



Sept. 6th 1920 - March 7th, 2012

This page was put together for Mother in the 1990's and this past year.

we lost her to go home to her parents.

The page has been updated to reflect our loss.

We will miss you so much Mother.

Love Leslie, Jacie and Ty

BIO FOR THE

"FLYING BOWMANS"



Pictured above is the formation of the *"Busy Buzzards"* with Les Bowman in the lead plane.

The inset and blowup shows Les and Martie Bowman and their daughter M. Lorraine Allen (Larnie) on the Bowman's 50th Anniversary in 1978.

Following is their story (or part of it).



Les and Martie and daughter Larnie during the days when Larnie wing-walked for fun at 8 years old.



Les and Martie in front of a "WACO" on pontoons at Puget Sound Washington in the 1930's.

Les and Martie both passed away in the middle 80's after a rich and full life.

Larnie Bowman Allen. She is Mother of two, Grandmother of 5 and Great Grandmother of 11.

I am outlining some highlights from their aviation careers to set in stone their contribution to aviation.

Many of the items from their aviation careers have been donated and collected by the Smithsonian Air

and Space Museum as they have their own exhibit and archive.



Liberty powered Douglas of 1924 is one of the many planes piloted by Les Bowman (on the right).

On the left is Martie's brother, Paul Murray.



The Bowmans started their flying careers in the 1920's when Les decided to become a pilot instead

of a preacher. He spent his years as a test pilot and once tested 165 new models in one year. He made over 300 forced landings, but never cracked up or was injured in any of them.

He was a charter member of the "International Engineering Society."

He had one of the earliest commercial pilot's licenses signed by Orville Wright.

In the 1930's he was an airplane motor designer.

W.B. Bert Kinner and Les developed one of the first five cylinder-radial type airplane motors. In order to sell the engine, it had to be approved by the "Bureau of Standards"

**in Washington D.C.
Les took the first engine by train to D.C. and had to plan and help build the first test stand
for aircraft engines.**

**The engine had to run for 500 consecutive hours. It did, and revolutionized the private
aircraft industry.**

He was also a barnstormer and racer and performed aerobatics.

**In 1987 Lawrence Burian (on the right) flew to Washington State to present Les with his
"Director Emeritus"
plaque from the National Aviation Trades Association which was first called the**



National Aviation Training Association.

Les was the second President of the Association in 1941 after Bill Ong in 1940.



Martie with her first plane.



Martie Bowman with two of the many planes she flew.

Meanwhile Martie was doing her bit for aviation.

By 1930 she had entered the Women's International Air races, including the Dixie Derby and Powder Puff Derby.

Her greatest coup was accomplished in 1938 when she swept three women racing events at one National Air Race competition.



Throughout the 30's she was Women's International Airway Champion.



She ferried and raced aircraft for several of the major aircraft and aircraft engine companies during the 1920's and 30's and in the 1940's she ferried aircraft from the factories for the Bowman's business of sales, service and training.



Photograph shows Mrs. Bowman and daughter Larnie and their chow "Cub" being greeted in San Francisco

by Col. Turner after Martie had won the Women's International Air Derby in 1934.

The plane is a WACO "C" Cabin.

Martie was shot at while flying this race.

It went through the fuselage just in front of the tail section. (Perhaps by an irate farmer)

Fortunately no one was hurt.



Martie on the left shown above with competitor and friend, Mrs. Gladys O'Donnell.

Martie flew in the company of many famous female pilots such as Mrs. O'Donnell and Amelia Earhart.

Martie at one time purchased one of Amelia's planes.



Larnie Bowman Allen at age 8 when she wing walked.

Daughter Larnie was not left out of the activities of this flying family. At age eight she created quite a stir with the public by wing walking.
Larnie says she always wore a harness fastened securely to her shoulders with the leash in the hands of one of her parents.
"Nothing to it really. I loved wing-walking."
Larnie had flown many hours in the air with her parents. Les and Marie agreed she should take flight instructions from a friend, Lee Eyerly, Manager of the Salem Oregon airport.



Larnie at age 14. Two years after she soloed.

After eight hours dual, Larnie soloed and will always hold the record as "youngest pilot" because later the FAA required a pilot to be 16 and solo with a co pilot to get a permit.

But the public was not ready for a child to be in the air.

Thousands of letters poured into Washington criticizing her parents.

"The news media was pretty awful to us Nation wide" stated Larnie in an interview in the 1970's.

"Only one columnist, the late Arthur Brisbane, spoke out in defense of us."

War came to America

and the Bowmans participated in a very active way.

Les was President of the Aircraft Sales Company and Fort Worth Aviation School of Fort Worth TX,

one of the primary and advanced civil pilot training schools, where he taught and tested planes. The

company was one of five civilian schools picked to train U.S. Navy pilots for the war effort by the

War Training Service.

(A personal note: This is where my parents, Mother Larnie and Father, Lt. F. Jack Allen met as my father was a student at the school)

The Bowman's went on to other careers before their deaths. Les was a ballistics consultant and expert for

many gun companies and both were big game outfitters in Wyoming. They also owned a manufacturing company for horse trailers.

Les wrote and photographed articles for many outdoor and gun magazines.

Marty was the force behind the force, editing the articles and managing the big game outfitting business

The LB- out of Cody Wyoming in the Thoroughfare Region.

They were married 66 years.



Pictured above: Martie, Larnie, Les

Thank you for reading.

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