



# The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

July 2013

Scottsdale, Arizona

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! Last month's meeting featured CarolAnn Garratt who spoke about her three around-the-world flights in her Mooney M20J. She wasn't able to use her slideshow presentation because of projector failure. A big thanks to Dick McNaney and his wife Pauline who provided transportation and entertainment for CarolAnn during her visit. Chapter members donated \$460- to the fight for a cure to ALS through the purchase of books and DVD's that CarrolAnn had for sale.

The June meeting also was our Chapter 1217 birthday celebration so everyone got to enjoy some birthday cake. Thanks to Terry Emig for driving up from Casa Grande with some of the refreshments.

With the heat of the summer here I have to admit I have been spending less time at the airport and heading over to San Diego to escape the heat and do some sailing and hanging out in the cool weather. The good news is the summer heat is half over and good flying days are just two months away!

July also marks my annual pilgrimage to Oshkosh and AirVenture to see what's new in the world of grassroots aviation. Watch for pictures and reflections in next month's newsletter. If you are headed back that way, put the annual Chapter 1217 Happy Hour on your list for the first night of the fly-in, details are in this newsletter.

See you at the July meeting!

*Curtis*

## JULY CHAPTER MEETING

The July meeting of Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 will be held on Thursday, July 18, starting at 7 pm, in the **Scottsdale Aviation Business Center**. This month's guest speaker is Bruce Brockhagen who will tell how he came to be in charge of a Consolidated PB4Y2 Navy Patrol Bomber owned by a Scottsdale businessman. This is one of those stories within a story of how they came to decide on this plane, acquire it, and learn how to fly it. He is also going to go into the history of the plane and what the big plan is for the future of this great old bird. Terry Emig deserves the credit for getting Bruce to speak at this month's meeting, thanks Terry.

Remember guests are always welcome.

## CONSOLIDATED PB4Y2 PRIVATEER

In an effort to help everyone understand what this month's guest speaker will be talking about, here is a brief history of the design.

Derived from the B-24 bomber, the Consolidated PB4Y Privateer was deployed on long-range anti-shipping and anti-submarine patrols. It helped to close the "Atlantic Gap" and was able to provide air support in areas that had been previously out of reach from both US and British shores.

Being late to the party, the Navy had to accept Consolidated B-24 Liberators as patrol planes. The sleeker, easier-to-fly B-17s were all reserved for Army Air Corp use. Eager to reduce crew fatigue on long patrols, Consolidated was instructed to allocate three B-24s for conversion to Navy requirements.

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### Consolidated PB4Y Privateer

To ease control problems, Consolidated had already attempted to change the B-24's twin rudders to a single vertical fin. The first conversion, the XB-24K, done at the Consolidated San Diego plant, used the tail from a Douglas B-23 Dragon. The results were unsatisfactory.

The Ford Motor Company, which operated a huge B-24 license-production plant called *Willow Run* in Michigan, then transplanted a vertical fin from a C-54 transport onto one of their B-24s, creating the XB-24N. They also added a new custom built horizontal fin and replaced the nose turret with an ERCO 250 SH ball turret, which was more streamlined than the standard nose turret of production B-24s. It was superior enough to the standard B-24J that the Army ordered seven more pre-production YB-24Ns and inked an order for 5,168 B-24N bombers. Horrified that a mere car manufacturer might have upstaged them, Consolidated pulled strings to have this order canceled. Equally horrified that they might be forced to accept some of these planes instead of getting their own design, the Navy helped to kill the N-model.

Meanwhile, new fuselages were constructed for the Navy PB4Y-2s in San Diego. For the second time, the basic Liberator fuselage was

lengthened (legendary founder of Consolidated, Ruben Fleet personally ordered the first B-24C and all subsequent Liberators to have the nose section lengthened 2 feet, 7 inches at company expense "to improve the appearance." He could have saved the effort; it was still a homely plane). The new fuselage was now a full 74 ft, 7 inches, 10 feet 5 inches longer than the first B-24A. The space was devoted to new electronics and a flight engineer's station. The first three Privateers (the initial name "Sea-Liberator" had been quickly dropped) flew with standard twin tails. When the new single tail was ready, it caused the Privateer to tower 29 feet 1-5/8 inches off the floor.

The trademark of the Liberator family, the 110-foot long, twin-spar Davis High Lift wing with its massive Fowler flaps was unchanged. This was the secret to the long range and relatively high speed of the Liberator/Privateer family, and the reason the Privateer stayed on in squadron service long after the rival B-17 had been retired.

Four Pratt & Whitney R-1830-94 engines were retained although they were fitted with only a single stage supercharger. For low

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### Three PB4Y Privateers on Water Bombing Run

altitude patrol planes, the two stage supercharger was considered unnecessary. The oil cooler air inlets were moved to above and below the engine, eliminating the characteristic horizontal oval appearance of the engine cowl. Military and T.O. power was rated at 1,350 hp each. Later, when some survivors of Navy and Coast Guard service were modified for use as fire bombers they were fitted with 1,700 hp Curtiss-Wright Cyclone engines.

Twelve .50-caliber Colt-Browning M2 machine guns were carried, all in powered turrets. This was sometimes augmented with one or two 20-mm nose cannons for strafing. Normal bomb load for a 1,300-mile radius patrol was 4,000 pounds of bombs, depth charges or mines. Some planes were also armed with one or two ASM-N-2 Bat anti-shipping glide bombs which were first used successfully during a raid against Japanese shipping in Valikpapan Harbor, Borneo in April of 1945.

Operationally, the classic use of patrol bombers was to hunt down and sink enemy ships. The Privateer stepped easily into this role, the way having been paved by years of anti-submarine and anti-ship operations in Navy PB4Y-1 Liberators and USAAF B-24s equipped with a series of radar sets collectively known as "Low Altitude Bombing" sets. By WWII standards, the Privateer was lavishly equipped with an electronic suite that

could be customized on a mix and match basis so that Privateers could be airborne communication platforms, radar and radio station hunter/killers, anti-shipping search and destroy units, weather reconnaissance planes or search and rescue units to locate downed airmen with their radio direction finders. If the situation demanded, they could even act as their own standoff anti-radar jamming unit.

Patrol craft are not glamorous, like fighter planes, or vital to the troops on the ground like bombers, close support attack planes, or the cargo planes that keep them supplied. What the Privateer lacked in pizzazz, it more than made up for in versatility and practicality. The Navy wanted the seas swept clear of enemy transport, enemy radars, enemy radio navigation aids, and enemy scouting vessels. It wanted mines planted, submarines harassed or destroyed, communications augmented, and weather information for 1,300 miles around the Privateer's base. No other aircraft was as capable of this as the Privateer.

The last Privateer was delivered in October of 1945. Of 739 airframes built, there may be two in flying condition today.

After WWII, Privateers were used as hurricane hunters and played a large role in Reserve squadrons, helping to keep up training for thousands of Naval Reservists. In 1950, numerous mothballed Privateers were recalled for service in Korea, where their air-to-surface radar was used to hunt down and destroy North Korean infiltrators along the coasts. They also flew dangerous nighttime *Firefly* missions to drop flares over embattled United Nations troops so that air support could continue.

Other Cold War missions included the theoretical delivery of nuclear weapons by Naval aircraft, and an unspecified number of PB4Y-2s were modified to deliver second generation atomic bombs. Other airframes were optimized for *Ferret* missions to gather electronic intelligence. These were high-

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Value / high-risk missions, often employing a long series of uncomfortable, tension filled runs aimed at approaching or penetrating enemy territory to eavesdrop on enemy radar signals or radio traffic. Most valuable for intelligence analysts was the air-to-ground and air-to-air communication between interceptor controllers and interceptor pilots. The easiest way to get this chatter was to provoke the enemy air defenses into launching an interception of your own aircraft. The hard part was getting away alive after they did. On April 8th, 1950 a Privateer from VP-26 was caught by Soviet MiGs over the Baltic Sea and destroyed with all crewmembers either killed in the crash or strafed to death. Apparently a number of the 38 Privateers seconded to the Nationalist Chinese Air Force suffered similar fates at the hands of the Red Chinese People's Army Air Force.

Other post-war service included 22 Privateers provided to Aeronautique Navale for service with the French colonial forces in Vietnam. They were used as bombers until after Dien Bien Phu, with four lost in combat. Six were returned to U.S. service, the remaining twelve were flown to North Africa where they fought in Algeria and later during the Suez Incident. In 1961, the survivors were scrapped in favor of the new Lockheed P2V Neptunes, a fate shared by most other Privateers.

The longest serving Navy Privateers were expended as a radio control target drones off Point Mugu, California in the early 1960's. The last, flying under the call sign *Opposite 31* and carrying the ironic nickname *Lucky Pierre* was shot down by a Bullpup missile with an experimental proximity fuse that turned the Bullpup into an air-to-air weapon.

A small number of ex-US Coast Guard search and rescue Privateers survived to become anti-forest fire water bombers. The *Coasties* had removed the side and nose turrets and rebuilt the nose of the plane with a huge glazed observation dome. After being sold off as surplus, civilian operators gave them new Wright Cyclone engines along with the

installation of their borate/water slurry tanks. These were *Super Privateers*" and these planes soldiered on into the 1990's

## AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR

It has now been a 15-year tradition of Chapter 1217 members attending the Oshkosh AirVenture Fly-in to get together one evening and compare sightings and stories. As usual, on the first day of the Fly-in, we will have our annual AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR AND FISH FRY at WENDT'S ON THE LAKE. Come and join us for some traditional Wisconsin food and libations. That's on **Monday, July 29, 2013**, around 7 pm.

If you want to plug it into your GPS the address is N9699 Lake Shore Road, Van Dyne, WI 54979-9703 (920) 688-5231 [www.wendtsonthelake.com](http://www.wendtsonthelake.com). They are located 3.8 miles south of the seaplane base.



Rare Photo of Japan's longest serving Kamikaze Pilot, the 6 mission veteran "Chicken" Teriyaki

Courtesy of Billy Walker



**Chapter 1217 Members, Terry Emig, Roger Parrish, Billy Walker and Mike Braegger Doing a Memorial Day, Memorial Fly-Over**

## **PACIFIC FLYER SHUT DOWN BY LIBERALS THUGS**

Well at least that's the headline that Pacific Flyer publisher Wyman Dunlap would like to have put on his final newspaper after 32 years. The newspaper was never afraid to take on the government or the FAA and really enjoyed a good conspiracy theory, even if some of the facts were a bit blurry.

The Flyer always had great stories about planes, pilots, and air shows on the west coast. Every year they published their annual swim suit edition which always generated tons of hate mail that enjoyed posting and responding to. The paper's relationship with the military was one of their strongest attributes.

Efforts to find a buyer came up empty handed so the April 2013 issue had the headline "Our Final Issue."



**Roger Parrish's Aeronca**



**Jack Pollack's Chipmunk**





**Bernie Gross and an Original Storch Seen During his Visit to Germany**



**Bucker Jungmeister in the German Museum Visited by Bernie**

# ThunderAds

## FOR SALE, ETC.

### ESTATE SALE

Chapter member Marty Williams has flown west and his family is selling his Zenith 701 kit. Contact his son Keith at 480 998-4873.

**CURTISS REED PROPELLER** \$4,000 Model 55511. 82" SAE 1 taper shaft. (Warner, Ranger, Maytag 604) Patrick McGarry: 602-430-0140

### PROJECTS FOR SALE

Protech, PT-2, folding wings & trailer, 82 hp Mosler engine. & Gere bi-plane, about 75% complete, built from magazine plans, circa 1932, completely rebuilt Model A engine. Pat Wall 928-851-2244.

### 2009 LANCAIR 360

Superior IO-360 engine, TTAFE 20 hours, mineral oil, every thing new including paint, GPS, loaded must see. Mary Shragal 630-897-7706

### COMBINATION VHF/GPS ANTENNA

Comant Model CI 2480-201, Separate connectors for Comm and GPS. Never installed. See AS&S pg 616. Their price \$568.75, sell for \$250.00 Ron Kassik 480-948-0168 or ronkassik@cox.net

## SERVICES

### ANNUALS

Owner Assisted. Jim Moss 520-440-2191  
www.northside-aviation.com

### FLIGHT INSTRUCTION, ETC.

Fred Gorrell Designated Pilot Examiner:  
Airplane: Private, Commercial, Instrument, ATP, ME, Lighter than Air: Private, Commercial. 602-942-2255, Cell 602-418-2045, fgorrell2@cox.net

### HOMEBUILT AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATION

ABDAR Gary Towner 928 535-3600

### PROP BALANCING, ANNUALS, PREBUYS

Jim Berdick AI 623 293-2708

### ANNUALS, RESTORATIONS, FABRIC WORK

Eloy Airport Julie White 520-466-3442

### AIRMEN PHYSICALS

Dr. Henry Givre AME, Chapter member and RV-4 owner. 520-836-8701

### BFR'S

Fred Lloyd 602-793-6637

### MACHINE SHOP

High quality parts fabrication for homebuilts at a reasonable price. David Leverentz 520-898-4321

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