

CPA FLIGHT LINES

Volume 11, No. 12

December 1994



New officers for FY95 are (l. to r.): Robert Henley, Co-Treasurer; Bill Hamilton, Vice President; Darlene Malmquist, Secretary; and Michael Baldwin, President. Not pictured, Ann Henley, Co-Treasurer (with husband Robert).

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COLORADO PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INC.
P. O. Box 200911 Denver, CO 80220

President's Message

by Mike Baldwin

1994 ANNUAL MEETING

On Saturday, November 5, we had our annual meeting at the Holiday Inn at APA. Each Officer and Director presented a short report on the activities of their respective areas of responsibility during the past year. 54 Members attended, 20 more than last year.

The increased turn-out was consistent with the increase in CPA activity and membership over the past year. We have increased our advocacy, representing the GA pilots of Colorado in many areas.

The membership has increased substantially, growing to a record **542** members from a start last November of **433**. Forty-six dropped out for a variety of reasons, and Membership Records Chair **Terry Barbo** processed **155** new members. The plot of membership over the year shows no substantial increase until mid-year, followed by steady growth to the present level. Most of our 25% increase occurred in the last half, with outlying communities well-represented. Since no single activity can be credited, I can only assume that the word on our advocacy and representation is getting out.

Thanks to all of you who renewed and joined up as new members. The larger we are, the stronger our voice and the more we can do for you as GA pilots.

Emily Howell Warner was our speaker at lunch. She eloquently described the path she took (7000 hours worth) to become the first female hired as a pilot by a scheduled

airline. She is a real pioneer and we were honored to hear her (She is also CPA member number one).

Your new officers and directors were installed, and Mick and Loretta Wilson were honored by CPA and the 99's for their service to aviation in Colorado.

Another new director has been named. He is **Dr. Dean Hall**, who will be EAA Liaison. Dean is a National director of EAA. He resides in Ft. Collins, where he keeps an RV-4 and a Steen Skybolt as pets. Dean built both airplanes, enjoys aerobatics, and has been in the air for 43 years.

CENTRAL COLORADO REGIONAL AIRPORT

"General Aviation News and Flyer" reports that the Central Colorado Regional Airport (CCRA) will be active in 1995. It is intended to be publicly owned but "financed, developed and operated privately." The physical details show this as a fine facility, with a startup of two commercial flights daily during the ski season. Planners intend ground-breaking in April, with operations starting nine months later. Wow.

CCRA would be the highest commercially-served airport, at 9,600' MSL. Paul de la Garza, in charge of marketing for CCRA, is quoted as predicting that GA will account for 30% of traffic. He also has said that American Airlines has agreed to serve CCRA.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

To quote further from **GAN&F**, the

Van Aire Community, host of an annual CPA fly-In and home of Director **Steve Harless** and many CPA members, is credited with being active enough to obtain space under the "B" Airspace for itself and for other GA airports as well. CPA Vice President and AOPA Liaison **Bill Hamilton** is credited as being a key player in "the turn-around for Van Aire."

The article also states that the Van Aire residents became more closely aligned with **CPA**, and that "This group was a voice for general aviation."

This configuration of the "B" Airspace is a prime example of how CPA can help pilots in Colorado. After DIA opens, we will keep a close watch on how the system actually works, and will press for any improvements needed.

COLORADO DISCRETIONARY AVIATION GRANTS

In the first week of October, the Colorado Aeronautical Board met to consider Discretionary Aviation Grants (CPA Director **Mike Silva** is a member of that board). Projects were selected to assist airport maintenance and sponsors for matching federal funds, and those meeting federal, state and locally-mandated programs.

A total of \$1,238,489 was appropriated to fund 33 airport improvement projects throughout the state, for an average grant of about \$38,000. Most were in the area of pavement repairs and equipment purchases.

These grants were all for general aviation airports. CAB is a fine organization which is of great benefit to GA.

Dennis Roberts reported that three local airports may be listed in the National Transportation System as airports of national significance -

Denver, Colorado Springs and Centennial met the criteria for inclusion.

The Board also received from NASAO the award for the most innovative state program, the Aircraft Rescue and Fire-Fighting training program. Congratulations, Dennis.

CPA has written to the Governor's Office recommending the reappointment of Dick Bucknell, Peter Lert and Mike Rock to the CAB. In this we are in alignment with CAO. Continuation of their fine work requires some continuity.

NEWS FROM AOPA

AOPA's Expo '94 set a new record with 8,358 attending at Palm Springs. There were 300 exhibitors and 60 aircraft on display. More than 1,000 planes were parked at Palm Springs, with more at Bermuda Dunes and Banning.

AOPA agrees with FAA's proposed three-year class III medical, but disagrees with its limitation to those under 40. Me too. Please write on this issue. Three-year Class III medicals will not affect safety, and will reduce the cost of flying.

CPA BOARD RETREAT

For the second time, Board members met early in December for an all-day session to chart the course of CPA for the year. We can look forward to an active year of representing your rights as pilots, promoting safety through training, and conducting various flying events. Nearly all aviation organizations in Colorado are represented on the board.

Officers and directors are listed in the back pages of *Flight Lines*. Please call with your needs.

Colorado Aviation Calendar 1995

- Feb 21 **Legislative Coffee**, Marilyn Taylor, 303-321-3500
Feb **UNITED STATES PILOTS ASSOCIATION**, Winter meeting, Austin, Texas.
 Info: Bob McClure, VP Meetings, 816-452-2083.
- May 6 **Mountain Flying Ground Course**, Colorado Pilots Association.
- June 24-25 **17th Annual EAA Rocky Mountain Fly-In**, Greeley, CO Info: 303-356-9141
- July 27-Aug 2 **EAA Annual Fly-In Convention**, Oshkosh, WI Info: 414-426-4800
-

The Colorado Pilots
Association
wishes you and yours the
best for the Holidays!

Please Note:

The November issue front page photo of *Flight Lines* misspelled the name of CPA'er Bill Totten !!!
(we apologize for the error)

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My Christmas Flight

I pointed the Cessna homeward after a routine flight
it was a cold and frosty December night,

the full moon overhead shown down bright
and reflecting on the snow it lit up the night,

the stars were also out strong and bright
but one in particular as if to guide my flight,

the evening star in the southwest sky
directly on course with the route I was to fly,

and it reminded me of the Bethlehem star
that led the wise men in from afar,

to a stable in town where there lay
a tiny infant wrapped in rags asleep on the hay,

the wise men were joyous for they knew
that the prophesy of old, that night had come true,

God had sent a Savior to a sinful mankind
His very own Son to lead the blind,

He didn't come to establish a religion, you see,
but to seek and save that which was lost, you and me,

He came not to be served
but to minister to mankind's needs,

He came to bring hope and joy
to a hopeless and joyless world,

He came to offer forgiveness of our sins
and eternal salvation if we would but call on His name,

my hometown lights came into view
and the evening star now on the horizon
its guiding task was through,

the joy and hope and peace of real Christmas
was rekindled in my heart that night
so I'll remember this as my Christmas flight.

Michael J. Vader

Heard Along the Flight Line

■KEVIN BUNNELL, manager of Weld County Airport, tells us he plans to combine the Colorado Air Festival, introduced at the airport two years ago, with the Annual EAA Rocky Mountain Fly-in. The combined event is scheduled June 24-25.

■Air Traffic Controller George Sammeth from Jeffco Tower offers a few tips, for pilots operating out of the airport, on communication techniques to minimize frequency congestion. His remarks appear the Fall issue of the Frequent Flyer, the airport's Fall 1994 newsletter. They are repeated here because they make sense and could possibly be used at other airports.

✓**Say it all on the first call.** On initial contact with the tower or ground control, state facility you are calling, your call sign, where you are, what you want to do, and ATIS code. Example: "Jeffco Tower, Cessna 189AB, over Tri-County Airport, inbound for touch and go's, with Echo." "Jeffco Ground, Cherokee 4567D, on the east ramp for taxi with Juliet." This will reduce multiple transmissions per plane and reduce congestion.

✓**Shorten call sign to last three digits after initial call.** In the examples above, the calls should be shortened to "Cessna 9AB" and "Cherokee 67D" on all subsequent calls.

✓**Frequency Changes.** VFR departures should remain on tower frequency while in Class D airspace, which extends for a five statute mile radius from the airport. If you wish to leave frequency

while in Class D airspace, request a frequency change. If you are at least five miles out (and therefore out of Class D airspace), frequency change is at your discretion, and there is no need to request permission.

■VANITA GALLO must feel like a bachelor these days. Construction problems in completing the 2nd home they are building in Costa Rica are keeping husband Frank on the site. Though he did manage to get home for Thanksgiving and renew acquaintances, the following day he rushed back to Costa Rica. His urgency for a speedy completion is the scheduled visit by a group of CPAers in late January.

■The CPA flight to Costa Rica will be a small plane trip involving about six aircraft. It is expected to route through Brownsville, Texas and along the east coast of Mexico on the way down. As the crow flies, the distance is something over 2,100 nautical miles.

■We note that fuel consumption on a Boeing 757 at high speed cruise (490 knots) is roughly 10,000 pounds per flight hour.

Considering the fuel burn in a typical Mooney is about 10 gal/hr, a one hour trip by a 757 would burn enough fuel to keep a Mooney flying for 166 hours . . . or about two years of flying time for the average general aviation pilot.

■Communication seen on Compuserve, regarding commonality between airplanes and women: "They both break down for no apparent reason. Both cost tons of money to fix. They

look a lot better when painted. They make a lot of noise. Some are faster than others. Appears to be all a matter of religious opinion as to which is preferable."

■Worth watching how the new Congress will respond to the proposal for a quasi-private ATC corporation . . . and the proposal for "pay as you go ATC." Should it go into effect, reaction from general aviation is predictable. If the cost to use FAA services is high, pilots will simply refuse to use them . . . with safety consequences. There is already a fear this will happen. Letters sent to the FAA caution that:

- ✓More pilots will decline to file flight plans, and people will be lost due to delays in search and rescue.
- ✓Pilots will decline weather briefings.
- ✓Pilots will avoid requesting "Flight Following" and mid-air risks as well as loss of situation awareness will result.
- ✓Instrument rated pilots will be more likely to scud-run than file, and VFR into IMC crashes will increase.
- ✓Pilots will choose to do fewer practice approaches to meet minimum currency requirements, or allow their

currency to lapse and increase their risks.

✓Instrument rated pilots will not "waste good money" by filing IFR flight plans when not necessary for weather, will loose currency in working with the system, and will cause increased pilot-controller workload and incidents when they DO work the system.

■We hear the Spruce Goose, the large flying boat built by Howard Hughes, is still in pieces following its move from Long Beach, California to McMinneville, Oregon. Recall the aircraft was acquired by Evergreen Airlines and transported by barge along the coast and up the Columbia River to McMinneville where it will be displayed at the AirVenture Museum. Currently it is stored in three large temporary structures behind the Evergreen office complex. Restoration is underway with no date for completion.

Earlier in the year the two Messerschmitt 109s owned by Evergreen and restored by Vintage Aircraft at Fort Collins Downtown Airpark were shipped for display at the museum.□

CPA HOTLINE (303) 266-6266

Do you have an aviation issue to discuss?

Reflections on Flying the Bell P-39 Airacobra

by Walt Barbo

Can't say that I am completely addicted to using the communication feature of CompuServe. At least, not yet. But one of the two-way communications which appeared in early November really caught my attention when the question was asked: *"Would you be so kind as to enlighten those of us who have had no experience in air combat, and in particular, no experience in the P-38 or P-39, what kind of tactics you found to be the most successful. What was it like changing from stick to yoke? How did you avoid turning with the Zero?"*

The response was from a WW II Army Air Corps fighter ace who fought against the Japanese in New Guinea, and who over the next several days gave one of the most colorful insights I have seen on combat flying in the Pacific. His stories had particular meaning to me since I also flew both types of aircraft, the P-39 in transition training prior to shipping overseas, and the P-38 in combat. His stories were even more meaningful to me for the reason he was from the same fighter group I was assigned to in New Guinea. The people and places named brought back a lot of 50 year old memories and reflections of my own.

His comments on differences between the P-38 and the P-39 are worth sharing:

"Tactics . . . they were entirely different for each of the two planes. P-39 tactics were very simple. On those rare occasions when you could get above the enemy planes you made one pass and then ran like a spotted assed ape for home. You did not waiver, you never pulled the throttle back, you never touched the prop pitch, you just ran and prayed the Good Lord

would keep you in front far enough to be out of his gun range. Puckering helped a whole lot also."

"In the P-38 it was an entirely different story. Instead of running we wanted to remain and fight. As soon as you went into combat, naturally everything went forward as far as they would go (throttle and prop pitch) and only rarely were they touched. Speed was our greatest ally."

"The rule was always stay in pairs. Keep your wingman at your side. If you lose your wingman then join up with another single and become his wingman, if necessary. He will offer you protection and you can reciprocate. The Japs employed the individualistic approach to combat. They wanted to take you on, one on one. Avoid this temptation by all means (you will end up walking home). I often had to run a bluff on the enemy because I was such a poor shot, but anything to remove him from one of your comrade's tail served the purpose. The Japs would generally stay bunched. In so doing they left themselves vulnerable to a lazy eight type maneuver where you could fly through their formation and deflect shoot at them. But for Pete's sake, do not enter into their circle. When making a pass through them make certain that you are covering your wingman and he is covering you. I shipped a couple to transports that became overly optimistic. This was a team sport with a very binding set of rules."

"What was it like changing from stick to yoke? One day we had been flying stick, the next day they show us where the switch was, the throttle, the prop pitch, the flaps handle, the

landing gear handle, and tell us to bring it over the runway at about 90 miles per hour. And you have just made the transition! I liked the yoke better because you had more leverage with it."

"How did you avoid turning with the Zero? Let me ask you a question. How do you avoid picking up a rattlesnake with your bare hands? Your mama did not raise a fool, and neither did mine! When certain things are inevitable and should you prize life, you automatically do those things that would preserve your life. In combat you learn certain things real fast and listen real close to those that have tried the different aspects of aerial warfare. You did not turn with a Zero!"

Less than 10,000 of the Airacobras were built, almost 5,000 of which were given to the Soviet Union under a Lend Lease Program. Its combat career began in February, 1942 against the Japanese in the Port Moresby area of New Guinea. As far as I know, the South Pacific was the only combat theater the aircraft saw actual combat. It was not used in the European theater because it could not compete favorably against aircraft flown by the Axis powers. Frankly, it was not that favorable

membership renewals

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Harry Young, Pagosa Springs
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Walter Giffin, Pueblo West
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against the Japanese either. At that time, however, it was the only aircraft available.

My introduction to aircraft was at Victorville AAF Base, California in late March, 1944. I received my Army Air Corps wings in the graduating class of 44C (March, 1944) at Williams AAF Base, Chandler, Arizona and was transferred to Victorville for transition training in fighter aircraft.

Our P-39s weren't much to look at. They were the ones transferred out of New Guinea when the groups there transited to P-38s. Though they had only a few hundred hours, most had been run hard, they were war weary and required continual maintenance. But for those of us coming out of flying school, nothing looked quite so beautiful. With its needle nose and huge 12 cylinder Allison powerplant, it promised to be a real screamer. Imagine the excitement within the group of 19-20 year olds when given an opportunity to fly this kind of a hotrod.

Our stay at Victorville was for only 2-3 weeks. Long enough to check out in the aircraft and fly a few hours to gain confidence. No tactics. Several days learning the systems, a blindfold checkout in the cockpit to make certain you knew where the systems were, then about a 30 minute flight to get a feel for it. This was to be my first flight in a single place aircraft. Also my first flight in a tricycle gear aircraft. The flight was strictly routine. Stalls, slow speed flight, simulated approaches to landing. Same thing anyone would do with an unfamiliar aircraft. The best rate of climb speed of 160 mph gave about 3,000 feet per minute climb. It stalled at 105 mph clean and 90 with wheels and flaps down. Instructions were to do the approach at 130 mph and reduce to 110 at the threshold.

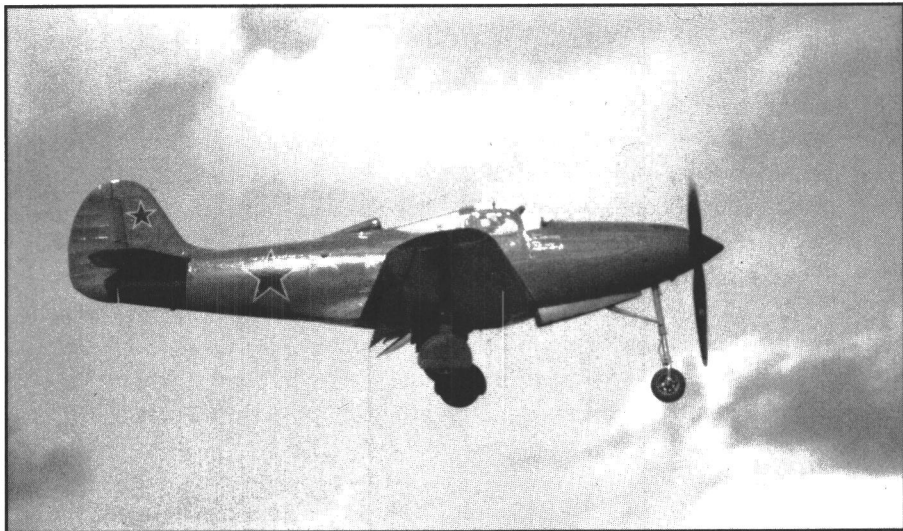
With the tricycle gear, landing was a piece of cake.

After a few more flights the learning attitude quickly changed to one of bravado and curiosity as to how fast it would go. I can still recall one flight, on the deck, screaming over the open sage brush of the Mojave Desert, everything forward, flat out. It was the first time I had ever seen an airspeed indicator reach 400 miles per hour. But what a fuel guzzler. The internal fuel tanks held only 86 gallons. I returned after a flight of only 20 minutes with nearly dry tanks.

The training was exciting but also sobering. Two training accidents in the first week, both fatals and both involving engine failures and attempts at forced landings, brought home the reality that this aircraft was more than just a toy. Frankly, the "engine behind pilot" design didn't make it the best aircraft for belly-landings. My first exposure to body bags! Sobering!

The aircraft was relatively small. Wingspan was only 34 feet, length 30 feet. And it weighed in at about 8,000 pounds at full gross. In comparison, the T210 I fly has a span of nearly 37 feet, length of 28 feet and gross weight of about 4,000 pounds. One of the things I liked most about the P-39 was that it seemed to fit like a glove. Sitting in it I always felt like I could reach out and touch the wing tips. You felt molded to the aircraft such that aircraft and pilot were one. Exceptionally maneuverable. Fantastic performer in rolls. Sluggish in climb and speed above 15,000 feet. For me, though, it was the hottest thing in town.

The Allison powerplant was rated at about 1,125 horsepower at what was termed Military Power. This was achieved at 44.5 inches of MP at 3,000 RPM. Fuel



The P-39 Airacobra was designed as a low level pursuit fighter. Its firepower consisted of four 0.50 caliber machine guns and a 37 mm cannon.

Photo reproduced courtesy of Confederate Air Force Museum.

burn at this power setting was nearly 140 gallons per hour. Takeoff power was at 50.5 inches and 3,000 RPM. And there was a wire on the throttle quadrant which you could push through to get what was called War Emergency Power. Breaking the wire would give you 1,420 horsepower and a top speed of about 400 MPH. It was the power setting used frequently in combat . . . as well as the power setting I used in my little jaunt across the desert floor.

After about three weeks in Victorville we were off to Ephrata, Washington for tactical flight training in the P-39s and later, the P-63 King Cobra.

The three month assignment at Ephrata was the first time in my brief military career to that point in which I felt treated like a gentleman. Victorville was a step beyond flight school. But we were treated little differently. We still had to march in formation to the flight line and to classes. There was no drill sergeant, but there was a "groundpounder" captain who performed

the same function. No time off base. Not that it mattered. There was no place to go from Victorville. But Ephrata was different. More casual. Relaxed. It wasn't long before most pilots had thrown away those plastic rings which shape the hats and crushed them to a 50 mission look. And there were the occasional trips to Seattle . . . a real treat for me since my home town was just a few miles away.

Our training at Williams Field had included some gunnery training in T-6's. But it would never compare to the feeling of flying a P-39 at ground targets while firing a 37 mm cannon and a couple of .50 caliber machine guns. Actually, the P-39 had four .50 caliber guns, two in the forward fuselage and synchronized to fire through the propeller and one located under each wing. For training purposes we never fired more than one or two. What an experience it was to fire the cannon. Felt like the aircraft stopped in mid-air after each round. I often wondered what it did

to the aircraft structure.

It was during air-to-ground gunnery that I learned about one of the aircraft's bad traits. Controls were very light and with gentle touches it would fly like a lamb. But if the pilot pulled back too hard on the stick the aircraft would go into a high speed stall. This is what was attributed to two aircraft accidents over a three week period during my tour at Ephrata when aircraft flew into ground targets while on strafing runs.

I didn't know either of the two and, therefore, didn't feel the trauma of the accidents. But what was to happen a few weeks later did. It happened on a flight of four while performing a formation loop. I was flying number two position. As we were going over the top I noticed our airspeed was getting a little low. On looking back I noticed Three and Four were falling back, and then saw Four fall into a flat inverted spin. He was able to get out of the aircraft . . . but not far enough away to avoid contact. As luck would have it, when his chute opened it snagged on the pitot tube of the aircraft, stayed there for a few rounds of the spin, was finally thrown free, after which the pilot and collapsed chute descended to earth like a rock tied to a piece of string. This was the first time I felt trauma during my experiences. Number Four was a close friend who had joined me on several of my Seattle trips.

Before the Ephrata tour was over it would be my misfortune to also have to leave an aircraft. It happened over the Columbia River near the town of Wenatchee. I was on a flight of two on an air-to-air gunnery practice mission. It was a simulated dog fight, similar to what the local Sky Fighters Inc. offers in its Skyfighter for a Day program. Or like you see in "top gun" films. It was on one of

these passes when the engine on my P-39 literally exploded. Suddenly things got very quiet. Fortunately, my altitude was nearly 10,000 feet and I had a few moments to think. My first thought (still can't believe I did this) was to pull the Form 1-A out of its container in the right door and place it inside of the front of my flight suit. This form was the squawk sheet used by the military for pilots to identify mechanical problems with aircraft. My thought was to take the form back to base with a complaint on the in-flight engine failure.

Getting out of the aircraft proved a little challenging. After slipping the Form 1-A into my flight suit I pulled the release on the right door. The P-39 has two doors, but the right hand door was the recommended door for exit because there was less equipment in the way. The procedure called for slowing the aircraft down to something over stall speed, with the aircraft pointed down slightly in a slight turn to the right as you exited. But frankly, when I pointed the nose slightly down it gained airspeed like a rock. So I chose to hold it slightly nose high. It still indicated about 140 mph when I left it. But leaving it wasn't that easy. Picture, if you will, the problem of flying the aircraft with your right hand and having to shift the control to your left hand as you lifted your left leg over the stick on departure. That little gymnastics maneuver is my most vivid memory of the departure.

Crawling out on the wing proved relatively easy. I can recall going hands and knees almost to the end of the wing before the rush of air blew me off. There was no problem with tail surfaces. My only problem was I probably pulled the ripcord too soon and got the wind knocked out of

Welcome New Members

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Hall, Dean
5717 Southridge Greens Blvd.
Fort Collins, CO 80525

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Pueblo, CO 81008

Wolk, Mark A.
6160 S. Olathe Street
Aurora, CO 80016

Novacek, E. F. (Gene)
P. O. Box 273
Hayden, CO 81639

me when the chute opened. Couldn't get my breath for what seemed like an eternity. First thing I remembered was lying face down in the harness with the seat and canopy floating above. As I lay there getting my wind wouldn't you believe, the Form I-A slipped out of my flight suit . . . along with a chapstick that I always kept in my pocket. They did not seem to be falling that fast and I tried to grab them as I fell. But they soon outdistanced me . . . so I pulled the seat under me and sat back to enjoy the rest of the trip to earth.

As soon as I could get my senses I looked at my watch to take note of how long it would take to touch ground. Can't explain why I did that unless I was thinking of adding it to the time of the flight. In any case, it took nine minutes to descend the nine thousand feet. Fortunately, during the descent the wind blew me away from the Columbia River gorge and towards farm land. But can you imagine what it felt like to go over acre after acre of bean fields . . . with bean poles in place. Landing, fortunately, was in an open area near the town of Quincy. My only problem was that the chute started to oscillate as I neared the ground which swung me into the ground on landing. Fortunately I only suffered a light sprain out of the experience and was back flying within a week.

During the descent I saw the crash of the aircraft far below me. It was a dry season in eastern Washington and the crash started a

fire that consumed several thousand acres. Glad I landed nowhere near. When I did land, one of the local farmers was there to pick me up. He told me that he had watched my descent for several minutes and followed me to touchdown. No, he didn't have a daughter.

I don't mean to make light of an experience of this type. I notice, however, that most of us who fly build an artificial shield around ourselves to protect us from the reality of a serious incident. It is not a game, particularly for those who fly warbirds. While I always enjoy seeing these birds in flight, they can be very unforgiving in any kind of an emergency. And while I truly admire efforts of organizations like the Confederate Air Force to keep them flying, I have to believe the day is near when we must give up this ideal and place the remaining warbirds in museums.

Reflecting back, I remember the P-39 as the most fun aircraft I ever flew. It was designed as a pursuit fighter, a job it did exceptionally well. It had a fantastic rate of climb up to about 12,000 feet. And it was fast and maneuverable. Unfortunately, by the time it was introduced to combat the mission requirement had changed more to one of "search and destroy" and "bomber escort." The P-39 simply did not have the range or high altitude capability for this kind of mission. It was outdated before its time.

CPA DIRECTORY

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