

"The Luckiest Stinson Around - N6336M"
by Aubie Pearman
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Dear Larry,

I have some interesting stories about a local Stinson. I have flown this airplane on several occasions. It is very special to me because this is the first Stinson I ever flew. This Stinson is no longer a local airplane, but it is the luckiest Stinson in the entire world, it's N number is N6336M.

The first lucky event occurred to N6336M at a small airport in a little town called Pontotoc, located in North Mississippi. The Stinson was sitting in the doorway of a large hanger nosed in (ie nose first). The airplane wasn't all the way in the door, just sitting about half way in with the tail sticking out. The owner was changing the oil or doing something to the engine.

Outside the hanger there was a Champ tied down. The owner of the Champ was known to take a two hour lunch and sneak out to the airport to fly his Champ. The little Champ was a cute little airplane, but it had two problems one being, no electrical system, and the other it was sometimes difficult to start - unless the throttle was about half open.

This happened to be one of those days. After a dutiful pre-flight, the little Champ was untied except for the rope still holding the tail. The owner attempted to start the Champ, alone. It was lunch, everyone was gone, the tail was still tied so what could go wrong?

He cranked and cranked on the prop, no luck. Went around the airplane, must need one more pump on the throttle or an additional squirt of prime. Back around to the business end of the Champ, cranking on the prop until near exhaustion.

This time back in the cockpit, he move the throttle about half open. Now once again at the prop - **THAT REALLY WORKED!** The Champ came alive. So much so that the tail tie down gave way. The helpless pilot grabbed the only thing he could reach, the wing strut.

This is really a serious situation, airplane racing directly toward the aft end of a Stinson with the pilot in tow. The pilot at this an point lost his grip on the strut and falls to the ground watching the Champ racing toward the parked Stinson. As soon as the Champ lost the drag of the dangling pilot it leaped into the air but only inches above the Stinson. The Champ flew pilotless over the Stinson barely missing it by inches but the left wing of the Champ slammed into the hanger door. The force of the collision swings the tail of the Champ which, is still suspended above the parked Stinson, toward the front of the Stinson. The Champ's engine is still running at a good clip (almost wide open).

The Champ with all of its energy expended, still suspended it's position just offset nose to nose with the Stinson, the Champ falls about 15 feet straight down. It is only inches from N6336M. Once the Champ hit the floor the prop begins chewing the top out of a 55 gallon barrel. All of this happened within a 10 foot sphere around the Stinson.

The second part of this Stinson story occurred about 12 years later under the care of a different owner. This is the story of an absolute miracle. The owner at the time kept N6336M in a hanger at 5A6 airport, located in Winona, Mississippi. As you may or may not know in the spring months the possibility of tornados is quite high. At this little country airport the hangars are arranged in a line approximately north and south. There were four hangars constructed with wooden poles and rafters using tin as a covering.

The Stinson made it's home in the second hanger by counting from the northern most hanger. As bad luck would have it, as the line of thunderstorms approached the owner was reassured by the fact that the Stinson was inside the hanger. After the worst of the storms had past the owner drove to the airport to check on the Stinson, just to make sure.

As he entered the airport driveway his heart began to sink as he saw the three southern most hangars were gone. But to his surprise and relief, standing in the driving rain like a proud lady, the Stinson was only slightly damaged. The tornado had lifted the hanger completely clear of the Stinson. The only damage to the Stinson was caused by two of the boards from the roof of the hanger. One of the boards tore the fabric and was inserted completely through the fuselage. The second board was stuck completely through the right wing in the outboard section. Considering the possibilities the old girl weathered the situation very well (pun intended).

The story does have a happy ending. N6336M was sold to a another new loving owner, who lives some where in the Carolinas. I have another Stinson story, but I will send it next time.

Sincerely,
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