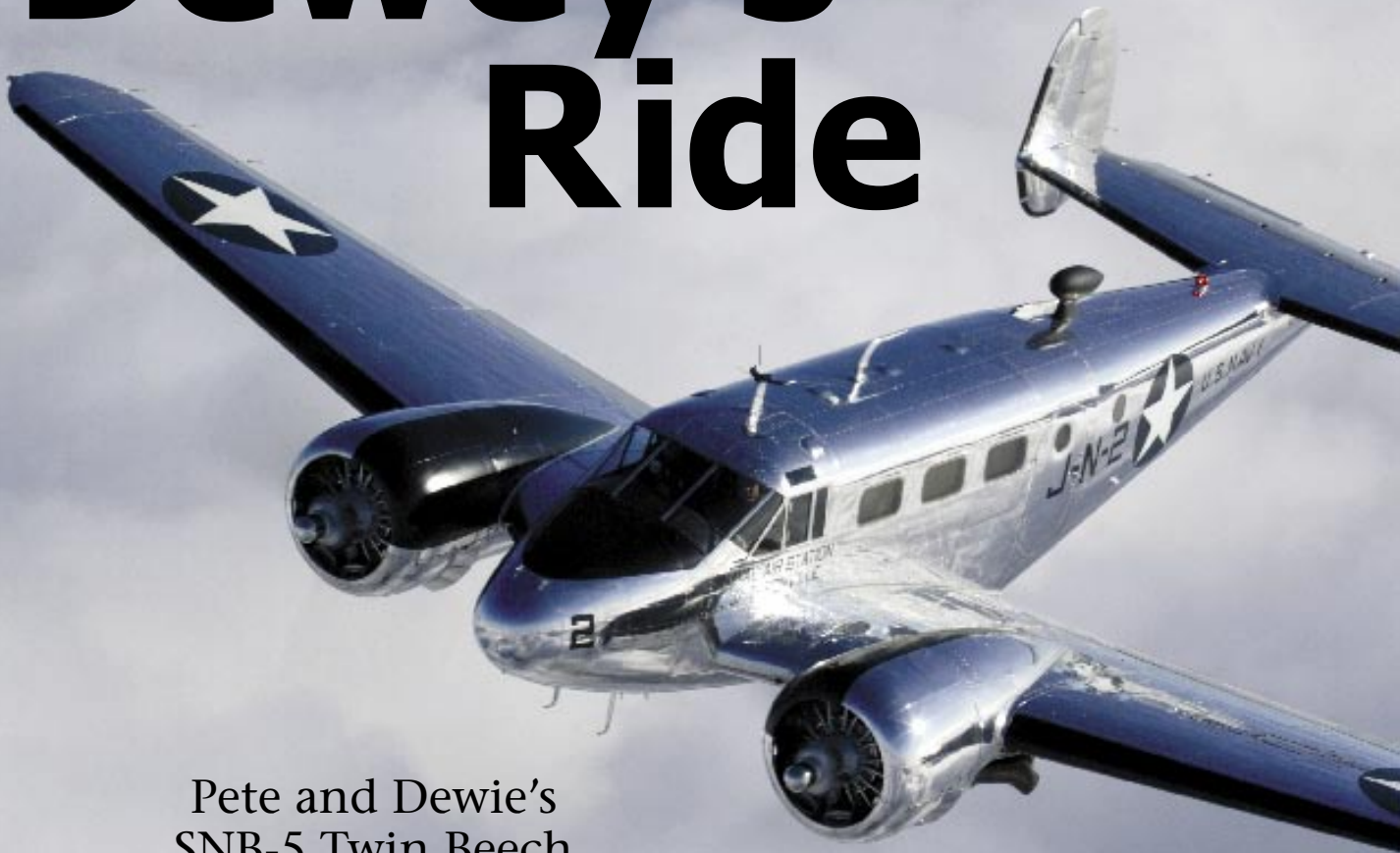


Dewey's Ride



Pete and Dewie's SNB-5 Twin Beech is a Real Crowd Pleaser

KIM ROSENLOF
WB#549220

When my husband, Dean, and I arrived at Wittman Field (OSH) about 5:15 a.m. on Saturday morning during EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2004, it didn't look like our scheduled photo shoot would happen. Winds blustering more than 25 knots and a low layer of clouds that stretched unbroken from horizon to horizon cast a pall over the group of pilots and crew huddling beneath the wings of *Pacific Prowler*, the B-25 Mitchell to be used by photographer Paul Bowen (WB #548801) as the photo platform. Photo subjects included the *Prowler* itself (through EAA photographer Jim Koepnick's lens),

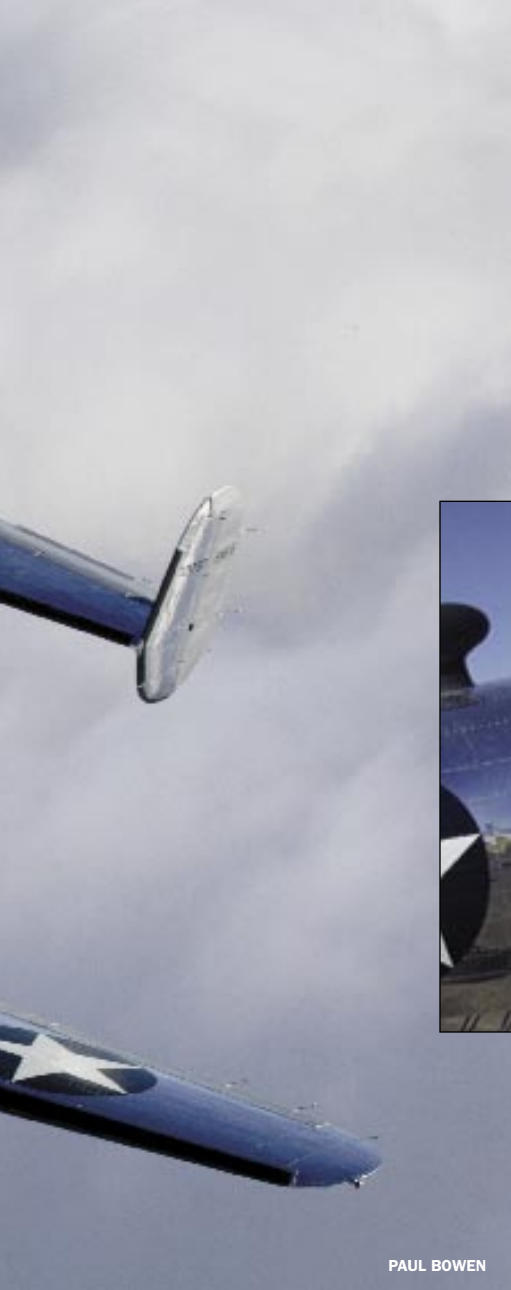
Scott Yoak's T-34 Mentor, a second B-25 known as *Devil Dog*, an FM-2 Wildcat, and Pete and Dewie Quortrup's award-winning SNB-5 Navigator (C-45 Expediter or Twin Beech), *Dewey's Ride*.

We decided to wait out the weather, and sure enough, the wind pushed the low overcast toward the east, then died down itself around 6:30 a.m. But by that time my stomach had decided to put up a fuss. Now I don't get airsick, but getting in a bomber for a 90-minute or longer photo shoot when my stomach was already protesting on the ground didn't seem like a good idea. Still, I didn't want to miss my chance to go flying with this

beautiful congregation of warbirds. So after giving up my seat on the *Prowler* to Dean (thanks to the good graces of *Prowler* pilots Bill Harrison and Ray Fowler), I asked Pete if I could hop in the Twin Beech for its much shorter photo flight.

Empty Nest = Twin Beech

A native of Dallas, Texas, and a professional pilot for more than 20 years, Pete was first introduced to the Twin Beech during a 15-month stint for Texarkana-based ABC Airlines. From the end of 1980 to the beginning of 1982, Pete flew freight out of Dallas in Beech 18s, racking up about 900 hours and developing a love for the type



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get something you really want.”

So with his wife’s, Dewie, support, Pete began looking at Beech 18s. He first called Ron Hyde, president of the Twin Beech Society. Hyde also owns a restoration shop, Stetson Aviation, at Karnes County Airport in Kenedy, Texas, and gave Pete some pointers on what to look for when purchasing one of these



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Dewie and Pete Quortrup and their pride and joy, SNB “Dewey’s Ride,” at EAA AirVenture 2004. The couple acquired the plane in 2001, and began a complete restoration of the Twin Beech.

venerable old airplanes. In Conroe, Texas, the Quortrups found just the plane they’d been looking for.

“It was very original. The Beech 18 can have a bunch of modifications, and we didn’t want to undo too many of them. For instance,” Pete said, pointing to a neighboring C-45, “the one-piece wraparound windshield was very much in vogue for a long time, but to get that back to original is a big job. We wanted the original exhaust, wingtips, landing gear, and cockpit glass. Basically something that had never been used as a freighter.”

Pete got his wish. Having rolled out of the Beechcraft factory in 1942 as an SNB-1 with Bureau No. 39750, *Dewey’s Ride* served for 27 years in the U.S. Navy at various stations, including its first assignment at Naval Air Station

(NAS) Jacksonville. Designed for bombing/gunnery training, the SNB-1 sported a top turret, bomb bay doors, and a bombsight in the nose, although 39750’s records show that NAS Jacksonville used it for instrument training. In 1950, the Navy converted 39750 to an SNB-5, stripping the aircraft down to its truss and building a new transport aircraft from it. Very little remains of the 1942 aircraft.

The Navy continued to fly 39750 for 18 years after its conversion. Subsequently designated UC-45J in accordance with Department of Defense uniform naming conventions issued in the early 1960s, 39750 was transferred to the Forest Service in 1969. Based out of North Carolina, the UC-45J served in observation and transport roles until it was finally mustered out of government service in 1985. Its first private owner registered the aircraft in Tennessee and gave it a Navy orange and

white trainer paint scheme. During the eight years he owned 39750, the Tennessean also installed a military interior, upgraded the radio, and added an autopilot.

Two other private individuals owned the aircraft before the Quortrups purchased *Dewey’s Ride* in March 2001, but neither seemed to have made extensive modifications to the aircraft according to its logs.

An Annual Leads to Complete Restoration

Pete asked Stetson Aviation’s chief mechanic, Butch Card, to do a pre-purchase inspection, and then asked for more help after purchasing the SNB. In addition to being a top-notch mechanic on Beech 18s, Card is a pilot and certified flight instructor. So even though Pete had nearly 1,000 hours in the type, the

before moving on to larger aircraft.

Twenty years later, after the Quortrups’ three kids were grown and it became financially feasible to own an airplane, Pete decided to look into Beech 18s and their military variants. “When my youngest daughter graduated from college, I told all my kids not to ask for any more money because I wanted to start spending it,” Pete said. “I had been thinking about getting an airplane for a long time and was looking for something practical, such as a Cessna 182 or Piper Cherokee. But then the idea to get a Twin Beech popped into my head and I thought, ‘Why not? If you’re going to get an airplane,



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Pete shines up the SNB before judging.

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and single fuel selector for both engines, with a modern electric fuel pump and dual fuel selectors. Pete also had a red button removed that would ground both magnetos and kill both engines at the same time. "I'm not sure what procedure would call for that," he said, "but on one of my early flights I had a young nephew who sat in the right seat, reached for that button, and said, 'what does this do?' He didn't actually pull it, but right then I knew I had to fix that problem."

Other modifications included adding carbon monoxide detectors and individual feather buttons for each engine in the overhead panel, and changing out the longer tail wheel mod added by the Forest Service. Card's son Ronnie, one of four Cards who work either full- or part-time at Stetson, replaced all of the subpanels, meticulously painting knobs and applying stenciling to make everything look new. Another Card son, Rick, was initially responsible for the aircraft's shine.

"We knew we needed to repaint the airplane so we stripped it," Pete said. "And we found the metal underneath to be really clean. It was clean, but dull. So we made the decision at that point to polish the airplane."

A student at the time, Rick worked on the aircraft during spring break, summer vacation, and over the Christmas holiday. He spent eight hours a day using various grades of

polish and techniques to get that glassy shine over the Twin Beech's entire surface. The Quortrups were ecstatic over the result.

"I helped a little bit during that time," Pete said, "And I learned a lot about the polishing process because I thought I was going to do it myself... As soon as I saw what Rick could do, I couldn't contain my excitement. It's hard to say that polishing is a talent, but Rick has really developed a feel for it. I definitely got my money's worth out of letting him do it."

It turned out that the bare metal look fit perfectly with the aircraft's history as a warbird. "We learned that when these aircraft were delivered to the Navy in 1942, the Navy did not paint them but left the bare metal and just painted the national and squadron insignia."

Pete used a picture of Bureau No. 39800, just 50 serial numbers later than his own SNB, as a guide for the paint scheme, along with a detailed handbook that included technical orders and precise measurements for World War II aircraft markings. The handbook also included the military part numbers for the paint, which Pete used when ordering the paint to exactly match the hues. Finally, the Quortrups had to determine the three-digit squadron marking that would go on the fuselage. They decided on JN2: 'J' for Jacksonville, 'N' as the Navy's abbreviation for trainer, and '2' because 39750 was likely the second

experience was 20 years old and he asked Card to give him 10 hours of dual instruction in the Twin Beech.

After flying off those hours and a few more, the aircraft was due for annual in May 2001. When he turned the aircraft over to the Stetson Aviation crew, Pete didn't know it would be nearly two years before he'd fly it again. "It started out to be just a really good annual where we would fix anything that was wrong with it, but [do] no cosmetics," Pete said. "It ended up as a complete restoration. Once you get an airplane apart, you just don't want to stop short."

Some of the decisions were easy to make, such as replacing the military fuel system with its "wobble" pump



Refurbished panel for dual pilot operations.

aircraft delivered to the squadron per the Bureau number.

Pete's research also turned up an interesting fact that turned into the aircraft's name. Apparently the commander of the U.S. Navy Flight School at NAS Jacksonville wrote a letter to Walt Disney back in the 1940s asking if Disney would create a squadron logo for the flight school, as he had done for other military units (Pete has a copy of the letter in his scrapbook). Disney's logo, Dewey Duck (a nephew of the more famous Donald Duck) in flight gear hatching out of an egg, was used as NAS Jacksonville's official logo from 1940 to 1942. As 39750 arrived at NAS Jacksonville in 1942, and Dewey is a homonym for Dewie, it seemed quite appropriate for Pete and Dewie Quortrup to name their airplane *Dewey's Ride*.

An Interior Fit for an Executive

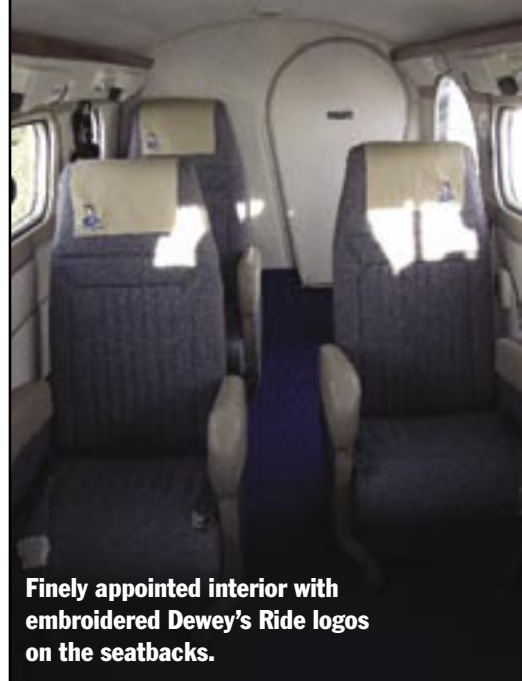
Although the Quortrups took pains to exactly replicate the exterior as it would have looked on delivery in 1942, they were less interested in duplicating the interior. After all, this was supposed to be a practical airplane. So they did the next best thing, choosing a look to replicate an executive



Dewey's Ride logo, created by Walt Disney himself.

transport from the 1940s, with a leather and cloth interior, headrest covers emblazoned with the *Dewey's Ride* logo, and indirect lighting above the seats. But they added a few modern touches as well.

"We've done a lot of things that don't really show," Pete said. To make the interior as quiet as possible, they installed dual-paned windows and a Quiet Flight active noise reduction system. The Quiet Flight system uses individual microphones placed next to each passenger chair to feed noise input to a signal-processing computer. The computer then processes the incoming noise and transmits the



Finely appointed interior with embroidered Dewey's Ride logos on the seatbacks.

KIM ROSENLOF PHOTOS



Unique ladder stowage installation in Dewey's Ride.

inverse of the noise signature over four speakers placed in the cabin to effectively cancel out much of the noise. "We've measured a 5 dB reduction in the level of low noise in the cabin."

That Saturday morning I was ready to experience the Quiet Flight system in action during my flight on *Dewey's Ride*, but first Pete asked me to raise the ladder and shut the door. It was then that I found out Pete is quite handy as a fiberglass fabricator, as he modified his baggage compartment to include fiberglass holders for the ladder, plus shelves, a mirror, and hand sanitizer for the chemical



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toilet Pete carries on long trips. Pete's fiberglass experience comes from a Glasair kit he has been building intermittently since 1989. I closed (and Pete locked) the cabin door, noting the *Dewey's Ride* logo sewn into the cloth interior on the door.

As Pete had already promised the copilot's seat to friend Martin Bornheimer, I chose a seat in the back, which allowed me to roam the airplane to take in-flight pictures. Just like in an airliner, each passenger on *Dewey's Ride* has his own headset jack, light, and air vent above the seat. The engines

cranked over one at a time, and it was apparent even on the ground when the Quiet Noise system kicked in.

The noise was even more reduced when I wore the Sennheiser headset Pete provides for each passenger (Pete and the copilot get Bose headsets). His state of the art intercom system allows each passenger to either communicate with the pilots and listen to the tower frequency or talk among themselves and listen to music. I, of course, stayed on the pilots' channel so I could hear what was going on with the other airplanes.

The Photo Shoot

Jim Koepnick had already completed his shoot of *Pacific Prowler*, and just after taking off from OSH, we heard *Devil Dog* form up with the *Prowler* for Paul Bowen's pictures. It didn't take us long to find the two B-25s flying in trail formation, with *Devil Dog* tucked up right underneath *Prowler's* tail. What a sight, especially with the puffy white clouds of the low overcast as a backdrop.

While we circled more than 1,000 feet above the photo flight, Scott Yoak formed up on us in his

The B-25 photo plane from the subject's point of view.



KIM ROSENLOF PHOTOS

Pete makes a turn around Warbird Island on the approach to Wittman Field.



Returning from the early morning photo flight, Pete lines up on the centerline of Runway 36 at Wittman Field.

T-34. Yoak is a sophomore at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida, but he's been flying his family's warbirds ever since it was legal for him to do so. His excellent formation flying skills allowed me to get several good shots.

Soon it was our turn to be the photo subject. After Yoak peeled off, Pete skillfully joined up behind the *Prowler's* tail, obeying Bowen's instructions relayed through the air-to-air frequency. Although Bowen was the official photographer, we could see several others taking photos of us through waist gunner and top turret positions.

After just a few wide circles, Bowen decided he had what we wanted and we headed back to OSH. By this time the overcast had moved far out over Lake Winnebago, and I caught Warbird Island, the starting point for the warbird approach into OSH, in my camera lens as we circled around it. It wasn't until we were back on the ground with the engines shut down and climbing out of the cabin that I realized my stomach hadn't bothered me the entire length of the flight, although now it threatened to get nasty again. I guess my cure for an upset stomach is to get in the air and stay there!

Dewey's Ride as Best Transport

The attention to detail exhibited by both the Quortrup's and the Stetson Aviation crew during the restoration of *Dewey's Ride* earned the aircraft the Best Transport award at EAA AirVenture 2003, with Stetson receiving the Silver Wrench award. Maintaining such a beautiful airplane keeps the Quortrups on their toes; during the rainy days at EAA AirVenture, the Quortrups and friends used squeegees, sponges and cloths to wipe every bit of raindrop residue off the polished aluminum before it dried. All of the hard work in maintaining a polished airplane pays off, however, in the attention that *Dewey's Ride* attracts at air shows and just flying around.

"We flew into Sedona (Arizona) for breakfast one time, and everyone's watching all the planes landing and taking off," Pete said. "Friends of ours who drove up to meet us rode back in the airplane, so Dewie stayed behind. She said later that when we taxied out, everyone stood up to watch. That's what's fun about having a polished airplane. It's a real eye-catcher."