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# *EAA Chapter 175*



## *Smoke Signals*

## *Newsletter*





**June, 2015**

**Next Meeting: Saturday, 06/27/2015**

**Breakfast @0800**

**(Speaker "Lites" Leenhouts will be joining us for breakfast)**

**Meeting @ 0900**

## OUR GUEST SPEAKER



### CAPTAIN JOHN R. LEENHOUTS

Captain John R. Leenhouts was born in Bryan, Texas and resided in numerous places throughout Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Utah and Illinois. After graduating in 1973 from Oklahoma State University with an Aerospace Engineering degree, he entered the Navy via the Aviation Reserve Officer Candidate Program. Commissioned an Ensign in March, 1974, he was designated a Naval Aviator on August 22, 1975 at NAS Kingsville, Texas.

Following flight training, he reported to VA-174 for A-7B training and then to VA-46 for duty. During this tour he completed three deployments aboard USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67), the initial shakedown on USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69), and became the first fleet Landing Signal Officer (LSO) to cross-train in the F-14 and fly it concurrently with the A-7. Captain Leenhouts returned to the “Hellrazers” of VA-174 as an instructor pilot and LSO. In January 1982,

he joined Carrier Air Wing ONE as the Staff Landing Signal Officer, flying the A-7E with VA-72 and the F-14A with VF-102 onboard USS AMERICA (CV-66) for both a deployment to the North Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

Upon completion of an accident-free CAG Landing Signal Officer tour, Captain Leenhouts was selected to be the Naval Air Force Atlantic Fleet Landing Signal Officer from December 1983 until December 1985. As an Operational Readiness Evaluator he flew with every East Coast Fighter and Light Attack Squadron from every carrier in the Atlantic Fleet. Returning to sea duty, Captain Leenhouts was assigned a second tour with VA-46 as a Department Head, again deploying to the Mediterranean Sea on USS AMERICA (CV-66) and USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (cvn-69). In August 1988, Captain Leenhouts surpassed 3,000 Corsair hours and achieved 1,000 arrested landings as a Lieutenant Commander. Following duties on the Light Attack Wing ONE Readiness Staff, he was assigned as Attack Squadron 72 Executive Officer in June 1989, deploying to the Red Sea aboard USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67) in support of "OPERATION DESERT SHIELD". During "OPERATION DESERT STORM", he accumulated over 100 combat hours in 24 missions leading strikes into Iraq and Kuwait. He subsequently reported to Strike Fighter Squadron 136 in December 1991 as Executive Officer, he assumed command of the "Knighthawks" in March 1993 and deployed on USS Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Persian Gulf and on USS George Washington to the Mediterranean Sea.

Following his command tour, Captain Leenhouts attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base graduating in 1995. Subsequently, he became Deputy Director of Operations for the Joint Task Force Southwest Asia in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from August through December 1995. In February of 1996 he reported to Battle Force Seventh Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan as the Operations Officer and deployed to the Far East onboard USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62). Captain Leenhouts returned to the United States and assumed command of Strike-Fighter Wing, Atlantic in April 1997.

With 10 major deployments to his credit, Captain "Lites" Leenhouts has logged over 10,000 hours piloting more than 35 different types of military, antique and civilian aircraft and has become the all-time leading Carrier Aviator having accumulated 1,645 traps on 16 different aircraft carriers. Additionally, Captain Leenhouts has exceeded 10,000 aerial photographs and is published worldwide. His awards include the Legion of Merit (2 awards), Distinguished Flying Cross with Combat "V" (2 awards), Meritorious Service Medal, Individual Air Medal with Combat "V" (4 awards), 2 Strike Flight Air Medals with Combat "V", Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" (2 awards), as well as various other individual, unit and expeditionary awards.

Captain Leenhouts gave up Command of the Strike Fighter Wing and retired from the U.S. Navy on 31 Jan 2001 and took a position with Northrop Grumman as the Jacksonville, Florida Area Manager and Program Manager for all F/A-18 Modification, Repair and Overhaul effort teamed with Boeing at the Cecil Field Commerce Center in Jacksonville, FL.

“Lites” is the newly appointed SUN 'n FUN President & CEO in Lakeland, FL where he oversees the annual SUN 'n FUN International Fly-In & Expo, the second largest aviation fly-in convention in the world.

In his time out of the office, “Lites” enjoys flying his 1941 Stearman or 1930 Waco, driving antique British cars, or riding his Harley on the many back roads of our great nation.

## **President’s Corner**

- I am appealing to all of our great members again to seriously think about helping the chapter get started in their Chapter Strategy Action Plan. I’ll be presenting an update this week to you all about how we can help our chapter become more involved in the local aviation community.

- It's not rocket science...but maybe just as difficult. It's volunteering your time and energy once in a while to help.
- We had to cancel another Young Eagles flight schedule in June but only because the student sponsor did not have enough participants, not because we were out of pilots. But the volunteers again were slim.
- I encourage you to seriously consider how you can support the chapter as we progress in our effort to grow and remain relevant in our local community footprint!

**Respectfully/ jpk**



Credit AOPA\_ePilot for the following article. Especially relevant for pilots in Florida where thunderstorms are frequent this time of year.



Note from the editor. We recently spent a day at EAA in Oshkosh as part of a trip to Northern Michigan. I highly recommend the stop. The EAA AirVenture museum has more than 200 historic aircraft. There are 4 movie theaters and a “hands-on” section for kids and kids of all ages. Your membership buys your admission. Rates

for non-members are very reasonable. The area has great accommodations. Visit the web site for more info.

<https://www.eaa.org/en/eaamuseum>



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