

His lyrical poem metaphor hangs as a tapestry or is used as a coffee coaster in briefing rooms everywhere, and says things most pilots wished they could.



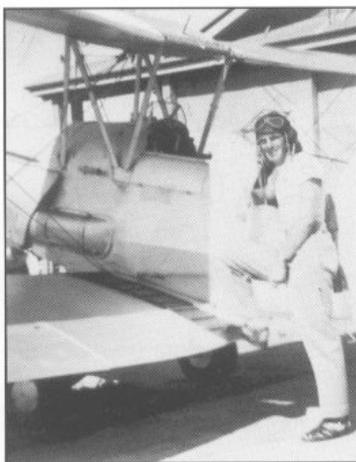
McGee's memorial in the UK with Daniel & Caleb Nixon

McGee was nineteen years old when his Spitfire engine then his parachute failed. *Google his story ...*



Another Aviation Classic:

The Open Brethren Assemblies in Tasmania commissioned farmer Esrom Morse in 1960 to open a bush ministry at remote Longreach, Qld. Bible College prepared him; aviation made it possible. Flying was the only way.



Rodger Connolly recently complained to ABC radio "Talking Heads", they'd not talked to Es Morse on their programme?

"I have just finished reading the memoirs of a remarkable individual who served as a Flying Padre for more than forty years in Outback Australia without ever being on any organisation's payroll. (He self published his memoirs around 10 years ago in a book titled "Angels on My Wings")."

"This humble man's story is one of the best yarns I have ever read. He amassed 12,500 hours flying a single-engine Cessna in outback Australia during which time he broke just about every aviation law and flying convention there is."

"His name is Esrom Morse (even his name suggests character...it's a palindrome) Es is now in active retirement in Redcliffe QLD. If you could convince him to appear on "Talking-Heads" you will have secured a highly entertaining guest".

Of course, Aviators know the sound of Morse, but forgotten the code; it's published on maps. for NDB's and VOR's. Morse is with us forever.

But Es's book said: *"It's a fascinating sight to be flying across the Great Western Plains at around 12000 feet and watching scores of great towering 'whirlies' moving slowly across the plains and reaching thousands of feet into the sky."*

"It's not so inspiring to be flying on such a day and clawing at the sky, trying to gain some altitude, but being thrown hopelessly about them and going down just as much as you go up. I remember one such a day when I had struggled for ages and was still only at about 7000 feet when I heard a Airline pilot pass his position. As he was not far away I called him to find out what height I had to get, to be clear of the bumps and get some smooth flying. He asked what height I was, and when I told him I heard him laugh and said, "Forget it mate. We are at fourteen thousand and it is just as terrible up here."

"Charlie Gray was a passenger with me as we climbed five thousand feet west of Muttaborra, when we were alarmed at what looked like a big flock of large birds, but in a few seconds we passed through a mass of dry roly-pollies and grass. We have seen sheets of corrugated iron several thousand feet up, which indicates the power of storms or whirlies at ground level."

"Storms play a very important role in the lives of anyone living in the Outback, especially in the case of light aircraft pilots. It is an incredible sight to watch from a great height a dust storm generate and then build up in the 'Morney' and the 'Cluny' areas. The country is so open and flat and vast that the huge build-up accompanying such a storm can be frightening to watch from a plane, especially if they are where you want to go."

"In much of the southwest of Queensland great rivers like the Thompson, Barcoo, Diamantina and Georgina can carry floodwaters hundreds of miles and as it moves down into the far south-west it branches out into thousands of channels which spread out for miles. If the flooding continues, the waters rise and eventually the whole country is submerged. As these waters recede, the volume of top cattle feed is enormous and enough to feed all the cattle in the country. However, next year there may no rain or flood at all, and all die."

"I remember flying 160 miles from Innamincka to Birdsville, and for the whole distance, only odd red sand hills

were above water, and many of these almost covered with cattle. At Birdsville, Hughes of 'Clifton Hills' in the north of South Australia said that he could fly from his place for three hundred and fifty miles in a straight line over muddy water. That was in 1963 the year when for the first time in white peoples memory the flood waters broke through the sand hills and flooded Lake Eyre.

"Early one morning I flew over drought-stricken stunted scrubland near Yaraka and for miles, I watched thousands of kangaroos fan out left and right of the plane as it approached. These animals were starving and uncannily sensed a storm and were traveling towards it.



"To take off early on a lovely morning, and climb out over the vast western plains, and see the small hills and trees touched by glorious early morning sunlight - to see the long clear cut shadows quickly beginning to shorten as you slide over them. is a sensation that I know most pilots treasure dearly.

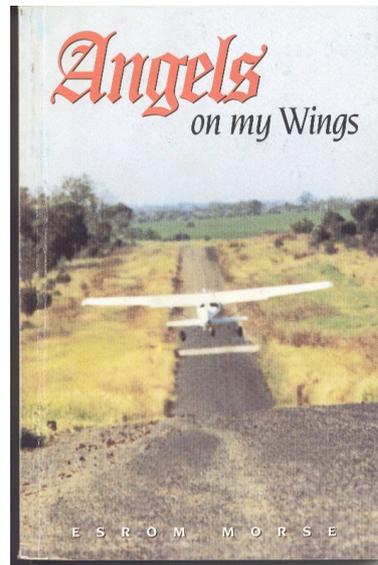
"To climb abeam of the broken cloud touched by the rays of the early morning sun, or the late evening sunset is so beautiful that you are conscious that only God could create such a beautiful picture. To weave gently, and soar your way through the highways, through the tunnels and chasms of towering masses of cloud that are constantly moving and changing in shape and colour is unforgettable.

"Flying did not teach me to pray, but it certainly encouraged it, and it certainly taught me a great deal about prayer.

"For me, the most unpleasant aspect of flying would be bad weather, and those things associated with it. Extreme heat and turbulence in outback summers is a dark one in my memory.

I have spent many hours with one hand on the control column, my elbow wedged on the armrest, and my right hand holding on to the bottom seat frame between my knees and the seat belts pulled as tight as possible. There have been times when the belts were just not tight enough and I have hit bumps so hard that my head has been banged onto the cabin roof and I have headed for a property and landed to bandage my head, and search for any possible plane damage."

Morse's book is a rare aviator's classic, and worthy of searching for in used books stores. (This is the man who skydived to celebrate his 80th.)



You can catch more of Es's exquisite aerial yarns at ... <http://www.outbackpatrol.com.au/angelonwings.htm>

One of Morse's longest serving successors is Pastor Steve Cavill; in his shiny Jabiru in '08. This frisky light sports 4-place supplements their C182, and covers a hundred remote homesteads and communities west of Longreach to the NT and SA borders and back ..



Longreach's Steve Cavill and his Jabiru

Another Bishop:

Bernard Buckland was another active pilot in the church, while one of Anglican Bishop Howard Witt's rectors at Derby, WA.

Buckland used a Piper Tri Pacer in the Murchison before shifting to the Kimberleys, and later to the minefields around Kalgoorlie. He later became the Bishop of NW Australia, based at Broome.

A Dreamer:

The war did things to George Howe of Perth, too. He'd worked on fighters and bombers in the islands. His dream for a flying mission and Christian outreach took ten years to birth, so by the mid-1950's he formed Aerial Missions, Inc.