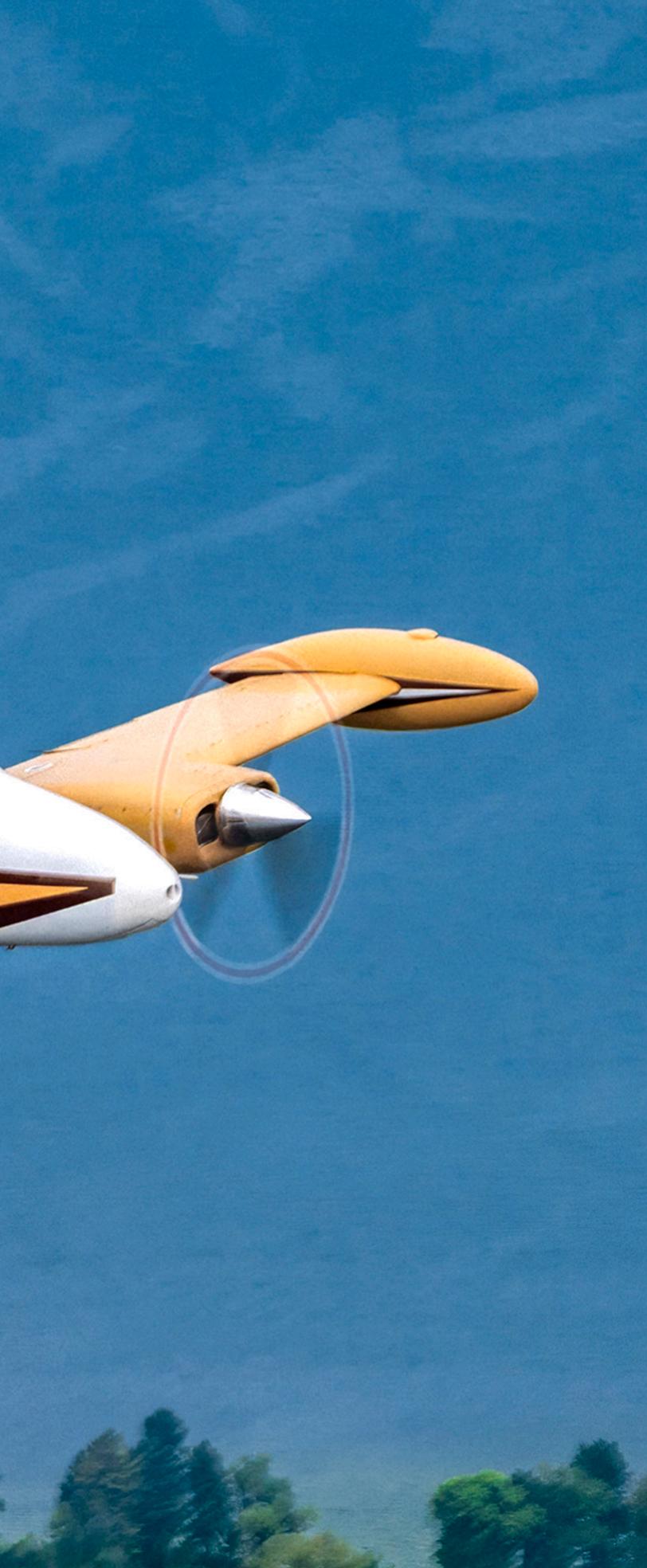
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A fitting machine to mark a personal milestone, but also a machine worthy of much more recognition than a simple association with my meager accomplishment.”



# The Rocket Launcher:

A Predecessor to Riley's  
Rockets Flies Again

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by Matthew McDaniel

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No predetermined effort had been made. I hadn't planned to mark my 150th aircraft type flown by consciously choosing a fascinating type. Nor had I considered whether it would be a hopped-up twin versus a mild-mannered single. Between my crazy schedule and trying to seize opportunities as they are presented, it just worked out to be something noteworthy. Something rare in its heyday six decades ago and on the verge of extinction today. A fitting machine to mark a personal milestone, but also a machine worthy of much more recognition than a simple association with my meager accomplishment.

## Ushering in the Next Generation

In the early 1950s, Cessna was not new to the twin-engine game. Its Model 50 Bobcat first flew before WWII began in 1939. By war's end, over 5,400 had been produced. They served in a variety of roles: multi-engine trainer, utility, cargo, VIP transport, etc. Post-war, many were snatched up via surplus sales and converted to corporate aircraft or family haulers. Their wood, tube, and fabric construction and thirsty radial engines made them relatively high-maintenance and inefficient, limiting their longevity. All-metal construction, horizontally-opposed engines, and sleeker airframes were the future, and Cessna knew it. They needed a next-generation twin that would replace the old "Bamboo Bombers," serve as the foundation for a new family of twins, and help them compete with Piper, Beechcraft, and Aero Commander (all of which had new light-twins in development or early production, as well).

In 1953, those aspirations became reality when the prototype Cessna 310 took to the air. Production 310s began rolling off the assembly line in Kansas in late 1954. These were "Straight 310s,"



meaning they incorporated no sub-model designation, as no sub-model yet existed. Their straight vertical tail and rotund wingtip fuel tanks (commonly called "Tuna Tanks" for their resemblance in shape and size to that prized fish) soon become the visual markers of these now-classic light twins.

The straight-310 was basic. Two pilot seats with a three-person bench seat behind (assuming the three in back were all quite small). An aft baggage

area was accessible via a right-side baggage door. Inside, a hat-rack shelf topped the baggage area and allowed interior access to the lightweight items stowed there. The 50-gallon tuna tanks carried all the fuel for the carbureted, normally aspirated, 240hp engines (which turned 2-bladed constant speed props). The panel was a hodgepodge arrangement of instruments and radios that passed for "IFR equipped" at the time.



The C-310 seemed light years beyond the technology and aerodynamics of Cessna's T-50. It also significantly surpassed the performance of its only truly in-class competitors, the Riley Twin Navion and Piper's Apache (both 4-to-5-seat, light twins).

### Polishing the Diamond

With sales steadily rising, Cessna soon began refining the 310. The 310A was built for the military only. Thus, the 310B was the first upgraded version offered to the civilian market (starting in 1958). The D-model (introduced in 1959, for the 1960 model year) did away with the decidedly uncool-looking straight tail, replacing it with a swept fin and rudder (which were all the rage on both cars and small aircraft of the era, drawing from the steeply raked fins of the futuristic jet-powered military aircraft then in service). By 1962, the 310 was up to the G-model and offered many design and performance enhancements over its earlier siblings (especially the pre-D, straight-tailed 310s). This disparity did not escape the watchful eye of Jack Riley.

Based in Florida, Riley was an entrepreneur and one of the most successful aircraft salesmen in the country in the post-WWII years. In 1953, he took

delivery of the second D-16 Twin Navion conversion from Acme Aircraft Co. in California. Soon after, he purchased the original prototype too, along with rights to the design, and founded Riley Aircraft Conversions. He initially built D-16 Twin Navions via approved modifications to any Navion airframe. By late 1954, Riley and TEMCO (who he'd outsourced production rights to) incorporated so many improvements into the D-16A version that it was certified as a separate aircraft type (the Riley 55). Throughout the mid-1950s, Riley stayed busy marketing and selling slightly over 100 Twin Navions. When sales began to dry up, he converted many of the original D-16s to D-16As. But by decade's end, Riley was eyeing new projects. The Twin Navion could not compete with the clean-sheet light twin designs in steady production by then.

Riley noticed the performance gains of the current 310 models over their predecessors. Even though the oldest straight-tailed model was barely over five years old at that point, Jack saw an opportunity. Take pre-D-model 310s and subject them to an array of modifications that would transform their aesthetics, performance, interior appointments, and overall

capabilities to such a degree that they would match or exceed those of a brand-new C-310D. He'd sell them as conversion-completed aircraft, or existing owners could have their early 310 converted.

As with his previous projects, Riley was an all-in sort of guy. His team's list of design modifications grew long and complex. Just as they had with the A-model Twin Navion, the FAA grew uncomfortable with such extensive modifications being approved solely via the STC process. Again, Riley agreed to subject his work to independent certification standards and have the resulting aircraft certified as a separate type. That type would be the Riley 65. He was placing full-page ads in aviation magazines as early as 1960 to market the new twin.

### Riley's Pre-Rockets

The Riley 65 is a type few remember today, and hard data is difficult to scrounge up on it. It seems only around 60 were manufactured. Because each was highly customized, no two were exactly alike, making each one unique in its own right. Today, many aircraft continue to fly with the Riley name on them. "Riley Rocket" is a fairly well-known moniker Riley



applied to many types for which he eventually certified performance enhancement packages. The Riley 65 is not, however, a Riley Rocket. Rather, it was the launching pad that supported all of Riley's future Rocket programs.

Any Straight-310, 310B, or 310C could be transformed into a Riley 65. The buyer could specify one of two engine choices: the original O-470-M (240hp) or the fuel-injected IO-470-D (260hp). Sticking with the original engine, along with Riley's speed mods, would make these older 310s perform like a D-model. Choosing the 260hp engine (same as on the factory D-models) bought performance that not only exceeded the D, but also exceeded the future E and F-models. By 1962, adding a manual wastegate Rajay turbocharging system became an option, as well. Later, a "Super 65" was offered with the 290hp IO-540s. That would be the aircraft that led directly to the development of the first Riley Rocket. Semantics aside, the engines were only the tip of the iceberg.

Outside, the 65 received a one-piece windshield (void of the center post). Additionally, third side windows were added to the fuselage. The windshield and all windows were double the thickness of the originals. The over-wing, augments-tube exhaust systems were converted to faired, under-wing exhaust stacks. These changes, along with significant improvements to the noise insulation, lowered cabin noise levels



to a more tolerable roar. Later in the program, the vertical tail could also be exchanged for the swept version introduced on the 310D. Although, before that option was introduced, many Riley 65s were built retaining their straight tail.

The under-wing exhaust also allowed the upper nacelle to be reshaped into a more aerodynamic design. This was done via the addition of a perfectly streamlined, 20-gallon fiberglass nacelle fuel tank (bringing total capacity up to 140 gallons, to feed the thirstier engines). Finally, a resin and epoxy coating was applied to the wings, the cowlings, nacelles, and fuselage. The

coating covered rivets, screw heads, and panel joints, dramatically lowering parasite drag (resembling the smooth composite construction commonly used in aircraft today). Riley called it "Bond-Tite Aerodynamic Surface Smoothing."

Internal structures were strengthened throughout to support the higher performance and boosted gross weight (from 4,600 to 4,830 lbs.) allowed by the increased horsepower. Up front, the 65 was upgraded to a one-piece shock-mounted panel with the flight instruments arranged in an "Airline-T" configuration for IFR operations. The best avionics the early-1960s had to offer

were installed, too. The yokes were modified to remove the upper cross-bar for better visibility of the panel's new goodies. The rear seat bench was exchanged for two bucket seats. The hat-rack was removed, the cabin was extended aft, and an additional bulkhead was added, where an additional bucket seat was added in a third row (adjacent to the new third side windows). A later option was a side-

facing couch that could be converted to a rear bench seat in minutes. Finally, a built-in oxygen system was added.

### Saving a "Barn" Find

In 1956, Cessna completed its second full year of Model 310 production. Serial #35281 was one of 228 Straight-310s manufactured that year. Registered as N310S, it was initially purchased by Florida Power & Light Co. It was re-certified as a Riley 65 in August 1964, using the 260hp IO-470-D engine option. Since Riley re-used Cessna's serial numbers, it's not known exactly where in the list of 65s this airframe falls, but it is clear that it was a later one, based on the dates of the paperwork filed and the fact that it incorporated both the swept vertical tail and turbocharging options. For the next 35 years, it changed hands many times, but remained active. It was exported to Canada in 1968, where it flew through the mid-'80s. Upon returning to the U.S. in 1987, it remained active (as N310LB).

Then, there was a belly landing in the late 1990s (whether that was purely accidental or the result of a gear malfunction is unknown). Thereafter, the engines and belly skins were repaired, and the 2-bladed props were replaced with new 3-bladed units.



While the plane flew again, it never really returned to an “active” status and slowly got surrounded and buried by other vehicles and equipment sharing its hangar space.

Ken Schmick entered the picture in 2022. As owner of Sierra Aviation, he focuses on buying, improving, and reselling all vintages of Cessna’s 182 Skylane. His recently constructed hangar at the Fond du Lac, WI airport (KFLD) is bristling with Skylane airframes, wings, and parts. A twin Cessna was not really on his radar, nor was a multi-engine rating on his pilot certificate. Nonetheless, an online ad from the nearby East Troy, WI airport (57C) caught his eye. An attractive deal was struck for a Riley 65, having languished in a hangar

there for almost a quarter-century. Ken had the mechanical abilities to tackle the technical challenges, and the seller just wanted it to be saved before it was too late.

As is so often the case, the project was not one for the faint of heart. Once it was freed from its tin prison and inspected more closely, the punch list of necessary projects grew quite long. The good news, however, was that no serious corrosion was found. The obvious priorities were to put the long-dormant major mechanical systems back into good working order. Many instruments were missing or in need of overhaul. Most of the avionics had aged into their paperweight stage. Thus, Ken soon decided a total panel makeover was also in order.

Of course, this allowed him to install equipment that would have been the stuff of science fiction when Riley remanufactured the plane in 1964. This, in turn, stripped significant weight, as heavy analog equipment and gyros were replaced by digital units.

In the meantime, Schmick was pursuing his multi-engine rating in a rented 310 so he would be both safe and legal to fly the Riley when the time came. The plane’s registration had expired during its inactive years, and its N-number had been reassigned to another aircraft. So, it was re-christened N115CK. Finally, the interior (which had been stripped from the plane years before) was reinstalled. Slowly but surely, Schmick crossed items off his list, and in 2024, nearly two decades since her props had last spun, #35281 flew again.

## Giddy Up!

When an airframe is 71 years old and displays plenty of cosmetic signs of its age, one doesn’t necessarily expect stellar performance from it. Yet, the aircraft leapt into the air before I’d even pushed the throttles fully open. The climb from 1,000’ to 8,500’ MSL (while operating normally aspirated only) might not have qualified as exhilarating, but it was impressive nonetheless. In climb, the throttles were adjusted to maintain 25-squared until they’d returned to their wide-open takeoff position. By level-off, wide open throttle was generating a predictable 22.0” of Manifold Pressure (MAP). While accelerating, I rolled in nose-down trim and soon found near hands-off equilibrium. Then, I reached down to the bottom of the throttle

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- MORE COMFORT for your money**  
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standards, they were game-changing technology for general aviation pilots of the 1960s. Today, we would be more likely to refer to the Rajays as “turbo-normalizers,” because they were not designed to push MAP beyond what could be achieved at sea level. Instead, they are meant to boost MAP back towards (but not above) sea-level pressure while at cruise altitude and/or in the higher stages of climb. But they have limitations. First, they should not be used below 5,000-6,000 feet, where the risk of over-boosting the engine is too high. Second, they should not be used unless the throttles are wide-open, allowing the engines to accept the extra intake air they supply without over-boosting. They

are running whenever the engine is running. However, all their air supply is dumped overboard through the normally open wastegates. Great care must be taken by the pilot when modulating the turbo air supply between zero and full, as there is no accurate way of knowing what percentage of opened/closed the wastegates are. Balancing one with the other can be challenging, too. For those reasons,

many pilots choose to use them as an all-or-nothing system, waiting until it is safe to close the wastegates fully in one motion and re-opening them fully again when their MAP boost is no longer required.

Using that methodology, the Rajays are simple to use. Climb at normal climb power (25-squared for most operations in the Riley 65) until the throttles have been pushed to wide-open to maintain 25" MAP. From there, allow MAP to drop naturally in the climb (roughly 1" per additional thousand feet of climb), until they've fallen several more inches. At that point, the wastegates can begin to be closed, which will provide an immediate MAP boost. In climb, this will allow an increased climb rate at the same airspeed, or a greater forward speed at the same climb rate. In cruise, it will translate into increased cruise speed. But that cruise speed will be slightly better than if the plane were simply cruising at a lower altitude where such power is naturally available, because it will be cruising in higher/thinner air, which will provide a slight true airspeed (TAS) advantage too.

In descent, the wastegates can remain closed only if the descent rate is

quadrant, where the wastegate controls for the Riley-added Rajay turbochargers are located. Pushing each control full forward, the wastegates closed fully, MAP jumped back to sea-level values, and the septuagenarian Cessna was off to the races.

The Rajays are the most significant change incorporated into the 65, systems-wise. While their manual wastegates are antiquated by today's



The author and Ken next to the Riley

shallow enough to allow the throttles to remain wide open. Once indicated airspeed (IAS) and/or turbulence necessitate a power reduction, the simplest way to avoid accidentally over-boosting the engines is to open the wastegates first (which will reduce MAP 8 to 10 inches, as the engines return to a normally-aspirated state). Thereafter, the throttles can be safely reduced, on whatever schedule the pilot chooses, to control IAS, rate of descent, and manage engine cooling rates.

During our cruise speed tests, we consistently achieved at or slightly above 200 KTAS (230 MPH) with density altitudes in the 13,000-foot range. This was while running approximately 27" MAP/2400 RPM and burning around 19 GPH per engine. Those speeds are right at Riley's advertised cruise speed for the 260hp version of the 65. Those performance numbers put the Riley 65 on par with D, E, & F-model 310s. Rajay literature says to expect about 240 MPH at that

altitude using their current turbos (in new condition, of course).

There is definitely more speed to be had from N115CK. First, Schmick knows his gear doors are not yet perfectly rigged in their closed position. Second, there is much more tweaking to be done to ensure the turbos are functioning perfectly and providing maximum and equal boost to the IO-470s. Finally, the drag-reducing coating applied by Riley is showing its age in many areas. Chunks have broken away on the nacelles and upper fuselage, leaving areas of the aircraft skin exposed around jagged edges of the remaining coating. In other areas, the coating had to be chipped away intentionally to expose screw heads for maintenance work (such as around the windshield, which Schmick replaced during his early restoration work). Schmick's long-term plan is to repair all the missing, chipped, and cracked speed coating before fully repainting the aircraft. In doing so, appreciable speed gains seem almost

certain, which will likely have him easily exceeding the 230 MPH TAS that Riley claimed (at optimum altitude and best-power settings), and matching or exceeding what Rajay claims 260hp 310s with their turbos are capable of.

Single-engine work in the Riley 65 proved quite anticlimactic. Even while operating at 7,500 feet MSL, the 65 was able to maintain level flight above Vyse with the critical engine at zero-thrust and the operating engine slightly below normally aspirated full power. The boost in single-engine performance (both in speed and single-engine service ceiling) was a big selling point to Riley, who claimed a single-engine service ceiling of 10,000 feet (normally aspirated) and 20,000' (with max turbo boost). In many ads and sales brochures of the era, Riley boasted, "The Riley 65 can fly faster on one engine than Piper's Apache can on two."

### The Future of Ole #35281

Schmick's unique twin is very much an ongoing labor of love. Future



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projects include the restoration of the Riley speed coating and the exterior aesthetics. Though he hasn't decided on final colors, he does plan to retain the current paint scheme, as it is the standard scheme Riley applied to all the 65s. A new interior is on the wish list too, but is prioritized fairly low for the time being (as the current interior -installed by Riley- is functional, even though it might be a little dated and worse for wear in areas). However, Schmick is content to complete those projects in good time, while keeping the aircraft flyable as much as feasible throughout the process. There is little doubt that the Riley will need a steady stream of ongoing maintenance to keep it reliably airworthy. Such is the case with any aging aircraft.

The best part is that this rare machine is a hangar queen no more. It has become a working airplane again and is being used on missions to support Schmick's C-182 business and the occasional family junket, too. For example, as this article was being prepared, Schmick flew N115CK from his home just south of aviation's Mecca in Oshkosh, WI, to the L.A. basin and back. Not too bad for a twice-manufactured twin, almost twice the age of the new owner who brought it back to life. Somewhere in the universe, Jack Riley, Sr., is smiling...and probably disappointed he didn't change just one more thing to make it even faster. **T&T**

**Matthew McDaniel** is a Master & Gold Seal CFII, ATP, MEI, AGI, & IGI, and Platinum CSIP. In 36 years of flying, he has logged nearly 23,000 hours total and over 6,000 hours of instruction given. As owner of Progressive Aviation Services, LLC ([www.progaviation.com](http://www.progaviation.com)), he has specialized in Technically Advanced Aircraft and Glass Cockpit instruction since 2001. Currently, he is a Boeing 737-series Captain for an international airline, holds 8 turbine aircraft type ratings, and has flown over 150 aircraft types. Matt is one of fewer than 15 instructors in the world to have earned the Master CFI designation for 11 consecutive two-year terms. He can be reached at: [matt@progaviation.com](mailto:matt@progaviation.com) or 414-339-4990.



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# Editor's Pics

Photos & Story  
by Lance Phillips





The Lockheed Constellation nestled in Boeing Plaza this year at AirVenture was something special. This photo was taken mid-day with my full-frame Nikon Zf. I took three lenses to Oshkosh: the incredible little 40 mm kit lens, a monster 135 mm f1.8, and the one I used to take this photo – my Voigtlander 75 mm f1.5 manual focus powerhouse.

# Another near Midair Collision

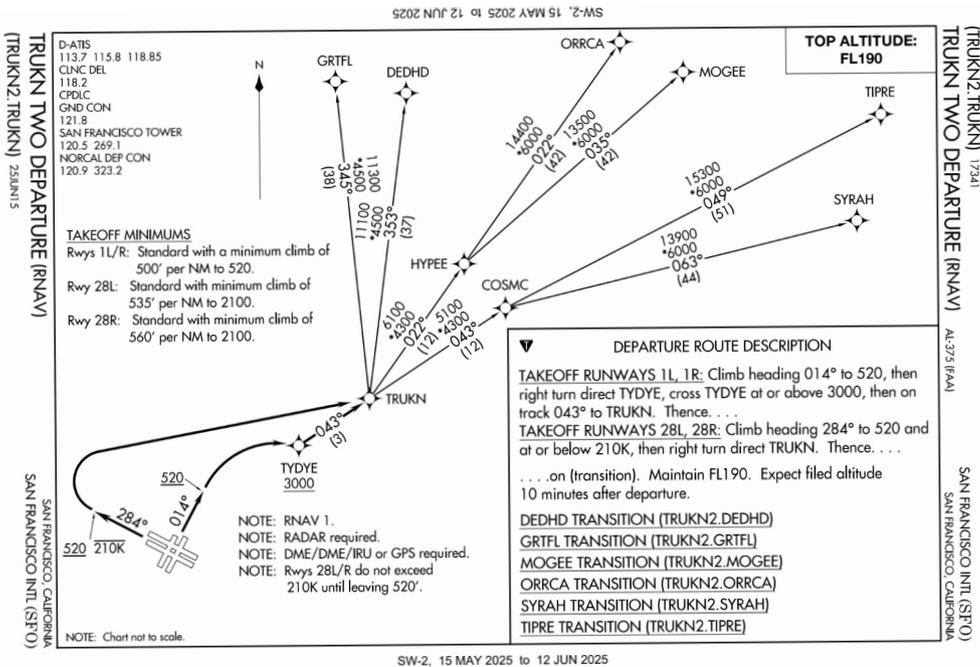
by Ed Verville



“On May 13, a United Airlines plane made a wrong turn during takeoff, nearly colliding with a SkyWest flight at San Francisco International Airport.” (ABC7 News Bay Area).

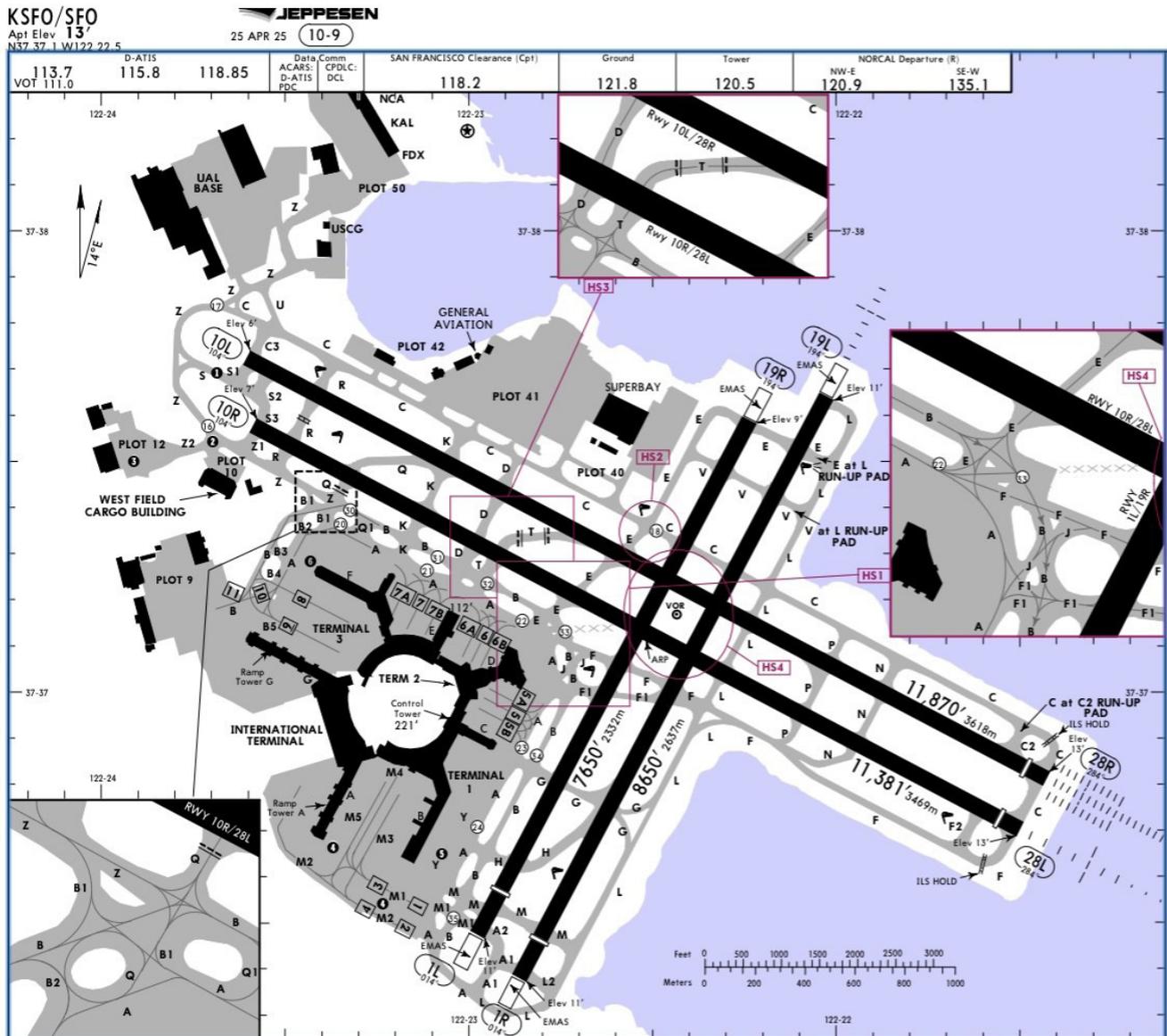
San Francisco KSFO Airport was departing airplanes from the closely spaced parallel runways 1L and 1R (runways 1 left and 1 right). United Airlines Flight 1152 was cleared to take off from runway 1R. A few seconds later, SkyWest Flight 5273 (operating as United Express) was cleared to take off from runway 1L. This is normally a safe situation as the airplane taking off on runway 1R would follow a standard instrument





departure directing it to turn to the right, and the airplane on the left runway would be directed to fly straight out or turn to the left.

But on this occasion, the United flight turned left, cutting in front of the SkyWest flight. The SkyWest CRJ flight was likely very startled by an Airbus 320 turning across their flight path directly in front of them. The SkyWest pilots maneuvered their airplane away from the United flight, coming within 280 feet vertically. There was an immediate breakdown in





Simultaneous departures...

communication with ATC, trying to figure out where the United flight was going, and the United flight hadn't yet realized its mistake. ATC was quick to get the United flight back on a heading away from other traffic, but the United flight crew still sounded confused as to what had happened.



...and arrivals

United Flight 1152 was assigned to fly the TRUKN TWO DEPARTURE. This is a Standard Instrument Departure or SID that provides route, altitude, and traffic separation during the departure phase of the flight. This SID directs the pilots to fly the runway heading (014 degrees) until reaching

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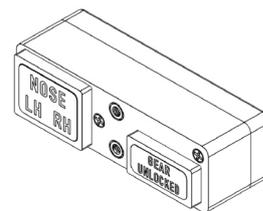
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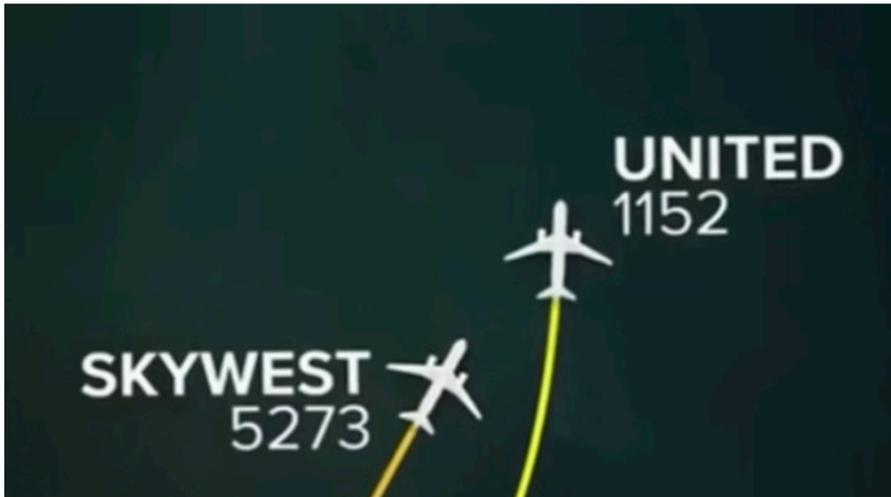


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(FMS) for a different runway would have directed them to turn left to a heading of 284 degrees.

After being handed off to NORCAL Approach (North California Approach), United was provided a telephone number to call after they landed for a possible pilot deviation. This is what no pilot ever wants to hear. Even though near midair collisions and runway incursions are on the FAA and NTSB watch list, there seems to be no sign of slowing the rate down, with 1,740 runway incursions in 2024, and many near midair collisions. **T&T**

520 feet, then to turn right, direct to TYDYE Intersection on a 043 degrees course. United did not do this.

It appears that United Flight 1152 may have set their initial heading to 284 degrees, causing their turn in the wrong direction. This may have happened because of briefing the wrong departure procedure from a different runway, or by being originally assigned to depart runway 28L and then having their runway changed to runway 1R by ATC. Setting up the heading bug to 284 degrees or loading the procedure in a Flight Management System



**Ed Verville** is an experienced FAA instructor and examiner for business jet pilots and aircrew programs. He has 15,000 flight hours in more than 100 different makes and models and holds type ratings in the Bombardier CL-65, CL-30, CL-604, and Boeing 747. You can see Ed speak about "Loss of Control" and "Instrument Departures" at EAA Oshkosh and Sun 'n Fun at their FAA Forums.



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## Kramer LaPlante

by Grant Boyd

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KRAMER LAPLANTE



"Growing up, my older brother and I were both always into fast cars and airplanes.

We would go to the Miramar Air Show in San Diego, which was exciting. My brother actually got his license pretty early on and took up flying as a profession," said Kramer LaPlante, a Citation Mustang owner.

"I said that I had to do the same at some point, which wound up being the same year that I sold my company [MVMT, which manufactures and markets a line of watches and accessories]. It was the perfect time, and I went for it full force towards getting my private pilot's license."

LaPlante purchased a 2007 Cessna 206 Turbo Stationair the day after he earned his wings in 2018. This aircraft would serve him well both in its capacity as a training platform and family hauler.

"I had rented during my initial flight training, but knew I wanted something that I could always have access to and would be a good platform for me to continue my growth. I logged about 500 hours during the first couple of years owning the airplane and got my instrument rating in it," he said.

"It was an awesome airplane, and as a six-seater, I could load it up with a bunch of my friends. We could put all of our snowboards and gear in it and go up to the mountains. It was a turbo, so it was still capable in higher areas."

LaPlante knew that he ultimately wanted to upgrade to a more capable aircraft, although he wasn't sure when to make the move and what the next best step would be. Fortunately, he had some other pilots in his corner who had made similar moves in the past and were willing to provide their expertise.



"I wasn't necessarily planning to go directly to a jet from the 206, but I had some aviation mentors. They knew that I would want to upgrade again in the near future, so they told me that I could do a little upgrade, then move into a pressurized plane with a retractable gear, or even a turboprop, or just bite the bullet early and get into the jet right away. Either way, they knew I would end up being there at one time or another. It was a great decision, for sure," he said.

LaPlante purchased his next plane, a 2008 Citation Mustang, in 2020 after having also considered moving into a Piper Meridian or a Cirrus Vision Jet. "My mentors were big Mustang people, so they obviously kept advocating for it, for many reasons," he explained.

"I chose the Citation Mustang because, quite simply, it outperformed the competition across the board — and did so at a lower entry price. Compared to options like the Meridian or Vision Jet, the Mustang offered more: two engines for added safety, higher cruising altitude, greater payload capacity, and a significantly more comfortable cabin for six adults. While it does require annual recurrent training, I see that as a benefit. It keeps me sharp and ultimately makes me a better pilot. In the one-to-two-million-dollar range, there's really nothing that compares. The fact that they also hold their value incredibly well was just the icing on the cake."

Moving up into the jet was natural for the aviator, largely due to the platforms he had flown previously, Cessnas with Garmin systems.

"It was a seamless transition into the Mustang since it had G1000 avionics like my 206 did, so nothing was new there. The learning curve wasn't that huge, outside of it being faster and having to get more familiar with different arrivals and things like that. It is a pretty easy airplane to fly."





LaPlante explained that, in addition to his journey to the flight levels being slightly different than most, his use of the aircraft is unique as well.

“I feel like I took a little bit of a reverse route that most people take to own their own jet. A lot of times, people own one due to business reasons, and the aircraft helps with business. I did the opposite, where I sold my company and then just really wanted something to be able to enjoy and fly, and a lot of my flying is for pleasure,” he said.



“It was a seamless transition into the Mustang since it had G1000 avionics like my 206 did, so nothing was new there.

“I live in Los Angeles and do a lot of ski trips, and love going to Aspen in the summer and winter. I also go to the lake in Arizona quite a bit, and then a lot of other west coast flights, to places like Tahoe, Mammoth, and even down to San Diego, where my family is. A lot of my flying is shorter trips, and usually there are at least four of us in the plane. On a 200 nautical mile trip, we are usually

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not going that high – usually in the low 20s and doing around 330 knots true. Fuel burn is around 800 pounds an hour,” he said.

LaPlante estimates that he flies roughly 100 hours per year and has logged approximately 650 hours on the airframe to date. He completes yearly recurrent training both in a simulator and in the aircraft.

“Some of the pros of the airplane are that it’s very easy to fly, and you have a lot of redundant systems. The model has a pretty good maintenance history, and I have hardly ever been AOG. If I do have an issue, usually there is someone on the field who can help troubleshoot. Another cool thing is that it has big storage compartments, nose and aft. There is about 620 pounds in total, and it has a ski shaft in the aft baggage area that comes in handy. The Mustang is an all-around great airplane.”

Everything has its downsides, but LaPlante advises that the light jet is very capable for its size and cost.

“I guess in terms of cons, the aircraft is definitely a little bit limited in power. So, if you want to load it up and go far or go in and out of Aspen in the summer, it’s very limited in terms of takeoff performance. Then, if it is hot or you are loaded up, it takes extra work to get to the higher flight levels. You can obviously always be bigger, faster, and go higher, but in terms of what the airplane is and what it’s supposed to do – I would say it’s kind of beyond expectations,” he said.

“But I think most everyone’s goal is to upgrade, to go further, higher, faster, while carrying more. My ultimate goal would be to fly a Phenom 300, the most capable single-pilot jet. That’s what I would eventually love to strive for, but the Mustang has been great. And being completely self-made and flying my own jet is incredibly special and humbling to me.” **T&T**



**Grant Boyd** is a private pilot with eight years of experience in aviation business, including marketing, writing, customer service, and sales. Boyd holds a Bachelor’s and a Master’s of Business Administration degree, both from Wichita State University, and a Doctor of Education degree from Oklahoma State University. He was chosen as a NBAA Business Aviation “Top 40 Under 40” award recipient in 2020.

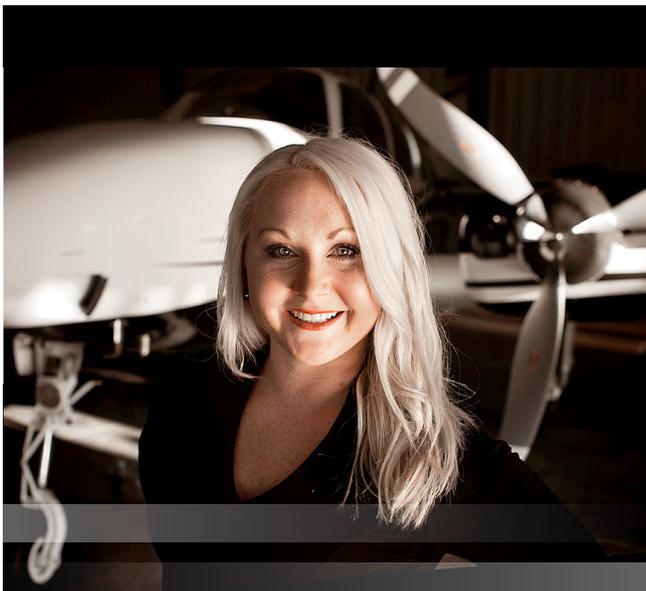


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## On Final by David Miller



# Don't Ask Me How She Got There

"How do you get in?" That's the first thing Patty said to me when she saw the PBaron. It had been decades since she flew in the right seat of such a personal airplane. You wear the Baron like a snug shoe.

Just getting in is a challenge. The first leap is a major one from the ramp to the wing. A step is provided, just out of reach for most ladies. A twist to the left as you jump from the ground to the aft wing, then another twist to face the door handle.

Opening the cockpit door is another issue. It's a two-handed affair, rotating a small, red knob while grabbing the latch and maneuvering it backwards. Then, if all goes well, you drop yourself onto the seat and take a breath to recover.

We developed a simple routine in previous Citations and King Airs. After reaching cruise altitude, Patty completes her co-pilot duties and moves to the cabin for a short nap. She returns for the descent and landing. There is ample room in turbine airplanes for the short trek to the cabin. Not so much in the Baron.

During our first flight, Patty took a look backwards and said, "How do you expect me to get back there?"



I had been hiding a dark secret. It simply wasn't possible. The space between the seats was tiny, even for petite Patty. "You didn't even plan for me to get in the back," she demanded. "Let me do some research," I said to stall for time.

I called my mentor, Doug Moss, a PBaron owner. "Doug, how do I get Patty from the cockpit to the cabin?" "Can't be done, physically impossible, was the response. It's only been attempted once by a teenager, and her skeletal remains are on display at some museum in Washington, DC," he said.

I didn't have the guts to tell Patty the news.

A recent flight from Colorado Springs (KCOS) to Addison (KADS) had us waking up at 4:45 am to beat the summer temperatures. At cruise altitude, Patty was fading, her eyes closing every few seconds. "I am going to the back," she announced.

Do I tell her it is impossible? Nope.

Years of yoga had prepared her for this moment. She peered through the tiny opening between the seats. "Can I stand on this?" she asked. It was the emergency gear extension handle. "Sure," I said as she fell into the abyss.

I began what I will call the "Beechcraft shove."

Over the fifty-two years of our marriage, I have had the opportunity to be "up close and personal" with Patty's backside. But never at seventeen thousand feet. And never for what seemed like an eternity. Seconds later, a bump from an unexpected cumulus build-up slammed my head into her rear denim pocket as I gasped for air.

"What the hell are you doing?" she yelled.

And then, just as quickly, it was over. Like a gush through a waterfall, she landed headfirst on the rear seats. Asleep minutes later.

"Wake me for the descent," she said.

"Sure," I said. Sure.

Fly safe. 

*Patricia W. Miller has not seen or approved this article. Please keep it confidential.*

**David Miller** has owned and flown a variety of aircraft from light twins to midsize jets for more than 50 years. With 6,000 plus hours in his logbook, speaks nationally and writes on a variety of aviation safety topics. You can contact David at [davidmiller1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidmiller1@sbcglobal.net).



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