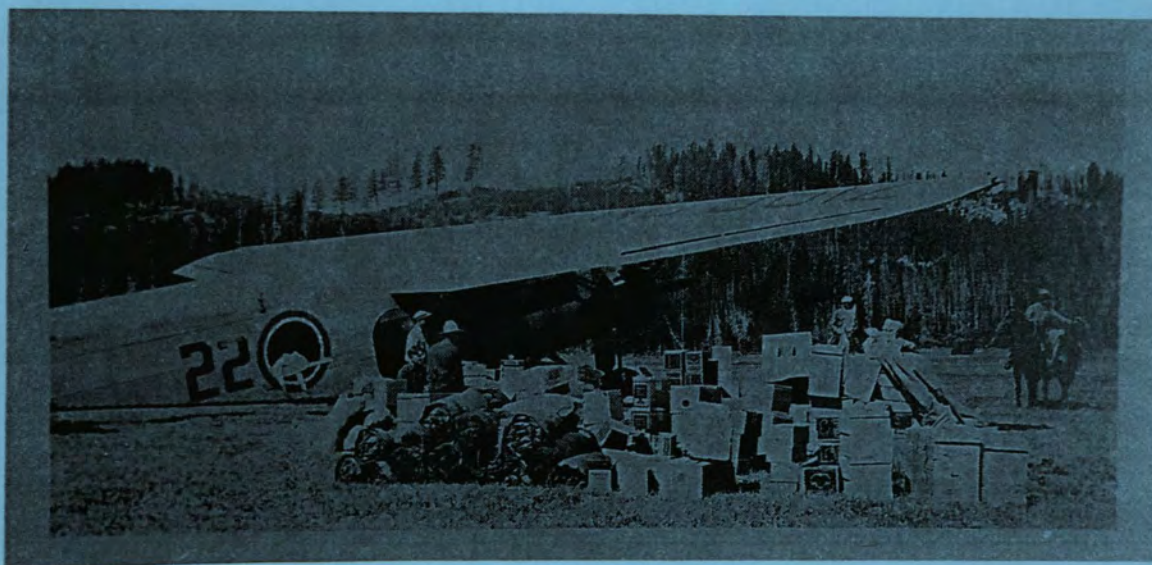


Central Idaho Pilots

A Roster of Forest Service
and Contracted Pilots
1928-1970

By
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HERITAGE PROGRAM
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Photo on cover is Nick Mamer's Tri-Motor delivering supplies to Chamberlain Basin in 1931.

(Photo from William T. Larkins *The Ford Tri-Motor 1926-1992*)

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Penn Stohr Jr., Dan Stohr, Kenny Roth, Bill Fogg, Orman LaVoie, Warren Ellison, Jack Demmons, May Potter, Jim Larkin, Stan Nye, Rod Snider, M.L Owen, Evelyn Hughes, Skip Alderson, Doug Smuin, Art Lindstrom, Gene Crosby, Lloyd Hansen, Del Catlin, Fred Gerlach, Bob and Tina Burke, Museum of Mountain Flying, Bob King, Greg Herrick, Maurice Hovious, Mike Westveer, Gayle Dixon.

Introduction

In the aftermath of World War I, the military made several models of surplus aircraft available for purchase to the public. The growing industries in aviation, mining, and fire suppression created a demand for each other, resulting in what we call today "backcountry flying." The mining camps located in some of the remotest areas of the West needed supplies and mail year-round. Typically this was accomplished in the winter months by dog sled, and by driving treacherous roads the remaining parts of the year. The use of airplanes created a solution to all of these problems. However, it was the pilots of these planes that established backcountry flying and its continued success.

The primary focus of this publication, *Central Idaho Pilots*, is to specifically identify the pilots that flew on the Payette National Forest from roughly 1928 to 1970. The year 1928 is significant to backcountry flying history on the Payette, because the first landing took place on the forest at Chamberlain Basin. In 1970, government policies began to change and more restrictions were placed on what could and could not be done in the area of aerial fire suppression. Also at this time the Forest Service and other aviation contractors began a slow shift toward new types of aircraft used on the forest to complete specific jobs.

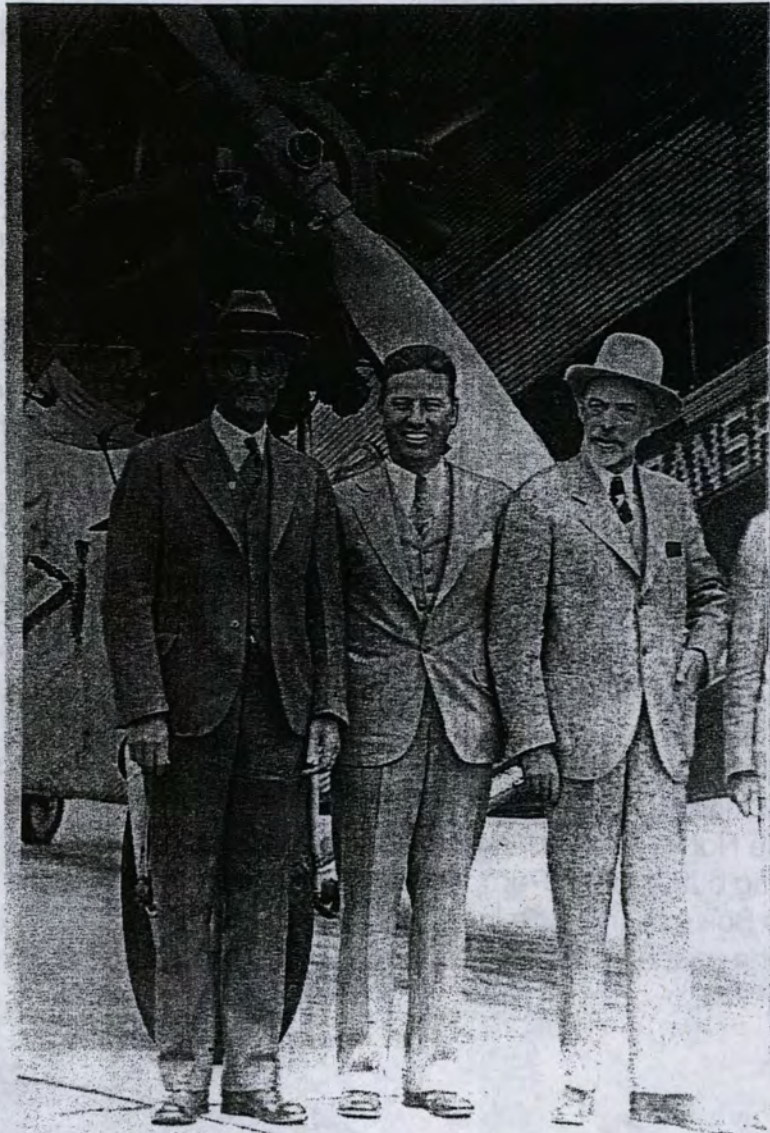
Central Idaho Pilots is designed to give a roster of the pilots that flew on the Payette National Forest directly for the Forest Service or as Forest Service contractors. Pilots included on the roster may have been based out of another area and only flown on the Payette for a few jobs, or may have been based for several years at the Cascade or McCall airports.

Pilots on the Payette did various types of work hauling supplies, smokejumpers, retardant, etc. Whatever the situation, their history of flying in the area is important to the heritage of the Payette National Forest. Generally this roster is organized in chronological order; with each name is a brief biography of the pilot's flying career based on available and reliable information; some of the pilots' records are limited and therefore, little is written about them.

Early Years

Originally the military started flying surplus World War I aircraft for fire spotting, in agreement with the Forest Service. The idea arose, according to long time backcountry pilot, Jim Larkin, in 1919 when Major Hap Arnold approached a regional forester about the idea. They both agreed that it would be a good program since military pilots would have work and it would aid in fire suppression. One of the pilots in the service at the time was Nick Mamer who is often referred to as the "Grandfather of Mountain Flying." Larkin believes that Mamer, along with Lt. Freng, were flying in the area as early as 1925. Mamer and Forest Service Inspector Howard Flint became close associates in the development of aerial fire control. It is likely that Mamer was the first to land on the Payette at the Stonebraker Ranch while doing aerial fire work in the summer of 1928. George Stonebraker had a meadow located a mile and half northeast of present day Chamberlain Basin landing strip. Mamer continued flying aerial fire work after he was out of the military, and started his own flying business at Felts Field in Spokane, Washington. He went on to become one of the nation's leading pioneers in the field of aviation, accomplishing the first in-flight refueling, and holding several of the fastest record breaking non-stop flights to various places throughout the country. Included in Mamer's business was a flight school where he taught two of the best early pioneers to fly: Bob Johnson and Penn Stohr.¹ Mamer's business struggled during the Depression and he went to work as a pilot at Northwest Airlines. On a flight near Bozeman, Montana, in 1938, the Lockheed Electra he was flying lost the entire tail section as a result of severe turbulence. Mamer was so calm and collected that he talked his way down on the radio as to what the plane was doing. There was nothing he could do and the plane crashed, killing him at the age of thirty-nine.²

Sometime after Mamer's successful meadow landing, George Stonebraker began to fly in and out of his ranch. He learned to fly from Gordon Moore who was the first person to land at Big Creek.³ Eventually Stonebraker started his own flying service based in Cascade, flying to various places across the Payette. Historian Arthur Hart in his book, *Wings Over Idaho: An Aviation History*, notes that Stonebraker held a few mail contracts and also had one or two pilots working for him. One pilot, Ray Fisher, was killed in Stonebraker's Bellanca when it crashed into West Mountain while on a cattle hunt. Fisher was carrying four other passengers who all escaped with minor injuries.⁴ Stonebraker eventually moved full time to Cascade.



Nick Mamer center with two Spokane city officials standing in front of his Tri-Motor named, the West Wind (NC 9612). (Photo from William T. Larkins book *The Ford Tri-Motor 1926-1992*)

Bob King

Bob King learned to fly in the late the 1920s out of Boise. He received more extensive training and instruction in Portland where he earned his official license. In his early career, according to his son Bob King Jr., he made a living by barnstorming around various areas of Oregon and Idaho. One such barnstorming event that he was famous for was a night stunt where he attached flares to the wing tips of his Jenny airplane, giving off a unique effect in the night sky. His nighttime performance nearly cost him his life while barnstorming near Burns, Oregon, when his plane crashed during the act. However, he walked away uninjured. From King's barnstorming days he went to work with friend Virgil Adair developing early backcountry techniques in the areas of Yellow Pine and Stibnite, flying Stearman bi-planes and Zeniths.⁵ When King was not flying to these areas, he was busy flying the mail route from Boise to Atlanta in a Travelair 6000. According to historian Wayne White in *A History of Aviation In Idaho 1930-1950*, King was the first to land an airplane at Thomas Creek on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. On this trip he flew in some Eastern anglers to Keith Burns who owned the McCall Ranch which today is known as the Middle Fork Lodge.⁶

In the mid-1930s King and his brother-in-law Harry Creswell started Capital Airlines flying passengers in staggerwing Beechcrafts to various areas throughout the Northwest. During the 1940s King went to work for Standard Oil Company flying out of Lima, Peru, for about ten to fifteen years. King eventually came back to Boise, flying for a local charter service. From the early days of aviation until he passed away in the early 1960s, King always enjoyed flying.



Bob King with a Travelair. (Photo courtesy of B. King Jr.)



Bob King on the left with a staggerwing Beech in 1936. (Photo courtesy of B. King Jr.)

Other Early Pilots

The following is a list of pilots found mentioned in various sources that are associated with early aviation on the Payette National Forest: Webb Apell, William Gowen, Paul McKinley, Wild Bill Haddock, and Jack Rose.

The Johnson Brothers And Johnson Flying Service

One of Mamer's students, Robert Johnson started his own flying business after learning to fly at Felts Field in 1926. By 1927 Bob bought an OX-5 Swallow and performed work similar to that done by Mamer out of Missoula, including aerial fire patrol, hauling cargo and flight instruction. In 1929 Johnson purchased a Travelair 6000, which he had determined was well suited for carrying heavy loads and getting out of short fields with ease. With the new plane, Johnson's business expanded and he soon took on his younger brother, Dick, as a mechanic in exchange for teaching him how to fly. The company continued to grow slowly, hiring a full time mechanic and pilots such as Penn Stohr during the summer months.

Johnson Flying Service even expanded to areas of Idaho, where frequent jobs were done on the Payette National Forest. According to historian Arthur A. Hart, Johnson teamed up with A.A. Bennett who had a flying business based in Boise. The two received the contracts on several mail routes to places like Yellow Pine, Stibnite, and several others on the Payette. Johnson eventually ended the partnership with Bennett for financial reasons and went on to underbid Bennett for the mail contract for eight years.⁷ To make the mail route more feasible, Johnson originally set up a branch in Cascade and then moved it to McCall after the war.

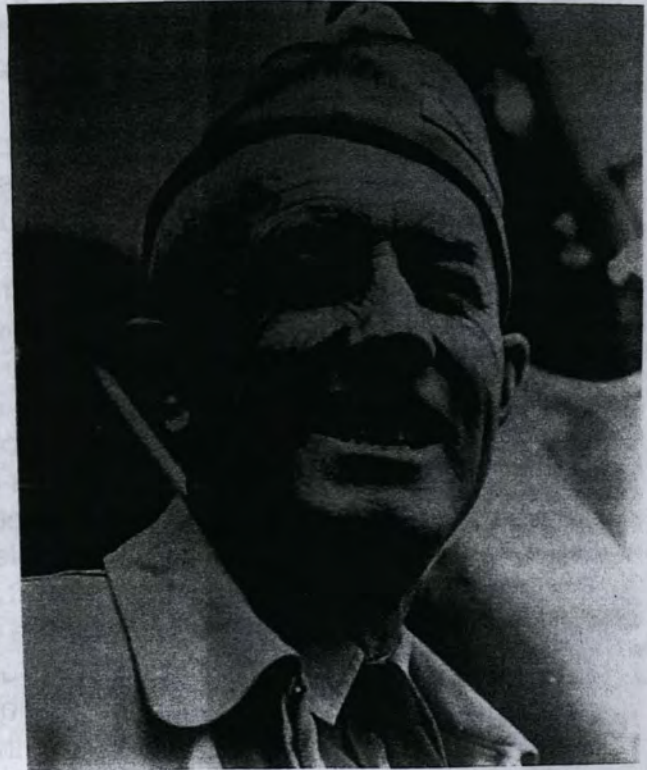
Even more so than mail routes, Johnson Flying Service was the pioneering mastermind in the development and application of various aerial techniques for the Forest Service. Johnson was instrumental in the first smokejumper program, aerial spraying in both fixed wing and helicopters, cargo dropping, and a multitude of other experimental projects. At one point Johnson was even involved in helping the Forest Service build lookouts by dropping the supplies with cargo shoots during the winter on the snow. It was, however, not just the designing of the projects that made them reality, a lot of it had to do with the abilities of the pilots. As Johnson received more and more Forest Service and mail contracts, his roster of pilots grew too. In the early 1950s Johnson was employing thirty-five people and by the 1970s it had grown to a staff of fifty, plus additional employees when busy.

Dick Johnson who was the wild side of the business and one heck of good pilot lost his life while flying a Forest Service contract outside of Jackson, Wyoming. He was doing a game count and ran into bad weather. The Travelair (NC 655H) hit a down draft and the plane was forced into the timber. He along with Orange Olsen was killed, but game warden Bob Brown walked away with minor injuries.

Bob Johnson sold the company in 1975 to Evergreen Aviation based in McMinnville, Oregon. Bob spent his retirement years at his cabin on Flathead Lake in Montana and due to his deteriorating health passed away at the age of 87 on December 15, 1980. His accomplishments and career have been well documented and are the subject of several books.



Bob Johnson standing by a wall of coyotes after a hunt. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)



Dick Johnson. (Photo from Steve Smith's *Fly the Biggest Piece Back*)

Penn Stohr -The Miracle Pilot

Willis Penn Stohr was flying mail runs in the area of the Payette National Forest when he first started seasonal work for Johnson Flying Service. By 1936 he was working full time. Penn's eldest son Dan believed that Penn had met Bob Johnson through Nick Mamer, who taught him to fly at Felts Field in Spokane, Washington. He and Mamer became fast friends and when Penn had completed the necessary hours, he and Mamer continued to fly together. In fact, he and Mamer had a very close call while flying together but were lucky enough to walk away.⁸ Penn and his friend, Fred Moller, were interested in purchasing a plane from Mamer. While the three of them were on a test flight, the plane somehow went into a flat spin and spun in at 2000 feet per second and struck a power line. The three were able to get out unharmed before the plane burst into flames. Mamer was not surprised when Penn and Moller were uninterested in purchasing that particular plane.⁹

In 1910 the Stohr family moved West from Clarence, Missouri to Plains, Montana where Penn attended high school. Around the age of 17, after learning to fly from Mamer, he saved enough money to buy his first airplane, an OX5 Swallow. He began earning a living with his new airplane by barnstorming in nearby towns. However, the areas he was working in were not exactly booming towns that would have supported a barnstormer. In reality, prohibition had created a high demand for skilled pilots who could fly liquor over the border between the United States and Canada. In 1927, Penn married Alma Garber from Plains and they had their first son, Dan, in 1929 followed by twin daughters, and their youngest Penn Jr. in 1943.¹⁰

With a full time position at Johnson, the Stohr family moved frequently between Boise, Cascade, McCall, and Missoula, depending upon the various flying contracts. While working for Johnson, Penn became a seasoned Ford Tri-Motor and Travelair pilot. In 1941, they permanently moved to Valley County where Dan remembers them wintering in Cascade and summering in McCall. Based out of Valley County, Penn became a legend of the backcountry because of his skills as a pilot. He felt he did nothing extraordinary, and took this recognition as just part of another day's work. In historian Frank W. Wiley's book, *Montana and the Sky*, he says, "Stohr's flights became legendary. Mercy flights were almost everyday occurrences during the winter months . . . This dedicated cigar-smoker worried more over being caught short of cigars than he ever did about any weather or flying problems."¹¹

As a young boy, Dan remembers it was always a real treat when his Dad asked him if wanted to fly with him for the day. His most vivid memories are of trips into Stibnite during the war years. Johnson was contracted by the mining company to run supplies in and out of Stibnite, the company town where the mine operated. On one such trip during the winter, Penn was to fly in and pick up the body of a person that had been killed in a mining accident the previous week. Dan was happy to go on this trip, for he had never seen a dead body. Penn landed safely at Stibnite, turned around and taxied back across the same tracks to ensure he would not get stuck in the deep snow while taking off. There

were two men and a sleigh awaiting Penn's arrival. Penn opened up the rear door on the Travelair. Then the two men picked up the body, still fully clothed. The only problem was that the body was frozen stiff, making it difficult to put it into the plane. One of the men was the dead man's brother and he started cursing at him, "You always were difficult you son of"

Dan stood there in the snow next to his father, wide-eyed not believing what was going on. Penn wished the two men farewell, finished his cigar, and flicked it on the ground before clambering in past the body and into the cockpit. Dan followed not far behind and probably twice as fast. After take off, Penn fired up another cigar and was making light of the situation, but Dan was still shocked.

One evening while at home, Penn received a telephone call. "Sure I'll pick it up. I'll fly it out as soon as possible." The person on the other end of the line was from the town of Stibnite and had called Penn to see if he could bring in some liquor because the whole town of Stibnite had run dry. Sure enough Penn needed a passenger to make sure the bottles stayed upright, and who better than Dan to get the job done.

Penn did just about any job that came down the pipe while flying for Johnson Flying Service. One of his main jobs was flying Forest Service contracts. For a short period he was flying out of Missoula, dropping supplies and doing observation work on a fire about 60 miles away near Cayuse Creek. On one particular flight, he brought with him Forest Service observer Bill Ferris. They were near the head of the Clearwater River when a strange noise could be heard followed by slow thumping. It later became known that a cylinder head had blown off. The motor eventually froze and of course at the worse possible time, just as they were climbing a ridge. Penn kept it in a climb and made it over the ridge, trying to reach the Cayuse Creek landing field. Penn looked around as he cleared the ridge and Bill had disappeared. He had gone to the restroom in the rear of the plane to fill out his last will and testament, and to record the cause of the crash. In reality Penn had it under control. He glided the Travelair 6000 into the wind, and put the little plane on the ground dead stick. He jumped out of the cabin with a grin on his face and immediately started to give Bill a hard time about his bailout to the restroom.¹²

Penn was involved in several other contracts with the Forest Service. He was the first pilot to fly smokejumpers based out of McCall. He made the first flight with smokejumpers in 1943 and carried Lloyd Johnson as a spotter, along with John P. Ferguson and Lester Gahler, who preformed the first jump in the area. In early February of 1943, Penn became nationally known after rescuing the crew of a downed Douglas B-23 Dragon that crashed at Loon Lake.

The B-23 was traveling from Tonopha, Nevada, to McChord Air Force base when they hit a heavy snowstorm and were unable to land at any nearby bases. The pilot, Lt. Robert Orr, decided he would try to land at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho. By the time the decision was made the fuel was too low. As it was snowing heavily, the crew spotted what appeared to be a field, later to be discovered as frozen Loon Lake. The plane made one pass over the lake, and was unable to get less than 50 percent flaps because they were frozen. On the second pass they smashed into the trees and came to rest about 50 feet from the

shore. After several days of waiting, three of the crew members decided to walk out for help, leaving the other five at the plane. Penn had heard of the missing plane and was continually changing the routes he flew to see if he could spot anything; however by examining his log book, minimal flying took place because during the first two weeks of February there was poor weather. Late in the afternoon on February 13th, he was returning from his mail route to Warren when he spotted the downed plane. After getting through government red tape, the following day he was able to make several landings on Loon Lake and bring out the five crew members who had crashed on January 29th. Penn was also instrumental in helping the Army Air Force (AAF) retrieve several of the military top secret pieces of the plane. Little did the AAF realize, but on one of the many flights into the bomber he took one of the most sought after items, the .50 caliber machine gun from the tail gunner's position. His kids remember how he would bring it out on special occasions and everyone would get three shots apiece, which was a real thrill. After Penn's heroic feat at Loon Lake, a good friend of his, who wrote for the local Cascade newspaper, dubbed him "The Miracle Pilot."¹³

The nickname of "The Miracle Pilot," was of little importance to Penn. In his mind he was merely doing his job and he was in the right place, at the right time and just did what anyone else would have done in his position. Letters came in nation-wide from friends, the crew member's mothers, and from the Assistant Secretary of the War for Air, Robert A. Lovett. The attitude of Penn Stohr and his skills as a pilot were the key in another rescue operation near Challis, Idaho in March of 1943, when a crew from a B-17 jumped out over the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.

Penn continued to be involved in various other rescue activities and exciting adventures while flying out of the Cascade-McCall area which included everything from bringing in a pregnant woman to the hospital, to rounding up a gang of car robbers who were hiding out in a backcountry cabin.¹⁴ In 1945, Penn and his family moved to Missoula where he continued to fly for Johnson Flying Service. In 1957, Penn was killed along with his copilot Robert Vallance, while doing aerial spraying near Townsend, Montana in a Ford Tri-Motor (NC 9642). It is not exactly clear what the cause of the tragic accident was, but it is clear that Penn was doing what he loved best, flying.¹⁵

The legacy of Penn Stohr, the person and the pilot, was handed down in his family. Dan took up flying and wanted to make a career of it, but was turned away as a commercial pilot because of poor eyesight. Penn's youngest son Penn Jr. or "Little Penn," as he was referred to in his younger years, has had a impressive career as a pilot, working for both Johnson Flying Service and Evergreen Aviation in McMinnville, Oregon.¹⁶ (More on Penn Jr. on page 40). Penn's skills as a pilot and his pioneering of mountain flying were recognized by two hall of fames when he was inducted into the Idaho Aviation Hall of Fame in 1990 and the Hall of Fame established by the Museum of Mountain Flying in 1995.



Penn with his Hisso Eagle Rock. (Photo courtesy of Dan Stohr)



Penn at the Cascade airport in 1943 with a Travelair in the background. (Photo courtesy of Dan Stohr)

Chick Walker

Chick flew a good number of early Forest Service contracts for Johnson Flying Service. He flew many Travelair hours and also flew the Tri-Motor. Jim Larkin remembered him well. "He was a practical joker, a real 'scare um harem' kind of guy, and a good pilot."¹⁷

Slim Phillips - The Screaming Eagle

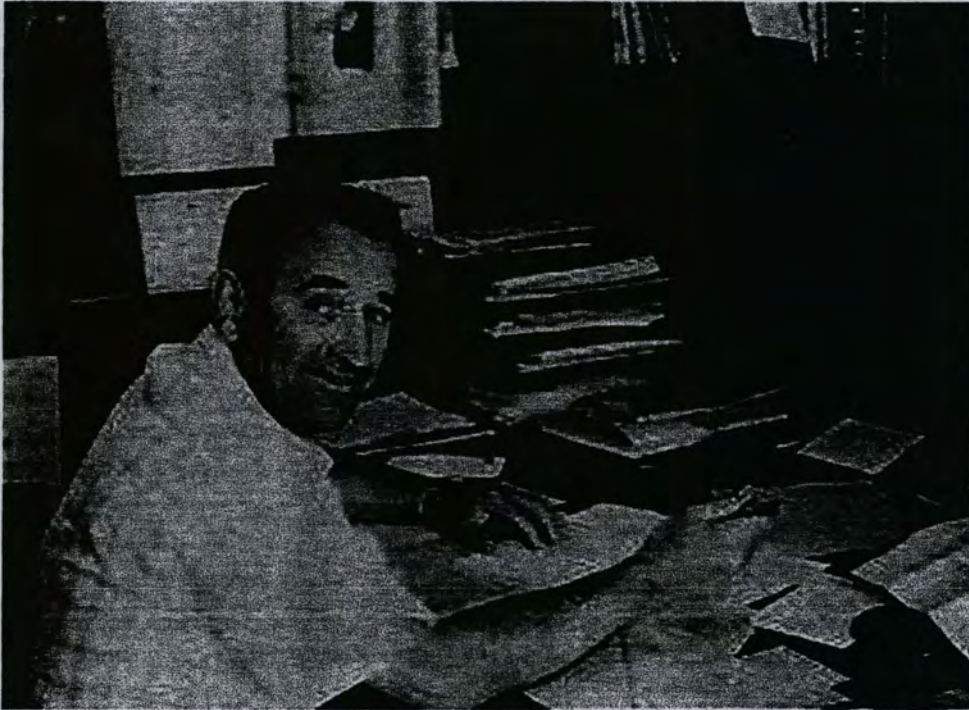
Slim Phillips started working for Johnson Flying Service sometime during the mid 1940s. Slim flew just about everything Johnson owned, from light planes to the Ford Tri-Motor. He flew most types of jobs and was involved in the smokejumper programs based in both McCall and Missoula. Slim received his nickname, "The Screaming Eagle," from his students and his fellow pilots at Johnson because he had the tendency while instructing to yell at the person he was teaching to fly. According to Warren Ellison, "Slim was one heck of a good pilot. He was a great instructor, even with his habit of screaming. He had a natural knack for flying at a very young age." Warren recalled that Slim was always one for a good joke and would do controlled crash landings from time to time, merely to put on a show and for a good laugh.¹⁸



Slim Phillips at work in Missoula. (Photo from Steve Smith's *Fly the Biggest Piece Back*)

Jack Hughes

Jack, who was the step-son of Dick Johnson, started working at Johnson Flying Service around 1942, when he got his pilots license. According to Jack's widow, Evelyn, Jack taught in the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program for one year in Missoula and then taught at a school sixty miles south of Dallas, Texas. He went back to Missoula; working at Johnson's and for a short time was stationed in Cascade. Jack became the first licensed helicopter pilot in Montana in 1948, but also continued to fly most of the fixed-wing aircraft as well. He became Chief Pilot in the 1940s and continued to work for Johnson until 1975. Jack was not only actively involved with Johnson's, but was also involved in the Montana State Aeronautics Commission and at one point was president. Penn Stohr Jr. says, "Jack was a key person in the success of Johnson Flying Service."¹⁹ After many years of retirement, Jack passed away in 1990.



Jack Hughes doing paper work at Johnson Flying Service in Missoula.
(Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Warren Ellison

Warren Ellison was born and raised in Olympia, Washington. Warren always had a passion for flying. He first learned to fly in 1936 in Grays Harbor, Washington. He received his training from his father in a Warner powered SM-2 Stinson Jr. Once he obtained his pilot's license, he flew whenever he got the chance and his budget would allow. In 1941, Warren had his closest call while flying a Taylor Cub J-2. The plane crash broke his foot which disqualified him from joining the military during World War II; this was crushing to Warren.²⁰

Had he been able to join the armed forces he would not have had the opportunity to take the available pilot's position with Johnson Flying Service in Missoula in 1943. The best thing about working for Johnson, Warren says, "Was doing what I loved, and becoming a Ford Pilot." In 1944 Warren started to fly more in the present day area of the Payette National Forest when he began to learn winter operations from Penn Stohr in Cascade. During the war years Warren was mainly a flight instructor for the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program. The program was run with a government contract to train pilots for the military through Johnson and the University of Montana. It focused mainly on basic flight training. From Missoula, the students would go into their own specialized field such as a bomber pilot, fighter pilot, or a bombardier.

One year later, Penn was transferred to Missoula and Warren joined up with Bob Fogg to head Johnson's Cascade operation. The two mainly flew the Travelair 6000 and Ford Tri-Motors during this period. Warren was involved in some of the first timber spray projects using the Ford, one of which was out of the McCall area. While working out of the McCall area, Warren also flew cargo, equipment, and jumpers to almost every backcountry landing strip on the Payette National Forest.²¹

In 1947 he and his wife moved back to Missoula where they remained until 1956. After working for Johnson Flying Service, Warren went to work for Joe Albertson and became the Chief Pilot for Albertson in late 1962. He worked with Albertsons until the early 1980s.

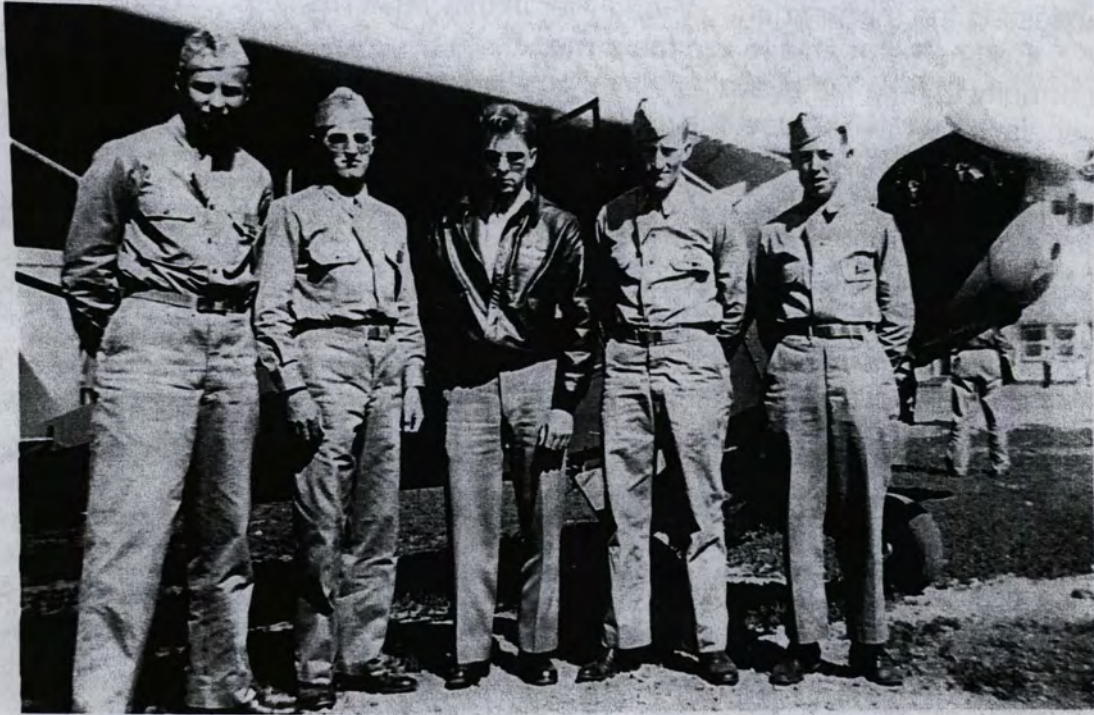
When thinking back about the early days of aviation, Warren can remember many humorous stories and some sad ones. One of his favorite stories was when he was checking out Bob Clark on the Ford Tri-Motor. While they were flying to Shear Landing Strip from Missoula, Warren was flying left seat, as the strip could often be tricky because it was uphill and there was always water on the runway. The Ford touched down and Warren applied heavy breaks to slow down before reaching the patch of water because he had never seen so much water before on this runway. Clark, who was very religious, looked over at Warren in deep relief, "Nice landing, I'll thank the good Lord for that easy landing." Just then the plane shuttered, jolted hard and stopped, knocking the plane on its nose.

Warren looked over and said, "What did you just say?"

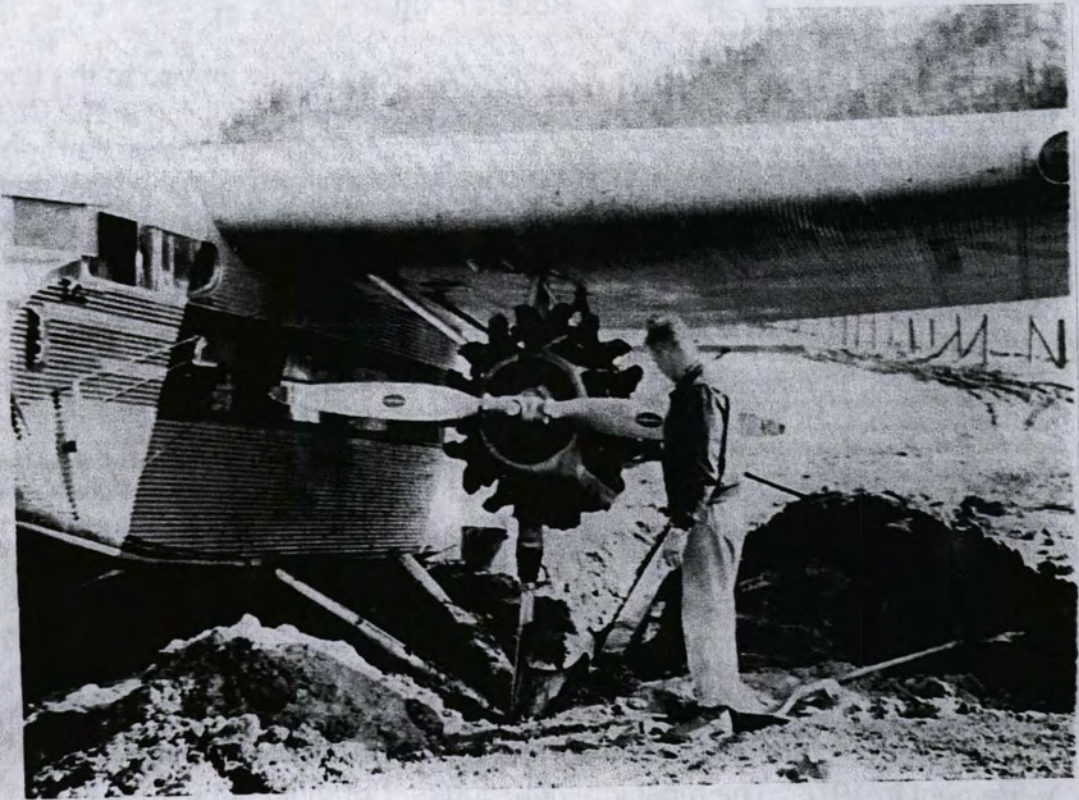
Clark turned to his eyes and glanced at the window while he muttered, "Never mind."²²

One incident Warren had when flying on the Payette National Forest was

when he and Bob Johnson were flying a DC-3 from Missoula to McCall. Bob looked down and spotted Chamberlain Basin. He decided, "What the heck, lets go down and talk to the ranger." The reason the trip sticks out to Warren is because it was the biggest plane of its size to land at Chamberlain. Warren loved his years of flying between Missoula and McCall and believes it was some of the best flying he ever did.²³



Warren center with his students, who were in the CPT program. (Photo courtesy of W. Ellison)



Warren digging out the Tri-Motor at Shear landing strip. (Photo courtesy of W. Ellison)

Robert Fogg

Originally from St. Anthony, Idaho, the Fogg family moved to the Long Valley area when Bob was in the seventh grade. He loved living in the Cascade area with his mother and two brothers. Bob graduated from Cascade High School and wanted to go to a university, but he realized that he did not have the money to make it happen. Since going to college was not an option and he knew he needed a profession, he took a job at the mill where he earned enough money to take a few flying lessons. He took his flight lessons from Dick Johnson at the Cascade airport for thirty five cents per hour. At the end of the summer in 1939, Bob moved to Alaska to work and live with his older brother, Ted. While he was living in Alaska, Bob sent all of his money to Johnson Flying Service in Missoula for flight lessons.

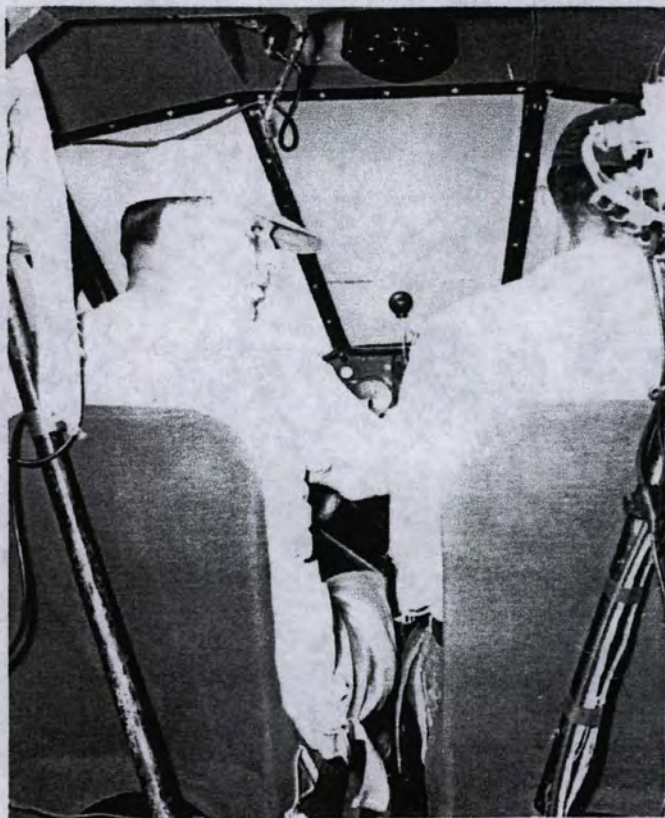
Eventually Bob earned his commercial license and flight instructor license from Johnson Flying Service. According to an interview done by Joe Bennett and Doug Jones in 1976, Bob went to work for Johnson's full time as an instructor in the spring of 1942 with the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program. Bob stayed on with Johnson Flying Service in Missoula until the end of the war. He was relocated to the Johnson branch in Cascade, which was moved that same year to McCall.²⁴ Bob flew for Johnson's until it sold to Evergreen Aviation. Evergreen Aviation kept the McCall branch, where Bob worked until his retirement in 1978. The most infamous job that Bob did out of McCall was flying the Salmon River mail route. Bob and the mail route were featured in an article in the August 1975 issue of *Flying* magazine. While working at the McCall branch, he served twenty-seven years as the longest running airport manager and spent time in the Idaho Legislature. Bob passed away from emphysema in the 1970s. He was survived by his wife Margaret, youngest son, Bill, and his daughter Bonny.²⁵

In an interview with Bob's youngest son, Bill, he told numerous stories of his Dad's flying adventures on and near the Payette National Forest. One that is particularly interesting is when Bob was asked to set up the Campbell's Ferry landing strip in 1954. It was so narrow and difficult to land on that the pilot had to continue down canyon past the airstrip, descending in altitude the entire time and then almost turn the plane 180 degrees on one wing tip and head back to the landing strip. As the pilot made the final approach to the strip, all they could do was pray that no big game or obstacle was in the way. Because of difficulties due to shortness and visibility problems at Campbell's Ferry, Bob had to go in by foot to set it up. The strip was necessary in order to bring in supplies for a pack bridge that was being built nearby. Bill explained that there are a number of stories out there about his dad, but Bob never really liked to talk about them unless someone asked him a specific question. One fact that Bill finds interesting is that for a pilot who flew so many hours in the backcountry, the only airplane crash Bob had was as an instructor in the CPT. The student was flying a J-3 Cub on an approach landing and Bob was in the co-pilot seat. The student misjudged and came in way too low, clipping a power line. The line caught on the rear tail wheel and stretched the power line out like a rubber-band. The

plane shook and sputtered until it could fly no more. The plane literally fell out of the sky straight down, landed nose first, and came to rest on its wings. Bob always felt it was amazing that he and his student walked away with minor injuries.²⁶

Another interesting story about Bob was one he told in the interview taken by Bennett and Jones. Bob was delivering hay to a farmer at Big Creek and he came in for a landing with a ski-equipped Travelair. He landed fine, but almost immediately came to a stop. He shoved the throttle wide open and the plane would not budge. He got out only to find that the skies had sunk almost three feet deep. He unloaded the hay and started to pack down the remainder of the runway with his snow shoes and dig the plane out. Six hours later he returned to the McCall airport and told the other pilot, Jim Larkin, about what a trip he had and that he was not looking forward to going back. The following day Jim made the trip thinking that Bob had exaggerated. Eight hours after leaving McCall, Jim arrived back exhausted. It was an experience the two laughed about for years.²⁷

Bob's son, Bill, said his Dad lived to fly and he was able to do so even with his failing health. He believed that Bob's favorite plane was the Ford Tri-Motor. Bill remembered that even in the later years when Johnson was selling all of the old Fords, his dad would try and get the few remaining to McCall as frequently as possible, even in the late 1960s.²⁸



Bob Fogg at the controls of a Travelair. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)



Bob Fogg inspecting an airplane crash while in the CPT program. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)



Campbells Ferry landing strip. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)

Bill Yaggy

In their book, *Tall Timber Pilots*, authors Dale White and Larry Florek mention that Bill received his start as a smokejumper based out of Missoula where he jumped for 2 years. When Johnson started the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program he changed over to flying and went through primary, secondary, and instructor courses and eventually received his Forest Service field check-outs. Bill moved to McCall for a short time, replacing fellow Johnson pilot, Ken Huber, and flew with Bob Fogg. While stationed in McCall in 1946, the Forest Service called for a plane to do a seeding job near Dixie, Idaho. While on the job he and his helper, Bob McBride, were caught in a severe snowstorm. Bill, thinking that it would just blow over, dove down to lose altitude. After several minutes, the Travelair hit the tree tops and crashed killing Bill and only giving minor injuries to McBride.²⁹ Johnson Flying Service pilot, Warren Ellison identified the Travelair Bill was flying as NC 623H.³⁰



Bill Yaggy and Travelair. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)

Orman LaVoie

Orman learned to fly from Dick Johnson in Missoula. To pay for the flying lessons he worked at the Missoula golf course. His hard work paid off and Orman soloed at the age of 14. He was hired on by Johnson Flying Service in 1939, working in the shop while he continued to work for his other ratings and licenses. Once he obtained the necessary licenses he became an instructor in Johnson's Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program until he enlisted in 1944. While in the military he flew C-46s over the Hump. When the war was over, he returned to his home town of Missoula and went back to work flying for Johnson's. Orman was involved in several different experimental projects for the Forest Service in both the Missoula and McCall areas. He and mechanic Waldo Mathies picked out both of Johnson's C-47's (NC 320 and NC 466). Although military airplanes, they can also be referred to as a DC-3. With one of these planes Orman made the first landing of a plane that size in McCall.³¹

One flying job Orman did based out of McCall was in Johnson's Curtis Air Sedan, counting elk along the Salmon River. The project was completed in 1947 for the Fish and Game who were skeptical that large populations of elk existed in the area. Orman left Johnson's in 1951 and started flying for Western Airlines, from which he eventually retired in 1975 when the company merged with Delta Airlines. During the majority of his retirement, he lived with his family in the Bitterroots where he built airplanes and flew from his private landing strip. His son, Mark, learned to fly and he too spent some time flying for Johnson Flying Service.³²



Johnson Flying Service pilots drawing out plans for a Forest Service contract. L To R – Forest Service employee, Orman LaVoie, Penn Stohr, Warren Ellison, Jack Hughes, and Bob Johnson. (Photo courtesy of W. Ellison)

Don Goodman

Don was originally a native of Valley County and learned to fly at an early age. Penn Stohr Jr. believes that Don started working for Johnson Flying Service in roughly 1943. Don, along with his fascination for aviation, was an avid skier. In fact, he along with financial backer Bob Johnson, designed one of the first break-away ski bindings. However, he was not careful enough about patenting, and his ideas were lifted by major companies. After he and his brother, Leon, spent time during World War II in the 10th Mountain Division skiing, Don returned to Missoula, flying for Johnson's by 1950. Don was very mechanically inclined and he helped Johnson's design the borate tanks for the TBMs.

Penn Jr. recalls one day in the early 1960s when Don showed up during one of his days off flying a TBM that he had bought from the Canadian government at the Missoula airport. He parked it over at the terminal and a confused Bob Johnson went over and asked Don what he was doing. Don announced to Bob that he was going to put tanks on it and go into business for himself. Bob shook his head and said that's fine, but I can't have you working for me and competing against me. Don went to work converting his TBM so he could fly Forest Service contracts. He was working on it so much that he began living out of the city owned terminal; eventually people got a little irritated. However, this did not deter Don; he just hooked the TBM up to the back of his pickup and hauled it to his house in Missoula. He eventually did get it flying, but during that period it was very difficult to compete for Forest Service contracts with big operations such as Johnson's. Don could only get put on temporary status, which meant that he only got work if another contractor could not fulfill a contract. Don went through a series of bad luck with the TBM, but was able to make ends meet and eventually built his own company to three planes. Don was killed in one of his B-26s on a Forest Service contract while he was trying to save his plane and retardant.³³

Ken Huber

Huber originally started flying for Johnson Flying Service around 1944 and was based in Missoula. In 1945 he was transferred to the McCall branch for a short time, replacing Warren Ellison. He was transferred back to Missoula, however continued to fly McCall jumpers during the summer months from 1945 to 1951. Long-time Johnson pilot Kenny Roth believes that Huber worked the summer of 1947 and 1948 in McCall and resigned from Johnson's around 1951. From Johnson's, Huber went to work as an airline pilot for Frontier. While flying a Frontier DC-3 on instruments outside of Billings, Montana, Ken was killed. Roth says, "Huber was one of the best airline pilots at the time. It is believed that a storm came in really quick causing the air pressure to change, which in return caused the altimeter to change. That, combined with low visibility is most likely the reason for the accident."³⁴

Clare Hartnett

Jim Larkin believes that Clare received his start in the flying business as a mechanic in 1925 on a fire patrol project. The patrol project covered territory ranging from Spokane, Washington, all the way to Boise. Clare picked up flying and came to Valley County in 1928 where he was hired by Slim Delong in Cascade. From Cascade, Delong had him flying into Deadwood Reservoir in a Hisso. He continued contract jobs flying all around the Northwest. Clare then spent time in the Ferry Command during World War II. After the war, in about 1947, he became the first pilot hired by the Forest Service in Region Four. He retired in 1953. He moved to Riverside, California, and passed away sometime in the late 1970s.³⁵

Swede Nelson

According to Kenny Roth, Swede took primary and secondary flight training from the Johnson Flying Service Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program in Missoula. During World War II he flew C-46s overseas. He returned to Missoula and received a job working for Johnson's. He mainly flew helicopters later on but also flew the Tri-Motor, Travelair, and DC-3.³⁶



Swede Nelson in Missoula. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider).

Jim Larkin

James C. Larkin from Colorado Springs, Colorado, moved to Idaho in 1928 with his family. Before moving from Colorado Springs, Jim received a ride from a barnstormer which gave him the urge to learn how to fly. Jim first learned to fly in 1939, and with the rising conflict in Europe entered a Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program in Boise in 1941. After graduating top in his class he went on to do various jobs in the service such as being a flight instructor, a pilot in the Ferry Command, and eventually finishing out the remainder of the war flying the Hump in C-46s. After returning home he continued to fly frequently, doing some crop dusting for private businesses and for the Forest Service. During this period Jim and his brother built an airfield at their Donnelly home. Jim did most of his flying from there.³⁷

In 1949, when not flying planes off of his back porch in Donnelly, he was working for his boss, Bob Fogg, at the McCall branch of Johnson Flying Service. While working for Johnson's, Jim flew Forest Service contracts. He flew every type of cargo imaginable into the backcountry, from tractors to pigs. Jim's main job in the summer months was carrying smokejumpers in both the Ford Tri-Motor and the Travelair. After working eight years for Johnson, Jim started his own aviation business flying contracts for the Forest Service with a Cunningham-Hall. In 1958 he became directly employed by the Forest Service and was stationed in Boise. In 1964 Jim moved up in ranks within the Forest Service and was appointed Director and Chief Pilot for the Forest Service Region 4. Every year from 1949 until his retirement in 1979, Jim flew smokejumpers and did some type of contract work for the Forest Service that related to the Payette National Forest.³⁸

Jim continues to stay active in flying by helping with mountain flying seminars held during the summer in McCall. While in McCall during the summer of 2003, he was reunited with the Johnson Flying Service Travelair NC 9038, the exact Travelair that he spent most of his time flying in the backcountry while working for Johnson's. He was very happy to see his favorite plane again. He and the current owner, Hank Galpin, took it up for a ride.³⁹



Jim Larkin flying a Travelair. (Photo courtesy of J. Larkin)

Kenny Roth

Kenny moved West with his family in 1936 from Kansas, in a Model A Ford while looking for work during the hard times of the Great Depression. The first town the Roths settled in was Wilder, Idaho. Kenny and his two siblings eventually finished school in Homedale, Idaho, where his parents were doing farm work. The summer after he graduated from high school, Kenny went to work in Garden Valley for the Forest Service, fighting fires. Not long after that summer of hard work Kenny enlisted in the Navy and served through the remainder of the war overseas. Kenny then moved back to Homedale with the intention of becoming a full time farmer. However, fate changed his career when his good friend Ray Mansidor showed up one day as Kenny was working in a beet field in the hot sun. Ray said, "Hey, Kenny what are you up to?"

Kenny looked up and yelled, "What does it look like I'm doing? I'm farming."

Ray yelled back, "What do you say you and I go and jump on fires in McCall this summer? The pay is really good."

By this time Kenny had left the beets and had gone over to talk to Ray. Kenny had never even heard about this smoke jumping stuff. After some discussion, in which Kenny actually learned about the job and that he could make more money jumping than he could farming, he agreed to go to McCall and try out. He and Ray both made the smoke jumping rookie class of 1946 and had a good but hard summer working. In fact, Kenny liked the job so much that he jumped for five seasons. After the fire seasons, he worked for Brown Tie & Lumber Co. where he eventually became a full time employee.⁴⁰

Kenny fell into being a pilot just as he had fallen into being a smokejumper. A friend who he had met in the Navy was taking flying lessons for free with the post war GI Bill. Kenny figured what the heck and took up flying in his free time during the winter seasons near Caldwell, Idaho. He then bought a J-3 Cub for \$500.00 dollars which he mainly flew out of the McCall Airport. Flying, to Kenny, was merely fun and he enjoyed doing it in his off hours when time permitted. However, one spring day in 1952 his perspective and attitude about flying was changed when he ran into Bob Fogg. Kenny had met Bob while being a jumper and always had a great respect for him. Bob said, "Hey Kenny I have a proposition for you. I'm planning on taking a leave of absence from flying for about one year so I can go down and work the family store in Cascade. The trouble is I need a temporary replacement, would you be interested?"

Kenny said with little interest, "I'll think about it."

Kenny eventually did agree to take on the position, but with regret because it meant that he would be taking a pay cut compared to his work with Browns. He has always said, "Had Bob Fogg not wanted to take a leave of absence from flying, I would probably have never become a full time pilot. I would probably have logged in McCall for the rest of my life." Kenny flew out of McCall full time in the summer of 1952 and then moved to Missoula the following year when Bob's year of leave was over. Kenny continued to fly for Johnson's in and out of the backcountry surrounding McCall until Johnson's was bought out in

1975. Kenny flew for several companies and individuals after working for Johnson Flying Service, doing everything from fire contracts to aerial spraying.⁴¹ In his book, *Fly The Biggest Piece Back*, historian Steve Smith recognizes Kenny as a "Master Mountain Pilot."⁴²

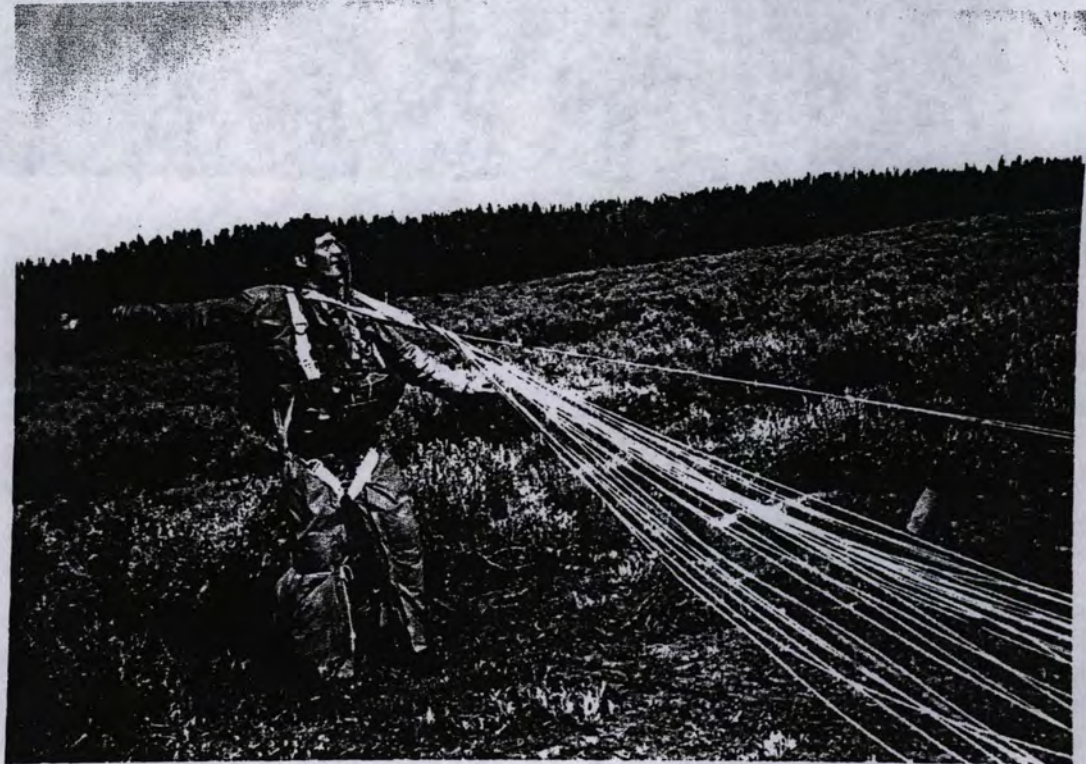
While working for Johnson's Kenny really enjoyed the contracts that the company did for the Forest Service such as flying smokejumpers and supplies into the backcountry. One of his most hair-raising experiences happened while flying a group of jumpers in Ford Tri-Motor N 69905, during August 1953. The plane had just been purchased as a replacement by Johnson because in July, Jim Dillion and Dick Duffield who were flying Tri-Motor N 8400 crashed when the plane struck a static cable that was strung above a power line. The plane hit on its nose, killing both pilots and completely demolished the plane.⁴³

Bob Johnson needed another Tri-Motor to keep up with the work load during the fire season. Bob located one and Penn Stohr went down to pick up the new Tri-Motor N 69905 and fly it back to Missoula. On Penn's return flight he noticed poor performance on acceleration. By August, Johnson was so busy that all the aircraft were in constant operation. A request came in on August 17th to Johnson's to drop six jumpers and gear on a fire near Hungry Horse, Montana. Kenny was the only pilot left and the only plane left was the new Tri-Motor that the mechanics had not yet had a chance to look at. Kenny took off with a full load of fuel, people and supplies with no trouble. However, the winds were too severe for the jumpers to jump so he decided to land at Spotted Bear airstrip until winds died down. After an hour, the jumpers loaded up and Kenny taxied the Tri-Motor down the runway. By this time, he had used up almost half the plane's fuel. The plane lifted into the air above the tall timber; Kenny shoved the throttles forward to gain more altitude and all three engines quit. Being calm and collected, Kenny pulled the three throttle levers back, the nose engine and right engine roared to life again, but the left engine was completely dead. Kenny tried restarting it, but to no avail. He yelled back to the jumpers to brace themselves for an emergency landing. Kenny said, "All I could do by that point was to keep flying it the best I could, even though I knew what was going to happen." The powerless plane smashed into the timber tearing the cockpit open and dismembering the wings. Kenny suffered minor cuts and a fractured right foot. Kenny said, "I normally wore heavy boots when I would fly, but I was called in on such short notice that I didn't have time to change my shoes." Everyone else walked away with minor injuries. It was later discovered that the motors had been upgraded, but when they were changed the mechanics did not install fuel pumps and were relying on the old gas system which was gravity feed. So when the tanks were below half full there was not enough pressure to get the fuel to the carburetors.⁴⁴

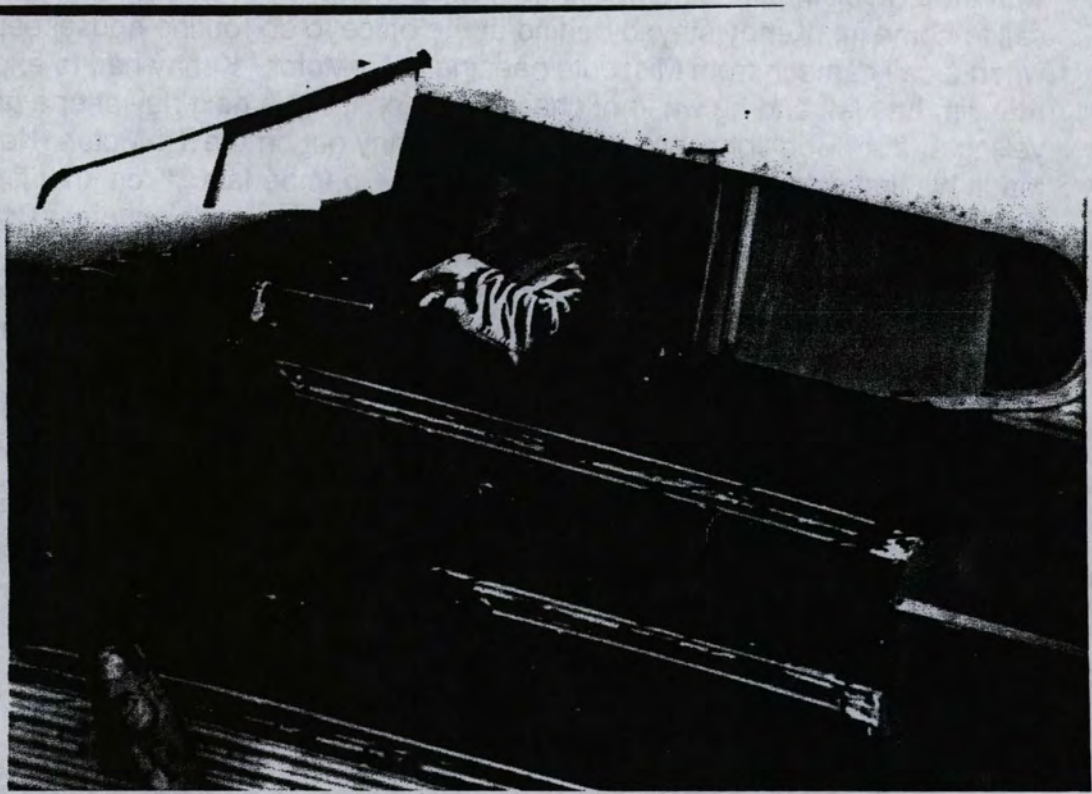
Kenny's favorite plane, without a doubt, is the Tri-Motor. Kenny remembers, "It was big deal at Johnson's if you were qualified to fly a Ford. Bob Johnson only let the real seasoned pilots fly them." However, Kenny was checked out in the Ford just after a few months of flying with Johnson. In the summer of 1952, Jim Larkin was getting tired of flying all of the Ford jobs and he missed flying the more nimble Travelair. So when the call came in for some work

with the Travelair, Jim took the flight. Neither Kenny nor Jim expected another call to come in. Kenny stayed behind at the office to do routine housekeeping when a call came in from Missoula needing a Tri-Motor. Kenny had to explain that Jim had left and he was not checked out on it. The next day after a good yelling at from Bob Johnson, Jim checked Kenny out on the Tri-Motor. Kenny made his first solo flight with the Tri-Motor into Chamberlain. From that first flight Kenny has taken Tri-Motors into the most difficult strips in the country. Cold Meadows was the most difficult strip on the Payette National Forest to get a Ford into. "Only three of us have done it, myself, Jim Larkin, and Warren Ellison."⁴⁵

Kenny has an immense bank of wonderful flying stories about his own experiences and his friends. Kenny's career as a pilot was recognized in 1995 by the Museum of Mountain Flying when he was inducted into their Hall of Fame. The hard working Kenny Roth regretfully retired from truck driving in 2001 and presently enjoys doing volunteer work at the Mountain Flying Museum in Missoula and spending time with his family.



Kenny Roth his rookie year of smoke jumping in McCall. (Photo courtesy of K. Roth)



Kenny Roth looking onward while flying a Tri-Motor. (Photo courtesy of Kenny Roth)

Karl Bryning

Karl was hired by the Forest Service to replace Clare Hartnett in 1953. Before working for the Forest Service he was the airport operator at Pocatello. The Forest Service made him the first full time pilot and he was in charge of all Region Four air operations. He did most of his flying out of Idaho City and for the first year used the Forest Service owned Noordyne. The next year he convinced the Forest Service to purchase a World War II surplus Twin Beechcraft, which was more suited for smokejumper use.

One of the most significant changes Karl made while being Air Operations Officer for the Forest Service was the creation of the Airplane Pilot Qualification Card: Special Missions. The card was required for any pilot transporting Forest Service personnel, which included people such as smokejumpers. The requirement is still used today. This created a big task for the Forest Service as they had to check ride most of the Johnson Flying Service pilots and any other contractor, including their own pilots. Jim Larkin was heavily involved with Karl in the program, which began in 1958. Karl eventually transferred to the Bureau of Reclamation in 1968 where he became the chief pilot. He eventually finished his career working for the Bureau of Reclamation and retired in the late 1970s.⁴⁶

Ed L. Thorsrud

Ed was a carpenter who worked seasonally as a pilot for Johnson Flying Service during the summer. He flew Johnson's DC-3s, Twin Beeches, and TBMs depending upon the application. His flying background was as a pilot during World War II flying the Hump in a C-46. He started doing seasonal work for Johnson's sometime after the war and eventually bought his own TBM and did contract work. Also, at one point in his career he was involved with Air America.⁴⁷

Charles Dean Logan

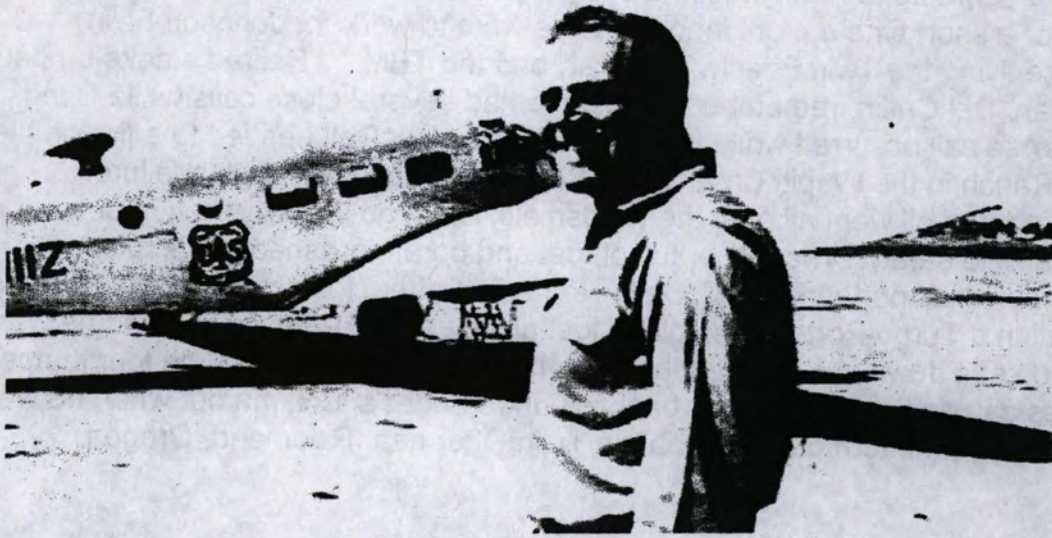
Del Catlin, a former smokejumper foreman, remembers Dean as a small wiry guy who had a great sense of humor. What people marveled at most about Dean was that he only had one hand but could fly remarkably well. He was a Johnson Flying Service pilot who mainly flew out of Missoula, but would occasionally come to McCall.⁴⁸ According to Kenny Roth, Dean was originally from Kalispell, Montana, and started with Johnson's in 1953. He had done some flying in Alaska and flew mostly the Twin Beech and Travelairs while working for Johnson. Roth remembered an interesting story that happened while Dean was flying Travelair NC 447W along the Salmon River. He was flying along and without warning the motor started shaking. Dean immediately started to look for a place to land. He was able to set it down next to the river with little trouble. When he climbed out of the plane he noticed that the end of one of the propeller blades had broken off.⁴⁹



Dean Logan (Photo courtesy of R. Snider).

Robert W. Clark

Bob started for Johnson Flying Service some time after World War II and flew mainly the DC-3 and the Twin Beech. He had a background as a military pilot.⁵⁰



Bob Clark with a Twin Beech in the background. (Photo Courtesy of R. Snider)

Ralph G. Kelley

Kelley worked for Johnson Flying Service, flying the Ford Tri-Motor, DC-3, and the Twin Beech. Kenny Roth remembers giving him his first check ride in the Ford into Big Prairie airstrip. "He was good pilot," recalled Roth, "After working for Johnson he became a helicopter pilot. He was killed on a spray job somewhere near Pueblo, Colorado flying a B-18."⁵¹

Dave Schas

According to Kenny Roth, Dave jumped out of McCall (1948-1951) and then for a short time out of Idaho City. He went to work for Johnson Flying Service flying the Twin Beech, Travelair, and the TBM.⁵² Retired smokejumper foreman, Del Catlin, remembers that Dave had several close calls while flying. One close call occurred while flying a TBM out of McCall headed to a fire on the Root Ranch in the Wapiti Creek area. Shortly after takeoff, engine failure occurred and oil went all over the windshield. With no visibility, he jumped out of the plane to safety. The plane, full of fuel and borate crashed and exploded about six miles northeast of McCall. He had another close call while flying out of McCall in a Turbo-Porter. The plane lost all power just after takeoff and he was able to set it down in a field just beyond the airport. Only one of the four jumpers he was carrying suffered minor back injuries. Schas's luck ran out when he was killed flying an Intermountain Aviation Twin Otter near Redmond, Oregon.⁵³

Frank Borgeson

Frank did seasonal work in both McCall and Grangeville for Johnson Flying Service. Kenny Roth remembered an interesting story when Frank was flying Ford Tri-Motor NC 7861 from Grangeville with four jumpers, a spotter and cargo. They were flying along at normal altitude when all of sudden a huge bang struck the plane and the right engine started vibrating. About three inches of one of the propeller blades had broken off and shot through the corrugated skin of the airplane, nearly hit a jumper and exited out the left side of the plane. The engine started shaking so violently that Frank ordered the jumpers to jump and to throw out all of the cargo. The spotter who was sitting in the cockpit refused to jump and stayed with him. By this time the whole right engine had fallen off, but somehow Frank managed to get the plane on the ground.⁵⁴



Frank Borgeson with a TBM in the background. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider).

Dick Potter

Dick went to work for Johnson Flying Service in Missoula in 1955. He flew a little of everything including the DC-3, Twin Beech and most of all his favorite the TBM. According to his wife May, he started flying at Missoula in 1943 and took some lessons at Miles City. He went into the service, working on the railroad in the Philippines. After he came back, he finished his flying instruction through the GI Bill. May recalled that Dick loved his job and the first year that he was detailed to McCall was in 1960, flying hunters and fisherman into the backcountry. In June of 1977, one day before Dick and May's 36th wedding anniversary, Dick's TBM suffered mechanical failure and he was killed in the crash while on a spray job in New Brunswick, Canada.⁵⁵



Dick Potter with his favorite plane, the TBM in the foreground. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Fred Gerlach

Fred began to work for Johnson Flying Service in the spring of 1956 after flying in the military for four years. The first summer he flew out of McCall for a short time with Bob Johnson in a Ford Tri-Motor carrying jumpers and supplies. Then later on that same summer he was doing the same work with Penn Stohr Sr. Fred says that Penn showed him the country out of McCall, landing on the majority of the strips on the Payette National Forest. Over the course of his career, he mainly flew helicopters and some of the light aircraft. Fred became a full time professor at the University of Montana in their Forestry Department, but continued to fly for Johnson's during the summers until about 1975. Fred retired from the University of Montana in 1994 after thirty-four years of teaching.⁵⁶



Fred Gerlach with a Johnson Flying Service Helicopter in 1963. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Rod Snider

Rod started flying for Johnson Flying Service in 1957, flying mainly from Missoula. He became interested in flying after becoming a smokejumper in Winthrop, Washington. He learned to fly in 1951 and went on to become a pilot in the Air Force. After leaving the service, he began to look for a full time job and a childhood memory of reading the book *Tall Timber Pilots* led him to his job at Johnson's. He flew out of the McCall area, on many occasions flying into landing strips on the Payette National Forest. He left Johnson Flying Service in 1965 and was hired as a pilot for Boise Cascade. While at Boise Cascade he flew Lear Jets and helicopters. He retired from Boise Cascade in 1982 and continued flying for pleasure until about 1998. When asked about his favorite plane to fly, Rod remarked laughing, "They are all so different, I had fun flying them all and also got tired of them all." He flew everything while working for Johnson except for the Ford Tri-Motor.⁵⁷



Rod Snider at Missoula airport. (Photo Courtesy of R. Snider)

Ralph Rensick

Ralph flew mainly out of Lewiston and was a seasonal contract worker, mainly flying TBMs.⁵⁸

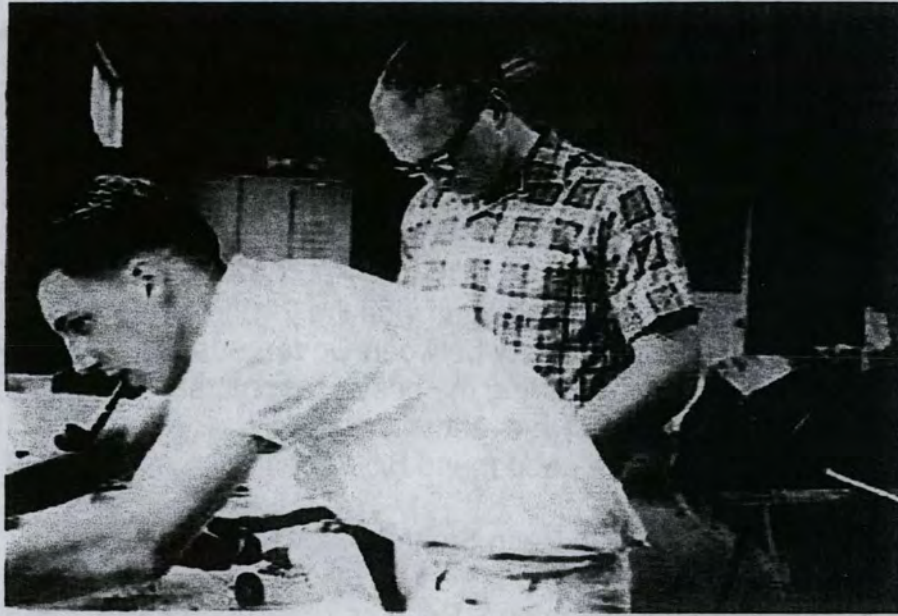
Dale E. Major

According to Jim Larkin, Dale began working for the Forest Service around 1960, where he frequently flew between Ogden, Idaho City and McCall. Dale undertook the needed jobs during the busy seasons that Jim Larkin and Karl Bryning were unable to do. He eventually started work for the Bureau of Reclamation in 1980, flying with good friend Bill Ryder.⁵⁹

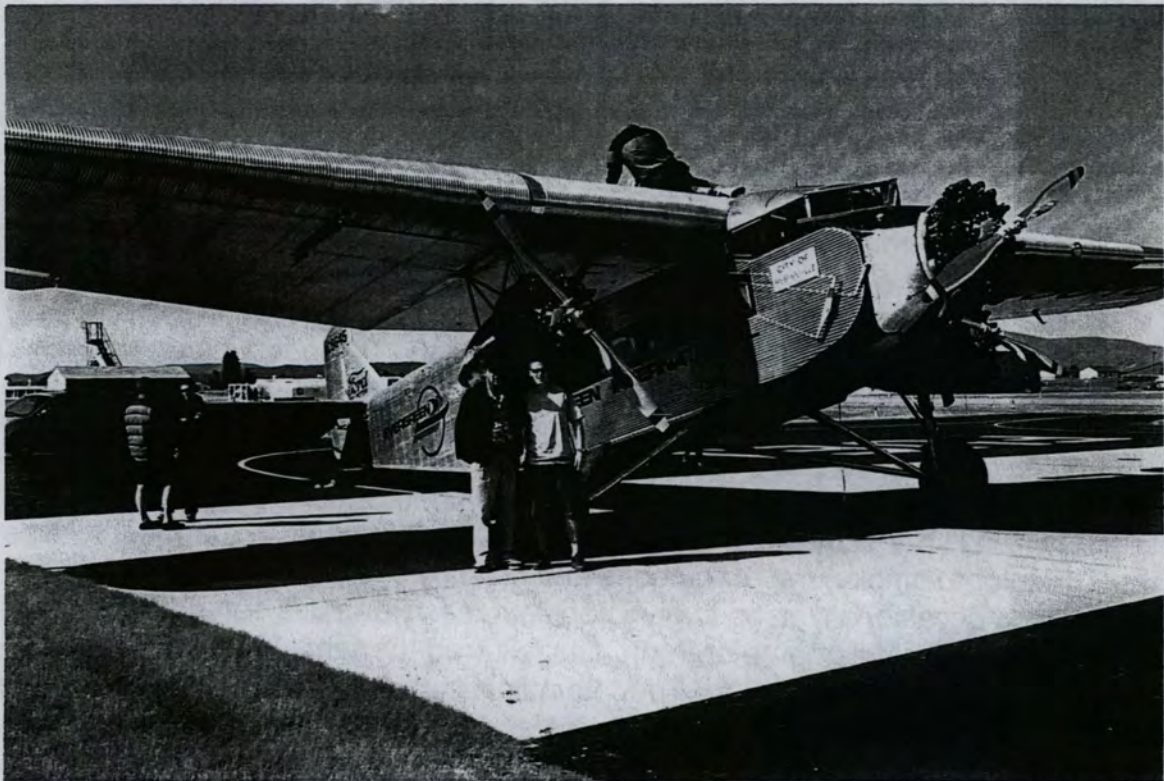
Penn Stohr Jr.

In 1960, at the age of seventeen, Penn Jr. (Raymond Penn) began working for Johnson Flying Service as a gas boy. He received his passion for flying from his dad and his brother, Dan, who often took him flying as young kid without their mother's knowledge. While working as a gas boy, Penn Jr. was taking flying lessons and soloed the same year. By 1962 he earned his commercial license and was flying charters to build up his hours to fly Forest Service contracts. In 1966 he was flying the DC-2 and DC-3 as pilot in command, frequently based out of Missoula, where he did fly to the McCall area occasionally flying Forest Service contract work. By the time Johnson's sold to Evergreen Aviation, Penn Jr. had established himself as a successful pilot by flying everything from the Travelairs to the Electras and becoming the Chief Pilot in 1974.

Despite the selling of the company, Penn Jr. remained Chief Pilot for Evergreen where during his career he became Vice President of Operations then Senior President of Operations. He is now currently Director of Operations and is very active in Evergreen's Aviation Museum. The museum contains the world famous Spruce Goose and over fifty other vintage aircraft. In the museum's collection is Penn Jr.'s favorite plane, the Ford Tri-Motor (Evergreen's is NC 9645), which is perfectly restored and kept in flying condition. He frequently flies the Tri-Motor to smokejumper reunions and air shows where the plane is put on display and occasionally used to give people rides. Penn Jr's son, Josh, who also shares the middle name of Penn, has followed the family heritage and is one of the only third-generation Ford Tri-Motor pilots in the world. Penn Jr. continues to work hard in the growing field of aviation and in his spare time enjoys sharing his exceptional knowledge and expertise of aviation history.⁶⁰



Penn Jr. with fellow Johnson employee Bob Christiansen. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)



Penn Jr. and son Josh with Evergreen's Tri-Motor while flying back from the 2004 Smokejumper Reunion in Missoula.

Merle T. (Abe) Bowler

In *A History Of Aviation In Idaho 1940-1970*, historian Wayne E. White's book identifies Abe as the first pilot to land in Riggins, Idaho, where he gave some of the residents their first airplane ride. Abe learned to fly at the age of 23 from Bert Zimmerly of Zimmerly Airlines. In 1942 he became the chief pilot for Wallace Air Service in Spokane. Wallace, like many other aviation businesses, had a contract with the military for a flight training program. In 1944 the contract ended and Abe started his own aviation service in Orofino, Idaho. In 1960, Abe went to work for Johnson Flying Service, mainly flying out of Missoula, but on occasion, McCall. He flew for Johnson's until he passed away in July of 1962 at the age of 50.⁶¹

Maurice "Moe" Owen

Moe started flying in the winter of 1946. He went into the military and served in the Korean war as a crew chief on Twin Beechs. After the war he returned to Missoula and went to work as a full time pilot for his uncle who owned Missoula Aerial Service. During the summer months in 1958 and 1959 Moe did a few spraying jobs for Johnson Flying Service. However, in 1960 he became a full time employee until he left the company in 1975. While working for Johnson's, he flew frequently on the Payette National Forest flying out of McCall. Moe did the Salmon River mail run and often flew McCall based smokejumpers. After leaving Johnson's, he went to work for the Forest Service where he flew all over the western United States. During the early 1980s he began doing contract flying for the Forest Service, flying smokejumpers in Twin-Otters until about 1986. Moe eventually started his own private flying business flying outfitters, hunters, rafters, etc. into private strips in the Montana backcountry. He retired from his business in 1998 and is enjoying the retired life.⁶²



Moe Owen with Travelair in background. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Harold V. Montgomery

Harold flew out of McCall during the mid 1960s. He worked for Johnson Flying Service, flying the Twin Beech, and some of the lighter planes like 180s.⁶³

Gene H. Crosby

Gene was introduced to the Forest Service and flying when he became a smokejumper based out of McCall in 1953. He jumped for a total of five fire seasons, with his last season being 1959. The two seasons Gene was not jumping he spent in the army, assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. Through jumping he got to know Bob Fogg, and from time to time Bob would have an extra flying job for him, which Gene enjoyed doing. In 1962 he signed on full time with Johnson Flying Service, flying out of McCall. In 1966 he moved to Albertsons where he worked for five years under another former Johnson pilot, Warren Ellison. He eventually started his own farming and ranching operation in Caldwell, Idaho, where he raised his kids.

When Gene reflects back on his life he says his best years were when he was jumping and flying out of McCall. He really enjoyed flying jumpers as he knew a number of them and he knew the drill. Gene also believes that winter flying on the Salmon River mail run was the most pretty flying he ever did. While flying out of McCall, Gene did have a few close calls. One Sunday morning in 1964 he took off early from McCall, flying Travelair NC 9038 loaded with weed killer, gas, food, etc, for Chamberlain Basin. He had just about cleared the north end of Payette Lake when the motor just quit. Later he found out that the nut at the end of the crank shaft that secures all of the drivers, came off and disengaged leaving him with no accessories, such as the magnetos or oil pump. He had always remembered his instructor telling him to memorize the land you fly over so if you ever have any trouble you at least have options on where you can land. He always thought that the road along the Payette River could work in a worse case scenario.

Gene got the plane down on the road and even had the tail wheel down. However, the road had just been graded, which created ridges right where the tires needed to go. Eventually on one side the brakes locked up and on the other side the tire blew out. Gene lost control of the plane and it flipped over into the river. He was not hurt but was fearful the plane might catch on fire because of all the chemicals and gas he was carrying. He was able to climb to the back of the plane, but the door would not open. In a panic to get out he wedged his back against the window frame on the opposite side of the plane and kicked the door out. He stumbled up the rocks to the road and was picked up by a motorist. After a quick nap he attended a church service at St. Andrews in McCall where he finished the remainder of the communion wine when it came to him. Three days later he hopped in Travelair NC 447W and was back to work.

Another close call happened when Gene was flying a Twin Beech the day after Johnson had lost a pilot and another Twin Beech (see Skip Knapp). He and spotter Yergenson were headed to Chamberlain Basin to pick up four jumpers

when an electrical fire started and filled the plane with smoke. Yergy suggested they both jump using a safety shoot. Gene looked at him said, "You're crazy if you think I'm getting in a safety shoot harness with you! If you want to jump you can." Gene kept flying and when they got near the landing field Yergy jumped. Gene turned base, cut the mixtures and was able to horse the Beech to the ground dead stick.⁶⁴



Gene Crosby with fellow smokjumper Bud Filler. (Photo courtesy of B. Filler)



The Travelair where it came to rest on the bank of the Payette River. (Photo courtesy of Bill Fogg)

Ray Luke

Ray had a background in flying the forests in Alaska. He came to the McCall area in the early 1960s and worked with Jim Larkin and Clare Hartnett while they were working for the Forest Service in Region Four.⁶⁵

Robert. Culver

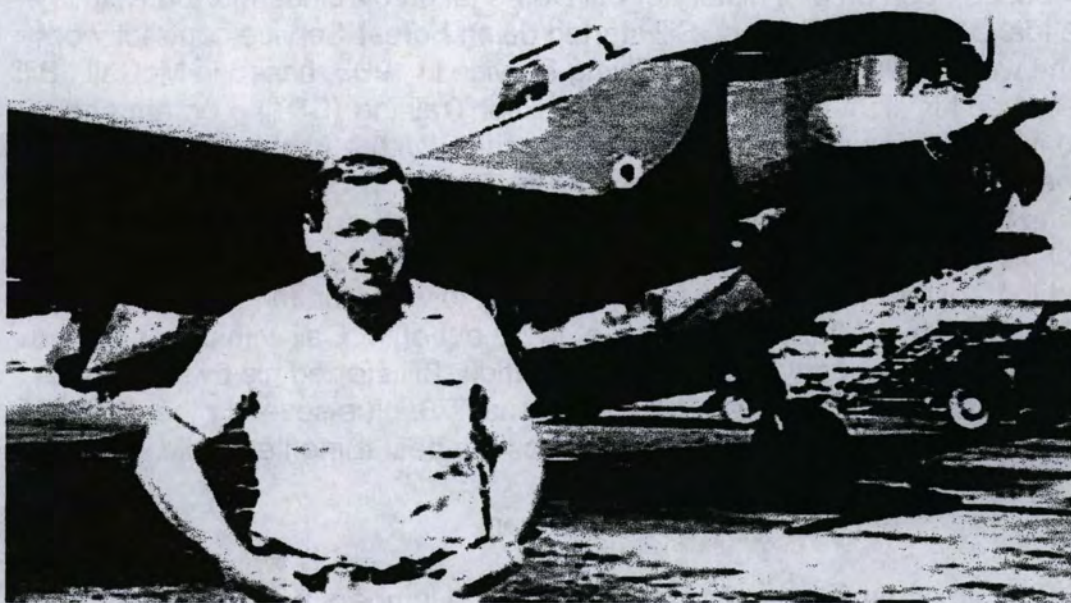
Robert flew for Johnson Flying Service starting sometime in the 1950s and worked until the early to mid 1960s. He flew various planes for Johnson's, flying smokejumpers and cargo. One incident took place while he was flying Ford Tri-Motor NC 8419 on August 4, 1959, when landing at Moose Creek Ranger Station in the Selway National Forest. He was flying four jumpers and a spotter when he overshot the runway and went into the trees. The Tri-Motor caught on fire, burning Culver and the spotter who was in the co-pilot seat, but the two managed to survive. However, the four others lost their lives in the crash.⁶⁶ Stan Nye added that "Bob made his way to Alaska working for the FAA and passed away after struggling with emphysema."⁶⁷



Bob Culver standing with a DC-3. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Ray Greene

According to Moe Owen, Ray was originally from Twin Falls, Idaho, where he did mainly agriculture and tanker flying. He began work for Johnson Flying Service in the early 1960s primarily flying the TBM and B-26. Also while working at Johnson's, he was responsible for mechanic work. Ray left Johnson's in about 1975 and went on to work for the Canadian government doing aerial spraying. Ray passed away in the early 1980s after suffering from cancer.⁶⁸



Ray Greene at Missoula with a Johnson TBM. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Chet Dolan

According to Gene Crosby, Chet flew for a short time in Billings, Montana, before going to work for Johnson Flying Service in the early 1960s. He mainly worked out of Missoula, but would come to McCall when it was busy.⁶⁹ Moe Owen believes that Chet retired from Johnson's sometime in the mid-1970s and went to work on his family's ranch which he had inherited. Chet passed away in 1996.⁷⁰

Bill Dorris

Based upon an oral history of Bill Dorris taken by Linda Morton Keithley for the Idaho Historical Society, Bill started doing Forest Service contract work when he went to work for Johnson Flying Service in 1965, based in McCall. Bill had received his flight training in a Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program and served in the Marine Corps as pilot in the Pacific. With a background of engineering, after the war he went to work for Boeing in Seattle. He disliked the work and took a job as a game warden with Idaho Fish and Game living in several places until he moved to McCall in 1956. The Idaho Fish and Game wanted to transfer Bill and that is when he went to work for Johnson, replacing pilot Gene Crosby. After twelve years of flying out of McCall with Johnson and the selling of the company to Evergreen Aviation, Bill started his own business, McCall Air Taxi. He started with only a Cessna 170, plus several other leased planes. Bill remarked in the interview, "It was the best thing I ever did."⁷¹

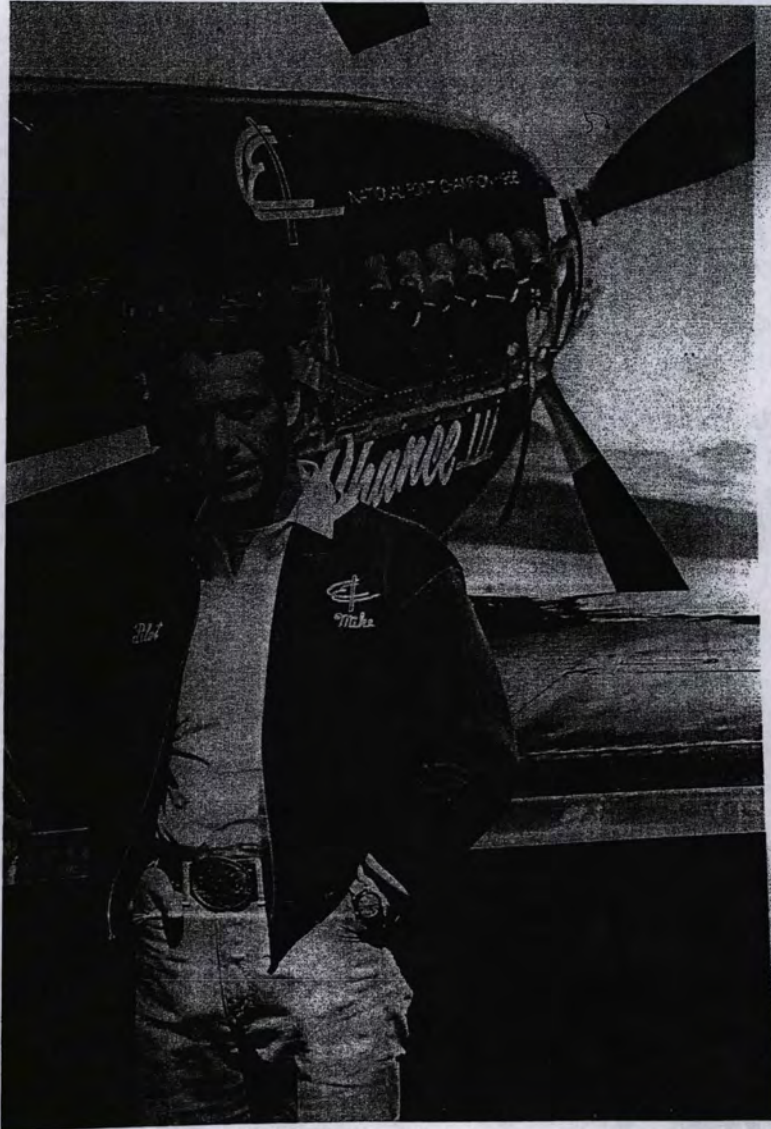
Bob Duncan

Bob did some flying out of McCall, carrying jumpers while working for Intermountain Aviation sometime in the mid-1960s. Intermountain Aviation was a competitor of Johnson Flying Service and was a contractor for the Forest Service.

Mike Loening

Historian Wayne E. White says Mike arrived in Idaho in 1955, on a flying vacation he and his wife were taking of the western states. He liked the area so much he bought a ranch near Salmon, Idaho, where he built a private airstrip. He started Salmon Air Taxi and by 1961 he purchased the first new Cessna 185 in the state. Along with the 185 he operated a Twin Beech, an Aero Commander and a Piper Commanche. He sold Salmon Air Taxi in 1965 and started another company called Loening Air Inc. While owning Loening Air Inc., he obtained the smokejumper contract for the Forest Service, mainly flying out of Idaho City. During this period he did a fair share of flying McCall based smokejumpers and odd jobs on the Payette National Forest. Mike went on to be involved in aircraft spraying and the borate business. While operating his flying business, Mike

became well-known in national air racing circles flying a P-51. In 1970 he was declared the National Point Champion. Mike was killed along with his oldest son Scott while trying to attempt an emergency landing during the winter somewhere near Denver, Colorado.⁷²



Mike Loening with P-51. (Photo from Authur Hart's *Wings Over Idaho*)

Robert H. Nicol

Bob originally was a smokejumper based in Missoula. Shortly after, he flew for Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Arizona. According to Jim Larkin he was one of Intermountain's top pilots. He eventually left Intermountain at roughly the time they sold to Evergreen Aviation and went to work full time for the Forest Service.⁷³

Ray O'Brien

Ray flew for Charlie Reeder who owned and operated Reeder Aviation out of Twin Falls. According to Jim Larkin, Reeder ran Forest Service contracts for about two years out of Idaho City. From Idaho City, Ray mainly flew the Twin Beech and on occasion a DC-3 (150Z).⁷⁴

Wayne Hughes

Wayne (no relation to Jack), who was based in Lewiston, flew seasonally for Johnson. He worked jobs both out of Missoula and McCall for a few summers during the 1960s. Penn Stohr Jr. recalls that Wayne was a big cowboy-looking guy with a great sense of humor. As a gas boy, Penn Jr. always had to clean all of the chew he spit out the window, off from the side of his airplane.⁷⁵



Wayne Hughes with a TBM. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Jerry Wilson

Jerry owned a small flying operation out of Lewiston, Idaho, called Hillcrest Aviation. Jerry flew some Forest Service contracts in the McCall area doing various types of jobs.⁷⁶

Stan Nye

Stan started working for Johnson Flying Service, flying the majority of their smaller planes and working his way up to the Twin Beech. He served as co-pilot on everything else when needed. While working at Johnson's he spent time flying out of the McCall area, carrying jumpers on occasion. One of his main tasks at Johnson's was setting up a radio repair shop and getting certified, which he did in 1964. Stan left the company to work for Boise Aviation where he only stayed a short time before being hired on as a pilot at Intermountain Aviation in Arizona. He did Forest Service contract work, such as carrying jumpers out of the McCall area in the Turbo Porter and Twin Otter. Stan says, "Intermountain was instrumental in promoting and proving the Porter and Otter and were highly successful in smoke jumping work." Stan went to work for Evergreen for less than a year after buying out Intermountain. He and a few other pilots formed their own company called Mountain West Aviation, which merged with Sierra Pacific. Stan continues to fly today at age 71 for private companies.⁷⁷



Stan Nye with a Twin Beech in Missoula. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Skip Knapp

Byron E. Knapp "Skip" was originally from Florida and had some experience as a military pilot. Skip had heard of the smoke jumping program out of the McCall area and contacted jumper foreman Del Catlin about getting a job. Del put him in contact with Johnson Flying Service and he was hired on for the summer of 1965 to fly out of McCall.⁷⁸ According to Gene Crosby, on July 9 a flight was called in and Kenny Roth and himself were to take a load of jumpers to a fire in the DC-3, when another call requested four more jumpers be taken to a fire on the Payette National Forest.⁷⁹

Skip took the flight, flying Johnson's Twin Beech along with long time smokejumper Kenneth "Moose" Salyer, as spotter. Skip delivered four jumpers to the fire in the hot rough air. In a newspaper clipping found in Del Catlin's scrapbook, the plane was on the way back to McCall and crashed on Norton Ridge near Loon Creek and then caught fire. It is debated whether the plane hit a down draft forcing it to the ground or whether Skip was not familiar enough with the rough terrain. Skip's funeral service and burial was requested by his family to be held at the Indian Creek Ranger Station near the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.⁸⁰ When discussing the tragic accident with Gene Crosby he says, "one of the most ironic and eerie things about the whole crash was that Knapp had written a book of poetry and at the end of the book was a poem about a Twin Beech, just like the one he was flying in which the plane was crashing."⁸¹



Skip Knapp's burial site near the Indian Creek landing strip. (Photo courtesy of Lawrence Kingsbury)

Robert Schellinger

Bob went to work for Johnson Flying Service in the 1957. Bob, like other Johnson pilots, had a military background and served during the Korean War. The first job Bob was on was helping out on the spray job near Townsend, where Penn Stohr was killed. Bob was an extraordinarily skilled pilot and did several rescue missions flying Johnson's helicopters. Eventually Bob went on to start Schellinger Helicopters. He was killed in a helicopter crash on May 4, 1981, near Trout Creek, Montana, while ferrying two surveyors.⁸²



Bob Schellinger with a Johnson Helicopter in 1963. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider)

Hardy Sandvig

Hardy had a Navy flying background which he had earned while flying TBMs in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He went to work for Johnson Flying Service in the early 1960s flying the TBM. Penn Stohr Jr. remembers Hardy had come back from a spray job in Canada and a few days later he was on another spray job based out of Idaho. The spray job cost him his life when the TBM he was flying stalled coming out of a turn and went into the timber near Lost Trail Pass in Idaho. It was not until his funeral that his friends learned that he was a decorated World War II vet who earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Also while flying TBMs during World War II he was on two carries that went down, the Hornet and the Wasp.⁸³



Hardy Sandvig in Missoula. (Photo courtesy of R. Snider).

Doug Smuin

Doug had always had an interest in flying, and one evening in 1968 while playing in a band in Missoula, his desire to fly became possible. The band was playing at the Johnson Flying Service Christmas party and everyone was having such a good time that Penn Stohr Jr. told the members of the band if they continued to play the rest of the evening he would offer a few hours of free flying lessons. The next morning Doug was the only one to take him up on his offer. Doug started working for Johnson Flying Service not long after that and did several flights to McCall in the DC-3 and patrol work in a Cessna 206. In 1975 he joined Evergreen and retired from commercial flying in 2002. However, he still actively flies the planes at Evergreen's Museum such as the B-17 and Ford Tri-Motor.⁸⁴



Penn Stohr Jr. left with Doug Smuin flying Evergreen's Ford Tri-Motor. (Photo courtesy of Penn Stohr Jr.)

Lloyd Hansen

Lloyd started with Johnson Flying Service in 1966, originally as a flight instructor, working his way up to flying the DC-3 and co-pilot on the DC-4. However, the majority of the hours he logged in on the DC-3 and Twin Beech were while flying smokejumpers. One day he decided to quit Johnson's and he walked across the ramp in Missoula to the Forest Service where he flew until he retired in January of 1993. While working for the Forest Service, his primary function was as lead plane for the air tankers along with flying a Cessna 206 and DC-3 for smokejumper training. Lloyd said the most interesting thing about his career as a pilot is that he was based at one airport his entire 31 years of flying, which is darn near impossible.⁸⁵

Skip Alderson

Skip arrived at Johnson Flying Service in January of 1965 with his private pilot's license and worked his way up. While working for Johnson, he made his first trip to the McCall area in 1966, flying a Comanche. From there on he flew frequently to McCall from Missoula and flew most backcountry strips along the Salmon River. After flying for Johnson's he continued flying Forest Service contract work out of the McCall area as Chief Pilot at Chrysling Flying Service for another year and a half before going to work directly for the Forest Service. As a Forest Service pilot, he flew commonly out of McCall flying jumpers, lead plane, and Infrared. Skip retired from the Forest Service at age 60, however, still flies Forest Service work for Minden Air.⁸⁶

Art Lindstrom

Art began work as a gas boy in 1965 at Johnson Flying Service and started working on his various pilot's licenses during the same period. At Johnson Flying Service he mainly flew the Twin Beech and DC-3, flying cargo and smoke jumpers. He flew several times from McCall, but did the majority of his flying from Missoula. In the fall of 1972, Art went to work as Ski Marketing Director at Grand Targhee Ski Resort. From there he went back to flying full time for his friend, Gar Thorsrud, helping him get his company, Mountain West, started. He flew for Gar for a number of years and then started his own camera shop, and flew Forest Service contracts such as jumpers seasonally, during the summer months. Then in 1985 he went to work for United Airlines and later retired. Art is currently flying Leading Edge Aviation Service's Twin Otter, flying Forest Service contracts.⁸⁷

John "Phil" Remaklus

Phil had a background as a military pilot and took up flying seasonally for Bob Fogg out of the McCall Airport during the late 1960s. While flying for Fogg he mainly flew the Cessna 185 and 206.⁸⁸ According to Phil's obituary he also flew

for High Country Air after leaving Johnson Flying Service. Phil passed away on August 21, 2004.⁸⁹

John Slingerland

John flew during World War II in the Pacific, flying Corsairs. He came to work flying for Johnson Flying Service in the 1960s, mainly flying out McCall. He was killed in a DC-3 crash on the Selway.⁹⁰

Johnson Owned Travelairs – 6000s and 6Bs

(List compiled and researched by Jack Demmons of the Mountain Flying Museum)

Number	Ultimate Fate
NC 8879	The aircraft, the Mae Gerard, went partially through the ice on Deadwood Reservoir SE of Cascade in the Boise National Forest when Bob Johnson landed it on its wheels (1939 or 1940). After the aircraft was retrieved and was drying out on a bank, it caught fire – a wing tank had ruptured during the retrieval – exploded and burned. Destroyed.
NC 9813	Johnson Flying Service pilot, Dick Johnson (Bob Johnson's brother) crashed in the Roaring Lion Creek area SW of Hamilton. Montana August 22, 1939 while dropping cargo to fire fighters. He was badly injured and the cargo kicker, Clarence Sutliff, the Assistant Superintendent of the Bitterroot National Forest, suffered minor injuries. Destroyed.
NC 450N	Johnson Flying Service pilot Bob Maricich was killed in the crash of the Travelair SE of Cub Point near Emerald Lake in the Nez Perce National Forest on July 15, 1940 while on a cargo dropping mission to fire fighters. The plane hit a tree on one pass, crashed and fell into a shallow pond. Cargo kicker Del Claybaugh was injured. Destroyed.
NC 655H	Johnson Flying Service pilot Dick Johnson was killed, along with Orange Olson, a Wildlife Management Officer. Bob Brown, a Wyoming Deputy Game Warden, survived. They were on a game survey mission. The plane hit a tree while flying in rough weather. The crash took place south of Jackson, Wyoming in the Moose Creek-Grey River country on March 2, 1945. Destroyed.
NC 623H	Bill Yaggy a Johnson Flying Service pilot, was killed and crew member Bob McBride was injured when the plane was trapped in a canyon and crashed during a snow squall north of Dixie, Idaho, in the Nez Perce National Forest on February 21, 1946 while on a spray mission. (Bill Yaggy was a former Missoula smokejumper.) Destroyed.
NC 9038	The aircraft, flown by Johnson Flying Service pilot Dick Kinnett, was damaged during a forced landing along Cabin Creek, a tributary of Big Creek, which flows into the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, in 1957. Then, during the mid 1960s, Johnson

Flying Service pilot Gene Crosby was flying the plane when the engine timing gear broke. Crosby tried to land on a dirt road leading to Warren, Idaho. The plane veered off the road and flipped into a shallow spot in the Payette River. One wing was ripped from the plane. Years later, Hank Galpin of Kalispell acquired the remains and began restoring the plane to flying condition. It has been fully restored and Hank flies it quite often. The plane was flown quite often by Penn Stohr Sr. out of McCall.

- NC 8865 This was a former Bradley Mining Company plane that was based out of Boise. It was sold to the Johnson Flying Service. Later, it was acquired by the Beencraft Museum at Tullahoma, TN. Then several Idaho pilots managed to acquire it. At one time it was then based at Salmon, Idaho and it is now kept in a hanger at Gooding, Idaho. The current owners are Jim Eldridge and Dick Waite.
- NC 8112 This former Johnson Flying Service Travelair is currently housed in a museum at Little Rock, Arkansas – the Aerospace Education Center. Bob Johnson sold it to Dolph Overton who had the Wing and Wheels Collection. It then went to the Central Flying Service before ending up in the museum at Little Rock.
- NC 9084 This Travelair is owned by Bill deCreeft out of Homer, Alaska at Kachemak Bay – Kachemak Air Service, Inc. and is still a “working aircraft” and is mounted on floats. Bill purchased it from the Johnson Flying Service in August of 1969.
- NC 447W This was the last Travelair Bob Johnson owned. Delta Airlines at Atlanta restored it to flying condition and has been reregistered as 452N. It is one of two Curtiss Wright 6Bs that Johnson owned. The other was NC 450N that crashed on July 15, 1940 in Idaho. They were similar to the Travelair 6000s, but had what were called “bird cage” cockpits because of the shape of the canopies.

Johnson Owned Ford Tri-Motors

(List compiled by referencing William T. Larkins' *The Ford Story* and *The Ford Tri-Motor 1926-1992* and additional information provided by Penn Stohr Jr. and current owners.)

End Number	Model/ Serial Number	Ultimate Fate
NC 7861	4-AT-46	Ford finished building this Tri-Motor on 10-9-28, but kept it at the factor until June of 1929 to reconfigure the motors to Wright J-6 engines. The plane was bought by Union Electric Light and Power Company in St. Louis, MO. It was then sold to William A. Monday in the Spring of 1937. Johnson Flying Service bought the Tri-Motor on 9-19-39 and nicknamed it the "Flying Cowboy" because of the cowboy image on the tail. Bob Johnson sold the plane to Dexter D. Coffin Jr. in Palm Beach, Florida in May of 1969. Coffin eventually donated it to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida where it is currently on display painted in a Navy paint scheme.
NC 9612	4-AT-55	Ford finished building this Tri-Motor on 1-15-29 and was bought by Nick Mamer of Mamer Flying Service in Spokane, Washington. Mamer nicknamed the plane the "West Wind" and made the first Tri-Motor landing on the Payette National Forest in 1931 at Chamberlain Basin. In 1936 the plane was purchased by Reginald Pattinson and Wayne Parmenter, St. Elmo and later Witt, IL. K-T Flying Service of Honolulu bought the plane and sold it in August of 1945 to Clinton Johnson in California. However, while being operated in Honolulu the plane was damaged by the Japanese on December 7, 1941 in the attack of Pearl Harbor. The plane was eventually brought back to the Northwest when William Hadden of Orofino, Idaho bought it in 1952 and modified it into an agricultural sprayer. In the fall of 1957 Johnson Flying Service purchased the aircraft and later sold it in February of 1969 to Dolph Overton of Santee, SC. (Overton, Wings and Wheels, Orlando, Fl.). Overton has nearly completed the restoration and it is to be flying in 2005. According to Overton the plane will be for sale when restoration is completed.

NC 9642 4-AT-58 The Tri-Motor was completed at the Ford factory on 1-29-29 and delivered to Mohawk Airways in New York on 4-18-29. From there the plane went through several owners and was purchased by Johnson Flying Service in April of 1939. In May of 1950 Johnson modified it to a convertible insecticide sprayer. The plane was classified as destroyed after Penn Stohr Sr. and Robert Vallance were killed in the plane near Townsend, Montana on 6-19-57. The remains of the plane were stored in Johnson Flying Service's Stockade and were purchased by Kal Aero of Kalamazoo, MI in 1979. Registration N 9642 was reissued in 1980. When Maurice Hovious of Vicksburg, MI retired from Kal Aero he purchased the remains and paper work for the aircraft with the intention to eventually restore the Tri-Motor. According to Hovious the center section is the only part of the aircraft currently under restoration.

N 8400 4-AT-62 This Tri-Motor was completed on 4-13-29 and delivered to Curtiss Publishing Company, Philadelphia, PA in July of 1929. The plane went through six different owners before being purchased by Johnson Flying Service in March of 1941. In July of 1953 the plane crashed near Boulder, Montana killing the two pilots Jim Dillon and Dick Duffield. Maurice Hovious purchased the remains of this Tri-Motor along with the remains of NC 9642 at the same time (see description of NC 9642). A few wing pieces have been restored for this aircraft according to Hovious, but nothing further has been done.

NC 8407 4-AT-69 This Tri-Motor was completed by Ford on 8-21-29 and delivered to Eastern Air Transport, Brooklyn, NY. The plane was sold the following year to Intercontinent Aviation located in New York City. In 1950 Rex Williams of Phoenix, AZ purchased the plane and in May of 1954 replaced the nose engine with a 550 hp P&W Wasp and replaced the outboard engines with two 450 hp, making it the highest powered 4-AT model ever flown. The plane traded hands two more times before being purchased by Johnson Flying Service in May of

1955. By the time Johnson bought the plane the nose engine had been changed to match the outboard motors. Johnson Flying Service sold the plane in 1963 where it went on to several more owners before being bought by the EAA in Hales Corners, WI. Currently the plane is located at Wittman Field, Oshkosh, WI where it is flown by the EAA on a regular basis.

NC 9684/
N 69905

5-AT-40

Ford finished this Tri-Motor on 4-9-29 and delivered it to Cia Mexicana de Aviacion in Mexico City, Mexico in May of the same year. The plane went through several owners and was eventually bought by Milton Hersberger of Put-In-Bay, Ohio in 1952. In Larkins second edition of *The Ford Story* he says, "[The plane was] modified to use three 450 hp Wright engines (all other 5-ATs had P&W engines), P-47 'Thunderbolt' oleo struts, Lockheed 18 'Lodestar' wheels, and other structural changes." After the modifications were made the plane was then bought by Charles Frensdorf of Orofino, Idaho. In July of 1953 Johnson Flying Service purchased the Tri-Motor to replace NC 8400 that had crashed earlier in the same month. One month later on August 17, 1953 the plane crashed just after take off from Spotted Bear landing strip while being piloted by Kenny Roth. Kenny along with the others aboard the plane only suffered minor injures. The Tri-Motor was classified as destroyed. Penn Stohr Jr. remembers some of the remains of the plane at the Johnson Stockade, but does not know what happened to them.

NC 8419

5-AT-58

Ford completed the plane on 6-29-29 and delivered it to the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, MI. The plane was sold in 1931 to Northwest Airways in St. Paul, MN. The plane then exchanged hands four times with various airlines based in Alaska until 1945 when Monroe Airways of Monroe, MI bought the plane and did a complete overhaul on it. In 1946 the plane was purchased by G and G Airlines of Tucson, AZ and operated by them until 1951 when Johnson Flying Service obtained it. While at Johnson Flying Service the plane was used various types of work and for a short time in 1956 the Tri-

Motor was leased to Northwest Airlines for a commemorative flight. In 1959 the plane crashed at Moose Creek, while being piloted by Bob Culver. Culver and the spotter were the only two out of the six to survive the crash. The remains of the plane were stored at Johnson Flying Service until 1979 when Kal Aero bought them along with two other Johnson Tri-Motors (NC 9642 and N 8400). The fuselage was rebuilt by the fall of 1982 and completed by 1991. Penn Stohr Jr. was the first to fly it when he flew it to the 1991 EAA convention in Oshkosh, WI. Recently the plane has been grounded for corrosion in the wings, but will be flying again within the next year.

NC 435H

5-AT-102

The Ford factory finished this Tri-Motor on 4-17-31 and delivered it in May of the same year to Pacific Air Transport in Oakland, CA. In March of 1932 the plane was purchased by National Air Transport in Chicago, IL. The plane was then acquired by Pacific Air Transport again in April of 1933. The plane was then sold one year later to United Air Lines based in Chicago. Johnson Flying Service obtained the plane in September of 1934 as their first Tri-Motor. In September of 1939, Dick Johnson was landing at Big Prairie, MT when the Tri-Motor was caught in a downdraft which broke one of the landing gears causing the plane to swerve into the trees. The plane was declared destroyed. Maurice Hovious who owns three other Johnson Flying Service Tri-Motors (NC 9642, N 8400, and NC 8419) believes there is enough left of 435H to rebuild it in the future.

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