# EAGLE'S PROPWASH

## FEBRUARY 2015 ISSUE
## CHAPTER 113 *"The Backyard Eagles"*

Fieseler Storch
*Photo Courtesy of Randy Hebron*

Our Web Site: www.113.eaachapter.org EAA113@yahoogroups.com

**Meetings: 7:30 PM** the 3rd Thursday of each month at the ***EAA 113 AVIATION EDUCATION CENTER***
***Mettetal Airport (1D2) 8550 Lilley Road, Canton, MI***

## Member Services

**Class I Board of Directors:**

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| **Vice President:** Shahar Golan | (248) 767-6630 |
| **Secretary:** Debbie Forsman | (734) 397-3452 |
| **Treasurer:** Grant Cook | (734) 223-2688 |

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| **Newsletter:** Elizabeth Hebron | (734) 776-9294 |

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Al Bosonetto, Dave Buck, John Maxfield

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**Flight Advisors:**

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webmaster@eaa113.org

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| Bill Brown | (734) 420-2733 |
| Jim Morency | (248) 981-8127 |
| Pat Trevas | (734) 416-3955 |


### *CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT:*

*"EAA Chapter 113's major focus is on the relationships with people who have diverse aviation interests, centered around their love of flight, fellowship, learning, and fun.*

*Chapter members have a passion for flying and are willing to share it with others.*

*Chapter 113 provides the opportunity for exchange of information, as well as the interaction that leads to friendships that last a lifetime."*

### *BOARD OF DIRECTORS:*

*"The Board of Directors are to provide both advice and assistance to the chapter officers on an ongoing basis."*

# PRESIDENT'S *PODIUM*

**John Maxfield** (248) 890-6767
avee8rrr@yahoo.com
February 2015

This time of year marks a couple of significant milestones for EAA. It's the time when the very first EAA meeting was held in Paul Poberezny's basement, starting our parent organization. It also marks the half way point between last year's AirVenture Fly-In and Oshkosh 2015. Do you think I'm counting the days till we all gather to celebrate the world of flight? You bet I am! The month of February is also the time to renew your Chapter 113 dues and update any changes to your contact information. All of this can be done online by clicking the Chapter Logo button at the bottom of our website, www.113.eaachapter.org or mailed to our new mailingaddress: EAA Chapter 113, 8512 N Lilley Rd, Canton, MI 48187.

My Thanks go out this month to our newsletter editor, Liz Hebron. The new electronic format looks great while including more colorful content for your enjoyment and saves valuable resources at the same time. Remember, the newsletter you receive isinteractive so you can click on links and find yourself right where you need to be.

Our Chapter Frostbite Chili Fly-In is this Saturday, February 7th. Bring your family and friends, as well as, a pot of your favorite Chili or a dessert to share from 11am to 3pm. Our annual Spring Awards Banquet follows on, March 21st with Ed Rusch as our guest speaker. Ed is a pilot and mechanic, currently living in Toledo. He has restored vintage airplanes, mapped much of the world from the air, and has crossed oceans in single engine Cessnas. His personable, entertaining manner, promises to keep the evening light and interesting. Ticket prices are $25 per person if you buy them before the end of February. Prices increase March 1st until the final cutoff date of March 13th. You can buy tickets online using the Ticket Button at www.113.eaachapter.org , by mailing a check to EAA Chapter 113, 8512 N. Lilley Rd, Canton, MI 48187, or as always, see Debbie at the meeting.

The 2015 EAA Chapter 113 Scholarship applications are now available. Find them by clicking the scholarship button on our website, www.113.eaachapter.org . Last year we selected two winners from a record, 23 applications, a lengthy process, but very rewarding in the end. This year's applications need to be returned by March 22nd to be considered.

I'd like to introduce the Chapter's newest member, Mark Curley. Mark lives in Tecumseh and is building an RV-6. Welcome to EAA Chapter 113 Mark!

You may recall The Village Workshop, presented its plans for a "Maker Space" type workshop facility in Northville several months ago. Their building renovation is complete and they invite all Chapter 113 members to their February 28th Open House, prior to their grand opening March 1st. Visit their website at www.thevillageworkshop.com to find out more.

This month's speaker will be Dave Steiner. Dave attended the Duxford England Airshow last year and will share his experience with us. We will also have the opportunity to view the recently completed, Mettetal Airport Promotional Video as well as the monthly EAA Chapter Video from Oshkosh. Stay up to date with EAA 113 at www.113.eaachapter.org and follow us on Facebook!

Happy Landings
John Maxfield

# PAULSON AVIATION & HISTORY *LIBRARY*

**Barb Cook** (734) 277-3469
barb@armipay.com
February 2015

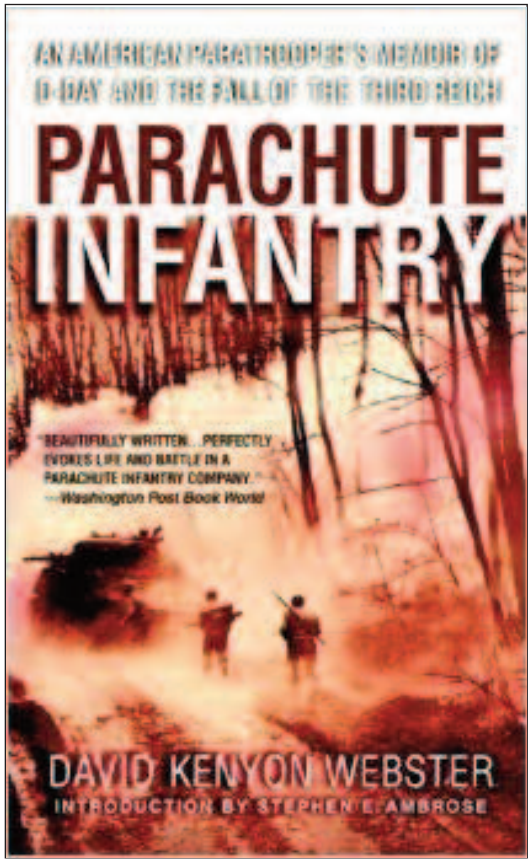
***PARACHUTE INFANTRY; An American Paratrooper's memoir of D-Day and the Fall of the Third Reich***, by David Webster, 1994. Shelf number 940.54 2142 WEB

In the forward by my favorite historian, Stephen Ambrose (*Lewis & Clark, Band of Brothers,* and *Wild Blue*) says, "I recommend this memoir to anyone who wants to know more about World War II, about combat, about being a paratrooper, about discovering oneself and being involved when the whole world was being tested and threatened. It brings back a place and a time, a sense of commitment, the feeling of 'We are all in this together' as the United States and her allies fought for freedom."

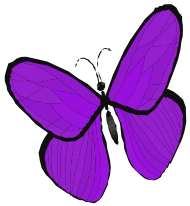
Despite being a man of letters and from a family of means, Webster fought to join the infantry where he was "thrown into an intimate and life-dependent relationship with ill-educated farmers, miners, and lumbermen -- in short, with men with whom he had nothing in common." (p.ii) These fellow squad members developed a bond that is unique to combat infantrymen. Their relationships are closer than those of brothers, different from those of lovers, stronger and deeper than those of friends. (p.iii)

He includes 8 pages of black and white photos of himself and his company in Germany and Austria. The last 30 pages contain some of his letters to family, written from the field during the war.

I found this first hand report simply fascinating.



# Flying into Spring



## EAA 113's Annual Awards Banquet

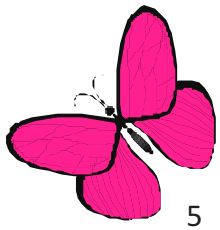
It is now just a few weeks away from the promise of Spring! We will help welcome the arrival of the season on **Saturday, March 21st, 2015** with our **Annual Awards Banquet**. Again this year, it will be held at our own **EAA 113 Aviation Center**. The Gathering of guests will begin at 6:30 p.m. and Dinner will be at 7:00 p.m. Advance tickets are $25.00 per person and will include entertainment, silent auction, full catered meal, dessert, coffee and soda. If you prefer an alternative beverage, you may bring your own. **NOTE:** The price of tickets will increase to $30.00 after March 1st with a final cutoff date of March 13th.

Debbie will have tickets available at the February General Meeting and most Saturday mornings. Please be aware: the March Meeting is past the deadline for the caterer, so plan accordingly! You can also purchase tickets by including this amount along with a check for your annual dues. Be sure to make a note as such on your check. In addition, tickets can be purchased on our website by clicking on the "Tickets" icon on the bottom left of the homepage at www.113.eaachapter.org.

Our special guest this year will be Ed Rusch from Toledo, Ohio. Ed is a charming, entertaining pilot and mechanic with many interesting stories. He has flown all around the world including ferrying small aircraft across oceans, as well as, flying Ford Tri-motors for Island Airlines and EAA.

This special event provides the opportunity to enjoy a pleasant evening with our aviation family as we honor members that have completed aircraft and made their first flight this year. It is also a time when we recognize the members that continue to dedicate their time and talents to the daily operations within our Chapter.

*Come fly with us into Spring!*



# HELP WANTED:

We are looking for donations for our Silent Auction at this year's Annual Banquet. We are seeking both aviation related items and other varied goodies!

Please check with your favorite local restaurant or store and see if they might be willing to give a donation of a gift card or merchandise. Let them know we will gladly list their sponsorship.

Also, perhaps you have some aviation collectibles or antiques that you no longer have the space for or the desire to hang on to. This way, you know your things will go to a good home! A few of these types of items last year quickly became engulfed in bidding wars!

Please help make this year's auction worthwhile and exciting! Notify Debbie with any donations.

Thank You!!

# THE VILLAGE WORKSHOP OPEN HOUSE

**FEBRUARY 28, 2015**

**All day, starting at 9:00am.**
**Reception party starts at 7:00pm.**
**All are welcome.**

What if there was a place that had everything you could ever think of to make anything you could ever think of? The VILLAGE WORKSHOP has the tools, the equipment, the staff, and the software you need to make your ideas come to life. The VILLAGE WORKSHOP is a community space dedicated to creativity, learning, entrepreneurship, and prototype services.

# 2015 SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to another successful Father's Day Pancake Breakfast in 2014, EAA 113 was able to again set aside funds into a Scholarship account to support young people pursing aviation studies. Since we established this program twenty-nine years ago, our Chapter has awarded over $30,000 to aviation students.

Last year, the Scholarship Committee had a record breaking 23 applications to review! We are hoping to again have such a problem and are asking the Chapter members to promote this worthwhile program to encourage aviation in future generations. If you know of any potential candidate, please let them know the scholarship applications are available online at www.113.eaachapter.org in a fillable PDF format. All applicants must exhibit a passion for aviation! **Applications must be <u>received</u> by March 22, 2015 to enter the selection process.**

## 2015 EAA 113 Aviation Studies Scholarship

EAA Chapter 113 will again award as many as two $1,000 scholarships for the 2015 Aviation Studies Scholarship Program. We are looking for qualified local students pursuing a career in Aviation. Candidates should be currently admitted to a college, university or trade school majoring in aviation related studies. Scholarships may also be awarded to students studying in an approved flight school to assist with flight lessons if they are twenty-five years of age or younger as of March 22, 2015 and have completed their first solo flight.

## 2015 EAA 113 Air Academy Scholarship

EAA 113 is also proud to announce it will once again offer one scholarship for up to $500 to assist a Young Eagle in attending a summer session of Air Academy at Oshkosh. This amount is often used to supplement our Young Eagle credits that are earned throughout the year. The combination of funding sources often allows for our Chapter to pick up the full cost for an enthusiastic youth to attend this camp. If you know of an aviation-focused young person, between 12 and 19, please let them know this Scholarship form is also available on our website. Specific details about these camps can be found at www.eaa.org.

Please assist us in passing along information about our Scholarship Program. Last year's recipients have remained in contact, and repeatedly pass along their gratitude to the Chapter and each have obtained additional flight ratings and college courses since receiving their scholarships last June. Some of our other past recipients have gone on to careers as Military, Commercial and Corporate Pilots; air traffic controllers; flight instructors; and A & P's, to name a few. To date, the EAA 113 Scholarships have made a difference to over 50 young people in aviation! Let the tradition continue!

# CHAPTER 113 MEMBER NEWS

## Ken Mosley

An opportunity to travel to Arizona, the weather, and an instructor's availability all came together for me to get my glider rating in January with Instructor Russ Hustead of SkyKing Soaring in Payson, AZ. The aircraft is a Diamond Extreme motor glider with a 115 HP Turbo Rotax engine which makes climbs to 14000 ft. no problem giving plenty of power off gliding time to descend 9000 ft. back to the field--quite adequate despite the lack of thermals in January.

Instructor Russ Hustead and Ken Mosley
*Photo Courtesy of Ken Mosley*


Galveston, TX
*Photos Courtesy of Pete Waters*

# WHERE IS YOUR CHECKLIST? MAKE YOUR OWN

**by Matt Hanson**

(from *Air Facts Journal*, December 17, 2014)

Checklists are a common tool in aviation to help make sure you don't forget to do something at some point in time. Even if you don't always follow them line by line when in a familiar situation, I am sure they helped you develop those subconscious routines you use in all phases of flight, from startup to shut down with maybe an ILS approach down to minimums in between for good measure.

Despite the obvious benefits of using checklists, many pilots fail to recognize the real cognitive value of checklists lies in the process of creating them. One of my favorite activities when purchasing or transitioning to a different light aircraft is creating my set of checklists for it. Having completed six now, I have a pretty good idea of the process.


*Generic checklists are pretty good, but doing it yourself has a lot of benefits*

Start by studying the POH front to back, page by page. Make sure to do the same for any POH supplements, especially for performance modifications such as larger engines and aftermarket intercoolers. Using the checklists provided by the POH as
starting templates, consider the equipment and avionics actually installed on the aircraft and make appropriate changes. For each phase of flight, think about how you like to perform that process and compare it to the process outlined in the POH's checklist. A significant advantage to creating your own checklists is that since they will be pertinent to your aircraft/situation, they are less likely to be ignored in actual use.

(Continued...)

Compare the operating instructions detailed in the POH and supplements to your own thoughts on engine leaning procedures, preferred power settings, temperature limits, etc. If you think that climbing with CHTs below 400 degrees, cruising at 65% power and a five-minute turbo cool down before shut down will help your engine last longer, then put that information on your checklist where appropriate. That way when your buddy jumps in it for a joyride, he'll hopefully at least operate the aircraft same as you do.

In addition to customizing the POH's checklists, you can also make versions with additional information for certain situations, such as programming the radios and navigation equipment before an IFR departure or getting the one-minute weather and identifying appropriate NAVAIDs before contacting approach. When training for my instrument ticket, I hit a wall with trying to keep everything in one shoe when starting an approach. Finally I had to break down and create a separate checklist for each type of approach, i.e. non-precision timed, ILS, etc. and although they seem a bit overkill today, the process of creating them brought order to my cockpit and got me over that wall.

Print your checklist on paper in an order and format that makes sense to you and your aircraft. For relatively simple aircraft that you know like the back of your hand, I like the shirt pocket sized cards. They're easy to make if you can find a (gag) typewriter and are easy to stick in a nook on the dash. For more complex aircraft with expanded procedures you may have to move up to larger formats. If you wish to protect your work, slip them in a clear plastic sheet cover instead of laminating them. That way you can easily mark on them right then and there as needed. Although you can keep your checklist electronically on your tablet or phone, I don't as it's inconvenient to switch between apps, especially when you're relying on your tablet for charts and plates.

If you've read this far, then you probably realize that downloading someone else's checklist or buying one from the pilot store doesn't cut it. So dig up that POH, fire up Word and have fun. Maybe you'll even learn a thing or two while creating your own set of checklists.

**SAVE THE DATES**

| | |
|---|---|
| **March:** | 21st—Annual EAA 113 Banquet |
| **April:** | 4th—Young Eagles |
| | 18th—Spring Cleaning Day |
| | 21-26th—Sun 'n Fun |
| **May:** | 16th—Young Eagles |
| **June:** | 21st—Father's Day Pancake Breakfast |
| **July:** | 20-26th—Oshkosh AirVenture |
| **August:** | 15th—EAA 113 Family Picnic |
| **September:** | 19th—Young Eagles |
| **October:** | 24th—Young Eagles |
| **November:** | 14th—Chili Fly-In |
| **December:** | 4-5th—Operation Good Cheer |
| | 17th—Holiday Party |

# IN SWEDEN, REMOTE-CONTROL AIRPORT IS A REALITY

**By Rich Pres**


*Mikael Henriksson works at an air traffic control center in the town of Sundsvall, Sweden.*
*But the screens show the airport in the tiny town of Ornskoldsvik, more than 100 miles away.*
*It's the world's first facility to use new technology to help passenger planes land far away at an unmanned airport.*

*(Continued...)*

As our plane touches down in Sundsvall, Sweden, the horizon is all snow and ice.  A small air traffic control tower sticks out above the white horizon.

But this airport actually has two air traffic control centers. The second one is just a short walk from the airport runway.

Inside a ground-floor, windowless room, there's a display that looks exactly like what you'd see out of an air traffic control tower. You can see the snowy runway, you can see the trees, you can even see a car pulling into the airport parking lot.

But instead of windows, these are actually screens. And the airport you're looking at isn't the one in Sundsvall. It's the one in Ornskoldsvik, Sweden — about 105 miles away.

Ornskoldsvik is the first airport in the world to land passenger planes remotely. This summer, an airport in Leesburg, Va., will become the first American airport to use the new technology.

Erik Backman runs the remote airplane landing center in the town of Sundsvall. He explains that the town of Ornskoldsvik has a tiny airport, and it's expensive to keep air traffic controllers there who spend hours with no planes to land.

So they decided to have one team in Sundsvall that could handle both cities.

"The day you have one air traffic controller who can control two airports, then you have some good benefits according to costs," Backman says.

In Ornskoldsvik, a set of cameras and microphones delivers a real-time image to Sundsvall. Of course, new technology is notoriously glitchy. And a problem landing an airplane is far more consequential than a laptop freezing up.

Backman says when he saw the first mockup of this technology in 2004, he was dubious. The room had to be dark; the pictures were jumpy.

But a decade later, they've been landing planes remotely for months without any major problems.

Mikael Henriksson, the project manager, has been an air traffic controller for 40 years. He says in all his time looking out tower windows, there were only three big innovations: blinds to block out the sun, thicker glass to block out the noise, and bug zappers to get rid of the flies.

Now, he's had a chance to play with this new technology, and he can't believe it only arrived near the end of his career.

"For the air traffic controller, this is like airline pilots going from propeller to jet," Henriksson says. "It's a paradigm shift."

Because once the windows are replaced with screens, you can overlay all kinds of information on the display: airplane numbers, runway incursion warnings. You can zoom in, or switch to an infrared view to see through thick fog or darkness.

And that might make this technology useful even for big, crowded airports.

*(Continued...)*

Anders Carp is head of traffic management at Saab, the Swedish defense and security company that created this technology. He thinks there are worldwide — even military — applications.

Airports in dangerous places could have a camera house instead of a control tower, he says. The air traffic controllers could be a few — or a few thousand — miles away in a safe environment, because it doesn't matter whether the remote tower is across town or on the other side of the earth.

Back in the Sundsvall control center, a plane descends toward the Ornskoldsvik runway. We watch it move across the screen. The sound shifts in stereo as the plane rolls along.

The passengers — and even the pilot — have no idea whether they've been brought in for a landing from the tower they can see out their window, or from this hidden, remote center more than a 100 miles away.

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## COMING DOWN WITH THE AVIATION BUG: WHY ME?

**By Hunter Heath**

(from Air Facts Journal, January 16, 2015)

It is a calm, sunny Sunday afternoon, and I am at 1500 feet AGL in the old Chief, cruising south to the Shelbyville, Indiana airport, to practice short-ish field landings on their grass crosswind runway. Looking to my right, there is my regular flying companion, my late father, or my sense of him. I talk to him now and then, but he seldom answers, just looking straight ahead, pale and waxen in the way he was toward the end, but with a slight smile of encouragement.

Today, I want to ask him why aviation came to be such a central part of my thinking and my life, despite my never having made a dime with an airplane, or been an especially skilled pilot, or having grown up in a flying family. But he leaves me to ponder alone.

In the old joke, insanity is hereditary: you get it from your children. But in this case, my aviation insanity definitely came from my father. How he got it, I'm not sure, but there are clues. The oldest–and only–picture of my father with both parents and his two half-brothers shows him as a toddler in his father's arms, about 1920, standing by a WWI biplane, remarkably close to the moving propeller. Did Dad catch the bug then? Or did he get it from Charles Lindbergh, who crossed the Atlantic when Dad was nine years old? I know that many boys of the era fell in love with airplanes then.

Was it in 1935, when Dad was in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), standing in an Idaho fire tower with a Forest Service radioman, when word came that Wiley Post and Will Rogers had died in an Alaska floatplane crash? For certain, when WWII broke out, Dad tried to get into the Army Air Corps, but was rejected because he was 6 foot two and rail-thin. When he finally got a good job, assembling oil-exploration seismographic equipment for Schlumberger in Dallas, Dad started flying lessons in a 40 hp J-2 Cub, and got his private license just before I was born. After two forced landings (not a rare thing in the old Cubs and T-crafts, I am told), Mom said, "You have a child now, enough of this flying nonsense." Maybe it was that, maybe it was just money, but he quit flying around 1942.

*(Continued...)*

I've written here before about how our family car often turned in at the Lubbock, Texas airport after church, how I built rubber-powered balsa models of Champs and Taylorcrafts and Navions and F-86 Sabrejets, flew U-control planes, and how girls and motorscooters and cars ended, or perhaps just suppressed, that infatuation. But through all my growing up, Dad didn't fly. On those occasions when he got us rides with friends, I always got airsick and usually puked. Perhaps that's why I never asked for flying lessons as a teenager. There were no aviation magazines lying around the house, and airplane talk seldom came up at mealtime. We were not an "aviation family," but there was something invisible going on.

*Lubbock, Texas, 1955. The author in his 13-year-old Sunday Best, kicking tires at the airport. The public was welcome to roam the ramp freely and peer into any airplane.*

Only after I'd left for medical school and my younger brother graduated from high school did Dad announce that he was going to fly again. Many years had gone by, so he took the entire private pilot curriculum all over, got a second license (How? Maybe FAA records weren't very good in the 1960s!), and began flying regularly. I heard about all this by mail. Mom was a cheerful passenger, and they traveled all over Texas and up to see us in Minnesota. Dad was an early EAA member, bought a Taylorcraft fuselage and an engine, and began accumulating parts to rebuild the plane. On a visit to Texas, Dad took my wife, son, and me to Mom's home town so I could record interviews with pioneer family members. We traveled in a C-172 on a windy, dusty, choppy day, and his 90 degree crosswind landing scared the crap out of us, though I later recognized how skillfully it was done. Afterward, I wrote Dad a letter explaining why I would never be a pilot. It was a great 9 years of flying for Dad, until he fell into ill health and died at 61.

I wrote here earlier (I Knew They Were Going to Die That Day) about how my father's death motivated me to get my private license, then an airplane, then my instrument rating; how I met EAA founder Paul Poberezny and became closely involved with EAA, founding the aeromedical advisory council, and writing regularly for their magazine. All this seemed strange and wonderful and completely unexpected. Over just a few years, a loss-driven desire to fly had segued into a purple passion for "all things aviation." I acquired new friends, found hidden talents, influenced a few things, got to ride in exotic airplanes (antique biplanes, a P-51, AT-6, T-28, B-17, and more). All these things poured fuel on the passion.

These things happened in the midst of a busy–consuming–medical research and administration career, so my aviation pursuits were squeezed into life's interstices. Once-high flying hours declined steadily as professional commitments grew. A job change led me to sell my old Skyhawk, and a 60-75 hour work week kept me on the ground. Another job change yielded the same pressures, and flying stayed on a back burner. Fifteen years went by without much flying, except in the Great Aluminum Mailing Tubes. As retirement approached, I assumed that my flying days were over, but two key things happened: the coming of the Sport Pilot category, and receiving by email the trailer for a marvelous, romantic film, One Six Right. Late one evening, I viewed the trailer, and tears streamed down my cheeks. I watched it twice more, then went to my wife and told her that "I have to fly again." The next week, I started looking for a Sport Pilot eligible airplane.

Aviation became a major life focus in retirement, with membership in two EAA chapters, gradually restoring the 1946 Aeronca Chief, reading extensively on aviation history, and spending endless hours thinking about airplanes, aviation people, the FAA, weather, aviation technology, and more. The purple passion returned in full cry. Strangely, though, I haven't actually flown a great deal, partly because my fair-weather airplane has been down so often, but partly because the act of flying itself may not be the core of my passion.

So, I return to the question I posed to the familiar phantom in the right seat: how–why–did aviation became such an encompassing passion? It was not a



*(Continued...)*

constant in my life, no one was selling it to me, I didn't have flying friends, the busy-ness of life made it inconvenient in many ways, it was expensive, my wife was supportive but not interested… What happened?

In a recent op-ed piece, "Too Late Gives No Warning. If You Have Dreams, Put Them Into Action Today," Budd Davisson may have gotten to the core of my question. Writing about people who plan to take up flying "some day," or "after I retire," Davisson notes that "Not until they actually dip their toes into three-dimensional waters do they begin to realize that aviation is so much more than simply flying. It's much more than airplanes. It's a universe unto itself that is its own community and is ready-made to be a thoroughly fulfilling, cradle-to-grave lifestyle." A community! A lifestyle! Things become perhaps clearer.

In an effort to fulfill a dream of my father's, I unwittingly opened a door into that universe of fascinating and welcoming people, machines, physics, weather studies, rules, companionship, community, adventure, and constant learning. I was asking the wrong question: the real issue is, why the devil did it take me so long to open that door? I do not regret one minute of time spent on aviation matters, nor do I regret a dollar of the many spent. My main regret is that I did not insist on flying lessons when I was a teenager, feed the passion, and share it with my father when we were both young. Oh, the years I missed! The airplanes we could have flown, the places we could have gone!

Instead, my clock is winding down, and my flying days are limited. However, I do not think hanging up the headset for good will douse the passion. Flying friends who need ballast, EAA activities, books, aviation films, and always learning will, I think, sustain me. Dear reader, take Budd Davisson's advice: "Aviation is best lived if started young, but it's never too late to start." If you have the passion, feed it! Sadly, my son is not in a position to get involved, living abroad in an enormous, aviation-hostile city. But there are two grandsons who think Grandpa's airplane is pretty cool…

The author's oldest grandson, Benjamin, at the controls of the Chief. He appears already to have that dreamy aviator look in his eyes.

# HOW I CAME TO BE AN AG PILOT

**By Dave Sandidge**

(from Air Facts Journal, January 19, 2015)

*Reader Dave Sandidge's uncle, Bernard Threet, was an ag pilot in the Mississippi Delta region for many years. After his uncle's recent death, Sandidge wanted to honor him by sharing the story of his memorable cross-country in a Piper Cub crop duster. And what a story it is.*

In early 1954, at twenty-seven years of age, I was working at Baxter Laboratories in Cleveland, Mississippi mixing and preparing chemical compounds for the injection molding machines they used to manufacture plastic medical products for hospitals and clinics. I had already earned my Private Pilot's license at the Cleveland airport – a small, dual-runway, grass field in the heart of the Delta region. Mr. Henry Elliot, a soft-spoken gentleman who helped pioneer crop dusting in Mississippi back in the 1920s, taught me how to pilot an airplane just as the Wright brothers had taught him. After receiving my license in 1953, I continued on with my training and earned a commercial license in late 1954.


*Crop dusters are different – just ask one.*

I had always been fascinated with airplanes and flying, and having grown up on a farm I knew I wanted to enter professional agricultural flying. So I began working for Johnny Dorr in Merigold, Mississippi during my vacations from Baxter Laboratories – helping out around his ag flying school doing odd jobs in the maintenance shop to pick up some flying time in a Piper Cub. Johnny was an iconic aviation figure both during and after WWII. He founded the first agriculture flying school in Mississippi in the late 1940s. It was from there that I first began spraying crops in the spring of 1955 in a converted J-3 Cub.

A few weeks went by and Johnny decided he would let me start spraying poison on some cotton fields between Merigold and Shelby in one of his Stearman biplanes. These were converted World War II trainers equipped with 225 horsepower engines that he used to teach his Ag students in. They were reliable because they hardly ever broke down, but they were also somewhat under-powered for hauling heavy loads out of short grass strips and maneuvering close to the ground on those steamy Mississippi Delta days. It was while flying Johnny's Stearmans that I learned the importance of keeping the ball centered in the race while turning; coordination on the controls was imperative. Some of my peers didn't learn that before they augured in.

Back during that time most agricultural spraying outfits were more akin to gypsy barnstormers than they were fixed-base companies. They'd set up operations and start spraying in the early part of the year way down south in Texas or Florida. Then, after the days became warmer and longer, they'd pack up and work their way north to Louisiana, Mississippi and on up the river valley toward Illinois and Ohio as the planting seasons became optimal for the specific areas. One of these traveling concerns was based in Mercedes, Texas, an agrarian, one-horse town ten miles north of the Mexican border – not too far west of Brownsville.

*(Continued...)*

*Spraying fields in a Piper Cub? Why not?*

One of the men who owned and operated it, Glen Accord, partnered with a friend of Johnny's from Shelby, John Robert Hollingsworth, in 1955 to buy a spritely, rebuilt Piper Cub sprayer for John to fly up in Mississippi. It was a Cub with more powerful engine. This arrangement ensured the airplane had a lot better performance, but it also made it nose heavy. All-in-all, it was a much better airplane for John Robert to fly doing agricultural work in Mississippi, but it was sitting in a hangar in south Texas. So they had to figure out who was going to fly it up north to Shelby.

John Robert knew me and my situation – I had just started my vacation from Baxter and would do just about anything to get in the air – so he called me that afternoon at Johnny Dorr's field and asked if I'd be interested in flying his new J-3 duster back to Mississippi from South Texas. There wasn't any money in it, but he also said he'd let me fly it in spraying operations some if I did. Well, without hesitation I jumped on the offer with a very enthusiastic "yes." He gave me a few details about the flight over the phone, and said Glen would send me an airline ticket to Mercedes as soon as he could. I don't think I slept a wink for the next three days.

The next Saturday, Daddy and Momma drove me all the way up to Memphis, Tennessee to catch the flight to Houston, Texas, where I was to change planes for the final leg down to Brownsville. From there I'd either hire a taxi or ride the Greyhound the last few miles west to Mercedes.

I didn't spend any time in Mercedes because, when I arrived at the field just south of town I saw some fellows already had the airplane out of the hangar sitting in the grass; it was fueled and ready to go. Glen and another partner of his were there waiting for me, and about the third question Glen asked me was where I intended to land first for fuel. I was familiar with the range of a normal J-3, about 160 miles with no wind, and I had thought I'd make the first stop someplace south of Houston.

What they told me set me back on my heels. Glen said due to the bigger engine and a smaller fuel tank, this airplane had a range of barely over ninety miles in a calm wind – or just over an hour's worth of flying before I'd have to land for fuel. His partner then spoke up and said not to worry because they had been generous enough to install a reserve gas tank for my benefit – a five-gallon Western Auto jerry can that sat in the empty hopper tank in the front seat. The extra fuel would get me another seventy miles down the road, but I'd have to land somewhere to pour it in the airplane's fuel tank first. Anyway, I had to rethink the entire flight – adding many more fuel stops.


*Falfurrias, Texas – not a big landmark to find.*

After squaring things with Glen I loaded my overnight kit in the back and took off from Mercedes headed north for Falfurrias, Texas – what seemed like just a stone's throw up the road. I had drawn a line on my map from Mercedes to Falfurrias and observed there weren't many usable landmarks between the two airports – mostly scrub and bush.



*(Continued...)*

VFR charts were notoriously bare of details in the 1950s; however, I saw and circled a couple of grain silos marked on the chart; so I could watch for those in order to check my magnetic course. I was holding a very accurate compass heading for twenty minutes; but even so, the first grain silo never did appear.

I climbed higher in an attempt to see further ahead and eventually saw one several miles off to my right – almost ninety degrees. I banked the airplane and headed over that way, but all the while I was wondering how in the world I could have gotten almost eight miles off course after flying only twenty minutes. In due time it dawned on me that the compass was no good at all. It was many degrees off from what it should have been reading. As a result, we (the airplane and I), got back on course about the time I had to land at Falfurrias. I turned around to come in from the east, touched down and taxied to the white-shingled office shack next to the airport rotating beacon tower. Hopping out of the airplane I realized that, this being a quiet Sunday afternoon, there was no one attending the airport to sell me any gas. So I was forced to use the five-gallon can after the first landing.

The trip continued like that all the way up the Texas coast – watching the section lines, marking off check points, and all-the-while trying to make some sense out of that crazy compass. The only sure way I could identify any particular town was to swoop down and read the name on the water tank. In any event, I made it to Victoria, then to El Campo and Rosenburg, and finally to a small grass field just south of Houston. It was there that I realized I was going need a reliable compass in order to be successful navigating my way across the eastern part of the state with its pine forests stretching for many miles in all directions.

The airport manager happened to have one for sale at the counter, so I bought it. He even let me borrow some tools in order to install it myself. After about a half hour I got the thing in okay, but while swinging it to test its accuracy I concluded it wasn't going to work either. There was something in the airplane somewhere causing any magnetic compass to bobble back and forth like a drunken sailor. So, I removed it and took it back to the manager to get a refund, but he said he had just been to the bank deposit box to drop in the take for the day and didn't have any more cash. After a while though, he must have taken pity on me because, between him and the mechanic in the hangar, they eventually came up with enough money to give me my refund.

From South Houston we flew on to Beaumont, Texas, where they had a blacktop runway. I refueled the airplane and bought a sandwich and a cup of coffee from the airport café. While there I made careful notations about the course line to my next stop, Jasper. That part of east Texas was flat and featureless; there was nothing but trees for miles and miles. I noticed on my chart that two highways led into Jasper – one from the southwest and one from the southeast. I hoped to arrive over the town right on course, but if I was off, either to the east or west, I'd intercept one of the two highways and follow it to the airport – kind of like a funnel. I took off from Beaumont and circled the field to the southwest. Then I passed over the runway directly on course for Jasper. There would be no more checkpoints until I arrived there.

The further north and east we flew the hazier it became out ahead of us. The visibility was dropping, and there were several large clouds building off to the northwest through the northeast. I wondered if we would run into rain showers before sunset. I strained my eyes to see ahead, and after a while we came right up on the town of Jasper. I guess fate was with us because we hit the airport on the nose.

After landing I asked the older fellow who met me to top off the gas. As he did so I reached into the hopper tank, got the five-gallon gas can and set it on the ground to make sure it was full. He saw it and asked what it was for. I told him I needed the five gallons because the airplane's fuel capacity would only allow us to go about ninety miles at a time between fuel stops. He got the same startled look on his face that I must have had on mine when I first heard it, but he didn't say anything. He thought about it for a while though, because while walking back to the office after he was finished he asked me first where I was headed. I told him to Shelby, Mississippi. He then asked me where my next stop for gas would be, and I told him Many, Louisiana and then on to Natchitoches.



*(Continued...)*

Those pronunciations were both wrong, and with somewhat of an irritated smirk he promptly corrected me: (Man´-E) and (Nack´-o-dish). He said Many was unattended and didn't have any gas, but that I could land there and pour my five gallons into the airplane tank. He thought that might be barely enough to get me as far as Natchitoches, but he wasn't sure. He seemed very concerned about my future, and he then asked how much total flying time I had. I answered, "Just enough to get a commercial license." Stepping through the office doorway I saw him shaking his head back and forth as if to emphasize what he was probably thinking: "Son, you ain't never gonna make it." At that point I wondered who had more doubt about my success – him, or me.

I paid him for the gas and headed down the hall to use the men's room. They had a large aeronautical map pasted on the hallway wall, so I stopped and checked my route ahead. There was a pipeline on it running all the way from Jasper to way past Natchitoches that my map didn't have, so I took out my pencil and drew it on my chart. Then I headed back out, took off and got on that pipeline for Many.

Climbing to about 1500 feet took a few minutes, and the cooler air was refreshing, but up at that altitude it became evident that the pipeline right-of-way was the only open space in the woods from horizon to horizon. If the engine quit we'd have to land there. The problem with that was it hadn't been cleared; it was logs and gullies from tree line to tree line; no other work had been done. Nevertheless, it was the only way we could go; it was better than flying over solid forest. As we flew on, the haze and cloudiness increased in the late afternoon, and I thought I saw rain up ahead in the murkiness. Sure enough, in just a little bit as we approached the strip at Many, I saw heavy rain coming down in the entire area, and it didn't look like it was in any hurry to move on through. So I turned around and headed back toward Jasper.

I started to sweat a little because I didn't have enough fuel left to get there. For just a second or two I thought I was going to be forced to find someplace along that pipeline to set her down and pour in my five gallons, but I suddenly remembered that I had passed over a county highway cut through the trees a ways back. So we continued on southwest until we came up on it after only ten minutes or so.

From early on in his instruction in flying a student pilot is taught that landing anywhere except an approved airport or landing area is prohibited; the CAA could revoke a pilot's license in a heartbeat for doing so without good reason. All this weighed heavily on my mind as I circled the highway below. The road looked good for a landing; there wasn't much traffic, and it was straight and flat; but I still didn't want to risk a dunking in the hot water I could get into if I got caught landing on it. So even though I was about to have a real emergency I was more scared of landing on the highway. Therefore, maybe against my better judgment, I continued on towards Jasper until I saw a flat stretch along the pipeline right of way that might give me just enough room to land on and get stopped.

I didn't have enough time to do a careful survey of the landing area, so I came right around from the west in a steep descent and aimed for the short patch of logging road on the north side of the pipeline that looked clear of debris. There was a temporary power line running across the threshold area, so I had to be fairly aggressive in side slipping it in. I touched down okay, but the red soil was pretty soft. I got on the brakes as much as I could to try to stop her in the short distance available, but with the bigger engine up front I had to be very careful, because the airplane was already nose heavy; I could have flipped her over on her back if had I used too much braking.

In the last seconds I saw a gully piled high with logs and cut brush barely a few yards ahead, and I didn't think she was going to get stopped in time before we ran off the edge and plunged down into it. But with just feet to go she hit a softer patch of dirt and came to an abrupt halt. I cut the switch, wiped my forehead and let out a big sigh of relief. I climbed out and checked her over. She didn't seem to have any damage anywhere, so after pouring in the five gallons, I hauled her tail around to the edge of the gully, started her back up and made a short-field takeoff towards the west. We spent that night in Jasper.



*(Continued...)*

The next day, Monday, was mostly uneventful. We left Jasper in the morning in pretty good visibility and found fuel at almost all the stops we made. I only used the five-gallon can two times before we finally made it back to Shelby. But it was raining pretty hard at the airport there, so I turned around and flew back the few miles to Merigold and landed at Johnny Dorr's grass field along Highway 61.

As it turned out, while I was flying back to Mississippi in the new Cub John Robert broke his hand when the prop on the Cub sprayer kicked back while he was cranking it; he was going to be out of flying for a little while. But that worked out fine for me because my escapade with the big-engine Cub impressed him enough to where he felt encouraged to ask me to fill in for him while he was recuperating. So I had two airplanes to fly during that time I was still on vacation from the job at Baxter. I did okay with all the spraying; the customers seemed satisfied with my work, and that pleased John Robert even more. He soon asked me to continue flying in the evenings after my vacation was over. So I flew all that summer and eventually left Baxter Laboratories to fly agricultural work full-time.

Every time he'd call from South Texas, Glen Accord would laugh and tease me about my cross-country Cub adventure and if I still had the Western Auto can. Apparently, the whole thing made a good impression on him, too; when the growing season in Mississippi was over that year he called again and asked if I would be interested in flying the airplane back down to Mercedes over Thanksgiving. I told him I thought I might have the time but that I'd have to see about it. I think he could tell I really didn't want to do it, but that didn't stop him from calling me every few days. The thing was, every time he'd call he would change his mind about where he wanted it to go – asking me first to fly it to Mercedes, then to Dallas, then Monroe, then to someplace else I can't remember.

I finally told him I didn't want to fly it anymore, and that maybe it was time for someone else to have an adventure of his own.

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# Next Meeting : Thursday, February 19, 2015

## 7:30 PM at the EAA Aviation Education Center

# FROM THE SURGEON GENERAL

## Gregory Pinnell, MD

The Federal Air Surgeon's office came out with the latest and hopefully last version of policy on Sleep Apnea in pilots. This is a dramatic departure from the original version we saw last year which resulted in a large backlash amongst the aviation industry stakeholders. Below is an summary of the new policy and please feel free to write or call with questions!

Major Points in the New Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) Screening Guidance:

••No disqualification of pilots based on Body Mass Index (BMI) alone. The risk of OSA is determined by an integrated assessment of history, symptoms, and physical/clinical findings.

••The OSA screening process must be completed by the AME using the American Academy of Sleep Medicine guidance to be provided by reference material incorporated in the Guide for Aviation Medical Examiners (AME).

••Documentation of the OSA screening can be provided by the AME simply by checking the appropriate block while completing the airman's 8500-8.••Pilots determined to be at significant OSA risk will be issued a medical certificate and referred for an evaluation.

••OSA evaluations may be completed by any physician (including the AME), not just sleep specialists, using the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's guidance.

••Evaluations do Not require a laboratory sleep study or even a home study if the evaluating physician determines the airman does not require it.

••Results of the evaluations can be given to the AME, forwarded to the Aerospace Medical Certification Division (AMCD), or sent to the Regional Flight Surgeon's (RFS's) office within 90 days of the FAA exam to satisfy the evaluation requirement. The pilot continues to fly during this period.

••If the pilot needs additional time beyond 90 days to complete the evaluation, a 30-day extension will be granted by the AMCD or the RFS on request.

••Pilots diagnosed with OSA can send documentation of effective treatment to the AMCD or the RFS's office in order to receive consideration for a Special Issuance medical certificate.

••The FAA will send the pilot a Special Issuance letter documenting the follow-up tests required and timing of the reports.

••Most follow-up reports will only require usage data from the CPAP machine and a brief statement from a physician.

Fly Safe!
Gregory Pinnell, MD
Senior AME, Senior Flight Surgeon USAFR
www.AIRDOCS.net
989-245-4494

# February 2015

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 **EAA 113 Home Builders 7:30 pm** | 6 Movie Night 7:30 p.m.  | 7 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** **EAA 113 Frost Bite Chili Fly In 11:00-3:00**  |
| 8 | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12 **EAA 113 Board Meeting 7:30 pm** | 13 | 14 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am***   |
| 15 | 16  | 17  | 18 | 19 **EAA 113 General Meeting 7:30 pm** | 20 | 21 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 **EAA 113 Fly Safely Meeting 7:30 pm** | 27 | 28 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** |

# March 2015

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  *Don't forget to buy your Banquet Tickets!* | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 **EAA 113 Home Builders 7:30 pm** | 6 Movie Night 7:30 p.m.  | 7 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 **EAA 113 Board Meeting 7:30 pm** | 13 *Last Day to buy Banquet Tickets!!*  | 14 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** |
| 15 | 16 | 17 *Happy St. Patrick's Day*  | 18 | 19 **EAA 113 General Meeting 7:30 pm** | 20 *1st Day of Spring* | 21 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am***  *EAA 113 's Annual Awards Banquet*  |
| 22  EAA 113 Scholarships Due Today! | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 **EAA 113 Fly Safely Meeting 7:30 pm** | 27 | 28 ***Breakfast @ 3 Brothers 8:30 am*** |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | *"Keep an eye on those spring winds!"* |  | |

***The End***