

Seabee Bulletin

FROM PERSONAL PLANE DIVISION OF REPUBLIC AVIATION CORPORATION

DEALER BULLETIN NO. 3

August 19, 1946

THE SEABEE CROSSES THE CONTINENT

Tex Rankin, one of the world's best known and loved pilots, was the first of Republic's blue ribbon distributors to take delivery of a production Seabee.

He and his partner, Bob Norswing, left Farmingdale the evening of July 25th. The story of their crossing the continent, their adventure on high mountain lakes, the climax on Lake Tahoe and the grand anti-climax when they homed at Tulare is as human and interesting a tale as has been told in many a long day.

With Tex Rankin's permission, it is reproduced as he wrote it for his own dealers and is enclosed with this bulletin.

OTHER SEABEE DELIVERIES

Following a schedule adopted many weeks ago, which basically aimed to get the first Seabees into different types of terrain, climate and operating conditions, the following distributors have to date in August, taken delivery of their first demonstrators:

Bill Turgeon, for Turgeon Flying Service, Inc. of Sky Harbor
Airport in Illinois

Les Bowman of Aircraft Sales Company for the State of Texas

Joe Crosson of Northwest Air Service, Inc. for Alaska

Bud Harrington of Harrington Air Service, Inc. of Mansfield, Ohio

Ted Herbert for Safair of New Jersey

Bob Thompson for North American Airport Corp. for southern New York

Tom MacDonald and Marion Cey of Aircraft Sales Corp. of Detroit

Wes Holmes of E. W. Wiggins Airways, Inc. for Boston and much of New England

Mr. And Mrs. E. Merritt Anderson of Anderson Air Activities for Wisconsin

Bob Hinck and Nick Flynn of Hinck Flying Service for Minnesota

In addition to the above, Wes Marden of Marden Airways, Inc. yielded to the urgency of the State of Maine, allowing Earl Crabbe, chief pilot of the Forestry Department to put the first Seabee into government service on fire patrol for the State of Maine.

Production is now accelerating. By the end of August it is hoped that nearly all of our 70 distributors will have received their demonstrators so that we can start the round of deliveries to our Seabee dealers.

Every distributor's pilot who has been in has been given transitional time on the Seabee and is now prepared to demonstrate the Seabee to dealers in his territory. In the meantime, Republic is trying to help out those areas where delivery is delayed by sending out company planes and pilots to cover special events or to meet special situations.

PLANS FOR CLEVELAND AIR RACES

Nine of Republic's top executives and their wives expect to attend the Cleveland Air Races and to have occasion to meet Republic distributors and dealers from all over the country.

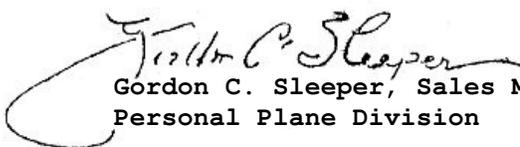
Republic headquarters will be at the Hotel Carter and at the Races our party can be found in Boxes 16 and 17, Section P, Grandstand A. Expected to attend from Republic are:

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Marchev (President)
Mr. and Mrs. C. Hart Miller (Vice President and General Manager)
Mr. and Mrs. Mundy I. Peale (Vice President and General Sales Manager)
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Kartveli (Vice President and Chief Engineer)
Mr. and Mrs. Lowry Brabham (Director of Flying)
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Ellington (Director of Public Relations)
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Foulger (Manager Dayton Office)
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lehne (Director of Military Contracts)
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon C. Sleeper (Director of Personal Plane Sales)
Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Spencer (Chief, Seabee Experimental Flight Test)

As an innovation for the Races, Republic expects to have three Seabees stationed on the waterfront near the City of Cleveland to provide ferry service to and from the airport for members of the Republic party and their guests.

A "DON'T DO" TO REMEMBER

Please, when you fly the Seabee, don't land on water with your wheels down. It is bad medicine. It invites trouble. It could be very serious. Yet it has happened right here at Republic twice in one week, once when the wheels were not locked down and once when we believe they were locked. In neither case did the Seabee turn over. There was no injury to the absent-minded pilots or their passengers. In both cases the bow windows came out. In the locked wheel landing the gear mechanism broke. In one case, some of the hull rivets popped. Despite the fortunate outcome of these two accidents, it should be remembered that neither test was conclusive as fairly high winds made the landing relatively slow. You are urged to train yourself and others never to land on water without visually checking that your wheels are up.


Gordon C. Sleeper, Sales Manager
Personal Plane Division

Tex Rankin's Story:

We received delivery on the very first NC job delivered to a distributor. It is serial number 13. The factory kept 12 ships for test work. We accepted delivery on Thursday, July 25, and left at 4 P.M. for Washington, D.C. The following day we took off at noon and flew to Danville, Illinois, with a stop for gas at Marietta, Ohio.

The following morning we took off at Sanville at 9 A.M., and landed at Burlington, Iowa, because of a severe thunder storm. We remained on the ground for an hour, then proceeded to Lincoln, Nebraska, for gas and lunch.

We had already decided to take the middle route to the West rather than the low level cooler route through Montana to Spokane, or the low level southern route. We wanted to know what the Seabee would do taking off at Cheyenne and Rock Springs, and how it would climb over the high mountains of Wyoming, Utah and Idaho.

We took off from Lincoln in a broiling sun with the temperature 96° in the shade and flew to North Platte, Nebraska, for gas—then on to Cheyenne for the night.

The following morning (Sunday) we took off at Cheyenne with 75 gallons of gas (elevation slightly over 6000 feet) and flew to Rock Springs, Wyoming. We gained an altitude of 11,000 feet on this flight.

At Rock Springs we found the temperature 96° in the shade with a cloudless sky. The temperature over the oiled runways must have been 130°. We took off at noon and used less than half the runway. The ground elevation of the Rock Springs field is 6750 feet.

We had no great difficulty climbing to 12,000 feet on the trip to Burley, Idaho. Enroute we flew directly over beautiful Bear Lake along the Idaho-Utah border.

We landed at Burley for gas and then proceeded to Boise where we landed about 3 P.M. on Sunday, July 28, where we were met by our old friend Chet Moulton who is doing such a grand job as Director of Aeronautics for the state of Idaho.

The following day in company with Chet and Waldo Thurber, Bob Norswing and I made several test flights at Boise and in near by lakes. We were able to take off from Lake Lowell near Nampa with a full load in one minute forty seconds, with an estimated wind of ten miles per hour.

We also flew up to Payette Lake at McCall, Idaho, but I declined to land because of bad "down currents" blowing over the mountains on the West side of the lake. Payette Lake is 5000 feet high.

The following day, Jul 30, we flew from Boise to Bend, Oregon, where we had lunch with our good friend Al Tilse. Later in the afternoon we flew on to Pearson Air Park, Vancouver, Washington, our present Northwest headquarters.

On July 31 we demonstrated the Seabee to some of our Dealers, making landings on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers and in Lake Vancouver, using Pearson Field Airpark as our base.

While taxiing up on a beach without first having the landing gear in a full locked position, we snapped the eye out of a fitting that retracts the landing gear the landing gear. This occurred about sunset.

Next day we removed the fitting and made a temporary repair and flew the Seabee back to Pearson Airpark.

On August 2 and 3 we continued our Dealer demonstrations at Vancouver. On August 4 we flew to Seattle and demonstrated to other Northwest Dealers, using Boeing Field as a base and making water landings on Lake Washington, Lake Union and Lake Sammamish. August 5 we returned to Vancouver and on the 6th we flew non-stop to Klamath Falls, Oregon, elevation 4085 feet.

At Klamath Falls we made a total of about 20 take-offs and landings from Klamath Lake with a full C.A.A. load (four persons and 42.4 gallons gas). The average take-off time from a standing start, engine idling, to an airborne condition was 50 seconds. The elevation of Klamath Lake is 4130 feet.

ON August 7, with our good friends Cy Wallen (205 pounds), "Penny" Payne (175 pounds), Andy Salini (150 pounds), and myself (190 pounds) (average 180 pounds) and 60 gallons of gas, we took off at Flamath Falls Airport and headed for Diamond Lake in the high Cascades. Diamond Lake is 5184 feet high, about 2-1/2 miles long and lies about 10 miles north Crater Lake.

Fifty minutes later we flew along senic Mount Taielsen at 8,000 feet and looked down upon Diamond Lake. It looked very small and with tall fir trees all around, I began to feel reluctant to land. I flew down near the surface of the lake and looked it over, I told my passengers that if I landed I had grave doubts that the ship would take off and clear the trees with anymore than a solo load. I warned them that if we could not take off they would have to wait for some means of ground transportation.

Cy Wallen said, "Well, if we don't land, we will never know whether or not the Seabee can take off with a full load from water more than 5,000 feet above sea level." That was all the encouragement I needed. In we went to the profound amazment of several fisherman floating around in row boats.

We shut off the engine and floated around for about 20 minutes visiting with the fisherman. A moderate wind which we estimated to be under 15 miles per hour was blowing from the north.

We put the Hartzell propeller in reverse pitch and backed up to the south shore of the lake in order to have the full 2-1/2 miles ahead of us. Then we opened the throttle and headed toward the tall firs on the north end of the lake. TO my happy surprise the Seabee got off in exacty one minute and thirty seconds and we used only about 4,000 feet in our water run. When we reached the end of the lake we had gained about 500 feet. Needless to say we were all elated over this splendid performance. We believe that we established some sort of record for a single engine amphibian with a full C.A.A. load at a water elevation over 5,000 feet.

We returned to Klamath Falls and made a few more flights from Klamath Lake.

The following day, August 8, we flew to Redding, California, where we demonstrated the Seabee to our good friends Dave and Alma Hinds. We made several landings and take-offs, fully loaded, on Shasta Lake, above Shasta Dam. Take-offs here averaged about 45 seconds. The elevation was just below 1000 feet. The wind was almost calm.

On August 9 e flew from Redding to Lake Ttahoe in the high Sierras. We arrived over the lake at 1:30 P.M. to find its blue waters as smooth as a mirror. Those of you who have flown seaplanes know that smooth is goog for the photographer but not good for seaplane take-offs.

We landed at the Tahoe Airport on the southeast corner of the lake where Mr. Waters and Mr. Kiernan, operators of this very splendid airport, received us most cordially and gave us excellent service.

At 3 P.M. Bob Norswing and I took off from Tahoe Sky Harbor and landed on the lake, the elevation of which is 6225 feet. There was no steady wind. Just gentle variable gusts. We took off from the smooth water in a run of about 2000 feet. We returned to the airport and added 20 gallons of gassoline, bringing our supply to 43 gallons, and we also took on two more passengers, Mr. and Mrs. Randolph. We took off from the airport in 28 seconds, fully loaded and landed on the lake. There was little or no wind and we were unable to get the Seabee "on the step." I am confident we could have gotten on the step and into the air if ee had had as much as a 20 m.p.h. winf and moderately choppy water.

Late that evening Wes Stetson, famous acrobatic pilot of pre-war days and now conducting a flying service with Taylorcrafts on floats out of Emerald Bay, on the west side of Lake Tahoe, flew the Seabee with your truly as passenger. He made two landings and take-offs in Lake Tahoe. The wind was not blowing and of course the ship did not perform as it would had the wind been blowing moderately.

Wes has probably made more landings and take-offs in Lake Tahoe than any other pilot in the country, and he thought that the Seabee performed splendidly in view of the calm conditions.

We remained at Tahoe Friday night as guests of the Randolphs, hoping Saturday morning would bring a nice brisk wind. However, Saturday was even more calm than Friday. We waited until 10 A.M. and then took off for our home at Tulare, where our procrastinations caught us with us, for although Republic had sent out new parts to fix the landing gear retracting arm, broken when we taxied up on the beach near Vancouver, we had not taken the time out to install it. We were still using the temporary fitting we made in Vancouver. When we arrived over Tulare, we circled the town several times to let our friends know that we had finally arrived. Imagine our embarrassment when we landed at our home airport, and after rolling about 50 feet the landing gear folded back and we slid 200 feet on the keel before we came to a stop.

We jacked up the ship, let the gear down and taxied up to our shop where the mechanics installed the new parts which we should have installed a week before.

The "belly landing" did no harm to the hull whatever except to wipe some paint off the keel strip. Anyway, no one can say that we have favored the Seabee in any manner whatever since it fell into our hands. We have really given it everything but the hammer test.

As we finish this bulletin we are planning to get our California and Nevada dealers to assemble at Adams Airport in Fresno tomorrow and do our water landings on Friant Lake near that city. Tulare Lake seems to have dried up this summer so we could not have them come to Tulare and have a demonstration on water.

After the southern dealers see the Seabee, we are going to put it in our shop for a well deserved 100 hour check.

Cordially yours,

(signed)

J. G. "Tex" Rankin

JGR/lcm/rl