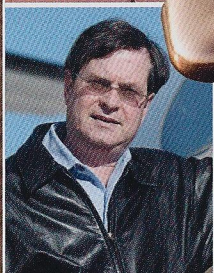
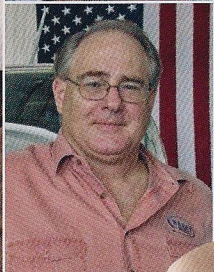
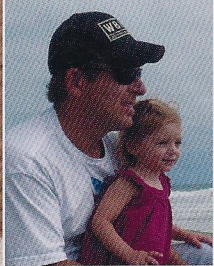
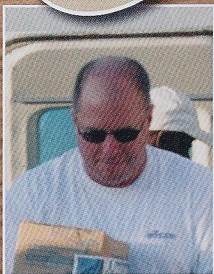


# The Real Faces of *Business Aviation*

by Dianne White



**W**ho are the people using business aviation? Most of them are not running Fortune 100 companies or flying to exotic locations for opulent off-site retreats. Instead, they are the ones who are turning the gears of America's economy.

The owners of these companies are flying to meet face-to-face with clients or using their aircraft to bring customers to their facilities. They are moving employees quickly to help victims of floods or fires recover and rebuild their property. Entrepreneurs are using airplanes to build new businesses that will in turn create new jobs. Finally, you can find them on front lines of delivering food, medicines, doctors and medical supplies to remote corners of the world suffering from catastrophic natural disasters.

In the following pages, we'd like to introduce you to a few of your fellow Twin & Turbine aviators. They, like you, are the real faces of business aviation.



## Brett Meares

### President, Gulfside Construction Services

When Brett Meares first got his pilot's license in 1982, he couldn't have imagined that it would become a tool in saving thousands of lives. Nor would he imagine his Mitsubishi MU-2, routinely used in his Florida-based disaster recovery and construction business to move crews from job to job, would become a lifeline for delivering food and medical supplies to remote areas of the Haitian countryside.

What started out as a desire to fly "just a few flights" developed into a two-month, 24/7 commitment that resulted in 190 humanitarian missions.

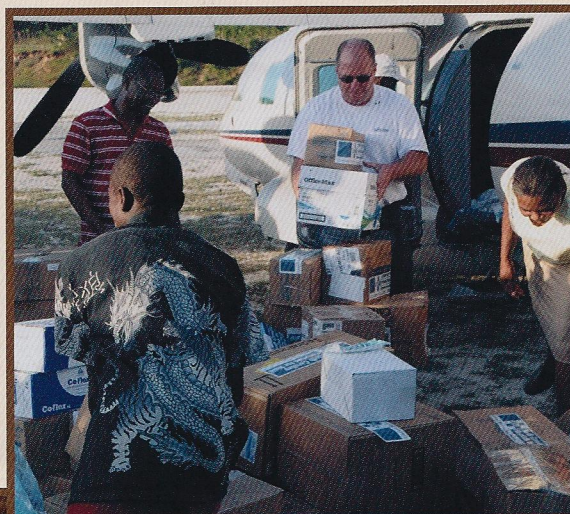
"I've done other charity flights for Angel Flight, but nothing like this," he said.

In the best of times, Haitian people live on the edge of existence. If food stops coming in to Port-au-Prince, the country's single shipping port, within a week people are starving. The earthquake had effectively shut down the port. Even though the earthquake didn't affect all of Haiti, the supply line had stopped and people were going hungry.

The initial call for help came from his contacts at Angel Flight.

Meares' first mission was to fly rice and beans from Columbia, S.C., to a Haitian orphanage near the rural town of Jeremie. After delivering his cargo, Meares asked a nun if there was anything in particular she needed. The answer: baby formula. They were losing three to five children a day to starvation.

Meares flew to Santiago, Dominican Republic to see if there were any supplies that could be flown back to Haiti. Walking past a warehouse at the airport, he struck up a conversation with a relief coordinator. During their talk, he looked down and noticed he was sitting on a pallet of baby formula. After working out the bureaucratic kinks, Meares flew the formula, along with medical supplies back to Jeremie.



"It's like Haiti had a massive heart attack and general aviation kept it alive." Meares said. "There was no doubt in my mind, if the aid wasn't delivered, people were dying."

This developed into somewhat of a routine: Meares would fly food from South Carolina to Haiti, and then spend three or four days ferrying supplies from Santiago to different locations within Haiti. Finally, he'd load up homebound relief workers and fly them to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where Banyan Air Service had set up a hub for people and supplies going back and forth.

Most of the runways in rural Haiti were unimproved strips or even roads converted to temporary runways. Meares joked that he had to get over his fear of FOD during his relief missions.

"I used to be extremely anal-retentive about FOD, to the point I would get out and pick up a rock I saw on the runway," he said.

Meares' final mission was to deliver millions of dollars of medical supplies from Santiago to Jeremie, Haiti. "There were 40 pallets of stuff and we had three days to get it done. The aircraft cabin was stuffed like a sausage tube," he said.

Although Meares has flown and owned practically every cabin-class twin under the sun, he prefers the MU-2's performance and payload utility. The aircraft's flawless performance during the extreme demands of his Haiti missions proved the aircraft's value to Meares.

But the missions confirmed something else to Meares: "It reinforced my belief in the natural goodness of humanity. I think it is the nature of humankind to respond in a positive way to something like this," he said.