



I was thinking of how I got my experience in helicopters. It all started in San Marcos in 1951. I volunteered to work on helicopters from fixed wing Piper Cubs.

We had six Piper Cubs and I was a gas and oil man for eight hours a day on the flight line. The Line Chief came by and said they needed mechanics to crew helicopters on the other end of the field. So off I went.

I was assistant crew chief on a Hiller H-23. I went to OJT school in morning and helped keep the aircraft flying in the afternoon. It was all new learning how to grease the rotor head and drive shaft. The H-23 the H13 were the smallest trainers we had. The big helicopter was the H-5 and the H-19 hadn't come out yet. Those were the days.

As I learned more I got to work on the H-5 and it need a lot of care. I remember some days we would track the blades both morning and night. The blades were fabric over a steel spar, what

a night mare. Additionally the head had to be greased every day, but I loved every minute of the work and learning. I even got to be a crew chief.

When the H-19 came out I got to go to the factory school. We picked up the first five aircraft and flew cross-country to Texas. It took nine days as we flew VFR with no wind.

I think the ferry flight real made it for me as we flew with the pilot and crew chief, so I had to help fly. We were an attraction wherever we landed for fuel, mostly military bases but some civilian fields. (Otto Kroger)