

I earned my private pilot's license in 1973 and within a year I had my instrument and multiengine ratings. In 20 years of flying I eventually logged over 1,700 hours, flying a wide variety of single-engine airplanes (Cessna 150, 152, 172, 177, 182, 210, Beechcraft Bonanzas F33, V35 and A36) and several multiengine airplanes (Beechcraft Travelair and Duchess, Piper Aztec.) In 1979 I bought a beautiful 1963 Beechcraft Baron, and in the next ten years logged over 1,000 hours in it, more than half of my total time. The Baron was destroyed in a bizarre accident in 1989, and fortunately nobody was in it at the time. A pilot was taking people for rides around the pattern in his Piper Archer during an airshow at Van Nuys airport. He charged them for the ride, and the money went as a donation to the 99'ers, a famous women's flying club. After a number of trips around the pattern he ran out of gas on takeoff (you heard that right, he ran out of gas on takeoff) with 3 people on board, a woman, her son and her father (3 generations). The pilot tried a rarely successful 180° maneuver back to the runway, and flew through my hanger, destroying the hanger, the Baron, and skidding into another airplane on the ground which he also destroyed. They all survived but there were some serious injuries. I rented for a few years after that, mostly Cessna 182's, but eventually quit flying altogether. The last PIC (Pilot-In-Command) entry in my log was July 30, 1993 when I did a solo roundtrip between Van Nuys and Oxnard in a Cessna 182.