



From Wikipedia: The **North American Aviation T-6 Texan** is an American single-engine advanced trainer aircraft used to train pilots of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), United States Navy, Royal Air Force, and other air forces of the British Commonwealth during World War II and into the 1970s.

Some men go “middle age crazy”, buying sports cars and doing other silly things. Now I am far beyond “middle age”, but I am still doing crazy things like climbing the Sydney Bridge.

As a pilot I have over 1200 flight hours, almost all in relatively slow single engine aircraft. I have always wanted to fly something more exciting, and over the past few years, I have had some great experiences.

I have personally flown an L-29 Albatross jet trainer, a WW2 B-25 bomber, and a MIG-15 jet. I am 79 years old, and am not finished by any stretch. Years ago, I had an opportunity to fly a T-6 or SNJ as it is called in the Navy, but circumstances prevented it.

I found a local group called the Commemorative Air Force offering rides in a T-6 and sent them a message asking the length of the flight and if I could extend it. I got the following response:

Here is a listing of the costs for various times for a ride in the SNJ:

20 min \$395, 30 min \$550

It is not cheap, but you only go around once in life. I will probably go for the 30 minutes. I want to be able to fly to my home airport and fly past my house with my wife Kathy watching and waving.

I am also getting a ride for my copilot, Jim. He is a tremendous help when we fly our Angel Flight and Pilots & Paws missions.

I am planning to let Jim go first, and I will take the longer flight to fly past my home. After the flights, we will go to a local brewpub to celebrate and to refill the 32 ounce growler that Kathy’s son gave me for my birthday last month.

We were sent certificates for our rides, and presented them to the ride coordinator. Since there was no sense in giving us individual briefings, Jim and I got the briefing together.

For those of you who want to see a video of what the flight can offer, here is a YouTube video I found:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ic2e76i4508>

Jim went first, and got strapped into the plane.



The plane started up, and taxied out for takeoff. Unfortunately, there was an engine problem, and Jim taxied back in. We were told it would be a couple of hours to diagnose and fix the problem, so we headed out to a nice place for lunch.

When we got back, they had just finished changing all the spark plugs, and the engine test was successful. They put the cowlings back on the engine, and Jim got in and they took off.



While I was waiting for Jim, the B-25 I flew last year was pulled out of the hangar, and a P-51 Mustang landed.



It was kind of exciting to see the old WW2 planes close up and still flying. After Jim got out of the plane, I climbed in and got strapped in. I had my camera with me to get some pictures of my house and the Santa Paula Airport, hopefully. Before we took off, I called my wife Kathy, and our home airport to let them know we will be making a low pass over the airport.



We took off, and climbed out toward my home airport. The pilot called on the radio to let people know we were coming.



After passing over our house, we flew past Santa Paula Airport. This is the airport that Jim and I fly from on our Angel Flight and Pilots & Paws missions. We entered the pattern, and turned on to the final approach, then pulled up.



After making a low pass over the airport, Mike (the pilot) gave me the controls to fly south towards the coast. I did a few turns to the left and right to get the feel of the plane, and was surprised at how responsive it was. I can see why it was an excellent trainer for new pilots. I then turned toward Camarillo Airport, to set up for a landing. As we got closer, Mike told the tower he would do a maneuver called a right break. We approached the end of the runway, then pulled up and circled to the right for the landing.



We taxied in, and shut down the engine. Jim was waiting there with our logbooks to have our latest adventure recorded.

For both of us, it was a really exciting day to be able to fly a piece of history. We ended our day at a local brewpub and toasted our latest adventure.

When I got home Kathy said she had waved as we flew directly over our house

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