

The Lippisch Letter

December 2010

Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 33

A monthly publication of the Dr. Alexander M. Lippisch Chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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Read Back - My Heart Is Africa, A Flying Adventure

By Jim Meade

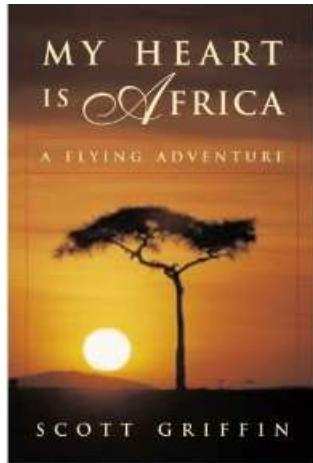
Scott Griffin left his Canadian business under pressure and decided to take a couple years off to help the Flying Doctors Service in Africa. He flew out of Nova Scotia early one black morning and pointed his C180 toward the Azores, 1400 miles away across the Atlantic Ocean. He was alone and apprehensive. The rear seat space was occupied by a 120 gallon ferry tank. The copilot's seat held the life raft and mandatory HF radio. He had no autopilot. During the passage, he ran into clouds, carburetor ice, turbulence and airframe ice. His radio failed. Then he got struck by lightning. He descended in darkness to shed the ice and passed the point of no return. Forty five minutes later he broke out into clear air; he had passed through the cold front. Drained of energy after fighting the elements, he sat numbly until he spotted the lights of the first of the Azores islands. His handheld GPS had guided him to the tiny spot in the ocean.



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The Azores marked Griffin's introduction to aviation bureaucracy on a different level than he was used to; a theme that pervaded the rest of his two-year aviation sojourn in Africa. His next leg was into Lisbon, where he was put in a holding pattern in the clouds and then assigned a localizer approach. On landing, he swerved off the runway because his left brake wouldn't function - then he found it was blocked underneath on the copilot's side by the survival suit. Clearing it, he frantically taxied out of the way to avoid a 747 on final.

After Liston, Scott flew east of the Mediterranean to Cyprus, then south over Egypt, where he landed at Cairo and Luxor and on to Djibouti. On the Luxor to Djibouti trip he forgot to switch tanks and nearly crashed before figuring out why the engine quit. Finally, one last jump to Kenya where he was met by his wife who had airlined over and he was home for a couple of years.



These incidents should, but don't really, prepare the reader for the rest of the book. Seated comfortably in your reading chair, it's not possible to anticipate all the aviation adventures Griffin will find himself - I should say, puts himself - into. Sometimes you wonder where his brains are. He damages the gear when he lands on a mud flat on an island in the middle of a huge lake on the wrong side of an international border and wonders why it is such a hassle to get out. When he has the plane repaired, he attempts an ill-advised take-off and promptly wrecks it even worse. More is to come.

The two years with the Flying Doctors Service was fraught with the kinds of bureaucratic inertia that one finds in any society. There were laws, regulations, customs, personalities and financial forces at work. It's interesting, but it's not flying so this review will skip that part.

During the Africa stay, Griffin had a chance to fly his C180 down the east coast of Africa, across the Cape of Good Hope up to Angola and back up to Kenya before heading home to Canada.



The South Africa loop included the company of a couple of twenty-something Swedish girls who somehow attached themselves to him and his wife.

His course back to Canada took him from Kenya straight across the dark continent over trackless jungle, with no place for an emergency landing for 1500 miles that would have engulfed and hidden him forever if an accident occurred. Traversing Zaire, he manages to let himself get into a thunderstorm which merged with another to produce extreme turbulence. (Extreme turbulence means the aircraft is violently tossed about and may be impossible to control. It can cause structural damage.) Ice pellets and lightning struck the plane. He's scared again.

Flying north up the west coast of Africa, a sand storm erupts and engulfs him right at the time the alternator decides to go off line. The worst part of that is the fuel transfer pump is electric. Does he have enough juice in the battery to keep the tanks full or will he exhaust his fuel over the Sahara desert? Then, the GPS internal battery runs out of juice so he is not only running out of fuel in a sand storm, he doesn't even know where he is. By this time, as a reader, I'm about wrung out. This guy has nine lives and has used them all, it seems to me. Obviously, since he wrote the book he survived, but I'm not sure I will. Coming into Dakar, he has no radio so he buzzes the tower, pulls up into a tight turn and promptly unports the fuel sump. So his engine dies. He continues the descent and finds himself wingtip to wingtip with another plane 30 feet away. Scott finds out later the pilot is a student on his checkride who passes partly because of how he handles the situation.

By this time in the story, we are all eager for Scott Griffin to get in his C180 and get it out over the Atlantic on the way home where he can't hurt anyone except himself. After rebuilding the alternator in Tangier, he meets his wife in Morocco. She declines an invitation to fly home with him. I would, too. He does make it, eventually, by way of Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and Baffin Island. Not much happens on the way home. A little carburetor ice over Iceland, snow storms at Greenland, ice pellets...well, by now you know what to expect.

What an adventure. Scott Griffin is described by a book reviewer as a romantic and I guess that's as good a name as any. He sure pulls some crazy stunts in the air. He reminds me of the barnstormers of the 1930's; maybe Waldo Pepper. He is definitely the kind of pilot the FAA warns us about. You wonder why he doesn't kill himself and others. But, maybe he just writes a wild story - wilder than real. He had me shaking my head numerous times.

It's a fun, lighthearted book to read. Full of good examples of things you shouldn't do. It was published in 2006 in Canada by Thomas Allen Publishers.

Here is a short film based on the book:

<http://www.movingstories.tv/2010/01/my-heart-is-africa-featuring-author-scott-griffin-is-flying-adventure-bookshort-film/>



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2011 Calendar

In an effort to allow members to more effectively plan to participate in Chapter events in 2011, the board is providing an initial calendar for the year. The following are all the meetings and events we have on the calendar currently.

January 27, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
February 24, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
March 24, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
April 15, 2011	6:00 PM	50 th Anniversary Gala – Cedar Rapids Marriott
May 26, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
June 5, 2011	9:00 AM	Young Eagles Rally – Washington, IA
June 18, 2011	1:00 PM	Young Eagles Rally – Iowa City, IA
June 23, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
July 24 – 31, 2011		Airventure – Oshkosh, WI
August 25, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
September 22, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
October 27, 2011	6:00 PM	Fall Banquet – Location TBD
November 17, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD
December 15, 2011	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
	7:30 PM	Chapter Meeting – Agenda and Location TBD

From the President's Pen . . .

By Denny Hodge

Election season is over . . . did you vote?

As the new congress gathers in Washington, there will be a lot of discussion about direction. Where are we going? How can we work together to get there? The “great melting pot” is seeing a diversity of ideas that goes well beyond Republicans and Democrats. Similarly, Eastern Iowa is a microcosm of the national melting pot, with a variety of cultures, beliefs and ideas and our chapter is experiencing more diversity of its membership.

Nowhere has this diversity been more apparent than in the member survey I asked everyone to complete for the Board of Directors. There were questions that were split 50/50 between “YES” and “NO.” There were comments on several questions that demonstrated a vast diversity of thought, idea and preference. And all this diversity from just the fourteen people that actually responded to the survey.

The challenge for our board is not how to utilize the opinions provided by those fourteen members, but how to understand what the rest of you are thinking and what you want from your EAA chapter. Over the next several months, the board will be talking about the future of Chapter 33 . . . what we want to be and how we get there. Now is the chance for all of you to be heard. The survey can be found at:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HPG2MP5>

We will be publishing the results of the survey in future newsletters, but would like to see more people take the survey before we close it down.

Beginning this month, you will be able to view the work your board is doing in this newsletter, as we publish the minutes from our monthly board meetings. Take advantage of this opportunity to get a picture of where we are headed as a chapter . . . then make your opinions on the issues known to one of your board members.

Last Meeting - Project Visit & Composite Workshop

For November, we hardy soles braved the element (cold is an element, right?) and made our way to Randy Hartman’s Hangar 51 (Alpha-Omega Aircrafters). We started off with Scott French presenting his project, a scale adaptation of a Fieseler Fi 156 "Storch". A WW2 German light observation plane. Scott has been working on this project for some time and describes it as “challenging”. Scott went on to detail the plane’s construction and the difficulties in adapting a scale version of such a rare and unusual bird. Scott still has some work to do but is now closer to being finished than he every has been before. (That’s the sprit, Scott).

We also held elections for new Board members. Congratulation to Minnetta Gardinier and Denis Sailer, our new board members. Denny and the rest of the Chapter Officers are planning some big events this year and hopes all our member will pitch in and help out where every they can.

We saved the best for last and Randy Hartman gave us a introduction to composite building techniques and materials. Randy knows his way around an epoxy pump and has put his knowledge and skill to good use on many of his own and his clients aircraft. We got to see Randy's OSH Grand Prize winning Long-ez and his more recent Lancair. Both are beautiful aircraft. Many thanks to Randy and Scott for wonderful presentations.

Next Meeting - 2010 Awards Banquet

Chapter 33 will hold its annual Awards Banquet at Clarke Alumni House on the Coe College Campus in Cedar Rapids at 6:00 PM on Thursday, December 9. Come enjoy the social hour with cash bar while listening to the music of the Marion Chamber Trio. The buffet will open at approximately 7:00 PM and will be followed by the 2010 awards ceremony. Cost is \$20 per person. We need 50 people to make this event fly. What could be better than spending an evening with your aviation friends, good music, good food, good conversation AND DOOR PRIZES.

RSVP to Denny Hodge (dennyhodge@mchsi.com) before December 3rd. Checks can be mailed to Larry Wood, or you may pay at the door.

Future Meetings

April 15, 2011 – Chapter 33 will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on April 15th of next year with an Anniversary Gala at the Marriott Hotel in Cedar Rapids. Keynote speaker for the night will be Rod Hightower, new President of the Experimental Aircraft Association. We'll also salute those impassioned aviators and builders who came before us with a variety of presentations and guest appearances. You won't want to miss this.



Fly Market

FOR SALE: 2005 Starduster Too that was donated to EAA 517. For your bargain hunting members looking for an easy winter project. Fix it up in time for the spring flying season. We are accepting offers and would like to see it gone before Christmas. Please be kind enough to pass the word to your members. This link will take you to a web page that was donated to us with details about this airplane. <http://www.aircraftexchanagenetwork.com/listman/listings/I0024.php>

FOR SALE: I have decided that it is time for me to sell my RV-9A. I have it currently listed on the web at <http://www.barnstormers.com/>

Look for vans and then on RV-9A. Total time is now 211 hours on a factory new Lycoming O-320, 160 HP engine. Here is a chance to buy a RV without any labor or head scratching for less than a similar kit would cost laying in the crate ! If and when the RV gets sold I will have my share of a ten unit T hangar in Monticello for sale. For more information call Armin Jacobs at 319-465-5298 or ajacobs@n-connect.net



FOR SALE: NEW Slick wiring harness (for 4 cyl right mag). Slick P/N M2507. List \$176, I'll take \$70. NEW Garmin mounting tray for 150/250/300XL series \$20. Lammers 319-377-1425 or dave-lammers@mchsi.com.

FOR SALE: A gorgeous Cessna 175 for sale <http://www.greatusermanuals.com/c175/> Ed Wischmeyer 319-491-6904. Also available for rent, two slots in East Executive Hangar at CID.



Chapter 33 Calendar

Dec 9 6pm-9pm Chapter 33 Awards Banquet and Social, music by the Marion Chamber Trio (a flute, cello and harp trio), followed by dinner and presentation of chapter awards. Clarke Alumni House on the Coe College Campus

Jan 29 11am-2pm 13th Annual Chili Fly-In, Greenfield Municipal Airport

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Just because your vacation flight makes a forced landing doesn't mean you can't relax

In December 2010 Issue...

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**EAA
Chapter 33**

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