

My Comanche love affair.

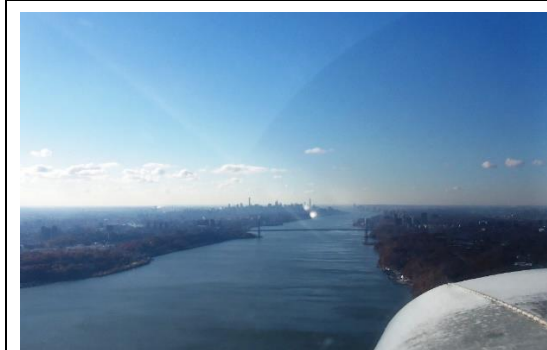
I have owned and loved only two aircraft: a 1960 PA24-250 Piper Comanche single and then a 1963 PA24-250 Comanche.

I found the first one in Annapolis MD in 2002, following the world's return to flight after 9/11. N6632P was not very remarkable in and of itself – just a very basic Comanche with a mid-time engine, old Nav/Com radios in a left-hand stack, an ADF, and a four-knob transponder. But boy, could she fly! She thought nothing of jumping in the air for breakfast 100 miles away or loading up with everything except the kitchen sink for an extended trip.

From our base in eastern Connecticut, and with the addition of a King GPS, we flew to Florida a number of times to visit family, to New Orleans after Katrina to see my Coast Guard daughter, to Fond du Lac to attend AirVenture, and all over the northeast US hosting monthly fly-ins for the Northeast Comanche Tribe. 32P never complained, and always seemed happy to go. Then, three summers ago, the tired landing gear failed to lock, 32P slid into the runway margin on her belly, and the insurance company bought her for the hull value.



N6632P parked at Danielson CT, 2002



32P flying the Hudson Corridor



Comanches parked at Newport NH fly-in

Enter Comanche #2, N8168P, a 1963 PA24-250 with a nice center stack and a working STec-50 autopilot. Finally, some relief for my left arm! 68P has continued the practice of hosting Northeast Comanche fly-ins throughout the northeast and made it to Lakeland for the 2021 Sun n' Fun, proudly parked with other Comanches at ComancheTown.



N8168P at purchase



68P at Sun n' Fun ComancheTown

As I said at the beginning of this piece, these two aircraft are not overly remarkable. Other planes may well be prettier or faster, but none can do for me what these 60-year-old Comanches have done. They have allowed me to share my love of flying with many people. With the strong engine and awesome payload, I have flown passengers for Angel Flight NE throughout New England, from the Canadian border to Long Island sound, from Cape Cod and the islands to Cleveland. I have flown many kids as Young Eagles for a first taste of the sky (our current record being 21 in one day). I have ferried other pilots to or from their aircraft when theirs are down for repair or annuals. On my return flight from Sun n' Fun I carried a rescue dog from Venice FL to Concord NH. In all these activities, my Comanches have carried me in comfort and safety, in daytime or nighttime flights, in or around clouds or high over the tops, and always with speed and efficiency.

I love my Comanches, not so much for what they are, but more for what they allow me to do - to go when I want, where I want, with whom I want, at a time I want - and all with confidence. To share a day on Nantucket, or to visit friends in northern New England. To accept an Angel Flight for someone receiving treatment, or to see the light shining in the eyes of Young Eagle passengers. That is what flying is all about!

The saying goes, "A mile of road will get you a mile. A mile of runway can give you the world."

The world is waiting just off the departure end of my runway, and 68P is patiently sitting there at the tiedown, waiting for me to begin our next adventure.



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N6632P and N8168P
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