

August 2, 2008

Dear friends and family,

Thank you so much for your prayers during my transition to Banso. It's been quite a month. Last night I realized that during July I spent over 40 hours as a pilot flying (½ in the Philippines and ½ in Cameroon), over 40 hours as a passenger flying to and from the Philippines and over 40 hours waiting in airports between my connecting flights. Yes, quite a month indeed!

On July 7, I left Yaoundé and traveled to Nasuli, Philippines to complete a recurrent training program in preparation for moving to Banso and taking over responsibility for the Helio program here in the northwest of Cameroon. Dave Carman, the current pilot, and his family will be leaving in a week to return to Switzerland and the US for a year of furlough.

I arrived in Davao, Philippines in the afternoon of July 10 and then traveled by car onto Nasuli, the Wycliffe center in the southern Philippines that evening. I spent the next several days studying and helping Ken Van Weerdhuizen with some small projects. He has been flying in the Philippines for almost 20 years and agreed to help with my Helio recurrency since the schedule at JAARS was too full to do the training there. We began flying together on the 14th and flew about 20 hours in 6 days.

On the last two days of our training we delivered some cargo to two different New Tribes missionaries working out in the jungles. They are completely dependent on the airplane for access and supplies. We did several takeoffs and landings at each of the airstrips to give me some extra practice on these unique runways.

It was a great privilege to return to the Philippines and even fly over the very hospital where I was born (Bethel Baptist in Malaybalay). Although I spent most of my years in the northern portion of the Philippines, I really enjoyed the food, culture and beautiful countryside again. Our family left the Philippines in 1988 when I was 14, but it still holds a special place in my heart.



Ken Van Weerdhuizen. Enroute to New Macopa



Short final to New Macopa – 930' short



Ready for takeoff at New Macopa

Thanks so much for your prayers during this time of training. Even though our time was really limited, the weather was perfect and we were able to accomplish all of our goals. During our week of training the northern Philippines was completely covered by tropical storm Bertha. However it didn't affect us at all. Praise the Lord!

I left the Philippines on July 20th, arrived back in Cameroon on the 21st and then continued my checkout with Dave Carman in the Helio here in the Philippines starting on the 24th. We moved up to Banso on the 25th and have been pushing hard since then with my orientation to life and work here in Banso. There is an enormous amount to cover because I will be the only airplane pilot here. I'm having to learn just about everything about the finances, maintenance, shop, PR, housing and the list goes on. The flight portion of my checkout has gone really well and is now basically complete so we are shifting our focus onto managing the program here. I have already completed 3 operational flights here since arriving including one medical evacuation.

The Lord has answered our prayers for health, strength and good weather this month. In spite of a lot of travel and change I have been healthy in spite of being tired. My transition to Banso is still ongoing, but it is going very well. Thank you for praying!

Please continue to pray for:

1. Health and strength for this last week of orientation. I am scheduled to fly the Carmans to Yaounde this Friday to leave for Switzerland.
2. Wisdom & strength as I'll be on my own next week.
3. Carman family as they pack and prepare to go on furlough.
4. My personal transition to Banso regarding new friends, church and outside activities.

I have uploaded more pictures from my visit to the Philippines along with pictures from my parent's visit to Alaska to see my brother and family to my website (www.petersonfamily.info/robert/gallery2). I hope to add pictures from Cameroon soon. Thank you again for your faithful prayers and generosity. I am doing very well but I need the Lord's strength each day. May the Lord bless you.

In Him,
Robert Peterson

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