

Hangar Flyin'



Happy Independence Day!

Thank you, men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces, and thank you, veterans, for your service to our country.

Mark your Calendar

EAA AirVenture July 27 –August 2

For a look at activities during the week, follow this link: <http://www.eaaapps.org/>

Editor's note: This is an article Ron Pearson sent me. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.



On a clear summer day in August of 1978 I handed the keys to my Luscombe 8A over to a stranger and watched him fly away. The airplane was his now.

The plan was to take a short break from aviation; just a few months off to get life's little interferences in order, to take stock of the important things like job and raising a family. I had no idea this little sabbatical would last thirty-one years.

I never really got over flying. Although there was a succession of sailboats and ham radios, of motorcycles and four-wheelers, I still found myself searching the sky whenever I heard the drone of an airplane overhead.

As the years passed I tried to force the idea of airplanes out of my mind. And when I would tell people "I used to own an airplane," or "I flew there once in my Luscombe," I would always get that look that said, "Oh sure... yeah, you owned an airplane."

As life slipped by the family grew. There were school plays and graduations, then weddings. And one day I found myself retired. The sailboats were gone, the ham radios sat quietly on a shelf and the motorcycle was just transportation. Thirty-one years had passed since that man flew my airplane off toward his own horizon. It was time.

I began calling around for a flight instructor. There are flight schools in the area, but I just wanted to take a check ride. I just wanted to see if any of the 350 hours in my old 8A were still lodged somewhere in the back of my brain. I found Brad Walker and a rental Cessna 172. We scheduled an hour.

I met Brad at Elmdale Airpark. My stomach was in knots. Never mind fly an airplane; I wondered if I could hold my lunch down. We talked, we flew, we talked some more and three hours later Brad signed off my bi-annual flight review. The ghost of days past floated through. I hadn't forgotten how to fly.

Now I began the inner questioning. Do I want to rent an airplane once or twice a month or do I want to own an airplane and fly all over the country at my own leisure. Do I want to sit in the hanger with other pilots (that word sounded so good again) and just talk airplanes. My wife knew the answer. I began looking online in the trade-a-plane ads.

There were Champs and Chiefs, Cubs and Coups, 120's and 140's. And the prices... oh Lord had things changed. In 1973 my Luscombe had cost me \$2350.00. Trade-a-plane told me that would probably get me good propeller today. But I continued to shop.

The big air show in Ranger Texas was scheduled for Saturday, May 23rd. I had no idea what this air show would mean to me.

My wife and I arrived early so we could watch the airplanes fly in as well as take the time to walk around and stare at

the ones already parked.

Things were going along well when my wife spotted a white and red classic that had just landed and was taxiing toward the parking area.

“Is that a Luscombe?” she asked. Her voice sounded as if she had just witnessed the re-incarnation of a long lost relative.

I looked at the little two-seater as it came closer. “Yes,” was all I managed to say. The hook had been set.

Sometime in the afternoon of the following day I found my airplane online. It was a 1946 Luscombe 8A. My hands shook as I called the number listed in the ad.

No, he hadn’t sold it yet. Yes, I could drive down to Bertram and see it on Tuesday. Yes, he would take a bank check. No, he wouldn’t sell it before I had a chance to buy it. I felt like I had entered a time warp.

I saw the airplane on Tuesday. I took a ride in it and I gave him the bank check. I told him I would be back on Thursday to fly it home. When he wasn’t looking I pinched myself.

On Thursday morning the alarm clock rang at 5:30 am. I had been awake since mid-night. My feet hit the floor before my wife could turn the little switch to silence the ringing.

We got to Bertram by 9AM. The little Luscombe sat waiting patiently. It was fueled and ready. The owner showed up on time. We flew around the pattern shooting a half dozen not so precision T&G’s. “You’ll do fine,” he said and I flew home.

The trip to Ranger Airport in Ranger Texas was both exhilarating and terrifying. I was flying my own airplane, an airplane that had carried a bad reputation for ground looping through all the years. I had a total two and a half hours as pilot in command in the last thirty-one years. There was a sandwich sitting on the seat next to me. I dared not eat it.

But the world was beautiful as it slipped beneath me. Houses and cars, pets and people passed below oblivious to the old man in the sky who was once again the owner of a Luscombe 8A. I just couldn’t stop smiling.

I landed the airplane at Ranger Airport with no fanfare. Just keep it going straight until you turn off the key. That’s the secret to the Luscombe.

That landing in Ranger was just the beginning. Together the little Luscombe and I began to get used to each other. We went to the AAA fly in Gainesville. We flew over our town taking pictures. We shot T&G’s. We made friends.

Someone once said, “You can never go home again.” He was wrong. Home is where your airplane is and I’m home again...



EAA Young Eagles Flight June 13, 2009

Many thanks to all who made this possible, especially those who worked 'behind the scenes'. The smiles you see here say it all.







Actual radio transmission from an Air Force control tower:

"Phantom four-seven-niner, you're on fire! Never mind, I see you've already ejected."

Caption Contest



OK, no one has sent in a suggested caption, so I'll run this one more month. Think up a caption and send it to Ben at benmallon1@suddenlink.net for a chance at winning a quart of AeroShell 15W50 aviation oil.

Let's Hear from More of Our Members

My thanks to those who have submitted photos, stories, articles and info for our newsletter. If you haven't submitted something, what are you waiting for? If you submitted something and didn't see it in the newsletter, call or email me. I probably forgot or lost it somewhere, and a reminder from you will help. So please send articles, stories, photos, etc. I need your ideas as well. THANK YOU. Please send to my email address: benmallon1@suddenlink.net