

Jimmy Mathis and His Long Cross-Country Ride

By Harry Kraemer & Dave Moeslein

Imagine being 16 years old. You've gotten your Student Pilot Certificate, and you've completed your training and experience requirements except for the long cross-country. And, then, your instructor tells you that the route will be from coast-to-coast! That's right. You'll fly from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast. Sixteen-year-old Jimmy Mathis did just that.

Mathis was introduced to flying at the age of 10 by a schoolteacher, and his father gave him his first flying lessons as a 15th birthday present. Being 15 was to Jimmy's advantage,

and he learned better than the average flight student. Having trained pilots of all ages to be private pilots, we admit that working with people 13 to 16-years-old is the most enjoyable. Jimmy was like any young teenager; he didn't bring pressures and worries from the office, his spouse, or financial situation with him to the airport. Teenagers have a clear and open mind, and they learn very quickly.

Although we didn't know it at the time when Jimmy's long cross-country flight was planned, Jimmy was going to become the first licensed student and the youngest certificated student pilot to fly solo from coast-to-coast.

The idea started after the media gave a lot of attention to separate flights (coast-to-coast)

by two different youngsters (an 11-year-old girl and a 9-year-old boy), each claiming to be the youngest pilot to fly such a trip. Even though the youngsters felt a sense of accomplishment and the media recognized their achievements, they were not licensed pilots, nor did they do it alone (solo). Their flight instructors accompanied both youngsters to satisfy legal requirements since they were not old enough to hold a Student Pilot Certificate and could not, therefore, operate the aircraft as solo pilots. BUT- Mathis did it alone! Solo! Nobody else was in the aircraft or anywhere nearby!

As instructors, we are very active in promoting the safety of general aviation and the



Jimmy Mathis

furtherance of aviation education. As these two youngsters completed their trips, there was a lot of talk about how unsafe the two flights were, by both the media and within the pilot community. We were motivated to demonstrate that, with the proper training, a trip of such magnitude could be made safely by a pilot of any age and with a minimum of ratings. We just had to find a 16-year-old pilot (16 is the minimum age to become a student pilot) and one with parents that we could convince to let go on such a trip.

Mathis was the perfect one for the trip. At only 15 at the time, he was soon to become a student pilot. His parents didn't think our idea was so great at first but, after we explained how we would go about planning the trip and addressing various challenges, his parents soon began to realize that this was a carefully thought-out plan that made sense. Mathis' father also is a private pilot, and we think this had something to do with his parents letting him go.

The planning and training began immediately. The first task was to train Mathis to solo. Everyone involved in the trip thought that it would be meaningful and unique if he could solo on his 16th birthday. He would be more than ready by that time.

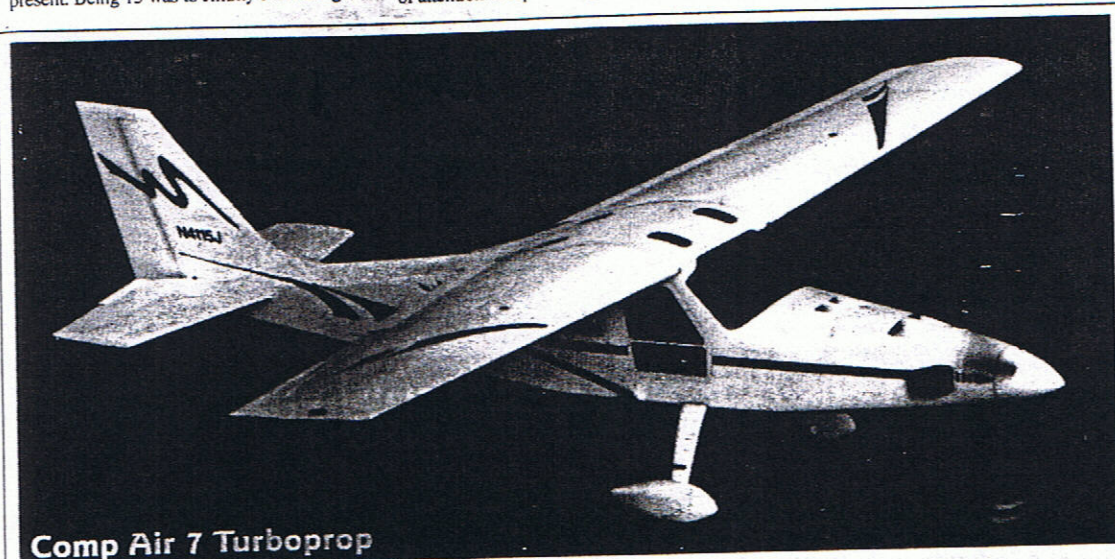
Mother Nature was the one to worry about, since Mathis' birthday is in February. Two days before his birthday, the area was hit with a major snowstorm and strong winds.

The weather cleared by his birthday and with six feet of snow piled up on the sides of the runway, everything went as planned on a day with no wind and high overcast skies. Mathis wasn't a bit nervous, even though several local TV stations were there to provide live coverage of his first solo — and the beginning of his adventure.

The training continued through the spring, during the day and during the night, in calm winds and in blustery winds, on clear days, cloudy days, and even in IMC, including training in thunderstorm recognition and avoidance, as well as in Class B and Class C airspace. We planned to have him start the long cross-country in early June — after he was out of school and before the daily afternoon thunderstorms became frequent. His flight schedule would be limited to an average of 300 miles per day (the length of the long solo cross-country required for the Private Pilot Certificate) with a planned fuel stop at each halfway point.

In essence, all that Mathis would be doing was a series of the required long solo cross-country trips that would culminate in a coast-to-coast trip. One of the challenges of planning a trip this long was to set up a route that avoided all Class B airspace. (Remember,

Continued On Page 116



Comp Air 7 Turboprop

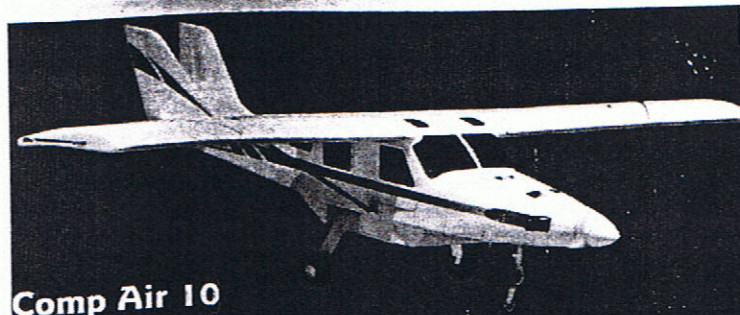
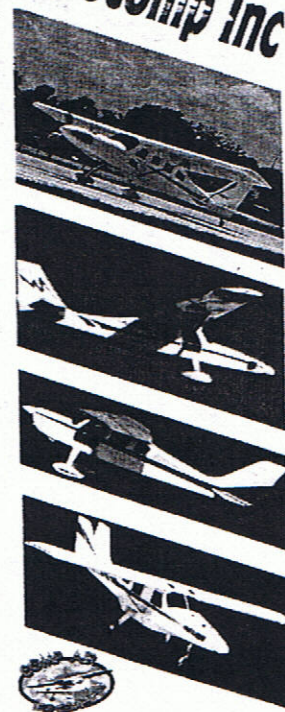
11 Designs: 100 to 280 mph Cruise
Up to 5800 lbs. Gross Weight -- Easy to Build, Easy to Fly



2335 Newfound Harbor Dr.
Merritt Island, FL 32952 USA

Telephone/FAX: 1-321-453-6641
Internet: <http://AEROCOMPinc.com>

Big Airplanes!
Aerocomp Inc



Comp Air 10

X-Country

Continued From Page 115

Mathis was only a student pilot and had not yet met the training/experience requirements to enter them.)

Safety was the primary consideration in planning Mathis' trip. We contacted our local FSDO to establish further contact with the FSDOs in the areas where Jimmy might be flying. This allowed us to develop a network of very experienced instructors across the country who met him at each stop, set him up for the evening, and then reviewed his planning and the weather before he departed on the next leg of his journey. Before departure, even though he had consulted with a seasoned instructor in the local area, Mathis was required to make contact with us (we were watching the weather very closely, too) so we could agree on his "go-no go" decision.

Mathis was flying a Cessna 172 (N737EY) for his trip. Although the airplane carries about five hours of fuel, he was required to land (at the nearest airport) after three hours of flight, provided he was not within an hour of his next scheduled airport of landing for refueling. This was another safety margin that was built into the trip in the event he flew off course or intentionally had to divert course.

He also was in contact with ATC for the entire flight. Using the National Beacon Code Allocation Plan, we had a discrete transponder code and call sign assigned to the flight. Mathis' call sign for the trip was "Solo One," and his transponder code was "1260." With this, we were able to pick up the phone and know his location at any time.

Mathis' approximately 2,500-mile journey started in Ocean City, Md., on June 30, 1994, after a one-day delay due to weather. His first stop was Elkins, W.Va., (268 nm) for fuel and to check the weather. Then he flew on to Batavia, Ohio, (236 nm), where Hal Shevers of Sporty's Pilot Shop was his host for the evening. They had dinner together that night, and Shevers hosted Jimmy in his home.

In the morning, Mathis got the grand tour of the Sporty's facility, and Shevers installed a loaner transponder in the aircraft to replace the one that had failed within the first 30 minutes of the flight from Ocean City. Mathis left Ohio bound for St. Louis (303 nm). He spent a long Fourth of July weekend in St. Louis due to stationary front weather, where he was able to see a ball game, go to the "VF-Fair," and hear the Beach Boys.

He left St. Louis on July 5, heading for Wichita, Kan. (372-nm leg). From Wichita, he headed for Plainville, Texas (336 nm), where he took a day off to rest. He went to City Hall, and the mayor gave him the "Key to the City" and July 7th was named "Jimmy Mathis Day." Mathis also has a sandwich named after him at a restaurant in Plainville.

On July 8, he departed for Las Cruces, N.M. (322 nm). After an overnight stay and some discussions with the instructor about the upcoming high-density altitude, mountain and desert route of flight, Mathis was off to Chandler, Ariz. (281 nm), where he stayed for a couple of days to receive some mountain flying training.

Finally, July 12 was the big day. Mathis left Chandler en route to Long Beach, Calif., but not before a stop in Palm Springs (239 nm). He needed to make sure that the L.A. basin fog had lifted and to discuss his routing through the Banning Pass and review his entry under the LAX Class B airspace with the local instructor. Then, and only then, was he ready to go to Long Beach (a mere 86-nm), where he was greeted by a news helicopter that followed him along the runway as he landed on "the long one" — Runway 30. Mathis parked at AirFlite (Toyota's FBO), where his plane was swarmed by the media as he shut down. Mathis was greeted by the mayor of Long Beach and given a "Key to the

City" during a press conference. He had just completed a trip of 33.3 hours.

Although there are many memories associated with his trip, the most memorable part of the trip (for us) has to be Mathis' arrival into Long Beach. He had called us before leaving Palm Springs with his ETA at Long Beach. Toyota (the major sponsor) had planned a big reception for Mathis with a lot of media coverage. (We were in touch with the tower by telephone so that we could tell the media to be ready when he was landing.)

However, he arrived earlier than his ETA, so the media was not set up. We had to tell the tower to hold him somewhere. "But where?" the tower replied. Then the tower decided to have him do circles around the Queen Mary, where the news helicopter met him before

Continued On Page 117

De-Icer Boot Restoration

"Boot Repair Without Patches™"

At Our Facility. . .
or Yours



BootsEdge Repair Corp.

888-687-0945

Attention Aviators!

No Cheap Imitation Watches at HME!

For ORDERS and INFORMATION Phone → 1-888-464-6660

Check out our Web Site: "http://www.hmewatch.com"

WINGMAN NAVIHAWK

Fully Computer Controlled Anal-Digi, 30 City W.T., 24 hr Local & Zulu, 3 Alarms, Chrono, Countdown Timers

\$229.95

All Stainless Steel \$229.95

NAVIHAWK BLUE ANGELS

Fully Computer Controlled Anal-Digi, 30 City W.T., 24 hr Local & Zulu, 3 Alarms, Chrono, Countdown Timers

\$239.95

Metal Band Model \$275.

CHASE DURER FIGHTER

22 Jewel All Swiss Movement, Multi Functional Digital Sections, Alarm, Compass & Tachymeter Bezel, 24 hr Chrono, Mineral Crystal, Date

\$550.00

Available in Red, Wrt, Blu or Blk Face/Strap \$595.

CHASE DURER PILOT

All Swiss Hi Quality Movement, Full 24 hour Chrono in 1/100 sec, Date, 555 Bezel, Sapphire Crystal

\$349.00

All Stainless Steel

CHASE DURER WING

All Swiss Hi Quality Movement, 2/Tone Full 24 hour Chrono in 1/100 sec, Date, 555 Bezel, Sapphire Crystal

\$395.00

Anal in Wrt/Gold, Blu/Silv or Wrt/Blk

WINGMAN VI

Brand New 22 Jewel Citizen, New Shock Resistant LCD's, Chrono, Countdown, 21 City Worktime

\$205.00

ELEGANT VERSION \$225.

CITIZEN NAVI-SURF

Most of the Same Features as the Navihawk, but offering a Sync'd Sweep Second Hand

\$275.00

Available in Wrt or Steel Blue Face

SEIKO GMT NEW*

Seiko's Newest Addition! 24hr GMT Hand, Multi City Disp, 20sec p/yr Accuracy, Perp Calendar, Mineral Crystal

\$339.00

CASIO TWINGCEPT

Brand New Model from Casio! Offers Analog/Digital, Dual Time, Thermo, Light, Altimeter to 15,000, Alarms, Chrono

\$209.95

Digital Display night on Crystal!

CASIO TRIPLE SENSOR

Most Popular Model from Casio offers Digital Compass, Thermo, and Altimeter, Alarm, Chrono, Day/Date

\$229.95

All New Improved Band & Look!

HME

1626 Wilcox Ave. #144
Los Angeles, CA 90028
Order Desk: 323/464-6660 Fax: 323/462-8193

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Payment Method: ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa ☐ Check/Money Order ☐ COD (\$5.00)

Credit Card # _____

Exp: _____

Signature _____

Phone Number _____

Please include Phone # on all Orders



ORDER FORM



California Residents, Please add 8.25% Sales Tax

Quan	Description	Price	Sub Total

Shipping Charges within the U.S.A.

U.P.S. Ground	\$5.00
U.P.S. 3 Day Select	\$9.50
U.P.S. 2nd Day	\$16.00
U.P.S. Next Day	\$20.00
Alaska & Hawaii Orders	\$22.00
All Other Locations: Call for Quote	

California Sales Tax

Shipping Charge

TOTAL >

X-Country

Continued From Page 116

following him to the runway.

Overall, the trip went well. Mathis had only a few minor problems along the way. On his first leg, the transponder failed and forced him to change his course to stay clear of Baltimore's Class B airspace (the only Class B airspace in which Jimmy was authorized to fly). Then one morning he could not find the airplane keys, which caused him to be

delayed several hours. (Such delays caused more of a problem for us than they did for him, since we had to notify the media waiting at the next destination that he was delayed.)

On the leg between St. Louis and Wichita, the aircraft's left cargo door came open. Since he was worried about losing his camera equipment and other gear, he used his chart and did some quick pilotage to find an airport to which he could divert that would only

require turns. Over the course, there was an area where Jimmy could have been out of range of VORs (his primary navigation reference). For this reason, we had a Loran installed in the aircraft. As fate would have it, he was out of range of VORs and the Loran failed. Fortunately, Mathis had received a lot of training in pilotage, which was put to task.

During the trip, Mathis also did a lot of TV and radio interviews with the local and home-

town (Baltimore) stations. He had to carry a schedule with him so he knew what show he was doing next and with what station. He made the headlines with the local newspapers in the towns he visited across the country, and his trip received attention across the Atlantic in England by British TV and newspapers.

Having concluded his journey in Long Beach, Mathis vacationed with his parents in California and Nevada. He returned home via the airlines to Baltimore (BWI), where he was met by Ted Mathison, administrator of Maryland Aviation Administration, who presented Mathis with a "Citation" from Gov. William Donald Schaeffer. Several weeks later, the FAA recognized Mathis at a ceremony in Washington, DC. FAA Administrator David Hinson presented him with a Special Achievement Award, and he was joined by representatives from the FAA, NATA, AOPA, Air Transport Association of America, General Aviation Manufacturers Association, National Coalition for Aviation Education, Toyota, and the National Aero Club of the United States. Jimmy also received a letter of recognition from President Bill Clinton and The Baltimore County Board of Education.

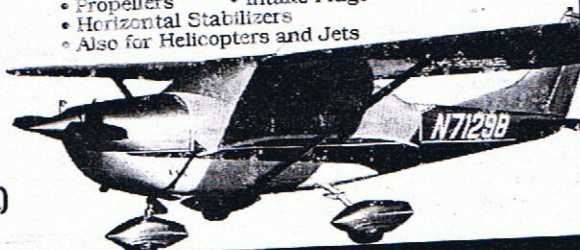
Just imagine the stories Mathis told when he returned to school the next year and was asked, "Well, Jimmy, what did you do over the summer?" Jimmy went on to get his Private Pilot Certificate on his 17th birthday, but getting his driver's license was first on his list after completing the cross-country trip and returning home.

AIRCRAFT COVERS

- Custom-made for all makes, models, and modifications.
- Protects interior and avionics from the sun and heat.
- Prevents damage caused by leaking door and window seals.

Covers Available:

- Canopy
- Wings
- Propellers
- Horizontal Stabilizers
- Also for Helicopters and Jets
- Engine
- Empennage
- Intake Plugs



TOLL FREE (U.S. & CANADA)
800/777-6405

www.aircraftcovers.com

BRUCE'S CUSTOM COVERS

989 E. California Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

PHONE: 409/738-3959

FAX: 403/738-2729

Email: bruce@aircraftcovers.com

Tell Them You Saw It In
In Flight USA

1967 Mooney M 20 F



*This fast aircraft is in very good condition,
very clean and well kept. It has a new top and recent bottom.
A nice flying plane!*

Registration #N9606M

8147.0 Total Time, 1403.72 SMOH, 187.5 SBOH, 0.00 STO, 385.96 SPOH
No Damage History, No Corrosion, No Hail.
Annual Due 2/2001, TXP Due 2/2002

Avionics & Features:

New ICOM A-200, New TCM-MX12 with G/S & LOC, O/H Collins TDR 950
TXP, King KA 134 Audio Panel, Garmin Pilot III GPS with Ext. Perm. Ant. &
12V Pwr., 4 Place I/C, OAT Gauge, RAM Air Recovery, Recent Annual, Recent
Glass, Reliable Manual Landing Gear, Recent Tanks Sealed, EGT, New Carpet

Exterior: 5/10

Cream with Red Accents

Interior: 8/10

Medium Blue Cloth Seats, Navy Blue Carpet

A Great Deal at \$49,500

Contact: Carlos Garza

Petaluma Municipal Airport • Hangar 8-J • Petaluma, CA 94952
e-mail: winginit@iscweb.com

(707) 769-9113 • Fax: (707) 765-1723

WARNING!

Don't even think of
calling another aviation
insurance agent until
you've called AIR first!

✓ Best Rates

✓ Expanded Coverages

✓ One Call for All Markets

✓ No Associations to Join

AVIATION INSURANCE RESOURCES

... just PLANE insurance
Call Today ... Toll Free

1-877-AIR-PROS

FAX 1-301-682-9793

www.AIR-PROS.com