



TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

Dear Ken & Lynn,

Lately the newsletter has developed an alarming trend, it seems to have become a chronicle of crashes, accounts of odd behaviour, etc. I thought it's time for some good news, otherwise it will put people off Ospreys rather than turn them on! Two areas where I would like to relate my experiences are stalling behaviour and water handling.

My aircraft is being tested by our Department of Aviation as the first-of-type Osprey in Australia. The testing required is very extensive - runs into twenty-five pages! Its stalling behaviour has therefore been very thoroughly investigated not only by myself but by a national aerobatic champion (no - not doing aerobatics in it) and two very experienced professional test pilots, at C of G positions back to 16½" aft of datum. We are all agreed that it does not really exhibit any natural stall warning. At the stall the nose simply drops sharply and on mine the right wing also drops. The Department of Aviation will not give the Osprey an Australian Certificate of Airworthiness unless it is fitted with an artificial stall warning device.

But now for the good news. Because the stall is quite sharp it could never be mistaken for anything else, and recovery is carried out quite easily by the use of perfectly standard techniques. Both the "into" and "out of" phases are quite predictable. Height loss in my aircraft is about 100 to 200 feet, so the only point to really watch is that you don't let it happen near the ground. I NEVER approach at less than 65 knots.

Now for water behaviour. I am not a water-rated pilot but like several other people who have written in the newsletter, I ran my Osprey in from the land and then tested its water behaviour. (Incidentally, the moment when for the first time I saw it floating on the water and retracted the wheels was one of the great moments of my life). All went well 'till I tried getting near take-off speeds. The results were frightening -- sufficient to say thank goodness I didn't actually get it off and try to land again.

Since then I have had it tested by, and commenced instruction with, an experienced water pilot. In his opinion my Osprey is a safe, steady little aircraft -- as easy to handle as a Lake Buccaneer. It does not show bad porpoising tendencies but if you try to lift it off before it's ready, it will bounce.

The important point in water handling is DIFFERENT and TRICKY folks-I still haven't got the hang of landings. I can't recommend too strongly that you get at least some instruction from an experienced person, either in your own Osprey or otherwise, before you start water work yourself.

To summarize, my Osprey is a delight to me. I have done over 30 hours so far, I'm still finding out about it and everyone who sees it really admires its stylish lines. Stick at it - it will be worth it!

Yours sincerely,

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Several issues back you reported the death of a friend of mine, Bob Mautner. I wish here to relate the story of the movement of his aircraft from his shop to the water.

Four of us, Fred Berast, Sid Busget, Alf Baron and myself had decided to fly over to see Bob as his aircraft was completed and we had a great desire to drool over it as Bob was a master craftsman and his aircraft mirrored this, it was gorgeous.

We met at the airport in Penticton at 8:00 destination Argenta about 180 miles east. We preflighted our trusty steeds - CF-HTO - CFQGJ - mighty 150's and set off, Alf and myself together as we are both Osprey builders. It was mid February and the weather unseasonably cold 9900. After a fairly uneventful flight we arrived at Bob's strip which used to be a logging road. It's a very good trip but a little intimidating as it has 60 feet trees on both sides and rises to an 8⁰ grade on between the trees. Bob's son met us with ground transport as it is about 11 miles to his home.

We arrived to find Bob and family trying to devise the safest, easiest way to load the Osprey on a low bed designed for a back-hoe. This was no mean task as the trailer was barely wide enough for the gear and the aircraft had to be loaded from the side, but after much jockeying and a lot of team work we got it on and tied down.

Next comes the 10 mile trip to Lardeau over various road conditions from very bad to very good. Four of us stood guard on the trailer to ensure the cargo rode safely. We arrived in Lardeau on the beach and proceeded to unload which proved to be a whole bunch easier as we had another helper in the form of gravity.

It was now getting on in the afternoon and we had to leave as we had a 2 hour flight home and dark comes early in February. So Bob drove us back to the strip and we took off, rocking wings in good-by as Bob waved I could not resist a pass over the Osprey as it stood on the beach, a kind of a window into the future as I dreamt of the day my Osprey would make the same journey. I did not know then it would be our last good-by as Bob crashed two weeks later due to a power loss - steep turn to return to the strip, low airspeed accident. We all lost a friend & comrade.

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