

HISTORY OF CHAPTER 162
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In one sense the Old Hickory/Nashville Chapter 162 of the Experimental Aircraft Association has come full circle since March 5, 1963, when a small group of aviation enthusiasts met to organize. Their first meeting was in the briefing room of the Tennessee Air National Guard on Berry Field. Some eighteen years later the chapter again began to meet in TANG quarters: enjoying the hospitality of the NCO Club.

The intervening years saw Chapter 162 gather in a variety of places. one year after that first meeting the group obtained the use of an old barrack-type building on Berry Field. It was in a sad state of repair, but it was a place to meet aide to house a wrecked Baby ace that eight members of the chapter had purchased as a rebuilding project. While meeting in the building, the chapter grew in membership incorporated, and the chapter newsletter was born. But the Inevitability of progress in the renovation of Berry field brought the bulldozers and the demise of the building.

For just over two years, beginning in December 1966, EAA 162 met at the facilities of Nashville Aviation/Big brothers Aircraft at Berry. Renovation again forced a move, this time to the auditorium of Nashville Electric service at 13th and Church streets. Here the chapter met for nine years. This long and happy association ended when NES closed its doors to meetings of public groups. For the next two years meetings were held across the river in the Nashville Middle-Tennessee Homebuilders Association building on North 1st St. Then for the July 1980 session chapter 162 came home to BNA at the NCO Club - full circle.

A simple recounting of the meeting places is barely a start in reporting the history of an organization, especially one as versatile and constantly changing as Old hickory Chapter. That designation goes back to the first meeting when it was decided to take a name that would not indicate a limited locale. Old Hickory was selected to suggest a wider area of the state than would be the name of a single city or county, and for several years "Serving Middle Tennessee" was carried on the masthead of the chapter newsletter. In May 1975, however, the chapter voted to change the name to Nashville Chapter 162.

The operations of the chapter began to take specific shape with the adoption of a

constitution and bylaws in August 1965. This action was necessary not only to give stability and continuity to chapter organization, but also to enable the chapter to incorporate. The importance of incorporation was recognized by members even before the national EAA made it a requirement for chapter certification. On December 20, 1965, through legal services generously subsidized by attorney and EAA-er Roy A. Miles, Jr, the chapter applied for incorporation in Tennessee as a non-profit organization. Those meetings with Roy in his office to sign the application were Pierce S. Ellis, Richard J. Lakebrink, Frank R. Moore, and Earl B. Travis. The charter of incorporation was issued on January 6, 1966.

Available records show that Chapter 162's first involvement as a group with national aviation matters came in the summer and fall of 1966. It was then that the FAA proposed a Special Airworthiness certificate with specific requirements for amateur (custom)-built aircraft. The dust was barely settled from this fracas when early in 1967 the FAA proposed a system of airman and certification fees. Members cooperated to make their protest felt, coordinating efforts through chapter officers with EAA Headquarters. History does sometimes repeat itself and a separate story could be told (if all the records could be found) successive efforts on the part of the Experimental Aircraft Association and its chapters to fend off crippling regulations and reforms. The struggle goes on.

With the interest in sport flying growing, EAA headquarters continued to expand and enlarge activities. With so much going on, it became evident that not everything could be handled and coordinated at the national level. Interest in regional activities here began when Chapter 190 in Huntsville in the spring of 1966 suggested cooperation on the part of area chapters and held a Southern Region get-together. Chapter 162 was represented by four of its members. In spite of sincere efforts all around, the Southern Region got off the ground only briefly. Searching for increased effectiveness in guiding the growing sport aviation movement, EAA Headquarters in 1967 began holding mid-year meetings at Hales Corners for chapter officers and representatives. At the first one, in February 1967 Chapter 162 had four members in attendance. The records do not show that the chapter participated in subsequent mid-year meetings. The chapter did however have representatives at a regional officers' meeting held by EAA national officers in Macon, Georgia, in March 1971 and hosted by Macon Chapter 38. This was one of several such meetings held in various parts of the country that year by the EAA headquarters staff.

The need for some sort of cooperation among chapters in the area persisted, and efforts to meet the need proceeded on two fronts. The first was at the state level.

An EAA Council for Tennessee was first seriously put forward by Memphis Chapter 182 early in 1969. In May of that year Chapter 162 hosted a conference at the airport Hilton on Berry Field with fifteen representatives from the chapters 182, 150 (Chattanooga) and 162 attending. Plans were made to form a state council so as to be able to address concerns that could not be handled effectively by individual chapters or the national organization. There was no further action until the Memphis chapter inquired again about Chapter 162's interest. This was in the fall of 1970. John Burris as chapter secretary replied in the affirmative, and the chapter 162 newsletter carried a strong editorial in its December issue which was acknowledged favorably by EAA President Paul Poberezny and Washington representative Dave Scott. Finally, in April 1973, the chapter approved proposed by-laws for a Tennessee EAA Sport Aviation Association prepared by one of its members and authorized circulation to the seven other state chapters for comments and/or approval. By June 1974, a majority of the state chapters had approved the proposed by-laws, and in November, chapter 162 voted financial support for incorporating. The state charter of the Tennessee Sport Aviation Association was issued in February 1975. This Association existed mainly as a stand-by organization until 1981 when the Tullahoma Happening reverted to regional status after two years as a national fly-in. There is now the possibility that the Tennessee Association may be put on active status to Assist the Tullahoma Bunch in staging the Old South Fly-in each fall.

The other front on which effort was made to gain area or regional cooperation among chapters was the formation of SESAC- Southeast Sport Aviation Council. Such an organization was first considered by the chapter at its August 1972 meeting. The vote was to support the formation of the proposed council, and in February 1973, four members represented Chapter 162 at the organizational meeting in Greenville, S.C. Again, in June 1973, Chapter 162 had representatives at the meeting of SESAC in conjunction with the Old South Fly-in at Santee, S.C. The development and growth of SESAC was not without some misunderstandings at the local, regional, and national level. The meeting in October 1973 in conjunction with the Tullahoma Happening, had Paul Poberezny in attendance, and progress was made toward alleviating matters. When all the dust settled, William J. Ehlen of Tampa emerged as the wise counselor and guiding light of SESAC. His untimely death in February 1979 seems to have dampened the SESAC movement, the main result of this good efforts being the Sun 'n' Fun Fly-in each year in Lakeland, Florida, but which has since moved well beyond a regional event.

By the end of the sixties, the sport aviation movement was gaining momentum in almost geometric progression. In 1969, Paul Poberezny retired from full time

military duties to devote full time to the office of EAA President. In 1970 the international EAA Fly-in was moved on extremely short notice from Rockford, Illinois, where it had been held for seventeen years, to Wittman Field in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The wisdom of that move is attested to by the growth each year to the point now that it is universally recognized as the most significant of all the annual aviation events nationwide.

Interest within Chapter 162 in fly-ins has always been keen. Since 1968 with the first Nashville Aviation Days, 162 has participated as a chapter, with support beyond that by individual members as well. The first Tullahoma Happening, famous do-nothing get-together, was in 1970. From time to time, there were other fly-ins, planned and impromptu, plus the Tennessee Chapters Fly-In at Tullahoma in the spring. The Sun 'n' Fun Fly-in began in February 1975 and quickly grew in popularity and size, with always a contingent from Chapter 162 there as well as at the big one in Oshkosh. From early emphasis on custom-built aircraft, the chapter activity has broadened to the place that antiques, classics, and warbirds are much in evidence. Soaring and acrobatics have always been an interest.

Lest the foregoing sound too perfect a recital, it should be recorded that regardless of the membership roster at any given time, Chapter 162 has always been composed of individualists. The history of the chapter is essentially the story of its individual members. So how can you tell the story of a chapter whose strength and vitality have been those individuals? It would be impossible to list all the names that have been on the roster, much less to tell of each's accomplishments, but no account can claim any semblance of reality that does not mention Garland Pack, Paul Booth, Jim Haun, the Avco people like Frank Walker, Charlie McMahan, Curt Franklin, and Carl Weddle; the Swift owner/pilots; and the Hunter Buzzards.

The listings that follow give the names and capacities in which some members have served and are serving, plus an effort to compile a record of aircraft construction and restoration. Not to be forgotten are those unnamed who contribute their efforts without significant recognition or reward. Over the years, members have dropped out, a few to return later, and new members have joined, changing the complexion of the group. But always there has been an interesting mix of individuals—the flamboyant/the reticent-- the doer/the talker--the expert artisan/the ham fisted--the debonair/the taciturn--the cocky/the diffident. Seemingly the only common denominator has been a love of flight, but that has been a strong enough bond to hold the group together.

(The first effort at a history of an organization is inevitably a flawed to some extent, when some of the records are missing. Back in 1965, just two years after the chapter was formed minutes of the May 18 meeting reported the need for information on the whereabouts of the charter from EAA HQ establishing the chapter, It is still missing, but a request for a copy has been sent to Hales Corners. Readers of this account are invited to make corrections and additions. It is appropriate to seek an accurate and complete history.)

ADDENDUM – November, 1984:

1983 and 1984 saw many exciting activities and much participation by the growing membership of 162. Highly successful Air Shows were planned and carried out by the Chapter both years. There were several completions and first flights of individual homebuilts and numerous projects were initiated. Several remain (as they have for years) in various stages of completion. During 1984, one of our chapter members, John T. Baugh, Jr., was elected to President of the Warbirds of America; and another member, John T. Morgan, showed us all how to live and die with dignity in his losing bout with cancer.

Let us **now** look forward with anticipation to 1985 !

Nashville EAA Chapter 162 meets each third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Berry Field NCO Club. Please attend and support us.

Addendum – April, 2019:

During our chapter meeting, we were handed a document which held this piece of history by Debbie from women in Aviation chapter in Lebanon.

Our intent is to continue the history and retrieve the years in between to complete the story of Chapter 162.