

Holland "Dutch" Redfield

"The Final Touchdown"

During a lifetime in aviation, I have experienced only one forced landing. It was not difficult. The dead-stick glide began at three thousand feet. There were several suitable fields from which to choose. Things worked out nicely. Yet I know that I have one more forced landing lurking and waiting for me out there. I believe that at this stage of my life, I am ready for it. Perhaps there will be warning, maybe not.

Will there be time for me to plan a good approach to this final touchdown? Will it be a hasty no power, no options, straight ahead steep descent to a walloping hard touchdown? Or will it be a soft afternoon peaceful glide?

Whatever, for this final glide, I ask only for an open cockpit, so I can, however briefly, savor for the last time the feels of flight, as biplane wings forward of me exquisitely frame and record the slowly changing, tilting scenes as I maneuver and silently bank and glide onto what I have long known will be my very final approach.

Please, no helmet, so old ears can best sense vital changes in speed, relayed through the lovely sounds of whistling interplane struts and wires, and so cheeks and bared head can best read changing airflows swirling behind the cockpit's tiny windshield.

Below, in a forest of trees lies a grassy field long ago set aside for biplane flyers of old. It looks small, tiny. With lightly crossed aileron and rudder I'll slip her a few inches over the fence. I'll level her off, then hold her off, with wheels skimming the grass tips.

The lift of the wings, the sounds of flight, rapidly diminish. With stick full back, lift fades, a slight tremor, then she and I are bumping and rolling across the beautifully sodded field. The wooden propeller remains still.

We roll to a stop. I have no belt to loosen. I raise goggles and slowly climb out. Suddenly there is applause, then bear hugs and slaps on the back. "Hey, you old goat, you really slicked that one on!" I am with old friends.

Dutch Redfield

Dutch passed away in his sleep on November 13th.

Holland 'Dutch' Redfield

1916-2008

Holland "Dutch" Redfield of Nassau Point, a former airline training captain, sailing enthusiast and most recently a resident of The Shores at Peconic Landing, passed away Nov. 13.

He retired from Pan American World Airways as Atlantic Division chief training captain in 1976, after 33 years totally devoted to pilot training. Prior to joining the airline, he operated his own seaplane flying service in the Adirondack mountain and Thousand Islands areas of upstate New York. He learned to fly in Syracuse, N.Y., in 1931.

Mr. Redfield was one of the founders of the Setauket Yacht Club in Port Jefferson and later served two terms as commodore.

He was also a member and officer of Eastern Sailing Club, the Quiet Birdmen, Long Island Early Flyers and the PanAm Clipper Pioneers. In 1946 he authored a book entitled "Instrument Flying and Radio Navigation;" in 1981 a second, "Thirty-Five Years at the Outer Marker;" and in 1995 a third, "The Airman's Sky Is Not the Blue."

In 1969 he was in the first group, and became the fifth airline pilot in the world, to be qualified on the Boeing 747 in Seattle, Wash.

"Dutch" is survived by his sons Charles, of Kansas, and Holland II, of the U.S. Virgin Islands; his daughter-in-law Geraldine, of Florida; granddaughters Kristen Hughes of Florida and Amanda Redfield of North Carolina; and great-grandchildren William and Margaret Hughes.

Memorial visitation was held Sunday, Nov. 16, at Coster-Heppner Funeral Home in Cutchogue.

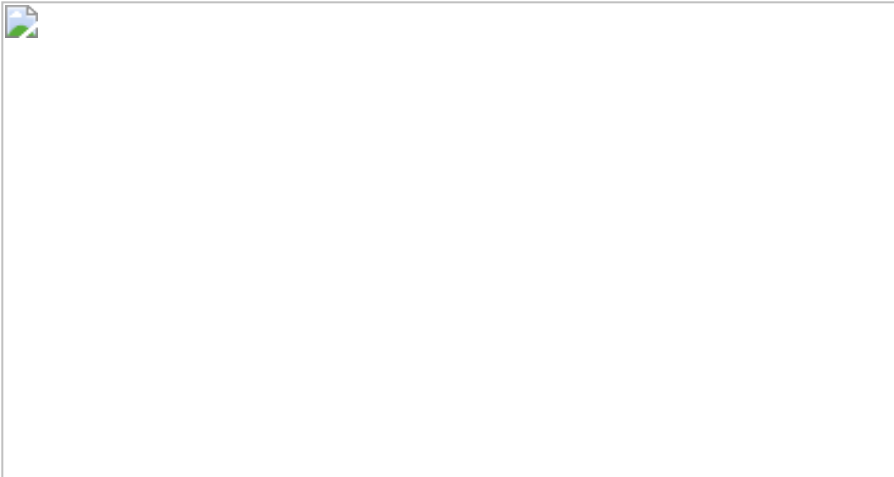
"The Final Touchdown" was read at Dutch's funeral service.

Postscript: When I first sent this out to some of my friends via email, I got two replies. One from Lew Wallick, retired Boeing Test Pilot who said Dutch has been one of his students; and one from Tom Hatch, retired Pan Am pilot, who said Dutch had given him check rides in the 707. A small world.....

Dutch was a long-time National Waco Club member .

Check out this YouTube video and read about Dutch's Waco flying:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJU6SWcSxr0>



Waco UPF-7

Waco UPF-7 was a dashing war hero. Well, we're not sure it was a hero, exactly, but it did serve almost from its birth in 1940 as a training aircraft for the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP). And Wacos often did the most glamorous training in that program, like aerobatics. The purpose of the program was to provide a pool of pilots in the event of war.

The CPTP was glamorized by Hollywood in the 1939 movie *20,000 Men a Year*. The film served to fire the imaginations of college students who were recruited for the program.

CPTP — an instructor's perspective

Former CPTP instructor, Holland L. "Dutch" Redfield, included an account of his days teaching aerobatics in a similar Waco UPF-7 aircraft in his book, *Thirty Five Years at the Outer Marker*. Although the book is out of print, photocopies may be obtained through a Web site (www.geocities.com/vmken/BookRedfield.html).

Redfield, who at the end of his career was teaching Pan American pilots to fly the Boeing 747, loves the Waco UPF-7 to this day, saying that it is built like a brick structure of high utilitarian value — his description was shorter. To quote Redfield, he loves "the open cockpit, the magnificent radial engine, the large disk'd propeller, the control stick between the knees — I am pleased." He describes the sound of the giant propeller with the engine at idle power. "A slow rhythmic whish whish whish whish whish — like the beat of a swan's wings in flight🌀."

Redfield describes the UPF-7 as a tough, rugged airplane, built to rigid military trainer standards and therefore lacking the nimbleness of other Waco models. "But you didn't have to worry about the UPF-7 falling apart under the high stresses of the advanced aerobatic maneuvering that was called for in the course program."

Seven days a week

It's a good thing Redfield liked his airplane, because he spent seven days a week in it. "Working with my six students, I might spend the entire day Monday, hour after hour, doing exacting eights around pylons; Tuesday, beautiful chandelles; Wednesday — all day — snap rolls; Thursday, demanding slow rolls; Friday, punishing split S's; Saturday, half-rolls; Sunday, Immelmans." His role as a CPTP instructor lasted through three years of the early 1940s and 1,900 hours of flight.

Not all of those hours were placid ones. Hearing from his boss about a "square loop," Redfield decided to try one. As he applied negative Gs, the engine quit while the UPF-7 was nearly vertical. "The airstream sounds of flight and the whistling wing-brace wire sounds rapidly diminished to absolute silence, and we hung there like a spent arrow. Cows mooing, dogs barking, train whistles, and auto horns beeping below could be clearly heard. Still we hung there, pointing straight up, despite everything I tried.

"It seemed forever before the Waco slowly started sliding backwards, and then, with a resounding, neck-bending crash, flipping violently end for end, in a split second it was pointed straight down. As we dove for the Earth the dead propeller ahead slowly began turning again, and the sounds of flight came alive. Clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, and the engine windmilled back to life. My student in the cockpit behind banged the coaming and yelled, 'That was fun. Let's do it again!'"

Above narrative by Alton K. Marsh from AOPA Magazine August 2002.

Links

[Waco UPF-7 Story](#)

[Return to Stories Page](#)

[Return to Home Page](#)

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