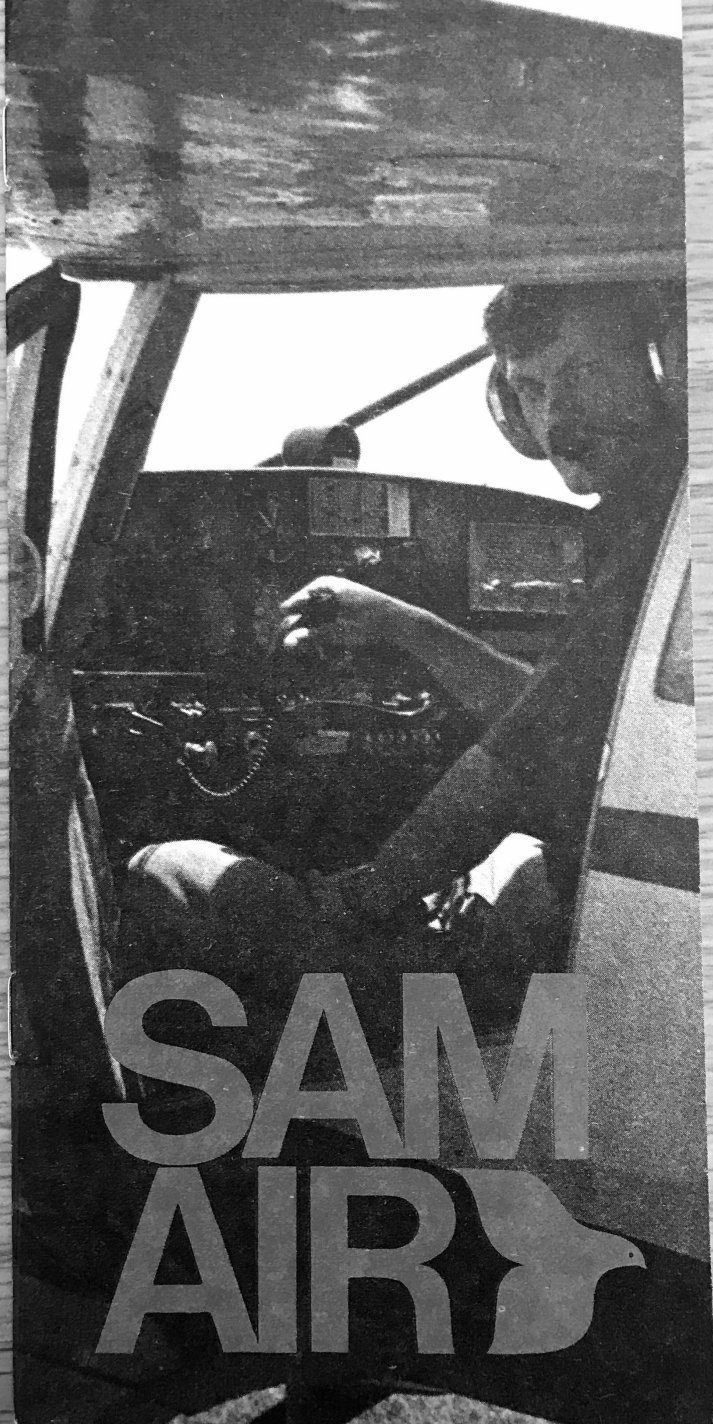


AMAZON VALLEY INDIAN

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SAM AIR

People and Machines



*By Don Gahagen, SAMAIR Director
Santa Cruz, Bolivia*

SAMAIR is people and machines. People like Tim Bohl, a young man who from the age of eight wanted to be a missionary pilot. People like Joe Kemper, a Vietnam veteran who gave his heart to the Lord after the war and then was challenged to put his piloting and mechanical skills to work in the battle against spiritual darkness.

SAMAIR is people like Dave Seaton, a highly skilled and experienced pilot who spent most of his 6000 hours of flying time as a crop-duster. Now he spreads the gospel instead of insecticides. It is Dave Simmons, son of a SAM missionary family, who grew up on a mission station in the Peruvian jungle and therefore

Mark Friesen, Tim Bohl, Dave Simmons and Joe Kemper: part of the team of mechanics and pilots that make up SAMAIR.

knows the importance of missionary aviation.

And SAMAIR is even people like me—an ordinary guy who learned to fly quite incidentally while in seminary and then was challenged by the Lord to start an aviation ministry in South America.

But SAMAIR is more than just pilots and their wives. It is missionaries who need supply and transportation—not just SAM missionaries, but others involved in the same great cause.

It is national and Indian pastors and teachers who need to move across vast areas to reach and disciple their own people. It is sick people whose very life may depend on the airplane that carries them to the nearest medical help. It is even government officials who travel with us because air taxis and military planes won't fly into the places we reach.

Oh yes, and SAMAIR is machines as well. Two 31-year-old Stinsons and two much newer Maules. Lord willing, these will be joined by two larger Cessnas we are trusting Him to supply in the near future. And, of course, there is the maintenance of our own equipment and the constant repairs of outboard motors for river travel, motorcycles, trucks and jeeps for the roads, generating plants to keep the radio transmitters going—and anything else that runs or doesn't run, depending on our time and crucial parts.

SAMAIR is people and machines working together in a vital ministry where roads often are impassable and river travel runs very slowly.

Come—fly with us in your prayers and your generous giving. Help keep these people and these machines in the air so the work of the Lord can prosper.

The Drop

*By David Seaton
Santa Cruz, Bolivia*

When I first spotted the tiny clearing in the Bolivian jungle I had my doubts about getting any of our cargo into the target area. The spot where we were supposed to make the drop was only 30 yards square, with the river on two sides, dense jungle on the other two and the tent home of the missionaries in the middle of the clearing.

Yet the faithful couple needed the supplies badly, and I knew we must not fail. The missionaries were trying to contact a savage tribe with the gospel, and they were running low on food and other supplies. The parcels to be dropped to them also included a new antenna for their communications radio, and without it they would be out of touch with civilization.

The location was only an hour's flight from our base in Santa Cruz, but the only other way in or out was a five-day trip on the river.

We could not land, so a drop was the only possible way to deliver the food and supplies. After several passes, my companion and I decided we would fly

down the river at treetop level, cross the clearing at an angle and drop the packages on the target. If we misjudged, the much-needed cargo could (1) go into the river, (2) disappear into the jungle or (3) demolish the tent in which the missionaries lived. A six-pound bundle of meat, traveling at 70 miles an hour, can be a dangerous missile. A strong and gusty wind kept the operation from becoming boring.

Our first two passes deposited packages at the water's edge. The next two went into the jungle, but only a short distance. They were quickly recovered. On the fifth pass, a gust of wind caught us just at the wrong instant and one of the packages bounced into the river, but the water at the edge was shallow and the package was fished out unharmed. By the sixth and seventh passes we had gotten good at it. The bundles landed right on target, almost in the center of the clearing.

I like to call it "missionary bush flying"—this exciting ministry the Lord has called me to in Bolivia. My years of experience as a crop-duster in the United States stand me in good stead. In any event, life is far from dull, and I am grateful. SAMAIR is a lifeline to God's servants in remote and virtually unreachable areas. We're thrilled to be a part of it.



In between serving isolated missionaries, SAM-AIR personnel can also be found serving folks with a motorcycle problem.