



March 20, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

I never met Charlie Hirsig that I can remember. He died when I was just four years old. However, I feel like I knew him well. He was a close friend and colleague of my father, W. Dillard "Pic" Walker. Charlie was killed flying one of my father's Luscombe 8A basic trainers of which Plains Airways operated 33 of these aircraft during WWII's CPT program.

Charlie was the manager of Plains Airways Laramie base. Before he died, Charlie would own the Laramie operation and become the founder of Summit Airways. Summit would later become Challenger Airlines.

Charlie Hirsig enjoyed a wonderful reputation as a pilot, manager, and entrepreneur. Later, when Charlie Hirsig's name came up, my father would recall his affable smile and warm demeanor. My father said Charlie had a way of getting people to do the impossible just with his smile.

I would happily know Charlie's widow, Marion, and his children, Kay and Jimmy. Jimmy was one of my closest friends growing up. He had a photo of his Dad next on his bedside table. In the photo Charlie is looking skyward. His image has stayed with me for more than seventy years!

When I think of all Charlie Hirsig accomplished in the thirty four years his life spanned, I'm truly amazed. He was responsible for hundreds of pilots and mechanics to learn their trade during WWII. He improved the flight program of Plains Airways Laramie division and grew the flight operations beyond what my father had done before him.

Then, Charlie began his own successful aviation enterprise with Summit Airways which would become Challenger Airways and, in 1947, Frontier Airlines.

Frontier was the safest airline in the world-wide history of civil aviation. Frontier flew in and out of black holes and mountain valleys in mostly older aircraft such as the venerable DC-3 and Convair aircraft. Frontier would fly from Canada to old Mexico and in the US from coast to coast, safely. In the forty year history of Frontier, a single fare paying passenger was killed when a DC-3 lost a battle with low-level icing near Miles City, Montana. Based upon the most stringent measure, that of the number of take-offs and landings Frontier's incredible safety record will never be equalled.

Charlies Hirsig's efforts were the beginnings of a truly marvelous aviation story. I am proud to add my name to those who would like to see his memory honored by the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame.

Respectfully submitted,

Billy Walker  
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