

Roy Kinsey, Flying With WWII Veterans

By Mike Taylor

Mike Taylor is a former aircraft design engineer, 24-year aviation industry veteran, current marketing consultant and private pilot.

Owner/Operator Spotlight

My introduction to Roy Kinsey, our MU-2 pilot/owner spotlight in this issue of MU-2 Magazine, was through a forwarded copy of Coastal Lifestyle Magazine. That title alone sounds refreshing. And anyone who's flown the coastlines of the 50 U.S. states can appreciate the diversity and majesty of their landscapes. Flying coast to coast, the MU-2 pilot knows a 2,500-plus nautical mile journey will require a fueling stop. However, from the Gulf Coast, the MU-2 can reach many locations in the lower 48 in one hop. And that is precisely where Roy Kinsey does some of his most enjoyable flying.

Roy Kinsey has been flying since 1965. He's logged over 1,000 hours in the MU-2. His flight experience includes the J3 Cub he soloed in, Cessna 140 and 170s, Beech Bonanzas, and pressurized Beech Barons (Barons adding another 1,000 hours to his logbook). Having owned and flown a variety of aircraft, he most fondly remembers taking ownership of his current MU-2 in December of 1997.

Earlier this year Roy Kinsey participated in a July 4th celebration that included flying in his 1943 Boeing Stearman in a ceremony honoring World War II veterans. The publishers of MU-2 Magazine informed me, and Roy, that an upcoming issue was in the works and they were "wondering if [he] you would be willing to be our 'MU-2 owner/operator highlight.'" It was my role to call Roy for an interview.

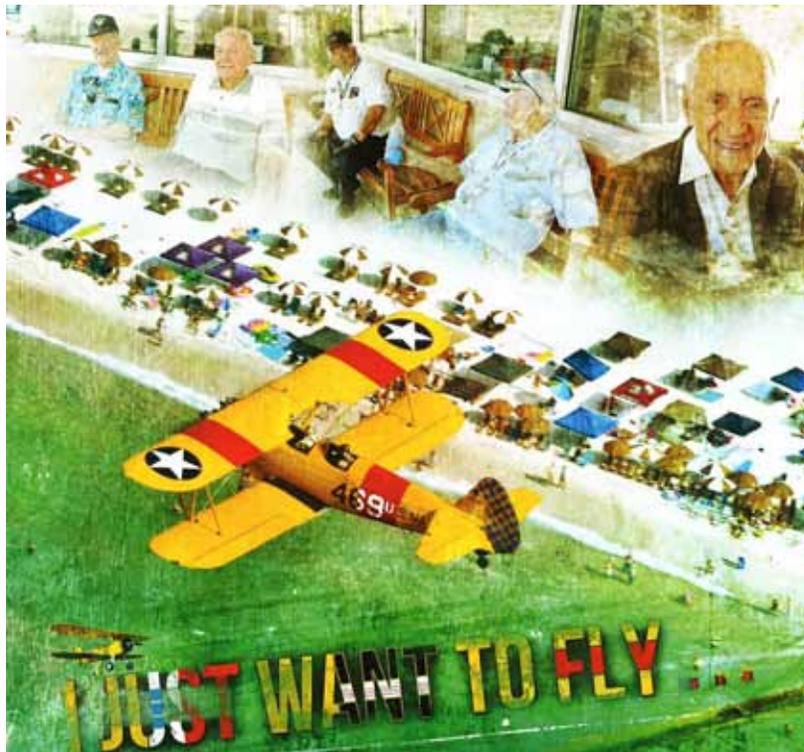
First questions revolved around Roy's flying experience. Truth be told, I really wanted to proceed to the Stearman stories. Today's pilots who fly these great aircraft usually have a long pedigree of flying experience. They'll tell you a Stearman is not easy to fly. It's big, the cockpit is open, and its radial engine and tailwheel configuration make it difficult to see forward.

The big rugged Stearman biplanes of 1930s were built in large numbers to train U.S. Army Air Force, U.S. Navy, and Royal Canadian Air Force personnel. The Stearman is a living tribute to the military pilots who did their primary training in them. I was interested in learning how Roy arrived at owning and flying one,

in addition to what brought him to the MU-2.

Roy and I talked about our common interest in flying Cubs, both having soloed in these classic designs. From a non-aviator's perspective, the Cub and Stearman might look like twins with their often-yellow paint and tailwheel configuration, were it not for the stacked wings on the Stearman. Like many who learned to fly in a Cub, Roy's been flying for nearly 50 years.

When asked what brought him to the MU-2, he coolly replied, "I'm the typical owner who started in pistons and singles." But as many avid pilots quickly do, Roy moved up the scale and soon found himself making use of a "P-Baron," a popular twin-engine piston aircraft with a pressurized cabin.



Roy recounted an experience he had with an engine shutdown, in-flight in the Baron. He asserted that this experience led him to the purchase of the MU-2. Although initially there was concern about MU-2 engine costs, his experience with the aircraft has proven this to be unwarranted. He's encountered only one trip delay, for mechanical reasons, in all of his MU-2 flying. Roy reinforced his conviction, adding that his service representative, Mark Cobb, was quick to resolve the issue with easy to locate parts.

"Fast" was the word most conspicuous in Roy's explanation for scaling up to the MU-2. Its reputation for speed had long been

appealing to him. He also started looking at them because they were less expensive than other turboprops, such as the Beech King Air. He noted the MU-2's physically smaller size and punctuated the fact that it fits nicely in a standard T-hanger. Besides, Roy added, "It's typically just me and one other passenger flying in it." Only twice has he had seven people on board.

What "clinched" the deal for Roy, was a trip in the P-Baron to Alaska. He had stopped in Ketchikan for fuel and witnessed an MU-2 landing. Into the FBO walked Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and a long time MU-2 owner/operator. While halfway to Anchorage,



Carey Hardin (Stearman #469) over Pensacola, Florida.

Graham's MU-2 passed Kinsey's Baron, to his surprise. Roy emphasized that the Baron is well regarded as a "fast airplane."

Today, Roy simply equates his decision to, "It saves a bunch of time compared to the P-Baron." His MU-2 is a short body M-model, "the last of the 3-bladed planes," he added. "It has plenty of room, it's a fantastically capable and reliable airplane." Then there was the type specific training required to operate the MU-2. It was more than he had ever known in any other aircraft, but quickly realized it was well worth it.

A coastal lifestyle for Roy equates to living in the Florida panhandle and practicing law. He does this with his wife and daughter, the latter also a practicing attorney and newly elected circuit court judge, the congratulatory father pointed out.

Roy was eager to talk about the Stearman flying event he organized. "This may be the last opportunity we have to do something like this. We are losing these old pilots every day. You can't find a better group of people. They are polite and extremely appreciative," he commented.

The flying was to be done in conjunction with the Pensacola Beach Air Show that took place in July. In preparation, Roy was informed that carrying passengers would not be permitted during the fly-in. So they decided to take the veterans up before the show.

The plan was to go early, and Roy presumed correctly that these men would be willing. "When I told them that if we briefed quickly and got them in the airplanes by 0900 everyone would be able go to the beach, they sprang into action," he remarked. The youngest veteran was 89.

The originally planned five-ship Stearman formation had reduced to three. Both cancellations were due to electronic flight instrumentation problems, and Roy delighted in the fact that none of the more-than-70-years-old Stearmans had problems with any of their 1940s vintage equipment.

Roy's first passenger was Navy F6F-5 (Hellcat) pilot Dick Pace, a senior at Dartmouth College in 1941 who joined the Naval Aviation Cadet training program. The war started while Pace was doing his flight training and he later became a flight instructor.

Roy depicted Pace as, "a true gentleman, a rare individual, the type who is hard to find today." He added, "Still young in his 90s, Dick recently came to my office to return a book I lent him and was driving a bright red, two-seat Maserati roadster with the top down."

Roy pointed out that Pace had been to the National Naval Aviation Museum at Naval Air Station Pensacola and "borrowed" the flight suit he had donated to the museum so he could wear it during his flight. You can watch a video of their flight here... www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3Wc_b9xdr8.

Ed Williamson, Army Air Corps B-17 pilot, was a late addition



A 1975 Mitsubishi MU-2B M-model (N261WB) and a 1943 Boeing Stearman (N60198) owned and flown by Pensacola, Florida attorney Roy Kinsey.

to Friday's flights. Roy recounted, "An old friend of mine, Jim Wilson, who was a Vietnam-era Marine pilot knows Williamson and called me Thursday to ask if Williamson could fly. I told Jim that Williamson probably wouldn't be able to fly as all seats were committed."

Things changed. As there were only three airplanes to fly the five veterans scheduled for Friday, two flights became necessary. Roy notified Williamson of an open seat. Eager to fly, Williamson drove to the airport that night to make sure he could find it and could be there by 0730 Friday morning.

Roy noted they had to scrub several media flights late Friday due to a thunderstorm. But Saturday's weather was an improvement. In addition, Army Air Corps Stearman pilot Jim Ratliff and his grandson had arrived from Atlanta prior to the storm. This meant four Stearman aircraft would be available for Saturday's flights.

"Once again the veterans arrived at Pensacola Aviation Center well before 0830, and embraced the same plan we used Friday for a quick briefing and sending the first flight to the beach at 0915. We again got wonderful handling from Air Traffic Control in spite of air traffic being much busier than Friday. We again used the call sign 'Veterans Flight' and got the first flight in the air on schedule," said Roy.

It has been said by the daring among pilots, "For adverse aileron yaw there is none better than a Stearman." Yet the aircraft remains one of aviation's most popular. Likewise, Roy Kinsey affectionately refers to his MU-2 as "an airborne Harley-Davidson. It's big, loud and fast. Although the Harley is not known for its speed, in the MU-2 there are no blue haired drivers pulling out in front of you," he punctuated.

Roy uses his MU-2 as a business plane. In his practice, he represents injured persons (auto injuries), performs criminal defense, and represents law officers accused of a crime while on active duty.

He outlined a one day-trip where he met a witness at Dekalb-Peachtree Airport FBO, then another in Charlotte, North Carolina making use of the airport's courtesy car there. The trip would typically have taken three days. Instead he was home for dinner that same day. Roy pointed out, "Every community has an airport nearby. It was planned this way after the war. With private aircraft it is possible to effectively fly point-to-point." Roy added though, he is not flying for business as much as he used to, noting that more is being done in the legal field electronically today.

Roy travels throughout the U.S. in his MU-2. Additionally, he



Roy Kinsey (Stearman #708) and Dick Pace, Navy veteran.

has flown to the Bahamas and Canada. He sees the Bahamas as the perfect trip for his MU-2. Having bought a place in Treasure Cay in the northwest Bahamas, he obtained an overflight permit allowing him to clear customs in Pensacola.

As a veteran pilot, one is constantly training and polishing skills, much like adapting to the changing legal profession. Correcting for aileron yaw in the Stearman and attending recurrent training on the MU-2, both are punctuated with reminders that the flying lifestyle has both challenges and rewards.

Although the Stearman flying event was planned as a one-time event, Roy says he is being pressed to do it again. He enjoys national Stearman events such as the annual gathering in Galesburg, Illinois. Roy stated, "Putting veterans back in the cockpits in which they learned to fly was a small way for us to honor and thank them." It's an endeavor replete with rewards.

To view the Coastal Lifestyle article visit (article starts on pg 11)...
www.coastallifestylemagazine.com/ebooks/2014-08-09/index.html.



The gentlemen of the Stearman flight (left to right): Bill Andrews (Navy vet), Earl Stockton (Army Air Corps vet), Dick Pace (Navy vet), B.T. Smith (Navy vet), John Johnson (Navy vet), Ed Williamson (Army Air Corps vet), Roy Kinsey (Stearman #708), John Beard (Army Air Corps vet), Carey Hardin (Stearman #469), Phil Webb (Stearman #42).