

"I hope I don't get airsick because I get carsick and if I get airsick, I couldn't be a pilot and then I would have to go to work."

Written by a fifth grader.

Smoke Trails:

Brother Francis' 'Gasping-Gertie' left smoke trails all over the Northern Territory in the 40's & 50's, while he served with "The-Bush-Brotherhood", (an Anglican order of bachelor clergy).

His unpredictable landings were described as 'flying-the-Auster-with-style!' *He blamed it on the Kangaroo juice.*



Based later at Bourke, NSW in 1960, he welcomed the Nixon bi-plane with delight, but said little of his exploits. Journalist Ivan Southall included some he extracted in his "Parson On The Track".

Francis left for parish work in South Australia almost to recover from his flying reputation.

The Brotherhood was absorbed in the 70's by other Anglican missions. Google for the book and the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Dubbo, NSW.

Klunk-Ping-Thud:

Heavy repair costs tended to reduce mission flying but pilots found ways to get by with caution. One hangar at Broken Hill used to display this outrageous repair prices list on the hangar wall.

- For a Ping-Ping-Ping - 85 Pounds
- Plunk-Ping-Plunk - 150 Pounds
- Klunk-Ping-Klunk - 225 Pounds
- Thud-Klunk-Thud - 500 Pounds
- Clang-Thud-Klank - 825 Pounds

Into All the Earth:

The untamed Northern Territory possessed a charm all of its own. It's mystery fostered cavalier pioneers. *So say the history books.*

Christian men among them were Harold Shepherdson and Vic Pederson, who were ordained to "go into the highways and byways and compel them to come in." They did not realise they were overworked and underpaid, admired but not truly appreciated. But there was no one else, and someone had to do it.

Not quite the same were Eddie Connellan building an airline, and the Territory's own flying doctor, the colorful Clyde Fenton. All adventured where man had not flown

before, in unheard-of ways, by bending most of the rules and challenging convention to do it. Departmental fumings didn't change them one bit.

Taught himself to Fly:

From the 1930's through to the 1970's Harold Shepherdson was a Methodist missionary at Elcho Island off the far north-east coast of Arnhem Land.

He built a Heath Parasol from a kit and taught himself to fly it. It became a Cessna later, and those who were young missionaries then still spin yarns of this exploits in the air. Nurse Gwenda Ronalds/Sadler flew with him on many clinic runs, and watched him work his 'wonders', and saw how the people truly loved him.



His Heath Parasol

It has been widely known that Shepherdson was responsible for instilling Christian teachings and work ethic with the Yolngu people, and taught songs such as Blessed Assurance, How Great Thou Art, Just a Closer Walk with Thee, along with Christmas and Easter hymns.

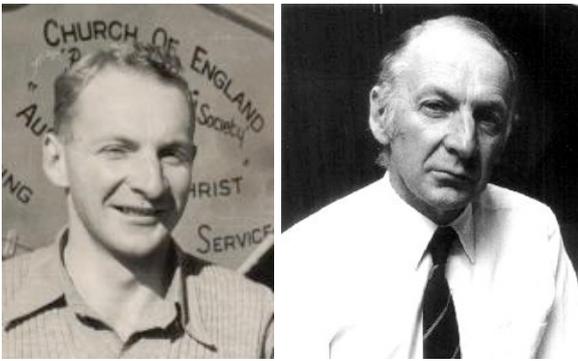


Today's MAF pilots say they carry on the Shepherdson vision. Perhaps they'd read Patrick Overton ... who said, "When you come to the edge of all the light you have and are about to drop off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing that one of two things will happen; there will be something solid to stand on, or you will learn to fly". That's like II Cor. 5:7 See Overton ... at ... <http://homebody2001-ivil.tripod.com>

Here's more harrowing stories of a crash or two that will leave the hair standing up on your neck: Go to ... <http://www.qfom.com.au/collections/story/pilots.html>

Nearly didn't make it:

Early BCA pioneer pilot, Mac Macarthur Job at Ceduna SA in the 1940's nearly didn't make it; he was first rejected by the RAAF due slight color vision defect. *But that didn't stop Mac Job for a second.*



His persistence won him a 65-year-long career flying numerous types and as an aviation writer and consultant to high level administrations. His research and writings won him impressive international awards.

As a Dragon and Lockheed pilot he helped build the Aerial Medical Service for the Anglicans at Ceduna, SA, before it was absorbed into the RFDS.

His emergency medivacs in raw conditions at night with and without flares, saved many patients. One Lady of the Homestead delayed things a while to make out her Last Will and Testament, before she would dare to fly in his aeroplane.

Dragon pilots took considerable pleasure in explaining to worried passengers that even though it was an ageing wood-and-fabric aeroplane and was held together by fencing wire and chewing gum, **they were perfectly safe**, because when the weather got rough, the termites in the spruce held hands!



In 1958 he was operating a private Charter business on the NSW coast, for businessmen and tourists.

Job tells of coaxing a gasping Gypsy Major engine in his Dragon for 20-painful minutes abeam the cliffs into Merimubula airport, almost on the crest of the waves, just in the nick of time! Innocent passengers clicked merrily away on their Leicas enjoying low flight while Mac sweated in the front office. *It's single controls; no copilot.*



That's when flying was described as consisting of endless hours of tedious boredom interspersed by moments of sheer terror.

In 1964 Macarthur Job was engaged by DCA's Safety Investigation Branch, and has reported aircraft incidents since. He is still a freelance aviation writer and advisor in 2008 at the ripe old age of eighty-two.

A Bishop's Prayer:

Here's another segment of the aviation story like Langford-Smith and Vic Pederson, which could be labeled, as Steve Ward says, "*God kept these fliers alive in spite of themselves*".

It's about the Bishop of the West, and his famous exploits! Ward says he heard some from people - others "*I have first-hand knowledge of!*"

1. Soon after their arrival in Broome in the 60's to do Air-Charter, they heard that the Bishop had "hand-started" the parish C182 prop, at the La Grange mission south of Broome, due a flat battery. Sister Eta firewalled it thinking that was his instruction. (*He told her to close the throttle, but didn't demonstrate*).

He grabbed the tail as it went past, wrangled it though 3-turns before it tossed him off. It then reached around 60kts with main wheels locked, and finished end over end. No injuries to speak of, but lots of dents.

Max Horsecroft was the Pommy engineer who did general aviation work around. He used to complain every 100-hourly after that, that Rosary Beads were stuck in everywhere. In the tail cone, under the instrument panel, jammed in cable joints, stuck in the ceiling upholstery. The Nuns tore the Rosarys to pieces as the Bishop sped them down the runway!

2. The Diocese then bought the big-hearted Bishop a brand new C210, VH-MHC. He soon ran out of fuel and did a wheels-up on the mud flats outside Derby, We all cried - *it was a brand new aircraft!*

3. Then he ground-looped at Lombadena on the wet red clay.

4. He was at Balgo Hills with 3 nuns on board - and the Sisters could see that the fuel gauges were on "E". He was taxying out but the sisters could not get through to him what they were hysterical about. He took off for Derby - but the engine started to splutter on climb-out. He declared an emergency - and made it back to the ground at Balgo.

In God We Trust:

He said in his "225" DCA Incident report words to the effect that ... "*someone else there always filled the tanks at Balgo - they knew I can't get back otherwise.*" The Nuns got excited when they flew with him. He told them, - "**In God We Trust.**"

Which comes to his classic pre-flight checks - "*Get in, taxi out, line up..... Cross yourself, ... Father, Holy Ghost, the Son, --- and give 'er the gun ...*"