



THE GRAPEVINE



There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

Vol. XXVIII,



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Important NOTE:

Membership renewal –2010

People can start sending me their membership renewal checks. It is \$30 for 2010. My address is 25 Jacaranda Drive, Fremont CA 94539. I don't need the forms unless it is a new member.

Now accepting checks for the annual dinner in January. Aviatin writer Lane Wallace is the guest speaker and it will be worth the price of admission. If her presentation is similar to Oshkosh, discussing her flying in Africa you really don't want to miss it.

Mark Palajac
Treasurer, EAA Chapter 663 Livermore

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING, EAA CHAPTER 663, 12/3/2009, 7:31 PM, TERMINAL BUILDING, KLVK.

Chapter president Ralph cloud called the meeting to order.

One guest, Bob Tucknot introduced himself.

The minutes of the November meetings were approved as printed in "The Grapevine".

Treasurer Mark Palajac reported \$3847.01 in chapter funds; eighteen members have paid dues for 2010. His report was approved.



Board Of Directors

Bruce Cruikshank 510-886-6897
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January Meeting And Program

NOTICE: Our January meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 7th of January. The meeting will be at the terminal - KLVK.

Calendar:

Month	Date	Speaker	Topic
Jan	7		CHT discussion

Our January Program will feature a discussion about CHT and what that means to your aircraft.. Remember the "What is it" contest requires you to be present to win. Aircraft Spruce has graciously agreed to continue their sponsorship so check out this month's picture, send an email with the correct answer and show up at the meeting to collect your prize.

Business: The new Draft Proposed Airport Rules & Regulations was the first item discussed. The next Airport Commission meeting will be December 14 at noon in the terminal building. Ralph encouraged members to attend. Rich Pickens owner of Attitude Aviation is attempting to establish a committee to influence the rule changes; the subject has yet to come up on the Commission agenda. Ralph also mentioned the effort to put an initiative on the city ballot to limit the amount that can be spent on an airport projects to \$100,000.00 without voter approval. Yikes.

John Goldsmith gave a report on the Airport Community Barbeque hosted by Attitude Aviation, which had a very large turnout in spite of the cold. It was reported that Rich Pickens was surprised and please with the chapter's \$200 donation to the cause.

The annual dinner: The date is January 23, \$25 per person, reservations are now being accepted. The speaker will be a return of aviation writer Lane Wallace, featured in "Flying". The subject will probably be flying in Africa. Location will be in the same building as last year but in a different room; the menu will be similar to last year, from the same caterer.

Send pictures of you project to pictures@eaa663.org so they can be included in the electronic picture frame (to return to the display case in the back of the room soon) and the chapter website.

Ralph passed on from Young Eagles coordinator Eric Helms information about an aviation day at the airport to provide members of a Boy Scout Troop an opportunity to obtain aviation merit badges. The event may be scheduled for some Saturday in May. The idea is to have several chapter members make presentations to groups of scouts on all phases of general aviation. More details will come.

Announcements: The next board meeting will be 12/17, 7:30, at Ralph's place.

Members Forum: Bob Buckthal mentioned that old tires may no longer be placed in the trash. Place them next to the oil recycle tank on the south side and the city will dispose of them. Trina Anderson told of

plans to install a natural pass fired peak power plant to be placed 2.7 miles from the Byron Airport.

Break and then program: Ralph valiantly assembled a last minute program of Oshkosh flashback videos and a slide show of Soviet era military aircraft. Thanks Ralph.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING EAA CHAPTER 663, 12/17, 7:37, AT RALPH'S PLACE.

Ralph Cloud, Dave Dent, Dick Jennings, Mark Palajac, Bob Farnam, John Goldsmith, Bruce Cruikshank, and Brad Oliver were present.

Mark reported \$4926.01 in chapter funds. Thirty four members have paid 2010 dues, and so far there are 37 paid annual dinner reservations.

Ralph confirmed first flights. We could come up with four.

Dinner planning: The menu for the dinner was set as follows: From the caterer: Appetizers: Swedish meatballs and seven layer dip. Salads: Caesar, Tomato and Cucumber, and Three Bean. Main course: Tri Tip Roast with gray, Teriyaki Chicken. Side dish: Garlic Mashed potatoes, and green beans. The chapter will supply the wines, soft drinks and desserts. Cocktails will begin at 6pm with dinner at 7pm.

Due to the high cost (\$700+) of the facility a new venue will be found for next year.

There was more discussion of the Regulations and Rules changes and the Airport Spending initiative.

As yet there is nothing planed for program of the January meeting.

8:35 meeting adjourned for pie.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Cruikshank, Secretary.

PS: I would like to welcome the newly elected secretary Kirk Knight. Thank you Kirk!

Feedback/Questions/Suggestions

Any and all feedback is welcome. In order to make the newsletter entertaining, informative and above all else, something that you enjoy reading every month please take a few minutes to send suggestions, tips, corrections or any other feedback to: jeffrylite@comcast.net.

Mailbag:

This month's article is a continuation of the story started last month from a true American hero. I hope you enjoy it.

Doolittle Raid on Tokyo:

This is a really excellent first-hand account by the pilot of aircraft #13 on the Doolittle Raid off the Hornet in 1942. Take the time and enjoy a bit of history.

When we were close enough, I pulled up to 1300 feet and opened the bomb doors. There were **furious black bursts of anti-aircraft fire all around us**, but I flew straight on through them, spotting our target, the torpedo works and the dry-docks. I saw a big ship in the dry-dock just as we flew over it...

Those flak bursts were really getting close and bouncing us around, when I heard Bourgeois shouting, "Bombs away!"

I couldn't see it, but Williams had a bird's eye view from the back and he shouted jubilantly, "We got an aircraft carrier! The whole dock is burning!" I started turning to the south and strained my neck to look back and at that moment saw a large crane blow up and start falling over! Take that! There was loud yelling and clapping each other on the back. We were all just ecstatic, and still alive! But there wasn't much time to celebrate. We had to get out of here and fast! When we were some thirty miles out to sea, we took one last look back at our target, and could still see huge billows of black smoke. Up until now, we had been flying for Uncle Sam, but now we were flying for ourselves.

We flew south over open ocean, parallel to the Japanese coast all afternoon. We saw a large

submarine apparently at rest, and then in another fifteen miles, we spotted three large enemy cruisers headed for Japan. There were no more bombs, so we just let them be and kept on going. By late afternoon, Campbell calculated that it was time to turn and make for China. Across the East China Sea, the weather out ahead of us looked bad and overcast. Up until now, we had not had time to think much about our gasoline supply, but the math did not look good. We just didn't have enough fuel to make it!

Each man took turns cranking the little hand radio to see if we could pick up the promised radio beacon. **There was no signal.** This is not good. The weather turned bad and it was getting dark, so we climbed up. I was now flying on instruments, through a dark misty rain. Just when it really looked hopeless of reaching land, we suddenly picked up a strong tailwind. It was an answer to a prayer. Maybe, just maybe, we can make it!

In total darkness at 2100 hours, we figured that we must be crossing the coastline, so I began a slow, slow climb to be sure of not hitting any high ground or anything. I conserved as much fuel as I could, getting real low on gas now. The guys were still cranking on the radio, but after five hours of hand cranking with aching hands and backs, there was utter silence. **No radio beacon!** Then the **red light** started blinking, indicating twenty minutes of fuel left. We started getting ready to bail out. I turned the controls over to Knobby and crawled to the back of the plane, past the now collapsed rubber gas tank. I dumped everything out of my bag and repacked just what I really needed, **my .45 pistol, ammunition, flashlight, compass, medical kit, fishing tackle, chocolate bars, peanut butter and crackers.** I told Williams to come forward with me so we could all be together for this. There was no other choice. I had to get us as far west as possible, and then we had to jump.

At 2230, we were up to sixty-five hundred feet. We were over land but still above the Japanese Army in China. We couldn't see the stars, so Campbell couldn't get a good fix on our position. We were flying on fumes now and I didn't want to run out of gas before we were ready to go. Each man filled his canteen, put on his Mae West life jacket

and parachute, and filled his bag with rations, those "C" rations from the Presidio. I put her on auto-pilot and we all gathered in the navigator's compartment around the hatch in the floor. We checked each other's parachute harness. Everyone was scared, without a doubt. None of us had ever done this before! I said, "Williams first, Bourgeois second, Campbell third, Knobloch fourth, and I'll follow you guys! Go fast, two seconds apart! Then count three seconds off and pull your rip-cord!"

We kicked open the hatch and gathered around the hole looking down into the blackness. It did not look very inviting! Then I looked up at Williams and gave the order, "JUMP!!!" Within seconds, they were all gone. I turned and reached back for the auto-pilot, but could not reach it, so I pulled the throttles back, then turned and jumped. Counting quickly, thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, I pulled my rip-cord and jerked back up with a terrific shock. At first, I thought that I was hung on the plane, but after a few agonizing seconds that seemed like hours, realized that I was free and drifting down. Being in the total dark, I was disoriented at first but figured my feet must be pointed toward the ground. I looked down through the black mist to see what was coming up. I was in a thick mist or fog, and the silence was so eerie **after nearly thirteen hours inside that noisy plane.** I could only hear the whoosh, whoosh sound of the wind blowing through my shroud lines, and then I heard a loud crash and explosion. My plane!

Looking for my flashlight, I groped through my bag with my right hand, finally pulled it out and shined it down toward the ground, which I still could not see. Finally I picked up a glimmer of water and thought I was landing in a lake. We're too far inland for this to be ocean. I hope! I relaxed my legs a little, thinking I was about to splash into water and would have to swim out, and then bang. I jolted suddenly and crashed over onto my side. Lying there in just a few inches of water, I raised my head and put my hands down into thick mud. **It was rice paddy!**

There was a burning pain, as if someone had stuck a knife in my stomach. I must have torn a muscle or broke something. I laid there dazed for a few minutes, and after a while struggled up to my feet. I dug a hole

and buried my parachute in the mud. Then started trying to walk, holding my stomach, but every direction I moved the water got deeper. Then, I saw some lights off in the distance. I fished around for my flashlight and signaled one time. Sensing something wrong, I got out my compass and to my horror saw that those lights were off to my west. That must be a Jap patrol! How dumb could I be! Knobby had to be back to my east, so I sat still and quiet and did not move.

It was a cold dark lonely night.. At 0100 hours I saw a single light off to the east. I flashed my light in that direction, one time. It had to be Knobby! I waited a while, and then called out softly, "**Knobby?**" And a voice replied, "**Mac**, is that you?" Thank goodness, what a relief! Separated by a wide stream, we sat on opposite banks of the water communicating in low voices. After daybreak, Knobby found a small rowboat and came across to get me. We started walking east toward the rest of the crew and away from that Japanese patrol.

Knobby had cut his hip when he went through the hatch, but it wasn't too awful bad. We walked together toward a small village and several Chinese came out to meet us, they seemed friendly enough. I said, "**Luchu hoo megwa fugi! Luchu hoo megwa fugi!**" meaning, "**I am an American! I am an American!**"

Later that morning we found the others. Williams had wrenched his knee when he landed in a tree, but he was limping along just fine. There were hugs all around. I have never been so happy to see four guys in all my life!

Well, the five of us eventually made it out of China with the help of the local Chinese people and the Catholic missions along the way. They were all very good to us, and later they were made to pay terribly for it, so we found out afterward. For a couple of weeks, we traveled across country. Strafed a couple of times by enemy planes, we kept on moving, by foot, by pony, by car, by train, and by airplane. But we finally made it to India.

I did not make it home for the baby's birth. I stayed on there flying a DC-3 "Gooney Bird" in the China-Burma-India Theatre for the next several months. I flew supplies over the Himalaya Mountains, or as we called it, over "The Hump" into China. When B-25s finally arrived in India, I flew combat missions over Burma, and then later in the war, flew a B-29 out of the Marianna Islands to bomb Japan again and again. After the war, I remained in the Air Force until 1962, when I retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel, and then came back to Texas, my beautiful Texas . First moving to Abilene and then we settled in Lubbock, where Aggie taught school at Mackenzie Junior High. I worked at the S & R Auto Supply, once again in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. I lived a good life and raised two wonderful sons that I am very proud of. I feel blessed in many ways. We have a great country, better than most folks know. It is worth fighting for. Some people call me a hero, but I have never thought of myself that way, no.

But I did serve in the company of heroes. What we did will never leave me. It will always be there in my fondest memories. I will always think of the fine and brave men that I was privileged to serve with.

Remember us, for we were soldiers once and young. With the loss of all 16 aircraft, **Doolittle** believed that the raid had been a failure, and that **he would be court-martialed** upon returning to the states. Quite to the contrary, the raid proved to be a tremendous boost to American morale, which had plunged following the Pearl Harbor attack. It also caused serious doubts in the minds of Japanese war planners. They in turn recalled many seasoned fighter plane units back to defend the home islands, which resulted in Japan's weakened air capabilities at the upcoming Battle of Midway and other South Pacific campaigns.

Edgar "Mac" Mc Elroy, Lt. Col., U.S.A.F. (Ret.) **passed away** at his residence in Lubbock, Texas early on the morning of Friday, April 4, 2003.

If anyone would like a digital copy of this article in it's entirety please send me an email and I will be happy to provide a copy. Jeffrey.

"Grapevine Talking" This month is on hold again this month due to some scheduling difficulties. For those of you that haven't taken the opportunity, experience breakfast with the chapter every Saturday morning at 8:00 AM. If you haven't been to the chapter [website](#) lately, take the opportunity to stop by and view the excellent work by Brad Olsen.



Cool video's found on the internet.

[And you got here how?](#)

[Can you ever get enough Blue Angels?](#)

[Dale Jr flying with the Blue Angels](#)

[I was just looking out the window of the 747 when...](#)

**What is it? From last month
Sponsored by:**



Last month no one correctly identified the Convair 880. The photo and story was donated by Bruce Cruikshank so he wins the Aircraft Spruce Clock.



Here's the story on the Convair 880 picture. Apparently Larry Pullen noticed that a bunch of 880s left IAH between 8 and 9 AM each day. He decided to drive out and get airport ground transportation to drive us down to the end of runway 26. We arrived at the crew lounge before eight and Larry explained to each captain that we would be at the end of runway 26 with cameras waiting. He asked them to hold their aircraft as low as possible until clearing the cameras. It was quite a sight to see all those "smokers" taxiing out to runway eight. One by one they were cleared for takeoff. Larry was into b&w photography at the time so he had Kodak Plus X loaded. I stood to his left and was using Kodachrome 25, a color slide film. As each aircraft rotated they all tried to shallow out their climb but the pictures we were getting were more underbelly than front on. As they took off, Larry and I decided that the best picture would occur just before the wing tips exited the side of the viewfinder. We didn't have motor drives back then (1972) so you had to plan the exact moment of tripping the shutter. Finally we were down to the last 880 and we both felt that we didn't have the picture we needed. The airplane took the runway and we could tell by the black smoke that he was coming our way. One final check of camera settings, a deep breath and we both raised our cameras. The aircraft looked like a dot as it accelerated towards. As we watched the nose rotated and the image increased in size. "Hold it down! Flatten it out. Try to hit us." I thought. And then it happened the nose came down, and this aircraft was coming at us low. As the wing tips filled the frame I clicked the shutter. Then I looked up. What I saw was 160,000# of aluminum and kerosene accelerating towards me at close to 200 miles an hour. Without thinking I dove to the ground and tried to become one with the grass and the earthworms. I don't recall the noise of the aircraft as it roared overhead. This lack of recollection has always bothered me as measurements will show the keel beam and partially retracted right main gear were only 10-12' off the ground. Captain John Steiger and F/O Howard Steed did a great job in helping to create a tremendous photograph. Tom LeBoutillier

You too can win if you donate a winning photo. Send to your chapter editor. You will be notified prior to

the newsletter being published if your photo has been selected and will then be eligible for the prize if no one correctly identifies it via email prior to the chapter meeting.

Thanks to those that called Aircraft Spruce and mentioned this contest in the newsletter as they have agreed to continue their sponsorship. Prizes are available thanks to them. Please give them a call with your next order and tell them how much you appreciate their generous donation to our monthly newsletter.

Submit your answer to the newsletter editor to be eligible for a prize to be awarded at the regular chapter meeting. **You must be present to win.**

Winning entries will be decided by the email that is received with the earliest time stamp and the correct naming of the make/model of the pictured airplane. Winners that correctly identified the winning make/model that do NOT attend the meeting will forfeit the prize to the next available submission.

The correct, first answer that attends the monthly meeting will be declared the winner. You will be notified of the winning entry at the monthly meeting. The winning entry that DOES attend the meeting will receive his/her prize at that time. Should no one correctly respond with the winning make/model, the prize will be returned to the sponsor(s). Being part of a "group" really does make a difference. Join us for the regular chapter meeting and see what prize might be coming your way. I'll give you a hint, it will definitely be aviation related. Don't be late and check your email for the newsletter.

If anyone has something they think is new or unique, send it along. Special prize consideration will be given even though you will be ineligible for the monthly award, but you will have the thanks of the other chapter members for your CONTRIBUTION.

Now, break out your knowledge base, your experience, all the aviation magazines you can get your hands on, browsing the web or whatever resources you have at your disposal and take a gander at this month's photo.

**What is it?
Sponsored by:**





A checkout in a new type of aircraft is an accomplishment to be proud of. It is also a time for caution. Nearly one-half of all aircraft accidents happen to a pilot with less than 100 hours in type.

I hope you enjoyed reading this month's newsletter as much as I had in doing it for you. If you have any suggestions to make it better or any feedback, please send to me at the following.....jeffrylite@comcast.net.

Things of note. 42 new executive hangers are being built at Tracy (KTCY). Deposits are being taken now, \$190 fully refundable. Prices for the fully electric bi-folding door, concrete (level) hangers start a little above \$375. Contact the Airport manager via the Tracy Airport website or see Dave and Trina Anderson for more details. Anticipated finish will be sometime this spring.

Since I fly a Sonex, a few words from the factory. 2009 saw 282 flying airplanes with 51 first flights. Not an RV but for less than \$30k it will still get you in the air. Jeffry



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