



Dear Lynn & Ken,

You poor things. Fancy having to struggle for articles to publish in our newsletter. I for one feel rather ashamed, although I do have a reasonable excuse. It's been absolutely hectic around here since Christmas time.

In December I commenced fabricating the wings, ailerons, elevator, and rudder, and since that time have completed, painted and transported the aircraft from my home to the airport to meet a deadline inspection date by our M.O.T. for the 24th February, all single handed, but on a full time basis as I am now retired.

Since my Osprey is the first of type in New Zealand it was necessary to have the final inspection performed by CAA engineers from Head Office in Wellington. In all, five different people carried out very detailed inspections, and fortunately the only things requiring attention were some additional placarding and a safety guard ring around the engine press to start button. There is a great deal of paperwork involved at the completion of construction, but after having waded through all this in a systematic way, I finally received that magic slip of paper - known in our country as "Temporary permit to fly". This is issued for a period of 3 months and enables the owner or test pilot (in my case one and the same) to fly off the test programme. There are 11 foolscap pages of exercises to be performed and according to results recorded, will depend the issue of the full "Permit to Fly" license.

Tuesday the 13th March dawned fine and calm - in complete contrast to the feeling in the pit of my stomach. I had on the day previously carried out a series of taxi tests, and after correcting a nosewheel steering problem, was able to taxi the full length of the runway at 45 knots balancing the aircraft with elevator to keep the nosewheel about 12 inches off the tarmac and not let the tailskid touch. This proved to be a most valuable exercise as it gave me a real feel for the authority of the elevator. Now it was 7:15am I would try one more full length 45 knot run - yes that was O.K., I am satisfied. After 5 years of spare time and one year of almost full time, this was it!! I had run out of excuses and I had no where else to go, so after a very concentrated cockpit check and clearance from the tower, I lined ZK-RJT down the centerline of the 4000 foot runway. Along with a great rush of adrenalin I moved the throttle forward all the way. Acceleration is very rapid and in a very short length of runway had reached 60 knots and when I rotated, the aircraft popped up into the air as though she had waited far too long for the command. Immediately, I could feel that everything was in trim so applied the brakes, raised the gear and called the tower for clearance to 5000' where stalls, wheels up and down were completed in order that a safe approach speed could be arrived at for my first landing. As I let down from this exercise the tower cleared me onto downwind for 07 which would take me right past our house if I widened the circuit a bit, so it was that I was able to bank around the house and share some of the pride and joy of the moment with my wife Leigh. She said afterwards that the Osprey looked beautiful with the early morning sun glinting on the new