PIPER FLYER

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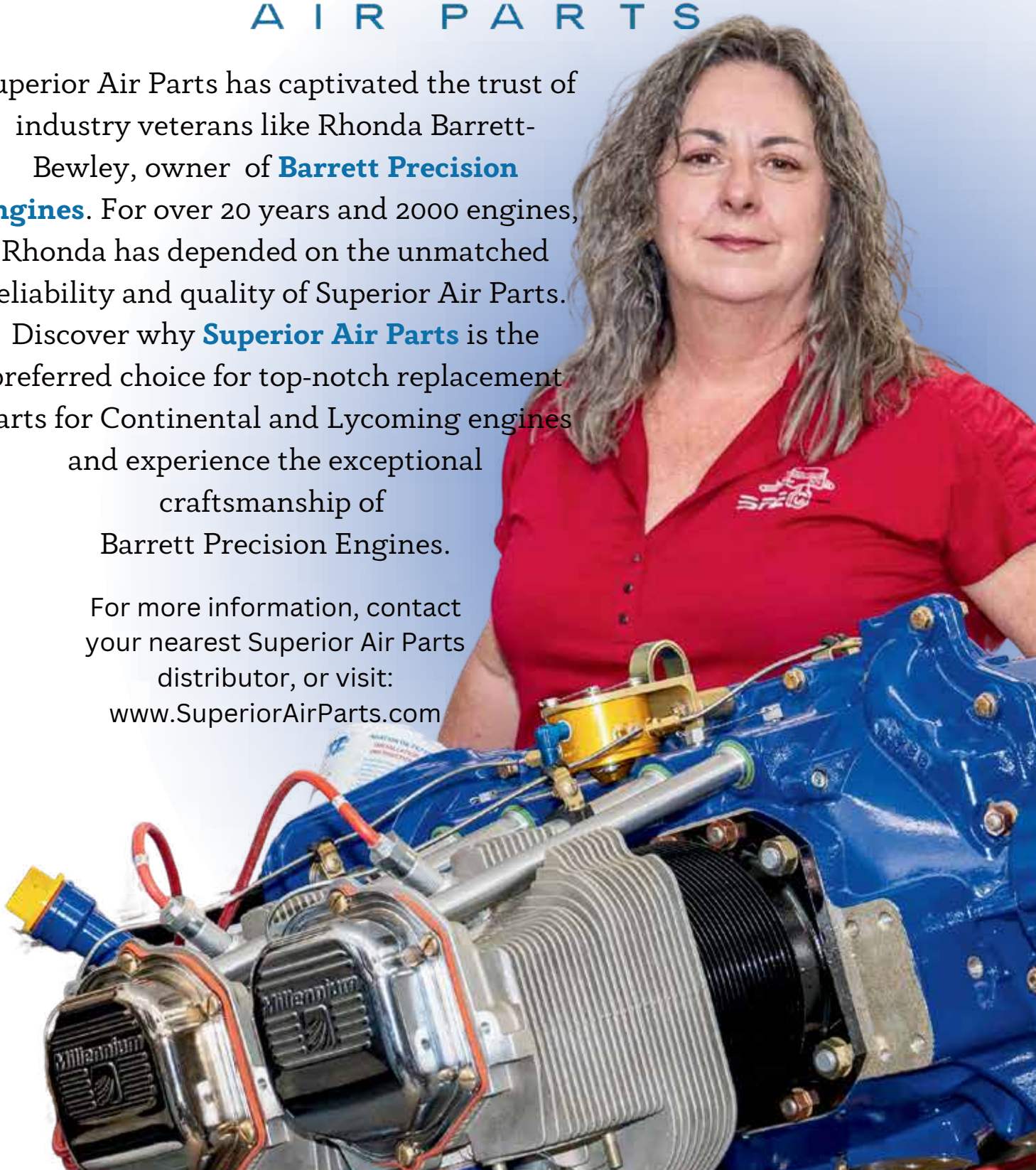
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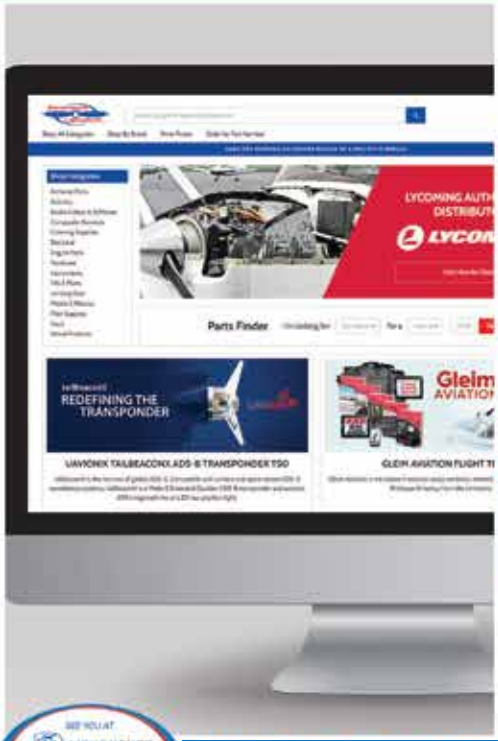
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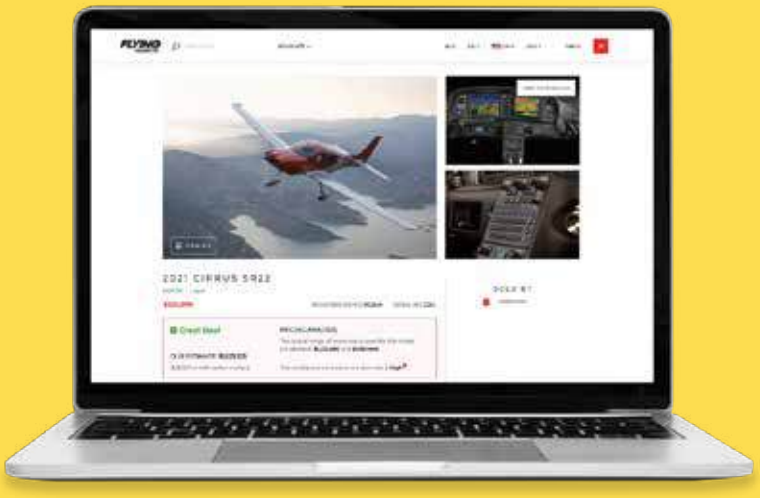
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The View From Here
Jennifer Dellenbusch

Warbirds, What-Ifs, and a Wake-Up Call

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED by the post-WWII era in General Aviation, especially when it comes to Piper. The explosion of new models, the way designs evolved from one into the next, and even the prototypes that never made it past the drawing board, all point to an exciting time when personal flight was still a bold new frontier.

While I usually focus on civilian models, Piper also dipped a toe into military aviation. I thought I knew all of Piper's "warbirds," but I hadn't come across the PA-48 Enforcer until Scott Kinney pitched the idea for an article. It's a fascinating look at a little-known, short-lived, but undeniably cool airplane. You'll find it on Page 30.

Also in this issue: Have you ever had to make an emergency landing? Piper Flyer Association member Matthew McDaniel shares what he learned the hard way in Part One of "Preflight Blind Spot: The Oil Leak I Missed Before Takeoff"—a must-read for every pilot.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of *Piper Flyer*. Stay safe, stay curious, and don't be a stranger—we love hearing from you.

Blue skies,



Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to **editor@piperflyer.com**

FAA MOSAIC

The FAA has been contemplating changing the rules for the LSA category (through MOSAIC). Rumor has it, it would include some small Cherokees. Does the Piper Flyer Association have any insight on whether the Cherokee line will be included in these new guidelines if they are revised?

Bill Steinberg

Hi Bill,

Jen sent me your question, since I've been following the development of the MOSAIC proposals for several years. To answer your question with a non-answer: we still don't know what the final rule will look like, and won't until it's published. Everything until then is speculation. I can tell you a few things, though, that may provide some basis for thinking about what a final rule *might* contain.

A Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was issued in July 2023. The proposed rule would create a revised definition of LSA that would apply to both legacy and new airframes. The proposal set the line of inclusion at a "maximum V_{S1} of 54 knots CAS"—that's the flaps up, clean stall speed. By that definition, many Cessnas (150, 172, some early 182s, etc.) would be included in the definition, but nearly every Piper PA-28 (with the exception of the earliest 1,950-pound gross weight Cherokee 140s) would be excluded.

I wrote an extensive article on the MOSAIC

Continued on Page 54



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The Rhythm is Gonna Get You

Routines and habits help us feel comfortable, and also help us notice when things diverge from the norm.

I am a creature of habit. I think that most good pilots have a solid set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) that they follow, just like I do.

In a study that I just made up out of thin air, 75% percent of a pilot's attention and thinking is taken up with deliberations about food and mating rituals.

Very little brain space is left for deep thoughts about flying procedures or remembering that their airplanes will taxi more smoothly if they remove the chocks and untie them before leaving.

Routines are a survival technique

Learning a rhythm of mostly good habits was essential for my survival as a professional pilot. I found that it was a good thing if I had solidly memorized patterns to follow as I flew poor-weather approaches, taxied at strange airports, or handled aircraft in abnormal situations.

Simple things like starting the engines the same way every time and giving the salute to the crew chief as they saluted back and waved our aircraft off their ramp became so ingrained that I still had them when things were distracting or unusual.

Social and leadership habits I used back then were also done the same way almost every time, in a sort of flying life pattern. My habits grew to include a handshake with my co-pilot after blocking in on the last flight of a four-day rotation. I bought the first round of drinks on layovers and learned the habit of never being grumpy with the flight attendants, mechanics, dispatchers, gate agents, or catering people.

Memories, pressed between the pages of my POH

Checklists help us safely fly our airplanes, but we all know that most of the procedures we follow daily are derived from memories and habit patterns. These habit patterns, followed up with checklists, set up a rhythm for our flying life.

For example, if I got on a dark and unpowered McDonnell Douglas MD-88 in the morning, there was a cold airplane power-up checklist in the book we could follow, but finding it and reading it in the dark was not a great way to operate. Once we put our flight bags on our seats or into their racks, we made sure that the battery was on, the APU fire test was done, and then we started the APU.

I have a set rhythm for setting up, flying, and putting my airplane back in the hangar for its rest after its flight, and I bet you do, too.

Once started, we could transfer power from the APU's generator to the airplane systems, turn on the bleed air, and fire up the air conditioning packs. Making sure that the galley power was on, I would then make the first pot of coffee for the day. I did the coffee thing because there was an art to coffee brewing in an airliner—the secret is using two packs of coffee per pot and heating the pot by swishing it with water before you begin.

Simple habits like remembering to pack up your oxygen mask and picking up the cockpit trash before we left made for a serene and comfortable flying life free of drama and angst. Everything being done the same way at the same time every time sounds dull, but it can lead to aviation happiness and safety.

Our General Aviation world revolves around rote

We do the same thing when we fly our Pipers. I have a set rhythm for setting up, flying, and putting my airplane back in the hangar for its rest after its flight, and I bet you do, too.

You and I preflight our aircraft the same way, looking at items in the same order every time. In the past 10 years of flying my airplane, I have never found water in my fuel, yet I sump both tanks and my carburetor bowl every time.

I have never trusted fuel gauges, so I stick the level of the tanks with a wooden quantity measuring device I built, and I look into the pitot tube for bugs, even though I have not found a bug there in 50 years.

When others fuel my aircraft, I have the habit of always being there when it happens. Loose gas caps are my responsibility, not the linecrew's, because they won't run out of fuel mid-flight if the caps pop open. I will.

Skipping any of these preflight habits would not usually make the flight dangerous, but the lack of rhythm in my mind would bother me. Something wouldn't feel right if I skipped my ritual.

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Feelings, oh-oh-oh, feelings

In flying, anything that is normal and aligned with your universe feels good. Anything that is out of line with your habits or how things feel, sound, and smell can make you uncomfortable.

Most people don't talk about feelings when it comes to flying. They think that aeronautics is a hard science, not a social science, and for the most part, they are right.

Telling an engine that failed in flight about your feelings of betrayal will not help, but if prior to that failure, you had a feeling of unease that led you to double-check your fuel quantity and how you managed it during the flight, your feelings could save your life.

Some of my habits and routines are not safety-related. They exist because I am a quirky person. Here are a few from my past and present flying life:

- I always say, "Let's see what this baby can do," as I take the runway for takeoff. I have said it when flying a Boeing 777 or a Piper J-3 Cub.
- An alternate thing I say on takeoff is: "Let's commit a flagrant act of aviation."
- When breaking out of the clouds on bad weather approaches, as I see the runway or approach lights, I sing, "I can see clearly now; the rain is gone."
- When I deviate around thunderstorms, I always say, "I've looked at clouds from both sides now."
- I take a short sip of water at some point just before landing. I have been using this habit for decades and do not know why.
- I touch the carb heat, the fuel selector, and the prop control briefly before landing, even if the landing checklist is done.
- For years, the FAA has recommended that you say your callsign at the beginning of your transmission before reading back clearances (see AIM 4-2-3), but I cannot do it. I always say my callsign at the end of my readback. This sounds insignificant, but it has led to way too many lectures by instructors directed at me during recurrent checkrides.
- I always wiggle my seat a little bit and settle my butt firmly into the cushions before a tough approach or landing.

Anything that is out of line with your habits or how things feel, sound, and smell can make you uncomfortable.

Our habits, even quirky ones like the ones I just listed, make us successful flying humans. I can't wait to see what weird things the coming artificial intelligence pilots come up with. I do not doubt that computer moguls and designers are even now teaching AI captains how to buy the first round at layover hotels and what songs to sing on approach.

Kevin Garrison's *aviation career began at age 15 as a lineboy in Lakeland, Florida. He came up through General Aviation, retired as a Boeing 767 captain in 2006, and retired from instructing airline pilots in 2017. Garrison's professional writing career has spanned three decades. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*

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Student Training in a Comanche, Metal in Oil Filter

IMPORTANT: This article describes work that may need to be performed/supervised by a certificated aviation maintenance technician. Know your FAR/AIM and check with your mechanic before starting any work.

Q: Are there any restrictions that will prevent a student pilot from buying a Piper PA-24-250 Comanche 250? Three people in my family are looking to get our private pilot certificates (and beyond) in the Atlanta area. Rather than spending lots of money renting a trainer, I would like to buy a Comanche 250, which is what we will end up using for a lot of cross-country trips. I hear that insurance does not like students in complex aircraft, and CFIs also frown on it.

Edward

A: It won't matter to a competent CFI, but insurance will be expensive for owners during primary training.

The Comanche is a very good Piper single, and when compared with other single-engine, four-place airplanes, always seem undervalued. This seems to make them a great value, but there are a few "gotchas" associated with Comanches that must be taken into consideration.

First off, the Comanche has a "slick" airframe. It's not like a Cherokee; it takes some planning to reduce power early enough to get to pattern speeds at the right time.

Secondly, unless the landing speed is nailed, it will float, then "arrive." There are a couple of add-on airframe mods from Piper Flyer Association supporter Knots 2U that make landings easier.

Although the landing gear system is bulletproof if correctly maintained, the system does require a recurring 1,000-hour inspection. This inspection requires the landing gear parts to be disassembled, checked for wear, and, if the wear is excessive, reworked. The rework usually only consists of installing new bolts and bushings. The 1,000-hour inspection is mandated by an Airworthiness Directive (AD). Parts are available for the Comanche's gear.

There are a couple of other ADs that must be complied with, but that's true on any complex single-engine airplane.

Some people aren't comfortable with the Piper construction standard—one door on the co-pilot's side of the cabin that is entered after climbing up on the right wing. Entering the cabin requires a step down off the wing. That's difficult for some folks as it requires a bit of agility and strength.

Then there's the subject of buying an airplane. You and the technician you hire to do the pre-purchase inspection are responsible for determining the condition of the airplane. Don't buy a Comanche (or any airplane) until it's been thoroughly inspected prior to purchase. Ideally, that would be done by an independent Comanche-savvy mechanic.

You're a Piper Flyer Association member; I urge you to spend some time reading the wide range of Comanche ownership, maintenance, and operating articles posted on the Piper Flyer webpage. In addition to select articles that are available with one click, you can also read complete back issues of *Piper Flyer* magazine. That's a great resource.

Let me know if you have specific questions about the Comanche, and I'll try to answer them.

Happy flying,
Steve



Steve Ells' Piper PA-24-180 Comanche 180, *Papa*, on the ramp.

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Follow-up Q:

Thank you for the detailed response. Your response highlights how serious aviation is and how risky it is to buy a plane for the first time. I have been interviewing a few Comanche pilots about a low-time flyer getting into a Comanche, with reactions ranging from enthusiasm to extreme alarm.

I understand it is a fast and touchy plane, but on YouTube, I don't recall any accidents due to a pilot flying with too much power; rather, I do see a lot of accidents where the plane the pilot is flying is underpowered and flies into the tree line at the end of the runway.

However, I am forewarned. I might ask around the Georgia/Tennessee/Alabama area if anyone can offer a ride and judge for myself.

You asked if I had any questions. I do have one. Have the wings ever fallen off a Comanche?

Edward

Follow-up A:

I can't say for certain that a wing has never separated from a Comanche fuselage, but I've never heard of it. *(For a discussion on the differences between the Comanche and Cherokee wings, see the link in resources to the* Piper Flyer *article "A Tale of Two Pipers."—Ed.)*

There have been several Airworthiness Directives (ADs) issued by the FAA that call for ongoing inspections focused on the tail, but as far as I know, all issues have been addressed by initially conducting inspections of the tail components or by doing logbook research to determine time in service. If a discrepancy is found by inspection or by being timed out by calendar or airframe hours, there is almost always a solution that suspends the inspections. A one-time fix is called a "terminating action."

A very experienced Comanche expert can pull off the 1,000-hour landing gear inspection, parts replacement, reassembly, and rerigging in 20-25 man-hours. But there aren't many Comanche-focused A&Ps around.

I don't foresee any problem with transitioning to a Comanche eventually, but my opinion is that during initial training, a simpler airplane would make it easier. You might do

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best with one of those throttle-on, throttle-off, fixed-gear airplanes. I say that because that's how I was trained.

I love my Comanche, but in my mind, there's a lot more to flying it (while taking care of the airframe and operating the engine via best practices) than I would have been ready for when I started. Today, I know why I reduce the rpm from 2,700 to 2,500 after I'm 300-400 feet in the air after takeoff; I would have been doing it by rote earlier in my flying.

Not saying you can't, nor am I saying you shouldn't learn to fly in a Comanche; I'm just saying that the task is pretty complex (no pun intended). Let me know if you have other questions.

Happy flying,
Steve

Patrick, a Piper Flyer forum reader, shared his thoughts:

Follow-up A:

Check on insurance first. That will probably make the decision for you. The insurance company will probably be picky about who can be your CFI as well.

Patrick D.

Follow-up Q:

The insurance quotes are around $5,000 a year for a student pilot on a Comanche. Interestingly, I thought liability-only insurance would have been more appealing, but it seems that the insurance agents would rather I get the complete package.

$5,000 seems reasonable to me, compared to the money being spent on getting a 60-year-old airframe that likely needs an engine overhaul and other critical maintenance.

Edward

Follow-up A (from Patrick):

I sold my Comanche because of the insurance/maintenance costs. The cost to insure my Piper PA-28R Arrow is less than half. That said, I do like the way the Comanche flies better. I just couldn't justify the extra cost. There's nothing technically keeping you from getting a private pilot certificate in a Comanche. The only issues really are insurance and CFI.

Patrick

Q: My engine is a TCM TSIO-360-FB. The TCM cylinders have about 300 hours on them. The lower end has almost 1,700 hours, and I think I'm likely looking at an overhaul.

My recent oil filter analysis found metal chips on the filter pleats. I would like to get in touch with TCM support with the chip identification to hopefully learn the source of the metal chips, and implications for moving forward.

AvLab's filter analysis of chips states: "Alloy steel AMS-6414/6415 and aluminum AMS-4280."

I'm wondering if I can get some information from TCM, but I expect that it will be difficult to get to the person I need. Any suggestions are appreciated!

Mark

A: Try this Continental contact:

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Happy flying,
Steve

Follow-up Q:

Thanks so much for your information. I emailed Continental around noon Eastern time last Friday. Derek responded around 5:00 p.m. the same day! He reported that the alloy steel chip is from the crankshaft. I suppose that we are looking at an overhaul. The prop governor is not faulty, but it also contained metal flakes/chips, which interfered with valve function and resulted in overspeeding.

Mark

Follow-up A:

When trying to help owners determine the extent of damage when metal is found in the pleats of a filter, the first question is, "Is there any metal in the screen molded into the prop governor gasket?" When there is, it's a strong sign that something important broke.

Sorry to hear about this failure. When you have time, and the failure mode has been discovered, and you have decided on the next step, please let me know what failed.

Happy flying,
Steve



Steve Ells *is contributing editor and tech rep for Piper Flyer Association. He has been an A&P/IA for 45-plus years. He is a commercial pilot with instrument and multiengine ratings and loves utility and bush-style airplanes and operations. He's a former associate editor for* AOPA Pilot. *He owns Ells Aviation and lives in Templeton, California. Send questions and comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*

RESOURCES

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ADDITIONAL READING

A TALE OF TWO PIPERS
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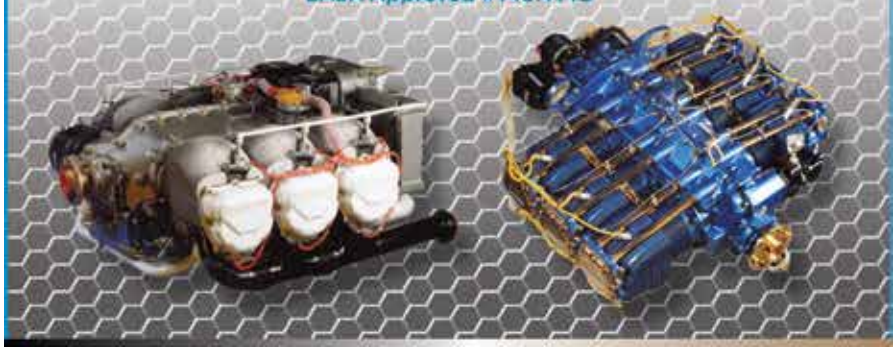
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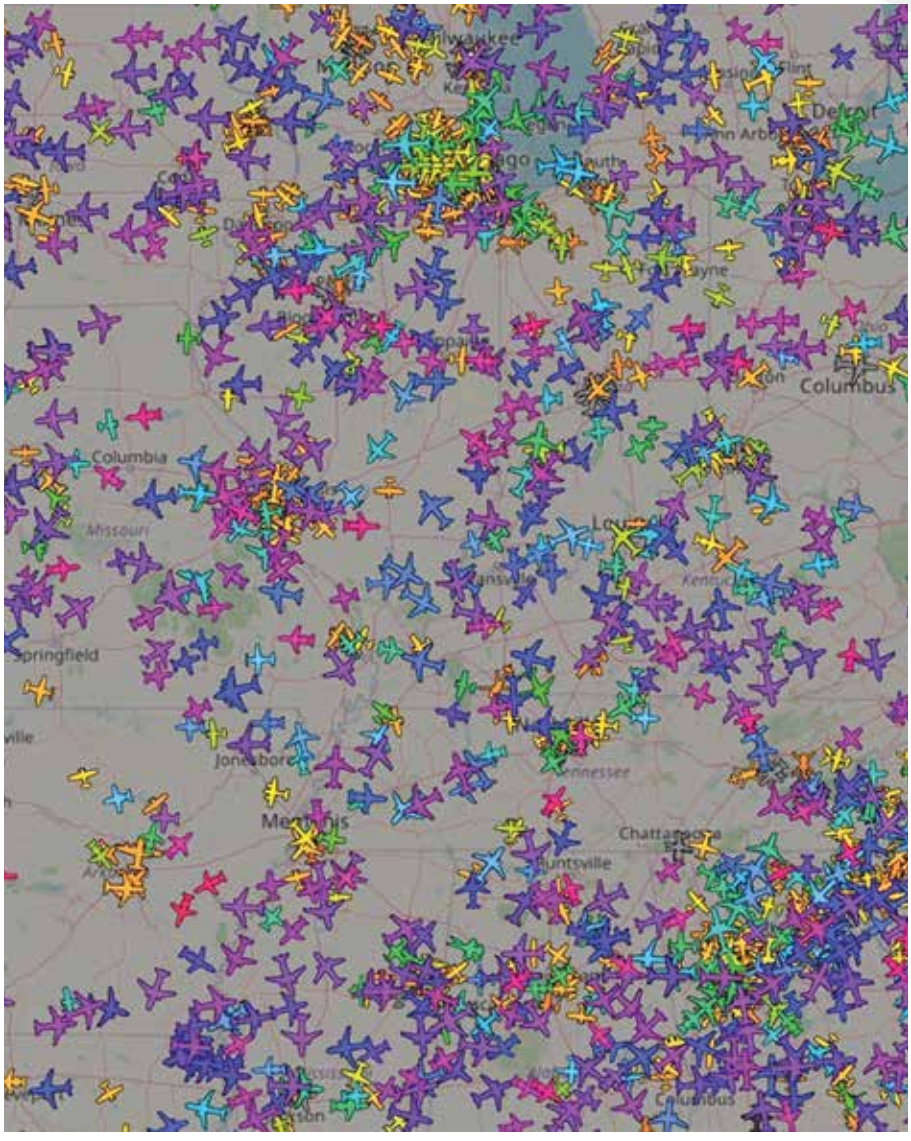
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Q2 2025 REGULATORY ROUNDUP

SCOTT KINNEY provides your quarterly update on regulatory changes of interest to pilots.



It's time again for our quarterly update of the General Aviation regulatory landscape. In this installment, we'll cover items from the second quarter of 2025 that may be of interest to Piper Flyers.

ADS-B data privacy legislation introduced into U.S Senate, House of Representatives; Montana bill passes

On June 26, Senator Ted Budd (R-NC) and Representative Bob Onder (R-MO) introduced the Pilot and Aircraft Privacy Act into the Senate and House. If passed, the legislation would help curtail and, in some cases, eliminate the use of ADS-B data for non-safety functions.

The Act would prohibit the use of ADS-B data to collect fees (such as airport landing fees). It would also expand prohibitions on the use of ADS-B data for investigative purposes. While the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 prohibited the FAA from using ADS-B data to initiate investigations, it did not address the use of such data by other agencies. The Pilot and Aircraft Privacy Act would expand the prohibition to include other federal agencies, as well as state and local entities.

In a press release, Senator Budd commented: "ADS-B is a critical safety

technology mandated by the FAA and more accurate than radar. Abusing this technology to levy unfair, sometimes duplicative fees and threatening pilots with legal action will keep some General Aviation pilots grounded, which is a loss for America's economy, emergency response, and the aviation community at large."

AOPA president Darren Pleasance seconded these assertions. "On behalf of AOPA, I want to thank Senator Budd and Representative Onder for leading on this important aviation safety issue. Both are active private pilots and understand that using ADS-B data for economic reasons clearly undermines the FAA's 2020 ADS-B safety mandate intended to provide situational awareness of an aircraft's position for air traffic control purposes."

For Montana residents, ADS-B-based landing fees are already a thing of the past. Montana's House Bill 571, which prohibits the use of ADS-B to collect landing fees on small General Aviation aircraft, passed through the Montana Senate in mid-April, and was signed into law on May 8.

Turnover at the top of the FAA continues

President Trump's nomination for FAA Administrator, former Republic Airways CEO Bryan Bedford, continues to progress through the confirmation process. As of June 25, 2025, Bedford's nomination has been approved by the Senate Commerce Committee and will be passed to a floor vote. The committee vote was not without controversy, as Bedford did not take a firm stance during confirmation hearings on upholding the 1,500-hour requirement for ATP certification, which attracted concern from several industry groups.

Federally-funded airports do not have the authority to ban leaded fuel unless certain conditions are met.

Expats need to designate a U.S.-based agent for service

As of July 7, 2025, individuals who hold or apply for FAA certificates issued under Parts 47, 61, 63, 65, 67, or 107, who have a foreign address but have no U.S.-based physical address of record on file with the FAA, are required to designate a U.S. agent for service of FAA documents. The new rule is listed under 14 CFR Chapter 1, Subchapter A, Part 3 (3.301-3.303).

According to the NPRM issued in October 2023, some 115,000 individuals outside of the U.S. (as of July 2022) hold FAA certificates, ratings, and authorizations, but do not have a U.S.-based address on file with the FAA. This has resulted in difficulties serving or delivering materials to these certificate holders.

If you're one of the individuals that this rule applies to, you'll need to either update your address of record with the FAA to show a U.S.-based physical address or designate a U.S. agent and register that agent with the FAA through the FAA's U.S. Agent for Service (USAS) portal (linked in Resources). They have also published an FAQ for users (see Resources).

Numerous commercial options can be found with a quick online search for "Agent for Service FAA." Note that the definition in 3.302 doesn't require a commercial agent; it can be "an entity or an adult (individual who is 18 or older) with a U.S. address who a certificate, rating, or authorization holder or applicant designates to receive FAA service on their behalf."

FAA publishes FAQ on "Access to Leaded Aviation Gasoline"

Following up on the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024's prohibition of leaded fuel bans (Section 770, Grant Assurance 40), the FAA issued a five-question FAQ on June 19, clearly outlining that federally-funded airports do not have the authority to ban leaded fuel unless certain conditions are met.



Q2 2025 REGULATORY ROUNDUP

With currently available unleaded fuels, it is impossible to meet those conditions, as the unleaded fuels are not approved for use in *all* aircraft (including rotorcraft). Thus, a ban on leaded Avgas would not be permitted, as it would economically discriminate against certain operators.

House advances Mental Health in Aviation Act

Representatives Sean Casten (D-IL), Pete Stauber (R-MN), Rick Larsen (D-WA), and Tracey Mann (R-KS), among numerous other cosponsors, have authored the Mental Health in Aviation Act. This bill passed through the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on June 12.

The bill requires the FAA to review and update its processes related to mental health medicals, including streamlining special issuance mental health medicals, improving mental health knowledge and training for AMEs, and providing additional authority for AMEs to make mental health determinations.

The bill also provides an appropriation to train/hire additional Aviation Medical Examiners and expand capacity at the Flight Surgeon's Office.

Numerous organizations have endorsed this bill, including the Pilot Mental Health Campaign, the Air Line Pilots Association, Airlines for America, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, the National Flight Training Alliance, the National Business Aviation Association, and NetJets Association of Shared Aircraft Pilots.

President Trump issues order on supersonic flight

On June 6, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order titled "Leading the World in Supersonic Flight," instructing the FAA Administrator to "take the necessary steps, including thorough rulemaking, to repeal the provision on overland supersonic flight in 14 CFR 91.817," and to address other regulations restricting civil supersonic flight.

Senators Ted Budd (R-NC) and Troy Nehls (R-TX) introduced the Supersonic Aviation Modernization Act, with the same goal, two weeks prior to the President's order. The content of the Senate bill mirrors the goals of the President's order, and as of June 28, the bill is still in committee.

Medical denial policy conclusion

In our February update, we reported that the FAA's Office of Aerospace Medicine had announced a change in the medical application process. The policy would have resulted in immediate denials of incomplete medical applications, rather than deferrals with requests for additional information. In May, we provided an update: the FAA had pushed

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Left .....U61157-002... **$1,011.43**
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Front Spar, 235-260hp
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the implementation of the new policy out and would be holding listening sessions in April.

After these sessions, the FAA published a release titled "FAA Seeks Input on Improving Medical Process." In this document, FAA Administrator Chris Rocheleau stated that, after hearing stakeholder feedback, "the FAA will not proceed with a plan to issue initial denials to pilots who provide incomplete examinations or paperwork."

What's coming in Q3 and Q4

While it's difficult to make exact predictions for the timeline for a rule to move from the Notice of Public Rulemaking (NPRM) stage to the Final Rule stage, rumor has it that the MOSAIC final rule(s) may be published around the time of EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2025 – in late July.

In the meantime, if you are interested in catching regulatory news as it breaks, the FAA publishes documents on the Federal Register; see the link in Resources. You can filter for "rule," "proposed rule," and "notice" using the checkboxes in the header.

Scott Kinney *is a self-described aviation geek (#avgeek), commercial pilot, and flight instructor. He is writer and editor for* Piper Flyer. *Scott and his partner Julia are based in Eugene, Oregon. They are often found buzzing around the West in vintage airplanes. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*

RESOURCES

AOPA: BILLS TO STOP ADS-B MISUSE INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS
tinyurl.com/adsbmisuse

BUDD BILL WOULD PREVENT KEY AVIATION SAFETY TECHNOLOGY FROM BEING IMPROPERLY USED TO CHARGE, PUNISH PILOTS
tinyurl.com/BuddBillPilots

CASTEN, STAUBER INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN BILLS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR AVIATORS
tinyurl.com/avhealthcareaccess

EXECUTIVE ORDER: LEADING THE WORLD IN SUPERSONIC FLIGHT
tinyurl.com/supersonicflight

FAA: FAA SEEKS INPUT ON IMPROVING MEDICAL PROCESS
tinyurl.com/medproinput

FAA: QUESTIONS/ANSWERS ON GRANT ASSURANCE 40, ACCESS TO LEADED AVIATION GASOLINE
tinyurl.com/GA40QA

FAA U.S. AGENTS FOR SERVICE PORTAL
usas.faa.gov
usas.faa.gov/faq

FEDERAL REGISTER: FAA DOCUMENTS
tinyurl.com/FedRegFAAdocs





PREFLIGHT BLIND SPOT: The Oil Leak I Missed Before Takeoff

Part One

When **MATTHEW McDANIEL** took off in his taildragger on a freezing morning, he had no idea his engine was already hemorrhaging oil. The lessons he learned from the tense return flight and post-mortem can help other pilots avoid similar surprises.



The forecast was for IFR conditions, so I'd only gone to the hangar to update the GPS databases and do a few other chores. However, when I arrived, the field was VFR, the 20-knot wind was nearly straight down the primary runway, and the temperature was several degrees higher than forecast. What would you have done? My normal default is to choose flight!

Preflight patience

New plan: A few laps in the pattern and a short hop to a local airport. Top the tanks there, fly the short distance back, and have the plane ready for tomorrow's trip. Normally, with temps below 40 F, I



like to have the engine preheater on for about 12 hours preceding engine start. Yet, when necessary, I've started and flown piston aircraft in temperatures as low as 0 F without any form of preheating—more times than I can count.

In those less-than-ideal situations, patience is required, allowing the engine and avionics to warm slowly at recommended warm-up RPM. As operating temps rise, first taxi power, then runup power, and eventually, takeoff power, become safe.

With the temps right at freezing (32 F), observing the precautions that I'd practiced over my many winters operating in the Great Lakes and upper Midwest regions was in order. The engine started without difficulty and quickly settled into its warm-up idle. Oil pressure came right up, and I ground-leaned the mixture. Parking brake set, I built my nest, programmed avionics, listened to the automated weather observation, and ran the checklist, as the engine slowly warmed. When the oil temperature reached 90 F, I advanced just enough throttle to get the plane rolling, then taxied to the runway at idle.

From no cause for alarm...

By the time I reached the hold short line, the oil temperature was in its normal range (which starts at 115 F in my aircraft). I completed my Before Takeoff checklist and runup. Without the benefit of preheating, I checked the mags and carb heat slowly, allowing the engine to re-stabilize at the new RPM between each selection. Thereafter, oil temp was well into the green range, and oil pressure and CHTs were all normal. I re-leaned the mixture for the last bit of taxi that would take me to the runway centerline.

The hold short line of my runway is a fair bit down the taxiway. I made my radio call, taxied the 100 yards or so to the centerline, and stopped to complete/confirm the takeoff final items:

- Carb heat: OFF
- Mixture: RICH
- Elevator trim: TAKEOFF
- Landing lights: ON
- Engine parameters: NORMAL

Advancing the throttle slowly and smoothly, the tail was up before reaching full throttle. With nearly 20 knots of wind



on my nose, lightly loaded, with cool temps, I was airborne in less than 500 feet, even though I was making no effort whatsoever toward achieving a short-field or STOL-style takeoff. Climbing at my usual 80 mph ias, I reached up to crank in some nose-down trim at approximately 200 feet agl. Perhaps craning my head upward toward the overhead trim handle briefly heightened my olfactory sense. Regardless, that's when I noticed the smell.

At first, I thought it was just the heater putting off a mild odor with the engine now running at full power. Then, I thought I saw my breath freezing in front of my face. However, in what must have been mere seconds, I realized it was neither heater odor I smelled, nor freezing breath I saw. It was very faint white smoke and the smell of burning oil.

...to emergency return!

At this point of realization, I looked at the altimeter: I was at 1,000 feet msl; exactly 320 feet agl. My eyes darted right, directly to my aircraft's digital engine analyzer, and zeroed in on the oil values. The oil temperature was typical for that early in a flight (about 140 F), but the pressure was in the caution range, at

In what must have been mere seconds, I realized it was neither heater odor I smelled, nor freezing breath I saw. It was very faint white smoke and the smell of burning oil.

45 psi. I decided that 500 feet between myself and Mother Earth would have to be sufficient today.

Reaching 1,200 feet msl (520 feet agl), I pulled the power back as far as I dared to maintain safe flying speed while not delaying my return to terra firma. Passing the intersection of my airport's two runways, I made an immediate left-hand turn. This put me on a perfect downwind (low altitude notwithstanding) for the crosswind runway, and I briefly considered just pulling the power to idle, making a tight pattern, and landing there. However, I quickly dismissed that idea, knowing that would give me a 20-knot direct crosswind (beyond my taildragger's crosswind limits).

So, I kept the left turn coming around and entered a low downwind for my departure runway. Rolling out on that heading, I looked at the oil pressure again... it was down to 40 psi. Keeping the power as low as feasible, I made a quick traffic call and turned my base slightly inside the threshold abeam point. With 6,000-plus feet of runway available, I didn't care that I was wasting some of it.

My airplane doesn't need much space anyway, and I'm well-practiced at taking it into runways as short as 1,000 feet (without headwind advantage, of which I had nearly 20 knots today). My goal was to keep the pattern tight, keep the airspeed normal, and land ASAP.

My turning point from that tight base to final approach allowed my eyes to fall upon the area of the taxiway where I'd been sitting during my runup only moments prior. A large, dark spot on the asphalt caught my eye. Yet, I had no time to process that fact just then. I was busy processing more critical thoughts and decisions.

The item my eyes darted to and from was oil pressure, which I could see (and comprehend) was now down to 35 psi (deep into the caution range). It was also time to make a decision about flaps. I elected not to use any. I'm equally comfortable landing my plane with full, partial, or no flaps, and I practice all these configurations regularly. Flaps would only delay my arrival, and time was the currency I was rapidly exhausting. I retarded the throttle to idle.

Rolling out on final, I was approximately 200 feet agl and probably 1,000 feet down the runway. A quick glance to the right; oil pressure, 30 psi. No more time for processing information. The time was upon me to focus on landing. As I rounded out the descent, a red light to the left of my flight instruments illuminated. It's a remote warning light. It lights up in the pilot's field of view, when any parameter on the engine analyzer falls into a warning (red) zone. I didn't look right to see what had triggered it, because I knew.

There was maybe 10 degrees of crosswind component, so I touched down on the left main wheel first and bounced slightly (I had kept energy in reserve, and at that point, I still had plenty). The second contact was on both mains equally, and I pushed the yoke forward to pin the mains to the runway. As speed slowed, I lowered the tail to the runway and let the plane roll.

Passing the intersection of the runways, I made the turn onto the parallel taxiway of the crossing runway (at a taxi speed for which I would have admonished any student). From there, I added a tiny amount of throttle, just enough to keep me rolling to exit the taxiway onto an apron.

At the edge of the apron, I looked at the oil pressure one last time; the numbers were red now and reading 23 psi. I pulled the mixture to idle cutoff. Total flight time was approximately two and a half minutes, liftoff to touchdown.

Stay tuned for Part Two, where Matthew will detail how the problem was assessed, diagnosed, and repaired. He'll also share the lessons learned in hindsight and how he's changed his operating procedures to avoid a future recurrence of this scenario.

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 6,000 hours of instruction given. As owner of Progressive Aviation Services LLC (progaviation.com), he has specialized in Technically Advanced Aircraft and Glass Cockpit instruction since 2001, yet retains a passion for teaching in and learning about antique taildraggers. He's also a Boeing 737-series captain for an international airline, holds eight turbine aircraft type ratings, and has flown nearly 150 aircraft types. Matt is one of less than 15 instructors worldwide to have earned the Master CFI designation for 11 consecutive two-year terms. He owns an antique taildragger which he enjoys flying with his wife, two children, and friends. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*



Pressing Pause: My Experience with AOPA's Safety Challenge

Join thousands of pilots nationwide in the 2025 National Pause for GA Safety—discover tailored safety content, test your knowledge, and claim your digital badge as you commit to safer skies for yourself and your passengers. **By Steve Ells**

GASafe is an aviation industry-wide program presented by the AOPA Air Safety Institute (ASI) that requests every GA pilot in the United States to take a few minutes to participate in the 2025 National Pause for GA Safety by completing two easy steps:

1. Visit the GAsafe.org website to begin.
2. Select the safety topic that interests you the most and review it. You will find dozens of links to curated safety content, including videos, courses, publications, and websites.

The 2025 National Pause for GA Safety is endorsed and sponsored by EAA, NATA, NBAA, Vertical Aviation International, plus dozens of owner's groups and other aviation associations and groups.

I visited GAsafe.org, and when asked to choose a track related to the type of flying I do, I clicked the "Low Slow Day VMC" track. Other tracks include "Higher Faster Complex IFR," "Vertical Aviation," track, and "Part 135 FBOs NATA."

My 15-question multiple choice quiz started with questions such as:

Which three ingredients are necessary for a thunderstorm to develop?

1) Sufficient moisture, unstable air, and a lifting action
2) Electrostatic discharge, unstable air, and a lifting action
3) Low-pressure system, warm air, and electrostatic discharge

I got that one right.



An example of the many videos and learning sections included in the National Pause for GA Safety test was a link to the ASI's "Thunderstorm Avoidance Safety Center" for further learning. I clicked on the link and up popped a page chock full of thunderstorm-related learning tools, including online courses, videos, safety quizzes, publications, and webinars.

The third question on the quiz was about density altitude:

High-density altitude is only a concern in mountainous regions or high-elevation airports.

1) True

2) False

After my choice was graded, a link to ASI's article about operating in high-density altitude conditions appeared. I clicked on it. There, I learned about the "Triple H Effect" (which refers to the combined impact of High altitude, High temperature, and High humidity on aircraft performance) and could order or download a poster to show the effects of temperature and pressure on the density altitude at my airport.

One of the questions I missed was this:

What is the first step in spin recovery?

1) Reduce engine power to idle

2) Neutralize the rudder

3) Ease back on the elevator

In the notes, I was reminded of the spin recovery acronym PARE, which is useful if you ever end up in a spin: **Power**—Off, **Ailerons**—Neutral, **Rudder**—Full Opposite direction of rotation, **Elevator**—Neutral. I was also directed to review the ASI Aerodynamics Safety Center, which has the same types of online courses and videos mentioned above, and a webinar titled "Implementing Learn to Turn" by Master Instructor Rich Stowell.

I only answered 11 of the 15 questions correctly. So, I took the test again. I aced the test the second time, which proves that testing is a good learning tool and that there's never a bad time to spend time re-learning or refreshing one's knowledge of flying safety.

Steve Ells *is contributing editor and tech rep for Piper Flyer Association. He has been an A&P/IA for 45-plus years. He is a commercial pilot with instrument and multiengine ratings and loves utility and bush-style airplanes and operations. He's a former associate editor for* AOPA Pilot. *He owns Ells Aviation and lives in Templeton, California. Send questions and comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*

RESOURCES

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THE GHOST OF THE MUSTANG:

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE PIPER PA-48 ENFORCER

From World War II roots to Cold War ambitions, the Piper PA-48 Enforcer's journey is a high-speed tale of innovation, politics, and missed opportunities.

By Scott Kinney



Which single-engine Piper aircraft has a maximum gross weight of 14,000 pounds, can carry a payload of more than 4,000 pounds, has a top speed of over 350 knots (402 mph), and is powered by a 2,445-hp Avco-Lycoming YT-55-L-9 turboprop engine?

Nope, it's not an evolution of the M700 Fury, Piper's only current single-engine turboprop model. Props to you if you looked back in time and guessed that airplane to be the Piper PA-48 Enforcer. If you aren't familiar with the model, well, not many people are, outside of those who study footnotes to military aviation history.

A total of four airframes wore the "Piper Enforcer" badge between 1971 and 1984. All were prototypes, and three survive today. If you were wandering the grounds at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson, Arizona, or the Air Force Flight Test Museum at Edwards Air Force Base, California, it would be easy enough to mistake these surviving prototypes for North American P-51D Mustangs.

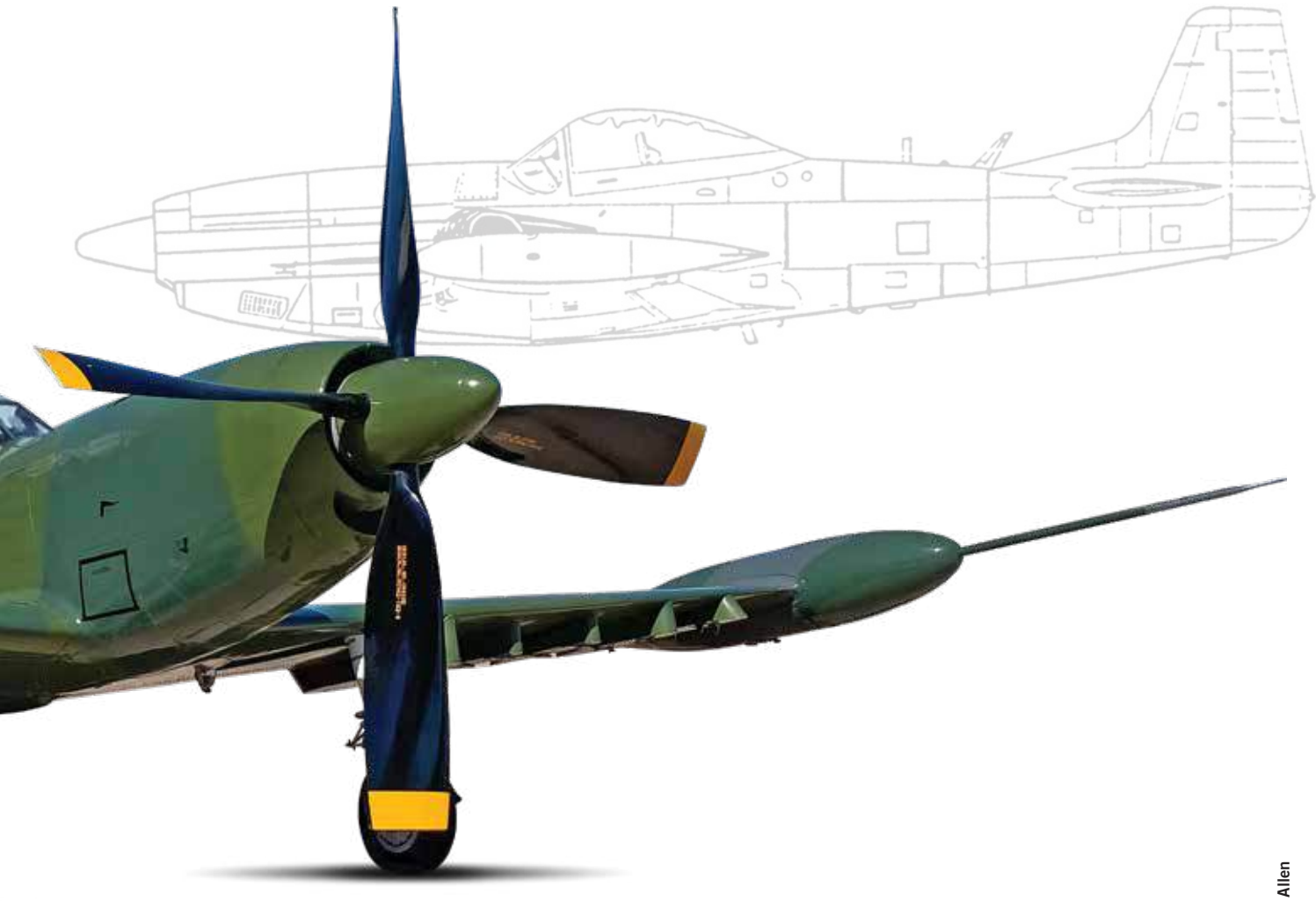
In the words of John McCollum, Piper Aircraft Corporation's Vice President of Special Projects, "The [Piper PA-48 Enforcer] has its heritage in the P-51. It looks like a P-51, its airfoil is the same shape as a P-51, part of the tail is from a P-51, the landing gear is from a P-51… but the airplane is basically all new material. There's a 2,500-horsepower turbine in the nose, a propeller off a [Douglas] A-1E… it's only about 10% old P-51 parts. It's basically a 100% new airplane."

Let's examine this unique Piper aircraft, its history, and why it was ultimately an unsuccessful gamble by Piper to try to secure market share in a market that didn't materialize.

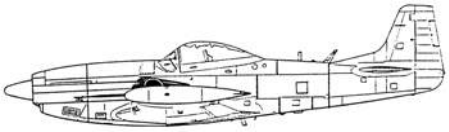
Trans Florida and Cavalier Aircraft

The Enforcer concept dates back to a company called Trans Florida, founded by David Lindsay in 1957. Trans Florida's primary products were refurbished World War II surplus North American P-51D Mustangs. The refitted aircraft were named Executive Mustangs and were upgraded with sleek interiors, extended-range tanks, and modern avionics.

Trans Florida's Executive Mustangs were popular with business customers, and several versions were produced in the late 1950s and early 1960s. To differentiate the offerings by range, they were rebranded as Cavalier Mustangs, with Cavalier 750, 1500, and 2000 versions (the numbers corresponding to the aircraft's mileage range). In 1967, the company was renamed the Cavalier Aircraft Corporation to match its flagship Cavalier Mustang product.



Doug Allen



In 1965, the U.S. Air Force solicited a bid from Cavalier to refurbish war-surplus Mustang airframes for provision to military customers in friendly developing nations as part of the U.S. Military Assistance Program. Hardpoints for weapons were added, and in the late 1960s, the WWII-era fighters found new life as the Cavalier F-51D Mustang in close air support (CAS) and counterinsurgency (COIN) roles in Bolivia, El Salvador, and Indonesia.

Cavalier is acquired by Piper

Cavalier's CAS/COIN development efforts continued with a new Cavalier Turbo Mustang variant in 1968, incorporating the more powerful Rolls-Royce engine (the Mk. 510 Dart turboprop), structural upgrades, and ceramic armor. Cavalier produced two prototypes bearing the trade name Enforcer, but with limited interest from the Air Force and no other committed customers in the pipeline, the project stalled.

In October 1970, Piper first considered acquiring Cavalier, as the board of directors at Piper saw an opportunity to diversify and expand further into the military market. Piper had produced light observation aircraft over the years for militaries (both domestic and foreign), but never anything CAS/COIN-oriented like the Cavalier Mustang. Piper believed that there was demand for this type of aircraft. The Cold War had turned hot in Vietnam, and the era's geopolitics saw the U.S. Congress considering providing additional weapons to U.S. allies, especially in Southeast Asia.

According to Piper historian Roger Peperell, Piper's deal to acquire Cavalier "consisted of an up-front payment to Cavalier, and then further payments if a large order was forthcoming from the U.S. Armed Forces." The acquisition of Cavalier was finalized in November 1970. Cavalier closed its doors, and David Lindsay joined the Piper team as a special adviser for the Enforcer project.

The Enforcer evolves

After Piper acquired the rights to the Cavalier lineup, Piper's engineers continued to refine the Enforcer












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N481PE



concept. While still under the Cavalier banner, Lindsay and his team had considered using a different powerplant, the Avco-Lycoming T-55. This turbine was already in military use, with a variant powering the Boeing CH-47 Chinook. Cavalier had purchased two engines and transferred them to Piper with the rest of the project assets.

With the YT-55-L-9 turboprop installed under Piper's direction, the Enforcer could now match or exceed the performance of light jets, while retaining short takeoff and landing capabilities. The YT-55 produced 2,455 shaft horsepower and had an improved weight-to-power ratio.

Piper submitted a Cavalier Mustang III prototype, N6167U, to the U.S. Air Force's PAVE COIN program for testing and evaluation in December 1970. The "new" aircraft was publicly announced under the "Piper Enforcer" name on April 29, 1971.

This prototype was a two-seat, dual-control aircraft and was informally referred to as the PE2. Another single-seat prototype would be completed in mid-July, 1971, and was called the PE1. The PE2 prototype crashed on July 12, 1971, but development and marketing continued with the PE1.

The prototypes were armed with six .50 caliber machine guns, and up to 10 additional items (bombs or rocket pods) on external underwing pylons.

Unfortunately for Piper, the USAF decided not to award any contracts from the PAVE COIN evaluations. Rather, a parallel competition, the Attack-Experimental (A-X) program, led to the adoption of the Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II (Warthog) as the USAF's primary CAS/COIN aircraft. The Air Force and Navy (with the help of Lockheed) evaluated the Enforcer outside of the competitions, but no orders were forthcoming and Piper's work on the project was halted.

In 1977, David Lindsay bought the PE1 airframe back from Piper and, with the help of Piper's J. Lynn Helms, lobbied Congress to consider an additional test of the Enforcer. Strom Thurmond (R-SC) was a key supporter of revisiting the Enforcer initiative. The Senate Armed Services Committee initially voted down the proposal in July 1977, but funded it in 1979 and 1980, perhaps in light of the increasing costs of the A-10 program. The Air Force, however, did not initiate a reevaluation program and the funds went unspent.

A new PA-48 designation and a new opportunity

In September 1981, Piper was awarded a two-year, $11.8 million contract under the Air Force's COIN aircraft test program. Two prototypes were to be built for evaluation. These prototypes were designated U.S. Air Force Serial Nos. 73-222 and 73-225 (Piper Serial Nos. 48-8301001 and 48-8301002) and would receive the Piper model designation PA-48.

Piper's engineers made several modifications to the new airframes, including strengthening the wing, lengthening the fuselage, and repositioning the canopy. Though the PA-48 Enforcer was still loosely based on the North American P-51 Mustang, at this point in its development, it had only about 10% parts commonality with the P-51. In addition to the turboprop powerplant, a four-bladed propeller (borrowed from the Douglas A-1 Skyraider), tip tanks, and modernized

Test reports showed the Enforcer to be fast enough to be survivable in a contested airspace environment, yet slow enough to effectively maneuver and loiter over the battlefield – essential traits for a COIN aircraft.

avionics and weapons systems were the most significant visually noticeable differences. Piper's PA-48 Enforcer also featured twin 30mm GAU-13/A cannons (similar to the 30mm Gatling-style cannon used in the A-10) in wing-mounted pods. The internally mounted .50 caliber machine guns were removed.

The Air Force, in conjunction with Piper, put the two prototypes through testing at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida in 1983 and 1984 (see Resources for a link to a video clip from this series of flights). Piper's John McCollum, when asked what the tests were designed to prove, answered: "[We want to prove] that we can carry ordinance similar to what is used on close air support airplanes today: the CBU-58 (cluster bombs), the Rockeyes (cluster bombs), the rockets, and so forth. We want to prove that we can carry them out and hit the target as well as the more expensive airplanes, and also prove that we can get to the target without being shot down by enemy ground fire or enemy airplanes."

Piper's Chief Test Pilot, Dave Lawrence, explained further: "The difference between this aircraft and many others that are being built today is that this airplane is supposed to be able to perform its mission at a very low cost compared to the present airplanes doing a similar type mission." At the time, the Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II (a jet) and the North American Rockwell OV-10 Bronco (a twin turboprop) were the main competitors in the COIN space.

During the tests at Eglin, the Enforcer demonstrated many of the characteristics that made the P-51 a legendary aircraft, including excellent handing, visibility, and versatility. Test reports showed the Enforcer to be fast enough to be survivable in a contested airspace environment, yet slow enough to effectively maneuver and loiter over the battlefield – essential traits for a COIN aircraft. It demonstrated a maximum speed of 350 knots (402 mph) and a range of 1,300-plus miles with ferry tanks. The turboprop engine offered better fuel economy and reduced maintenance compared to jets.

The PA-48 Enforcer program stalls out

Ultimately, after testing was completed in1984, the Air Force declined to procure the Piper PA-48 Enforcer. While the program had some strong Congressional advocates, notably Representative Bob Dornan (R-CA), the Air Force's post-Vietnam operational requirements had shifted. The Cold War was still on, but the emphasis was now on preparing for high-intensity conflict. Additionally, some speculated that a vote for the Enforcer program was a vote to reduce levels in the Air Force's A-10 program, or at least to stretch out its procurement schedule.

Piper test pilot Dave Lawrence summed it up, "They [the USAF] just wanted the program over with."

Peperell expands on that thought. "The USAF never really wanted the aircraft. Piper had hoped that countries in Africa or South America might be impressed by the aircraft as a result of the tests and would order enough for Piper to start production or even offer a licensing deal, but nothing was forthcoming, and the project died."

In the words of USAF Lt. Gen. James T. Stewart, who headed up the Air Force's initial 1972 evaluation of the Enforcer, "My honest conclusion was: there was no place in the Air Force for the P-51 [sic] Enforcer. Lo and behold, a few years later, Congress appropriates enough money for the Air Force to build two or three Enforcers… might have been a good idea 15 years ago when you could find P-51 airframes and actually put a turboprop in. Now, it's a totally new airplane. The whole bloody thing is new, and it looks like a P-51."





Piper PA-48 Enforcer Specifications

Dimensions

Length	34 feet, 2 inches
Height	13 feet, 1 inches
Wingspan	41 feet, 4 inches
No. of Seats	1

Weights

Maximum Takeoff	14,000 pounds
Basic Empty	8,320 pounds
Ordinance Capacity	4,000 pounds
Useful Load	5,680 pounds

Performance

Maximum Speed	350 ktas
Maximum Cruise Speed	315 ktas
Range	400 nm
Takeoff Ground Roll	1,000 feet
Landing Ground Roll	925 feet
Service Ceiling	37,600 feet
Rate of Climb	4,790 fpm
Stall Speed	100 kts

Fuel

Type	Jet-A
Total Capacity	1,472 pounds main, 1,920 pounds tip tanks

Power

Engine Model	Avco-Lycoming YT-55-L-9A
Horsepower	2,455 shp
Propeller	Skyraider Aeroproducts
Propeller Type	Four-blade metal, constant-speed

SOURCE: Peperell, Roger W. Piper Aircraft – Freedom of Flight.

Forgotten but not gone

Luckily for aviation history buffs, the two Piper PA-48 Enforcer prototypes were preserved and are available for public viewing. The first, 73-222/48-8301001/N481PE, is at the Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. The second, 73-225/48-8301002/N482PE, is at the Air Force Flight Test Museum's Museum Air Park. See the July 2025 issue of *Piper Flyer* for Dennis K. Johnson's guide to visiting this museum, located at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The PE1 airframe (the Mustang II prototype transferred from Cavalier to Piper in 1971 and then back to David Lindsay in 1977) is privately owned by the Lindsay family.

Scott Kinney *is a self-described aviation geek (#avgeek), commercial pilot, and flight instructor. He is writer and editor for* Piper Flyer. *Scott and his partner Julia are based in Eugene, Oregon. They are often found buzzing around the West in vintage airplanes. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*

RESOURCES

FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM
flighttestmuseum.org/aircraft-inventory-list

PIMA AIR MUSEUM
pimaair.org/museum-aircraft/piper-pa-48

PIPER PA-48 ENFORCER TEST PROGRAM VIDEO
youtube.com/watch?v=vt86VtawLEU

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Flying. "*Piper Flies Enforcer.*" July 1983. [Note: many back issues of *Flying*, including those cited here, are available free on Google Books: books.google.com. The *Flying* website, flyingmag.com, also contains copies of these articles.]

Francillon, Rene. *United States Air Force Museum Aircraft Collection.* Greenhill Books. 1990.

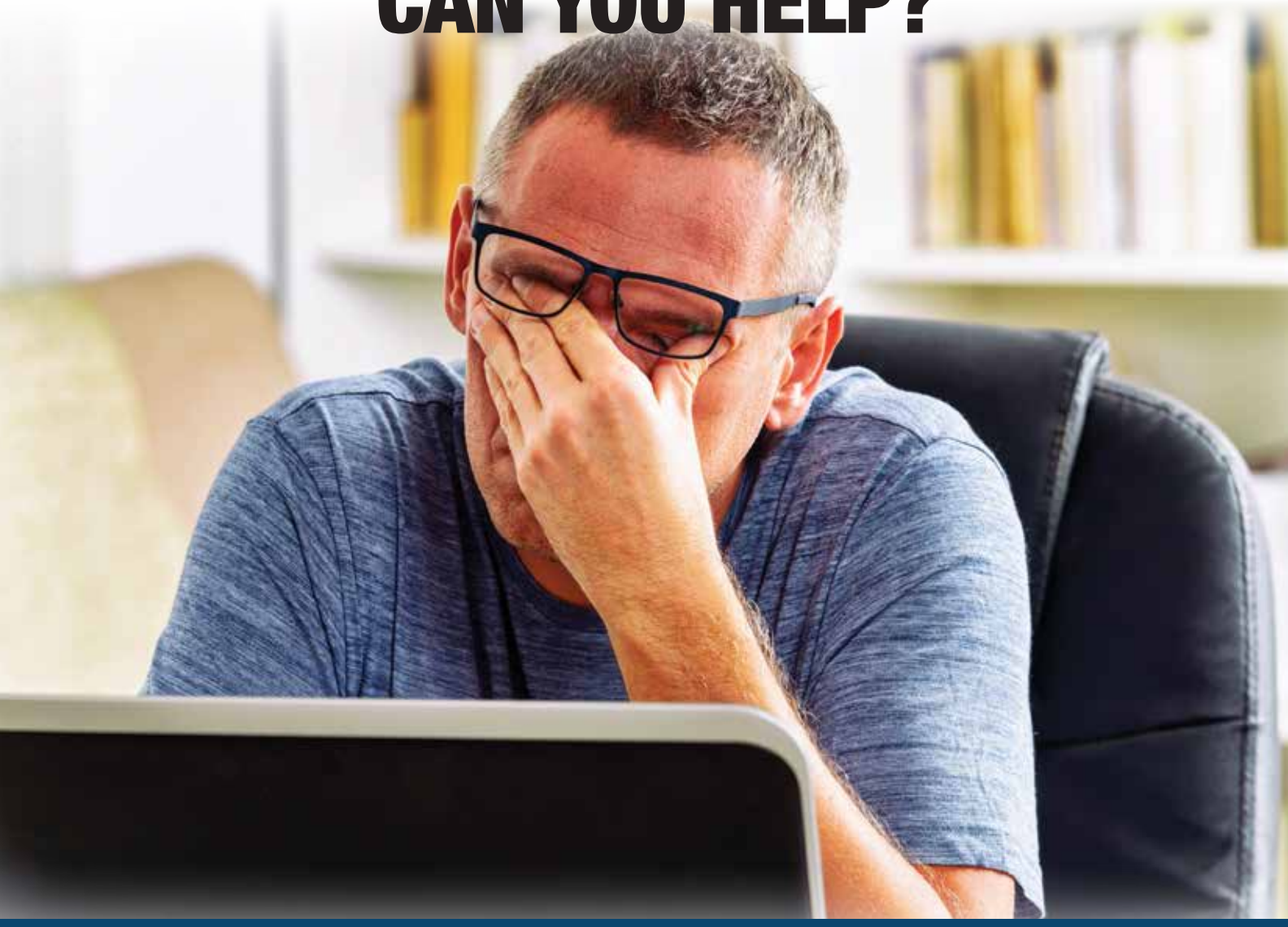
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USAF History Office. *A Man for the Time: An Oral History Interview with Lt. Gen. James T. Stewart.* University of Illinois-Champaign. 1990.

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FROM RUNWAY TO RELAXATION:

A PILOT'S ESCAPE TO ORANGE BEACH



Looking south toward KJKA, Wolf Bay, Orange Beach, and the Gulf.



Fly yourself to the sun-soaked charm of Orange Beach, Alabama—where sugar-white sand, Gulf-fresh seafood, and front-row views of Blue Angels practices await. This coastal destination is more than a vacation spot—it's a laid-back, pilot-friendly getaway you'll want to visit again and again.

By Troy Whistman

There is something magical about approaching a coastline from the air in your own aircraft. As my wife and I descended over Mobile Bay toward Gulf Shores International Airport (KJKA), the emerald waters of the Gulf stretched endlessly before us, bordered by pristine white-sand beaches that seemed to glow in the April sunshine.

Banking gently to align with Runway 27, we caught a glimpse of Orange Beach's distinctive skyline to the south—a collection of sleek condominium towers rising like sentinels along the shoreline. This wasn't just another weekend getaway; it was our first visit to Orange Beach. This was a pilot's dream vacation where the journey became as memorable as the destination itself.

Flying into Gulf Shores International

Flying into Gulf Shores International Airport/Jack Edwards Field is straightforward for most General Aviation pilots. It's a busy area with lots of air traffic: utilize flight following or file IFR! The traffic callouts and handoffs are helpful, and ATC would rather be talking to you than not. *(Note that if you are arriving from or departing to the east, you should be aware of the Eglin/Valparaiso Terminal Area and its associated Restricted Areas, Military Operations Areas, and Part 93 Special Air Traffic Rule routes.—Ed.)*

The airport features two well-maintained runways, with the primary Runway 9/27 stretching an impressive 6,962 by 100 feet and the crosswind Runway 17/35 measuring 3,596 by 75 feet. This configuration



offers pilots flexibility regardless of prevailing winds, which is particularly valuable in this coastal environment.

Wind patterns in the Gulf Shores region tend to be predictable, yet are variable by season. April, when we visited last year, is statistically the windiest month, with an average windspeed of around 14 mph. During our approach, we encountered the typical southerly flow that dominates spring conditions, with the AWOS calling winds from 190 degrees at 8 knots, gusting to 15 knots. The airport's dual-runway configuration means you'll rarely face challenging crosswind conditions, as you can typically select the runway most closely aligned with the wind direction.

While we would have preferred Runway 17 for these winds, Runway 27 was in use, and the winds were within my comfort zone and proficiency level, so we landed Runway 27. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need, though, as the tower is friendly and accommodating.

Upon landing, we taxied to Gulf Air Center, the airport's full-service FBO. Their line staff provided the kind of red-carpet treatment that makes General Aviation travel so unique, marshaling us to parking, assisting with baggage and putting the cover on the airplane, and offering a warm welcome.

The recently renovated facility features everything traveling pilots need: comfortable waiting areas, flight planning resources, crew lounging space, free Wi-Fi, warm cookies, and even complimentary crew cars for short trips.

We would be staying at a condo owned by our friends, and they offered us the use of their vehicle as well. The staff at Gulf Air had our friends' car pulled up next to where we parked the airplane, already running and with the air conditioning turned to cold—a nice touch!

We tied the airplane down on the ramp, but were a little concerned about forecast thunderstorms with hail two days away (which materialized but stayed safely just offshore). Discussing this with the friendly CSRs at the front desk, they took a note to tuck our airplane into the hangar that day, which let us enjoy our vacation without concern about the airplane's exposure to the elements.

In online reviews, one visitor reported the following, echoing our own experience. "We landed and taxied our little airplane to the ramp, arriving immediately after a Citation jet. We were marshaled in and







parked for fuel. The line crew gave us the same red-carpet treatment (literally) as they provided for the jet." This egalitarian approach to service, regardless of aircraft type, makes Gulf Air/Jack Edwards a refreshing destination for GA pilots.

From fishing village to vacation haven

Orange Beach's history is deeply rooted in fishing and maritime traditions. Originally inhabited by Native American tribes before being explored by Spanish settlers in the 1500s, the area evolved into a thriving fishing village by the 19th century. Early settlers relied on the bountiful Gulf waters for shrimp, oysters, and fish, establishing the region's reputation as a seafood haven.

It wasn't until the mid-20th century that Orange Beach began its transformation into the tourist destination we know today. As infrastructure improved (and travelers discovered the stunning coastline), vacation rentals, restaurants, and attractions began to appear. We were struck during our visit by how the area has developed while maintaining its natural beauty and coastal charm.

After its beaches, the weather in Orange Beach is perhaps its greatest natural asset. The region enjoys a moderate climate year-round, with spring and fall offering particularly pleasant conditions. During our April visit, we enjoyed daily highs in the mid-70s with comfortable evening temperatures in the upper 50s—perfect for both beach activities and evening strolls. March through May sees average precipitation of just six days per month, making spring an ideal time to visit.

If you're planning your own flying adventure to Orange Beach, timing is worth considering. While summer brings perfect beach weather with temperatures around 90 F, it also brings larger crowds and afternoon thunderstorms. Winter months





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Our condo overlooking the beach, which Teresa immediately went to absorb.

remain mild, with highs in the 60s, but can be too cool for traditional beach activities.

Many experienced visitors (and we hope to join them by returning multiple times!) consider spring the sweet spot—mild temperatures, less precipitation, and manageable crowds, especially if you avoid the Spring Break rush from mid-March to early April.

Beachfront luxury with aviation roots

When planning our trip, we quickly discovered that Orange Beach's accommodation landscape is dominated by condominium towers, many bearing the name "Phoenix." There's an interesting aviation connection here, which I'll get to in a moment. These condos are primarily developed and managed by Brett/Robinson Vacation Rentals, a company with a fascinating origin story tied to the region's development.

In 1968, brothers Tillis and Gene Brett partnered with builder Tommy Robinson to form Brett Real Estate Robinson Development Company Inc. With a combined initial investment of just $500, these entrepreneurs began laying the foundation for what would become a Gulf Coast empire. Their journey started in Chickasaw, Alabama, with door-to-door real estate sales, but their vision extended much further.

In 1985, after a beach house burned down in Orange Beach, the first Phoenix condominium rose from these literal ashes. The name "Phoenix" came from the mind of Gene Brett, inspired by the mythical bird known for rising from destruction, symbolizing resilience and strength. Though Tommy Robinson was initially skeptical of the name, it has become legendary and pervasive along the Gulf Coast.

For our visit, we stayed in a one-bedroom condominium in Phoenix East 2, owned by our friends and managed by Brett/Robinson. The condo offered stunning views of the Gulf from a private balcony and all the comforts of home—a full kitchen, spacious living areas, and direct beach access. Brett/Robinson has





condos to accommodate almost any group size, making them perfect for families, groups of friends, or couples traveling together. Our unit was immaculately maintained and provided the perfect base for exploring the region both by car and on foot.

Dolphins and the Blue Angels

Orange Beach offers a wonderful mix of natural attractions and unique experiences that make it worth the flight. During our stay, we discovered activities to satisfy both our desire for relaxation and our appetite for adventure.

A highlight was our dolphin eco-tour on Wolf Bay, where we got remarkably close to the resident dolphin population. Our captain explained that between 50 and 70 dolphins reside together in the bay, and the guides know many by name, recognizing them by their unique dorsal fins. The 90-minute cruise provided not just dolphin sightings but also fascinating information about their behaviors and habitat. My wife was completely captivated as dolphins playfully raced alongside our boat.

The proximity to Pensacola, Florida—just a 20-mile drive—opens up additional attractions particularly appealing to aviation enthusiasts. When planning our trip, I checked the Blue Angels' practice schedule and discovered we could attend a free practice show at Naval Air Station Pensacola (KNPA). Nothing quite compares to watching these precision McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornets perform their breathtaking maneuvers, especially for fellow pilots who can appreciate the extraordinary skill required.

Following the Blue Angels practice, we visited the National Naval Aviation Museum located on the base. Recently reopened to the public after a temporary closure, this museum is nothing short of spectacular. With more than 150 beautifully restored aircraft and 4,000 artifacts representing Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard aviation, it's a must-see for any pilot.

The collection includes everything from early biplanes to modern jets, including former Blue Angels aircraft. My personal favorite was seeing the Vought FG-1D Corsair that was flown by U.S. Marine Corps Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington.



Panoramic view of aircraft displayed at the National Naval Aviation Museum.



Coconut shrimp at Picnic Beach.


Shrimp and Grits at Ruby Slipper.



Of course, being a beach destination, there's no shortage of traditional vacation activities. We spent mornings walking the pristine shoreline, afternoons exploring local shops, and evenings watching spectacular sunsets from our balcony. For more active visitors, kayaking, paddleboarding, and deep-sea fishing excursions are readily available (see Resources).

Self-catering and seafood splurges

One advantage of staying in a condominium is the flexibility to prepare your own meals when desired. Our unit's full kitchen proved invaluable, allowing us to enjoy breakfast with Gulf views before heading out for the day's adventures. Well-stocked Publix and Walmart stores are conveniently located just minutes from most accommodations, making grocery shopping simple. We found this particularly useful for breakfasts and the occasional lunch when we didn't want to interrupt our beach time.

That said, Orange Beach's dining scene deserves exploration. Cobalt the Restaurant was a favorite dinner spot, with its fresh seafood and spectacular waterfront setting. Their blackened grouper literally melted in my mouth, complemented perfectly by a crisp adult beverage as we watched dolphins playing in the backdrop.

For lunch one day, we discovered OSO at Bear Point, where I enjoyed perfectly seasoned blackened catfish (can you see a theme here? I like blackened Cajun-style seafood!) that rivaled any I've had in New Orleans. Another morning, we indulged in brunch at Ruby Slipper, where their shrimp and grits proved legendary—creamy stone-ground grits topped with sautéed (and yes, blackened) Gulf shrimp and a spicy sauce that still has me dreaming about having it again weeks later.

Perhaps our most serendipitous find was Picnic Beach Bar and Grill, a hidden two-story gem with parking under the structure. After a morning of flying, sometimes a perfect burger is exactly what you crave, and theirs delivered—hand-formed patties, delicious buns, and homemade fries that could convert even the most dedicated health enthusiast for one glorious meal.

The Gulf Coast is calling, and your aircraft is the perfect way to answer.

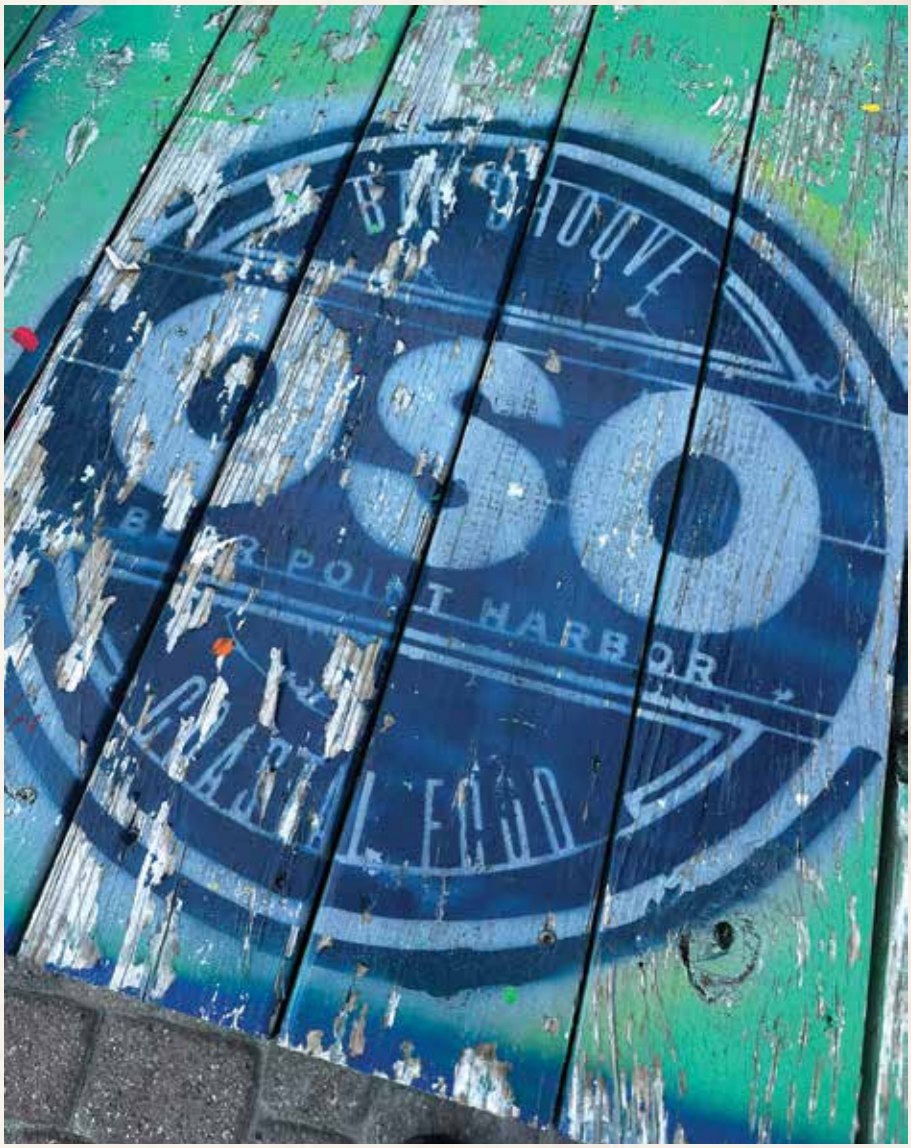
Your flight plan to coastal bliss

As we departed KJKA on our return flight to the Dallas, Texas, area, climbing to cruise altitude with the coastline gradually receding behind us, I felt that unique satisfaction that comes from a journey well-planned and thoroughly enjoyed. There's something special about flying yourself to a destination—the freedom to set your schedule and the unique perspective from above.

Orange Beach offers everything a flying vacation should: a well-equipped airport with friendly service, diverse accommodation options, activities ranging from relaxing to exhilarating, and culinary experiences worth writing home about. Whether you're planning a weekend getaway or a weeklong escape, I encourage you to plot a course to KJKA and discover this pilot-friendly paradise for yourself.

The Gulf Coast is calling, and your aircraft is the perfect way to answer.

Associate Editor **Troy Whistman** *and his wife Teresa fly out of the North Central Texas area. He particularly enjoys using aviation as a tool to help others; thus, he flies for and is on the board of Angel Flight South Central and believes that flying kids for Challenge Air is some of the most rewarding flying he has done. Send questions or comments to editor@piperflyer.com.*





Teresa and I have been doing this for years to commemorate our trips—it makes a nice album cover.

RESOURCES

BLUE ANGELS PRACTICE SCHEDULE
navalaviationmuseum.org/blueangels

BRETT-ROBINSON RENTALS
brett-robinson.com

GULF AIR CENTER FBO
gulfaircenter.com

GULF SHORES INTERNATIONAL/JACK EDWARDS FIELD AIRPORT (KJKA)
tinyurl.com/GulfShoresKJKA

NATIONAL NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM
navalaviationmuseum.org

PRESS RELEASES

August 2025

*** This section offers a curated selection of the latest announcements from aviation companies, manufacturers, and service providers, ensuring that readers stay informed about important developments in the world of Piper aircraft and General Aviation. Whether it's new product launches, significant corporate updates, or regulatory changes, each piece in this section is sourced from reliable press releases, offering authoritative information straight from the source.**

CONCORDE BATTERY CORPORATION HIRES MATT FULLERTON AS CENTRAL US TECHNICAL SALES MANAGER



WEST COVINA, CA, USA -- Concorde Battery is pleased to announce Matt Fullerton has been appointed Central U.S. Technical Sales Manager. Matt joins Concorde's international sales team in maintaining and initiating relationships throughout the aviation industry, supporting Concorde Battery's network of authorized aircraft battery distributors and airframe manufacturers.

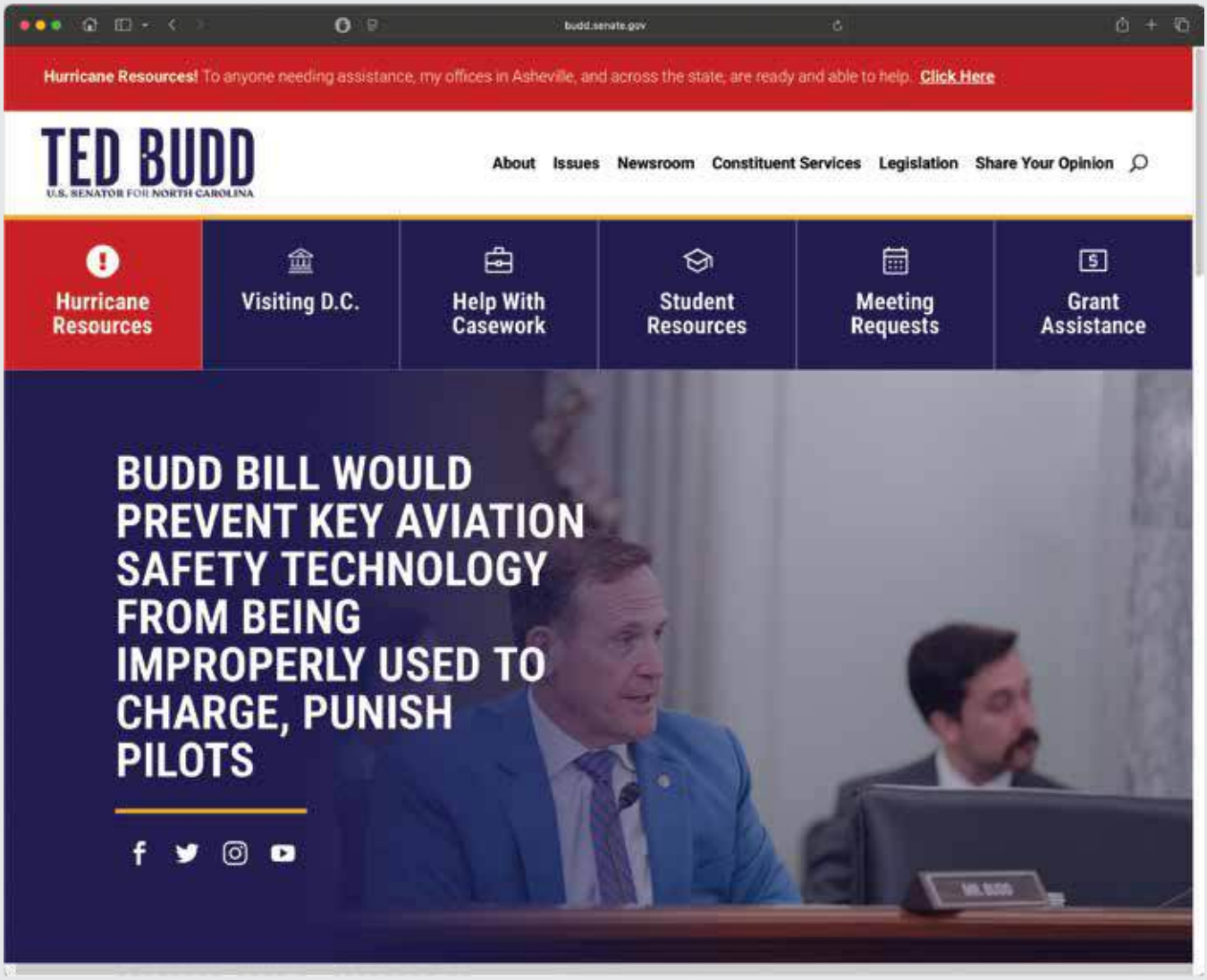
Mr. Fullerton is an expert in the aviation field with skill sets including operational knowledge as a Commercial Pilot, technical acumen as a licensed Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic, sales experience representing OEM product lines as well as aircraft sales. Matt joins Concorde Battery with a proven record in aviation of over 25 years including battery technologies in both the technical and commercial aspects. He is based in Wichita, KS, USA, and graduated from Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology in Tulsa, OK.

We are proud that Mr. Fullerton chose to share his extensive talents with us. You can join us in welcoming Matt by meeting him and other members of the Concorde Battery Sales Team at the upcoming EAA AirVenture Oshkosh.

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AOPA BACKS LEGISLATION IN CONGRESS TO STOP ADS-B MISUSE

WASHINGTON, June 26, 2025— Today, U.S. Senator Ted Budd (R-NC) and U.S. Representative Bob Onder (R-MO) introduced legislation, the Pilot and Aircraft Privacy Act, S. 2175 and H.R. 4146, respectively. The companion bills seek to address growing concerns about the misuse of Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data which has been increasingly used by some airports and state governments to collect fees from pilots.

"On behalf of AOPA, I want to thank Senator Budd and Representative Onder for leading on this important aviation safety issue. Both are active private pilots and understand that using ADS-B data for economic reasons clearly undermines the FAA's 2020 ADS-B safety mandate intended to provide situational awareness of an aircraft's position for air traffic control purposes," said AOPA President and CEO Darren Pleasance.

"ADS-B is a critical safety technology mandated by the FAA and more accurate than radar. Abusing this technology to levy unfair, sometimes duplicative fees and threatening pilots with legal action will keep some general aviation pilots grounded, which is a loss for America's economy, emergency response, and the aviation community at large," said Sen. Budd.

Continued on Page 48





Legislation to Stop ADS-B Misuse
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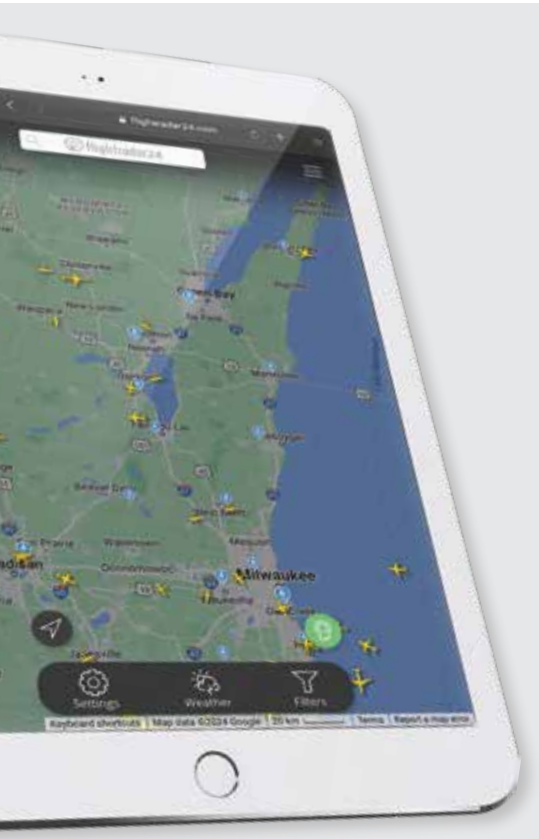
Senator Budd was joined by Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Senator Tim Sheehy (R-MT) with the introduction of S. 2175.

"As a pilot with years of experience using ADS-B technology, I understand the game-changing impact it has had on aviation safety," said Congressman Onder. "By communicating an aircraft's identification, airspeed, heading and altitude, ADS-B has dramatically improved situational awareness for pilots, as well as the real-time data air traffic controllers need to keep pilots and passengers safe. Unfortunately, some third parties have taken advantage of this data to impose and collect exorbitant third-party landing fees and frivolous lawsuits targeted at general aviation pilots and travelers. These uses of data for purposes other than air traffic safety act as a deterrent for pilots to equip their aircraft with this potentially life-saving technology."

AOPA represents more than 300,000 pilots and aviation enthusiasts across the country. The organization advocates daily to help protect and promote airports and works with airport managers and leaders to help find ways to diversify revenue streams and communicate effectively with those who use our public-use airport system.

General aviation pilots spent more than $600 million dollars complying with the FAA's 2020 safety mandate and were assured that ADS-B would only be used for improving safety and efficiency in the National Airspace System.

Montana's Governor, Greg Gianforte, recently signed into law legislation that would prevent airports in Montana from using ADS-B data to collect landing fees. This legislation was championed by State Representative Shane Klakken. Similar legislation has also



been introduced in the Minnesota legislature.

"We appreciate the recognition this issue is receiving at the state level, but we do want to avoid a patchwork of laws across the country and that is why these bills in Congress are so important," added Pleasance.

The bills seek to do the following:

• Prohibit the use of ADS-B data to assist in the collection of fees from pilots or aircraft owners.

• Clarify that ADS-B data may only be used for its intended purposes of air traffic safety and efficiency.

• Give the Secretary of Transportation the discretion to authorize other uses of ADS-B data.

• Expand, to all federal, state, and local entities, a provision in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 preventing investigations from being initiated based solely on ADS-B data.

• Require public-use airports to make transparent the impact of any new fees on general aviation and businesses and require any imposed landing fees be used for airside safety improvements.

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GARMIN EXPANDS AVIONICS DATABASE SOLUTIONS FOR SOUTH PACIFIC REGION

Navigation database developed by Garmin will bring more cost-effective options for customers in the region

OLATHE, Kan./May 12, 2025/PR Newswire – Garmin (NYSE: GRMN) today announced expanded coverage of the Garmin Navigation Database to include the South Pacific region, including Australia, New Zealand and surrounding countries. Previously available to aircraft owners and operators in the Americas and Europe, the Garmin Navigation Database delivers a new option for South



Pacific region customers to incorporate the latest aviation navigation information into their Garmin avionics. Offered for a variety of Garmin aviation products, including integrated flight decks, navigators, flight displays, portables and more, the new Garmin Navigation Database for the South Pacific region introduces a variety of cost-effective ways to purchase database updates. This includes single updates, annual bundle options and OnePak™ subscriptions for all compatible avionics in an aircraft.

"The Garmin Navigation Database continues to be an affordable and trusted solution in many regions throughout the world, and we are excited to expand its coverage to the South Pacific region. Customers now have the option for a convenient and comprehensive all-Garmin database solution that provides pilots with the information they need at a cost-effective price."

–Carl Wolf, Garmin Vice President of Aviation Sales, Marketing, Programs & Support

The Garmin Navigation Database for the South Pacific region provides foundational information needed for precise navigation throughout the departure, enroute, arrival and approach phases of flight.

Coverage is available in over 20 countries and more than 2,500 airports,





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including enroute and airspace data, instrument procedures, frequencies, airport information and more.

The Garmin Navigation Database has also been customized for region-specific needs, including verified aircraft landing areas (ALAs) in Australia and visual reporting points (VRPs) in New Zealand to aid in VFR navigation. The Garmin Pilot™ mobile application also includes unverified ALAs and identifies those within the application.

Bundles and OnePak annual subscriptions

In addition to navigation data, pilots rely upon other critical databases on their Garmin avionics. To help pilots easily keep these avionics databases updated, the Garmin Navigation Database is offered together with other databases in annual subscriptions. Device bundles provide an easy option for pilots to update compatible databases on a single Garmin navigator, flight display or portable. Single device bundles and OnePak annual subscriptions can offer a simple, cost-effective option to update navigation data and other databases, such as terrain, obstacles, airport directory, SafeTaxi®, FliteCharts – including recently released New Zealand FliteCharts – and more.

Pilots flying aircraft equipped with a Garmin integrated flight deck or multiple Garmin avionics systems can take advantage of a new South Pacific OnePak subscription, which offers significant savings by supporting all compatible Garmin avionics in a single aircraft. For one annual price, OnePak subscriptions combine the Garmin Navigation Database with other essential databases for all compatible avionics in an aircraft, along with an eligible Garmin portable device. South Pacific annual device bundles are available starting at 860.00 AUD for GNS and 1,030.00 AUD for GTN™ series navigators. South Pacific OnePak subscriptions start at 1,460.00 AUD and are also available with FliteCharts terminal procedure charts for 1,805.00 AUD.[1]

Standalone navigation database updates

The Garmin Navigation Database is also available to customers wishing to update only their navigation database.

Customers can choose a single month update or an annual subscription for their Garmin avionics systems. Standalone annual subscriptions of the Garmin Navigation Database for the South Pacific region start at 515.00 AUD for certified avionics systems. Single month purchase options start at 170.00 AUD. [1]

A better way to update

Database updates for Garmin avionics or portables can be purchased via flyGarmin.com. Once purchased, device updates are quick and easy with the Garmin Aviation Database Manager. Simple to use, the database manager application on your computer manages all database updates. It can also automatically download the latest update from the subscription so that databases are ready and can be installed without waiting for a download.

The app keeps track of current and future updates with a calendar view, indicating when a new cycle will be available, and a reminder of what cycle is currently installed. Most updates can be directly transferred to the device or data card. GNS series navigators require a Garmin USB aviation data card programmer to facilitate the transfer. Once the new databases are loaded, simply insert the card into the navigator, and fly with current data.

Additionally, Garmin's Database Concierge and PlaneSync™ connected aircraft management system can further simplify database updates. Database Concierge allows pilots to download updates to their Garmin Pilot app and wirelessly transfer to their compatible avionics via compatible mobile device. Alternatively, the PlaneSync connected aircraft management system provides automatic database updates to compatible avionics over 4G LTE or Wi-Fi via Garmin's GDL® 60 datalink.

The Garmin Navigation Database for the South Pacific region is available now. For additional information, visit Garmin.com/SouthPacificDB.

[1]Pricing includes VAT and is subject to change. Subscription will be billed in local currency, based on billing address.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from Page 8

proposal that ran in the September 2023 issue of *Piper Flyer*. It starts on Page 21. It includes a table which shows which models would be considered LSA, and which wouldn't. You can view it here: tinyurl.com/Piper-MOSAIC

The MOSAIC proposal resulted in a flood of 1,484 comments to the FAA from industry stakeholders, aircraft owners, pilots, and others. Many of the comments I've read asked the FAA to increase the stall speed limit to allow for the inclusion of more legacy aircraft.

So, the big question now is: how much weight does the FAA give to those comments? And if they do revise the definition again, where will the line be drawn? Several stakeholder comments requested that the V_{S1} number be increased to 59 knots. That would include the fixed-gear PA-28-140, -151, -161, -180, -181, but not the -235 and -236. Some Arrows, but not all, would be included. The FAA could, of course, decide to stick with its original definition.

The typical timeline from the close of NPRM public comments to the publishing of a final rule is around 18 months. The comment period on the NPRM was extended once and closed in January 2024. That would suggest a final rule sometime this summer. Rumor has it that the new rules package will be announced at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2025. I wouldn't be surprised if it showed up there; I also wouldn't be surprised if it got pushed back until Q4 2025 or Q1 2026. We'll see!

Scott Kinney
Piper Flyer *Editor at Large*

This is very helpful! I had surgery in January, and all is going well. No reason why I can't fly, but I'm afraid of being denied, and then my flying is done for good.

Thanks for the awesome service!

Bill Steinberg

Glad you're fixed up and feeling fit to fly!

Using your existing certificate and operating under Sport Pilot privileges is a good option. I have several friends who have decided they're done with FAA Aeromedical and have been flying as a Sport Pilot in their own LSAs. Assuming the goal is personal or recreational flying, there are few limitations for Sport Pilots.

BasicMed may also be an option for you if you've held a medical at some point in the not-too-distant past. That route would allow you to fly the PA-28 of your choice, regardless of what happens with MOSAIC.

Scott Kinney

Personal Minimums

Chris Kirk
July 2025

Thanks for including the Personal Minimums article. I enjoyed both the main article by Chris Kirk, as well as the sidebar by Scott Kinney.

As a retired airline pilot, I'm well aware of the limitations we had while employed. GA flying is different, so I am thrilled to see someone else who sets personal limits for themselves.

Here is my rather short list:

1. 800 and 2 for IFR. I started with 1,000 and 3 but have recently gone to this after getting more comfortable with IFR in "little planes."
2. A working autopilot for IFR.
3. One-hour fuel reserves, minimum.
4. 50% added to book runway performance numbers. In reality, I look up the "worst case scenario" I can come up with in the POH, and then add 50% to that.

So my list is shorter, but there is an amazing similarity on the ones I do have. Since I fly a twin, I'm also a little more willing to tackle night or mountainous terrain.

I'm still working on my wind limits, but have been using 15 knot crosswinds and 30 knots maximum, and have been comfortable with that. The Piper PA-23 Apache I own seems to handle crosswinds well, so I may push it up a little, but I doubt I would use higher for a lighter aircraft. When I was flying an Aeronca Champ, I think I was concerned about 5-knot crosswinds!

So far, I haven't had a limitation on altitude, but the highest I've gone in the Apache is 11,500, and I'm not sure if I'll exceed that or not. I try to watch for hypoxia symptoms, but so far it hasn't been an issue. I do take water with me on longer flights to try and stay hydrated.

Eric Parks
CFI/CFII/MEI/Corporate pilot five years
Airline pilot 37 years
GA pilot seven years
Something like 24,000 hours total time









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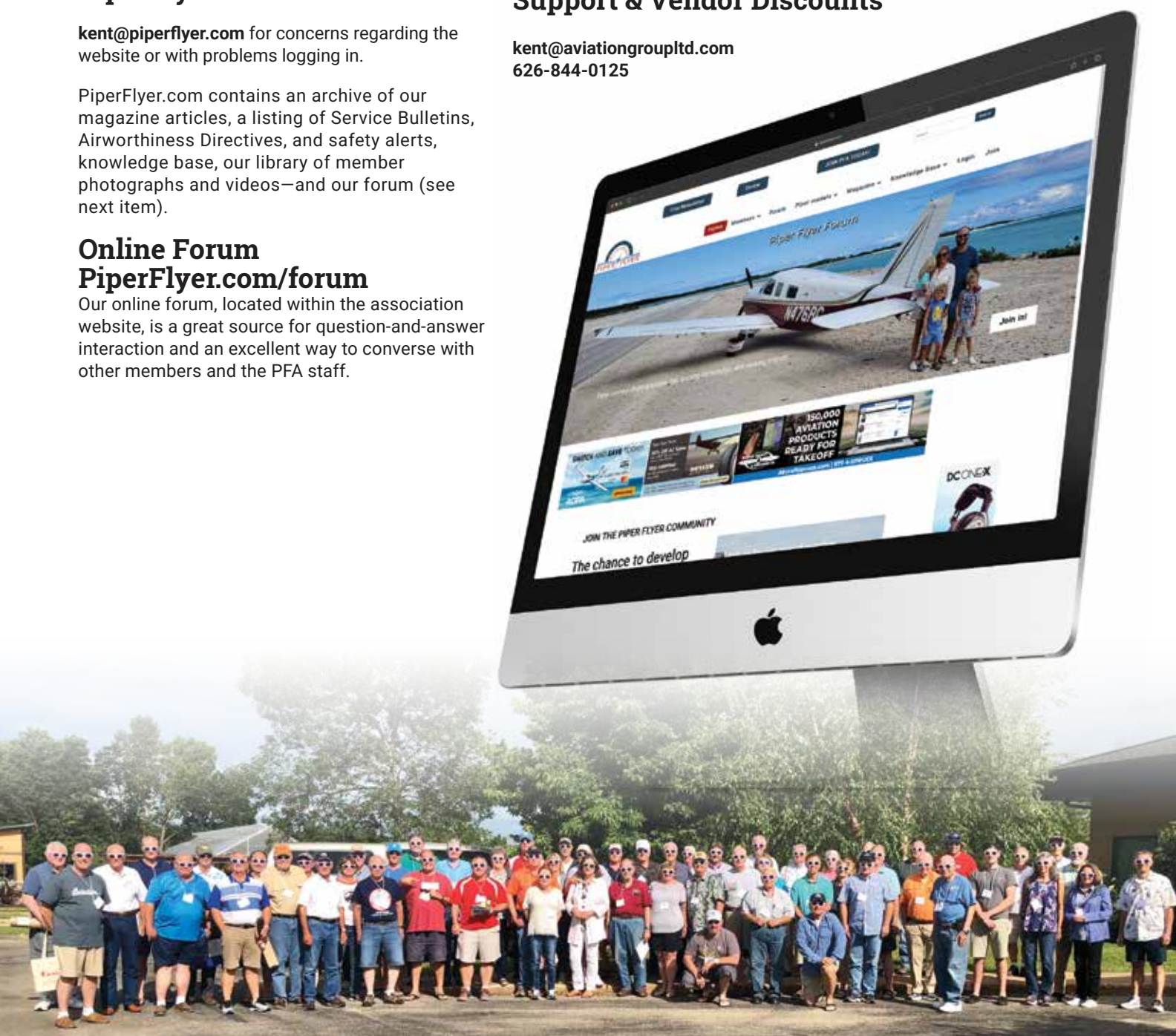
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