

CLAYTON L. SCOTT

The One Hundredth Year

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FOREWORD

This biography is still *in progress* and is dedicated to

CLAYTON L. SCOTT

On the occasion of his Hundredth Birthday

This is the one hundredth year of a remarkable,
resourceful, skillful man, who has embraced
challenges with equanimity and humor.

Compiled by Richard W. Taylor and Bill Jepson
as a memento for years of friendship,
admiration and understanding.

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Appointments, anecdotes or Scotty history for the next
edition, and questions welcome at: pioneerairman@comcast.net

EARLY LIFE

“Hi Ho!” Scotty’s life has been one extraordinary experience after another. Clayton Leigh Scott was born July 15, 1905, in Coudersport, Potter County, Pennsylvania. Along the way, he accumulated nearly a century of friendships, while expanding boundaries, testing, building and rebuilding airplanes, assuring progress in aviation. Now, Scotty’s stories, distilled from more than eighty-four years of cockpit memories, are logged here on the occasion of this celebration. As he continues to say, “It was a good ship to fly.”

Scotty’s first adventure was a five-day train ride in 1911 with his family when they moved from Pennsylvania to Portland, Oregon to join an uncle. The uncle was a stone and brick mason who convinced his brother to join him. His second adventure was a trip back to Penn-

sylvania in 1919. The two families, seven in Scotty’s and six in the uncle’s, started in three vehicles. The armada consisted of a seven passenger four-cylinder Case, a seven passenger Paige, and a Ford 3/4 ton truck. The Ford truck carried heavy trunks loaded for a long stay in Pennsylvania, a large tent, army cots for the lot,



The Paige, the Case, and the Ford on the Road

provisions and presents. The load was too much. The trip through the Cascades and Rockies wore out the truck’s clutch and brake bands. So, at Yellowstone, the heavy trunks, cots, tent, non-essentials and the Ford truck were dispatched by rail back to Portland. This meant that for the remainder of the trip to Pennsylvania, blan-



Part of the group, with Scotty fifth from the left

kets served as the mattress for the entire party. The trip took thirty days with overnight stops in campgrounds, where the fees were twenty five to fifty cents.

The same long arduous trip back to Portland in

1920 also took thirty days, but once back, the West coast became Scotty's home.

INTRODUCTION TO AVIATION

The OX5 powered *Jenny* was a product of World War I. They were cheap and plentiful right after the war. It was a plane that captured the imagination of all who saw it. While still visiting in Pennsylvania, a barnstormer landed his OX5 *Jenny* on Scotty's uncle's farm in the summer of 1920 to hop passengers. It was here that Scotty got his first taste of aviation. After the day's activities ended, Scotty remembers crawling into the cockpit, wiggling the stick and observing the action of the controls. He was hooked. But he would have to wait two years before he got his first ride, and that would be on the other side of the continent.

His first airplane flight was at Seaside, Oregon, in 1922 in an OX5 *Jenny*. He and a girl friend, Fern Naylor, ventured there and inquired about the price. Scotty did not have the full fare so they pooled their resources. Scotty's seven dollars with his friend's three dollars was enough for the ride.

While attending high school, Scotty and Fern Naylor went to the horse races in Salem, Oregon. In the racing program was a contest sponsored by Adcox's Auto and Aviation School in Portland. The challenge for the contestant was to correctly complete a sentence. While they were watching the races, Scotty figured out the answer to the puzzle and submitted his entry. Soon afterward, he was notified that he had won first prize—a six month course at Adcox worth two hundred dollars. The Jefferson High School principal in Portland gave Scotty permission to

attend the aviation related courses for credit toward his graduation in January 1925. Although they did not have a complete airplane, the airplane engine and automotive subjects were well covered. This mechanic's course on airplane engines gave him skills to prepare him to handle many unexpected failures in remote places.

After graduation Scotty worked in the



Trust Department of the US National Bank of Portland. He became acquainted with Mr. Vern Gorst from Coos Bay, Oregon, who kept a safety deposit box there. Mr. Gorst owned a stage-coach line and an airplane in Coos Bay. Later, in 1926, Mr. Gorst acquired an airmail contract, forming and operating Pacific Air Transport (PAT) with service from Los Angeles to Seattle. Pearson Field, located across the Columbia River at Vancouver, Washington, served as the airfield for Portland. Scotty started work for Mr. Gorst and Pacific Air Transport (PAT) on October 9, 1926, as a station attendant at Pearson Field. This was his first full time aviation job, although he had spent much of his time at the airport including every weekend.

Seattle was the northern terminus for the airmail route. However, an unusual arrangement was used for the Portland to Seattle segment. Airplanes delivered northbound airmail in the afternoon, but the plane returned to Portland



for the large white "T" painted on the truck's cab roof. With the truck in sight, the pilot dived to treetop level over the truck, announced his arrival and looked for a landing spot; not a landing field but any suitable clearing. Scotty would drive to the plane; put the mail in it, and return to Pearson Field.

the same afternoon to be available for morning departure southbound. Any airmail posted in Seattle was delivered on a night train leaving Seattle at 10:30 p.m. and arriving in Portland at 5:30 a.m.

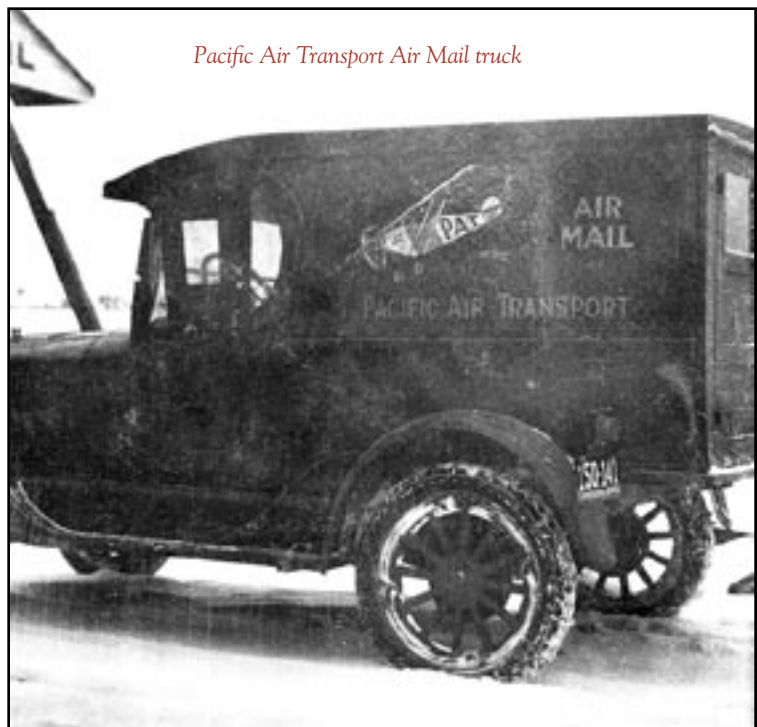
Scotty's job was to meet the train and pick up the airmail. He drove the Ford 3/4 ton truck with great pride.

Emblazoned across the entire width of the windshield in bold letters was AIRMAIL. For security he carried a revolver purchased for \$7.50. When he approached the bridge across the Columbia, all he needed to do was honk to be permitted toll-free passage.

The Ford truck was the latest model available with a Ruckstal axle equipped with an overdrive. It could do 46 miles per hour wide open. One of his jobs as station attendant was to drive the mail southbound from Portland whenever the weather was too bad for the airmail pilots to fly. Here is where the blazing speed of the Ford was used. He was authorized to drive wide-open on the highway, but go easy through towns. During bad weather Scotty would leave with the southbound mail for Medford. When the weather cleared enough for the pilots to leave Pearson Field, they would follow the highway looking

The planes were equipped with oversized balloon tires for these off-airport landings.

On one occasion, pilot Hebe Miller in a Ryan spotted Scotty five miles south of Roseburg, Oregon. He made several circles but could not find a place to land. He flew back over Scotty at about 200 feet, throttled back the engine, and then yelled, "Roseburg! Go back to Roseburg!" Scotty could hear him clear as a bell, and believes it was the first Air to Ground communication. On those occasions, when the pilots could not leave Pearson Field, Scotty would



Pacific Air Transport Air Mail truck

proceed all the way to Medford which was the next airmail terminal. It was then the job of the Medford station attendant to handle that mail packet. Scotty logged 3000 miles in one month in the truck, an indication of the Portland weather—no better then than now.

LEARNING TO FLY

So it was that Scotty learned to fly at Pearson Field. The PAT airmail pilots were his instructors using the OX5 *Waco 9*, the reserve plane for the airmail route. The price was twenty-five dollars per hour for the plane rental. The pilots donated their time to Scotty. With the plane rental cost this high it took Scotty a few months to solo. His October 1926 logbook shows that he made ten flights from October 24, 1926, to accumulate three hours forty minutes of instruction to solo on February 27, 1927. That's right—three hours forty minutes to solo. Flights of 5 and 10 minutes are shown. Noel Evans the Superintendent of PAT signed his logbook both for the first and for the solo flights. Clayton L. Scott was assigned Department of Commerce License #2155.

In May, the station at Crissy Field in San Francisco was having trouble with the stock-room efficiency. Mr. Gorst sent his trouble-shooter, Clayton Scott. Scotty had two jobs: First to straighten out the stock room for swift response to the mechanics' need for parts or tools. The mechanics wanted things "right now" to keep the planes flying and to continue receiving government checks for airmail deliv-

ery. His second job was as assistant mechanic. During his four-month stay, Mr. Gorst told one of the pilots to check out Scotty in the *Travel Air*. So the flight was made early on a Sunday morning while there were not many onlookers. On August 14, 1927, after one flight, Scotty was checked-out. This was the sum and substance of his total experience in the *Travel Air* when he returned to Pearson Field at the end of the month.

Scotty continued to fly at Pearson Field, drive the airmail truck, and handle all the other duties of the station attendant for PAT until October 1927 when he went to Portland for the next adventure. Mr. Gorst bought a new *Travel Air* which was shipped to Portland in a railroad car. Scotty assembled it on the railroad siding



and flew it out to Pearson Field where he faced a surprise. About three fourths of an inch of the brass propeller tip covers were polished by the soft abrasive sand at the railroad siding. During takeoff, the soft sand caused the tail to rise and the propeller to dig into the sand as Scotty fought to raise the nose. The damage was only a polish job and an airmail pilot flew it out to Seattle the next day. Scotty's thirty-five minute flight was his first as a test pilot.

FLYING FOR MR. GORST

Mr. Gorst sold Pacific Air Transport to Boeing Air Transport January 1, 1928, and then started Seattle Flying Service. Scotty moved north to Seattle and operated the new *Travel Air* out of Gorst Field, “the sand lot,” at West Marginal Way near the Ideal Cement plant. There is a bronze plaque in place today commemorating the site.

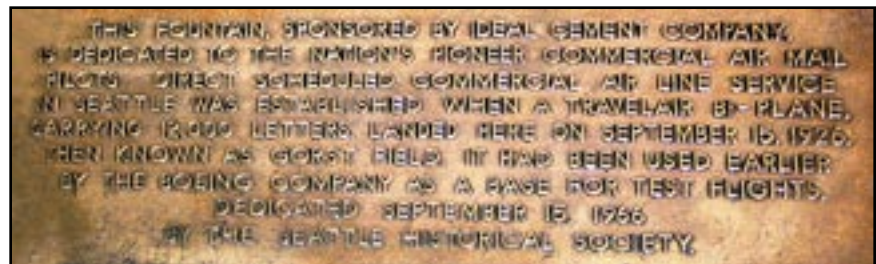
The airfield was muddy at times with frequent gusty winds from over the West Seattle hills. Early in 1928, construction of a new runway was taking place at the current site of Boeing Field. Mr. Gorst and Scotty drove over to take a look at the progress. Even though it was not complete, it did look better than Gorst Field at West Marginal Way.

On March 22, 1928, two automobile salesmen came to the Gorst Field wanting a ten dollar ride to celebrate their good fortune of a sale. After their flight around the Seattle area, an ugly gusty crosswind at Gorst Field forced Scotty to look

elsewhere. He remembered the new runway as yet unopened. Conditions were “just fine” for the first pilot to land at Boeing Field and Scotty did just that. The three had to walk into Georgetown to phone Gorst for a ride back. The celebrants had been along for another of Scotty’s firsts. Scotty went back to Boeing Field at 5:30 a.m. the next morning to avoid any problems and flew the plane back to Gorst Field.

By then, Scotty had 137 hours and Mr. Gorst started yet another endeavor. Gorst Air Transport Company began operating the Seattle-Bremerton Air Ferry on June 15, 1929, using his newly acquired *Keystone-Loening Amphibian* “*Air Yacht*.”

Scotty never waited for someone to tell him



Boeing Field Official Opening day on July 26, 1928

what to do. He was always there, figuring out what to do, how to do it better, and how to get more out of each and every endeavor. When he started flying the Seattle to Bremerton Air Ferry for Mr. Gorst, he got a room high atop the Lowell Apartments at 8th and Spring Street in downtown Seattle. A room on the west side gave him a clear view of the Seattle port and, on a clear day, all the way to Bremerton. He became his own weatherman and forecaster for the daily flights. The flights were very popular and often had a waiting line. The fare was \$2.50 each way. The *Loening Amphibian* made the trip in twelve minutes, saving the passenger an hour and providing a scenic flight.



In a Keystone-Loening advertisement, Clayton Scott was listed as Operation Manager. The same ad noted that 14,000 passengers were carried in the first ninety days with two "Air Yachts" and 19,000 in the first six months of operation. The air ferry was praised as an "outstanding example of successful air transportation". The *Loening Air Yacht* carried 6 to 8 passengers, was powered by a 525 horsepower engine and was advertised for \$27,900.

Mr. Gorst had a keen sense for making money using his planes to hop passengers on \$5.00 or \$10.00 rides in Seattle and Alaska. Scotty remembers a day when they counted out \$995.00 on his hotel room bed in Juneau, Alaska, for one day's effort. Mr. Gorst threw down a five dollar bill to make it a *one grand* day.

In 1929, Scotty went back to New York City and picked up Mr. Gorst's number two *Loening Amphibian* from the Loening factory on the East River. The five day journey back to Seattle took 38 flying hours. On the last day, into Boeing Field, the flight time was ten hours and forty-five minutes. He was exhausted but pleased to report to Mr. Gorst that he had arrived. Imagine Scotty's consternation when he learned that lines of people were waiting for a ride at the pier downtown. Gorst wanted him

to come right over to take care of the overflow. So what did Scotty do? Of course, he flew a round trip to Bremerton before collapsing in his apartment.

Gorst's interest in Alaska began when he participated in the 1898 Gold Rush and it never waned. After the Alaska experience, he wanted to explore airmail routes with the long range *Loening*. Scotty took Mr. Gorst up to Juneau where the legislature met. While barnstorming in Juneau, two legislators asked if Scotty would take them to Cordova. This would be no small undertaking and required adding two 30 gallon oil drums in the front seat of the cabin for fuel. Since the fuel valve was out of reach from the cockpit, the passengers had to put out their cigarettes to change the valve for the gravity feed transfer. In addition to the two legislators, Scotty took one of Mr. Gorst's employees, the temporary manager at Juneau. The flight across the Gulf of Alaska took place on May 7, 1929, and required four hours and twenty minutes. The Juneau to Cordova trip achieved acclaim as the first passenger flight across the Gulf of Alaska and the first airplane to land at Cordova. The Cordova Times headlines announced:

"GULF OF ALASKA CONQUERED
BY AIR—Scott, Pilot, Graham, Mechanic

Complete Last Link in Airways between South America and Arctic."

On July 3, 1930, Scott and mechanic John Selby were preparing for a flight from Ketchikan to Cordova, when a young school teacher Myrtle Smith from Minnesota signed on as a passenger. Scotty first met Miss Smith in 1929 in Seattle. She was vacationing in Ketchikan with other teachers and wanted to visit her sister who lived in Cordova. The trip took seven hours and forty-five minutes with stops in Petersburg, Port Althrop, and Yakutat. Myrtle Smith became the first female passenger to cross the Gulf of Alaska by air. Scotty and Myrtle celebrated their wedding on October 27, 1934, and enjoyed 65 years of married life.

Mr. Gorst was an adventurous and daring person capable of taking great risks but, in hindsight, they were calculated risks. He had a great way of sizing up people. To Scotty he challenged, "Why don't we try this?" And soon the two were off on another successful venture.

FLYING FOR MR. BOEING

In the twenties and thirties it was not uncommon for a flight to be overdue. Weather, engine failure or a multitude of problems could be the reason. Word spread among the few operators and pilots whenever a plane was missing. It was on one of these occasions that a Tacoma resident, owner of a missing plane, contacted Scotty who owned a Leoning Commuter to search Alaska and the Aleutian Islands for the missing plane.

FLYING FOR MR. BOEING

On his trip north, on September 17, 1931, Scotty



Myrtle Smith deplaning from the Flying Boat at Cordova





stopped for fuel in Canada. He landed his *Loening* next to a magnificent yacht, also on a fuel stop. There he met a fellow enjoying the fine weather in Carter Bay, Canada. Scotty took him for a spin to see the beautiful scenery and to locate prospective fishing spots. However casual the first meeting was, it began a close relationship that was to last a lifetime. The fisherman and yachtsman was William E. Boeing who knew a competent person when he saw one. He hired Scotty as his personal pilot a few months later. Flying for Mr. Boeing was a pleasant and rewarding experience. Mr. Boeing was a very successful aviation businessman and had far reaching interests including lumber, horses and horse racing.

The Boeing conglomerate consisted of all the elements of the rapidly expanding aviation community located throughout the United States.

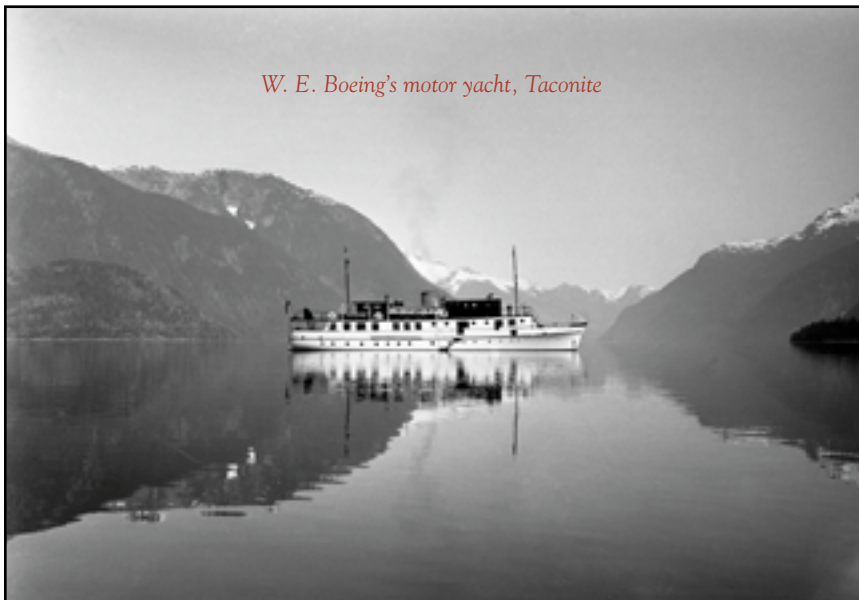
This was no coincidence and was a strategy of Mr. Boeing's from the beginning. Harold Mansfield quotes Mr. W. E. Boeing in *Vision* (1956): "One day the airplane will be accepted as a means of transportation." It was time to incorporate a company. He asked his attorney to draft the broadest possible charter; one that would allow them to manufacture airplanes or other products, operate a flying school and "act as a common carrier of



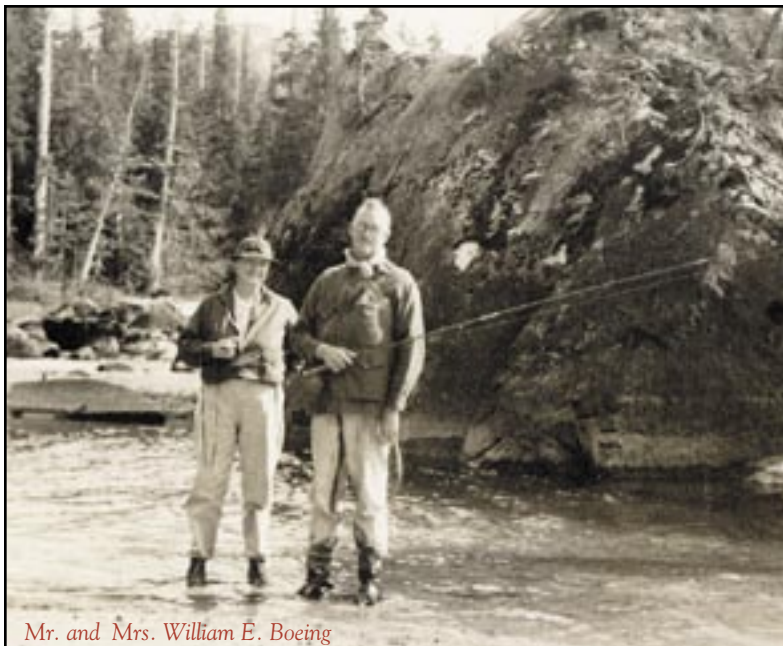
Scotty's Keystone-Loening Commuter

passengers and freight by aerial navigation." The articles were drawn on July 15, 1916, also Scotty's eleventh birthday.

On May 15, 1933, Mr. Boeing summoned Scott to his Seattle office. They had not met since the short hop in the *Commuter* in Carter Bay in the fall of 1931 so Scotty did not know what to expect. He had taken a few of Mr. Boeing's friends on fishing trips into Canada. Scotty had always been punctual and assumed that a successful businessman such as Mr.



W. E. Boeing's motor yacht, Taconite



Mr. and Mrs. William E. Boeing

Scotty. The superintendent introduced him to another copilot Mike Gibbons who was to show Scotty around. Together the two men completed the external preflight; Scotty continued to ask questions in the cockpit. He got a few answers and then Gibbons grew weary and dismissed him proclaiming, "Hell, I don't know. I was just hired yesterday."

What happened on the first trip from Portland to Salt Lake City did not impress Scotty either. The takeoff was at night and the first leg of the flight took the airplane up the

Boeing would be also. Scotty arrived promptly, well dressed, a little ahead of the appointed time, and was told by the secretary that Mr. Boeing would see him. During the wait, Mrs. Boeing appeared from the office and also told Scotty that Mr. Boeing would be just a moment. It was a long wait with the secretary and Mrs. Boeing occasionally coming and going from the office, followed by long periods of time when nothing happened. In retrospect, Scotty believes Mr. Boeing was testing him. Did he really have the patience for the job? Scotty remembers little from the few minutes he spent with Mr. Boeing, but he does remember that long two-hour wait. Scotty flew full time for Mr. Boeing during the summer of 1933.

On trips beginning in June to Campbell River and Lake Buttes with two or three passengers, the *Boeing Boat* performed poorly. The altitude of the lake was high, so very long runs were required for takeoff. Both Mr. Boeing and Scotty were disappointed with the performance of the *Boeing Boat*. The trips continued until September 22, 1933, at which time Mr. Boeing told Scotty to start looking around for a better airplane.

Scotty went to work for United Air Transport on October 19, 1933. His first trip as a copilot was in a *Boeing 247* from Portland to Salt Lake City. The training and lack thereof impressed

Columbia Gorge. About fifteen minutes into the flight, the captain got up from his seat and retired to the cabin to have a cup of coffee with the lone



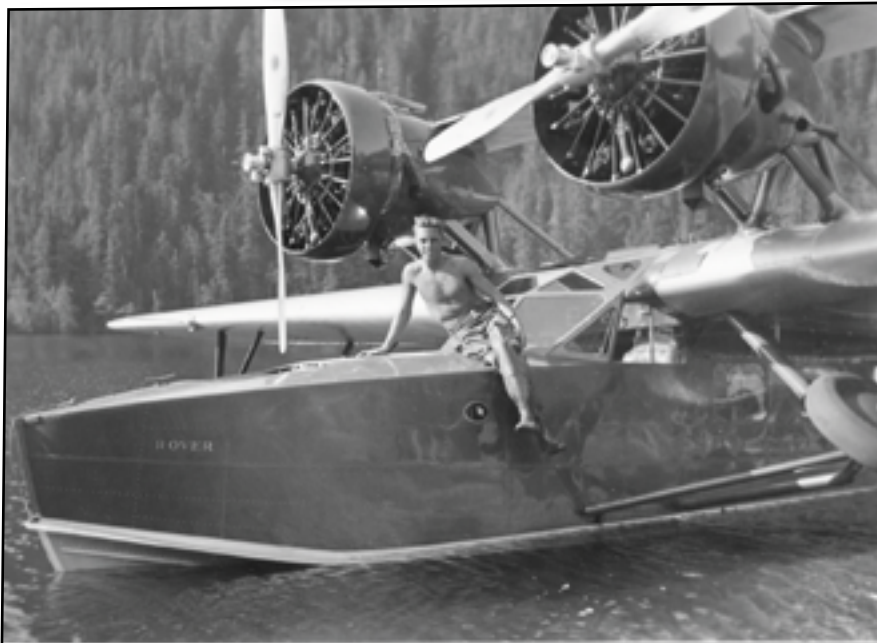
Boeing Flying Boat

passenger, leaving the brand new copilot to his imagination.

On the night of November 3, 1933, the right engine failed while they were near Burley, Idaho. To get a better look at the windsock, the captain made a low pass, only to discover the rudder pedal pressure required to compensate for the engine out was more than one could handle. He called for help from Scotty who used both feet on the one pedal. The failure was from a broken crankshaft making it easy to spin the propeller of the failed engine. Engine failures were common, and worse, the procedures for handling such events had not been developed.

Scotty gained some valuable experience and left UAT on April 25, 1934.

In May 1934, Scotty returned to work for Mr. Boeing. Boeing had decided he should purchase a *Douglas Dolphin* amphibian so sent Scotty to the Douglas plant to get checked out and to pick



Scotty and Mr. Boeing's Douglas Dolphin amphibian

up the plane. He lived at the Santa Monica Athletic Club and spent each day at the Douglas factory observing airplane construction and becoming acquainted with the Douglas mechanics. The mechanics were very helpful to Scotty and receptive to making changes that Scotty wanted until the supervisor found out what was going on, and put a stop to what was a good deal for Mr. Boeing. Checkout flights were



A two hour and ten minute flight was made to San Francisco, then to the Oakland side of the Bay where the party stayed for three days. The flight from Oakland to Seattle took four hours and five minutes. The *DC5* was the first tricycle gear airplane to land at

made from Clover Field. Hops were made to Burbank and on Scotty's 29th birthday, July 15, 1934, he was checked out as the pilot on Mr. Boeing's *Douglas Dolphin*, an amphibian powered by two Wasp S3D1 400 horsepower engines. Mr. Boeing called the airplane the ROVER.

The *Douglas Dolphin* was used for flights to Los Angeles, Kentucky and the east coast. Boston, Schenectady, Detroit, LaGuardia, Westfield, Providence, Cleveland, Duluth were all destinations recorded in Scotty's logbook. Coming back from New York in the *Dolphin* was an arduous trip bucking strong and gusty headwinds. At dinner one evening in Tucson, Scotty suggested that if Mr. Boeing planned to take more long trips, a faster more comfortable plane would be in order. This conversation led to Mr. Boeing telling Scotty to look around for a better plane while they were in the Los Angeles area. They landed at Burbank on April 13, 1940, and Scotty started his search.

He went to the Douglas plant at Mines Field in Los Angeles where he saw the DC5. Douglas was just finishing the flight test on the number one airplane, and gave him a demonstration ride. The logbook entry of April 18, 1940 shows that stalls and air work were demonstrated. Boeing decided to buy on April 19, 1940. The transaction for tax purposes was completed at Las Vegas and the airplane returned to Los Angeles for preparation for the flight to Seattle on the next day.

Boeing Field. Boeing engineers swarmed all over the Douglas and Scotty had to ask them to move out of the wheel well to be able to taxi to the other side of the field.

The *Dolphin* was left in Glendale after the DC5 purchase. Howard Hughes wanted to use the *Dolphin* so Mr. Boeing made arrangements for Scotty to demonstrate the airplane to Hughes.

On June 16, 1940, Mr. Hughes wanted to visit friends at Newport Beach so Scotty prepared the airplane for the flight from Burbank. When Mr. Hughes arrived, he had Ginger Rogers on one arm and two camel hair coats on the other! They departed and landed in the bay at Newport Beach. While taxiing up to a friend's yacht, a Coast Guard boat approached. Mr. Hughes disappeared from the flight deck to go below unseen, telling Scotty



Ginger Rogers and Howard Hughes

to handle the situation without involving him.

"You don't belong here. You must leave immediately," shouted the Coast Guard skipper.

"OK," Scotty said, "but you will have to get all those little boats out of the way."

"No. No, you must get out away from this crowded beach and take off out in the ocean," came the reply.

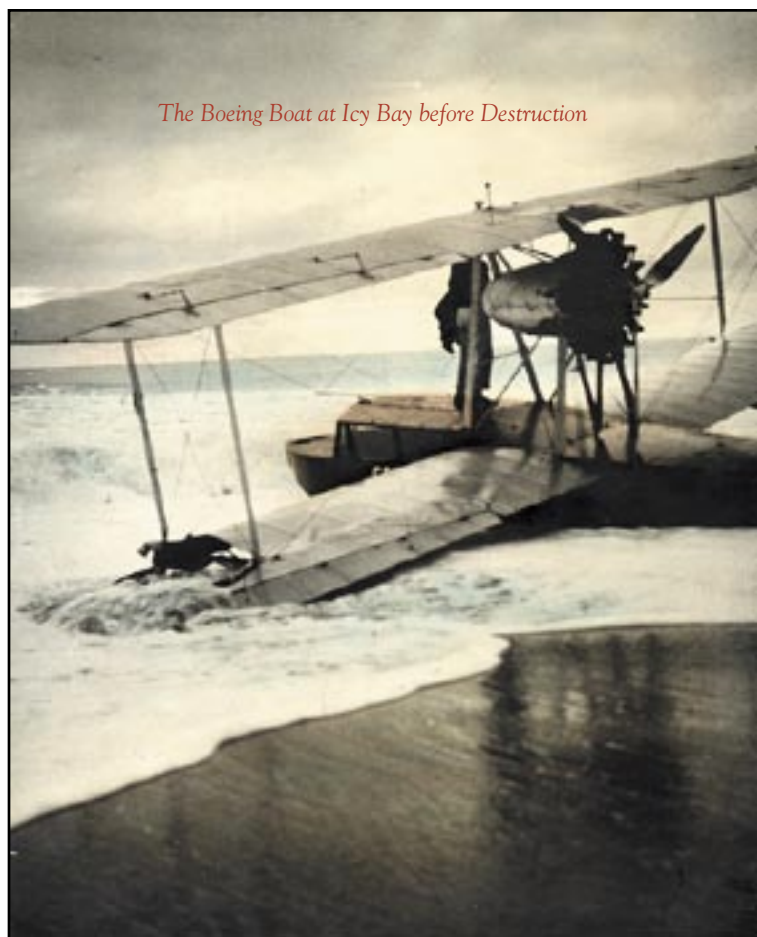
It became more trouble than it was worth so they taxied out of the harbor and into the ocean and flew over to Catalina Island. The wind was high, the waves gave trouble, and it was a constant struggle until Scotty could taxi up on a wooden ramp to a parking area where the passengers left for lunch on the island. The three flights totaled two hours and twenty-five minutes—a Hollywood lunch.

As a Christmas present, Mr. Boeing sent Scotty to Oakland in 1934 to enroll in the Boeing School of Aeronautics to take the instrument

pilot course. It was a good course and was greatly appreciated by Scotty.

The job of being Mr. Boeing's personal pilot was a pleasant experience, challenging, and a great geography lesson allowing Scotty to discover many new cities and to stay at great hotels. The job only ended when the US Government forbade the operation of personal airplanes along the west coast because of World War II war clouds. By then, Scotty was known in Boeing flight test circles and to Air Force Plant Representative Major Corkill. On the occasion of the collapse of the Tacoma Narrows bridge on September 30, 1940, Major Corkill told Scotty to sit in the left seat of the *B-17* and to fly them down to inspect the destruction. This was his introduction to the *B-17* and to a life as a Boeing test pilot, a job that was to be a great part of his life.

BOEING CAREER



The Boeing Boat at Icy Bay before Destruction

His illustrious career spanned twenty-five years as a Boeing test pilot and Chief of Production Flight Test from November 1940 until his retirement February 1, 1966. He flew all the airplane models that Boeing produced. These included the *Douglas DB-7*, and *A-20*; and the *Boeing 247*, *B-17*, *B-29*, *B-50*, *C-97*, *Stratocruiser*, *B-47*, *B-52*, *KC-135*, *707*, and *727*. See photos inside front cover.

Scotty made over 1000 flights in the *B-17* series planes during World War II, sometimes 4 or 5 flights per day in different planes. He probably has flown more different *B-17*s than any one in history, but considers the *B-52* the Cadillac of Boeing Bombers. He is a great judge of excellence when you consider that the *B-52* airplane is still in the Strategic Air Command inventory 52 years after its first flight, with no date set for retiring it.

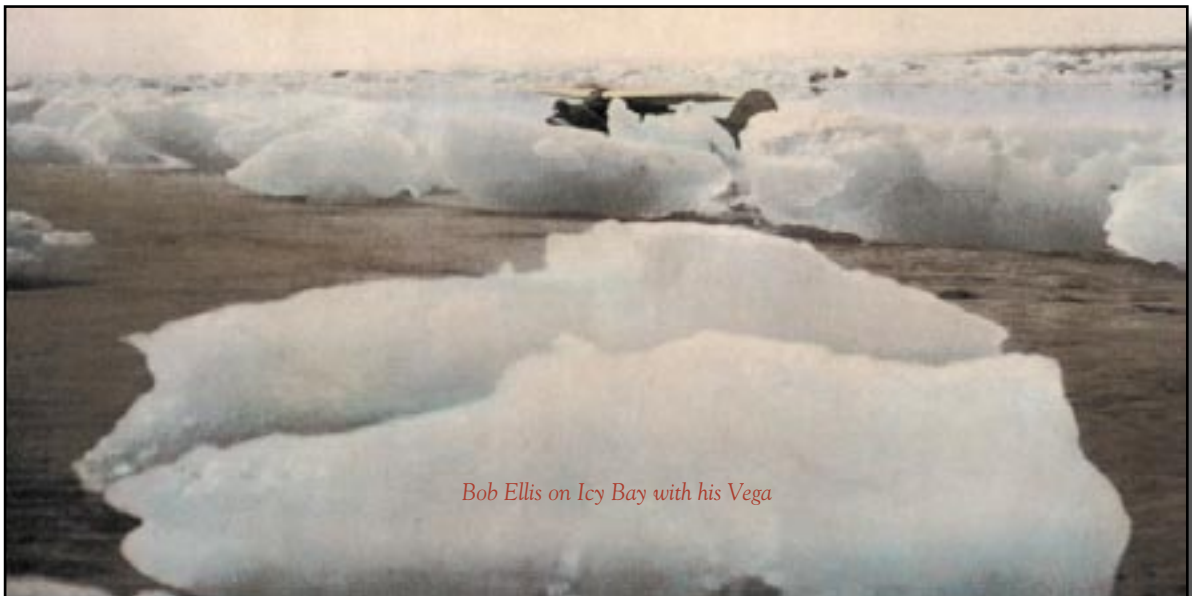
FORCED LANDINGS

The life expectancy of the World War I OX5 engine, which powered many airplanes in the 1920s and 1930s, was short. Other engines of the time were not much better. It was not uncommon for pilots to be faced with making a landing under unexpected circumstances. The engines of the forties and fifties did get better, but the chances of engine trouble was still great enough that pilot training contained forced landings in the syllabus. While poor engine reliability was a principal cause of forced landings, there were other causes as well. To be a survivor, the pilot not only needed the skill to land under the circumstances, but to have determination and resourcefulness to continue the adventure.

Scotty is a survivor, an enduring soul. He survived three airplane crashes and a few forced landings. His forced landing near Icy Bay Alaska on July 10, 1930, was in Mr. Gorst's Boeing boat. He and mechanic John Selby tried desperately to save the ship without success. Scotty was able to avoid floating ice by landing in the ocean. He and Selby struggled with the plane, the wind and the waves, and fought a losing battle for two or three hours, but eventually had to watch as the waves

tore off chunks of wings and tail surfaces. They spent three nights waiting for someone to come; the first night on the beach and the other two in an abandoned cabin. Finally, a rescue effort met with success when Bob Ellis arrived on the fourth day. Ignoring the large message Scotty and Selby had tramped in the sand, "SEND BOAT FROM YAKUTAT—DROP FOOD," Ellis landed in the Bay and picked them up. Ellis could land and take off in the bay because the ebbing tide left a wide channel. It did not take Scotty and his mechanic long "to get going."

An engine failure on May 30, 1932, forced Scotty to land in the Yukon River upstream of a small island blocking his way to safety in Nulato. Currents threatened to propel the *Commuter* swiftly downriver, but locals in motorized long boats intercepted the plane, finally towing the aircraft into town. Nulato just happened to have a telegraph station, a rarity in such a remote place so Scotty sent a message to Fairbanks by teletype ordering a cylinder, piston and rings. And then he waited. The parts arrived by plane but the airport was too muddy so the pilot continued on to Nome. The next day the parts passed by a second time for the same reason en route back to Fairbanks. There the parts were put on a boat. Three days later, on June 9th, the parts arrived and



Bob Ellis on Icy Bay with his Vega

Scotty put the engine back together in one and one-half hours. By this time, his passengers had called on other trading posts by boat and were ready to continue the air journey.

Years later, *Cessna 195*s made good float planes and Scotty was always on the lookout for good ones. He picked up one such plane in Canada. On his flight back to Renton, Washington, over the Cascade Mountains, the engine quit cold, leaving him to find a hole in the clouds. He picked out a likely group of fir trees for his landing. The trees broke his fall, but the plane hit the ground hard enough to wrench the engine out of the plane. Dazed for a short time, Scotty spent the night in the plane. Fuel drenched the back of his neck but luckily no fire occurred.

At first morning light, he made his way to a logging road where he surprised a county highway worker, "What are you doing up here?"

Scotty answered, "I left an airplane over in the brush."

"This morning?"

"No, last night," Scotty replied.

"C'mon, get in here."

The road grader cab was small but warm, and the hot coffee and cookies were the best ever. He took Scotty with him on his road grader to find his work companions. Their pickup truck took Scotty to the North Bend hospital where he spent one night recovering from the effects of a failed timing gear before going home.

Scotty was back in two days with a helicopter to bring the plane out, but this method was without success. A bulldozer was summoned to knock down trees to reach the plane from the logging road. Once at the site, the airplane engine, wings, tail surfaces, and fuselage were strapped to the bulldozer, and then towed out to



Down in the Cascades

the road. Amazingly, only one trip was required to get the big pieces to the road. The entire retrieval, however, took two weeks.

A second *Cessna 195* mishap occurred near Fort Nelson, British Columbia, on a flight with other pilots to celebrate the anniversary of the Alcan Highway dedication. The flight neared its destination when a power loss occurred. The subsequent landing was into a forest of young firs. Two trees crushed the leading edges of the wings reducing the forward speed for a safe let-down to earth. When the measurements were made of the tree impacts, they were identical distances from the airplane centerline. His passengers John Hewitt and his wife were not scratched. Other planes in the vicinity heard of the dilemma and were quick to rescue them with a helicopter. Although there was useable fuel in the tank, an improperly installed fuel cell outlet tube caused power loss by fuel starvation. Scotty says these were his only crashes, but there were a half dozen or so other memorable forced landings.

IN RETIREMENT

Scotty never lost interest in flying airplanes off the water. While still working at Boeing, he built a hangar on Renton Airport next to the seaplane ramp, where he modified landplanes into floatplanes. His shop was so well set up that

B & W replica rollout ceremony in 1966



when he retired in 1966, the Boeing Company contracted with him to build a replica of their first plane, the *Boeing and Westervelt B&W-1A*, for the Boeing Company's Fiftieth Anniversary celebration. After completing the project in record time, he flew this replica at locations around the United States during the anniversary year. Today the airplane hangs in the Museum of Flight in Seattle.

Converting a landplane requires engineering design, tests, manufacturing and a multitude of other skills along with extensive coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration. His first model was the *Howard DGA15P*. Since then he obtained FAA approval for over twelve models and supplied kits for many floatplane conversions. The planes were all successfully used in general aviation or in commercial service. These models included *Cessna 195*, *Pilatus Porter*, *Piper Aztec*, *Dornier DO-28*, and *Dehaviland Beaver* and *Otter*. See photos inside back cover.

Recognition for achievements leaves little extra space on Scotty's office walls and shelves. His trophies, plaques, awards, and collectibles represent only a part of his successes in his field. Throughout his career he has been honored by scores of aviation organizations: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), National Aeronautic Association (NAA), OX5, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), Quiet Birdmen (QB) and is an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots (SETP), to name a few.

Fishing has been a part of Scotty's life from his early days, and developed into being one of his favorite pastimes. It wasn't about the fishing as much as the adventures he shared with friends in wonderful places throughout the world. His "outing," as he called them, began with flying to places in the pristine wilderness of British Columbia or Alaska, in a seaplane loaded with

provisions, gear, and his friends. Then finding safe passage to the destination, setting up camp, landing the fish, and at the end of the day, relaxing by the fire with his friends to share good humor and, of course, good fish stories.

Almost daily, Scotty the bush pilot, test pilot, airplane manufacturer and storyteller drives to his office on Renton Airfield where he welcomes new or familiar visitors, and often

with his unmistakable greeting, “Hi Ho!” The view from his window is of two shiny *Jobmaster Cessna 195s* on floats, ready to continue the adventure. Fishing, flying, photography, journals, log books and an assorted collection of memorabilia surround him and even without turning a key, might just spin the prop for another Scotty story.

A TOAST:

Happy Birthday Scotty!

May you continue to be a testimony
to the fact that 100 years is really
just the youth of old age.



