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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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One Year and Counting

By John Roberts

My name is John Roberts, and I am building an airplane. There, I said it to a group that understands. Many of my friends and family think I've gone over the deep end.

Ever since I was in my late teens, I have thought about building an airplane. Years ago Popular Mechanics would feature articles about building your own airplane for \$500 or some such extremely low figure. While reading these articles and building models, I dreamed of the day I would build a real airplane.

After being married for 30 years, getting one of the kids off to college, and the other one finally a senior in high school, I got started. In April, 2005 I ordered a set of plans from Van's Aircraft for an RV9A. They arrived a few days later. I opened them and anxiously started looking through them. I was somewhat overwhelmed and decided that maybe I should not do this. After all, there are approximately 14,000 driven rivets in the plane. That was what was really scaring me. I sent the plans back.

In July, 2005 I contacted David Koelzer. I had seen on the Internet that he was building a Sonex, and I wanted to look at one. He was kind enough to offer to take my son, Luke, and me for a ride. What



a great airplane! However, I am 6' 4," and it was a little bit on the tight side for me. When we had arrived at the airport that morning, Mark Navratil was just bringing his RV8A, N2D, to the airport. We had helped unload it from the trailer before flying. I stopped over and talked to Mark and his son, Skyler, while Luke was up for a ride with David. It served to fan the RV sparks I thought I had put out. David's taking us for a ride cemented the fact that I was going to build an airplane -- I just wasn't sure which airplane.

A couple of weeks later Luke and I headed to OshKosh for Airventure 2005. We looked at airplanes, sat in airplanes, and asked what seemed like thousands of questions. The turning point came for me when we attended a metal airplane workshop. At the workshop we were given a chance to prepare the materials and drive several rivets. Hey -- this isn't so hard! With the confidence gained from that one workshop, we picked up some tools at OshKosh, and after we returned home, we ordered a Van's RV7A empennage kit. (Yes, I decided on an RV7A instead of the RV9A I previously had in mind.)



The kit arrived, but my shop was far from ready. I knew if I was planning on working on this through the winter, I needed a comfortable place to do so. I had a nice shop but no insulation or heat, so we spent a fair amount of time getting the shop ready with insulation, drywall, concrete apron in front, and heat.

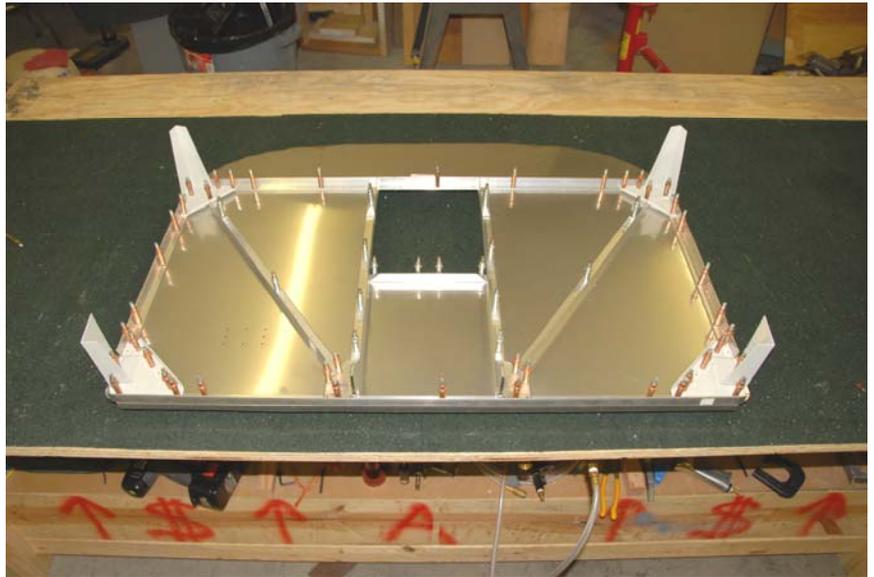
In October I finally could not stand it any longer, and although the shop was not completed, I dug out the empennage parts and drove the first rivets (actually squeezed them) on October 7, 2005. Whoo hoo! Our first assembly!

It has all been smooth sailing from there for the most part. Through the year whenever I could, I worked on the "project." Luke was great help and helped progress go quickly on many tasks. During our first year of building, the following items were completed:

- Empennage – up to the fiberglass (plan on doing all the glass at once)
- Ailerons – done
- Flaps – done
- Wings – done, control surfaces not yet mounted, no glass work done
- Fuselage – just started



The total amount of time recorded in my log for the first year of building was 500.1 hours. During that time I believe I have experienced every emotion known to man. Well, almost. I have not experienced defeat. Yes, I have made some “practice parts” (the name I have given incorrectly made parts) and had to order replacements from Van’s or refab something. But, you know what? It is just metal. If you drill it wrong or cut it short, get another piece and do it again and get it right. Overall it is not that big of a deal. When I come to something I don’t understand, there is a wealth of information available on the Internet. If I don’t find the answer I need (or trust) there, I just call Van’s Support. After all, this is supposed to be a learning experience, isn’t it?



Another great resource is the EAA chapter. Thanks to everyone who has answered questions, let me look at their plane, offered advice, etc. It is all very helpful. There are a few people I would like to extend a special thanks to. David Koelzer for getting the fire lit by taking us for a ride, Tom Olson for acting as my tech advisor, and Steve Ciha, Tom Caruthers, and again Tom Olson for letting us hitch a ride here and there to keep up the motivation. (Tom Olson and Steve Ciha gave us our first RV rides. Thanks, guys!)



The EAA chapter has been a great plus in the whole process so far. Everyone is friendly, and it is always enjoyable to get together. When you see me at a meeting, feel free to ask -- I’m always glad to talk about the “project,” or, even better, listen to you talk about your project.

If for some reason you have put off starting one of these “projects” of your own, I would highly recommend you take the initiative to get started. With all of the easily accessible information via the Internet, there has never been a better time. Two resources I use regularly are RivetBangers.com and VansAirForce.net. These sites are RV related, but whatever your project might be, I’m sure there is an information source available online. The EAA Chapter 33 members have been responsive and helpful, and that has made the entire process an even more positive experience.

Read Back – Wind, Sand and Stars

By Jim Meade

Editor's Note: Jim recently received his Certified Flight Instructor's rating in Gliders. So Jim can give instructions for Instruments, Single Engine Land, Multi Engine Land and Gliders. If you are looking for instruction and you have one engine, two engines or no engine at all give Jim a call 545-2866 or jnmeade@southslope.net

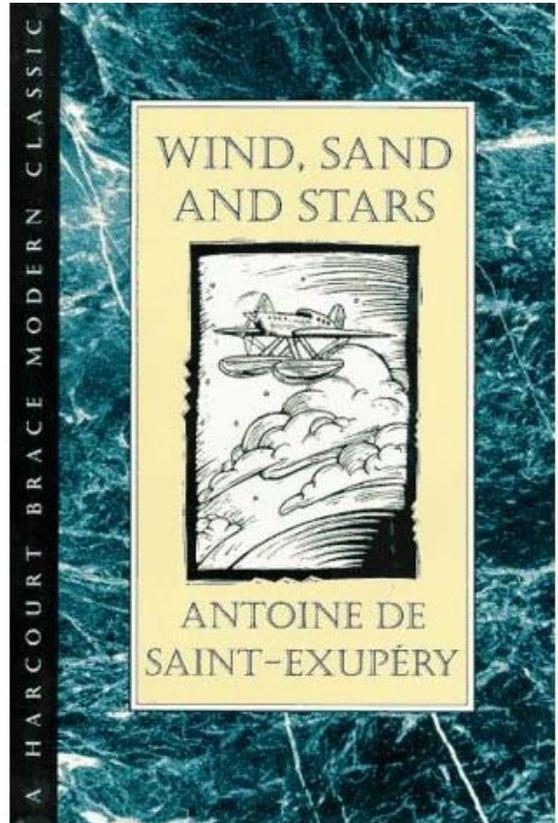
Antoine de Saint-Exupery is an icon of aviation literature and near the top of most people's list of aviation writers. But not mine. I'm definitely in the minority.

Saint-Exupery learned to fly in France in 1926 and pioneered flying in remote parts of the world. He's been over the Andes in string bags and flew into rising terrain in North Africa at night at 175 miles per hour. His adventures are world-famous. He went missing at age 44 over the Mediterranean in an F-5 (recon version of the P-38) in July 1944. The crash site was found and confirmed in 2003. It is generally thought he was not shot down but likely suffered a technical problem. Suicide has not been ruled out by some. He led an interesting life and was quite a ladies man.

The problem I have with Saint-Exupery is too much talk and not enough flying. He waxes philosophical about every subject he broaches. It's as if the guy is watching himself and writing about it on every flight. It's kind of like Richard Bach's Jonathan Livingston Seagull with a French accent. I just want to know about angles of attack or dive speeds.

The Little Prince is the book usually cited as evidence of this author's genius. I ought to read it sometime, but after Wind, Sand and Stars, I think I'll try it later.

Not my favorite, but if you like Bach or Kahlil Gibran, give it a try.



Read back – The Bridges at Toko-Ri

By Jim Meade

I've written before that most flying fiction is about people, not airplanes. This one is no different. But, to me, it's always been a special book. James A. Michener has packed a lot of emotion and action into 126 pages. And there is a lot about flying jets off carriers.

Older members will remember that the Korean War was poorly understood and not popular for the most part. Only now are we honoring the veterans of America's Forgotten War.

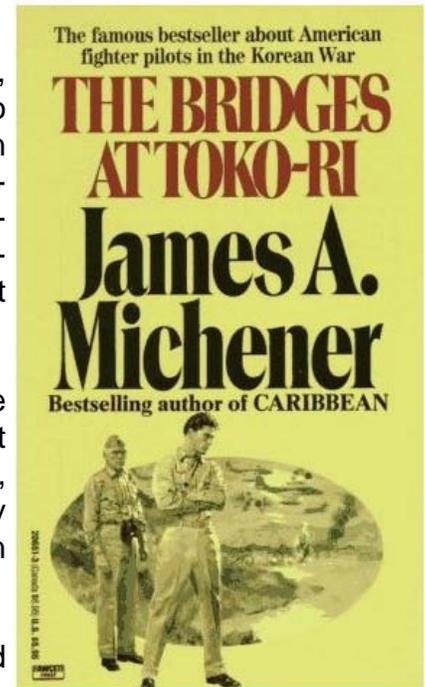
Harry Brubaker is a WWII Navy fighter pilot recalled to active duty to fly McDonnell F2H-3 Banshees off a carrier in the North China Sea. He leaves a good business, wife and children whom he loves to fight a war he doesn't understand. We called these men retreads. Retread tires such as made by Roy Carver at the Bandag plant in Muscatine were just getting popular. Take a good casing and put a new cap on it. Take a veteran and recall him to fight. Ted Williams, the baseball star, was one fighter pilot who was recalled after service in WWII.

Michener packs the book with details of carrier operations and the surreal air-ground war in Korea. His short, punchy sentences make a framework of fact and emotion that you flesh and dress based on your own experiences. The book reads very quickly.

This book was made into a very good movie starring William Holden, Mickey Rooney and Grace Kelly. The book devotes more space to other Naval characters such as Admiral Tarran, the admiral in charge of Task Force 77, the CAG (air wing commander), the landing officer and the rescue pilots. You can learn or recall a lot of Korean War naval carrier operations by reading this book. You see behind the masks of men who had to make terrible decisions without showing their own emotion.

If you don't know the ending, I won't spoil it for you. In some sense the ending doesn't matter. What does matter is that in this short book you accompany a man through the emotions of fear, love, hate, doubt, loyalty and commitment. Whatever happens to Lt. Harry Brubaker, we can all learn a lot about what it is to be a man and an aviator.

Highly recommended. This one would make a wonderful gift and belongs on every pilot's shelf.



Question of the Month

We have a setup a poll on our Chapter's Yahoo Site. This month's question is: What is the main reason you are in aviation?

- Comradeship with fellow pilots
- Flying low and slow
- It's just a tool to get me where I want to go
- Building and working on airplanes
- Touring and travel
- For the challenge
- Really like leather flight jackets
- other

To vote, please visit the following web page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eaachapter33/polls>

These polls are strictly for fun and your identity is will remain anonymous. If you have any ideas for future polls email them to me. david.koelzer@mchsi.com

Last Meeting - Tower Tour & Videos

For our October meeting we got the chance to visit the Control tower at the Eastern Iowa Airport. Tower tours used to be a regular Chapter event, however since 9-11 security issues have made visits a little more complicated. However, We were able to work with Bobbie Barnhart of the FAA to arrange a tour for our Chapter Members and fiends.

Even though we had to submit our names to the FAA in advance, we did get a very good turn out. It was nice to see some new faces as well as some spouses and children we don't often get to see at our Chapter events. We'll try to schedule some move events that might appeal to families.

Saturday turned out to be a cold, cloudy and rainy day but everyone was excited about the tour. We broke up into two groups and while one group watched some of Dr. Lippish's video, the other headed to the tower.

At the tower the group broke up again into two more groups. One group headed to the top of the tower while the other group went to the radar facility. As you might imagine the view of the airport from the top of the tower was spectacular. We got to see the radar displays and observe the airport op-



Photo by Kevin Powell

erations which were going on at the time. The controllers explained some of the procedures for acquiring aircraft, entering in their information and handing them off to departure control.

A few floors below was the radar facility where the approach and departure controllers work. There we got to see some of the procedures for handling in-coming planes from Chicago Center as well as handing off departing planes to Chicago Center.



Photo by Kevin Powell

Of course everyone was full of questions and all the controllers were ready with answers. There was so much to see that the tours ended up going longer than scheduled but no one seemed to mind. Many thanks to Bobbie and all the controllers at CID. We all now have a much greater appreciation of the great work they do here.



Photo by Kevin Powell

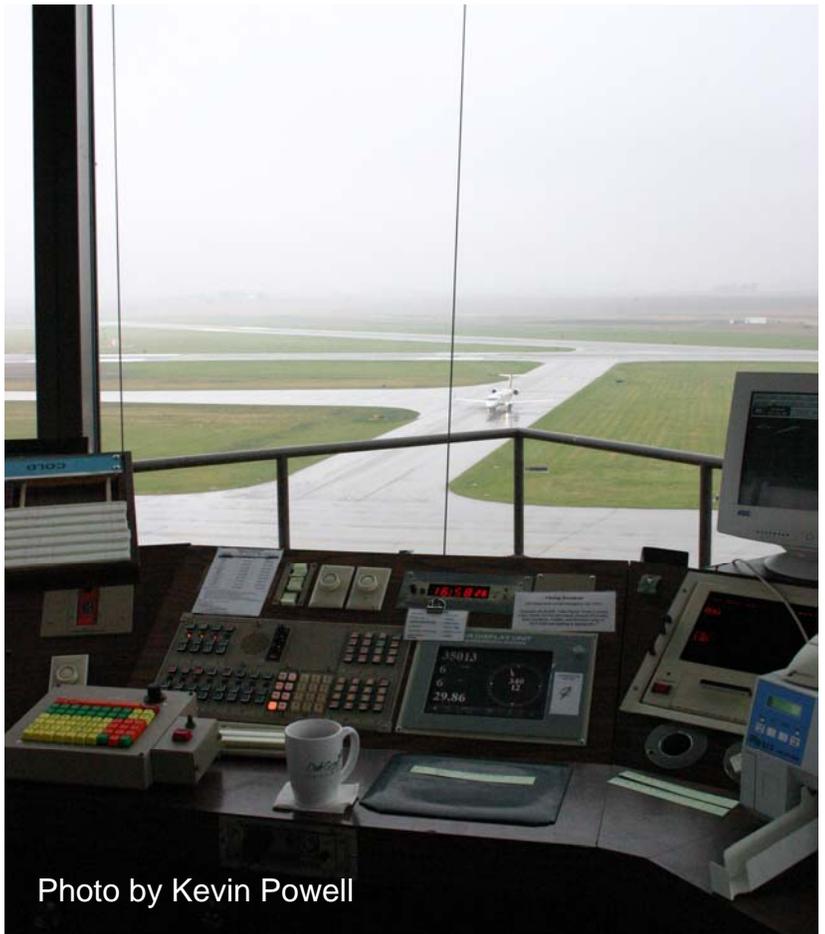


Photo by Kevin Powell

Next Meeting - Area 51

For November we are going to have a Super-Sized project visit at Area 51 or rather Hangar 51 in the East T's at the Cedar Rapids Airport. This hangar is final assembly area for Alpha Omega Aircrafters and Randy will have several aircraft there in the final stages of construction. Hangar 53 is just next door where Mark Navratil, Alan Kritzman, Tom Meeker and Thomas Caruthers keep a variety of RV's and a Mustang II. Doors will open at 9:00am Saturday Nov 11. The Chapter will be providing a big pot of chili for lunch and everyone is encouraged to bring some sides or deserts.

To get to Hangar 51, take I-380 to the airport exit, head west on Wright Brothers Boulevard, turn left on 18th Street and head south until just before the Guard Armory. Hangar 51 has a entry door which is outside the gate for those without an airport badge. You can also fly into this event, just taxi to the east T's. See you there.

Christmas Banquet

As is our tradition, we will once again hold a banquet during the Holiday season. This year John Anderson and Janet Blackledge have arranged for our event to take place at the Clark Alumni Hall on Coe's campus in Cedar Rapids on December 14th. We will have more details next month but for now put Dec 14th on your calendar and start looking for the perfect present for the gift exchange.

Chapter 33 Calendar

Nov 11 9am-1pm Chapter Meeting, Project Visit, chili & potluck lunch. Hangar 51, East T's, Eastern Iowa Airport CID.

Nov 9-11 AOPA Expo, Palm Springs, CA

Dec 14 Chapter Meeting, Holiday Banquet and gift exchange. Coe Collage, Clark Alumni Hall.

Apr 17-23 Sun 'n Fun Fly-In, Lakeland Florida



Thrust is equal to Drag and
Lift is equal to Weight
or some thing like that...

In The November 2006 Issue...

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