



The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

April 2019

Scottsdale, Arizona

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! At the March meeting our guest speaker was legendary helicopter pilot, Jerry Foster. Jerry told the story of the birth of Electronic News Gathering (ENG) from the air. He started with a McCullough J-2 Gyro Plane and worked up to a piston Hughes 269 and later a turbine powered Hughes 500, finishing off his career flying the Bell Jet Ranger. Jerry brought along a case of the book he has written and sold quite a few copies. He was even nice enough to donate one as a door prize. Jerry was very open with his tales of dealing with the FAA and their vendetta against him. It was a great opportunity for everyone to hear his story and talk with him after the meeting. A huge thanks to Brian Mitchell and Bill Unternaehrer for providing limo service to pick Jerry and drop him off after the meeting since he doesn't drive anymore.

Last month we all got to say our final goodbyes to Chapter member Col. Roger Parrish. His longtime friend Billy Walker spent many hours on the phone and called in every favor he had and was able to get the Thunderbirds to do a flyover with four F-16s at Roger's memorial service. Probably not a sight we will ever see again. The fly over and Roger's story were featured on the evening news for a couple of days. Well done Billy.

This causes a great dilemma, what do we do for Billy when the time comes. After he lies in state at the CAF hangar for a couple of months we will have a special sendoff. Terry Emig says Billy likes to watch cat videos on YouTube. So maybe a quartet of cats singing Sinatra's greatest hits or maybe we embrace technology and have a fleet of drones flying around passing out DD jelly filled donuts to the crowd. We have some time; he looks like he is eating regular.

The first Saturday in May will be our 21st Annual Mayday Fly-in / Drive-in at Deer Valley Airport. If you are ever in charge of organizing one of these events give it a cool name so you don't walk around for 21 years going Mayday! If you are new to the Chapter come out and look at some cool planes and put names with the faces, provided people wear their nametags. It will also be the unveiling of our Chapter Triplane for the kiddies to sit in and imagine they are over the western front chasing AeroGard fighters.

See you at the April meeting!

Curtis

APRIL CHAPTER MEETING

The April meeting of Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 will be held on Thursday, April 18th, beginning at 7 pm. This month's guest speaker will be Chuck Lawsen.

Chuck will present a video he made about his dad's WWII experience as a B-17 pilot. Lt. Robert Lawsen flew 30 missions in the 8th Air Force out of England and was shot down on the last mission of his tour. The video includes CGI re-enactments of four missions with one in its entirety. Over 20 programs were used to provide a realistic visual experience.

Chuck is a published landscape photographer and has credits starting with Arizona Highways magazine and calendars, as well as many other publishers over the last 25 years. Because of his dad's legacy as a WWII bomber pilot, he has always been interested in aircraft since childhood – especially the B-17. In 2001 he became an avid "flight simmer" enthusiast and in 2009 he started to make videos of aviator veterans to

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Curtis Clark and Jerry Foster at the March Chapter Meeting

tell their story. With his advanced skills in photo and video editing, vintage photographs used in the video were restored and the scenes in the movie have tight editing and smooth camera movements. The CGI includes much action like a dog fight and bomb run through flak as well as formations of dozens of aircraft filling the sky with long vapor trails. Besides the action scenes there is a segment about the B-17, the 351st Bomb Group, another about formations; there are maps, 1940's music, and narration as well. After the presentation, DVD copies will be available for purchase.

Guests are always welcome!.

***IMPORTANT* – MEETING LOCATION**

Until further notice all meetings will be upstairs in the Scottsdale Airport Terminal Building in the Stearman Room, 15000 North Airport Drive.

MAYDAY-MAYDAY-MAYDAY FLY-IN / DRIVE-IN BBQ

Saturday, May 4, 1100-1400 will be the date & time for the annual Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 MAYDAY FLY-IN / DRIVE-IN. Jack Pollack will again host this year's event at his Deer Valley north side hangar 31-08. Things get underway around 11 am with planes arriving and setup. There are plenty of transient aircraft parking spots right in front

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of Jack's hangar. Be sure to bring wheel chocks and lawn chairs. At noon time we will be having an old fashioned hangar cookout.

This year the Chapter will spring for the burgers, fixin's and drinks, you need to bring something to share that doesn't need to be cooked, heated or butchered. Examples are salads, desserts, and chips, salsa & dip. We don't need a lot, as we don't want a lot wasted.

Everyone is welcome so bring your family and friends.

If you are driving, go to the north perimeter road and drive to the west entrance for the hangars. Signs will be posted, but call 602 710-4494 and we will come down and let you through the gate. It might be a good idea to bring lawn chairs to sit in. Vehicles are encouraged to park in the marked car lot spaces near the hangar ends after unloading at Jack's hangar. Please DO NOT park in the airplane wash rack or your prized possession risks an unwanted washing.

All arriving pilots are requested to NOT to use the words **Mayday** when talking on the radio.

HORTEN AIRCRAFT

NEW FLYING WING

After three years of development, German aircraft manufacturer, Horten Aircraft, will unveil its prototype flying wing that is already undergoing flight testing as the nearby photos attest. "This aircraft is a highly modern economical two-seat tailless light aircraft without a fuselage," said the company.

"Due to its low aerodynamic resistance, the flying wing flies farther and faster than a comparable aircraft with a fuselage," said Bernhard Mattlener, Managing Director of the company that belongs to the Lift Air group. Lift is also the owner of Flight Design and their CT series plus the Rotorvox luxury gyroplane.

"The design of the airframe makes it easily adaptable for installing new propulsion



Lt. Robert Lawsen with His WWII B-17

technologies we anticipate will become available in the future," added Mattlener. Horten Aircraft plans further developments, such as multi-seat and unmanned versions of its current prototype.

The aircraft will be built at the company's headquarters at Kindel Airfield near Eisenach, Germany where Lift is headquartered.

At the beginning of the 20th century — in 1910, a mere seven years after the Wrights flew their Kitty Hawk Flyer off the North Carolina sand dunes - Hugo Junkers received a patent for his work on flying wings. The modern company name honors the visionary aircraft designer, Dr. Ing. Reimar Horten (1915-1994). "He is regarded as a pioneer in the field of flying wings and made the most significant contributions to the development of the forerunner prototypes," said Mattlener.

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At this time, the company is not disclosing any pertinent data about the aircraft but it will be at Aero Friedrichshafen 2019.

While this is not a Flight Design LSA project, the Horton will become part of the Lift family of recreational aircraft.



Newest Horton Flying Wing takes to the Air..I want one!

PUT NEW LIFE IN AN OLD BEAVER

The first battery-electric passenger planes in commercial service may turn out to be Canadian turboprops that date back to the 1950s and 1960s.

MagniX, a Redmond, Wash.-based company developing electric aircraft engines, has struck a deal with Harbour Air to be MagniX's launch customer, aiming to convert the Vancouver-based airline's 42 seaplanes into an all-electric fleet, the companies announced Tuesday.

Their aim is to begin flight tests later this year with a six-passenger de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver fitted out with a 750-horsepower MagniX engine and battery cells with an energy density of 200 watt-hours per kilogram.

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The plane will have 30 minutes of flight time with 30 minutes of power in reserve, MagniX CEO Roei Ganzarski told *Forbes*. That's not a lot, but it's more than enough for the unique route network that Harbour's seaplanes serve, connecting Vancouver with island communities in British Columbia, as well as cross-border to Seattle. About 70% of the 30,000 flights Harbour flies in a year are a half hour or less.

"The Beaver is a perfect example of where all-electric can provide value today as opposed to waiting years before batteries reach greater ranges," says Ganzarski.

MagniX plans to win certification for its engine and approval to modify the Beaver from U.S. and Canadian aviation authorities by 2021,

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**de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver float equipped Commuter Seaplane
The target of an Electric Motor refit.**

allowing Harbour to begin converting its nine other Beavers and launch electric service in 2022. By then, Ganzarski expects battery power densities to have improved enough to enable Harbour Air to fly full passenger loads with at least 45 minutes of flight time and 30 minutes of reserve power.

Electric propulsion promises lower operating costs and better performance, but the conventional wisdom is that batteries currently don't pack enough energy for their weight to produce an all-electric aircraft with much carrying capacity or range. The German conglomerate Siemens is also developing an electric aircraft engine, but it's focused on perfecting a hybrid system with a small gas turbine as a more practical near-term approach.

**EAA SEEKS COLLEGE
VOLUNTEERS FOR AIRVENTURE**

For the fifth consecutive year, the Collegiate Volunteer Program is looking for volunteers for EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2019, which will occur on July 22-28 at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh.

"EAA's collegiate volunteer program is all about building connections – connections with the aviation community, with other collegiate

volunteers, and with EAA," said Cassie Bruss, EAA's manager of volunteer programs. "Through the first years of the program, hundreds of college students have obtained amazing experiences here in Oshkosh during the World's Greatest Aviation Celebration."

College-age aviation enthusiasts and students from all over the United States, with a variety of different backgrounds, are invited to volunteer at EAA AirVenture. Volunteers will have the opportunity to build their resume through networking in nearly every area of AirVenture operations including aviation, business, flight line operations, food and event management, customer service, and photo and video.

Other benefits of the Collegiate Volunteer Program include AirVenture admission wristbands, flexible volunteer hours, a meal and beverage during shifts, opportunities to attend exclusive events and activities, a one-time, free six month EAA membership, and complimentary camping.

"This was my first year ever attending EAA AirVenture Oshkosh. The experiences I received being a Collegiate Volunteer were indispensable," said Lincoln Kilgore, a 2018

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Airforce Thunderbirds say Final Goodbye to their Former Leader

collegiate volunteer from Kentucky. "I met so many amazing and kind people, and I feel as though I learned quicker being a volunteer than if I was a regular attendee. I highly recommend this program. The friendships and experiences you make will last a lifetime."

The application deadline is June 15, 2019. For more info go to www.EAA.org/collegiate

HOLLYWOOD'S LONE ACE

He is virtually unknown to Americans today, though he appeared in 65 movies and was the only actor to become an ace during World War II. Born in Los Angeles in 1914 to Nebraskan Bert DeWayne Morris and Texan Anna Fitzgerald, he would be christened with his father's name but go by Wayne Morris.

While attending Los Angeles City College, he began acting at the Pasadena Playhouse. Handsome, blond, blue-eyed, and 6'2", he was a striking figure. Succeeding wonderfully in a Warner Bros. screen test, he signed a contract with the studio and debuted in the role of the navigator for the trans-Pacific flight in *China Clipper* (1936).

Warner Bros. kept Morris busy with bit parts in six more movies during 1936-37 before he was cast in the principal supporting role in the western: *Land Beyond the Law* (1937). Then came his title role in *Kid Galahad* (1937). Teamed with studio heavyweights Edward G. Robinson, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart, Morris played an innocent and naive young boxer to perfection. The movie was

both a critical and a box-office success. Morris appeared in a dozen more films, usually as the lead, before being cast as a pilot in *Flight Angels* (1940). His role would have significance far beyond whatever he could have imagined at the time.

To prepare for the role he began taking flying lessons. He was immediately hooked. By 1941 he was an accomplished and licensed pilot. With Japanese aggression increasing, he joined a Naval Reserve unit and earned a commission as an ensign.

None of this slowed his production at Warner Bros. He appeared in seven more movies following *Flight Angels* in 1940-41, including *I Wanted Wings*, in which he played an Army Air Corps pilot. Activated following the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Morris was ordered to flight school. Before 1942 was out he had his wings of gold.

He desperately wanted to fly fighters in the Pacific, but the Navy thought it could best use him as an instructor at home where he could, as a prominent actor, also make PR appearances. Moreover, the Navy considered him too big to cram himself into the cockpit of a Grumman F4F Wildcat. Morris was not pleased when he was ordered to a Navy airfield at Hutchinson, Kansas, as a primary flight instructor. He began his assignment with resignation rather than enthusiasm.

But the plot was about to thicken. Morris was married to Patricia O'Rourke, a beautiful young actress. Her mother had a younger brother, Lt. Cmdr. David McCampbell, one of the Navy's most accomplished aviators. One day, McCampbell happened to fly into Hutchinson on a cross-country trip. Morris prevailed upon Uncle Dave to get him into the fight in the Pacific.

"Give me a letter," said McCampbell. McCampbell was able to push Morris's letter of request through the chain of command and get Morris transferred. However, Morris now found himself training in the PBV in Jacksonville, Florida - the Navy still thought

Morris too big for fighters. He reckoned that he would be flying reconnaissance and rescue missions in the Pacific. But Uncle Dave had been tasked with forming a fighter squadron and told Morris to give him another letter of request.

McCampbell later said that he only picked men for his squadron who had a burning desire to fly fighters in combat. His squadron would be flying the new Grumman F6F Hellcat, which was a far superior fighter in every way to the Wildcat but didn't have any more cockpit room-and pilots still had to sit on top of their parachute packs. It would be a very tight fit for Morris.

By September 1943 McCampbell had organized Fighter Squadron 15, which he would train intensely for the next several months. VF-15 was assigned to the carrier *Hornet* in January 1944, and training continued. Late in February, the *Hornet* left Norfolk, Virginia, and sailed for Pearl Harbor. The training continued in route. However, once in Hawaii, not only VF-15 but all of Air Group 15 was detached from the *Hornet* and stationed on Maui for still more training.

By the end of April when Morris and the other pilots were beginning to think they might spend the rest of the war training, Air Group 15 was assigned to the *Essex*, which was bound for Majuro Lagoon in the Marshall Islands. Recently wrested from the Japanese, the Marshalls were being used by the Navy as a staging area for the invasion of the Marianas.

Essex arrived early in May but was soon off for raids on Japanese-held Marcus and Wake islands. With the invasion of the Marianas a month away this would give the young pilots of Air Group 15 a taste of the real thing: no aerial opposition, but intense anti-aircraft fire.

Several American planes were lost and nearly all, including Morris's, suffered damage. McCampbell's boys began hitting Saipan on June 11. Their primary targets were the seaplane base in Tanapag harbor, ships in

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the harbor, and military installations at Marpi Point. Now they were encountering several types of Japanese airplanes, including the famous Zeros. Near Garapan, the Hellcat pilots knocked three Zeros out of the sky.

On a second run later in the day McCampbell himself shot down a Zero. In his after-action report, McCampbell noted that the Hellcat could stay with the Zero in turns and when climbing, something the Wildcat had been unable to do. The Zero was the Japanese Navy's Mitsubishi A6M5, called "Zeke" in U.S. Navy identification code.

Wayne Morris was in a group of Hellcats that destroyed several seaplane ramps and nearly a dozen seaplanes, either in water or on Marpi Point. Then Morris sighted a "Mavis"-the code for the Kawanishi flying boat-that had gotten airborne. A large, four-engine seaplane with a crew of nine, the Mavis was armed with four .30-caliber machine guns and one 20mm cannon. The Japanese normally used the plane for long-range reconnaissance, but it could also be loaded with more than 2,000 pounds of bombs. Morris dove on the big bird and opened up with his Hellcat's six .50-caliber Browning machine guns. The Mavis rocked and rolled, and plummeted into the ocean. Lieutenant Morris had his first aerial victory.

Morris got his first Zero a week later in the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot, the name Navy aviators gave to the airborne phase of the Battle of the Philippine Sea. He and others of VF-15 were flying cover for torpedo planes and dive bombers of Air Group 15 when four Zeros dropped out of clouds and began a run on the bombers. Morris took on the lead Zero. The Hellcat and the Zero each banked and dove and rolled, but it was Morris's rounds that took effect. The Zero began smoking, nosed over, and plunged straight down thousands of feet to the water below.

On the way back to Essex, Morris spotted a Zero flying just above the surface of the sea. Reckoning he could bag his second Zero of the day, Morris dove on the Japanese fighter.

Much to his surprise, the enemy pilot had seen him coming and maneuvered out of harm's way. Morris made another pass with the same results. Three other Hellcats joined in the hunt-but no luck for them, either, as the Japanese pilot dazzled them with his aerobatics. "He went through every stunt in the books (and some not in) and, as far as I know, escaped unharmed," wrote Lt. Cmdr. Jim Rigg in his after-action report. Morris and the other three aviators from Fighting Fifteen had probably encountered one of the old pros of the Japanese air wing, a pilot who had been in action since the invasion of China in 1937.

Something less speculative was also revealed - the Zero could outmaneuver the Hellcat at low altitude. While the Hellcat was a far more powerful plane, it was also far heavier than the Zero. In the thin air of 20,000 feet this wasn't much of a disadvantage, but in the dense air of low altitudes the weight of the Hellcat, despite its superior horsepower, made it less maneuverable.

For the next two months VF-15 hit targets not only on Saipan but on Guam and Tinian. Most of the time the Hellcats were used to bomb and strafe. Their enemy was anti-aircraft fire. After the Turkey Shoot, the skies had been nearly cleared of Japanese planes, so more aerial victories would have to wait.

In September, Essex and other American carriers began launching strikes against the Palau Islands, especially Peleliu. McCampbell led the first sweep. Neither he nor any of his pilots were able to add to their kill totals because they caught the Japanese planes on the ground. They destroyed dozens of them, but under Navy and Marine Corps regulations only planes destroyed in the air counted as kills. After several days of pounding the Palaus, Essex and other carriers were ordered to sail west to the Philippines and strike at Mindanao airfields.

On the first sweep, Morris and two other VF-15 pilots spotted a Japanese patrol plane and

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blew it out of the sky. Several days later over Negros Island, Morris shot down his second Zero. Later the same day, he and Ens. Ken Flinn jumped a "Nate," the code for the Nakajima Ki-27 fighter - the Japanese Army's equivalent to the Navy's Zero. Morris's first burst caused the Nate to begin smoking. Flinn followed with a burst that caused the already badly damaged fighter to erupt in flames and roll into a spiral dive that ended in the ocean. Minutes later Morris and Flinn went after a Zero that was on the tail of a Hellcat. Morris fired, and the Zero exploded in a ball of flame.

A minute later, Morris found himself flying directly into an oncoming Nate. He hit the Nate with a single burst before banking steeply. In the meantime, Flinn circled in behind the Nate and finished off the already crippled fighter. During the rest of September, Morris got no more aerial victories but, together with his wingman and other pilots, was credited with putting a Japanese submarine out of action and sinking two freighters and several patrol boats.

Then, in October, in a strike at Okinawa, Morris dove on a "Tony" and sent it spiraling into the sea. The Tony was Japan's most modern fighter, the Kawasaki Ki-61, which featured an inline, liquid-cooled engine that had been copied from the Daimler-Benz engine that powered the German Me-109. Morris now not only had the big three of Japanese fighters but was an ace.

Later in October came the epic, four-part Battle for Leyte Gulf, and McCampbell and his boys were active in the air over the Sibuyan Sea. Morris got one Zero easily while making a high pass. His second kill of the day proved far more difficult. He fired at two oncoming Zeros, but his rounds either missed or had no effect. He banked steeply to come around and try again, but found the Zeros turning with him. He didn't think much of his chances in tight turns against two Zeros and ducked

into a cloud. Instead of going through the cloud and emerging on its other side, he circled inside the cloud and came out where he had entered. Just as he had hoped, he found the Japanese waiting for him on the cloud's other side. He got behind them and shot one down, sending the other scurrying for home.

Morris was in no condition to pursue - his Hellcat was riddled with bullets, the engine was coughing, and hydraulic fluid was running into the cockpit.

For another month Morris and his fellow fighter pilots in VF-15 continued to pound enemy targets in the Philippines, but now it was mostly ships and land installations. By and large, Japanese planes had been driven from the skies. By the end of November, Air Group 15 had completed its tour, and Morris and the rest transferred to the Bunker Hill, which was headed to Pearl Harbor.

Morris's war was over. He returned home with the Distinguished Flying Cross (four awards) and the Air Medal (two awards), among other decorations. It had not been easy. Three of the Hellcats he flew had been so damaged by Japanese fire, either from the ground or air, that they were stripped of their serviceable parts and pushed overboard. Yet Morris said it was not the Japanese he feared the most, but his own shipmates. "Every time they showed a picture (movie) aboard Essex, I was scared to death it would be one of mine. That's something I could never have lived down."

Morris returned to Hollywood and appeared in another three-dozen movies, usually as the lead in B westerns. In 1959, he was visiting his old commander and uncle-in-law, Dave McCampbell, now a captain and skipper of the Bon Homme Richard. While watching the carrier's pilots put on an aerial display, Morris collapsed and died of a heart attack. Hollywood's lone ace was 45.

ThunderAds

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