

Pastor Marlin H. Simon

I have not heard from Steve in awhile and now I have learned that the physical problems he was having have overcome his body. I have confidence in where he is, as he shared with me the goodness of our God and where his hope rested.

Steve is at home with the Lord, I know I will see him again, and in the midst of the sadness I feel with such a loss, I have an inner joy in knowing that we have shared in our saviors ability to take us to be with Him and we will see each other again.

Steve had a very special part in my life as one of the men that taught me how to fly. The old air knocker, 7AC champ, that he taught me in, was not in the best of shape. Most of the instruments didn't work. We had an altimeter, airspeed, and tachometer. The turn-bank indicator was broken with the ball up on one side. The oil pressure wasn't accurate and the gas gauge was a floating stick of some kind. The plane had been in many accidents and the wings were not straight across and he taught me how to fly this tail-dragger, literally, by the seat of my pants. He'd tell me what to do and demonstrate it, then have me do it. I was blessed to catch on quickly and he and Rich Andresen both pushed me to do stuff that was sort of beyond what "normal" students learn now days. I had logged 4 hours and 25 minutes when he took me to get "officially" checked out to solo, by an instructor. I took the instructor up and demonstrated what I had been taught. After a few minutes, he said, "let me have it for a minute". I did, and he flew it for a few minutes and said, "I don't see how you fly this thing, the wings are at different angles and you can't let go of the controls because it will turn by itself." I told him I didn't know any different and this was normal for me. He had me land it and when I did I slipped the plane with the stick all the way over and dropped it on the numbers. He said I did a good job and signed me off to solo.

Now mind you, I was overjoyed, confident of being able to fly the plane, and asked him if I could play with it over the field as there was no one else in the air, instead of just going around the pattern once and landing. He looked at me and said, "yeah, OK." Well, not knowing any better, and wanting to feel how the plane would handle without the weight of anybody in it, I took it up to about 1,000 feet directly over the airport and began to do 90 degree turns, steep lazy eight's, that guess who? (taught me how to do) !! Boy was that fun! When I landed and got back down and that instructor said, "Who taught you to do that?" I felt that I was about to get somebody in trouble and never exactly let on all that Steve had taught me.

Another most memorable experience – before I was soloed. I asked what a chandelle was as I had heard the airport guys talking about them. Steve pointed at a steep valley in the side of the mountain and said for me to fly into that. As I had absolute trust in his ability, I began to fly into it but the sides were coming

close and there was no way to go over that mountain! As I was becoming somewhat concerned, Steve said, "let me have it," and it was by demonstration that I learned in living color what a chandelle was. I would never recommend it, but it was one maneuver that I'll never forget!

Although I have many flying stories with Steve, this last story concerned my being taught how to land in a cow pasture. By now I did what "they" told me as I figured "they" knew how to fly and everything about this stuff. So I landed in this field that "they" had been in before, and "they" knew the farmer that owned the field. Well, it had been about 3 months earlier, and by now the field was neck deep in grass, hay and everything that grows wild. I taxied around trying to get off the ground and couldn't do it. Finally I was told to take the plane up on a hill and get a running start down the hill to build up enough airspeed to take off. It barely got airborne after quite a downhill run. I was then instructed to fly it to some remote airport where we landed, quickly got out and took massive amounts of hay off the landing gear and wads off the tail wheel and cleaned the green juices of the windshield so we could see to get home. It has become obvious to me that the Lord was watching over us those 33 years ago.

May God bless you as you collect these "Steve Stories" and may the peace of the Lord be yours, as you know the Lord that Steve knew. We'll all have a lot to share for billions of years as we look forward to meeting together "in the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."