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# 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Columbus Day	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 Halloween			

## MID-CONTINENT AIRCRAFT CORPORATION

# Planegram

### Interview with Dick Reade Reprinted from Ag Air Update

AgAir Update had the unique opportunity to interview Mr. Dick Reade of Mid-Continent Aircraft Sales and Service in Hayti, Missouri. Mr. Reade, in the 60+ years he has been involved with ag aviation, is an icon in the industry. Here is the first part, in a two-part series, of the interview that also consists of a video on AgAir Update's Youtube channel.:

AAU (Bill Lavender): Hello, Mr. Reade, how are you doing?

Mr. Reade: Lovely Bill, it's a great day.

AAU: We are in Hayti, Missouri with Mr. Dick Reade, who I consider an icon in the agricultural aviation industry. Mr. Dick, can you remember what year you started in ag aviation?

Mr. Reade: Bill, I started in about 1949, in Traer, Iowa, then we moved into southeast Missouri for an insect infestation that never developed. So, we have our roots here in Hayti.

AAU: Before that, however, you served in WWII flying a P-38, correct?

Mr. Reade: Yes, I did. I was in reconnaissance in the Pacific, flying over Japan, Korea and China.

AAU: Where were you based from?

Mr. Reade: I was based in Okinawa, which was about a six-hour flight over the water. Always, the engine was rough and when we would return nothing would be wrong with it! All we had were cameras for high and low altitude.

AAU: Just out of curiosity, when the government decided to turn you loose in a P-38, how much time did you have

logged?

Mr. Reade: Oh, about 150 hours or less than that, total time, including training.

AAU: When you came back from the military, what got you involved with ag aviation?

Mr. Reade: I was always interested in ag aviation. Instead of cattle ranching and not being able to get flying out of my system, I started with ag aviation, which was a developing field at that time.

AAU: The aircraft of choice would have been a Stearman?

Mr. Reade: Yes, in those days the Stearman was the aircraft, as far as I was concerned. That's what we trained with in the Service.

AAU: Were the Stearmans powered by the 220 (hp)?

Mr. Reade: Yes, the 220, then we went on to convert them to the 450s.

AAU: The War was over in 1945. Give me some time windows from when you started with the Stearman, the next step would have been the Ag-Cat program?

Mr. Reade: That is correct. We were a pretty good-sized Stearman operation and we even went into Canada on some spray projects. When Grumman came out with the Ag-Cat, we were asked to join them in anticipation it was going to be a good, popular aircraft. We thought it was, too and were given the opportunity, along with six others, to offer the aircraft for sale.

AAU: At that time, where you Mid-Continent Aircraft Sales and Service?

Mr. Reade: Yes, we were.

AAU: Were you also selling converted Stearmans?

Mr. Reade: A few, we were more into spraying at the time.

AAU: When Grumman came along with the Ag-Cat, did they invite you to become involved with the development program?

Mr. Reade: Yes, that's right.

AAU: What did they originally call the aircraft during development?

Mr. Reade: Well, first, Mr. Grumman was going to call it the GrassHopper, but after coming back from the war with all the Wildcats, Hellcats etc., we suggested Ag-Cat.

AAU: Do you recall where the first one might have been delivered?

Mr. Reade: We used the first one as our demonstrator. It is still flying out in Western Kansas as I understand, however it has been converted to the 450.

AAU: Once you became the Ag-Cat dealer, where was your territory?

Mr. Reade: The world. In those days, there were no territories. That was around 1969.

AAU: Mid-Continent was already in business, right? As a spraying operation?

Mr. Reade: Yes, that is right. We then evolved into a sales, service and parts

*continued inside*

## **Our Mission:**

### ***To keep you flying.***

Since 1949, Mid-Continent Aircraft has been the leader in Agricultural Aviation by providing a variety of services that exceed our customers' expectations.

We are committed to the advancement of general and agricultural aviation technology.

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## **COMPANY STARS**

### **Josh Rittenberry Insurance Producer**



Josh began his career in the Insurance Division at Mid-Continent in 2000. It's

business, as well, right here in Hayti. We have been here for more than 50 years.

AAU: Let me touch a little bit on the NAAA. Were you, in fact, the first president of NAAA?

Mr. Reade: Yes, I was the first president of NAAA. We were at a meeting in Washington DC, all belonging to the National Aviation Trades Association and had become very active in that association. We wanted our own separate division of NATA and they didn't want that to happen. So, sitting in DC, A.T.

a place he has eagerly enjoyed working ever since. After learning about the insurance business over the next few years, Josh was fortunate enough to earn his producer's license in 2005. Since then, he has written Business & Pleasure and Ag Insurance for satisfied customers all over the country. In the last few years Josh has represented Mid-Continent at the Missouri Agricultural Aircraft Association Convention and the Tri-State Aerial Applicators Convention which encompasses the states North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

Josh and his wife Tiffany reside in Caruthersville and enjoy yearly family excursions to South Carolina as well as making improvements to their new home and tending to their furry four-legged children: three dogs and a cat.

Morgan and myself, we started our own association.

AAU: Since then, you have been inducted into the National Ag Aviation Hall of Fame in Jackson Mississippi.

Mr. Reade: Yes sir, that is correct

Our interview continues next month with Mr. Dick Reade as he explains his involvement with the Thrush program and has words of wisdom for the upcoming generation of ag-pilots.

*continued next month*



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