

Former bomber plane lands in Goodland to re-fuel



Pilot Hank Reichert climbed aboard his P-51 Mustang airplane Wednesday after refueling at Goodland's Renner Field on a flight to a California air show. Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

From escorting the big bombers in World War II to a pit stop at Goodland's Renner Field, the P-51 Mustang airplane has seen it all.

Wednesday on a flight south for the winter, pilot Hank Reichert stopped to fill the gas tank and stretch his legs in the fully restored fighter plane.

Reichert, of Bismarck, N.D., said this is his third time to stop in Goodland on his yearly flight to an air show in Palm Springs, Calif. His co-pilot, Bob Kellogg, of Mankato, Minn., said they have to stop every so often in the cramped aircraft.

"Gives you a good break," he said. The airplane, Reichert said, is exactly the same as it was when it was flown in the war. He said he modeled the restoration after the aircraft flown in World War II by a friend of his, Noble Peterson, of Hettinger, N.D.

He was the only guy from North Dakota in his unit, so the airplane is named the "Dakota Kid."

The plane features the same col-

oring and letters as Peterson's plane, including three German flags to represent the number of enemy planes he shot down.

Reichert said the P-51 Mustangs flew alongside bombers to protect the bigger planes. The aircraft, he said, was known as the best fighter in the second World War.

"It was probably responsible for winning the aerial war," he added.

The plane was totally restored in Wahpeton, N.D., and Reichert has owned it since 1997. The only change he made was to add an extra seat now occupied by Kellogg.

The plane, he said, is capable of flying up to 445 miles per hour at an altitude up to 42,000 feet.

Reichert said he flies to air shows across the country, and after his stop in Palm Springs, he plans to head to Las Vegas, Nev., for a show.

When it comes time to fly south again next year, he said, he will make sure to stop by Renner Field.

"It's a nice airport," he said.

Next time, he said, he might call ahead to give people in Goodland a chance to catch a look at his baby.

Storm blows through Kansas, Colorado

The Kansas Highway Patrol closed I-70 west from Goodland about 2 p.m. Monday at the request of Colorado authorities, and reopened the road about 6 p.m. when the weather cleared up and I-70 between Denver and Burlington.

The National Weather Service in Goodland had issued a winter weather advisory for Cheyenne, Yuma and Kit Carson counties in Colorado at 3:35 a.m. Monday and a wind advisory for Monday at 3:04

p.m. Sunday.

The Weather Service reported winds up to 35 mph throughout the area with gusts up to 43 mph at Goodland and up to 47 mph at Burlington.

The highway patrol reported slick roads and blowing winds causing decreased visibility.

Snowfall in Goodland was measured at .4 of an inch and liquid equivalents indicated 1 to 2 inches of snow in Burlington.

The Weather Service reported the highest snowfall in the area at 3.7 inches from a spotter 16 miles northwest of Flagler, Colo.

Temperatures in the area dropped down from a high of 41 degrees at 4 a.m. Monday morning to 31 by evening.

The weather forced the four troopers on duty from the Colorado State Patrol to close I-70 so they could work more than two dozen accidents and prevent more.

Trooper Don Moseman said there were 24 accidents on the closed stretch from Burlington to Denver.

He said there were no deaths, but 12 of the 24 were considered fairly serious because of the damage.

He said the wind and icy road was factors in the crashes, but dangerous driving is really to blame.

"We never like to say that weather causes accidents," he said, "It's the way people drive in the weather."

First winter storm holds drivers up in Goodland

STORM, from Page 1

"It's definitely busier," said cashier Mike Young. "It picked up quite a bit."

As customers walked towards the back part of the store, they caught snippets of conversations, "...staying the night here" or "...road's closed," from the fully occupied line of pay phones.

The counter was backed up with travelers looking for a bite to eat while others sat at the tables or watched the television in the back.

The crowd included drivers from California, Alabama, Florida and more.

William Ospima of New Jersey said he wasn't happy about the unexpected delay on his trip to Denver.

"I guess we have to stay until tomorrow," he said.

He said he has never been stopped for weather before, but he

called his company and planned to wait out the storm in his rig.

"There's no other way out," he said.

One driver from Miami said he was going to pop in a movie and settle in for the night.

Keith Allred, a driver from Alabama, said at least his truckload of Nabisco products wouldn't spoil due to the delay, but he wanted to get back on the road soon.

"I don't like the cold weather," he said.

Mark Sanchez from Phoenix said the load of diapers he was carrying to Utah would just have to wait until the roads were safer.

"It's an act of God," he said, "but I've got all the stuff I need to survive."

A 16-year trucking veteran, Sanchez said he normally slows down to 35 mph for bad weather or when road conditions are dangerous.

"I'm not afraid (of the weather)," he said, "I'm not dumb, either."

One unlucky traveler was headed south on foot when he was hit by the storm. He sought refuge in the truck stop, saying he didn't have enough clothing to survive outdoors. He

said he would start his walk again when the weather let up.

Even with a packed truck stop, Young said the customers had been friendly.

"Everyone's in a surprisingly good mood," he said.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:

Oct. 18 — Lisa S. Roberts, 37, Tyler, Texas was fined \$120 for speeding.

Scott J. Hozie, 26, Bloomington, Ill. was fined \$150 for improper parking.

Szymon K. Lobocki, 25, Urbana, Ill. was fined \$150 for speeding.

Michael B. Davis, 49, Chicago, Ill. was fined \$204 for improper parking.

Oct. 19 — Aaron J. Miller, 23, Garden City, was fined \$330 for speeding.

Deborah L. Riat, 53, Nashville, Tenn. was fined \$144 for speeding.

Brandon M. Zelfer, 71, Goodland, was fined \$150 for speeding.

Oct. 20 — Dawn K. Cole, 27, Aurora, Colo. was fined \$120 for unlawful acts with a vehicle.

Kurt L. McAuley, 31, Seibert, Colo. was fined \$100 for over weight limit on wheels and axles.

Joel E. Cummings, 35, Tampa, Fla. was fined \$150 for speeding.

Joshua D. Morris, 20, Fort Defiance, Ariz. was fined \$150 for speeding.

Josh L. Rogers, 36, Oklahoma City, was fined \$120 for speeding.

Armando Mota-Avita, 18, Gilcrest, Colo. was fined \$120 for speeding and \$20 for no child restraint.

Oct. 21 — Natalie Sarabia, 18, Chula Vista, Calif. was fined \$120 for no license.

Kenneth A. Cline, 60, Bronaugh, Mo. was fined \$100 for failure to yield to emergency vehicle and \$150 for no seat belt.

Kerry G. Crunkleton, 21, Aurora, Colo. was fined \$120 for speeding.

Larry D. Yockey, 46, Springdale, Ark. was fined \$130 for over weight limit on wheels and axles.

Josip Tomic, 42, Lawrenceville, Ga. was fined \$112 for over weight limit on wheels and axles.

Joseph C. Roberts, 18, Killeen, Texas was fined \$204 for speeding.

David W. Givens, 53, Denver, was fined \$177 for speeding.

Katherina M. Vincent, 25, Federal Heights, Colo. was fined \$120 for speeding.

Paula A. Gibson, 23, Houston, Texas was fined \$144 for speeding.

Oct. 22 — Robert L. Richardson, 47, Goodland, was fined \$284 for over weight limit on wheels and axles.

Ronald L. Oneil, 40, Lake Mary, Fla. was fined \$92 for over weight limits on wheels and axles.

Oct. 25 — Alizadeh Ebrahim, 55, Oklahoma City, was fined \$160 for speeding.

Tammy R. Taylor, 34, Ponca City, Okla. was fined \$126 for speeding.

Victoria L. Becvar, 19, Goodland, was fined \$132 for improper parking and \$10 for no seat belt.

Roland C. Coote, 32, Los Angeles, Calif. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Craig A. Collett, 26, Blountville, Tenn. was fined \$160 for no registration.

Ricardo Constanza, 25, Houston, Texas was fined \$80 for no child restraint.

Gerald O. Carver, 68, Irving, Texas was fined \$186 for speeding.

Mary P. Murphy, 55, Golden, Colo. was fined \$126 for speeding.

Larry L. Watson, 62, Moberly, Mo. was fined \$138 for speeding.

Leonel Evaristo-Marquez, 24, Aurora, Colo. was fined \$360 for canceled license and \$66 for speeding.

Unlucky traveler hits storms while on vacation

STRANDED, from Page 1

As it turned out, all 348 rooms in Goodland were filled Monday night.

Kelly said he has made the 21-hour trip to Las Vegas before by driving straight through and has never been stopped by weather.

"This is the first time for me," he said. "I've never had this happen."

His luck with weather this year started with a trip to Florida in August. After the family visited Walt Disney World in Orlando, they had planned to visit Busch Gardens in Tampa. In Orlando, they got word a hurricane was heading their way.

"We just happened to be there," he said.

Kelly said to escape the bad

weather, he took his family to Panama City, Fla., instead.

"We had a good time anyway," he said.

Hurricane Charley passed south of Tampa, Fla. and hit Punta Gorda, Fla., but Kelly said avoiding weather is just part of taking a vacation.

"I'm a car dealer," he said, "I've been through everything."

The roads reopened at 6 p.m. Monday, and Kelly said the family was so ready to get on the road they would leave at any time.

"We would head out," he said. "We're well rested."

Reports from the Total Petroleum Inc. station and Goodland hotels show that although some people left when the roads reopened, most stayed in their trucks or hotel rooms until morning.

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