

October 10, 2008 - Home Sweet Home, ~~Alabama~~ Tennessee

Well, all good things eventually end, and my 12 week, 6,000 mile trip around the US was no exception. This week I returned to its starting point... my home base at the Seymour Airpark in East Tennessee. Now it is time for some reflections on just what I have come away with from this exceptional journey of mine.

You just don't realize what a beautiful country that we live in until you have the opportunity to extensively explore it from both ground and air. The stops that I made along the way gave me a chance to see some spectacular scenery, visit some interesting towns and cities, and become acquainted with some really friendly, kind and generous people. At none of the many airports that I based out of was I ever asked to pay a tie down or parking fee and even the one time that I needed some mechanical help in bleeding my brake line, the mechanic refused to take my money. My cost of flying was essentially limited to the gas that I put into my plane. Whether it was the great plains of Oklahoma and East Texas, the mountains of the far West, or the national monuments in the upper central states, I have experienced beauty beyond expectation. Having my "home" with me as I traveled those many miles was a great comfort. It allowed me to live where I traveled, with minimum disruption or distress. Other than returning with sofa piled high with a mess of unfiled papers and unopened mail, my "home away from home" served me well. In addition to the 6,000 miles traveled in the motor home, I put almost 1,000 miles on my little Vespa scooter. But, I was surprised to see that I accumulated only a little over 37 hours of logged flying on this journey of mine. It seemed like it should have been so much more. But when you consider that most of this was local flying in 30 to 60 minute increments, I suppose that it is a reasonable number.

Now that the trip is complete, is there anything that I would have done differently. Well, as the Frank Sinatra song says, *"Regrets? Yes, I've had a few...but then again, too few to mention"*. I regret that I lost a whole month off of my start date due to problems in having the airplane completed on time and with my motor home problems. This meant that I had to remove some of my stops and drop almost 2,000 miles from of the proposed route. I would have enjoyed my original Gulf Coast routing, and I certainly missed my Senoma, AZ stop with its chance to see the beautiful red buttes and spires in this part of the country. I never did get up to New England in the Fall, or along the mid-Atlantic seaboard states. But these are things that can hopefully be done in future explorations...perhaps as early as next year if anything is left in my retirement fund securities account by then. I also regret that my fiancée's vacation days limitation did not leave enough time for her to meet up with me while I was traveling the far West. I know that she would have been just as impressed by its beauty. Up to now she has not even gotten to see my Highlander in person, let alone have a chance to fly with me in it. I also regret that I was not able to do my obligatory 30 minutes of take-offs and landings each day as my flight instructor suggested. I was so intent on seeing as much as I could from the air each time I flew, that I did not really get to sharpen up my landing skills on this trip. Today I did, and that one hour of touch and gos went to demonstrate that I probably did not suffer all that much from this lack of practice.

Trip's Recap Photos or Mountains I Have Known



When people hear Branson, MO, they think of the shows instead of its rolling hills and lakes



The thing that I will remember most about my Tulsa, OK visit was its Balloon Festival



With Amarillo, TX it is the rugged beauty of the Palo Duro Canyon, just minutes from downtown



Taos NM mountains were truly spectacular

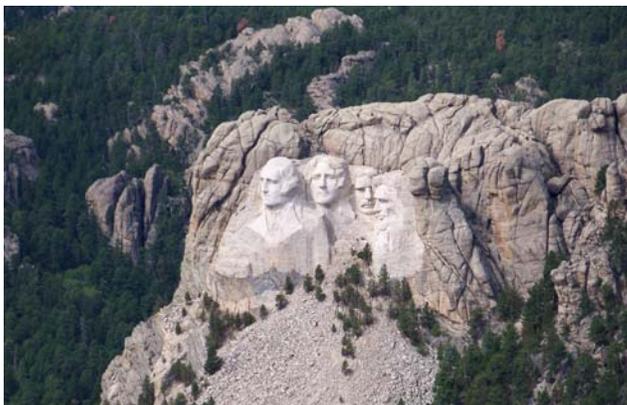


My hanger at the Seymour Airpark, filled with "stuff"

Unfortunately, now I have to get back out to work, and on the road with my motor home and car, and won't be doing any flying at all until sometime in December. I suspect that my skills will definitely see some rustiness once I return to it in a few months. Meanwhile, it would be a good time to get the plane over to Just Aircraft to see if there is anything that I broke along the way...and to get my heater muff and possibly the autopilot installed.

With regard to my plans for this web site, I will be keeping it active for the time being....although there will be no new entries. If I am able to resume these travels next summer, I will resume my postings at that time. Meanwhile enjoy the highlight photos that I have entered on these pages, and if you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at HighlanderFlyer@aol.com

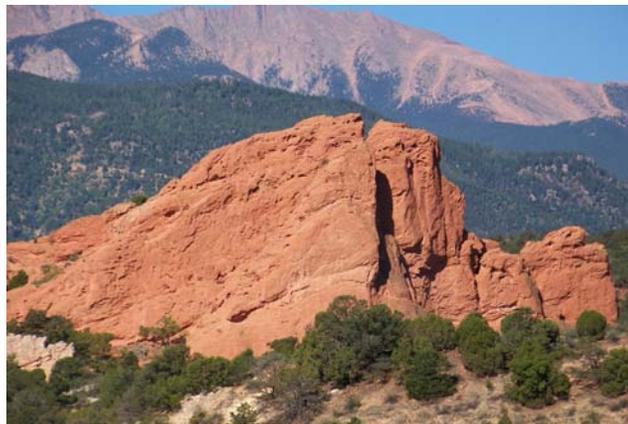
In South Dakota, some of the mountains even had faces carved on them



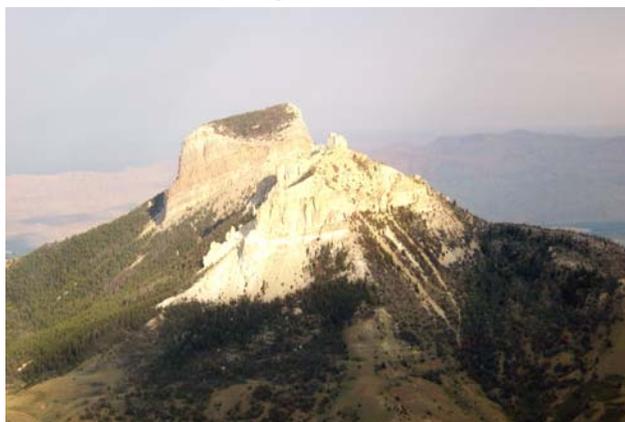
While in WV theirs were in full Fall color and some even had ski slopes



Denver's were the only mountains with snow



But Colorado Springs had the Red Rocks



While WY's Yellowstone's were almost pure white



In Montana river's ran through their mountains