



Can You Show Me How to Get There? (Said The Seaplane Pilot)

Friday August 4th – After Jeff's funeral Julie and I needed to get back to our kids and boat in Prideaux Haven. We arrived at Northwest Seaplanes terminal in Renton for our flight back at 8am. While waiting for our flight in the lobby our pilot was getting a briefing on where he was going. Everyone in the lobby could hear the conversation that went something like – "Ok so what your going to do is fly to Nanaimo, land there and clear customs, then fly to Refuge Cove drop off some passengers then on to Prideaux Haven to drop off the other two". The pilot was then asking questions about where to land in these locations and weather or not he need to get fuel in Nanaimo. It was all a little unsettling for Julie and I.

We boarded the plane with 3 other passengers going to Refuge Cove. The pilot was very nice but didn't have that confidence about himself that pilots usually have. He was fidgety and took some deep breaths just before taking off that really added to our anxiety. Just as we got a few hundred feet in the air he gave us a wheeeewww... as he wiped his hand across his

forehead. Not at all comfortable with this situation Julie and I looked at each other with a bit of fear in our eyes. He flew the plane just fine but his body language did not give us confidence. I thought to myself, if he doesn't land this plane good in Nanaimo we are getting off! Thankfully it was a good landing. The pilot got out on the dock and we waited on the plane for the customs agent. We talked with the other passengers about this experience and they agreed with the uneasy feeling.

Back in the sky the pilot landed way outside Refuge Cove then taxied all the way in asking the other passengers where the seaplane dock was located. The other 3 passengers got off leaving just Julie and I on the plane. Then the pilot looked at us and said, "do you guys know how to get to Prideaux Haven"? Is he joking? Nope, he was serious; he's never been there before.

After trying to explain it to him from the back seat he asked me to come up to the co-pilot seat to navigate. I crawled up to the front seat as we taxied out of the bay and put on a headset so we could talk with each other. He took off as I explained where we needed to go and how to get there. Prideaux Haven doesn't have a dock; you need to get picked up by dinghy then taken into the inner bay where boats are anchored. We were only about 7 miles away but you still have to navigate through islands and I explained to him how it's customary for pilots to buzz the harbor where people are anchored so your pickup knows you have arrived. He buzzed the inner bay then I explained to him where to land. He did a great job but landed a little short just outside the next bay over. No big deal, Todd came over on the dinghy and picked us up and the kids greeted us back.

Happy to be off the plane Julie and I explained the whole ordeal to Todd then quickly grabbed a couple drinks back at the boat to calm the nerves. It was an experience we will never forget and I guess I can check off my bucket list

“navigating a seaplane”.

To the pilots credit, he actually flew the plane really well even though he looked really nervous. We later learned he had been flying planes for quite some time but not to those locations.

The rest of the day was spent relaxing, swimming and exploring in the dinghy.



Pideaux Haven from the air



Our boats in Prideaux Haven



The rope swing never gets old



Ava mid flight. At least she knows where she is going!



Ava and Sean on the tube



The girls are very silly together

