

OUTSTANDING FLIGHTS: **Blazing the Air Mail Path in Alaska**

Carl Ben Eielson was one of Alaska's most famous pioneer bush pilots. He had many OUTSTANDING FLIGHTS, one of which was making Alaska's very first air mail test flight on February 21, 1924.

It was a 280 air mile winter flight from Fairbanks to McGrath in a DeHaviland DH-4 open cockpit biplane over very hostile territory. It was completed successfully in just a few hours. (By dog team, in winter, this route averaged 18 days to complete.)

On Eielson's return flight, however, a few problems surfaced as he relates in the following article.

Eielson was born in Hatton, North Dakota in 1897 and learned to fly during World War I. After discharge from the U. S. Army Air Service in 1919 he enrolled in law school but alternated his studies with barnstorming tours in the Midwest to satisfy his interest and love of flying.

In 1922 he accepted a position teaching at a high school in Fairbanks, Alaska, but soon devoted his future to flying full time for a company that delivered supplies and passengers to mining camps and settlements around Alaska. [Full story >>](#)



From EAA Vintage Aircraft Association



John's Jabberings...

By John Glasford

I believe EAA Chapter 39 is at a cross roads in its life. I discussed this at some length at the last meeting. I attended an EAA Leaders Conference in Oshkosh where headquarters' representatives presented many different aspects of leading and growing a chapter. The thing that stood out was most all of the chapters are in the exact same situation as our chapter. Aging membership and lack of participation, while others have the same aging membership but are growing and involved in many things that lead to FUN, FELLOWSHIP and GROWTH! So what's the difference? Well I can tell you it has nothing to do with what headquarters does or does not do; it's not the pesky video games or cell phones or even the cost of getting your license. It boils down to the local chapter members drive to keep GA alive and showing everyone their love of aviation. We should be welcoming not just fellow builders and pilots, but the entire community to our events. Welcome everyone and show our love of aviation. Our membership has some choices to make this year if we want to really show our love of aviation and grow our membership.

I am going to convene a planning meeting on **March 11th, 0900 at Rapid City Regional Fire House Conference Room**. I want to discuss what was presented at the Leaders Conference and see how we can apply this to our chapter. I want to see this chapter flourish and grow. Involvement of each and every one of you is the only way this will happen. Will it be easy? No, but the alternative is we fold up the chairs and close the doors. I know many of you have given a lot of effort to the chapter, and for that we are very thankful. But if you didn't know it's always 10% of an organization such as ours that does 90% of the work. How much do you love this thing we call General Aviation? And will you give your time and talent to make it grow? Do you want to be the 10% or the other?

Please mark your calendar and reserve the time to participate in **the planning meeting March 11th, 0900 at Rapid City Regional Fire House Conference Room**. I'll bring donuts and snacks. Please bring anything you would like to share. We have so many resources within our chapter, and I see nothing but opportunity if only we choose to pursue it.

I will see you at the planning and regular meeting!

meeting agenda on next page

March EAA Chapter 39 meeting agenda –

Program:

TBD

Old business:

KRAP open house lead event item – DC3 - Arie

Board member volunteers

Dates and timing of the next open house event

New business:

Action group for the open house event

Discuss ideas from the planning meeting

Set dates

Lead Volunteers

Coordination with airport, etc.

An air traffic control tower suddenly lost communication with a small twin engine aircraft. A moment later the tower landline rang and was answered by one of the employees.

The passenger riding with the pilot who lost communications was on a cellular phone. He yelled, "Mayday Mayday Mayday! The pilot had an instant and fatal heart attack. I grabbed his cell phone out of his pocket and he had told me before we took off he had the tower on his speed dial memory. I am flying upside down at 18,000 feet and traveling at 180 mph. Mayday Mayday Mayday!"

The employee in the tower immediately put him on speaker phone and said, "Calm down, we acknowledge you and we'll guide you down after a few questions. The first thing is not to panic. Remain calm!"

He began his series of questions:

Tower: "How do you know you are traveling at 18,000 feet?"

Aircraft: "I can see that it reads 18,000 feet on the altimeter dial in front of me."

Tower: "Okay, that's good, remain calm. How do you know you're traveling at 180 mph?"

Aircraft: "I can see that it reads 180 mph on the airspeed dial in front of me."

Tower: "Okay, this is great so far, but it's heavily overcast. So how do you know you're flying upside down?"

Aircraft: "The pee in my pants is running out of my shirt collar."



Planning Meeting

Saturday, March 11 at 9:00
Airport Fire House Conference Room
Y'all come; the more the merrier!

Have you paid your 2016 chapter dues?

If you haven't, checks should be made out to EAA
Chapter 39 and mailed to Scott Christiansen at
13091 Mission Hill Loop, RC 57702

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, March 21

at Chapter 39 Clubhouse

6:30 Hangar Talk

Treats provided by Molly

7:00 Program (TBA)

Followed by meeting
(see agenda on page 3)



Submitte4d by Al N.



March Birthdays:

Derek Leivestad—12th
Al Neal—18th

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Scott Christiansen

Balance brought forward.....	\$3522.25
Income:	
Dinner & dues.....	2093.00
Name tag.....	6.00
Expenses:	
Dinner & bar.....	1259.00
National EAA renewal fees.....	350.00
Donation to SD A & S Museum.....	450.00
<i>(We still have 4 unpaid for reservations.)</i>	
Balance on hand.....	\$3562.25

Chapter 39

Officers

President	John Glasford
Vice President	Arie LaCroix
Secretary	Gary Schroeder
Treasurer	Scott Christiansen

Volunteers

Newsletter & Web Manager	Molly Benkert
Young Eagles	Brenda Nolan
Safety Officer	Jerry Densmore

Tech Advisor Jerry Densmore

February Minutes

By Gary Schroeder

Meeting was held at the Club house at 7:00

Program

Matthew Whitelock explained the new RCAM (runway condition assessment matrix) to help us understand how the condition code is generated and how it is distributed through the Notam system.

John called the meeting to order at 7:45

Treasures report given \$3522.25

Old Business

- 2017 Open house: Arie had called numerous places to locate a DC3 that gives rides without luck. Dwight volunteered to help find another attraction for the open house.
- There was discussion about the GAAC funds from the past open houses to be transferred to our chapter for future events. There was a motion to sign the MOU agreeing to the stipulations by Al Neal and a second by Steve Hatfield, the motion passed.

New Business

- There were possible ideas discussed to build the chapter membership.
- A chapter project to build that can possibly be sold or start a flying club
- More Young Eagles events -- it's the 25th anniversary of the Young Eagles program
- Safety meetings
- To try to have fun at the monthly meeting and do the business at planning meetings
- The Labor Day camping/fly-in, Milo told us there are plans to do it again this fall.
- There were concerns about the new medical regulations and that the doctors may not want to sign the paperwork due to the liability issues.

The March meeting will be the 3rd Tuesday -----March 21 2017

Meeting adjourned

US Navy TBF Avenger gunner from USS Essex is buried at sea with his aircraft. [Click here.](#)

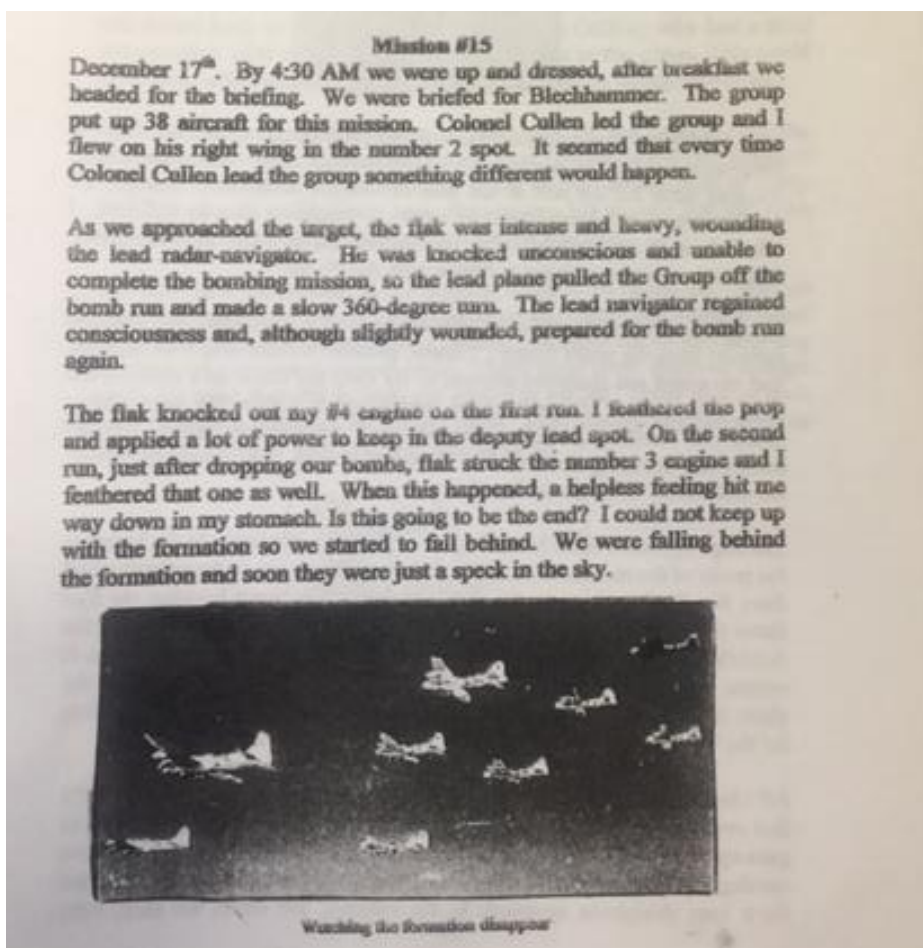


Submitted by Dam B.

Chuck & Grace Childs

Chuck and Grace Childs have experienced recent health setbacks serious enough to decide it's time to move closer to their daughters in Minnesota. They have supported our chapter for several years and will be missed. The following mission 15 story from Chucks book is reprinted from his book (with Chuck's permission) so that we may understand and honor his WWII service to our country. They are both currently at Rapid City Regional Rehab and doing better each day.

Thanks to Dan B. for doing this project



We were now alone over enemy territory, at 27,000 feet and struggling to keep the plane flying on only 2 engines. It was a frightening feeling knowing that we were miles behind enemy lines. I told the crew to stick with the plane and not bail out, keep a sharp watch for fighters and that Mike and I would do our best to get us home. When planes were left behind a formation, fighters in the area would shoot them down. Fortunately no fighters spotted us while we were flying alone.



German picture of a lone B-17 being shot down by a fighter

I had a different navigator than I usually had and he gave me a heading for Switzerland. I had no desire to go to Switzerland as we would have been interned there for the rest of the war. I told the crew that I thought we could make it to friendly territory where it would be safe to bail out. I asked them if they wanted to go to Switzerland or stick with the plane. The answer was unanimous to "Stick with the Plane!"

I established my own heading at 180 degrees south, then Mike and I settled down to keep the plane flying. I knew, because we had only two engines, that we could not maintain altitude to fly over the Alps, so I ordered the crew to throw out all unnecessary equipment to lighten the load. They threw out machine guns, ammunition and ammunition boxes, oxygen bottles and anything else that was of no value to us. They even jettisoned the ball turret. We were losing altitude.

The Alps appeared and I headed for their valleys. We began to fly between the peaks of the mountains and I told Don, my engineer, to transfer the fuel from the dead engines to the good engines. We were burning up fuel faster than I was comfortable with. We made it through the Alps and the Adriatic Sea appeared below us. I began to wonder if we could make it across, without having to ditch the plane in the sea, when I spotted the shore of Italy and headed for it. After reaching land, I turned to a heading for the base, which I could see in the distance. What a relief that was.

All I had to do now was to get the plane on the runway. I was now at 1000 feet over our tent area and I could see the crews come out of their tents to gaze up at us. For them, that must have been an interesting sight. A plane coming home by itself late with 2 engines feathered. I then made a turn for a long straight-in approach to the runway, put down the gear, then

applied more power to get us down. Suddenly the number 2 engine coughed and quit. We had used so much gas flying on two engines that the number 2 engine had run out of fuel. We quickly feathered the engine and "put the throttles to the firewall," a phrase meaning using all the power you had left, and set my glide for landing. The plane came in nicely and we set her down on the runway on the last engine, number 1.

We shut the engine down at the end of the runway and just sat without saying a word. No one in the crew cheered. There was complete silence. It was now approximately eleven hours since we had started on this mission. A truck and 2 fire engines came out to meet us, and the plane was towed back to the revetment area. A Group Officer, who had a brief conversation with me about the mission, met us at the plane. This could have been a different ending, but God was once again taking care of me.

This statement was taken from a paragraph of the narrative of the Distinguished Flying Cross (my second one) I received for this mission: "Because of Captain Childs' superior flying ability, he was able to safely land his aircraft at his home base, thus saving his aircraft and his crew from being interned or bailing out over enemy territory."

We were now transported to the briefing room to be debriefed. We had been reported shot down so there was some very surprised tower officers when I called in for an emergency landing. Waiting for us and worrying about us was our great ground crew. These boys never received enough credit for what they did to keep our planes in the air. There was no such thing as regular hours for the ground crew. They worked day and night in all kinds of weather until the plane was fit to fly.



They lived in small heated huts on the line and often they could only eat and catch a little sleep while we were on a mission. They were dedicated; they knew that our lives depended on how well they did their job. They knew the danger that we faced and saw to it that the plane was in good shape to fly. Three other planes did not make it back from this mission. I received my second Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission.