

## Appendix III: I Fly

### **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, February 8, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB.*

As I sat in the Palm Beach Chapter of the MATS Aero Club secretary’s office waiting to register my membership, the noise of one of the world’s largest transports caused me to look out the window and follow its flight path until it disappeared from view, taking my thoughts with it, turning them back several years. Wright Brothers – Lindberg – Billy Mitchell – I had read about all of them and their heroic efforts. I remembered the Chinese Clipper, which adorned the front covers of comic books before the war, and the wooden model Santa left me one Christmas. Then came World War II and the fast P-38s, F-51s, and P-47s. The curtain came down after the final act of World War II with the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, by the world’s largest bomber, the B-29 Super-Fortress.

### **Too Young Then**

I was still too young to join the Armed Forces when the war ended, never the less, I had been the juvenile hero of many air battles, emerging victorious from dog-fights with the Japs, and returning to England and North Africa after blasting European targets into oblivion.

### **Old Enough Now**

Korea and the jet age – this time I was old enough to get into the air frackas. I joined the Air Force expecting to become a pilot in no time but things didn’t quite turn out the way I planned. I became a desk jockey.

However, by joining the Aero Club, I now would learn to fly. No, probably not the fast jets – and the Air Force won’t recognize my training except for a possible smile of approval, satisfied to know that their desk fliers are also aviation minded, but for me it will be the realization of a life-long desire.

### **Things To Come**

I waited for M/Sgt. Russell Henderson to finish his phone call. He hung up and greeted me, “Hi Doc, hear you want to join the Aero Club.” After receiving a positive answer, he went on to explain many of the club policies: how to obtain a radio operator’s permit, how to arrange for a physical, etc. He explained the steps of progress from beginning through obtaining a commercial license. First, I would receive my primary instruction under the supervision of Capt. William K. Langner, a C-118 instructor with the 1741st Air Transport Squadron, then solo and receive a student’s permit. Approximately 40 hours later I would be eligible for a private license.

### **Cost Little To Learn**

Joining the Aero Club was hardly any trouble at all, I paid Sgt. Henderson \$1.00 for the last third of a month's membership dues, \$1.00 for a Civil Air Regulations book, and \$10.00 (half the initiation fee) and agreed to pay the rest payday.

I would have to give up a couple of nights at the NCO club each week to pay \$2.00 per hour for the instructor and \$3.00 an hour for plane rental, but from what I hear it would cost about three or four times that much for private individual commercial instruction.

(next issue – “Lesson No. 1”)

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### **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Thursday, February 21, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB.*

Most of the country was covered with snow or freezing rain, reminding shivering victims of the recent cold wave that it was still January and ole man winter hadn't the slightest notion of giving way to the birth of spring a moment sooner than he had to.

But Florida had escaped the cold wave and beads of perspiration formed on my brow as a bright sun beat down through the hazy afternoon sky. I squinted as I looked across Lantana Airport strip to the far side where a Bonanza had started rolling down the runway. Soon it was airborne with landing gear neatly tucked into the wings and fuselage.

### **Lesson One**

As I turned, my instructor, Captain William Langner of the 1741st AT Sq., drove up, parked his car, strolled over and said, “Ready to go?”

“Yes sir!” I replied, enthusiastically, and after a brief inspection walkaround-tour of the plane, we boarded and were seated, I in the front, Captain Langner in the rear seat. Another member of the Aero Club propped the plane. As we rolled along the runway, my instructor explained the fundamentals of taxiing our Aeronca Champion.

### **All Mine?**

“Okay Doc, she's all yours.” I twinged a little at this, but later was to feel easier about having her “all mine.”

“Apply pressure, first on the right rudder pedal, then the left,” my instructor told me as we zig-zagged down the runway. I couldn't help thinking, this is the beginning of reality for a dream that had many times before been on the brink of coming true, but had been pushed back to make room for other things.

“Hold the stick back – heels on the brakes,” Captain Langner coached. “Now run her up to 1500 RPM, switch to left magneto – notice the slight drop in RPM?”

I noticed the indicator had dropped slightly. Then he told me, “Switch to both magnetos – see how the revs per minute pick back up? Okay, now switch to right magneto – all right, now back to both.”

I strained to hear the instructions over the roar of the 65 horsepower Continental engine that powered the Aeronca. “If there is a 75 RPM difference at any time during this type of check, take her back in – something’s wrong with the engine.”

The muscles in my right arm strained from lack of exercise as I held the stick firmly back during full power run-up. I made a 360 degree turn at the end of the runway, visually checked the area, then the captain took control.

### **Airborne**

In what seemed only a hundred feet, the light plane rose off the ground and a few seconds later we were at 2000 feet. Once again I heard, “Okay Doc – she’s all yours! Fly it straight and level.”

My instructor explained that to do this, I should pick out a spot on the cowling of the plane, a spot in relation to the horizon when the plane is flying laterally level, and try to keep the nose in that position.

“Push the stick forward to go down. This forces the tail up, causing the nose to drop.” Captain Langner was shouting over my shoulder and the noise of the engine.

“Now pull the stick back and you get the opposite effect, tail down – nose up, causing you to climb. Watch that tachometer – keep your RPM at 2000.”

### **Plane Flies Itself**

This was my first lesson. I was learning how to make coordinated 90, 180, and 360 degree banks and turns, performing confidence maneuvers, flying straight and level.

Discovering that the airplane will, in calm weather, fly better by itself than the pilot can fly it, was my biggest surprise during lesson number one which lasted 45 minutes.

I had read many of the instructions, which I received in lesson number one, the night before in “Fundamentals of Elementary Flight Maneuvers” section of the “Civil Air Regulations and Flight Standards for Pilots” manual. But having the paragraphs come to life at my own hands with the instructor’s help was the thrill of a lifetime.

### **It’s In The Book**

The “Pilot Record and Flight Book” which I purchased at Lantana for \$1.00, now reads: “Flight from: Lantana. Flight to: Local. Equipment Flown: Aeronca Champ, N1036E, Continental Engine, 65 HP, Duration of Flight: 45 mins, Breakdown of trip time in classification: Dual 45 mins. Remarks: Straight Level 90, 180, 360 degree banks and turns, familiarization confidence maneuvers.”

(Next issue – Lesson No. 2)

## **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, March 8, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the third in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

Monday was a typical Florida day, the sun shining brightly, surface wind about nine miles per hour and just a little gusty – almost perfect flying weather, only a few scattered clouds at about 2200 feet.

But for some unknown reason I was a little nervous this time as I waited to climb into the Aero Club’s Aeronca Champion. Perhaps that was why I almost went into an outside loop when attempting my first stall recovery, about forty-five minutes after the second lesson began.

### **Lesson Two**

This time I took the controls from the beginning. I wiggled my toes as recommended to relieve some of the tension building up inside me as I tried to remember whether the stick is held forward during taxiing, or back when the wind is blowing from the rear as it was then. Forward – that’s it – to keep the tail down.

My instructor, Capt. William Langner, and I waited for two planes to land, and a twin engine job that had come up behind us to take off before we rolled onto the active runway, made our 360 degree clearing turn and headed into the wind to begin lesson two.

This time I took control of the plane almost immediately after our wheels kissed ole terre firma goodbye.

### **Not Alone Up There**

I made the standard 90 degree left turn at 400 feet and then began a series of left and right climbing turns, until we reached 2000 feet, then I eased back the throttle to cruising speed. By now the nervousness I had experienced on the ground had all but left me. And I guess my chest was beginning to swell some as I carried out Capt. Langner’s instructions. That is until my right wing dipped at the start of a 180 degree right turn, and I heard my instructor say, “We’re not up here by ourselves unfortunately, better check the area for other aircraft before making your turns.”

At the same time, I saw a blue and white tri-pacer about 300 feet below and to the rear of us. No danger of hitting him, but the important thing was that I had failed to be on the alert for other planes. Had the tri-pacer been higher I still would not have seen him until it was too late, unless I had looked before turning,

A few minutes later Capt. Langner had picked out a rectangular field and had flown around it twice at 500 feet when he told me to take the controls and explained that flying around the field was similar to the flight pattern around an airport.

### **Crabbing**

There was just enough cross wind to get in some experience in crabbing, which is done by heading the aircraft into the wind enough to correct for drift, causing you to fly slightly sideways over the ground, but

parallel to the side of the field.

After the rectangular course came the power off stalls. As usual Capt. Langner went through a couple before asking me to try it and explained the symptoms of approaching a stall, which he said you had to learn to “feel,” and that a stall occurs when the angle of attack, or climbing angle becomes too great for the speed. It is mostly caused by too much back pressure on the stick and can be corrected by releasing that pressure and getting the wing back to a proper angle of attack.

I soon learned that symptoms of an approaching stall is loss of air speed, the decrease in the effectiveness of the controls, and the tendency of the nose of the aircraft wanting to drop.

### **Goofing**

Finally when the nose can not be held up by back pressure on the stick and you begin to feel like you’re falling, you are in a stall.

Recovery is really very simple – just ease the stick forward until the plane enters a glide or shallow dive and add power. Anyway it sounds simple enough, but this is where I goofed.

“Ease the stick forward a little to recover,” said Capt. Langner.

I eased it forward all right – all the way forward, and instead of a shallow dive, I was soon on my way straight down, and about to enter an outside loop when I pulled back on the stick and abruptly came out of the screaming dive.

“Kinda hard on this type of plane,” said Capt. Langner.

Almost before I had time to get scared over what had just happened he had me make several more stalls and recoveries.

Once again we returned to Lantana airport. Capt. Langner took the controls on the base leg with me following through, and with my mind crammed with new experiences and knowledge lesson number two ended.

While crawling out of the plane I remembered the answer of an old North Carolina Sharecropper when he was asked after his first hop in an airplane whether he was glad to be back on terre firma.

“Yessah, I’s e glad, an’ the’ mo’ firma, de less terra!”

## **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, March 22, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

### **Weekend Wearier**

Eight a.m. during the week means that the day is well under way but Sunday 8 a.m. is still very early for me. However, that was the only time left on the Aeronca schedule when I went down Wednesday to sign up for week-end time.

My instructor, Captain Langner, was waiting at the Lantana Airport when I drove up at 8:05 after a hurried breakfast and a not-too-slow trip to the airport.

### **This One’s On Me**

As I had on the occasion of the previous lesson, I taxied the Aeronca out to the end of the runway, completed the engine run-up and lined the plane up with the runway, but this time instead of Captain Langner taking the controls and telling me to follow through as he had done on previous take-offs, he shouted over my shoulder, “this time you make the take-off!”

My heart skipped a beat as he came back with “now remember everything I have told you about take-offs.”

Continuing, he hurriedly reviewed take-off procedures. My mind raced to bring back bits of information it had stored that I would now have to use if I were to get the plane off the runway and into the air, without cracking up. I remembered that right rudder must be applied to compensate for the engine torque created by the prop at maximum speed. I remembered, too, that I would lift the tail of the plane as we increased speed, and would roll along on the main gear until the plane would begin to feel light. Then I would ease back on the stick to bring the nose up and we would be airborne. All this I remembered now, but would I be able to carry out the instructions at the proper time and in that sequence. Well, not much to that, I thought, as we began to ascend.

### **Call Me Ziggy**

All went well on my first take-off. Oh, I zipped a little and zagged a little, but we got off and in no time were back in the traffic pattern preparing to land. Now that I think back about the first take-off, I realize that I must have had a lot of help from my instructor, sitting back of me where I couldn’t see what he was doing, and not yet experienced enough to know whether he or I was controlling the airplane.

### **Or Zaggy**

Anyway, the next take-offs were humdingers. After pushing the throttle forward for full power, I realized as the plane swung to the left that I had not applied enough right rudder to compensate for torque. So down goes my right “number 18” on the right rudder pedal, and away we go to the right, gaining speed all the time. You guessed it – down went my left brogan, and back to the left we go. After a series of left and right 45 degree turns on the runway and forgetting to raise the tail and later the nose, we somehow got off the

ground (thanks to Captain Langner) at about a 30-degree angle to the runway. Both knees were knocking out some sort of unmelodic tune by this time, but somehow I managed to get back in the take-off pattern.

When we turned back on the base leg without breaking out of the pattern I anticipated my instructor's next words . . . "Well, let's see how you can do on a landing now."

### **First Landing**

The first landing was comparable to my first take-off.

We had taken off and were at 800 feet on the base leg, flying the pattern for my second landing. I cut the carburetor heat on to keep from icing (in Florida yet) just before reaching the spot opposite where I would touch down, I cut my power just opposite the landing spot I had picked and nosed the plane into a normal glide.

"Make your 90-degree turn parallel to the end of the runway just as I did before" said Captain Langner. Noise from the air passing overhead began to kinda swoosh by and I realized I was gliding too steeply. As I eased back the stick a little, I heard my instructor say "That's right, try to keep a normal glide."

### **Easier Said Than Done**

We passed over the canal off the end of the east-west runway and through the bumpy air over it. A slight southwest crosswind kept fouling up my attempts to line up with the runway. I had her lined up now. We were about 20 feet off the ground when Captain Langner said "fly straight and level now, check both wings, keep her level." At about five feet off the ground he said, "Ease the stick back . . . back . . . back. Get the plane in a three-point landing attitude." Screech . . . bump . . . screech! We were down. Off to the left again and then to the right, zig-zagging down the runway as I had done on take-off. "Keep control of the aircraft," said Captain Langner. Easier said than done, I thought, as my number 18's fought with the rudder pedals to control the plane's direction.

"Don't forget to hold that stick back," shouted my instructor. The plane slowed down and I gained control, with Captain Langner's help.

### **Positive Preparation**

Three landings and take-offs later, I crawled out of the air-knocker as wet as if I had bailed out in the canal at the end of the runway. I plopped down on top of the storage bin used by the Aero Club and listened as Captain Langner explained my mistakes and how to correct them, using a model plane to illustrate landing and take-off maneuvers.

### **That's What You Think!**

As I drove back toward home after lesson three, I laughed as I recalled hearing myself and others say, "I bet I could take a plane off the ground without too much trouble, but the landings would probably bother me some."

## **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, April 5, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the fifth in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

Fly for three hours! After only three lessons, of one hour each, what does my instructor, Captain Langner, intend for me to do for three hours? I wondered as I read the Aero Club schedule. Surely it isn’t a cross-country this early in my training. When I returned to my office that Wednesday afternoon, I tried to call Captain Langner, but he was flying with his regular Air Force students, teaching them how to handle the Douglas C-118 Liftmaster.

The next afternoon at three o’clock I drove to Lantana still not knowing what was in store for me. As things turned out, Captain Langner had scheduled another student for the same afternoon and had merely used my name on one line of the schedule with an arrow indicating that the other two hours would be used also.

### **Still Zigzag**

Relieved at the thought of flying only the regular one hour schedule, which leaves me completely pooped in spite of the fact that I love to fly, I made my first take-off that day without cracking up. Once again, however, I zigged and zagged down the runway barely being able to maintain control of the little Air-knocker.

### **Practice Turns**

That afternoon we flew out over the newly completed Sunshine State Parkway and I practiced making the 45, 90, 180 and 360 degree turns at two thousand feet over the snake-like Parkway.

After a few minutes of banks and turns, Captain Langner told me to head for a field over to our left. As we approached the field he said, “Go through a couple of stalls now to refresh your memory.”

### **Heart Stalls Too**

I took her through two stalls. My heart still skipped a beat or two when the nose of the plane dipped below the horizon and left me looking down at the green field marshes below, but now I knew how to control a plane in a stall and it didn’t frighten me. I would ease the stick forward, advance the throttle for power, then ease the stick back, until we’re flying level again.

### **Spins?**

After the second stall, Captain Langner said, “Climb back up to 2000 feet, and do the stalls a little differently this time.” As I eased the stick back and pushed the throttle all the way forward, my hands broke out in a cold nervous sweat. “Spin,” I thought. I hadn’t had spins yet and CAA didn’t require them any more but Captain Langner believed in taking his students through them.

As I later found out, I only had to dip each wing a little as I stalled the aircraft.

After the stalls, I returned to the airport for more landings and take-offs. The sun had begun to sink slowly behind a cloud bank as I came bouncing in on the asphalt runway for the final landing of lesson four.



## **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, April 19, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the sixth in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

Lesson five, like lesson three, began early one Sunday morning, with arrival at the airport about 20 minutes after my loud but trusty alarm had sounded off.

Two cups of coffee hurriedly stashed under my belt would serve as breakfast until I had completed my flying lesson. My first take-off wasn’t too bad this time, at least I got off over the end of the runway instead of over the side as I did so often during my last lesson. I climbed to 400 feet, made the standard 90-degree left turn and began climbing.

### **Touch And Go**

A few seconds later, Captain Langner shouted, “Now make another 90-degree left turn and stay in the traffic pattern. Today we are going to shoot touch-and-go landings.” I needed no further explanations. I had seen the pilots of the big transports shoot touch-and-go landings many times. They would land the aircraft, and seconds later lift the nose into the air and be airborne again. That’s what I was about to do.

At 800 feet and opposite the spot I had picked to land, I throttled back the engine, after turning the carburetor heat on, and entered a normal glide. Twenty seconds later I eased the throttle forward to clear the engine, the added torque effect caught me by surprise and the nose of the Aeronca abruptly swung to the left. I straightened her out and made a 90-degree turn parallel to the end of the runway, then turned on final and lined her up with the runway.

### **Too Low**

“Just a little too low,” said Captain Langner.

It was time to clear the engine again so I pushed the throttle forward. This time I held it there for a moment and picked up the altitude I needed.

The end of the runway passed under us and soon I heard the main gear screech as it touched the runway. We bounced a little and the main gear settled, then came the thud of the tail wheel.

“Get it under control,” said my instructor as I zigzagged down the strip.

“OK! Back around now,” Captain Langer shouted.

My right foot went forward on the right rudder peddle to compensate for the torque as I eased the throttle forward. I gently pushed the stick and the tail came up, then back with the stick and we were airborne.

### **Confident Now**

Several touch-and-go landings, mistakes and corrections and 55 minutes later, I taxied the Aeronca over to the MATS Aero Club parking area where another early-bird club member was waiting to fly while the weather was still very calm and the air traffic light.

“Yes, sir! Nothing like an hour’s work-out before breakfast to whip up a good appetite.”

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### **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, May 3, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the seventh in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

Since 5:30 o’clock Saturday morning, I had been trying to find someone to issue two parachutes which Captain Langner had requested I bring along for lesson No. six. Finally, at 6:00 a.m., I located a sleepy-eyed personnel equipment clerk who issued me two back-type parachutes as we exchanged a few words about the aero club.

At 6:20 a.m. it was light enough to fly and I was on my way to Lantana.

### **Dew Dropped In**

Captain Langner was waiting for me as I drove up to the MATS Aero Club parking area at 6:30 a.m. He had already made a ground check of the Aeronca Champ which was covered with the heavy dew that had fallen during the windless night.

Captain Langner propped the plane and I taxied out to the edge of the runway. During the run-up Captain Lagner noticed a definite drop in the RPM. After a while, he decided the cause was carburetor ice but by the time he felt it was safe to fly it was 7:00 a.m. and another student had shown up for his flying lessons.

### **Spins Today**

An hour later I was back in the Aeronca and flying at three thousand feet over an area not too far from the airport. Captain Langner, after telling me we were going to do spins today, made a series of maneuvers to make sure the area was clear and indicate our intent to do acrobatics. Then Captain Langner performed a couple of spins with me following through the controls.

### **My Turn**

Now it was my turn. Sensing how I felt after the two spins he had made, he handed me a couple of “Tums” as he told me to make the next spin.

The first step of a spin is a partial power stall at almost 1500 RPM. I had the stick almost all the way back in my lap and the Aeronca in a stall attitude when Captain Langner cried out “Right Rudder . . . hard!”

### **Roulette Terrain**

Cautiously but hard I pushed down on the right rudder. The right wing dropped and the fields below rushed up at me, spinning like a monstrous green roulette wheel.

“Close throttle,” shouted my instructor.

Throttle closed. Now all as silent except for the noise created by the Champ spinning through the warm sun kissed air of southern Florida.

I waited for what seemed hours for the next command that would stop the cattle in the fields below from spinning and leave me staring straight down at them as they came up to meet me.

### **Opposite Rudder**

“Apply Opposite Rudder,” “Stick Forward,” instructed Captain Langner and the spinning green mat below slowed and swung back in the other direction for a fraction of a second and then stopped its unnatural revolution.

I neutralized the rudder, and the air speed indicator began to cite respectable people to love or hate, to follow their leaders move to the right, 50 .. 55 ..60 . . .

“Now make a normal recovery,” said Captain Lagner.

I gently applied back pressure on the stick and brought the nose up to the level flight position, then eased the throttle forward to cruise RPM.

### **Spin Satisfaction**

My tensed facial muscles relaxed and a satisfied grin emerged as I confidently pulled the stick back and stared out at the soft clouds many hundred feet above me while climbing back to three thousand feet for another spin.

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## **Palm Beach Air Force Base BREEZE**

**Friday, May 17, 1957**

**“I Fly ...”**

**By S/Sgt. C. C. Dockery**

*Editor’s Note: This is the last in a series of articles being written to acquaint non-flying personnel with the first hand experiences of a new member of the MATS Aero Club at PBAFB*

When the sun drops below the horizon in southern Florida, it normally takes with it the gusty breezes that during the day provide pleasant moments of relief for those not fortunate enough to relax in the frosty comfort of an air conditioner.

Little did I realize when ole man sol robbed the breeze which was providing impromptu bumps for me in the Aeronca Champ today that he would be providing a gateway to the most exciting moment in my life.

### **“S” Turns**

Lesson Seven began about 40 minutes earlier at 5 p.m. Since that time I had been doing stalls at three thousand feet about eight miles from Lantana Airport. Now I was at 500 feet flying back and forth over a canal in a maneuver referred to as “S” turns. The object of this is to complete each turn and be in a straight and level position each time I crossed back over the canal.

When Captain Langner said “Let’s go back in” I figured that we were through for the day since the sun was already being swallowed up by the Everglades in the west.

But I later found out that was what he had been waiting for.

There were occasional gusts of wind as we flew back to the landing strip at 800 feet but they were weak now and diminishing rapidly.

Screech . . . Screech . . . phud . . . “I had made better landing” I thought as the Champ began to slow down.

### **Who – Me?**

“Let’s taxi back to the end of the runway for another trip around the pattern,” said Captain Langer.

“Guess he figures that I should do better than that, especially since there was no wind now,” I said to myself.

When we got to the end of the runway, Captain Langner suddenly said, “I’m kinda tired, how about letting me sit this one out?”

My heart skipped several beats and wound up somewhere in the upper part of my throat. He was telling me that I was about to S-O-L-O.

Captain Langner uttered a few last minute instructions which I heard only faintly. A multitude of dreams, hopes, expectations, and anxieties flooded my mind, and even my vision.

I managed a scared grin as he slapped me on the back and slammed the door behind him.

### **Sans Gremelin**

This was it! Could I remember everything? Would Captain Langner be disappointed in me? His voice wouldn’t be coming from behind to remind me that I was too low or too high, nor would I be reminded to lift the tail on take-off, or that my glide was too shallow or steep.

As I waited for a Cub to land, I re-set the trim-tab to compensate for losing the added weight of Captain Langner.

I swung onto the runway, lined up with the other end and thrust the throttle forward. Tail up. . . I stole a glance at Captain Langner as I whizzed past him . . . Nose up . . . and I was airborne.

At four hundred feet, I glanced back over my shoulder to see if I had drifted to either side of the runway, made a 90 degree left turn and began climbing.

### **Go Around**

Six . . . seven . . . eight hundred and I was opposite the spot I intended to land. I applied the carburetor heat and pulled the throttle all the way back. I was on final now and lined up with the runway which was too close for my 500 feet of altitude. The end of the runway passed under me and I was still at 350. I knew now that I would have to make another approach even though there was still enough runway to land. I let the Aeronca settle to 100 feet then pulled up for the trip back around.

### **Positive Approach**

The next approach was okay, and at about 20 feet I leveled off over the runway. Now I was only a few feet off the asphalt. I eased back on the stick and the nose came up . . . a little higher . . . more pressure to keep the Champ in a three point attitude.

The Champ settled the last foot or two and I landed . . . my first solo landing.

Maybe not a real landing, a touch and go, but after two more of the same I taxied off the runway and over to the parking strip where Captain Langner was waiting with a smile almost as large as the excited grin I flashed at him as I sat almost too erect in the cockpit of the plane "I Fly . . ."

Fly Safely!