
CAA Chapter 32 News

The official publication of Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 32 - St. Louis, MO (Jim Bower, Editor)

May, 2021

Our Chapter participated in a Young Eagle rally at Creve Coeur airport on June 5th. Here are two happy Young Eagles.

Scattered throughout this newsletter are some great photos of the event taken by our own Lisa Miano. Thanks, Lisa!

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WE HOPE TO SEE ALL OF YOU AT THE JUNE MEETING! 10:00 AM JUNE 19TH AT THE ARC. MASKS ARE NOT REQUIRED IF YOU'VE BEEN VACCINATED, BUT WE'RE STILL PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING.

Newsletter Contributions and Deadlines

Anyone wishing to submit articles, advertisements, rants, etc. to the newsletter should send them to your friendly editor on or before the Saturday ahead of the scheduled meeting. Send contributions to newsletter@caa32.org.



“We are a family – A family brought together by aviation.”

Paul H. Poberezny

“Aviation seeds must be transplanted to future generations if we are to see our rich heritage passed on for others to see, to feel, to touch, to fly.”

Paul H. Poberezny

Last month I shared these two quotes in the newsletter. It’s amazing to see those aviation seeds beginning to sprout and grow. And it appears they’re growing fast.

I mentioned last month I was sensing the pent-up demand among our general population to get out and enjoy life again. I’m sure you sense it too. Memorial Day weekend saw the CAF exhibiting their aircraft at Spirit of St. Louis Airport on the ramp at TAC-Air. I wasn’t surprised to learn they maxed out the available seats on their flights in the B-25 and TBM and had booked several overflow flights yet to come. Well done to our airport neighbors and friends! Keep ‘em flying, guys!

We’ve now had two Young Eagle events this month! On Saturday, June 5 we started off at Creve Coeur Airport (IHO) as part of a larger youth aviation and STEM event. Wow, what a turnout! I’m so thankful to all our members who showed up to assist with registration and acting as ground crew along with several from our fellow chapter (1402) in Sullivan, Missouri. I’m not sure of the count but I believe we flew over 75 kids!

To be sure, the day was full of challenges but lots of fun as we worked hard to keep everything running smoothly and above all safely on the ramp. Again, thank you to all our pilots for your never-ending patience as we frequently changed the plan on the fly to accommodate other traffic on the ramp and activities in nearby hangars. Everything worked out great and at the end of the day the event organizers showered us with praise for Chapters 32 and 1402. We made some new connections with like minded organizations based at

President’s Corner

by Bill Doherty

IHO so I’m looking forward to building on that to grow interest in aviation in our area among all generations.

This past Saturday, June 12 was of course International Young Eagles Day. We’re back at it in our home with Laura conducting Aviation Merit Badge classes, many of you working registration, flying kids, and being ground crew. I saw a well-practiced team in action! I saw families getting personal tours of Chris Ward’s Zenith project. I heard from multiple parents that their son or daughter was now hooked and super excited to have flown. It’s so rewarding to see such ear to ear smiles on the kids as they come back and to see them so full of joy. Meanwhile, yours truly was hard at work cremating, I mean cooking, up hot dogs and burgers for the crowd. Thank you to all who assisted with any and all of the above. I’m sure Rick will have the final numbers, but for June, we’re over 100 Young Eagles and still counting!

We meet again for our Monthly Chapter Gathering this Saturday at 10:00 AM at the ARC. In accordance with our discussion and vote last month, masks and face coverings are now optional. I think we’ve been able to get through a year of wearing them without any harmful effects for the most part...

If you haven’t been vaccinated, they’re still highly recommended to be worn, especially if you’re indoors. Try to keep some social distancing when possible. I know we’re all tired of this but there’s no harm in continuing to be vigilant.

This month I invited Ed Ruhbeck and his daughter Grace to talk to us a little bit about weather. This is a time of year when we all want to go flying and also a time when the weather can change quickly. Ed is not only a retired Air Traffic Controller with Oshkosh experience but also an experienced pilot and flight instructor. Grace majored in Meteorology at the University of Missouri and currently is a Flight Coordinator with Spirit Jets at Spirit of St. Louis Airport.

With AirVenture fast approaching I’d like next month if we could review the approach procedures to KOSH. I’ve never flown into the convention (and won’t be this year either) but I’m always fascinated about the method by which so many aircraft are brought into the airport and hearing about others’ experiences. To me, hearing those experiences is also a great learning opportunity to visualize some of the good and the challenging that

actually happens during that approach and even after landing. Any volunteers to lead the discussion?

We'll have a movie on Saturday, June 26 at the ARC. We'll start around 6:00PM with food with the film as soon as it's dark enough. Feel free to bring a dish to share and a comfy camp chair. This month we have a feature from deep in the aviation cinema archives. International Squadron (1941), starring Ronald Reagan as an American pilot flying in the Eagle Squadrons for the RAF during the Battle of Britain. Paul Mantz was the aerial coordinator and flew during production. Also in the movie are Olympe Bradna and James Stephenson.

I haven't seen it so, who knows? Sounds nice and cheesy...

I'll bring a backup just in case it's unbearable.

As always, check out the EAA.org website for past and upcoming webinars and other programs. There's a lot of interesting videos to choose from. Here's a link where you can find this month's Chapter Video with Charlie Becker. Check out the neat in-cockpit video with Sean Tucker about Young Eagles Day. I'll try to send a link to these chapter magazine videos as soon as they're out from now on.

<https://www.keaa.org/videos/chapters?playlistVideoId=6256473958001>

That's all I have this time. I'll see you at the ARC or maybe around the pattern!

Until then stay vigilant and fly safe!

***Blue Skies!
Bill Doherty,
President
EAA Spirit of St. Louis Chapter 32***



May Meeting Minutes

Dave Deweese



May's meeting began with the Pledge, Bill Doherty presiding.

No visitors or new members this month.

We're going to restart movie night, Dave Doherty suggested bringing food. In honor of Michael Collins we're going to show the Apollo 11 documentary, we watched the preview.

Next we watched Charlie Becker's chapter video message.

Note that there are committee signup sheets going around with the attendance sheet, sign up if you're interested.

Flood report: the Mississippi is at 15.2 feet and falling.

We approved last month's minutes as published in the newsletter.

Don gave the treasurer's report including checking, savings, and Ray Foundation account balances.

We've got three candidates for the Ray Foundation scholarship: Vasilli, Marco, and Wesely. Chris Ward reports that we're waiting on results of the ground school test.

There were two Young Eagles events this month: Friday 5/7 for Dave Zilz's STEM students, and another the following Saturday. Rick read from the thank-you note Dave sent. The next will take place 6/5 at Creve Coeur/1H0, followed by 6/12 here for International Young Eagles' day: we'll try to do food in compliance with HQ suggestions. Laura will also be on hand to do a scout badge program which will boost attendance. Dave Brickhaus is involved with a program at the St. Louis Science Center, they'd like to do an event 6/26 or 7/10 for around 12 kids, see Dave or Rick if you'd like to participate. Next Saturday there will be an event in Perryville, they've already got 70 kids signed up and 5 aircraft: another opportunity. Note that for June, July, and August will give double points. Jim Hann notes that there will be an airport open house at 1H0 October 2 or 3 to try to grab foot traffic from the pumpkin farm.

Regarding YE workshops Tim Dempsey held one recently. He intends to hold more, Rick asked to be notified and will send kids, he's also planning to monitor to see if it's feasible for us to try these events. Bill's thinking of a fall window.

Reconstituting the Explorer Scouts post is still on target for fall of 2021. There was a virtual meeting this week. Plans for the group include tours of KSUS facilities - Bill Doherty is arranging this. He's also looking to contact the Air Evac helicopter facilities. A TRACON tour is another idea.

The membership committee met 5/14 on Zoom. They're planning to use the free chapter roster management tool from HQ for now, and to consult with other chapters to see if there are alternatives. An online chapter membership application form is another idea. [volunteer]

The fundraising committee needs volunteers. Currently Mike Schwartzkopf is handling food cards, Amazon Smile, and Shop with Scrip. Mike wasn't here this month but Ron Burnett was present with cards. He notes that the shop with scrip app is very easy to use.

The CAF has a Wings Over St. Louis event scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend.

On June 6 at the Olney, IL (OLY) airport there will be a pancake breakfast.

New business:

We're too late get Victoria in the 2021 group for the memorial wall, we'll get her in the 2022 group. Order's already been sent to the engraver. Depending on funds we're also considering Lee Arnold, Bud Cole, Al Donaldson, Bill Blake, and Vince Morris. As each one's a \$500 donation these would happen over time, we'll discuss further in future meetings.

Bill asks if we want to continue requiring face coverings at our meetings or move to voluntary. We plan to keep arranging chairs with some spacing for now. We discussed and noted that YE events are separate: we'll still require masks there. He moved and seconded to go from required to "highly encouraged but not required, excepting Young Eagles events." Voted in favor.

AirVenture chapter camping: we need 6 spots. Jeff Stephenson listed off the group that plans to participate and notes we can add more for \$28/night.

June's chapter presentation will be aviation weather and meteorology with Grace Kennedy and Ed Rhubeck.

Updates for member projects.

Chris took his door frames out for coating: they'll match the green in his color scheme. The radios are mounted and ready to start wiring. After that will be landing gear, then engine. He's shooting for end of 2021 to have it completed.

Art and Rusty have wiring in the wings checked out and have mounted the lights. All the other lights are working and they're working on the plumbing between the fuselage and wings.

Bob's tying up loose ends and doing paperwork for his Zenith. He's looking at perhaps a month before his first flight.

Dave Doherty reports that the RV-6A needs the front windshield installed.

Jim Hann notes that the bill limiting hours per year for standard category 25+ years-old airplanes from 50 to 200 hours per year before extra taxes kick in.

Dave has some stuff from Bob Kraemer's estate that he doesn't want but will give to the chapter to use as we will.

After the meeting Bob Murray held the hands-on session of his electrical systems workshop. Bill asks what other workshops we might be interested in: fiberglass, welding?

Battery For Sale

Odyssey PC680 battery; still tests normal but not sufficient for electric dependent engine. Purchased May 2018. Ideal for build to test and power systems, or even sufficient through weight and balance phase. \$30.00.



Will deliver at meeting Saturday. Ron Burnett (314) 518-8563

For Sale

Zenith 601/650 empennage Kit, save big \$650.00



Learners as we Go

JUNE IS NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

“OLD MIND, NEW TRICKS!”

&

“GET ‘ER DONE!”

mr. bill

Wow, it is now summer and, by the looks on people’s faces, (which I can now see) we are mask FREE! With this new freedom things are again starting to open up and pop. And the sad times are turning into fun times again. Though the unseen side effect of all this commotion is that while “things” were closed and we all were hunkered down at home, many of us builders looked in our basements, garages, and hangars and with all this time on our hands, said, “It is time to finish these airplane projects!” Read that as Larry the Cable Guy saying, “Get ‘er done!”

The orders at Wicks are so stacked up that their visit to The Oshkosh Airshow has been put off until next year.

It has been written that if you want to place a Kitfox Aircraft order for a new plane it will be two years before the kit will arrive.

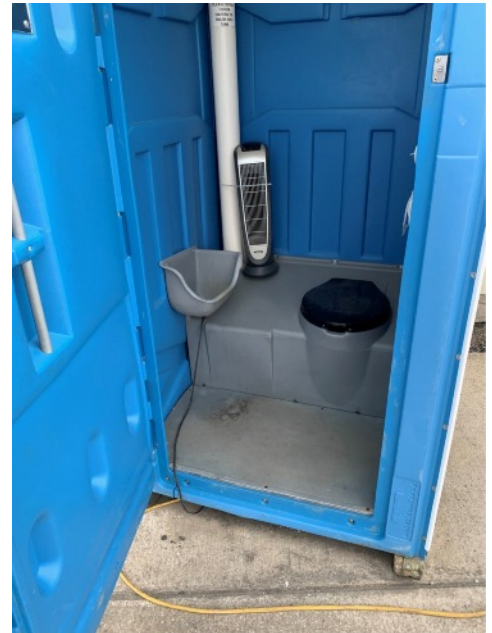
**SO, DURING
THE
PANDEMIC,
PEOPLE GOT
SERIOUS
ABOUT**

GETTING THINGS FINISHED!

Speaking of getting things done, our hangars at KSET, St. Charles Smartt Field are looking good.

THANK YOU Mr. Dennis Wiss, Airport Director, for the good work. I now have a Big Light and a Porta Potty.

All photos from mr. bill’s article



**Though, some people
have a heated
bathroom!**

EAA 32 and EAA 1403 had a GREAT showing at the Creve Coeur Airport STEM Conference held at the airport on June 05, 2021. As I turned into the jam packed parking lot, you just knew it was going to be a BIG event!



Again EAA Chapter 32 & 1402 (Sullivan, MO) shined with the Young Eagles Program. When no kids were there for the ground school (we don't need no stinking ground school we got Google.) the Bills (mr. bill and President Bill) sprang into action to be Safety Guys on the ramp for ALL the goings on. Needless to say, EAA flew 75+ kids that day in all different directions on that limited ramp space we were provided.

A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE YOUNG EAGLE PILOTS

The system works on the ground when the pilots trust the ground crew. We dealt with 2 helicopters, one being towed, one flying around, and a fuel truck that was delivering fuel in the middle of the event at noon on a beautiful Saturday afternoon at Creve Coeur Airport. (Really!) Then, someone told that fuel truck driver to park and leave his loaded fuel truck in the middle of an active taxiway!!!

Again, A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL **SAFETY** GUIDES who helped direct the airplanes and to those pilots waiting patiently for the rampers to get stuff moved!

Then IYED, known as International Young Eagles Day, June 12, 2021 was a great success at the EAA 32 Aviation Resource Center, the ARC. Ms. Laura had the Boy Scout Aviation Badge Class going and again the YE Pilots trusting their ground crew to handle the **SAFETY** operation of the ramp!

Again, with **SAFETY** being the Number 1 priority of this chapter, we have flown over 100+ kids this year in a very SAFE operation. Thanks to all who make that happen.

SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

Again, I would like to thank my good buddy Dave Deweese, who has to explain to the many parents who watch my Young Eagles flights, with their child in the plane, taxi out to the runway and then actually doing the take off. I instruct the children and in the beginning it is shaky. But they soon catch on and realize that this flying stuff is NOT that hard to do. This year I took the parents of the Young Eagle girls for the flight in the backseat of the Cessna C-182. The Moms had a blast as they watched her child actually get to taxi out and fly the airplane. The mom muttered, "I want to do this!"

But the best part of my day was having 45 minutes left before I had to return the airplane back to Saint Charles Flying Service so I could toss Dave into the left seat of the Cessna 182 and let him fly. In Dave's words, "My 54 year old brain is trying to not turn the control wheel like I am driving a car! URRGGHH!"



Q? Who won the Collier Trophy for 2020?

A: Garmin Autoland wins 2020 Collier Trophy. Things in EXPERIMENTAL aviation have made it to General Aviation. These computers can now find the closest airport, set up for an AUTOLAND and in some cases AUTO BRAKE, and stop the general aviation airplane on the runway.

Boy, the Wright Brothers would be amazed at what we can do now.

Next month we will talk about the "Right Sisters."

This Just in from Troy Airpark



Mr. Jonas U was awarded a RAY Scholarship

Dave McGougan's Kitfox Project

I am making a little progress on my plane, but it is slow! My third try on my doors went badly when I screwed up a piece of Plexiglas with my heat gun so I have stopped on the doors for a while out of frustration and moved on, I bought a number of used instruments from a guy in Wisconsin, who I hope is legitimate. So I started fitting the panel in the plane and working on the pitot system. Also started fitting the cowlings which are for a model 4, so must be trimmed. I hope to see the gang at the next meeting, life got in the way of the last two.

Lo and behold, I received my instruments this afternoon! Still need a couple more, but this is most of it, if they work. I can lay out the panel now and start plumbing!



Aviation Explorer Post 9032

Status Update as of June, 2021

Post 9032 currently has plans to reopen and have their open house on September 15th at 7:00 PM with the first Post meeting occurring in October. A bit of planning needs to happen up until that point so please be sure to attend the Advisor Interest Meeting at the ARC on June 19th at 9:00 AM if you're interested. At the Advisor Interest meeting we will be discussing what Aviation Explorers is, the commitment as an advisor, and what the action plan is moving forward with the Post leading up to our first meeting with scouts. We are currently targeting 6-8 weeks of planning and prep for the post which you can expect an overview of in the July EAA Chapter 32 newsletter.

We already have two new potential advisors: Chrissy Kujawa and Andrew Hedlund! Both of which participated in Aviation Explorers during their high school years. Chrissy and Andrew are from the Racine and Springfield Aviation Explorer posts, respectively, and have moved to St. Louis to work for Boeing as engineers.

Several of our current advisors attended a Gateway Youth Aeronautical Foundation event at Creve Coeur Airport which has opened some possible opportunities to partner with the foundation on future events or activities. On that note, if you have any ideas for youth activities or know of any youth between 14 and 18 years of age, please send an email to Andrew Mallek (amallek@post9032.org).

That is all for now but be on the lookout for more updates and info as we plan out the program for the Post!

Advisors-Needed!¶

Interested in becoming an advisor for Aviation Explorers Post 9032? Attend the interest meeting!¶

What: Advisor Interest Meeting¶

When: 9:00 AM, June 19th at the ARC¶

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!¶





Fly In

PLANE WASH

SATURDAY, JULY 17

9AM - 4PM

WINGS OF HOPE HANGAR
SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS AIRPORT - KSUS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
ALPHA ETA RHO
PI CHAPTER



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
—
PARKS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING,
AVIATION AND TECHNOLOGY

APPOINTMENTS FILL UP FAST!

Sign up at wingsofhope.ngo/planewash or
email tiffany.nelson@wingsofhope.ngo

COFFEE & DONUTS IN THE HANGAR!



Young Eagles - June 2021

Rick May

Our Young Eagles crew has been very busy already this June. It would appear that everyone is ready to get back out this summer and get back to doing things that were common pre-covid, and that includes aviation. It is great to be back around airplanes, airports and flying when possible.

On June 5th we took the event on the road to Creve Coeur airport. Along with members of chapter #1402 in Sullivan MO, we attended their "Youth Aviation Day". A couple of key players in this event were the "Gateway Youth Aeronautical Foundation", the "Historic Aircraft Restoration Museum" and the airport itself. While not a complete airport open house there were many displays including flight schools, colleges, career opportunities, and aircraft static displays. A big thanks to all our members who helped out at his event an enjoyable day with a lot of activities for all to experience throughout the day. You can see many pictures from this event at <http://aeroexperience.blogspot.com/>. As a combined group we had eight aircraft at Creve Coeur and flew, 73 Young Eagles. While no one had a specific number, I would estimate there were 300 or better people at the airport exploring the different areas and sights.

With another week, comes another Saturday and another Young Eagles event for chapter #32 and our dedicated volunteers. This past Saturday (June 12th) we participated in the 28th annual "International Young Eagles Day" at our home base at KSET. This was actually our 2nd Young Eagles Day rally in 2021. The May event was primarily what I am calling a "start-over event", to see if we all remembered what we were supposed to be doing, the weather was lousy and we only flew about 6 kids. This was certainly not the case this past Saturday on the 12th. It would appear the "start-over" worked well. We had 8 pilots plus another 15 or more volunteers, Laura held her first Boy Scout merit badge class (15) for the year and best of all President Bill fired up the grill. For the day, we flew 48 kids, the weather was beautiful for the morning flights, and everything went as good as it always has in past years, as if we had been doing it for 6 months. All of you make our Y.E. program the successful, smooth running engine it has grown to be, and it is great to have it up and working again and to be able to share our mutual gratification we have for each other and what we do. Thanks to all of you and a special thanks to the double duty volunteers that helped over the last 2 Saturdays.

Total #32 Young Eagles Flown 2021 YTD	126 (It's only June)
Total #32 Young Eagle Flights 2019	185
Total #32 Young Eagle Flights 2018	217
Total #32 Young Eagle Flights 2017	294 (best year in at least 10)

Future '21 Rally Dates (Proposed) July 10th Aug. 14th Sept.11th Oct. 9th

Future dates will not be posted to www.YEDay.org until 30 - 60 days before date of the event.

If you are or want to be a volunteer for #32's Young Eagle events please go to the above website and register as a user. This is not a commitment to attend all scheduled events, it is a communications & registration tool for all participants, volunteers, pilots, and ground crew.

The Story of the Navy's Best Kept-Quiet Cold War Boondoggle

By Bill Walton, Avgeekery.com

Thefts of civilian and military aircraft for joyriding have occurred many times in the past. There's that time US Army PFC Robert K. Preston stole a Huey and took it for a joyride around Washington D.C. Marine Corps LCPL Howard A. Foote once took a night time joyride around southern California in a VMA-214 Blacksheep Douglas A-4M Skyhawk. The military, for good reasons, tends to keep such thefts quiet. Perhaps the most publicized civilian joyride in recent memory occurred on 10 August 2018, when Richard Russell took off in a Horizon Air Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 and flew it around the Puget Sound area before he perished when the aircraft crashed. But for sheer scale, range, raw flying ability, and relative obscurity, strap in and hold on because this one's got them all beat.

Fleet Service and Early Storage

From Burbank 522 found her way first to Overhaul and Repair (O&R) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. From there the aircraft went west again to Fleet Aircraft Service Squadron ONE ZERO EIGHT (FASRON-108) at Burbank on 7 January 1955. The first patrol squadron (PATRON) to fly the aircraft was Patrol Squadron ONE ONE (VP-11) Proud Pegasus based at NAS Brunswick in Maine when 131522 arrived there on 15 February 1955. But, strangely, VP-11 flew the Neptune for less than a year before she was transferred to the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center (MASDC) at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (AFB) in Tucson, AZ. There she was placed in storage.



Back in the ASW Game and Bolting On More Power

Four months later on 19 March 1956, 131522 was transferred to VP-16 War Eagles at NAS Jacksonville. On 28 February 1957 the aircraft was transferred to the NARTU (Naval Air Reserve Training Unit) based at NAS Anacostia in Washington D.C. Nearly a year later on 3 March 1957 the patrol bomber was sent back to Lockheed for rework to P2V-5F specification. More power was bolted on, with a pod-mounted

Westinghouse J34 jet engine added under each wing and the radial piston engines replaced with more powerful Wright R-3350-32Ws. The jet and piston engines both burned Aviation Gasoline (AVGAS). Four of the underwing rocket pylons were removed but payload was increased to 10,000 pounds.

The Aircraft in Question

Oddly enough the story begins with an aircraft. Lockheed P2V Neptune (Model 526) Bureau Number (BuNo) 131522 (MSN 426-5403) was constructed as a P2V-5 by Lockheed at their Burbank facility and accepted for service by the US Navy on 29 July 1954. The aircraft was initially fitted with an Emerson nose turret with two 20 mm cannon replacing the solid nose of earlier variants. The aircraft retained its dorsal and tail turrets. Other changes from previous Neptune variants included larger jettison-able wingtip tanks. The starboard tip tank was equipped with a traversable searchlight slaved to the nose turret. The port tip tank was equipped AN/APS-8 radar in the nose. The aircraft also carried the AN/APS-20 search radar in a ventrally mounted housing.

Heavy Mining and Globe-Trotting

After rework, BuNo 131522 emerged as a P2V-5F and was sent to O&R at NAS Alameda on 25 May 1957. From there the aircraft crossed the country for more O&R, this time as NAS Norfolk. Most likely this time was used to make modifications necessary to enable the aircraft to carry out airborne mining missions, because on 27 March 1958 she was transferred to Attack Mining Squadron ONE THREE (VA[HM]-13) on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean. Upon return to CONUS on

30 November 1958 131522 went to NAS Chincoteague in Virginia for service with the Naval Air Ordnance Test Station (NAOTS). Active duty beckoned again in 1959, and the Neptune first answered the call on 31 January 1959 with VP-24 Batmen (formerly VA[HM]-13) out of frigid NAS Keflavik in Iceland. The next assignment for 131522 was with another fleet squadron- VP-8 Tigers out of NAS Norfolk beginning on 14 October 1959.

Back to Lockheed for Another Round of Mods

After a fairly short stint with VP-8, 131522 was flown to NAS Alameda for O&R and service with the Naval Bureau of Weapons (BuWep) on 4 January 1960. After her time in the Bay Area the aircraft headed south to Lockheed at Burbank for more rework. The nose gun turret was removed and a glass observation nose installed in its place. The dorsal gun turret was removed and its opening glazed over. The tail turret was removed and a Magnetic Anomaly Detection (MAD) boom was installed in its place. Crew accommodations and wingtip tanks were revised as well. By the time work on 131522 was complete it was nearly Labor Day weekend, 1960.

I Swear She Was Here a Minute Ago!

A crew of five from Ferry Squadron THREE (VR[F]-3) out of NAS Norfolk was assigned to fly 131522 from California back to the East coast. The crew flew the Neptune from Lockheed Burbank to NAS North Island in San Diego. There the aircraft was serviced, its fuel was topped off, and it was made ready for the next leg of the journey while waiting for a co-pilot to arrive. On 3 September 1960 the crew chief, Aviation Machinist Mate First Class Robert Harold Swain, proceeded to pre-flight the aircraft, button it up, start the engines, and taxi it to the active runway. After requesting and receiving clearance for takeoff, Swain departed NAS North Island at about noon local time headed for points East. But...Swain was all alone in the aircraft- and he wasn't even a rated pilot!

Not Quite a Pilot But Quite Experienced

As a P2V Neptune crew chief/flight engineer, Bob Swain had logged more than 1,700 hours of aircrew flight time during his nearly 17 years in the Navy. Swain had observed hundreds of takeoffs, missions, and landings from the flight engineer's jump seat just behind and between the pilot and copilot of the Neptune. However, he had exactly zero hours at the controls of the aircraft he was now flying. NAS North Island wasn't aware of



Swain's unorthodox departure until they heard from NAS Norfolk. Meanwhile, Swain's ability to pull off his theft of one big patrol bomber was explained by his access to the aircraft as the crew's designated crew chief and flight engineer.

So How Does Just One Man Fly a P2V Neptune Anyway?

Let's take a moment to acknowledge that the P2V Neptune is a fairly large airplane- larger in fact than a World War II-vintage Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber in every dimension. The Neptune also carried a large crew- as many as twelve (sometimes more) on a maritime patrol mission. The crew consisted of Officer pilot, copilot, tactical coordinator, and navigator with enlisted weapons system operators, sensor operators, radio man, electronic warfare specialists...and in every case an enlisted flight engineer/crew chief/plane captain. No other member of the crew was more intimately familiar with the aircraft and its systems than Bob Swain. The crew required to ferry the aircraft from one air station to another was ordinarily considered to be between five and seven. But never only one and certainly never one with zero hours as patrol plane commander.

Putting Down in Louisiana

Somewhere along the route to Norfolk Swain encountered strong northeasterly headwinds that drove him off course. When Swain neared Shreveport, Louisiana his fuel was running low. He made a pass over the field, Greater Municipal Airport (now Shreveport Regional- about 10.5 miles west-southwest of Barksdale AFB) which had a single

runway longer than a mile. Swain received permission to land and landed the Neptune successfully about halfway down the runway. He ran off the runway edge at one point but recovered before taxiing the aircraft to the end of the active. Rather than taxi back down the runway to the apron, Swain parked the purloined patrol bomber at the end of the runway, shut it down, and made his exit. When asked if he wanted more fuel, Swain replied he did not and then proceeded to the terminal.

Heading for the Hotel for Crew Rest

Swain asked for a phone and contacted the Tanglewood Lodge, a local motel, and made arrangements for a room. He arrived by taxi and paid for the room. He then began talking with the lodger about having just landed a big plane at the airport and that “anyone who can land a plane like that is pretty damn good pilot.” Swain said, “We had to take some people somewhere. They told me to fly some more people to another plane, and you know what I did? I just took that plane and flew it here.” Evidently Swain might have tipped back a couple of libations before telling his story to the lodger.

Busted and Stashed with SAC

Airport officials first found out the Navy was looking for Swain when they received calls asking about the Neptune- now parked at the end of the runway. City and Military Police were notified and traced Swain to the Tanglewood Lodge, where he was taken into custody at about 2030 local time. Because the Neptune contained the latest (highly classified) antisubmarine warfare sensors and equipment the aircraft was guarded by Military Police while at Shreveport. A Navy crew ferried the aircraft over to Barksdale AFB later the next day, Sunday 4 September 1960. Bob Swain was held in custody at Barksdale AFB, where at the time B-52s had just began replacing B-47s for service with Strategic Air Command (SAC).

You Can't Keep a Good Neptune Down (For Long)

Mostly unharmed after her unauthorized journey halfway across the country, 131522 finally made it the rest of the way to NAS Jacksonville for service with VP-16 War Eagles on 16 September 1960. On 26 February 1961 the Neptune switched units to VP-7 Black Falcons but stayed at Jax. On 18 September 1962 131522 was redesignated as a P-2E. When VP-7 deployed to Rota in Spain between April and October of 1964, P-2E Neptune BuNo 131522 went along. On 16 March 1965 the Neptune went into storage at Litchfield Park, then a

Navy Storage facility in Arizona. That facility is now Phoenix-Goodyear Airport and is still an aircraft storage facility- but for civilian aircraft (mostly airliners).

Ending Up as a Crash Test Dummy?

In December of 1965 131522 was transferred to MASDC at Davis Monthan AFB when Litchfield Park was disestablished. Removed from storage again on 15 January 1971, the Neptune went to the Naval Air Reserve Training Detachment (NARTD) at NAS North Island. On 5 March 1972 the aircraft was struck from the Naval inventory with a total of 6,179 hours on the clock and transferred to the Naval Air Reserve Detachment (NARDET) Columbus at Lockbourne AFB (now Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base [ANGB]) in Columbus OH. There the aircraft was used for ground training for several uneventful years. But on 9 February 1979 the Air Force requested the airframe be transferred to them in place so 131522 could be used as a crash/fire rescue training device- which would have resulted in its eventual total destruction. On 28 February 1979 the aircraft was transferred from NARDET to Air Force custody. But that's not the end of the story- or the aircraft.

Why Did Bob Do It?

Bob Swain's actions were absolutely unprecedented and very mysterious. Air Force officers from Barksdale AFB (where Swain was held) said Swain gave them no reason for his actions other than he was ready to go so he did just that without waiting for the pilots or the rest of the ferry crew. Prior to his “solo” flight Swain reportedly had an exemplary service record, with three commendations for outstanding service and a Good Conduct Medal with two Bronze Stars. A spokesman from Ferry Squadron THREE (VR[F]-3) based at NAS Norfolk said that Swain “had no disciplinary marks against him.” Swain was 34 years old with nearly 17 years of Naval service, married, the father of two daughters, and living in Norfolk at the time.

Convicted and Demoted But Still In the Navy

The Navy kept a fairly tight lid on the story. After all, the P2V Neptune Swain flew halfway across the country by himself was a critically important piece of the Navy's ability to detect, track, localize, and kill Soviet submarines. Supposedly the Air Force was very impressed by his airmanship. However, on 15 December 1960 Aviation Machinist Mate First Class Robert H Swain was court martialed and found guilty of

“wrongful appropriation of an aircraft” after the board deliberated for an hour and twenty minutes. Swain was reduced in rate to Aviation Machinist Mate Airman Recruit (from E-6 to E-1) and fined \$25 per month for six months. Swain could have received a maximum sentence of a Bad Conduct Discharge. And frankly it’s surprising he didn’t.

The Sub Hunter Becomes a Fitting Tribute to a Lost VP-7 Crew and All Veterans

On 6 May 1982 P-2E Neptune BuNo 131522 was transferred to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3761 located in Baltimore OH. After the transfer of ownership the aircraft was transported to the grounds of Liberty Union VFW Post 3761, located at 2155 Reynoldsburg Baltimore Rd NW, in Baltimore, OH 43105. There the once purloined patrol bomber can be visited today. 131522 also received a more accurate paint job depicting the aircraft during her final active service paint scheme while in service with VP-7 Black Falcons.



The Final Crew of 522

According to Don Bates (who would certainly know) when 131522 was taken out of active service in early 1965 her crew consisted of pilot LCDR Bob Byerg, copilot LT Bob Harris, navigator LT Larry Johnson, TACCO LT Bob Crabtree, crew chief/plane captain ADJ2 Don Bates, non-acoustic sensor operator ATR2 Howard Hollweg, acoustic sensor operator AX2 John Delconte, electrician AE3 Wayne Des Rosiers, radio operator ATN3 Henry Rustmann, second mechanic ADR3 Richard Woody, and ordnance man AO1 Herb Jung.



But...What About Bob?

Despite the liberal use of Ouija boards, fortune tellers, Magic 8 Balls, and miscellaneous dark sorcery, as well as literally turning the interweb upside down to see what would fall out of its pockets, this scribe has been able to verify precious little information about Robert Harold Swain either before or after his decidedly unorthodox flight. One unsubstantiated source claims that Bob Swain later became the plane captain for the Commanding Officer’s P-2E Neptune at VP-21 Black Jacks at NAS Brunswick in Maine.

Other Unknowns

It’s also not completely clear where Swain was headed when he departed NAS North Island. His eventual landing in Shreveport seems to support a destination of NAS Jacksonville, which was where 131522 was eventually assigned, but he could also have been headed back to Norfolk and strayed off course during his “solo” flight. If any reader has any insight into Bob Swain or any of the details of this story please comment or contact us with the information. We will credit all sources.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Not long after this story was published I heard from Don Bates, who was the crew chief when 131522 was retired from active duty. He provided several of the pictures of 131522. Thanks Don!

Bill Walton

Bill Walton is a life-long aviation enthusiast and expert in aircraft recognition. As a teenager Bill helped his engineer father build an award-winning T-18 homebuilt airplane in their Wisconsin basement. Bill is a freelance writer, an avid sailor, engineer, announcer, husband, father, uncle, mentor, coach, and Navy veteran. Bill lives north of Houston TX with his wife and son under the approach path to KDWH runway 17R, which means they get to look up at a lot of airplanes. A very good thing.



NC-85862 1946 Aeronca Chief 11AC-256 Rescue and Restoration

Mike Benne
Jon Benne



N-85862 came into existence on July 16, 1946 as it emerged from the Aeronca assembly line at Dayton Municipal Airport in Vandalia, Ohio. The Aeronca Chief is a single engine light aircraft, has a maximum weight of 1350 pounds, a range of 400 miles with seating for two abreast, shoulder to shoulder. The Chief does not have an electrical system, and the engine is started by hand-propping the Continental A65-8 65 horsepower engine.

The brief extant files of the aircraft on file with the FAA list it as having damaged right wingtips as early as 1947, new belly wood and fabric in 1949, and complete recovering of the aircraft fabric in 1958 and in 1966. It was originally painted in the stock Aeronca lemon yellow color. The left-wing spar was spliced near the wing tip in 1969 and the forward landing gear oleos replaced. The most recent and final logbook entry, in mid 1975, after logging a total of 1121 hours mentions a top overhaul on the engine performed along with an annual inspection. For some reason, the aircraft wings and control surfaces were removed shortly thereafter and the now red and white Aeronca Chief was left and forgotten in a miraculously dry Sedalia Missouri barn. Fortunately, the fuel had been completely drained and the engine preserved. In July 2020 with the owner in poor health, the aircraft was listed for sale.

Two trips were made to Sedalia to examine the remains of the Chief. On the first trip, an examination was made of the fabric and wooden parts, and an accounting of all of the pieces and bits that had been removed from the fuselage over the years. Surprisingly, 99% of the original aircraft and aircraft parts, along with the engine and the engine components remained. One magneto was missing, and someone unwittingly had cut a short section of ¼ inch metal tube off of the rudder and left elevator frames. The metal tube and strap frame seat was missing. However, the interior wood bulkheads and stringers that supported the 1966 vintage fabric were still viable and corrosion to the steel and aluminum parts was minimal. Some rodent damage had occurred, especially within the wings. However, many of the original Aeronca flight instruments remained, and the zebra wood grained front panel was still intact and was attractive.



We were grateful that previous owners had not cut holes in the front panel and added additional flight instruments protecting the

vintage look. The original log books had been lost, but a new set had been started in 1969. An inspection of the engine cylinders showed clean bores with no rust. The assessment revealed that the remains of the aircraft was suitable for a complete restoration with a budget that would not exceed the present market value of existing recently restored Aeronca Chiefs, considering that the restoration labor would be free time. A beautiful wooden Sensenich propeller for the aircraft along with an unairworthy wooden prop suitable for hanging on a wall sealed the deal. Jon bought the plane, and Dad helped him get it home.

The second trip involved the closure of the sale and transportation of the aircraft back to our hangar at St. Charles County airport. Thankfully, Caleb Hunter of Extreme Electrical / Salt River Automotive loaned us his F-250 truck and heavy trailer for the pickup of the fuselage, wings, struts, and the related unattached aircraft items. It took a full day to travel, retrieve the Aeronca from the barn, load, unload and store the aircraft in the hangar at St. Charles County airport.

The first order of business the next day was to re-assess the purchase and to clean the 45 years of dirt and debris that had accumulated inside the fuselage. A partial skeleton of an opossum was found in the belly of the airplane along with a bushel basket full of tree leaves, dirt and grime. The fuselage fabric was washed and it revealed that the previous owner had applied paint stripper to a portion of the fabric. Over the next few weeks, the fuselage fabric was stripped off of the frame, the landing gear, and the engine was removed.

Engine Work



The Continental A65-8 four-cylinder horizontally opposed engine is delightfully simple, a simple crankcase with the basics. It has all of the necessary moving parts, crankshaft and camshaft, pistons,

valves and rockers, two magnetos and nothing more. No starter or generator/alternator, and a screen in place of an oil filter. They are usually installed with a float type needle and seat updraft Stromberg carburetor. There is no mixture control on the carburetor. That's about it; there are no additional accessories, except a tachometer drive output connection. Dependable, about 10,000 A65's had been built in the time period between 1938 and 1966. They powered J-3 Cubs, Luscombes and Taylorcraft and weigh about 171 pounds.

Over the late fall and winter, the engine was completely dismantled, cleaned, and each part was carefully inspected. The crankshaft, connecting rods, and camshaft were sent to be magnafluxed to check for cracks. The connecting rod on cylinder three failed the magnaflux as it had a small fissure on the neck near the piston pin and was discarded. A yellow-tagged replacement was quickly found for the cracked connecting rod. Since the old engine oil had congealed in each of the eight cam followers,

each follower was disassembled, cleaned, and washed in solvent and reassembled. Each cylinder was also cleaned and painted, honed, with the valves ground to their proper angle and lapped to the valve seats. One exhaust valve was out of tolerance after the angle grind and was replaced.

Two S6LN-21 Bendix Scintilla rebuilt magnetos were purchased along with shielded ignition cables along with new engine gaskets, seals, piston rings, and bearings. These older model magnetos do not have impulse couplings and make it a little harder to start the engine. The Stromberg NA-S3 carburetor was in remarkably good condition. There was no old fuel contamination, and was missing the usual varnish found in float bowls that had sat for years. The carburetor was dismantled, inspected, and cleaned. The existing float needle with a Delrin tip was replaced with a full stainless-steel needle along with a new seat according to a Stromberg service bulletin. The metering jet sizes and venturi diameter installed in the carburetor were verified to match the engine size and type. The carburetor was painted, existing screws were replaced and safety-wired. The engine was reassembled in accordance with the Continental engine service manual.

Herman Rea of Skylink Aviation volunteered the use of his small aircraft engine test stand and a 40-inch diameter clipped tip club propeller for the test engine run. The test stand had survived the flood, and needed a good power wash and a coat of paint, but served its purpose well. We added a small reservoir for fuel along with a shutoff valve, a pair of mag switches, the existing Aeronca oil pressure gauge, the tachometer from the aircraft which actually spins counter-clockwise, and a fuel primer. The overhauled engine mounted directly to the existing engine mount on the Skylink Aviation test stand.



It isn't easy trying to hand prop a shortened prop and start a new engine with new rings and a lot of compression. It took a little while to get the engine started on a cool March day, especially if two of the cylinders aren't firing correctly. We had assumed the labels on the magneto (each wire was individually labeled 1-2-3 or 4) would individually go to each respective cylinder. The firing order of the engine is 1-3-2-4, with a magneto firing order of

1-2-3-4 and we realized that mag wires 2 and 3 were crossed. After the ignition wiring was corrected and a couple of good primes, the engine started immediately. We ran it for about five minutes and then shut it down as we weren't prepared to run it for a break in period. The engine is currently stored.

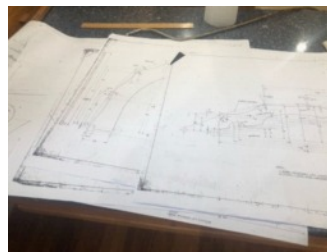
Fuselage Work

Once the fuselage frame had been completely stripped of its 1966 timeworn fabric, we removed all of the wood stringers and bulkheads which give the Chief the typical aerodynamic shape. We noticed that most, if not all of the wood had been replaced by previous owners. We removed all the cables and cable guide pulleys, the instruments and instrument panel, the control yokes and rudder pedals, and trim handle. All of these parts including the tail control surfaces and wing struts were cleaned in our grit blast cabinet or went to Blastco in Wentzville, Missouri. Jon tackled the removal of the original primer and paint on the aircraft frame, and we built a wooden rotisserie to make his job easier. This task required a lot of hand-work, particularly around the numerous cluster welds. He is nearing the end of this task, which will soon lead directly into a primer coat of paint on all of the bare metal of the frame and grit blasted parts.



There are five wooden bulkheads on the Chief, fourteen stringers running the length of the aircraft, two wooden rear

window frames, and some lattice work supporting the fabric cover over the cabin. When these were removed from the fuselage, there were a few broken stringers, along with a couple of repaired bulkheads. We took our time removing these pieces because some were a bit fragile, but others appeared in good enough shape to reuse. However, as this has become an extensive "frame up" restoration, we decided that all wood pieces will be replaced.



Jon has joined a number of Aeronca Associations (such as the National Aeronca Association) that provides to its members a CD of all of the original Aeronca

blueprints. These have become invaluable in remaking many of the Chief parts. Jon talked to Bill Pancake, the original Aeronca go-to guy who has over 5000 original Aeronca drawings, and has had six Grand Champion Awards at Oshkosh. Bill spent about an hour on the phone with Jon and sent him drawings of the Chief headliner and other parts.

Current Status

We've made good progress in less than a year of occasional work on the project. In March, Jon purchased all of the fabric and coatings during Wick's Aircraft 10% off sale. The fuselage has been stripped of paint, many smaller parts have been grit-blasted and cleaned of 45 years of grime. We will begin painting the primer on the metal frame soon. Then reassembly and rigging of the controls will begin. Jon would like to keep to the original paint scheme on the airplane, a lemon-yellow color with light blue trim. Both wings are stored in our hangar and one has been stripped of fabric. As expected, it will require some work....

Please feel free to stop by sometime if our hangar door is open, we are in 3-5 at KSET. You can also see progress on Jon's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/777009989574542>



Mike Weinberg's Zenith Cruiser

I've got a Zenith Cruiser in the works. The elevator and horizontal stab are all done. The rear fuselage is as done as it can be before I get the controls installed and I'm deburring and de-labeling the forward fuselage. Later this month I'm picking up a Viking 130 (engine) in Florida! Attached are the latest pictures on my progress as well as a paint job idea I got from Michael Garber.



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