



REMEMBERING

This started out to be an essay on why I have always been fascinated with airplanes, but turned into a trip down memory lane.

When I was a little kid, way back in the middle and late 30's, airplanes were few and far between. I remember when going to the McDonald school, one room, 30+ kids, seven grades and one teacher, that when a plane would fly over, everyone would rush outside to see it and the first one out the door would be Mr. Bushy, our teacher.

Once, when I was seven or eight, a red Piper Cub, 2 place side by side (Pacer?) ran out of gas and landed in our next door neighbor's cow pasture. Every kid in that part of the country and lots of grown-ups too, descended on this poor guy to touch and look and ask a million questions about the plane, flying, etc. He let everyone of us kids sit in his plane and push the pedals and wiggle the stick: Seventh heaven.

1941 was a fantastic year. I was 10. We went on a trip to Toledo to visit cousins on my Mother's side. Their two oldest boys had a basement full of models, hundreds, even some with gas engines. They gave me a scale model of a P-28 Pea shooter to take home. Fantastic.

For my birthday, that year, my Dad paid \$15 for a 10 minute ride in a Luscombe. Great.

Also that year, the Army Air Corp. activated the Collins Air Base west of Alpena for advanced fighter training and moved in P-35 and P-47's and later P-38's and A20A's.

When the first two funny looking planes with twin booms and two engines flew over our house escorted by about 20 P-47's, my Dad, Mother, two sisters and I got in the old Ford and drove 35 miles to the air base to find out what they were. Both planes and their pilots were parked right by the parking lot, so everyone could walk around and ask all about these new P-38's. The pilot even helped us get up on the wing to look into the cockpit. Within two months you couldn't get within a mile of the base.

By the end of 1942, both Alpena and Oscoda had advanced fighter training. We lived almost exactly between the two bases and they met almost every day over our house to fight. Note: No height limits at that time. You haven't lived until you experience 20 or 30 P-47's, P-38's, and A20A's all fighting at about 0 altitude over your house. Loved it.

By that time, I'm building rubber powered models just as fast as I can get enough money to buy the kits, glue, and dope.

Lots of great memories; U-Control and Combat, two trips to Selfridge Air Base with the Civil Air Patrol, and working at the Plymouth Model Air Meets. More U-Control.

In 1954, my wife surprised me with a Babcock Air Trol radio, Live Wire trainer and 09 for Christmas. More U-Control, kids, classes in model building at the Elementary school and then, one day, talking to a guy in a restaurant with one leg named Bill about "Radio Control" - and here I am!

Happy New Year,


Frank Olson