



# FRONTLINE MISSION REPORT

BY DAVID GATES



OCTOBER 2012

## The Last Flight South

My friend Tim Holbrook and I prepared the small two-seat Cessna 150 for its flight South to Peru. We rigged up an HF antenna, put in long-range tanks, squeezed into the plane with the HF radio on our laps, and headed South. Down through Mexico, weaving through Central America, and across the Panama Canal we flew making occasional Ham Radio contacts with the US and Peru to keep them informed of our position. Nearly one week later, we held our breath as we struggled across the lowest mountain pass of the Andes mountains in Colombia, and headed on a 6 hour night flight over the Amazon jungles of Peru with only a compass heading for navigation. God graciously carried us safely to our destination. I was twenty-two years old.



*Flying with us to Peru were two young men, Steve Caudil & John Laswell. John died in the 2005 GCC plane accident. Steve is a missionary in Bolivia*

Two years later, after making eight medical flights to Haiti in a Twin-Comanche, N8585Y, for Christian Flights International based in Kentucky, I borrowed the plane and flew it to Peru. With a fuel capacity of 6 hours, the plane was filled with six passengers including my pregnant wife Becky and our one-year old daughter Lina on her lap. Shorter than flying down through Central America, our route took us straight to Jamaica, then down to Panama and across to Colombia. Once again in a non-turbocharged plane, we struggled across the same mountain pass I had crossed two years before in the Cessna 150 and then across the jungles to Peru. Little did we know what an important part N8585Y would play in our ministry years later.

After several years of intensive medical flying in Guyana, in 1999, we felt the need for an efficient small twin-engine plane to expand the work across the Caribbean islands and for safe transport of supplies from the United States. My first thought was, "We need a plane like N8585Y." Into the Internet browser I typed, "Twin Comanche, Miller Nose, Robertson STOL" and hit <Enter>. Up on my screen popped up a plane with those same characteristics. Its registration said N8585Y. I was very excited and called my dad to discuss a possible purchase. The only plane we had up to that point was our high power Cessna 150 taildragger. We couldn't even conceive of how to buy a Twin. However, we laid the need before the Lord in prayer and started imagining, With God's peace leading us, we borrowed the Money and purchased the plane. Several months later it was entirely paid off.

*"When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work, and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward, will be the success given... Success depends not so much on talent as on energy and willingness" Christian Service, p. 262, 264.*

Over the last thirteen years N8585Y has faithfully carried out the mission, flying over 5000 hours through the Caribbean islands to Guyana, down to Brazil and Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Argentina. Through the kindness of donors, long range tanks were added, increasing its fuel capacity from 6 to over 10 hours. Its avionics have been upgraded and engine analyzers and fuel flow totalizers have been installed.

With the purchase of a larger aircraft, a 7-passenger Aerostar primarily flown by Jeff Sutton, and the donation of a pressurized high altitude long range Cessna 340A, it became possible to assign the faithful N8585Y to a new post of duty, the Philippines. Our chief pilot/mechanic there, Dwayne Harris, has prepared the plane for the flight across the "pond", while Gary Roberts, our chief pilot/mechanic who directs our work in Africa will be flying it across to the Philippines. There it will be flown by Dwayne among the many islands in support of our medical helicopter programs, to transport patients, personnel and equipment.

As we completed our last flight from Bolivia to the US a few weeks ago, I noticed my long-time copilot wife was wiping tears from her eyes. I also had a lump in my throat as we said goodbye to the plane that has been part of our lives and ministry since our early 20s. We know it will continue its faithful service in facilitating God's work overseas and look forward to flying it again on our next trip to the Philippines.



*Goodbye 85Y. May you serve God well in the Philippines.*

If you own an aircraft and/or want to facilitate one for the frontlines, here are some needs:

- Helicopters for the Philippines
- Planes for Africa, including a turbine or diesel aircraft
- Turbine or diesel aircraft for Mongolia
- Float planes for Northeast Peru (diesel or turbine) and Southwest Brazil
- Turbocharged plane for the high Andes in Peru
- Bush planes for Colombia, Peru, Guyana and Bolivia

More planes also means more volunteer mission pilots/mechanics. Apply online at [www.GMIvolunteers.org](http://www.GMIvolunteers.org). Remember, Jesus is coming sooner than you think. Don't get caught without oil in your lamps. Maranatha.

From the very busy front lines of battle,

*Uncle David*

## Bible Distribution in Bolivia



*Our group carrying boxes of Bibles to the village of Tiquina*

*My husband, David, asked me to write a short article about my mission trip for the news letter this month. I've never considered myself to be sanguine, but maybe I am--my report was several pages long! So I will just give a short summary here, and those that want to read the full report can click on the following link : <http://www.gospelministry.org/bible-distribution-in-bolivia/>*

Babi and her son, Arthur, Mike and Andre, two of our volunteers from Germany and I headed for the highlands of Bolivia. David and Richard, my son-in-law, joined us for the first part of the journey. They had a meeting at the Union office in Cochabamba. The rest of us stayed at the bus terminal while they went to the meeting, but after 12 hours of riding it felt good to stretch our legs before the next 8 hours of travel. While I watched the luggage, the rest of the team handed out booklets of the last few chapters of the Great Controversy. They handed out over 50 within a matter of minutes. I was so touched when I noticed an older Indian lady sitting on her luggage, intently reading the booklet we had given her. Just about then two policemen marched up to me. Uh, oh, I thought, I wonder if they are upset that we are handing out literature. "Excuse me, madam," one addressed me politely. "Do you have any more of those booklets? We want some, too!" We were more than happy to oblige them.

A few minutes later a young lady came and stood next to me. She was waiting for someone. I handed her a booklet and struck up a conversation with her. Her name was Lora. "Do you have a Bible at home?" I asked. "Yes," she replied. "Well, the Bible tells us that Jesus is coming soon, and this little booklet will tell you some of the things that will happen before Jesus comes." A shocked look crossed her face. "Jesus is coming here to earth?" she asked incredulously. Now it was my turn to be shocked! "Why yes," I exclaimed. "That's what the Bible teaches." "I never heard that before," she said, clearly bewildered. "How is he coming?" she wondered.

For the next 15 minutes I had the joy of sharing with her how Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven with all His mighty angels to resurrect those who have died in Jesus and take all His people home. I encouraged her to read her Bible every day and to get to know Jesus personally so that she could be ready for His coming.

During a Bolivian Independence day holiday, we set out to give out Bibles. The government officials asked us not to hand out anything until the ceremony was finished. One little lady said, "Please give me a Bible. I've wanted one for so long. I'm afraid I won't get one after the march." "I'm sorry," I told her. "We promised the officials we would wait till after the march."

After the ceremony we were almost mobbed by people wanting Bibles. I was surprised that they seemed more interested in Bibles than other things that were handed out in other tables. As I handed them out I reminded the people that Jesus is coming soon, and that they needed to get to know Him by reading His Word everyday. An older man reached out his hand towards me. "Please give me a Bible," he begged. As I handed him a Bible, someone snatched it out of my hand. Again I tried, but the same thing happened. Finally the third time he got the Bible. He hugged it tightly, then raising it to his lips, he kissed it over and over again. "Thank you, thank you," he said. "I've wanted a Bible for so long."

I got so choked up I had to leave for a minute to wipe away my tears. I have 7 Bibles at home in 4 different languages, and in English I have 3 different versions. All of them are precious to me. I don't want to part with any of them! But there are so many that do not have this privilege.

All too soon we handed out the last of our Bibles. As we were packing up the boxes, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was the little lady who had begged me for a Bible at the beginning of the march. "Did you save me a Bible?" She had a hopeful look on her face. "I'm so sorry," I said once again, shaking my head. "They are all gone."

A look of bitter disappointment crossed her face, her shoulders sagged. Slowly she turned around and shuffled into the crowd. I felt like I had been stabbed in the heart. Even as I write this it brings tears to my eyes. I couldn't stand it. I dashed into the crowd,



*Talking with villagers of Tiquina by Lake Titicaca*

frantically looking for her, praying I would find her. Finally I spotted her. "Señora, if you will tell me where you live, I will make sure you get a Bible." Her beaming smile was more than enough reward.

There are two more trips I long to make. One is to the people who live along the jungle river, Mamore, where David and I spent many happy hours playing so long ago. The other is to Potosí, an area of the highlands that has a lot of mining. Andre and Mike wanted to see a little more of Bolivia, so they went to Potosí, and visited one of the mines. Right away they began to feel uncomfortable, as if there were an evil influence down there. Then they came to a place in the mine where the miners were worshipping their gods. Suddenly they understood why they felt that way. So many of the miners chew coca so that they won't feel the cold or hunger, and they try to forget their troubles with alcohol. My heart was broken when I heard Mike and Andre's report. I long to show those people a better way. Won't you help me pray for them?

I just want to thank again all of those who donated to make this trip possible, and also those who pray for these trips. Without the Holy Spirit, these trips would be in vain. I just wish all of you could be with us on the trips and experience the joy that we did as we spread God's Word. It will be exciting to see the results in heaven! Let's keep spreading God's Word, whether at home or overseas.

May God bless each of you.

*Becky Gates*

**Gospel Ministries International**  
**874 South McDonald Road SW McDonald, Tennessee 37353**  
**Office: 423-473-1841**  
**Website: [gospelministry.org](http://gospelministry.org)**

**For your free mission report & sermon DVDs, call our office or email us at [orders@gospelministry.org](mailto:orders@gospelministry.org)**  
**Join the mission...share the good news with others.**