

# PREAMBLE



My interest in aviation started before the log that follows



I graduated from high school in 1941. College education was out of the question. A course in aluminum sheet metal work was offered that summer at the high school with the prospect of getting a job at an aircraft manufacturing plant in Tulsa or Wichita. In August, a group of us departed Muskogee for Wichita. I landed a job at Cessna Aircraft. By the spring of 1942 I was operating a spot-welding machine. I also realized that I was never going to amount to anything without a college degree. I returned to Muskogee in May 1942

I entered Northeastern Teacher's College at Tahlequah, OK which was about 30 miles east of Muskogee. My brother Don decided to do the same. Being just 19, the draft and military service was in the offing. That fall I learned that the Navy had a program at the school where by enlisting I could learn to fly at a local airfield and go on active duty in the Navy at some future date.


I learned to fly the Piper Cub and had a ball until the spring of 1943. I still attended classes, lived in a dormitory at the school. I spent all of my spare time at the airport doing maintenance work on various tasks, assisted an aircraft mechanic, and got to fly from time to time. I was the person that got to put in "slow time" on overhauled engine. Flying, of course. I had a ball! I met Kathy during the process. She also learned to fly and soloed!

*Written by Gene Luff, May 2019*

<p>July 1943</p>	<p>Departed for Del Monte, CA for preflight training (sports activities)</p>
<p>28 September 1943</p>	<p>NAS (Naval Air Station) Hutchinson, KS for flight training in Stearman biplane</p>  <p><b><i>Stearman</i></b></p>
<p>8 December 1943</p>	<p>Last flight – transferred to Corpus Christi, TX NAS</p>
<p>27 December 1943</p>	<p>First flight in SNV-1, single-engine monoplane – Corpus Christi, NAS</p>  <p><b><i>SNV1 Liberator</i></b></p>
<p>25 March 1944</p>	<p>Last flight SNV-1</p>

1 April 1944	First flight in PBY Seaplane at Corpus Christi NAS
May 1944	<p>Had trouble stall landing PBY my instructor went on leave but my troubles with landings were not reported to his successor and I kept on flying PBYs. I must have overcome my landing problems because I graduated as an ensign on 3 June 1944</p>  <p><b><i>PBY Catalina</i></b></p>
6 June 1944	I was home in Tulsa on D-Day
22 June 1944	Returned to Corpus Christi NAS and flew a few hours in SNV-1 June and July
8 August 1944	<p>First flight in PBM at Banana River NAS</p>  <p><b><i>Martin PBM</i></b></p>
20 September 1944	Last flight in PBM at Banana River NAS. Went on leave and got married on 27 September 1944 in Muskogee, OK
15 October 1944	Reported to NAS in Norfolk, VA
1 November 1944	Reported for PBM flight training in PBMs at Key West, FL NAS
11 December 1944	Last flight in PBM in Key West NAS.

	During the tour of training in Key West, two planes were in a circle (I saw one of them) masking bombing runs on towed targets in the water. The one was behind me and he drove the PBM into the water killing all on board.
23 December 1944	Three of us received orders to report to Patrol Squadron 214 at Guantanamo Bay NAS in Cuba, We left Key West in an RD3, landed at a landing strip in Cuba but a mixed order delivered us to San Juan Puerto Rico (PR). WE were eventually returned to Guantanamo Bay NAS within a few days.
9, 10, 11 January 1945	Time spent in fights to Great Exuma in the Bahama Islands. I was a beachcomber.
20 January 1945	Squadron was transferred to NAS in Coco Sola, Panama
March 1945	I was the navigator in the crew that delivered a PBM to Norfolk NAS for overhaul. Kathy flew in from Tulsa. We had a wonderful few days in Norfolk. The crew returned to Coco Solo via Banana River NAS and Guantanamo NAS in a freshly overhauled PBM
28, 29, 30 6529	
30 April 1954	Flew to the Galapagos Islands with a stop at Corinto, Nicaragua
1 May 1945	Corinto to Galapagos Islands
2 May 1945	Galapagos to Coco Solo
8 May 1945	End of war in Europe
Early June 1945	Squadron returned to Norfolk on board what know as a <i>Baby Carrier</i> . This ship had been hit by a Kamikaze Plane in the Pacific
June and July 1945	Leave in Tulsa. In July I returned to Norfolk with Kathy
27 July 1945	Naval Ba Pers didn't know what to do with me. They flew me to Pensacola NAS for training in PBYS! Kathy and I lived in houses with kitchen privileges in Norfolk and Pensacola.
Mid-August 1945	War with Japan ended!
October 1945	I was transferred to Banana River NAS for additional training in PBMs. Kathy and I lived in a second floor of a house on a strip of land between the Atlantic Ocean and Banana River near Melbourne, FL. I had purchased a 1938 Ford sedan while on leave in Tulsa during August 1945
9 December 1945	I was on board a PBM for 13 hours looking for those 5 planes that were missing off the coast of Florida.  <i>NOTE: This is the infamous Flight 19 – the five Anger torpedo bombers that went missing in the Bermuda Triangle on 5 December 1945</i>
17 February 1946	Training flight from Banana River NAS to Guantanamo Bay NAS (Cuba) night flight. Brother Don was onboard just so he could say

	that he had been overseas. He had been stationed at Vero Beach NAS as a Marine Corp instructor during the war flying Curtis SB2Cs.	
19 February 1946	<p>The return flight from Guantanamo Bay turned out to be quite eventful.</p> <p>I was another night flight. As we approached the Florida coast we received a radio message informing us not to return to Banan River NAS because of approaching thunderstorms. We were told to land at Dinner Key Coast Guard Station near Miami. I found the station and landed a little bit long. This was good because, as I found out the next day, there were some tall pilings on the edge of the water in line with the flight path. The accompanying PBM wasn't as fortunate. He struck one of the pilings and damaged one of the props.</p>	
10 March 1946	I was classified as a PPC (Patrol Plane Commander) [before] leave in Tulsa.	
April 1946	<p>Received orders to report to Patrol Squadron 208 at Norfolk</p> <p><b><i>VP-208 Squadron Patch</i></b></p>	
7 May 1946	Norfolk to Bermuda	
8 May 1946	Bermuda to Norfolk	
14 May 1946	Norfolk to Jacksonville	
18 May 1946	Jacksonville to Norfolk	
20 May 1946	Norfolk to Jacksonville Squadron was transferred	
26 September 1946	Jacksonville to San Juan	
27 September 1946	San Juan to Trinidad	
29 December 1946	Discharged from Naval Reserve (USNR). Departed Trinidad in an RD4 for Jacksonville; then by train to Tulsa.	



