Lee’s Story
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I'm borrowing this one, and I likely have some of the details wrong, but the yarn should survive it. Maybe improve on it.

Lee, my number one son, is a prof at the State University of New York in Albany and the father of my number one GrandKid, Joan. He learned to fly at the University of California in San Diego, magnificently located on the edge of the Torrey Pines bluff overlooking the Pacific, just north of La Jolla. At that time, and perhaps still, sailplanes played in the ridge lift along the bluff, and one could sit on the edge looking down a couple of hundred feet to the surf below, and outwards only a few feet to the silent wingtips of passing sailplanes. Well, not exactly silent, they hum a little.

Lee was captivated, of course. He volunteered for winch duty, trained in two seaters, both powered and not, got his pilots' and instructors' licenses, accumulated hours in his logbook, and in his turn took on status in the local soaring club. Lots of stories there, aside from this one.

Some years later, while a grad student here at University of Washington, he got a late night phone call .. out of the black, so to speak .. telling him to get on a plane RIGHT NOW to St. Louis, that a ticket had been reserved for him, and HOP TO IT, KID. "Whoa!", he said. "What's all this about?" After some back and forth it came out that the Cessna people .. their headquarters are in St. Louis .. had gotten his name from someone as a likely last-minute replacement for another pilot who had dropped out for unspecified reasons, to deliver a Cessna, and would he just get on the GodDamn commercial flight, please, and all will be explained when you get here. So he did.

Next morning, someone picked him up at an airport motel in St. Louis and drove him a short way across .. well, around .. the airfield to the Cessna complex on the other side. There he was met by sales-type people in suits who explained to him that the plane had been ordered by a physician in Teheran, with strongly promised delivery not later than a couple of days hence, and would you climb in, please, and take off on the first leg to Montreal?

Lee said "No."

Some chatter later, that got revised to "I want to talk with a pilot and a mechanic."

And after some more chatter, still later, "I won't do it unless you install a three-degrees-of-freedom autopilot [and some other stuff I now forget].

And after still more chatter and an overnight spent installing stuff he took off.

Wow.
His plane, by the way, was a two engine Cessna 411, fitted with an extra fuel tank inside the fuselage, behind the pilot.

Montreal to clear customs, then Halifax and Thule, landing there by special permit at the USAF airbase [saluted, by the field personnel and "Would you kindly park your craft over here, Sir?"] where he slept that night in the Bachelor Officers' Quarters. Much close look at the weather next morning, then take off for Rekjavík under midlevel stratus that lowered progressively as he flew eastwards, with a tense hour when he was out of radio range with everybody. Rekjavík to Gatwick, then a long flight over Europe to southern Italy [Legorno?], and thence on another long flight via Ankara thru airspace disputed between Greece and Turkey, and on to Iran.

He landed at 00:Dark:Hundred at Isfahan, whose airfield served both military and civil aircraft. Following instructions from the tower he parked a long walk away, secured his plane, gathered his gear, and began to hike between two long rows of top-of-the-line military jets, F-15s, parade-parked with sequential tail numbers, wingtip to wingtip, all of them luxury models with all the bells and whistles, rows extending forever onwards into the dark, but obviously not recently flown. Silence. Bright lights. Lots of planes. Dark all around. Metaphor there, somewhere.

At the control office he signed out for his delivery, was put on a bus to some hotel, and ordered to fly home commercially the next morning, without layover. Later he learned that his delivered plane had done its job, carrying the physician owner and his family westwards to safety, just ahead of the Ayatollah.

Cheers,
Halstead

PS. Those planes were inherited by the Islamic Revolution, of course, but it's unlikely that any ever flew, after that time, for lack of parts and pilots. Would there have been a revolution at all, I wonder, if the money had been spent otherwise on rural infrastructure, especially schools and roads, with rural labor.

Lee and I were then working closely together at UW. He didn't tell me this story until some weeks afterwards.