



Bell 505 Testimonial George Tecklenborg



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Interview with George Tecklenborg
Bell 505 Pilot and Certified Flight Instructor

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

“TEACHING IS SOMETHING I ENJOY AND STRIVE TO BE GOOD AT. I THINK MY SPECIALTY IS HELPING PRIVATE PILOTS WHO HAVE A PASSION IN HELICOPTERS THROUGH THE JOURNEY OF GETTING A LICENSE AND BECOMING A SAFE PILOT”

I started flying fixed wing in the mid-1980s as a teenager and flew recreationally for probably about 10 years. I gave up on it for a bit while starting a family and building my career in the construction industry. The flying bug never leaves, though. I always wanted to fly helicopters but didn't have the money or the time at that point. In 2008, I did my helicopter training with Chinook Helicopters and received my commercial license. I flew 100 hours, doing 50 hours on a Bell 47 and 50 hours on a Bell Jet Ranger 206B. After that, I leased a Bell Jet Ranger 206B for a year from Chinook and then bought a piston driven helicopter. In 2014, when I had more helicopter experience, I went to Chinook because I had a bit of a teaching bug in me. I have been teaching ever since.

Teaching is something I enjoy and strive to be good at. I see my specialty as helping private pilots with a passion for helicopters through the journey of getting a license and becoming a safe pilot. I also help them with their journey in purchasing a machine, recreationally flying and inevitably recurrent safety training.

I started the Instagram account @padtango a few years ago with the goal of posting once a day to share my passion for aviation. In the meantime, I've become a bit of a commercial pilot on the fixed wing side over the last few years and now flying a Citation Jet, which is lots of fun as well. It's fun to spread the joy through Instagram.





WHY ARE HELICOPTERS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB?

“THERE ARE MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THAT HAVE SPECTACULAR LANDSCAPE, BUT FROM HERE I CAN DEPART AND EITHER BE ON A SNOWY HILLTOP OR BESIDE AN ALPINE LAKE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE IN 20 MINUTES.”

Helicopters are the ultimate flying machine, airplanes are good for going places. Two days ago I went flying with a friend in his Turbo Beaver, for which I have a float rating. We were off landing on some lakes here in British Columbia. If I wasn't already a helicopter pilot, I really think that float plane flying here in B.C. would be truly the pinnacle of flight, but helicopters are better. They are the magic carpet of flying. We're blessed to have this terrain in B.C. There are many other parts of the country that have spectacular landscape, but from here I can depart and either be on a snowy hilltop or beside an alpine lake in the middle of nowhere in 20 minutes. That is such a privilege and a joy; it's incredible to share. My objective with the people that I work with as an instructor is to keep them safe while doing it.

WHAT FEATURES ATTRACTED YOU TO THE BELL 505?

“MY FIRST IMPRESSION FROM THE DEMO FLIGHT IN THE BELL 505 WAS THE AMPLE POWER AND GREAT VISIBILITY”

My first impression from the demo flight in the Bell 505 was the ample power and great visibility. When we first started hearing about the 505, a few things struck me. I could see that Bell was trying to achieve the open cockpit concept, which I think has been very successfully done with this machine, as well as to use proven parts and pieces, a concept I'm a big fan of.



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The Safran engine, of course, is new to the Bell line. I've done a bunch of instruction in the H120 as well, which shares the same engine, although it does not include the Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC). It's night and day between the H120 and the Bell 505 in terms of performance and how everything works. The FADEC choice is excellent; it's the way of the future. It's perfect for anybody on the private side. I spent quite a bit of time in Bell Jet Rangers and depending on which aircraft I jump into, whether flying normally or instructing a student, the starts can be a little too exciting. It's really nice with the FADEC, not to have to worry about any of that.

“FOR PRIVATE FLYERS THAT ARE GETTING THEIR TYPE RATING ON THE BELL 505, I LOVE THE FADEC. FRANKLY, IT JUST SIMPLIFIES MATTER SO MUCH”

For private flyers that are getting their type rating on the Bell 505, I love the FADEC. Frankly, it just simplifies matters so much. A FADEC start, a few quick checks, click to fly, and I'm ready to go! It's quite a bit simpler than the older machines. With new student in this aircraft, I'm not worried about slippery fingers on starts and I'm not worried about somebody cranking in too much throttle when they're spooling up the engine; the FADEC and the switch does it all for the pilot.



Glass is the way of the future, even though it can represent a bit of a training hurdle. I'm hesitant to use that term, but there's definitely training required to get used to everything that's available from the Garmin G1000H. With that being said, I love the Power Situation Indicator, the situational awareness, and the information that you can get from the displays. It's fantastic because everything's integrated and everything works together. The beauty is that it works so well as compared to a bunch of independent pieces that are providing their own little part of the equation for you. Even on an older Bell Jet Ranger, you have three different gauges to look at for your power limits and lots of numbers and gauge pieces to work from. Maybe there's a bit of an adjustment for any pilot to move from analog to digital, but it happens pretty quick. Because the G1000H is fully integrated, everything is built to work together. There's a lot of people that upgrade their helicopters to have a G500. While it potentially improves one part of the equation, it doesn't pull it all together like the G1000H does.



I was doing some auto-rotations a few weeks ago and I really liked it. I have found that there's a couple second delay, which as an instructor, you need to be quite familiar with on the FADEC and the response if doing a power recovery. It's much better than being concerned about over torques and doesn't take long to get used to. It works very well, and very seamless. I'm a big fan of the Bell 505 for autorotative training.

“I ALWAYS APPRECIATE THE EXTRA MASS OF BELL PRODUCTS AND BELL BLADES WHEN FLYING IN THE MOUNTAINS.”

While other products can gain pretty good performance because their light weight, it comes with the cost of turbulence issues and discomfort in the mountains. That's a key negative in other products, their handling in turbulence. I always appreciate the extra mass of the Bell products and Bell blades when flying in the mountains.

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING WITH BELL

The delivery process was fantastic. Definitely a top-level delivery process that is well done. I really appreciated the opportunity to speak to Bell engineers in Montreal. I had a few technical questions, and it was really thrilling in fact to talk to the test pilot. If he didn't know the answer, he phoned an engineer or program expert up and received an answer from them. That's fantastic.

