

StandardAero Employee Keeps Golden Age of Aviation Flying High

Long before the advent of custom interiors, in-flight entertainment, digital navigation and Mach speeds, general aviation offered early flying enthusiasts the opportunity to experience flight – not as a function of time and logistics, but instead as an emotion: The sensation of weightlessness, the exhilaration of the wind as it buffets your face and the visual panorama of an endless sky. For the modern air traveler, such experiences are relegated to novel tales of a bygone era as traveling by air today serves the more practical application of time and money – the need to get from point A to point B as fast as possible with minimal disruption.

For nearly 100 years StandardAero has served as a cornerstone of the aviation industry. From the Machine Works company in Winnipeg - from which today's StandardAero derives its name - to Garrett Aviation, to Associated Radio and all of the companies in-between, StandardAero's legacy companies have played pivotal roles in the history of aviation and has contributed to the strength of the company for which all of us today work and take pride in.

While there are many within the company who celebrate the excitement of our industry serving as private pilots and aircraft enthusiasts, there's one who continues to live the golden age of aviation, making it his mission to share with others what it's like to soar in an open cockpit aircraft.

Randy Miller, PT6A Sales Manager for the Western USA, was born into a flying family. His father was a pilot and mechanic, and his two older uncles were both B-25 and B-29 pilots during WWII. Miller's first plane ride was at the tender age of three in a 1941 Waco UPF-7. At 16, when most boys are focused on obtaining a driver's license, Miller was conducting his first solo and at 17 Miller received his Private rating. Six short years later, Miller received his Commercial rating and began crop dusting in a Grumman AgCat to help pay for college. Today, in addition to working at StandardAero, Miller runs Vintage Aviation (www.vintagebiplane.com), a company he started in 1999.

Miller started Vintage Aviation with a 1942 450hp Boeing, Stearman ([click here for photos](#)). He started the company to help share the thrill of flight in 1930's and 1940's open cockpit aircraft. "I feel that I need to keep the history and memory of these classic symbols of American aviation history alive for future generations because the general public has such a short memory, and seem to forget history that happened last year, let alone 60-100 years ago," said Miller.

Miller is also experienced in aircraft maintenance and restoration performing over 20 antique/classic aircraft restoration projects including seven Waco's, a Beechcraft Staggerwing, three Stearman's.

From 2005-2008, Miller completely disassembled his Stearman and completely rebuilt it including four brand new wings and a new center section. He stripped the fuselage down to the bare frame, inspected, re-oiled, epoxy painted it and built the aircraft back up from nothing. Miller included all new AN hardware, new cockpit sheet metal, new cables, new control bearings, new fuselage formers, new avionics and instrumentation, new wiring, new fabric and paint. He overhauled the Pratt & Whitney R985 engine to "0" time status and installed a smoke system along with many other things. The investment took over 4000 man hours and the best part about it, according to Miller, was the opportunity to work with his father.

Miller likes to attend fly-in/air shows in his Stearman. He recently attended the National Biplane Association's (NBA) final fly-in show. With the show now disbanded, Miller feels he must continue to carry the torch for this kind of aviation. Miller's father attended the first NBA fly-in in 1987 and won Grand Champion in his 1941 Naval Aircraft Factory N3N-3. Miller attended the last and won Grand Champion in his 1942 Stearman.

As they say, imitation is the highest form of flattery and Miller knows it makes his father proud to see him follow in his dad's footsteps.