

PP-ZAD To Europe, OSH and Home (part 3)

Andre Debert (Brazil) - The VIP parking place at OSH is reserved for aircraft that has distinguished itself in Sport Aviation. Located at the main entrance near the tower everyone sees it entering the flight line. PP-ZAD was in honorable company with the French Coyote that a couple piloted from France and the RV-4 that came from Australia.

Sunday the 29th was scheduled for the much awaited "Glass Overcast". I had been invited to participate in this formation of flight of many canards. The event would open with flybys of one each model designed by Burt Rutan. I would have to attend the briefings as the Long-EZ selected was mine.

As always, time at OSH flies by quickly. Robyn Laing, the dynamic lady in charge of the Japanese television team, literally took complete care of me. I was invited to join them for dinner at the only Chinese (they couldn't find a Japanese one) restaurant in town. They also wanted to host me in one of the private guest houses commonly found during the OSH week. During my stay with them I learned much about the, strange for us, race. They are so dynamic, so organized, and so industrious to the point of fanaticism but at the same time sympathetic and hospitable.

At 7AM after a large breakfast, I found them collected in an animated discussion. They had already been working for 2 hours debating the previous day's results and determining the current day's tasks. Prospects, team goals and individual task assignments were then established. We then departed for the field. I felt I was opening up OSH for the morning as there were so few people there at that hour.

My association with the Japanese TV

crew permitted me complete and free access everywhere. I used this many times to see things not normally seen by the regular visitor.

I went immediately to the long rows of parked EZs. Many had come to pay respect and honor to Burt. The 3 hours I spent waiting for the start of the briefing were well spent debating the respective qualities and features of our marvelous flying machines. Everyone wanted to know how ZAD could have almost 21 hours of endurance and could routinely take off overweight and land without breaking the landing gear.

Glass Overcast organizers were able to put together 28 canards for the fly by. More could probably have been flown with more training. It was quite a feat to gather that many inexperienced EZ pilots and have them trained for formation flying in so short a time. It would be a beautiful sight. They would all take off in advance of show time, join together outside the airport area and fly down the runway. During that time we would organize the opening squadron composed of a Quickie, a Vari-Eze, a Vari-Viggen, a Defiant, and my Long-EZ.

After a long delay to access the beginning of runway 18 we finally took off. I was beside the Defiant flown by Mike Melvill, who gained speed and altitude rapidly. We made 5 low passes over the runway, turning to the right in front of the tower, as Burt told the story of his creation and the adventure of ZAD to nearly a million people over the PA. The Glass Overcast formation flew over our heads as our 5 different canards flew in the fly by pattern.

I was overwhelmed with the event of flying my Long-EZ in front of this very select crowd at our mecca, Oshkosh. It was so great but it ended too fast. Too soon we had to land and return to parking. Dozens of people were awaiting me for more tales.

Not being a professional writer I find it impossible to describe Oshkosh. I

prefer to leave this task to the many media that are there. I am afraid I am too biased and you would only hear of glass and canards.

During OSH week a hurricane "Erin" was demolishing the southern states. Several Brazilian friends had to leave early to join their families that were trying to escape this beast. In the Wisconsin area an approaching cold front was threatening our happiness for the next several days.

I had intended to leave OSH on Wednesday, spend Thursday in Fort Lauderdale doing a 100 hour inspection, conduct business on Friday, rest on Saturday and travel to the Caribbean on Sunday. I was stuck between the hurricane and the cold front, neither of which I wanted to look at closely. Erin was hitting Florida close to Orlando while the cold front had already brought rain and strong wind to OSH.

Wednesday night the marvelous Weather Channel, from which I didn't take my eyes for an instant, was finally showing the weekend to be much quieter.

Thursday I departed OSH under gray skies with fuel enough to make it to Florida going around any weather left by the hurricane. The fuel weight would not allow me to climb directly over FL110 and Chicago Center wanted me over FL 150 to overfly them. I was vectored over the lake and after 4 hours of rain and turbulence the weather became better.

Indiana and Tennessee passed under our wings and I was about to overfly Georgia without seeing it once again. An hour later Atlanta Center raised doubts about my possibilities of reaching Florida or any other points on the Atlantic coast. CBs were scattered all over Florida reaching north to Jacksonville. They suggested several alternatives that I wrote down just in case. Center had a little difficulty understanding that a small experimental homebuilt airplane could have come from the

Canadian border in the center of the country, try to reach lower Florida and if unsuccessful, return north to the Canadian border without refueling.

I continued on course listening to the pilots chatting on center frequency about fighting the CBs.

The fact is I must have a certain prestige with CBs because as I proceeded on course they seemed to run away to the west. Over Jacksonville I turned south and watched the CB formations vanish to the west. I landed at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport after a little over 11 hours. My ground speed had been only 107 kts due to vectoring around Chicago and the constant head winds.

The next morning I spent on business and in the afternoon completed the 100 hour inspection. All was Ok except for lead fouled spark plugs and an exhaust pipe that had to be re-welded.

This time I decide to discover another island of the Caribbean on the way back to Brazil. The spectacular St. Marten (Saint Martin for the French) was only 8 hours away.

I departed Sunday morning to cover the 1114 NM of blue water full of little tropical paradises along my well known Airway "A 55". The weather forecast was for clear sky with possible thunderstorms in late afternoon, as expected for this time of year. After 8:08, at an average ground speed of 134 kts, I landed at "Princes Juliana" airport on the Dutch part of the island of St. Marten.

After the routine bureaucratic formalities, in which the abundant distribution of "general Declarations" were as always welcome, I hired a taxi to go to the French part of the island looking for a comfortable hotel to spend a couple days relaxing.

This part of the island is considered a French province and still depends

administratively on Guadeloupe. It is very beautiful and enjoyable. It is more organized than the Dutch area that gained its independence from Holland very recently. That section suffers the consequences usually associated with this process.

I had anticipated the delight of dining on giant lobster but was denied that pleasure. They were in reproduction season and it was not permitted to capture them. However, I was virtually in France and I could expect to satisfy my gluttony at any of the numerous restaurants available. My eating was limited to Sunday and Monday as Tuesday would be of abstinence in preparation for Wednesday's long and difficult journey back to Brazil.

I hope the lovers of St. Marten will forgive me, but frankly I was disappointed. I expected much more but all I saw were a collection of modern buildings of dubious architectural taste. A cluster of hotel and casinos, which tried to imitate Las Vegas, but only impressed the poor dazzled tourist of the third world.

Phillipsburg, capital of the Dutch part, is smaller than the district where I live but has traffic jams that compare to those in the biggest capitols. I rented a little car, just to be able to see the island without fatiguing myself too much while walking under the hot sun. I returned it the next day after driving less than 20 miles in 2 days.

On the other hand, Marigot, capitol of the French part on the north side of the island is a delicious little village. It looks like one in the provincial part of France. Long walks along its typically colorful commercial streets are delightful. One of the most attractive parts (for me) were the restaurants with their typical French dishes and the long beaches covered with very fine thin sand.

I could have stayed there for weeks but, too soon, the departure date from this little paradise arrived. This 1470 nm leg, the longest of the trip

back, would be probably the most tiring and difficult. This was due, in part, to a four and a half hour section between Barbados and Cayenne in French Guyana over water with no alternatives and poor communication. The famous TCZ (*tropical convergence zone*) was always active this time of year and it awaited me.

Without explanation, the international airport "Princess Juliana" was not operating by night and I had to accept take off when they would be open thus requiring a night landing at Belem.

The Caribbean overflight to Barbados was uneventful with good weather. Then a 20 kt head wind developed that created doubts of reaching Belem. The alternates were a little far away so I planned a fuel stop at Cayenne.

Close to the South American continent the winds changed direction from the sea to the land as is usual at the end of the afternoon. In less than an hour they were tail winds that more than compensated for the previous head winds. If they continued I could reconsider and proceed again direct to Belem. This would be much better as I did not like to land on the scorching Guyana located right on the equator.

Shortly after Cayenne, and already over Brazilian territory, I began to detour around several tropical formations. I was successful until I went suddenly into one of them over the state of Amapa. It wasn't a fully developed CB but it made me work harder. Torrential rain made it difficult to maintain control of the airplane. I nearly gave up to turn east and try a path to the east over the shore.

Such a deviation would jeopardize my range so I decided to continue ahead. These formations usually end as abruptly as they begin. After minutes that seemed hours I was suddenly out in bright clear sky.

At 21:00 local time, after 11:55 hours, I landed at the "Val de Caes" airport. The chief of the base, Colonel Mark de Matos, had left instructions to take care of us. I went directly to bed as I felt suddenly tired and had no interest in eating.

Thursday and Friday were spent in rest and relaxation. I was expected to arrive at Sao Paulo at about noon Saturday and this would force me to depart from Belem very early in the morning.

Saturday, August 12 at 02:07 we departed on the last leg of the long and adventurous trip. Meteorology predicted good weather for the entire route with head winds and thick damp haze in all southern Brazil. This is a common occurrence which I expected to dissolve by arrival time.

The bright and clear night permitted me to see the lamentable spectacle of fire grounds all over the states of Tocantins and Goias. As far as eyesight would permit, fires illuminated the entire sky. Sunrise is always a wonderful sight. This one was especially beautiful as nature tried to compensate for the crime of inconsiderate and greedy men. The brightening sky diminished the luminosity of the fires.

After 4 hours of flight and close to "Porto Nacional" I began to hear the airliners coming from the northern hemisphere headed south to Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. All their destinations were closed due to haze so thick you could cut it with a knife, as they used to say in France.

It was a general race toward alternates and Brasilia was best at this time. I was laughing in my beard, that I keep thick for this purpose. I knew the thicker and faster forming haze was the quickest to dissipate. I knew I would be able to make it to Marte without any problems.

Wind forecasts over the continent usually aren't accurate. This time they unexpectedly switched to my tail and would make me arrive too

early at my destination.

Abeam of Pocos de Caldas, in the middle of the state of Minas Gerais, Brasilia Center called informing me the squadron "Omega" would be awaiting me over Atibala. Squadron Omega is the formation flight of Cherokees our airclub sends to welcome me when I have just completed an extraordinary feat such as the Africa flight last April. (The airclub president informed me later I would have to stand still for some time after this flight or else I would have to help finance the welcome home formation flights.)

Squadron Omega joined up with me as the leader, Decio chided me. "What is the matter captain? You want to spoil the party? All the media, members and officers of the airclub, all your friends and family are expecting you to arrive at 14:00 and here you are at 12:00. - - "

So, we landed at Jundiai, a small airport some 50 miles away from Sao Paulo and waited there enough time for the party preparation.

This is it I thought, one more record attempt blown away. I could have claimed Belem/Marte at an average ground speed of 140 kts.

As always, the reception at Marte, my home base, was exciting and intense. After the usual fly-by formation with the Cherokees I finally landed putting an end to one more astonishing adventure.

From the runway I could see all the mob composed of friends and relatives incessantly applauding. Emotion took me up completely, and for a moment I forgot the intense fatigue of the last legs of the trip. They were all there, Ruy the president, many members of the airclub, ABRA and ABRAEZ, and even my wife, daughter and grand-daughter were there to pay tribute to one more feat of a great airplane: the Long-EZ, PP-ZAD.

After cocktails, speeches, and a

copious lunch, it was finally time to return home.

CONCLUSION

We were able to demonstrate once more the efficiency, versatility and safety of little airplanes and primarily experimental homebuilts.

We traveled routes that many reputed to be impossible or too dangerous to be made with a single engine.

We confirmed that an airplane and accessories, not necessarily of aeronautical standard, are extremely reliable, if operated within limits established by their manufacturers.

Nature and its diverse phenomena are to be respected always. Hurry is not only an enemy of perfection but also of flight safety.

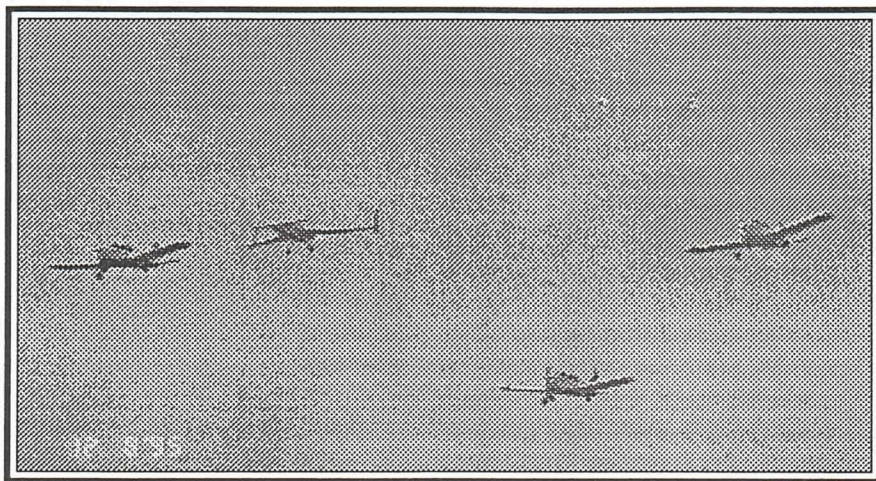
I cannot deny that luck was almost always with me, but I also helped a bit in that sense. Having no boss or tight schedule most of the time helped considerably. I was able to make the right decisions and select alternatives adequate to face the elements with security.

PP-ZAD flew for 130 hours and covered 16,480 nm in 5 weeks, resulting in an overall average ground speed of 126.5 kts. More than 10 countries were visited and 2 ocean crossings were completed with entire safety.

Modern electronics helped in communication, navigation as well as supervision and operation of engine parameters.

The so called "Experimental Aviation" phrase says it all. Our experiences are being used in all fields of engineering and life. We are helping discover innovations that contribute to easier life for all.

PP-ZAD will now begin a well deserved long period of stillness, but not too long, however. You know him to have a fear of getting rusty.



Sao Paulo Aeroclub's formation team, "Squadron Omega", escorts Andre home from his final record setting adventure

Systems 3 Paint Report

Jim Voss (Russia) - I used Systems 3 paint for my Long-EZ. It was easy to use since it was water based, but it was difficult to get a great finish for a lot of reasons. I eventually was happy but it took **hundreds** of hours and lots of elbow grease. That is enough for me to recommend to fellow builders to try another paint. Now, after flying for 2 years, (and always being hangared), the real reason for builders to avoid this paint is that it doesn't hold up. It is starting to craze - thin cracks in the surface that looked like hundreds of parallel razor cuts.

At first they could only be seen with the light glancing off the surface at just the right angle, but now have grown to be visible any time and I will eventually have to re-paint (OH NO!!) In some places, the crazing makes small pieces that then crack and flake off. I had applied the paint religiously in accordance with the manufacturer's directions and with several consultations by phone, so I think it was applied correctly. The bottom line is - -

Don't use Systems 3 paint !

Condolences

Most of you know that our friend, very long distance Long-EZ pilot/builder, Andre Debert, lost his life on March 14 in Santiago, Chile. He had just attempted another Rio to Santiago speed record flight (see CSA Oct 94) and was relaxing in Chile. He had been invited to fly in an airshow and was practicing a roll over the runway. Half way through the roll he apparently realized he was too low and tried to reverse it. A wing tip hit the ground and the resulting crash proved fatal for Andre.

I shall miss his wonderful personality and exciting EZ adventure stories. We have all lost by his passing but have gained so much by having him in our group!

Eternal tailwinds my friend.

Help - I Need Input

Many EZ drivers are looking engine repair in the face and do not know where to go for **good work**.

I propose an article based on your input. If you have a shop that did good work for you and the engine is performing well we want to know about it. Please take the time to contribute your success story for the benefit of other EZ drivers.

Alix Deberdt, daughter of Andre (Brazil) - March 14th, 1996 our beloved Andre took off for the very last time, he will be terribly missed by all of us. He used to say, "The sky is the limit, this planet will become too small for me!" Now Andre, at last, the Universe is the limit.

The family would like to thank you for the priceless support received in this painful moment.

Editor: In case any of you wish to send condolences, the address is:

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CSA Mail Label Policy

Policy has been to not sell the membership data base mailing list. I have run free ads for organizations who I felt promoted safety, education or canard flying on an available space basis. The policy was established originally when we were hit with demands for ad space and membership address lists by a couple nefarious EZ parts builders. We did not want Central State's good name to be associated with them.

I have been contacted by an aircraft materials education workshop wanting to send flyers directly to CSA membership. I feel their intentions are honorable and they are offering a CSA goal, education. I **do not** plan to sell the data base but might make the mail labels available to that organization at cost. I know some of you are concerned about being on too many data bases. I feel this move can attract more people to experimental aircraft construction and raise our awareness of materials and processes so we may build better airplanes.

I want your input before I make a policy decision on this subject