

# Helicopter

bt HarryZirkelbach 29 Oct 2018  
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Today the sight of a helicopter is common. And the small propelled driven aircraft s a rarity, the very vehicle which trained the Air Line Pilots. The result, a shortage of men and women capable of flying anything other than kites today.

Arriving here summer 1958, metro Denver still had eight small airfields. These were being overrun by housing development, Literally flying away;

Do you recall where the Piper Restaurant is on Parker and Evans? It was named because across the street was a small airfield that sold the Piper Aircraft. Eat before and after each hop. Stapleton the only service of Commercial Aviation.

These small airfields flourished as the youth of the 1939's was thrilled to think of flying. Lessons were inexpensive and on something ike 10 hours you could solo, earn wings. Fly north to Cheyenne, south to Colorado Springs, enjoy a meal near their airfield, compare fibs with other "new" veterans. And that thrill, the first perfect landing whee the wheels kissed the ground so gently you were not sure you landed. And that secondary goal, hidden, becoming a Commercial Pilot, in Captain's uniform, the larger aircraft and those pretty Stewardesses, one on each arm. God, it was great to be imaginative, young, a male adventurer in the 1930s.

Then another generation, helicopter pilot. Any who have flown in a whirlybird would surely remember their first flight.

In 1960 I had a helicopter flight from downtown Chicago out to O'Hare. Notable, the view fantastic, the noise

deafening. the seat uncomfortable; the ten minute hop listening to the pilot talk to his controller and we passengers. It happened that a week earlier a similar bird with four passengers had crashed and burned killing all. Our pilot took the time to tell of the incident , show us the char left by the crash and burn.

Then in a past employment I worked for Jeppesen, was their representative with the military. With the Army I would meet Army Captain Carpenter a helicopter pilot, many hours. Was stationed at Buckley; trained there. On one occasion he offered me a ride. more training. On this day we looked around Denver, and at the field, practiced loss of engine, "dead stick landings:". At any altitude he would simulate the engine loss, turn off the power. Almost immediately he headed, head first toward the ground and at just the right moment pulled back the controls, the propeller overhead turning automatically, providing enough life o gently touch the struts on the dirt. Or, with a thud when mistaking the distance too little, or a lesser bump when judging he distances too great.

The Captain had done this often, was good. There were just a few bumps and one thud in that hour, the machine undamaged, the blades magnificently bending with eery landing, never damaged by striking the earth.

I lost contact with Captain Carpenter when he flew with the Army in Nam. His names is on the Wall in Washington.

I have flown with other pilots in helicopter. This stands out. They were young, fearless, skilled, convinced their flight and any passenger was as safe as was their auto on a Denver Street.