

AN ANGEL EARNS HIS WINGS

Story and photos by Capt. Chad Nixon, 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support)

SALT LAKE CITY — For Maj. Albert Lehmann II, Facilities Engineer for the 807th Medical Command, the love of flying came at an early age. At age five, Lehmann would travel with his father in his Beechcraft Bonanza airplane. At 12 he began private lessons with the dream of one day earning his license.

As Lehmann grew and time passed his love for flying never faded. After returning from Afghanistan in 2012, he and his wife Martha looked to purchase their first plane.

“It took a little convincing,” joked Lehmann. “I bothered her a bit but she was kind enough to give in.”

It didn’t take much because after a little more flight training Lehmann earned his license and they bought a 1969 Cessna Turbo 210 Centurion.

“I believe everyone should pursue their dreams,” said Martha. “Flying allows Albert to concentrate on his personal goals, and when he flies he is in control of his destiny.”

After some flight time and additional training to increase his flying skills, Lehmann began to feel like something was missing.

“Flying for fun is exciting and serving in the military is rewarding, but I felt like I was missing a sense of mission,” said Lehmann. “While visiting an airport last year, I found a flier about Angel Flights and quickly realized

that this is the purpose I was searching for. I could use my love of flying to help others in need.”

Angel Flight West (AFW) is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization that arranges free, non-emergency air transportation within the 13 Western states for children and adults with serious medical conditions. AFW matches up volunteer pilots to people in need, enabling them to receive medical treatment and other vital care that might otherwise be inaccessible because of financial, medical, or geographic limitations.

Angel Flight West (AFW) links volunteer pilots in private aircraft and our commercial airline partners with people in need whose health care and other circumstances require them to travel to and from facilities to access services. The costs of all flights are donated. There is never a charge for an Angel Flight West mission.

In addition to medical flights, they arrange transportation for other humanitarian purposes, such as individuals and families escaping domestic violence; injured military personnel taking part in therapeutic programs offered by veterans’ organizations; and prospective parents hoping to adopt a child. Because not all healing takes place in the hospital, Angel Flight West also serves as the “official airline” for a number of children’s special needs camps attended by youngsters and teens.

Though not qualified in 2014 to fly for Angel Flight he continued to work toward his goal of achieving enough flight hours to be an Angel Flight Command Pilot. Lehmann completed the requirement and began flying Angel Flights this year.

“What could be better than to do what I truly love and help people while doing it?” said Lehmann. “Angel Flight West gives me the opportunity to volunteer and help make a difference in the world while being able to exercise my passion of flight.”

Chasing his dream of being a pilot has opened up new opportunities for the Lehmann family.

“I fly with him wherever he goes and we have adventures,” said Martha. “Albert has always taken care of his soldiers and Angel Flights allows an extension of his caring. It’s been our pleasure to help those in need.”



(Clockwise from top) Albert F. Lehmann, the father of Maj. Albert Lehmann poses for a picture with his Beechcraft Bonanza airplane in Bridgeport, Conn. Lehmann credits his love of flying to his father and their time spent together; Albert Lehmann II, and his wife Martha flying over the autumn trees in their 1969 Cessna Turbo 210 Centurion while taking a trip to Rifle, Colo.; Lehmann signals a thumbs up after completing his pre-flight checks before taking off on his first Angel Flight voyage at Salt Lake City International Airport. Lehmann serves as a volunteer pilot donating his time and airplane to transport people in medical need; Young Albert and his sister Bryarly C. Lehmann pose for a photo at Bridgeport Airport, now named Sikorsky Memorial Airport in Bridgeport, Conn.; An aerial photo overlooking Desolation Canyon, Utah on the way to Rifle, Colo.

