



THE GRAPEVINE



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

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Meeting And Program

NOTICE: Our October meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 3rd of October. The meeting will be at the FBO on the grounds at KLVK

Calendar:

Month	Date	Speaker	Topic
August	4 th	EAA Chapter Videos	Video's from the EAA HQ office
September	5 th	Barry Weber	Annual Oshkosh Picture Slideshow
October	3 rd	Stu Eberhart	Racing a P-51 at Reno

For Our October program, Dave Dent has arranged to have Stu Eberhart give a presentation about racing a P-51 at the Reno Air Races

Mailbag:

This is a special story shared by Harry Crosby and Larry Mersek.

A note I received of the passing of a fellow flyer from my gunship days. This is a great write up of what transpired on one of his more exciting missions.

It is my sad duty to inform you of the passing of one of our Stinger brothers, Al Nash in New Jersey yesterday morning, September 3, 2013. Al was a flight engineer and was a member of the Mackay Trophy crew. He was a major factor in the successful completion of that mission as he masterfully milked every drop of fuel from the tanks so we could land safely back at Udorn with literally drops remaining in the tanks.

More importantly, Al was a great guy and will be missed.

THE STORY OF 883

There was no doubt that the men of 883 were an experienced crew. If they hadn't been, there's no telling what might have happened when their . . . but before getting to that part of the story, we should tell it from the beginning.

It is May 8, 1970. An AC-119K, an Air Force gunship, tail number 883, sits outside waiting for its crew, waiting for tonight's mission — an armed reconnaissance mission over one of the most heavily defended road sections in Southeast Asia. In one of the briefing rooms, a group of men are gathering around in that special closeness that only an air-combat crew knows so well. Captains Alan D. Milacek, pilot; Brent C. O'Brien, copilot; Roger E. Clancy, navigator; James A. Russell and Ronald C. Jones, sensor operators; flight engineer TSgt Albert A. Nash; illuminator operator SSgt Adolpho Lopez, Jr.; aerial gunner A1C Donnell H. Cofer, and crewmembers SSgt Ronald R. Wilson and Sgt. Kenneth E. Firestone. The crewmen didn't know that the mission they were about to fly, their 100th together, was going to be just a little bit different from the rest.

Weather, targets, coordinates, rescue procedures. A normal briefing. Soon, the engines are warming up, taxi is underway, and 883 and crew are airborne.

For a while all is "routine." The crew has already discovered and destroyed two trucks when Sensor Operators Russell and Jones spot three more trucks on the road below. Pilot Milacek begins maneuvering the aircraft, placing it in a firing orbit. The crew is alert, each man at his post and ready for action. Suddenly, everything changes, the equilibrium of the night, such as it is, is gone. All at once the odds have turned against the crew of 883. Bursts of antiaircraft fire begin cracking, and 883 is now engaged in the classic air battle.

Co-pilot O'Brien clears two F-4 escorts in on the six-gun positions and they respond immediately. Again and again the F-4s are called in as 883 maneuvers through the deadly circle of fire. Seconds and minutes. They remain on target. After 17 minutes of the deadly duel, guns firing away at the trucks below, 37 mm rounds whizzing by 883 from the positions below, the crew feels that a "tenuous balance" might best describe the situation. One more truck has been hit and the fire from it lights the area.

Suddenly, at exactly 1 a.m., everything changes and makes the previous few minutes seem as though they had been spent in Disneyland. "The whole cargo compartment lit up and I felt the aircraft go into a right bank dive," recalls Airman Cofer, aerial gunner. No one knew exactly where they had been hit, the gunners didn't answer right away. All they knew is that the nice steady left bank that 883 had been flying had been violently wrenched into a violent right-bank dive. Milacek called out, "Mayday, Mayday,

Mayday, we're going in." He gave instructions for jettisoning the flare launcher to the Illumination Operator, Sergeant Lopez, and told the crew to prepare for an immediate bailout. If they were going to go in, they had picked a mighty bad spot to do it.

Things became a bit more complicated for the pilot. The plane was coming down fast, having already lost about 1,000 feet in altitude, while the crew struggled with the worsening problem. Milacek and O'Brien put in everything they had to try to pull out of that dive. Finally, with full left rudder and full left aileron, along with maximum power on the two right engines, they regained "stabilized flight." They pulled out of the dive. It wasn't the easiest thing in the world to do. Navigator Clancy said later, "When you go on these missions, you brief for rescue procedures, where to head for and so forth. But this plane was going where it wanted to!" On top of that there was an additional problem. With the right engines at full power, they began to glow, providing an easier target for gunners below. That wasn't all the crew had to worry about. After a quick evaluation, they discovered that they were headed away from their home base. Even worse, there was a range of mountains between them and home base, and they were too low to go over in their present condition. But let's take one problem at a time.

There wasn't much they could do about their existence as a bright target in the sky, of course. They had to remain in a stable flying attitude. But Milacek, with guidance from the navigator, Clancy, edged 883 around to the correct heading. Slowly, slowly, like a trickle of sand in an hour glass, 883 strained around until she was pointed in the right direction. Now there were the mountains to overfly. The entire crew began throwing out everything they could to lighten the load. Adrenalin working at full bore, like the engines on the right wing, Sergeants Wilson and Firestone found that they could rather easily throw out the cans of ammunition with only one hand. It was working. The aircraft began a slow climb to get over the mountains. Once over the peaks, Milacek began a slow descent. Sergeant Nash recomputed the expected dry-tank time and discovered that the fuel consumption had been reduced considerably. For the first time since they had been hit, the crew could think realistically of landing the stricken bird instead of bailing out. It looked like the emergency might be ending.

Approaching the landing area, Milacek carefully performed a controllability check on 883. He found, after some experimentation that, at reduced speeds and with gear extended, control could be maintained with almost full left rudder and aileron. Since flap damage couldn't be assessed, he decided to do a no-flap approach at 150 knots, somewhat faster than the usual landing technique.

Down they came, each crewmember wondering what the dark night held for them as they came closer to touchdown. Finally, the first bump, then wheel roll, then finally, taxi up. They had made it. They were down, after their 80-minute ordeal. It was over, and no one was hurt. Perhaps, though, no one was more relieved than Milacek, who was heard clearly over the intercom, saying as they went onto the taxiway at the end of the runway: "Thank you, Lord, thank you."

May 9, 1970, Vietnam - Fourteen feet of the wing and one aileron on Stinger 883 was shot off. The plane should not have stayed airborne.

It wasn't until the crew got out of the aircraft that they saw for themselves, for the first time, just what damage had been done. One-third of the right wing had been shot away and one aileron along with it. Technically, the aircraft was almost un-flyable.

A year later, the crew of 883 was together again, this time to receive the coveted Mackay Trophy for the most Meritorious Flight of the Year.

The citation reads, in part:

Working as a team and displaying the highest degree of airmanship and courage in the face of extreme danger, they managed to successfully return to their home base, thereby saving a valuable aircraft. The exceptional distinctive accomplishments of Captain Milacek and his crew reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Air Force.

September 2013 Minutes

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING, EAA CHAPTER 663, 9/5/2013, 7:30 PM, TERMINAL BUILDING KLVK.

Chapter president Ralph Cloud called the meeting to order.

Ralph welcomed and asked the guests to introduce themselves. Dave DeFord introduced his son Steve who is building a RV-10. Francois Degroen introduced himself and his daughter Berlin. Dug Frazier introduced his friend and co-worker Yu Hanakura.

The minutes of the August meetings were approved as printed in “The Grapevine”.

Treasurer Mark Palajac, not present, (on vacation) passed on to Ralph that he renewed the chapter’s membership to the California Pilots Association and along with \$20 filed a Statement of Information with the Secretary of State. The chapter now has \$4,101.90 and 96 members.

Business: Trina Anderson reported that 33 Young Eagles were given airplane rides out of the Patriots Jet Center at the Byron Airport on 8/17. It was an excellent setting for a rally. The next YE Rally will be Saturday 9/21 at Livermore.

The October chapter election: Ralph stated that since no one volunteered to head a nominating committee nominations for chapter officers and directors for the next two years would be taken from the floor. While Dave Dent tried to run a guilt trip on those present making an appeal for “new blood” to get involved in running the chapter, many present sat very still (cloaking devices?) trying not to get noticed. After much hemming and hawing John Goldsmith accepted a nomination for president. Chuck Ray was nominated for vice-president. Treasurer Mark let it be known, and secretary Bruce Cruikshank offered to be nominated again for their positions. After more hemming and hawing the following were nominated for directors: Dave Steihr, Dave Anderson, Trina Anderson, Dave Dent, and Bob Farnam. Ralph Cloud is automatically a director. Ralph mentioned that nominations will still be open at the October meeting. (Some time after the meeting John Goldsmith disclosed that the chapter by-laws require 2 nominations for each office {It would be nice to not ignore this AGAIN!}).

Newsletter editor Jeffry Larson noted that Bob Tucknott was the first of 6 correct answers to the “What Is It” contest.

Ralph mentioned the next barbeque coming the this Saturday 9/7.

The Livermore Airport Open House is coming October 5th. There are registration forms at the airport office or on-line.

Announcements: Ralph Cloud announced the passing of Ralph Huy the previous weekend. The LVAA is organizing a celebration of Ralph’s life at the airport; date to be decided.

The LVAA is also raising money for a bench commemorating Ralph to be placed on the grounds of the airport terminal. Over the years Ralph had offered free advice and use of tools to many members. It was moved and passed for the chapter to contribute \$200 towards the bench.

RALPH MENTIONED THE PASSING OF PAUL POBEREZNY THE FOUNDER OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION, THE REASON WE HAD GATHERED THIS EVENING.

Ralph has reserved the Livermore Veterans Hall for Saturday January 18th. Now all we need is a speaker.

The next board meeting will be 9/19, 7:30 at Ralph's followed by the general meeting and election on 10/3

Break and then program: Barry Weber once again gave us a great picture show of the latest Oshkosh Fly In. Thank you Barry.

Meeting Adjourned for pie.

September 2013

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 9/19/2013, 7:35 PM, RALPH'S PLACE.

Ralph Cloud, Mark Palajac, Dave Dent, Bob Farnam, Bruce Cruikshank and Bob Cowan were present.

Mark reported \$4,265.64 in chapter funds and a total of 96 members.

Business: Young Eagles, Ralph mentioned the next rally coming up on Saturday 9/21 at KLVK starting at 9:00 am until?

Tools: Bob reported nothing new, but Dave said the bead blaster needs a new glass window. The current one is cracked.

The Livermore Airport Open House is near on October 5th. Ralph said we've been promised a whole row to display our chapter aircraft. It's been suggested planes be in position by 9 am. There will be shade and cold drinks for the comfort of those participating.

Election: So far we have the following nominations: John Goldsmith president, Chuck Ray vice president, Mark Palajac treasurer, Bruce Cruikshank Secretary and for directors Dave Stiehr, Dave Anderson, Trina Anderson, Ralph Cloud, Dave Dent, and Bob Farnam. There was some talk about the Chapter By-Laws requiring 2 nominees for each position, but one may just have to do. At least the chapter will continue to function. Nominations are still open.

Dave Dent has arranged to have Stu Eberhart give a presentation about racing a P-51 at the Reno Air Races. Suggestions were bandied about for possible speakers for the upcoming annual dinner. Dave is trying to get Mike Melville.

Announcements: Next meeting will be 10/3 followed by the board meeting on 10/17.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Cruikshank, Secretary.

Feedback/Questions/Suggestions

Any and all feedback is welcome. Please take a few minutes to send suggestions, tips, corrections or any other feedback to: jeffrylite@comcast.net.

Cool videos found on the internet.

[Kids and aviation](#) – Thanks to Robert Cowen

4 part series on Lindbergh's 1st Atlantic Crossing

[Link 1](#), [Link 2](#), [Link 3](#), [Link 4](#) – Thanks To Chris Uhlik

[Buy your plane at Penney's](#) – Not a video, but a good read. Thanks to Bruce Cruikshank

[Niagara Falls from a Toy Copter](#) – Thanks to Bruce Cruikshank.

[Early air show photo's at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio in the 50's](#) – Thanks to Bruce Cruikshank

What is it? From last month Sponsored by:



6 correct entries were submitted, correctly identifying the Rose Parrakeet Replica. Bob Tucknott beat everyone to the punch. This airplane is yours to be had on Barnstormers for \$23,500.

Congrats to all that participated and added points towards the year end prize of the custom made 17" model from Factory Direct Models. Sponsor prizes thanks to Aircraft Spruce. Don't forget to thank them when you call and make that next order. Might be worth jotting down a note in the comments section if you order online. Missed guess's still count one point each, tallied to the end of the year with a 2 guess limit per month.

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 but points are cumulative and incorrect guesses count.**

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 as discovered. Winners that correctly identified the winning make/model that do NOT attend the meeting will forfeit the prize to the next available submission. 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 as discovered. Winners that correctly identified the winning make/model that do NOT attend the meeting will forfeit the prize to the next available submission. Chapter Judge's decision on correct identification is final.



To keep a pilot from monopolizing the conversation, tie his hands behind his back

What is it?
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