

Chapter 194 News

October 2024

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Editorial – Volunteer, and Call for Chapter History

Time is flying! A while back we wrote about the importance of participating in the Chapter events and requirements. Well, on November 6 it will be time to vote for a new Board of Directors. It's a good time to start thinking how you might participate. And please! throw your hat in the ring for nomination to board positions.

Did you know that Chapter 194 was actually founded in 1964? I'm wondering if anybody has information on the early days of the chapter. It would be nice to "fill in the blanks" so to speak. If you have any memories of the previous incarnation of chapter 194, I would appreciate it if you would contact me with what you know or remember. I joined the chapter back in the early 2000's but then it went dormant. It wasn't till working on the chapter newsletter that I noticed the chapter logo saying "Est. 1964". Thinking that with enough info, "there's a story there". Please contact me at hmanvel@manvel.com



Coming Chapter Events

October 2 – Membership Meeting

October 12 – Chapter Pancake Breakfast

November 6 – Membership Meeting – **BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION**

December – TBD – Chapter Christmas Party

Chapter 194 News



JIM ALLEN – POSTHUMOUS WRIGHT BROTHERS AWARD CEREMONY



EAA Chapter 194 (KPTK - Pontiac, Michigan) dedicated their entire September membership meeting to a presentation ceremony for James Allen, who recently passed away after a very short bout with cancer.

Jim was a highly respected member of chapter 194, having been the chapter newsletter editor, as well as having been the newsletter editor for chapter 1056 of Howell, Michigan.

The FAA's Wright Brothers award is presented to pilots who have achieved over 50 years of safe operations. It involves nomination and sponsorship by other certificated pilots, and upon acceptance, the FAA gathers up copies of every pertinent document relating to the candidates flying history, including written tests, ratings achievements, etc. These and several plaques and pins are presented to the pilot by an FAA representative. In this case they were presented to Jim's widow, Marian.



Marian Allen presented with award plaque by Zachary Ortiz

Continued next page

Chapter 194 News



Jim Allen - Continued

BACKGROUND

Jim Allen was a soft spoken gentlemen, who never really touted his own achievements in flying. Because of this, many chapter members were very surprised to learn that Jim was a highly decorated Marine, having served two tours in Vietnam, piloting helicopters in dozens of combat and support missions. We learned that he had a total of 30 Air Combat medals, as well as Silver Stars and other awards for Valor. He was responsible for saving many lives in Vietnam. A truly impressive history.

Upon returning to the states, Jim began a career of fixed-wing piloting, and flew Lears, Sabreliners, and then Gulfstream I, II, III, and IV's. He also managed Corporate Flight departments, and was a flight instructor.

Jim had a hangar at KPTK, and was in the process of building an EAA Acrosport Biplane, which was nearing completion when he passed away. His death was a surprise to all, as he was only diagnosed a few weeks prior.



Jim and EAA Acrosport project

Chapter 194 News



Jim Allen - Continued

PRESENTATION

The Eastern Michigan FSDO Representatives Patrick Ryan and Zachary Ortiz first presented the Wright Brothers awards and associated documents to Marian Allen. Following that, Marine Corp member Larry Begin, a friend of Jim's, gave a detailed description of Jim's flying and personal history.

Our meeting room in the terminal building was standing room only, the largest gathering we have experienced, with many of Jim's Military friends, and Honor Guard members who Jim served with after his return home. It was a proper way to bid farewell to a respected chapter member and friend.

HM



Patrick Ryan - FSDO



Standing room only!



Larry Begin - USMC

Chapter 194 News



Oshkosh 2024 Notes

This year's Oshkosh had to be one of the best! Weather was not as brutal as some years, and it only rained for about a half hour Tuesday, which forced me into a hardware tent to spend lots of money while I waited out the storm.

We flew the Defiant in on Thursday morning before the Monday show start. It was before noon, so the arrival procedure wasn't even in effect yet. It was weird after so many years of flying in, to call the tower 10 miles out and get sequenced in like normal!

Late on Thursday I received an email from an EAA communications guy asking if they could do an article on my airplane, and interview me. They came one day with a video guy, wired me up for microphone and did a pretty long interview. The next day they came back with a big boom camera on a trailer, and did lots of overhead shots of the plane. They couldn't tell me when or even if this will become a story, but it was fun to be picked out of the (5) Defiants on the field. (Update – they have since called me and confirmed that the article will be published in the January issue of SPORT AVIATION)

For those who haven't experienced Oshkosh, I should mention that my Iphone told me I averaged 9.1 miles/day of walking.

Chapter Camping

EAA offers it's chapters a camping site big enough for (6) campers, with a discounted rate for reserving it. This year Chapter 194 was out in the northwest area of Camp Scholler, and the day I hiked out to find it, I'll bet I added another mile to the walking total! If you plan to join the chapter campers, it would be a good idea to bring a bicycle or scooter.

The chapter hosted a dinner gathering on Friday during the show, and I was unfortunately unable to attend having left for home that morning. But it looks like everyone had a good time.

Night Airshow

Watching the Wednesday night airshow from my airplane's location on "EZ Street" was amazing, and we had the best sightline for the whole event. You really have to experience the combination of drones and fireworks, making the most amazing combination of graphics, color, and noise. I've not seen anything better.

Recommendation:

Plan to attend Airventure 2025. Fly in or drive in, you will be glad you did!

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Chapter 194 News



Oshkosh Drone & Fireworks Show!



Drones and Fireworks together – Amazing!



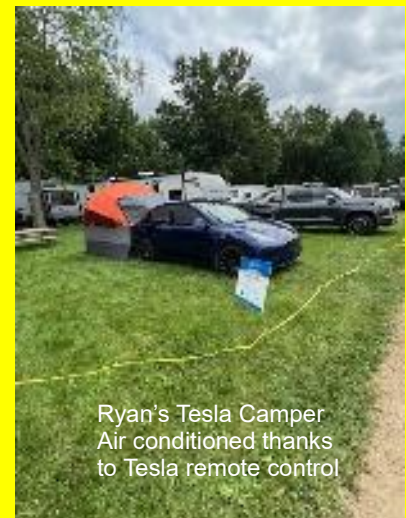
Chapter Camping!



Chapter 194 Camp Central



Chapter members enjoying the Friday night dinner



Ryan's Tesla Camper
Air conditioned thanks to Tesla remote control

Chapter 194 News



Martin flies with Randy Hebron in his Volmer Sportsman!

On August 15 I attended the EAA Chapter 113 general meeting, held on the third Thursday of each month. We started earlier than usual that evening to host a hot dog & burger barbecue and do some extended post-OSH socializing. Sticking with my own current theme, I was telling everyone who would listen how much I missed flying and owning my own aircraft. Our esteemed newsletter editor Elizabeth Hebron suggested that maybe I could go for a ride in Randy Hebron's Volmer Sportsman sometime.



I had learned about the Volmer VJ-22 Sportsman back in the '80s when I started my research into homebuilt aircraft. I had considered that design, along with other amphibians, before deciding to build my RV-8. When I joined Chapter 113, Randy's Sportsman would occasionally be on display at some of the meetings and Chapter events. Although it was very cool to see a VJ-22 in person, I doubted I'd ever get a chance to ride in one. I figured I'd be too big and too heavy to fit. I expressed those same doubts to Liz that evening, mentioning my current weight.

Randy had been flying the plane earlier that evening; I had watched him land and later observed him making his logbook entries. He crunched the numbers and acknowledged that the weight and balance with me aboard would be very close to the max weight. I walked out to the apron and examined the aircraft, as I always did whenever it was present. Randy asked me if I wanted to see if I could get in and out of it. I thought it might be worth a try and carefully followed his ingress instructions. It was a bit tight, but I fit. Next, he checked to see if the harnesses would fit around me and, indeed, they did. The next thing I knew, Randy was climbing in next to me and strapping in. My gosh... was this really going to happen?

Chapter 194 News



continued



I was thrilled, but also slightly dismayed. My cell phone and my Garmin Virb camera were on site but they weren't with me in the plane. I wasn't going to ask Randy to get them, or worse, make him wait for me to clamber out and clamber back in. I felt naked without them, but Randy was kind enough to lend me his cell phone to capture a few photos and video clips. He started the O-320 engine and as we began to taxi to the runup area my excitement began to build. For decades I'd dreamed of flying in a Volmer amphibian and tonight that dream was about to come true!

We took off to the south and followed the standard left downwind departure procedure before heading northwest. I wasn't sure what Randy had in mind; he asked if I would like to head over to Whitmore Lake for some water landings. I said I'd love it!

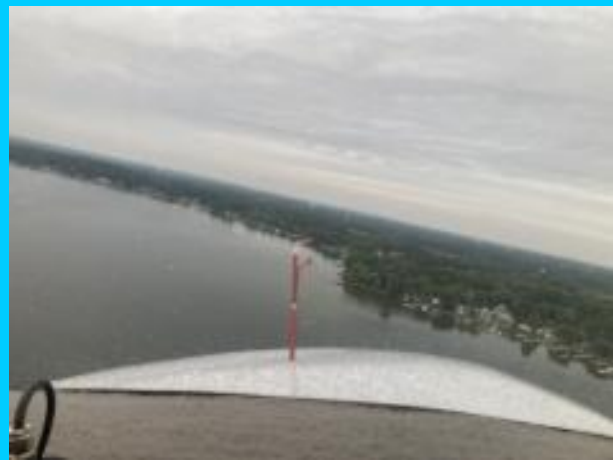
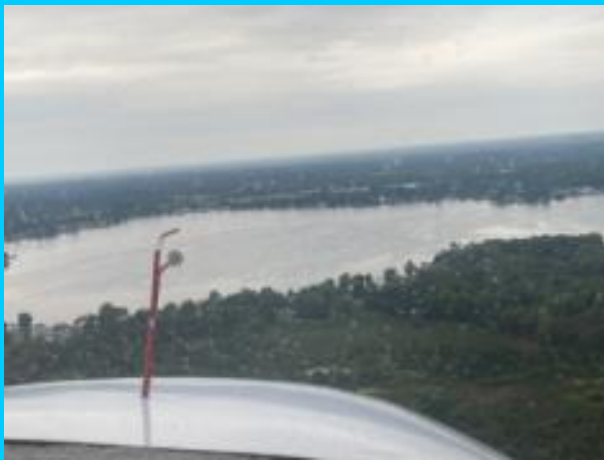


Chapter 194 News



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There was a variable overcast and we got a few sprinkles on the windshield as we approached the lake. The first approach and touchdown were just sublime. It had been decades since I'd last ridden in a floatplane and over fifty years since I landed on water in a hull amphibian. There is truly no other experience that compares to landing on water in a small flying boat! As we slowed down and settled into the water I could tell the waterline was just about at the same level as my seat. I had no worries; this plane was in its element and had been doing this since Randy first restored it in 1982.



When we began to power up for takeoff we were on the step in about 10 seconds and in the air in 20 seconds. I was quite impressed with the performance; once the hull got on the step the plane accelerated very quickly. We took off to the south, banked left and followed a figure-eight pattern across the center of the lake, descending and banking right to follow the north shoreline before straightening out to land again. I didn't take photos or video of this landing; I just allowed myself to experience it, and it was wonderful. I did capture our second takeoff.

I took a few more photos as we flew back to 1D2 and caught the landing on video. We taxied back to Randy's hangar on the east side, tucked the plane away and caught a ride back to the Chapter hangar. We had missed pretty much the whole meeting, but that was fine with me. I was still basking in the glow of the experience; at that moment, nothing else mattered!

Chapter 194 News



continued

A few days later Liz met me at the Chapter hangar and gave me a thumb drive with the photos and video clips I caught on Randy's phone. She also included some bonus video that her granddaughter Samantha had captured on her GoPro last July when Randy gave her a similar flight to Whitmore Lake. They had mounted the GoPro on the left float strut facing the fuselage, and it gave an excellent perspective from that angle. I combined my photos and video clips with Samantha's video and created a movie that I shared on my YouTube channel. It's only 18 minutes long and definitely worth watching!

Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/NC8sWK5zzuE>

Liz and Randy Hebron gave me an experience that had been on my wish list for most of my life. I will always be grateful for that, and cherish the memory forever.

