

MEMORIES AND PHOTOS OF FLYING IN PNG

BY

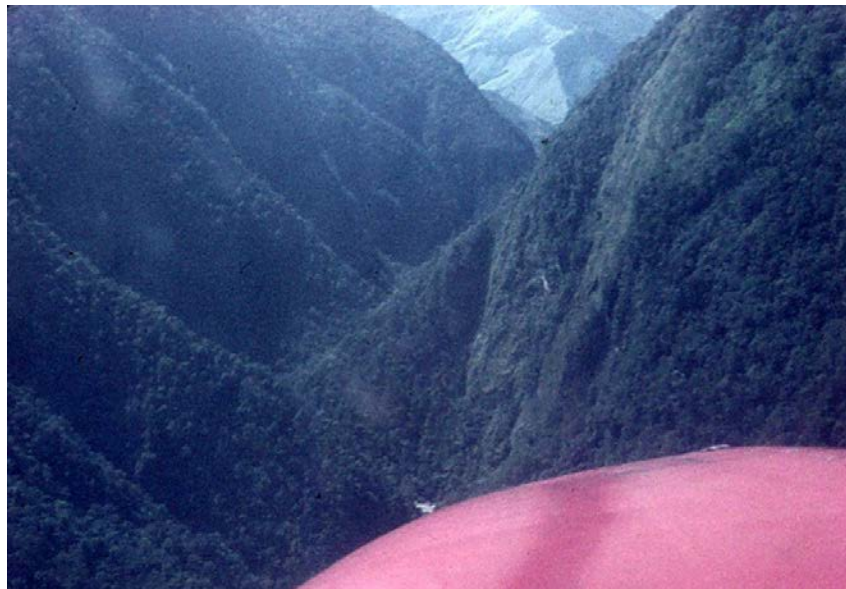
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Yalumet



Entering the canyon. There now is a road down there, a bit hard to believe.



You can just pick out Long Island under that bit of cloud



1969, Keith Latz in a loaded VH-AMH departing Lae for Menyamya



PLK was a nice looking 206 & one of the better ones to fly. I did my flight check in it for my Airline License just before Christmas 1972 from Madang to Karkar Island & back. It was the only 206 we could actually carry three 44 gallon drums of fuel weight wise. I was flying up the valley approaching Tabibuga with 3 drums of fuel



when all of a sudden I noticed I wasn't climbing & the airspeed was falling. I couldn't turn around I would have stalled it in the turn & ended up like EFO with a much bigger explosion. I got it around by doing a half stall turn by using full left rudder & letting the nose drop, I managed to recover just above the tree tops. A couple of weeks later I was flying empty from Kol up the valley south east to pick up passengers at Kerowagi. It was a clear afternoon cloud wise, I was still climbing towards the ridge just prior to crossing over into the Wahgi Valley when I hit a severe downdraft. I threw PLK into a left turn losing height rapidly, leveled the wings & just missed the trees on top of another ridge when the stall horn went off. I was fortunate after I crossed the ridge I had a clear run into the valley below. Very fortunate I was empty which was rather unusual. Then a little later I had another fright flying north to Madang out of the Ramu Valley towards Shaggy Ridge. They say things happen in 3s. We left for Australia soon after then in early 1973. Howard Shutte operated PLK out of Madang for a couple more years before returning to Farming in Idaho. PLK was then part of the deal when MAF took over Lutheran Mission Aviation. In 1999 MAF did a major overhaul on the airframe. I think it was early 2000 when Tom Blacklock was training a pilot. They were down in the Sothern part of what used to be Papua towards the West Irian border. On landing, PLK ended up on its back & was never recovered. Tom was this little Ampo Mission Kid back in 1969/70 when I was in Lae. He learnt to fly after his folk

returned to Alberta Canada. Tom flew for some time in Northern Manitoba before joining MAF. He has been flying out of Calgary since around 2001. After all my close calls, it's amazing PLK survived for as long as it did.

This photo was given to me, I am sure it is in the Wahgi Valley, I also think it has to be Banz.



Lae - Jan 1969, Ron Johnston who was in charge of the Lae supply house & later ran the Aviation Program from Goroka. Ron is talking to Keith Latz who I took over from.



This is Tauta where Ray Jaensch had his engine failure in 1964. Taken late 1972 after I was transferred to Madang.



1969, AMH outside the Missionaries house, Lab Lab, Siassi Island. In my early single days I spent a lot of weekends here with Bob & Rosemary Winderlich.



1969, Stan in AMF, Western Highlands, I think it may be Wabi



1970, AMF at Marawaka



Green was not a good color flying around the green jungle, you would never find it if it went down in the jungle.

Alan Stray came up with the new paint scheme which really gave it a character of its own.



Shortly after VH-AMS was purchased I had it in Lae for a short period of time. Kaintiba was nearly its demise, the Kalaboose line was working on the Airstrip. As I lined up on final they drove the tractor towing a concrete roller

down the middle of the Airstrip. I was far enough back I had just enough room to turn in the valley. The next day as I was on downwind, they drove the tractor off to the right hand side of the 1300ft airstrip, about half way down when I was on short final, committed to land with nowhere else to go without crashing. The National driving the tractor pulled the pin out of the tractor drawbar which released the concrete roller and it started rolling across the airstrip. The National initially chased it, then looked at me and turned back, then tried again to catch it and realized I was very close so he headed in the other direction again. I was trying to work out where the roller would be as I basically had to land beside it or I would have gone over the top end of the airstrip. I managed to touchdown, narrowly missing it; then I had to try & get back on the center of the airstrip so I wouldn't go over the side. The airstrip was wet, I ended up sliding sideways with the brakes locked, getting back on the center line, and I managed to stop at the top of the airstrip. The thing that saved me was the 17% slope.

From memory it was 1974, I was with Air Niugini in Port Moresby at the time. Ross Dunhill a former Navy Pilot flew out of Lae into Garina in VH-AMS and after landing, the Flaps jammed full down at 40 degrees. He decided to fly back to Lae empty with the flaps fully down. He never made it to Lae. The Cessna 206 could only hold its height at 4000ft when loaded with the flaps full down and full power.

At 5000ft you could not hold your height, you were descending, you had to make sure when approaching high altitude airstrips that you were descending before selecting full flap.



AMS, EFO, EJA, ELG



Terry Zadow





This happened at Kabwum towards the end of 1970. The approach into Kabwum was an optical illusion. You approached looking like you were on a steeper decent than normal. You would check your height against a cliff rock face as you passed it. Also your vertical speed would confirm you were on the correct approach path. Warren Bridge, a contract Pilot was flying it. He had to do an extra circuit to allow a Twin Otter to depart, then somehow got too high on the approach. He tried to go around but the ground out climbed him & couldn't turn because his speed was too slow. There were 2 Kiaps at Kabwun & saw him overshoot & head up the narrow valley. One Kiap ran for the radio and the other jumped in the Land cruiser, as there was a dirt track leading up the valley. Both Kiaps knew there would be a crash. There were village men out cutting the grass & heard the 206 coming. They raced into a hut which AMH would have crashed through the roof except for a very large Banana tree at the end of the Hut. The 206 belie pod hit the Banana bush which rickashayed the 206 clear over the hut without contact with the roof. Warren then put the 206 into a steep left bank & drove the left wing tip into the ground. AMH spun around on its wingtip, the tail came in contact with an embankment just missing below the steeps of another village hut, the tail broke off behind the rear window. There were 2 passengers on board who came from that village. They undid their seat belts as the crash was

happening & were thrown out the front door clear of AMH landing right in their own village. They both survived the ordeal and they both spent time in the Lae Hospital. Also on board was a load of cement, so cement dust was going everywhere. Warrens left knee was jammed under the instrument panel. Several New Guineans raced to help him out but retreated when the powder fire extinguisher went off making it look like it was catching on fire. After that stopped, Warren was dragged out. The first he could remember was sitting on the bank near that Village hut that he nearly smashed the steps on. I was in the Lae office when DCA phoned to inform me of the accident. Ron Johnson was in Lae that day. We flew AMS over to Kabwum. A couple of DCA inspectors came with us. When we got there, Warren & the 2 Nationals were about to be loaded on stretchers into a Twin Otter for Lae. When I saw Warren I thought that AMH must have survived reasonably well. Then when I first saw it, I wondered how they survived. The propeller blades were wrapped around the cowling but the spinner still had its point untouched. The left wing had taken the impact which meant the cabin area stayed reasonably intact. I still have one of the propeller blades, plus the Key.



AMH at Menyamya



Of all the Cessna 206's the Mission had, AMH was my favorite & I was fortunate to have flown it for as long as I did. One wet day, I was on my way to collect the Finks out of Kaintiba. Due to the low cloud, I flew past Tsili Tsili into the Langimar

river gorge, crossed the ridge behind Aseki & onto Kaintiba. I headed back the same way, passed Aseki into the Langimar going down stream so I wasn't expecting any problems through the gorge when all of a sudden the cloud in front went to the canyon floor. It was fortunate the canyon widened out a little between where we were & the cloud. I got right up as close as I could to the right hand side of the canyon, then put AMH on its left wing tip. The wheels didn't hit the canyon wall on the other side but must have been rather close. I am sure the Fink family must have thought it was the end. I climbed back up the river towards Aseki, just managed to fit between the ridge line & cloud behind Aseki, had to cut in close on base leg & when we stopped at the top end of the airstrip you couldn't see the bottom end where we touched down due to heavy rain. We got out the next morning in beautiful sunshine. On several occasions I had to follow the Finsch - Lae coast line just above the coconut trees during the south east season as the rain would close in on you rather fast from the Huon Gulf, I was over Voco Point once before I could see the end of the Lae Runway. It was a waste of time turning back as it was just as bad behind you. The thing you had to be ready for was soon after you passed the mouth of the Mongi River you would have to make a sharp turn left as Cape Gerhard rose up out rather sharply. You could only see a few meters ahead so couldn't afford to lose sight of the coast line. There were lots of days when the sun was shining & it was just such a pleasure to be flying through such scenic mountain country side. We made lots of friends in our days with the Mission & I still look back on it as the best flying I ever did despite the

fact the Angels had to save me from sudden death several times. When we were in Madang flying for ANG I would say we were living in Paradise & being paid to do it. Flying out of Lae was always interesting as there was such a diversity in the countryside, flying & weather. It took 50 minutes to fly from Lae via Aseki to Kanitiba. You could pass through 3 different weather systems. You would leave Lae in pouring rain which may only extend to the Markham bridge, then it could be fine until striking the weather coming up from the Papuan Gulf. The Morobe also had such a diversity of airstrips which also meant it never became boring. We also flew over to Siassi Island & on the odd occasion over to the southern end of New Britain for the Anglican Mission. Then there were the times we would fly in & out of Wau picking up the Wau kids. That could be a fun time. The Saruwakets were real tiger country, a very rugged scenic mountain area.

Taking off at Mindik



Aseki with Keith Latz at the nose



Seeboot the cargo boy with AMS, EFO in the hangar at Goroka.

The Cessna 206 was a real practical workhorse with the double rear doors. It made it easy to load & that part of the 206 was reasonably close to the ground. If



it fitted in, we would carry it.

The belly pod held 300 LBS MAX. It helped keeping the center of gravity forward.

Bilums fitted in real well as they were flexible & fitted in around the curve in the 206s belly that the pod was attached to. Just had to be careful there were no babies in

the Bilum. Nearly did it once, the Mother yelled at me as I was about to throw it into the pod, kind of got my attention. The tyre size on the 206 was quite good & handled the wet & sometimes soft or slippery conditions reasonably well. On the other hand, the Baron with its extra weight & speed on landing with its narrow tyres limited it to where it could be landed. It also had a small cargo door which made it rather difficult & slow to load freight into. To be able to load the freight & more passengers canvas side saddle seats were fitted that could be hooked up to the sides to make room for the freight. These side saddle seats were rather uncomfortable. Women hated them as their legs were sticking up & you could see up their skirts or should I say down their skirts. I rode in the Baron a couple of times, it was sold to McAir & I was told by a Mt. Hagen Control Tower Operator when I was flying the F27s that some time ago it had crashed in the Tomba Gap west of Mt. Hagen flying from Mendi to Hagen. Guess we must have been talking about different Aircraft that we both knew, we were probably filling in time while Hagen was closed with fog.

AMF at Goroka on the northern side of the hangar.



Unable to recall where AMF is. Looking at the people I think it is somewhere in the Morobe area. It is also with other photos taken near Boana.



Pangia with Mt Yalibu in the background



AMF & AMM at the Wau conference 1969. Stan Read, Dave Sherer, Keith Latz



AMM over Baiyer River



AMM at Baiyer River



VH-EFO replaced VH-AMH after it crashed at Kabwum late 1970. EFO was known as the EVANGELICAL FLYING OBJECT. It was purchased in Australia & flown to New Guinea by Warren Bridge who survived the crash in AMH. The Air Traffic controllers had problems saying ECO FOXTROT OSCAR, the Oscar bit use to get them Tung tied.

Six weeks after our eldest Daughter Michelle was born we were transferred to Madang, Alan Stray took my place in Lae. All our worldly goods fitted into EFO & together with my wife Noreen & 6 week old Michelle we flew ourselves to Madang where we spent the next 6 months. Howard & Pat Schutte were also based in Madang at the time. We lived in one of the Mission houses next to the Madang harbor just off the eastern end of the Madang Airport. EFO went back to Lae & Howard & I operated PLK out of Madang. We departed Madang January 1993, after doing some 3,500 hours in single engined aircraft in New Guinea, settled back into life in Australia, bought a house in Albury NSW & lived in it 3 months & a week, Air Niugini started up October 1993, I was on the second intake & was trained on the Fokker Friendship, did the theory with TAA in Melbourne & flying training with Ansett in Sydney. The Fokker Friendship F-27 was my first twin engined Aircraft, I ended up doing some 3,300 hours on the Friendship before going onto the Fokker Fellowship known as the F-28, this was my first Jet Aircraft.

EFO and EJA at Goroka hangar.



EFO at Menyamy. The Lady standing up in the green dress is Selma Weier. The Missionary in the straw hat is Dieter Geisler from Aseki.



A load of goats, some in the belie pod at Nugidu, Finschhafen. The Goats were on their way to Banz.



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