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# BEHIND THE HANGAR DOORS

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With any niche skill, it's common for those involved to be passionate about what they're doing. What may not be as common is the lengthy history that this particular pilot has with flying.

Doug Haughton is known by many throughout not only KPWT but also our Northwest region of Washington State. After returning from Vietnam, Doug did a variety of jobs, from writing mechanic columns in the Kitsap Sun to flying the UPS route for AIRPAC. Now, after 49 years as a licensed pilot, Doug tells the story of 'his' airport.

## MEET DOUG HAUGHTON

Doug grew up adjacent to Kitsap, nestled in Tacoma before moving to the Peninsula in 1969. Although immediately loving the area, Doug was called to Vietnam where he focused on mechanics and was involved with work centered around helicopters. Combining skills with passion, the idea of flight was planted in his head. Upon return Doug began cementing his place within Kitsap County. His goal? Raise a family, make an impact, and, of course, master the art of flight.

Bremerton National Airport used to operate vastly different from today, offering commercial flights and more. Doug found work here as a sort of mechanic for Kitsap Aviation. He reflects how he actually prefers the

airport as it currently is, with less complexity and more community. Even so, Doug has always felt that KPWT has been his home away from home.

While ultimately beginning, and perhaps still maintaining the title, 'car guy', Doug spent 54 years in the automotive business, writing and publishing over 300 articles on car care. Furthering his reach, Doug also taught night classes at Olympic College on the subject. The passion he carries with him to the matters he's involved with has allowed him to overcome obstacles and create lasting impressions with all he meets.

## DOUG'S THOUGHTS ON FLYING

For those who aren't pilots themselves, there may be questions surrounding how and why people decide to fly where they do. For Doug, fuel, proximity, and their respective resident restaurants all play a factor in choosing the next destination!



*Doug while flying for AIRPAC.*



*Fueling in the Yukon, headed to the Arctic Circle.*

A well-traveled man, Doug has flown to Alaska, Canada, Yukon, the Arctic, and Baja Mexico, as well as throughout the continental United States. Surprisingly, he revealed that while he loves flying his personal plane, it is almost always cheaper to fly commercially. Why? Because on average, a small aircraft like Doug's costs approximately \$300-500 per tank of gas. It is for this reason that Doug balances his trips by flying commercial unless his destination is within one tank of gas.

Beyond the logistics of taking out his Beechcraft Bonanza, Doug also considers the aforementioned available amenities, whether restaurants or sites to see. Stating that he's "never met an airport [he] didn't

like," he has many bucket list destinations that he's experienced and a few yet to go! Notably, Doug's most challenging flight was to the Arctic. He was flying free over the ocean, gazing upon the sizable ice caps. While most people would feel fear at a situation of this magnitude, Doug remarks that he "looks at it as an adventure," mitigating risk as much as possible to ensure he stays safe. Furthermore, Doug feels he has no fear of aviation at all, and rather, he has a "profound respect" for it. Doug would like to tackle his next adventure, the Bahamas, with his wife Joanna by his side.

## BEING FOR THE AVIATION COMMUNITY



*Joanna & Doug at BPA Christmas Party.*

The Bremerton Pilots Association, based at Bremerton National Airport, began in 1937 with a small group of passionate pilots. After years of push and pull, the group was dwindling. It wasn't until 1980 that BPA was truly ignited by the dream of four people. Doug and his three companions met at the old Airport Diner, where Amelia's Hangar Restaurant & Lounge currently stands, to discuss what the organization could and should look like. Doug's first presidential reign came in 1981, and he continued serving at least one term each decade. Today, Doug is once again the current president leading the organization.

Doug had two main dreams for the Bremerton Pilots Association: providing a play area for kids and creating

a sustainable scholarship program. Thanks to his dedication and the support of an entire airport, both dreams have come true.

The Youth Aviation Scholarship Fund aims to provide \$3500 per young man and woman in the Greater Puget Sound area who has the desire to obtain their Private Pilot's License. These individuals who apply, interview, and are ultimately selected receive not only the funds to kickstart their education, but the unwavering support of the scholarship committee and community. In total,

it generally takes one year to complete the license, but for those that are rigorous, it can take as little as just six months...which is exactly how Doug himself did it. Doug understands the commitment and work required to follow a passion such as flight, having done it himself while being married and maintaining a full-time job, which helps him in guiding those working towards this achievement.

The scholarship idea was born in the 1980s with the initial goal of 'planting the seed' among the aviation community and directly helping people with funds. He believes that it is essential for interested young people to have the opportunity to fly as they are the future of aviation. His advice for those thinking of making the leap? Just do it. Doug states, "We all did it, and we all got through it". In fact, he tells those interviewing for the scholarship similar: the easiest part of flying is the actual flying; the hardest part is paperwork.



The scholarship has grown immensely from its humble beginnings, becoming a beacon at Bremerton National Airport for all aspiring pilots. Doug noted that it wasn't his goal to be well-known, but rather to establish a

foundation for the future of aviation that will be self-sustainable long after his involvement. If you would like to help support this organization, consider visiting BPA's website. Doug says those involved can have the role of being "anything you want it to be," from a silent partner to having an active spot on committees. In the meantime, we hope you'll consider how you may be able to aid your own resident airport in growing community connections.

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# WANT TO BE FEATURED?

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