



THE GRAPEVINE



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

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Meeting And Program

NOTICE: Our January meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 3rd of January. The meeting will be at the terminal - KLVK.

Calendar:

Month	Date	Speaker	Topic
Dec	6th	Einar Enevolson	Strato 2C Aircraft
Jan	3 rd	Dave Ganzer	AeroViroment
Feb	7th	Michael Rodomsky	Cirrus 22 to Australia

Our February Program will feature another great speaker from Dave Dent's arsenal of contacts. Dave has arranged for Michael Rodomsky put on a show and tell of how to fly a Cirrus 22 from Vacaville to Australia.

Mailbag:

Contests results:

Despite valiant attempts from the members, every single guess submitted via email and at the chapter dinner was over the weight gain of Dave and Trina's beautiful new paint job on their RV-9A. 15lbs was the total weight gain. One guess was just .2 lbs over that but as the contest stated "The closest WITHOUT going over". It was an interesting contest and Dave and Trina were awarded the \$10 gift card from our sponsor, which once again is sponsoring our 2013 "What is it?" contest with monthly prizes. For those that didn't participate for whatever reason, consider this. If you had submitted a guess of 1 lbs, you would have won the gift card.

Speaking of "What is it?", Barry Weber was awarded the Comtronics headset (<http://www.comtronics-aero.com>) for cumulating the most points in 2012. It wasn't the runaway contest that most thought as David Flourney tallied 45 points and Bob Tucknot was third with 37 points. Remember you get 1 point each for an incorrect guess each month (2 guesses max), 3 points if you get the correct answer and DON'T show up for the meeting, 5 points if you do and 10 points for the 1st correct that shows up for the meeting. If you had submitted two incorrect guess's each month, you would have finished with 24 points. There were two months last year when the winning answer did not attend the monthly meeting. The board has approved purchasing the winning prize this year, a custom built made to order model of your airplane from Factory Direct Models (<http://www.factorydirectmodels.com>), painted to match the one in your hanger, or for you still building, one that WILL match the one in your hanger once it's done. Let's all contribute and give Barry a run for his money.



Order Your Premium Custom Model (with painted windows)

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- Your Airplane Recreated into a Beautiful Desktop Model
- Military or Civilian - We can Build it!
- See Additional Details Below -

Once you place your order you will receive your custom model order form to provide us with all the necessary information to Build YOUR Model

USAF General Tony McPeak On ' Jerking The Wings Off ' An F-100 Over Airshow Center

Del Rio could be the movie set of a West Texas border town. It's windy, and the weather tends toward seasonal extremes. A large U.S. Air Force Base 6 miles east of town is named after Jack T. Laughlin, a B-17 pilot and Del Rio native killed over Java within a few weeks of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Our Thunderbird's Team flies into Laughlin on Oct. 20, 1967, for an air show the next day, honoring 60 or so lieutenants graduating from pilot training.

We go through the standard pre-show routine. Lead and 5 do their show-line survey routine, while the rest of us walk the rounds of hospital and school visits and give interviews. Next day, proud parents watch as new pilots pin on wings.

At noon, we brief at Base Ops. As usual, an "inspection team" comprising base and local dignitaries joins us for a photo session before we step to the jets. The film *Bandolero* is in production near the base, and its stars, Jimmy Stewart and Raquel Welch, show up in the inspection team. Jimmy Stewart is a USAF Reserve brigadier general, a founder of the Air Force Association and a big hero to all of us. Raquel Welch is . . . well, she's Raquel Welch.

We're wearing white airshow suits, my least-favorite outfit. Lead can choose from among gray, blue, black or white. But today, we look like Good Humor men. Plus, I work hard during the demonstration and sweat deep soaks my collar. This wouldn't matter much, except we do a lot of taxiing in-trail. And with only 6 ft. between the end of my pitot boom and No. 5's afterburner, I take a load of engine exhaust in my cockpit. Soot clings to the dampness, leaving a noticeable "soiled ring around the collar" when I wear white.

At Del Rio, I follow my usual routine and I roll the collar under once we have taxied away from the crowd. After the show, I'll roll it back out again, the chimney-black dirt still there, but now underneath, out of sight.

We taxi short of the active runway for a "quick check" pre-takeoff inspection by a couple of our maintenance troops. As No. 6, I'm flying my soon to be memory acid-etched F-100 D. # 55-3520.

We take the runway, the four-aircraft Diamond in fingertip and Bobby Beckel and I in Element. . 500 feet back. The Diamond releases brakes at precisely 1430. Bobby and I run up engines, my stomach tightening against the surge of singular isolation. And thrill that comes before every air show takeoff.

By this time in the season, the Thunderbirds' Team is really 'clicking along.'

We have a lot of shows under our belt. And know what we are doing.

Twenty-one minutes into the event, it's going well--a nice cadence and rhythm.

We approach the climax, the signature Bomb Burst. My job is to put "pigtails" through the separating formation, doing elevator-unloaded, Max-rate vertical rolls.

The vertical rolls require establishing a perfect up-line. And more than a few also requires beginning the rolls with a ton of air-peed at entry. I grab for altitude to swap it for the needed airspeed as the Diamond pirouettes into their entry for the Bomb Burst. And at just the right moment, dive after them, hiding behind their smoke trail.

The steep dive builds airspeed quickly using AB [afterburner.]

The Thunderbirds had switched to the F-100, making us the world's first supersonic flying team. I have to be mind-full of a hard-and-fast rule:



DO NOT GO SUPER-SONIC DURING THE AIRSHOW.

No booming the crowd. So, I want to be subsonic. But just barely. Let's say . . . Mach 0.99.

The biggest mistake I can make is to be early in the maneuver. The Diamond is about to break in all four directions, so if I get there too soon, I don't have an exit strategy. Today, my timing looks good, so I light the 'burner' and start a pull into the vertical. We don't have a solo pilot's handbook on board. But if we did, the handbook would say this maneuver at this high speed would be allowed a 6.5 G pull.

If I get it right, I'll hit the apex of the Bomb Burst 5 seconds after the Diamond separates, snap the throttle out of 'burner' to get the smoke going, be perfectly vertical. And very fast. As the Diamond pilots track away from one another to the four points of the compass, I'll put on those lazy, lovely pigtails. Then I'll click the smoke off and figure out how to do a slow-speed vertical recovery.

But at Del Rio, it doesn't turn out okay. I start the aggressive pull into the vertical.

The aircraft explodes.

Now F-100 pilots are accustomed to loud noises. Even in the best of circumstances, the afterburner can 'bang' pretty hard when it lights up. It's also fairly common for the engine compressor to stall, sometimes forcing a violent cough of rejected air back up the intake. Flame belches out the oval nose--which will definitely wake you up at night--and the shock can kick your feet off the rudder pedals.

Any F-100 pilot who feels/hears a loud "BANG!" he automatically thinks : "compressor stall." And he unloads the elevator to get air traveling down its intake in the right direction.

So, instinctively, the explosion causes me to relax stick-pressure to unload the airplane's centrifugal G load. But now, I'm fully into one of those fast-forward mental exercises where seasons compress into seconds, the leaves changing color while you watch. I move the stick forward fairly lethargically, even having time to consider:

"That's NO COMPRESSOR STALL!!"

In retrospect, the airplane had already unloaded by itself . . . making my remedy superfluous.

But there was some pilot lore at work here:

No matter what else happens . . . fly the airplane.

Forget all that stuff about lift and drag and thrust and gravity, just fly the damn airplane until the last piece stops moving.

Good old F-100 # 55-3520 has quit flying. But I have not.

And now there's fire. Flames fill the cockpit. I have to eject. I grab the seat handles and tug them up, firing the canopy and exposing ejection triggers on each side of the handles. I yank the seat triggers and immediately feel catapulted into the slipstream.

Seat separation is automatic. Too fast to track, the ejection seat is disappearing as I curl into a semi-fetal posture to absorb the parachute's opening shock. Jump school helps here . . . congratulate myself on body position.

Then the chute snaps open. Much too quickly. Jolting me back to real time and short-circuiting the transition from stark terror to giddy elation, the evil Siamese twins of parachute jumping.

My helmet is missing. Where did it go? I look up and see a couple of chute panels are torn, several shroud lines broken, and there's one large rip in the crown of the canopy.

I'll come down a bit quicker than necessary . . . but there's not much altitude left anyway.

Going to land in the infield, near show-center. Have to figure out the wind, get the chute collapsed fast so as not to be dragged. Heck ! I'm on the ground and being dragged already. Get the damn chute collapsed ! Finally, I stand up, thinking I'm in one piece. And here comes a blue van with some of our guys in it.

Then it begins to sink in. In 14 years and 1,000-plus air shows, the Thunderbirds team has been ' clever ' enough to do all its metal-bending in training . . . out of sight. This is our first accident in front of a crowd. And that dubious honor is mine.

I gather my gear and climb into the van. Somebody wants to take me immediately to the base hospital, but I say : " I don't want to do that right now. Let's go over and tell the ground crew I'm OK."

So we stop, I get out of the van, shake hands, toss the crew chiefs an insincere thumbs-up.

Jimmy Stewart is still there and comes over to say nice things, but Raquel hasn't stayed for the show, so no air-kiss. I'd given our narrator, Mike Miller, some ad-libbing lines to do in the middle of his presentation, and he stops to say maybe we should leave " that thing . . . what ever it was," out of the next show sequence.

That's when I learn that I'd jerked its wings off.

On most modern fighters, the wings are well behind the pilot. You can see them in the rear view mirror or if you look back, but otherwise they're not in your field of view.

Of course, I had been watching the Diamond, ahead and well above me. I hadn't seen the wings come off.

All I knew was . . . it blew up.

The F-100 has a large fuel tank in its fuselage, on top of the wing center section and forward of the engine. When the wings folded, a large quantity of raw fuel from that tank dumped into the engine. Then exploded.

The shock wave from the blast propagated up the air intake and blew the Super-Sabre's nose off, along with the first [6] six feet of the airplane. The jet's badly-twisted after-fuselage liberated its drag chute. And as it separately fluttered down. some of the awed crowd thought I was inside the fluttering wreckage.

After exploding, the engine instantly shot flames through the cockpit-pressurization lines. Conditioned air enters the cockpit at the pilot's feet and also behind his head. My flying boots, ordinarily pretty shiny for an ROTC grad, were charred beyond repair. I never wore them again. Where I had rolled my collar underneath to protect the white show-suit appearance, my neck got toasted.

I have no idea how fast I was traveling at ejection. I was barely subsonic when the wings failed. But with the nose blown off, the F-100 is a fairly blunt object and would have slowed quickly. On the other hand, I remained with the aircraft no more than a second or two after it exploded. So there wasn't time to decelerate much.

When I came out of the jet, the near sonic wind blast caught my helmet, rotated it 90 degrees and ripped it off my head. It was found on the ground with the visor down, oxygen mask still hooked up and chin strap still fastened. As the helmet rotated, the helmet's neck protector scuffed my burned neck causing some bleeding. [HMMMM . . no sharks to be concerned about.]

The Team keeps a zero-delay parachute lanyard hooked up during the air show, giving us the quickest possible chute deployment. That explained why my chute opened fast--too fast, as it turned out.

I didn't get enough separation from the seat, which somehow contacted my parachute canopy, causing the large tear. The immediate, high-speed opening was certainly harsher than normal, and as my torso whipped around to align with the chute risers, the heavy straps did further damage to the back of my neck, the body part apparently singled out for retribution.

Walking into the base hospital, I'm startled by my image in a full-length mirror. Above, a sign says : "**Check Your Military Appearance.**"

Mine looks like I've crawled into a burlap bag with a mountain lion. The white show suit is a goner, the cockpit fire having given it a base-coat of charcoal gray accented by blood . . with a final dressing of dirt, grass and sagebrush. Being dragged along the ground accounts for the camouflage. However, I hadn't realized my neck was bleeding so much. I look like the main course in a slasher movie --' The Solo Pilot From Hell.'

They keep me overnight in the hospital.. The Team visits me, and Mike Miller smuggles in a dry martini in a half-pint milk carton. Everybody's leaving for Nellis AFB the next morning. I tell the hospital staff I'm heading out, too. And ask our slotman, Jack Dickey, to pack my stuff at our motel. The 1967 show season is over.

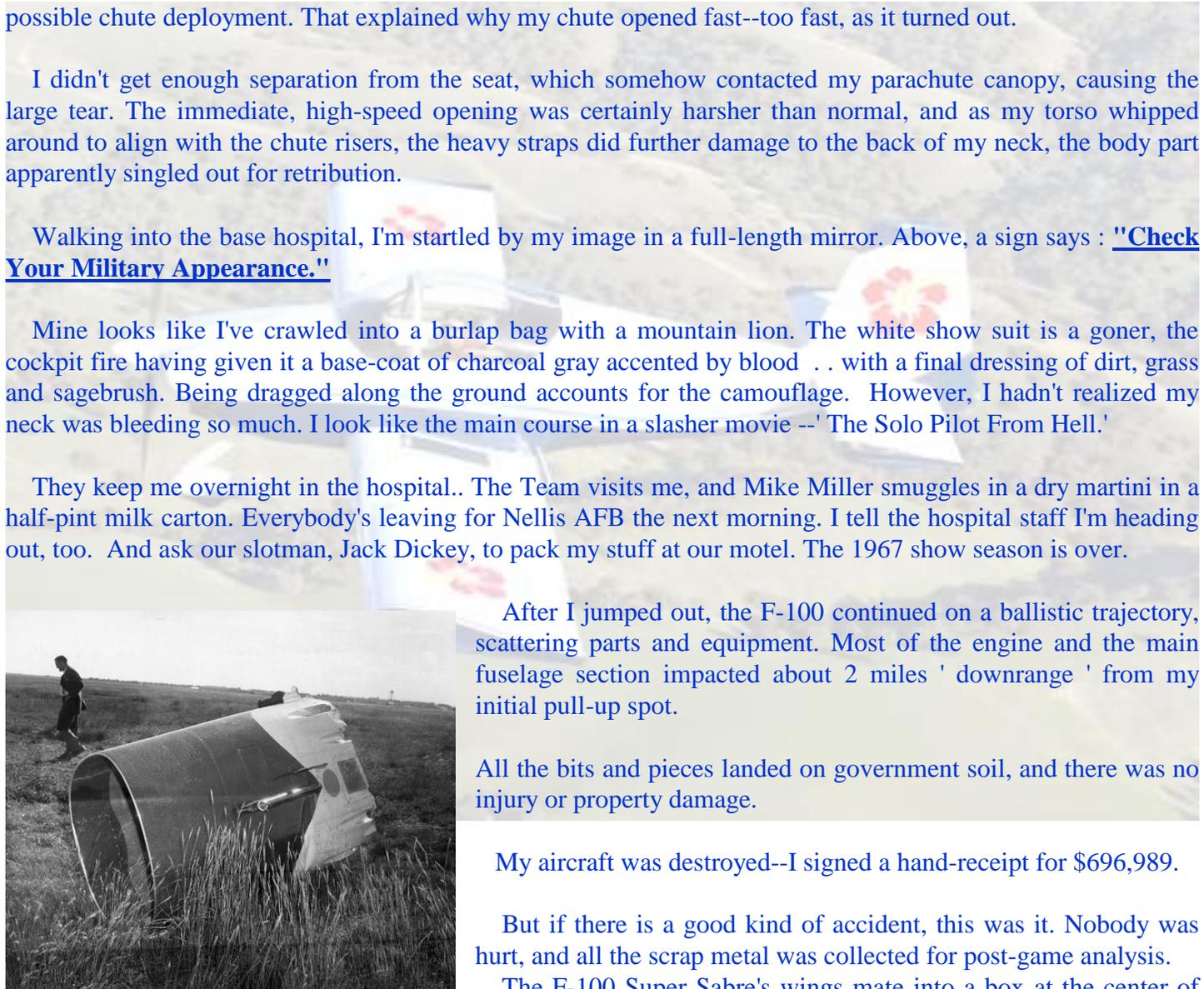
After I jumped out, the F-100 continued on a ballistic trajectory, scattering parts and equipment. Most of the engine and the main fuselage section impacted about 2 miles ' downrange ' from my initial pull-up spot.

All the bits and pieces landed on government soil, and there was no injury or property damage.

My aircraft was destroyed--I signed a hand-receipt for \$696,989.

But if there is a good kind of accident, this was it. Nobody was hurt, and all the scrap metal was collected for post-game analysis.

The F-100 Super Sabre's wings mate into a box at the center of its fuselage . . the strongest part of the airplane. When my aircraft's wing center box was inspected, the box was found to have failed.



North American Rockwell, the manufacturer, tested the box on a bend-and-stretch machine, and a section off the assembly line broke once again under at an equivalent load of 6.5 G for the wing loading I was experiencing when the wings departed.

It shouldn't have happened, since the F-100's positive load limit is 7.33 G, but my F-100's wing center box broke along a fatigue crack. . and there were about 30 more fatigue cracks in the vicinity.

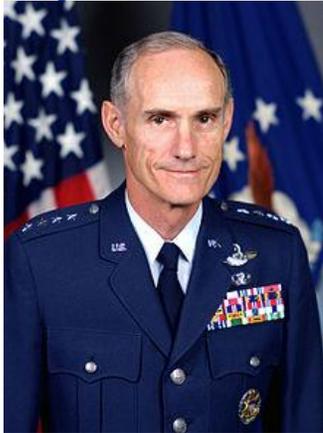
Some then-recent F-100 losses in Vietnam looked suspiciously similar. The recovery from a dive-bomb pass is a lot like my high-speed, high-G pull-up into the Bomb Burst. In the Vietnam accidents, the pieces had not been recovered, and the aircraft were written off as combat losses.

Later, specialists discovered considerable fatigue damage in the wing center boxes of other Thunderbird aircraft. USAF immediately put a 4 G limit on the F-100 and initiated a program to run all the aircraft through depot modification to beef up the wing center box. My accident almost certainly saved lives by revealing a serious problem in the F-100 fleet.

Merrill A. (Tony) McPeak

Note : USAF General Merrill A. McPeak flew F-100, F-104, F-4, F-111, F-15 and F-16 fighters, participated in nearly 200 air shows as a solo pilot for the Thunderbirds and flew 269 combat missions in Vietnam as an attack pilot and as a high-speed forward air controller (FAC).

He commanded the Misty FACs, 20th Fighter Wing, Twelfth Air Force and Pacific Air Command, and completed his career as the 14th USAF Chief of Staff.



Source : Abridged from Aviation Week & Space Technology : Contrails

January 2013 Minutes

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING EAA CHAPTER 663, 1/3/13, 7:33 PM, TERMINAL BUILDING KLVK.

Chapter president Ralph Cloud called the meeting to order.

Guests introduced themselves: Dave Ganzer our speaker and his wife, and Orlando (last name ?).

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

Treasurer Mark Palajac reported \$5078.58 in chapter funds. So far 25 members have paid their dues for 2013. As of the end of 2012 we had 103 chapter members. Mark also passed out a printout of the last 5 years of the chapter's finances.

Business: Young Eagles coordinator Trina Anderson mentioned that the Eagle Flight Forms have been ordered and are coming. More details are also coming.

Tool man Bob Farnam reported that in addition to himself, Leland Collins, Dick Jennings, Chuck and Darryl Ray and Steve Richards can also checkout chapter tools.

Brad Olsen mentioned the chapter member Bob Tucknott was recognized by the website AvWeb for making 300 Angel Flights.

Newsletter editor Jeffry Larson congratulated Ralph Cloud for identifying the mystery aircraft as a Mohawk. He also mentioned that he had no gift to present the January mystery plane winner. It was passed that chapter spend up to \$10 for a prize.

Annual dinner: Saturday 1/19 At the Livermore Veteran's Hall, set up starts at 5pm, cocktails at 6 pm, and dinner will be served starting at 7. Caterer Bonehead's Texas BBQ will be serving chicken, beef and all the trimmings. After, Ray McCrea will share his experiences with a total solar eclipse (airborne) in southern Africa and the wide life of Madagascar. It was approved forgive Ray's dinner fee and chapter dues for this year.

Announcements: The January board meeting will be 1/17, the next general meeting 2/7.

Break and then Program: Dave Dent introduced Dave Ganzer an engineer at AeroVironment, a company founded by the late Paul McCready whose main products these days are Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Dave presented many details of project he is currently involved with, the Global Observer, a hydrogen powered high altitude drone. The website avinc.com/uas/ has many details of their products. (Check the videos of the Raven and the Global Observer.) Thank you Dave and Dave.

Meeting adjourned for pie.

January 2013

MINUTES: BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, 1/17/13, ~7:40 PM, RALPH'S PLACE.

Ralph Cloud, Dave Anderson, Dave Dent, Mark Palajac, Bob Farnam, John Goldsmith, Bruce Cruikshank, and Chuck Ray were present.

Treasurer Mark Palajac reported 53 members have paid their dues for 2013, and a minimum of 63 dinners are expected at the annual dinner. Fourteen are paying at the door? The chapter fund stands at \$5249.10. A \$200 check will be sent to Dave Ganzer to over his expenses for spending the night and driving from Santa Paula. Dave Dent said Mr. Ganzer enjoyed giving the presentation, his first.

Dave Anderson led a discussion about the chapter Young Eagles program. Trina is working on a schedule for this year. Dave sighted the problem of having the capacity to give rides match the number of kids that show up. Turns out to often be a crap shoot. Red Sky Aviation is holding an open house in conjunction with the LARPD in the near future. We may get involved when more details are available. The LVK staff keeps track of the number of Young Eagles flown from the airport, total so far—918.

Newsletter: Editor Jeffrey Larson wants to award the winner of the 2013 “What Is It Award” to get a real prize, a custom wooden model of their airplane. On consensus those present approved up to \$300 for this award.

Details of the annual dinner were covered. Ralph is getting five layer dip and veggie trays from Cost Co and meat balls from IKEA! (He says they are good.) Harry Crosby is bringing the wine. And Bonehead Texas BBQ is supplying the rest of the eats. Setup starts at 5, cocktails at 6, dinner at 7, cleanup at 10. Ray McCrea, the chapter traveler is supplying the program.

February program: Dave Dent has arranged for Michael Rodomsky put on a show and tell of how to fly a Cirrus 22 from Vacaville to Austrial.

Announcements: The FAA FAST is having KLVK controllers meet with pilots on 2/4. The next meeting is 2/7 at the terminal building.

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 video's found on the internet.

[Rise of Military Drones](#) – Thanks to Chris Uhlik

[What was the N number?](#) As seen on MSN

[A better Eagle video](#) – Caution, swearing in Russian but subtitles are in English – Thanks to Bob Cowan

[Real Top Guns F-111 Belly Landing](#) – Thanks to Bruce

What is it? From last month Sponsored by:



Ralph Cloud was the first correct answer and was awarded the Multi-tool provided by Aircraft Spruce.

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.



Trying to wite-off an airplane with the IRS is like trying to prop up the moon.

What is it?
Sponsored by:





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