

THANKSGIVING 2009

Planning the trip

Thanksgiving 2009 was fast approaching and I knew this would be the last chance I might get to take a long flight within Central America. Knowing Millie wanted to go somewhere interesting, I decided it was time to take a long flight somewhere. Now a good friend of mine, Willie Jimenez, had invited us to visit him in Panama many times. This was perfect because I hadn't seen Willie in a long time, we would have to fly over Nicaragua and Costa Rica to get there and Millie had never seen the Panama Canal. The flight would be a long one but with the new long-range fuel tanks in the airplane we could easily make it nonstop. This meant I wouldn't have to land somewhere, clear customs and immigrations get back in the plane takeoff then clear customs and immigrations again when we arrived in Panama.

When I told Millie about the trip she immediately said yes. She too wanted to see Willie and his wife Carmen Gloria. I told her how long the trip was to be, about seven hours in the airplane, but it didn't bother her at all. So I called Willie, told him of our plan and he immediately offered to arrange for our arrival in Panama. The only thing left was to pack our luggage, file our flight plan and go. So I started planning the flight.

The flight would take us from San Salvador El Salvador, over Managua Nicaragua, just north of San Jose Costa Rica, over the northern shore of Panama then down into Panama City. According to my plan it would take six hours with no winds but I knew the winds were normally from the Southeast so it would take a little longer. I sent an e-mail to my friend Milton Martinez and told him of my plan so he could file the necessary paperwork for the over flights. I use MiltAir Aviation services every chance I get since he does a great job and knows exactly what needs to be done.

I told Millie to pack only one piece of luggage since we were to have a full load of fuel and the airplane would be heavy. This would be the first time that all 92 gallons of fuel would be in the tanks. With Millie, 92 gallons of fuel, myself and our luggage we would be just under maximum gross weight. It would be the first time I would actually feel how the plane handled at that weight.

On Wednesday, November 22 2009, we got up early and arrived at the airplane about six the morning. It was still dark as we loaded the airplane and made sure everything was secured in its proper position. As the sun came up I was just finishing loading the airplane while paparazzi Millie took pictures of everything. I finished the pre-flight about

7:00 the morning, we pulled the plane out of the hangar, closed the hangar with our truck inside and taxied over to the fuel pumps. I told the attendant to fill in all the way up while I went over file my flight plan. You should have seen the look on his face when I told him it would take about 90 gallons of fuel.

I filed a simple IFR flight plan. It was funny to see the flight service person's face when I told him I had 11 hours of fuel on board. With the flight plan filed, I walked over and started checking the airplane one last time. By now the Aero-club restaurant was open. Millie bought a couple of bottles of water and a diet coke for the flight. We brought our cooler that had sandwiches, some Gatorade and some peanuts. I checked the fuel to make sure it contained no water and being happy with the results; we strapped in and started the engine. The actual trip had started.

Heading out

When I checked in with ground control, they gave me an amended IFR Clearance. The clearance had me doing the "La Palma" departure once airborne. I had practiced that particular departure a few weeks earlier while doing an IFR proficiency check ride and it isn't too hard. It starts with a right turn soon after takeoff from runway 33, take a heading of 140° then intercept and track the YSV VOR 090° radial out bound. At the 7 mile point I had to be at least 7000 feet in the air. At 15 miles from Ilopango I should make a left turn while climbing to at least 8000 feet. This would not be a problem especially in VFR conditions. The departure requires me to climb to 11,000 feet prior to checkpoint ONGOS which I knew was going to be hard to do. ONGOS is fairly close to Ilopango and at max gross weight the plane would have a hard time climbing that high in such a short time. I accepted the flight plan, did my run ups and we took off.

I was out bound on the 090° radial and about 12 miles from the VOR when air traffic control asked me if I was going to the 15 mile point. The way he asked I knew something was not right. I took a look at my departure plate and realized that for the ONGOS transition I had to make a right turn at the 10 mile point instead of a left turn at the 15. If I took a right turn at the 15 mile point at 8000 feet I would come dangerously close to a large volcano known as Chichontepeque. This was the very same volcano a TACA airline 737 had crashed into about 10 years before killing everybody aboard. I told air traffic control I was making a left turn at that point and would close into 10 miles. He told me that if I was VFR I could continue direct to ONGOS visually from the current position. I accepted telling him I had the volcano in sight and headed straight to the ONGOS checkpoint. This taught me a lesson. Even if I know what the procedure is, I need to review it carefully before actually flying it.

By now it was about eight in the morning. With six hours of flying ahead of us we should arrive into Panama City around two in the afternoon. This meant we would arrive just before the worst time for thunderstorm activity in Panama City. I had no forecast for the winds along the route but I had added an extra half-hour to my estimate arrival time just in case the headwinds were strong. Besides, I had 4 extra hours of fuel on board so I was not worried.

We settled back and watched the altitude slowly climb as we headed towards ONGOS checkpoint. Just before I got to ONGOS I knew we would not be at 11,000 feet as required by the flight plan. Since the airplane was heavy it was barely climbing at 500 ft./m. The worst part was that we were only doing an airspeed of 80 kts so the engine was starting to run a little hot. This meant I had to increase my airspeed but that would slow my climb rate. I reluctantly increase my airspeed watched the engine run a little bit cooler while my vertical speed dropped to 250 ft./m. When we reached ONGOS we were only at 9000 feet. Once again the air traffic control told me to continue VFR until reaching 11,000 feet. About 5 miles after passing ONGOS, we reached 11,000 feet and continued IFR. Soon afterwards El Salvador control handed us off to Nicaragua control.

Enroute to Panama City

We flew along enjoying the scenery since there wasn't a cloud in the sky anywhere to be seen. This was also the first time we used our new Light Speed Zulu active noise reducing headset. They were working beautifully. Our airplane is very noisy but with these headsets it was quieter than my car. The best part is that with Bluetooth capability. I can listen to music without any wires being connected to it. Millie could listen to her music while I listened to mine. Whenever air traffic control called, the music would be muted until the conversation was over.

About 50 miles before Managua we spotted a volcano about 3000 feet below and a few miles to the left of us. As we got closer we could see that the volcano had smoke flowing down one of its sides. As we got closer Millie pulled out the camera and started taking pictures. Since she was on the right side of the airplane and the volcano was to our left the closer we got, the harder it became for her to get a good picture. So when we got close it I took the camera, snapped a few pictures and gave it back to her. This is easy to do



when your airplane as an autopilot connected to a GPS. It turned out to be one of the best pictures I have ever taken while flying.

After passing Managua we were supposed to climb to 15,000 feet in order to stay IFR. This is because we were going to be far from the radio stations that air traffic controllers use to communicate until the next checkpoint. The next checkpoint is over 150 miles away which meant I would be flying for over an hour above 15,000 feet. But to fly at 15,000 feet for that long I need supplemental oxygen which we don't have in our airplane. The highest I would feel comfortable flying for that long without oxygen would be 13,000 feet. So I had filed to fly this portion VFR then, when at Puerto Limon Costa Rica, I would pick up the IFR flight plan again until landing in Panama City.

After about 4 hours of flying we were somewhere over Costa Rica when we realized we were hungry. Millie pulled out the sandwiches we had packed, handed me one and I ate it. She did not want to eat or drink anything, but did take a little bit of water. I drank



some Gatorade and finished off the sandwich. Up to this point the flight was going pretty smooth except for the takeoff portion. So we talked, listen to music, watched the scenery and tried to be as comfortable as we could. By this point the clouds were starting to build up a little, but we were still in very clear weather.

Approaching Puerto Limon we could see in the distance a lot of clouds. At Puerto Limon we picked up our IFR clearance and headed on to Panama. Still at 11,000 feet

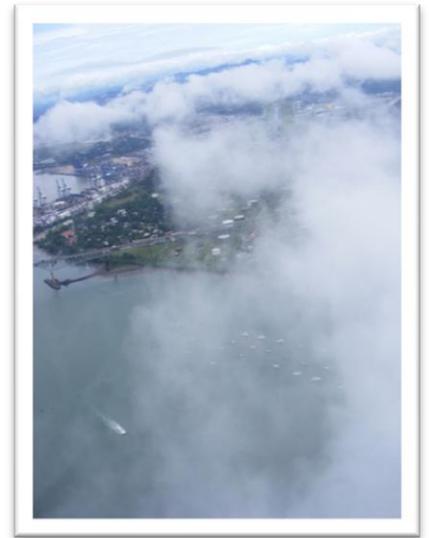
we flew along over the ocean as we headed towards a large amount of clouds.

Checking with air traffic control they told me the weather in Panama City was completely IFR. I knew it would be challenging to do the approach into Manuel Gelabert airport (MPMG) which was our final destination in Panama.

Before we even got to the North coast of Panama we were in solid IFR conditions and it was raining. My total concentration was now on flying and navigating on the route since I knew there were mountains all around me. The rain was probably falling lightly but since we were doing about 140 Kts it was hitting the front of the airplane pretty hard. At 140 Kts it seemed like we were in a hurricane. I was so happy the airplane has an autopilot slaved to the IFR GPS which decreased my workload significantly.

As we got closer to Panama City Air traffic control continued to bring me lower. Soon we were at 4000 feet, yet I could see nothing outside but clouds. The controller handed me off to approach and he gave me vectors to final. Still not being able to see anything but

clouds I followed his direction and after a few minutes we were at 2000 feet. He told me he could not bring me any lower until I had the airport in sight. I knew I was on final and the airport was in front of me somewhere, but I couldn't see it. I was still in solid IFR conditions. When he called that the airport was 5 miles on my nose I could see the clouds starting to break up a little. The approach to MPMG is a little bit difficult because on the north end of the runway there are mountains that climb up very quickly. On both sides of the runway there is also high terrain. At about 2 miles out I could finally see the runway between some of the clouds. I told him I had the runway in sight and he handed me off to the tower frequency. As soon as I called Manuel Gelabert tower he cleared me to land straight in. Once I got below 2000 feet there were no clouds and I was in complete VFR conditions, but I was still too high. But by now I was very close to the airport and still at 2000 feet so I knew it would be very hard to land.



No matter how hard I tried to lose altitude and slow the airplane down I just couldn't get it done. By the time I reached the threshold I was still doing about 130 Kts and in no position to land. I told the controller I was going to a go around and set up for a normal landing. I pulled up, made a left turn and got into the normal traffic pattern for landing. While I was maneuvering, Millie took pictures. She took a great picture of a large ship entering the Panama Canal under the Americas Bridge. On this second try the landing was normal and although the runway was wet from all the rain we landed without incident.



As soon as we taxied off the runway, ground control directed us to park next to the FBO hangar. Now this was odd because I had not requested FBO service, but I parked there anyways. As soon as I got out a person from the FBO came out and started to help me. He took me into the FBO to fill out paperwork. Willie was there waiting and told the person that I was not using the FBO facilities. After a few seconds of talking back and forth, they gave me my paperwork and told me to move the airplane to another side of the airport which I did. There we cleared immigration and customs, closed the flight plan and took everything out of the airplane. I wound up parking the plane near the control tower.

Thanksgiving Day in Panama City

By the time I finished Millie and Willie were waiting for me outside the terminal with the luggage in the car ready to go. It had taken 6 1/2 hours of flying to get there which meant the headwinds had been about what I had planned for. During the entire time I had eaten one sandwich, drank a little bit of Gatorade and one Diet Coke so I was hungry. Willie took us to his apartment to drop off our luggage and join his wife Carmen Gloria. Right after we dropped off our luggage we headed out for lunch. They took us to



a place called “Lenas y Carbon” that was on the waterfront. We ate while looking at some real nice boats. I don't know if the food was delicious or that I was so hungry I didn't care. We didn't do much for the rest of the day, just talked and caught up with old times. After lunch we went back to their apartment.

Willie's apartment is on the 12th floor of a building overlooking Panama City. From his living room there is an incredible view of the entire skylight. You could see the airport where we had landed, the ships getting ready to enter the Panama Canal and all the buildings. The weather was still pretty bad and it was cloudy but anything below us was very clear. Willie told us that the weather had been really bad with thunderstorms everywhere up to about one hour before we landed. It was still raining but you could tell that the weather was clearing up. Within a few hours night had fallen and the view from the apartment was spectacular. Since it had completely cleared up you could see all the lights of the ships in the harbor waiting to enter the Panama Canal. The temperature had also cooled down so much that you did not need air conditioning. As a matter of fact it was a little bit cold so we had to close the windows.

By now it was late; we were tired and I just wanted to go to bed. Willie's apartment is set up so he has a guest bedroom which simulates a separate apartment. This makes it so that anybody who visits has a little bit of privacy. It's really well set up. So we both took baths, got in bed and went to sleep.

The next morning I woke up and went out of the bedroom. Carmen Gloria was already in the kitchen preparing breakfast. The four of us sat around the table eating, talking, enjoying the company and looking out over a spectacular view of Panama City. The weather was perfect. There was not a cloud in the sky to be seen. Of course I had selected to arrive on the worst possible day, the day before. From the breakfast table we could see the airport I had landed in with airplanes taking off and landing. They were

actually many small private planes landing and taking off from the airport. I could tell that Panama has an active general aviation community.

After breakfast I needed to go to the airport to take some things out of the airplane I had forgotten. So we all got in the car and headed to the airport. The ride was very short since it was close by. They waited at the car while I got a ride out to the airplane. There I took out my charts my portable GPS and a few of the things that I would need to plan my flight back to El Salvador. I even got one of the Panama "FAA" employees help me put a Panama Flag sticker on the airplane just before I closed her up. Now I have all the flags of Central America on the airplane.



Once I had everything I needed, we got back in the car and headed out to do some Thanksgiving shopping. Willie and I just walked around while Millie and Carmen Gloria bought a few things. The dinner that night would include some of Willie's friends who we had not met. As we drove around Willie showed us some of the sights and some of the interesting things of Panamanian Culture. We had lunch at the local mall which was full of people. Panama City is a very modern city and it actually reminded me a little bit of Chicago. The traffic was really bad but I expected that.

By the time we realized it was getting late and we had to get ready for dinner. The cost of living in Panama is very low so Willie has a maid working for him part-time. She was almost finished with preparing the Thanksgiving dinner when we arrived back to the apartment. We all started getting ready for the dinner with Millie taking a bath and me looking into how the weather would be on Saturday for our flight back. It looked like the weather would be similar to the weather when we arrived. They were forecasting lots of rain, clouds and thunderstorm activity. With this in mind I decided we would take off early the morning before the weather got really bad. Like always, the flight would be in the worst weather.

When Millie was out of the bathroom it was my turn. I showered and got ready for dinner. By the time I'd finished and came out of the room I could hear the guests had already arrived. I walked out and join them with Millie already being in the group. One couple was the parents of Willie's daughter-in-law while the other couple was from Puerto Rico like us. The entire conversation centered on the fact we had flown our small airplane there. They wanted to know everything about the trip. They asked about how big was the airplane, how long it had taken, what the weather was like and 1 million other questions. They could not believe we had done this. I explained we had flown our airplane to other places and this was just another adventure for us. Millie gave them her

perspective as a passenger and how much she enjoyed it. We wound up talking about the flight and other flights we had done for the longest time. They were so interested in the situations we have encountered during our many flights. We were still talking when the food was served and we sat down for dinner. We talked about everything, enjoyed each other's company and ate dinner. With such good food, conversation and everything else by the time we realized it was almost midnight. Soon afterwards they said goodbye, wished us luck on our return trip and left. Once again we were tired and went straight to bed falling asleep immediately.

The Sights of Panama

We got up on Friday morning to another beautiful day with no clouds in the sky. Once again we had a great breakfast while enjoying the scenery through the apartment windows. Since this was going to be our last full day in Panama, Willie wanted to show us around. The first place he took us was to Gamboa, that has a resort with a beautiful golf course and huge clubhouse. In order to get there we drove along the side of the Panama Canal. There Willie told us about the area's history. We could see lots of ships going through the canal as we drove along. Before long it was time for lunch. One of the things I had told Willie was that I wanted to have lunch at the canal so he made reservations at the Miraflores locks restaurant.

When we arrived at the locks the place was full of tourist. We had to do a long line to get in after climbing some very steep stairs. We got in and took the elevators to the restaurant on the 2nd floor. I had been there before so it was no big deal to me but it was



Millie's first time. From the restaurant you have a great view of the canal locks and the ships go right by you as they transit the canal. Millie could not help herself, took the camera out and started taking pictures. I sat down ordered something to drink and headed to the buffet line. Off in the distance I could see two large cruise ships in the canal heading our way. I knew this was going to be an impressive sight as they transited the locks right in front of us.

Seeing the locks operate gives an idea of the magnitude of the engineering miracle the Panama Canal really is. Especially when you realize that it was built in 1913, there are

no pumps at all and everything works due to rainwater and gravity. It took almost an hour for the two ships to go through the canal in front of us with Millie taking lots of pictures. By the time they were through I had finished lunch but Millie had not started so she went to the buffet and sat down to eat. While she was eating she looked down to the lower canal area and saw some friends of ours from the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador. We called out to them and they waved back. It turns out a group from the embassy had also come to Panama for Thanksgiving but they had come via commercial airline while we flew our own plane. Lunch took about 3 hours while we just enjoying the company and watched other ships go through locks.

When we were good and ready we paid the bill and left the restaurant to finish our tour. Just outside the restaurant was one of the highly ornate busses common in Panama.



Millie thought it was so cool I took a picture of her in front of it. Then Willie took us all over Panama City explaining its history and showing us many of the sites. It was especially interesting going to the older sections of Panama City and seeing houses from the early part of the 19th century. All in all, it was a great history lesson. Going to Gamboa, having lunch at the canal and visiting the old city had taken all day. By the time we finished the sun was setting and it was time to go

home. Since we had eaten lunch so late and had eaten so much we were not hungry when it was dinner time. We ate a little bit of the leftovers from the Thanksgiving dinner and just relaxed. We were actually very tired from running around Panama City all day. I knew we had a long day ahead of us so I excused myself early and went to bed.

Heading Back

The next day I woke up early to check the weather and to do the final preparations for the return flight. Just like I expected the weather had turned bad and it was raining. Just like the arriving flight it would be hard IFR between Panama City and Puerto Limon Costa Rica then very clear VFR for the rest of the flight. Once again Carmen Gloria had a great breakfast for us as soon as we came out of the room. We finished the early breakfast, loaded our luggage into the car, said goodbye to Carmen Gloria and Willie drove us to the airport. We are really fortunate to have them as friends.

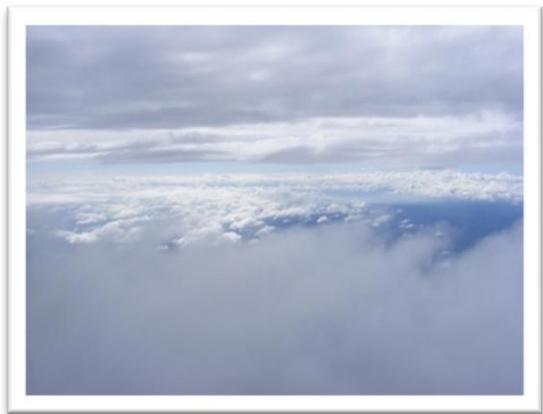
At the airport we dropped our luggage off at the terminal so Millie could go through security while I went to file the flight plan. As part of the flight plan procedure I had to

pay the landing fees, arrival fees and all the other things that are charged to a private airplane. But they were not that bad, I had expected a lot more. I also called for fuel and they told me it should arrive while I did the preflight. The preflight was very uneventful and just like they said the fuel truck showed up quickly. I had them fill the tanks all the way to 92 gallons just to be on the safe side. Once they finished I completed my preflight which included draining some fuel from the tanks to make sure it had no water. I got in the airplane and taxied over to the main terminal building where Millie was waiting. Once I made sure that all the paperwork was complete and everything was set, we loaded the luggage in to the plane and strapped it down. Millie got into the plane put on her seat belt and closed her door while I did a final walk around. It was raining very lightly and the clouds were about 3000 feet so I knew we would have no problem departing.



Waving goodbye to Willie, who was still waiting just outside the fence, I started the engine up. A call to clearance delivery got us our IFR flight plan and we taxied out. While we taxied I checked everything to make sure it was working correctly and they were. Soon I was cleared to the tower frequency got takeoff authorization and we were airborne. Within a few minutes of takeoff we were handed off to center and entered hard IFR conditions just like I had expected. Even though the airplane was heavy we climbed easily to our initial altitude of 6000 feet. By now it was about eight in the morning which meant we were basically on schedule to arrive in San Salvador at about two in the afternoon. We stayed at 6000 feet as we headed north in order to burn fuel for our eventual climb to 12,000 feet. Just like our inbound flight I could see nothing outside the windshield and made sure that I was right on the route. Once again it was so nice to

have an autopilot slaved to the GPS reducing my workload. With our headphones playing music we settled down for the long trip home. As we flew along we commented on how lucky we were to have friends like Willie and Carmen Gloria in such beautiful place like Panama.



Just after crossing the North shore of Panama heading towards Costa Rica, we started our climb to 12,000 feet. Here the clouds were breaking up and we were in and out of the VFR conditions. A few

turns around some nasty looking thunderstorms and by the time we reached Puerto Limon we were in complete VFR conditions. At Puerto Limon we canceled IFR flight plan, climbed to 12,500 and continued VFR to Managua, Nicaragua. As we overflew Costa Rica the clouds below us looked like small balls of cotton. Glancing at the ground I could tell we had a good tailwind pushing us along. A look at the ground speed indicated on the GPS confirmed I had a slight tailwind. At this rate we would be there almost a ½ hour early. There really isn't a lot to do when you are cruising along in the airplane from one point to the other. An occasional call to air traffic control is about all you have to do especially when the autopilot is flying the airplane for you. You just monitor the systems to make sure they are doing what you want.

We had been in the air about three hours when Millie suddenly said “I have to pee real bad”. Now this was a problem. We have a very small airplane and there's no way to go to a bathroom. As a matter of fact we do not even have a bathroom in the airplane. So here we are, somewhere over Costa Rica, we don't have permission to land and my wife has to pee real bad. I asked her do you really have to go or can you wait to which she gave me a dirty look and said “I have to go now”!

I carry portable urinals in the airplane but they're not really designed for women to use. As a matter of fact a guy would have a hard time using one of them in such a small airplane. There's no place to stand up so no matter what happens you have to do, whatever is you have to do, without getting up from the seat. The good thing is that these portable urinal are designed to immediately gel so there is zero chance of spillage into the airplane. The hard part is getting the pee into the urinal. It's quite obvious that a woman's body is very different from a man's body so I knew it was going to be extremely difficult for her. I told her to reach into my flight bag and pull one of them out.

When she pulled it out she looked at me and said “There is no way I can go to the bathroom in this”. I told her that was the only thing we had and we could not land for at least another hour. Again she gave me a real dirty look and said “I guess I'll just have to do it right here”. I have to admit it was really hard for me not to laugh as she wiggled around and tried to pee into the portable urinal without getting up off her seat. I looked away so as not completely embarrass her more than she already was. I honestly don't know how she did it but to my surprise, and extreme relief, she actually did it. She then closed the urinal, sealed it and put it in the trash bag. I don't think I could have done it as well as she did. I have a newly found respect for my wife as a flyer after this.

Back in El Salvador

About an hour later we checked in with Nicaragua control. At this point we came down to 12,000 feet and continued IFR from that point on. The controller was very helpful and asked me if I wanted to go from my present position direct to ONGOS intersection which of course I did. This would shave off a little time from our flight while taking us almost the entire length of Lake Nicaragua and Lake Managua. These are the largest lakes in Central America and among some of the largest lakes in the world. From 12,000 feet you could tell how big the lake is when there is a point that you can't see the shores.

Now it had been about five hours of flying and we were hungry. So pulled out the sandwiches Carmen Gloria had made for us back in Panama. I drank a little bit of Gatorade, not wanting to drink too much especially after Millie's incident. As you can imagine, Millie didn't want to drink anything at all but I convinced her to drink a little bit which she did. I told her we were approaching ONGOS intersection, would be in Salvadoran airspace and landing soon. Since we were on an IFR flight plan when we checked in with El Salvador control they cleared us direct to the Comalapa VOR in order to do the approach into Ilopango. We were in clear VFR conditions and I wanted to land. A couple of calls later I just canceled IFR and headed VFR straight to Ilopango.

No sooner had I cancelled IFR when a loud squeal came over my headset. It was so loud I ripped the headset off since it hurt my ears. Now, without my headset and with such a noisy airplane there was no way I could hear the radio. So I turned the noise reduction feature off and put them back on. I tried turning the feature on and off but the loud squeal came right back. I tried this several times with no luck so I just left the noise reduction feature turned off. Now I could really appreciate the active noise reduction function of the headset. Although I could hear the radio, it wasn't as comfortable as with the feature working. Millie asked me what had happened and when I told her she insisted we swap headsets. She knew it was more important for me to hear the radio calls than for her to do it. Anyways, since we were close to landing she would only have them on for a short while. As soon as I get to the house I will send them off for repair. I could not go back to flying without active noise reduction headsets even though I had flown my entire career without them. I had gotten spoiled with the new headsets.



A few minutes later I was in a position where I could do a straight in approach to landing at Ilopango. But once again I was too high while too close to the airport. Keeping you high in altitude is just air traffic control's way of maintaining safety in mountainous areas. So once again just like back in Panama, no matter how hard I tried I could not lose all the altitude and airspeed by the time I was on

final. Since no one else was in the traffic pattern I told the tower I would do a 360° turn before landing. This gave Millie a great chance to take pictures of the area as I maneuvered. When I came out of the 360° turn I was lined up almost perfectly for landing on runway 33. We touched down after just over five and half hours of flight. We had a good tailwind after all.

After landing we taxied to the international ramp to clear customs and immigration. Since it had been over 5 1/2 hours of flying we were hungry and ready to get home. I let Millie go to the Aero club restaurant while I taxied the airplane to the hangar. It took about 45 minutes to unload the airplane and load our stuff into the truck. Then I drove to the restaurant and sat down for lunch. A few of my pilot friends were there and they were curious about the flight. We talked while I ate lunch but I was ready to go home. Saying goodbye to them we got in the truck and drove home.

Thanksgiving Day 2009 had been another great adventure for us with our airplane. We had gotten to overfly the Central American countries we had not done yet and spent great time with our friends Willie and Carmen Gloria. Millie had been able to see the Panama Canal and we have met some new friends. It had taken us 12 hours of actual flying in four days. These are adventures and stories we will never forget. Once again we had been flyers not tourists.