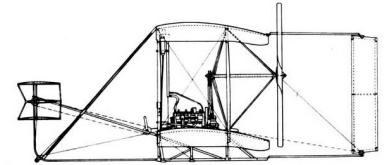




The Flyer



ELECTIONS ARE COMING !

And Getting Closer !

Yes, it is now October and now November is only a month away, and November means elections. Certainly, it is a Presidential election year, which is important, but closer to home, it is also the time for elections here at EAA Chapter 44 !

There are four positions on the Board of Directors whose terms expire this year. The Board of Directors have added the appointed terms of Mark Scheda and Trina Kenney to the already expiring terms of Steve North and Frances Englund. President Tom Henion has informed me that Mark and Steve, and probably Trina, will be standing for re-election. I understand that Frances will not be standing for re-election, though she will continue to coordinate the Ray Aviation Scholarship. A big "Thank You" to Frances for that, and for her service on the Board of Directors!

So, that leaves one (maybe two?) open, and currently uncontested position(s). Many of our members have served terms, or several terms, on the Board of Directors and I thank them for their service. Even yours truly did two terms! It is nice to have more experienced Chapter members guiding us on the Board of Directors, but it also helps to have a fresh viewpoint. Even if you are fairly new member of EAA Chapter 44, please consider standing for election to fill the empty position. Or several of you, older or newer members! Just because an incumbent is standing for re-election, it doesn't mean that others can't stand for that slot! More people standing for elections gives the membership a bigger slate to choose from. The requirement to stand for election to a position on the Board of Directors is to be a member in good standing (have paid your dues!). Please contact President Tom Henion should you be willing to throw your hat in the ring.

Please Consider Standing For Election! Thank You!

The Editor

Mission: EAA Chapter 44 is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization of aircraft builders and aviation enthusiasts in the Western New York region dedicated to promoting aviation and encouraging participation in aviation-related activities. These include designing, building and restoring aircraft, education, advocacy, and youth outreach programs. We promote flying with high standards of safety in an environment that supports freedom, family, and personal fulfillment.

Elmer Pankratz

I came across this article about Elmer Pankratz, who was, and maybe still is, a member of EAA Chapter 44. Elmer flew Photo Recon P-51 Mustangs in WW2. I am copying this article, so I hope the author, Austin Hancock, forgives me. The link to the article is: [WWII P-51 Pilot Reunites With His "Aluminum Sweetheart" at the National Warplane Museum - Vintage Aviation News](#)

“If you build it, they will come.” The beloved 1989 film *Field Of Dreams* coined this phrase. For years, both the movie’s title and also its famous quote have aligned with what the folks at the [National Warplane Museum](#) in Geneseo, New York, do each year, with their annual Geneseo Airshow. Dubbed “The Greatest Show on Turf,” the airshow has been making memories since the early 1980s. This past July was no exception, and one of the ones who came this year was a World War II veteran pilot ready for another mission with his beloved bird.

Elmer Pankratz had dreams of flying while he was growing up. A child of the Great Depression, Elmer was facing an uphill battle. However, as the U.S. entered World War II, he was soon given the opportunity to fly, and also fight for his country. Going in, Elmer had already fallen in love with the Allies’ newest weapon in the skies, the P-51 Mustang. He had nicknamed her his “aluminum sweetheart,” and would do anything for the chance to fly her in combat. By “anything,” Elmer was willing to fly the

Mustang in one of its most dangerous roles, tactical reconnaissance. During the War, Major Elmer Pankratz flew a total of 43 tactical photo recon missions, all in his beloved P-51. He credits the Mustang’s exceptional speed and maneuverability for keeping him alive in the face of German artillery and anti-aircraft fire. Elmer considers himself lucky to have not encountered enemy aircraft during any of his sorties, but he was well aware that they were likely lurking. This kept him on his toes, and he never lost sight of the mission nor the risks associated. Now a resident of Rochester, New York, Elmer Pankratz has been involved with Honor Flight, having taken the trip to visit Washington D.C. and the World War II Memorial. He also belongs to the Rochester-based Geriatric Pilot’s Association, helping keep the dream of aviation alive for the advanced generations. For all his hard work and dedication to aviation, preserving freedom, and particularly for his love of the P-51 Mustang, Elmer deserved the heroes welcome he received during the 2024 Geneseo Airshow.



WWII veteran Elmer Pankratz with a P-51 and its pilot at the Geneseo Airshow. Photo by Mike Killian



Elmer Pankratz with pilots Lou Horschel and Scooter Yoak at the Geneseo Airshow. Photo by Mike Killian

It was a hot weekend at D52, temperatures in the 90s with little to no breeze. The wide open airfield offers little shade to anyone, with the exception of under the wings of visiting aircraft. However, Elmer Pankratz had been through much worse. He flew dozens of missions in below freezing temperatures up at altitude, for hours that felt like days. He came through unscathed, not losing any digits to frostbite (unlike some of his comrades). He would not let a little warmth get in the way of his mission on Saturday, July 13th. That afternoon, Elmer would rise from his seat in the Warplane Museum Veteran's Tent, hop a ride on a golf cart, and embark upon his next mission with his "aluminum



Elmer Pankratz with his P-51 Mustang in WWII

sweetheart." Awaiting Mr. Pankratz were two P-51 Mustangs, and their pilot/owners. *Quicksilver* with "Scooter" Scott Yoak, and *Miss Kandy*, with Western NY native Lou Horschel. The golf cart pulled up, and Elmer's eyes lit up with joy. Like that 18 year old kid seeing a P-51 on the line for the first time, once again Elmer leapt from his seat, while his assistants (in awe) tried to keep up. He gravitated towards *Quicksilver* where Scooter and Lou were at the ready to load him into the cockpit, his office, once again. With a little effort, Elmer reclaimed his throne. He held court for around half an hour, Scooter and Lou listened with intent, while perhaps a bit starstruck. Many bystanders watched as well, with an equal amount of pride and joy for the reunion, the history they were witnessing.

After his trip back in time, Elmer Pankratz once again exited the cockpit of "his" aircraft, with a hearty round of applause from the audience that had by then amassed. However, his mission is not yet finished. Next year, at the 2025 Geneseo Airshow, Elmer plans to once again fly in his "aluminum sweetheart," the P-51 Mustang. Both Scooter and Lou are eager to make this happen. With Elmer's tenacity and spirit, there is no reason to believe that he will not complete his next mission.

(More Elmer content on next page)



Elmer Pankratz climbs into "his" cockpit once again. Photo by AJ Bartucca

Elmer Pankratz (continued)

Elmer wrote a book titled “I Needed A War To Do It...A Veteran Remembers”. I understand that it is out of print now. I was lucky enough to have been given a copy by Elmer a few years ago when he spoke at one of our monthly gatherings about his wartime experiences. While I was doing an internet search for his book, I came across another current article about him, which has some great period photographs. It is too large to copy to the newsletter, so here is the link:

<https://www.thearmorylife.com/elmer-pankratz-pilot-north-american-f-6-mustang/>

I recall that when the Ford TriMotor was here in 2016, Elmer had a ride in the copilot’s seat, and the pilot let him take the controls. Elmer remarked afterwards that it was nice, but it handled like a truck compared to the Mustang!

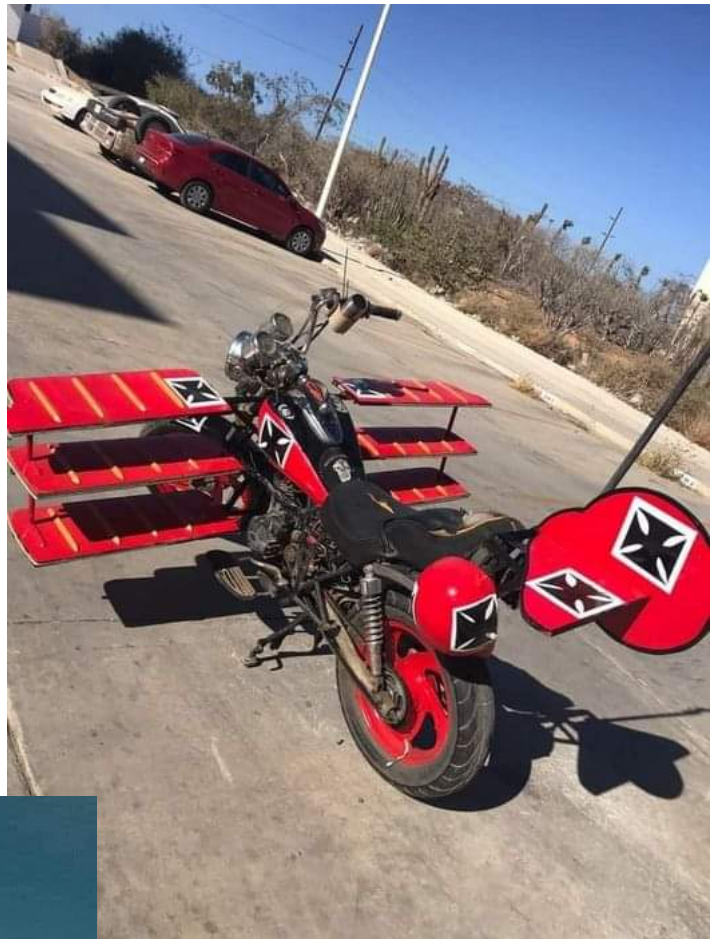
I had been thinking about Elmer the past few months, so I am glad to hear that he is still with us, and still loving his “Aluminum Sweetheart”!

Today, it was announced that by
2040 all airplanes will be
electric



It worked for streetcars, but I’m having some doubts about this concept !

At right: I am a big fan of WW1 aircraft, and also of motorcycles. Not sure that this combination will “get off the ground” !



At left: Not the most confidence inspiring view from the cabin window !

Next General Gathering

October 15, 2024

Dinner @ 6:30 pm \$5 donation

Dinner will be Ritz Cracker Chicken Casserole, provided by Gail & Jerry Isaac. Please bring a dish to pass.

Gathering is @ 7:15 pm. (Note time change!)

The presentation will be by Dan Vinton, who is originally from Hilton. He was a passenger on the USAir flight that was the Miracle on the Hudson (landed in the water after engine failure), and will be from his point of view!.

SAC Work Day - Saturday before General Gathering, 10 am.

All activities take place at the Sport Aviation Center of Western New York, and are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted.

Sport Aviation Center, EAA Chapter 44
44 Eisenhower Drive, Brockport, NY 14420
Brockport Airport / Ledgesdale Airpark (7G0)
43° 10' 56" N, 77° 55' 1" W

Board Meetings
2nd Tuesday of the month

General Gatherings
3rd Tuesday of the month
\$5 Dinner 6:30 pm, Meeting 7:30 pm

BART - Every Wednesday 6pm to 9pm,

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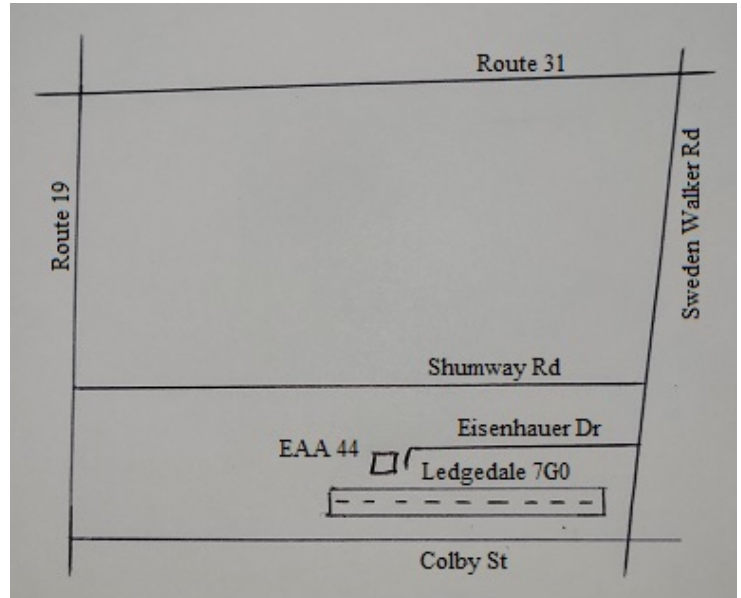
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