

Dogs Don't Fly

By David Lloyd Wilson

Introduction

This book is the result of ten years of flying and the adventures that I have had. I have flown several different types of airplanes and have accrued over four hundred hours in my log book. I have twice flown my small airplane from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This was a distance of about eight hundred miles. It was a great adventure and there was more than one time that I was in peril. I faced bad weather and the approach to land at Oshkosh. I was in a string of airplanes several miles long. No radio communication was allowed. All signals were one way instructions from the ground. Once safely on down I pitched my tent and waited for my friends to arrive. The week was wonderful and I saw many different types of aircraft. The airshow was unrivaled by any I had ever seen before. The next year I did it again. It is the ultimate destination for all pilots. Over eleven thousand airplanes visited the field through the course of the week. The joy of being a pilot and flying your own airplane to a far off place is indescribable.

This book is the result of my flying experiences and espouses great encouragement to acquaint the young man or woman who would follow in my steps. Nevell and Patch symbolize those that do, and those who want to do. If you the reader become inspired to learn to fly, I commend you. It is not difficult in any way, but does require a strong desire to learn and have courage. You must learn to become the captain of any aircraft you pilot. It doesn't matter if it is a Cessna 150, Cherokee 140 or Boeing 747.

The younger you start, the more opportunities will come to you. You may choose to add advanced ratings to your license and eventually choose it as your vocation. At the very least you will become one of an elite group, a pilot. Only 244,000 people hold a private pilots license in the USA. With a population of 303,824,646 (July 2008 est.) that would put you in the company of 0.008% of the population.

If this book motivates you to learn how to fly, go to any of your smaller regional airports and hang around a while. You will soon learn that pilots are a friendly lot. You most likely will get a ride. If you believe this challenge is for you, find a flight instructor.

They are all over these smaller local airstrips. Strap yourself into a small airplane and find your place between the heavens and the earth. I leave you with this quote:

“The only true law is that which sets us free.” *Jonathan Livingston Seagull (1970)*

Chapter 1 Nevell’s Experiment

Nevell Beagle was not like other dogs. From an early age he had discovered that his thoughts often wandered into subjects that no dog should ever ponder. While the other dogs his age enjoyed digging, and would play at tug and fetch, Nevell would often find himself alone watching the sky. While most young dogs spent their days socializing in groups and smelling the many interesting scents the world offered, Nevell would often search out the high places.

These were the hills that looked down on the rolling green fields of farmland that were his home. Like all dogs, he was destined to be a farmer and tend to the land. Dogs took naturally to farming as they love to dig in the soil. His family owned a small farm, and they were quite content to be its caretaker. His father had been farming since he was about Nevell’s age and was taught by his father before him. Soon, he knew that it would be his turn to learn farming and to put the carefree days of his youth behind him.

However, Nevell dreamed of doing other wonderful and exciting things. When he could, he would sneak off to the high places. There he would sit for hours and watch the cats at their work.

You see, cats were pilots, the crop dusters, the ones that flew the airplanes. From his high vantage point, he could watch the agile creatures at their trade. Without their assistance, the dogs would have had many difficulties with growing their crops.

One day when Nevell was a middle aged pup, he asked his father why the cats flew their airplanes over the green fields. His father was a very fine specimen of a beagle. His paws were rough and calloused from working the land. He was also a very smart dog and knew much about farming.

“Nevell, you see how green and beautiful our fields are, yes? Well, they look that way because they are well tended crops. Plants need water, food and protection from insects to be healthy. The cats fly low over our fields to spray fertilizer and pesticides. The rain comes from the heavens but we have ways of irrigating our crops if the rain

doesn't come. If we tried to feed and protect the crops ourselves we would run down many rows of plants with our tractor. So, it is necessary to employ the crop dusters to keep our crops healthy and give us a good harvest." No dog would ever admit it, but they were very dependant on the cats.

The cats knew their place in society, and so did the dogs. No dog in his right mind would ever consider flying, and no cat would ever consider farming. However, Nevell Beagle was not like other dogs. Since he could remember, Nevell had always been fascinated by the activity of the cats. The graceful dives and zooming climbs were like a dance in the sky. If only he could fly like that, it would be wonderful.

In fact, Nevell had once tried to fly. Not in a crop duster, but in an airplane that he had built himself. That's how he met Patch.

For weeks Nevell had worked in secret in the old abandoned barn not far from his favorite high place. Nevell had never really seen an airplane up close, but he believed he understood the general idea. The crop duster planes he had seen had two wings for the most part. He recalled that they were called bi-planes because of this. Nevell secretly gathered the materials he would need for his airplane and worked on it while the other dogs enjoyed the waning days of their youth.

Building an airplane proved to be much more difficult than Nevell would have ever imagined. He tried to incorporate as many of the things he had observed from the crop dusters into his design. After a time, the project was nearing completion and the day to fly would soon come.

Incidentally, there were still a few details that he had not yet figured out. For one, Nevell's plane did not have an engine as the crop dusters did, but he had learned from his observations that airplanes can fly a short time with the engine shut off. The wings and body were made of wood salvaged from the old barn and held together with sturdy bailing wire, nails and glue he had "borrowed" from the shed. He had braced the wings using old broom handles for support, and used the bailing wire to hold it together. The wheels came from an old lawn mower in the field out behind his house. His feet stuck out from the bottom of the floor so that he could move the plane on the ground and also use them for brakes when he landed. Soon Nevell realized that he had gone as far as his knowledge would take him and it was time for a test flight.

That day the winds were blowing pretty strong and in just the right direction for launching his airplane. As he sat in his wonderful craft he marveled at what he had accomplished. If there was going to be a day to fly, this had to be it. When the wind picked up, Nevell knew that now was the time. He pushed his little craft to the edge of the hill, and with no hesitation at all, continued right over the drop.

It was a wild ride and for brief moments the little plane skipped into the air. It was glorious and Nevell was amazed each time his feet would leave the ground. Unfortunately, a few moments later he was approaching the bottom of the hill. To his dismay he realized that he had forgotten all about the fence at the base. He knew that if he was ever going to lift off for real, now would be the time. He leaned back hard hoping that he would be able to raise the nose and clear the fence, but the little craft could give him nothing more. With a bone jarring thump, Nevell Beagle became the first dog in history to ever crash an airplane. He had run his airplane right into the section line fence.

When Nevell opened his eyes again, he was startled to see the smiling face of a grizzled old cat hovering over him.

“What kind of a stunt was that my little beagle?” said the grinning cat.

Stunned, looking around, the beagle noticed a great big orange bi-plane had landed not more than one hundred feet from where the wreckage of his small craft had settled.

“What happened?” asked Nevell.

“Well, from what I could see from the air, your soapbox racer crashed into this fence.” answered the cat.

Offended, the dog replied, “It’s not a racer, it’s an airplane, just like yours over there.”

Speechless, the old cat pondered the scene of destruction arrayed around the beagle. He actually could make out some parts that resembled an airplane. Stunned by the implications of this wreckage, the old crop duster gave the only response that was appropriate, “That’s ridiculous....Dogs don’t fly.”

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.