



The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

November 2020

Scottsdale, Arizona

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar. This month's update on my Wickham B is that I flew it five flights and dropped it off at Master Aircraft in Wickenburg for Gus's crew to strip and paint. Based on stories I had heard when the plane was originally painted in 1966 the builder had a bunch of his EAA Chapter 26 cronies come over to his shop and help paint it. The builder picked up a couple of cases of Krylon rattle cans and everyone went to work! It's amazing no one died from the fumes or the fact that half of them probably had a cigarette burning. The paint had been on it for fifty-four years and was really a gooey mess to strip.

Between finishing up the Wickham and doing the condition inspection on the RV-8 a conundrum developed that I wanted to share so maybe a lesson can be learned. I was sharing a hangar with one of our Chapter 1217 members who unexpectedly passed away. Because of the policies of the City of Phoenix the city immediately changed the lock and nothing could be removed. We had drafted up a lease that the city approved so I was semi legitimate. The lease we used had a clause that said the plane was mine and after ten days the city unlocked the hangar and let me remove it. Unfortunately, anything other than the plane that is in there is up to the executor to decide its disposition. If you are sharing, subletting, partnership or whatever angle you are using, remember things could get ugly if there is a death. Ed Feron, Deer Valley Airport Manager was a big help and worked with me but he has to do what the city wants and has limited discretion.

Items keep trickling in for us to use as door prizes so we should have a treasure chest for future meetings. A big thanks to Tim Weber who donated two dozen of his Tim Weber

Airshow team shirts for us to give away as meeting door prizes.

Stay healthy and keep a positive outlook. See you around the hangar!

Curtis

CHAPTER MEETINGS

RESTART IN 2021

As much as we would like to announce in person meetings starting up, Chapter 1217 Officers President Curtis Clark, Vice President Terry Emig and Secretary/Treasurer Jack Polack reach a unanimous decision that we would get back to regular meetings in January 2021 when the COVID risk will be at hopefully a more manageable level.

Another big hurdle is location. Our home in the Thunderbird Room at Scottsdale Airport currently is closed do to health risks.

Unfortunately another casualty is our annual Holiday Party in December but got word from Bill who hosted the last couple of years that his house is a no go because his wife is recovering from hospitalization. After contacting a bunch of potential locations within five miles of Scottsdale Airport the few that are taking parties are booked up. I could only find three restaurants that had that option available and they were booked.

Rather than try to find a new way of having our Holiday Party and run the risk of a last minute cancellation due to some lame excuse, it is probably better to wait until things get back to normal.

Rest assured that for 23 years we have been having monthly meetings and we will get back to it when life gets back to normal.

CHAPTER MEMBER FLIES WEST

William Frederick Pabst, III, a friend, took flight and soared on October 14, 2020 after a courageous fight with leukemia.

Bill was born in Wellesley, MA on October 20, 1953 to the late William Frederick Pabst, Jr. and Laura "Martha" Mustard Pabst. He completed his bachelor's degree in finance at Babson College in 1974. He landed in Arizona in the early 80's where he would call home.

Bill was incredibly fortunate to make a career out of his passion for aviation. He owned and operated Arizona Air, a private air charter

business, providing tours to the Grand Canyon and throughout the southwest. Later, he moved into commercial airlines starting as a pilot for StatesWest Airlines and then at America West Airlines. He flew for almost 25 years until his retirement in 2018 from American Airlines.

Bill had a passion for sport aviation and over the years had owned a Cessna 421, a Skymaster and an RV-6.

He is survived by Debra, his wife of 30 years; three children, Troy Ringle, Jennifer Ringle and William Frederick Pabst, IV.



**Bill Pabst and his RV-6
Bill passed away last month**

THE FIRST CUBAN HOMEBUILT

This story has been passed down from the Experimenter March 1960, the Experimenter was the forerunner of Sport Aviation.

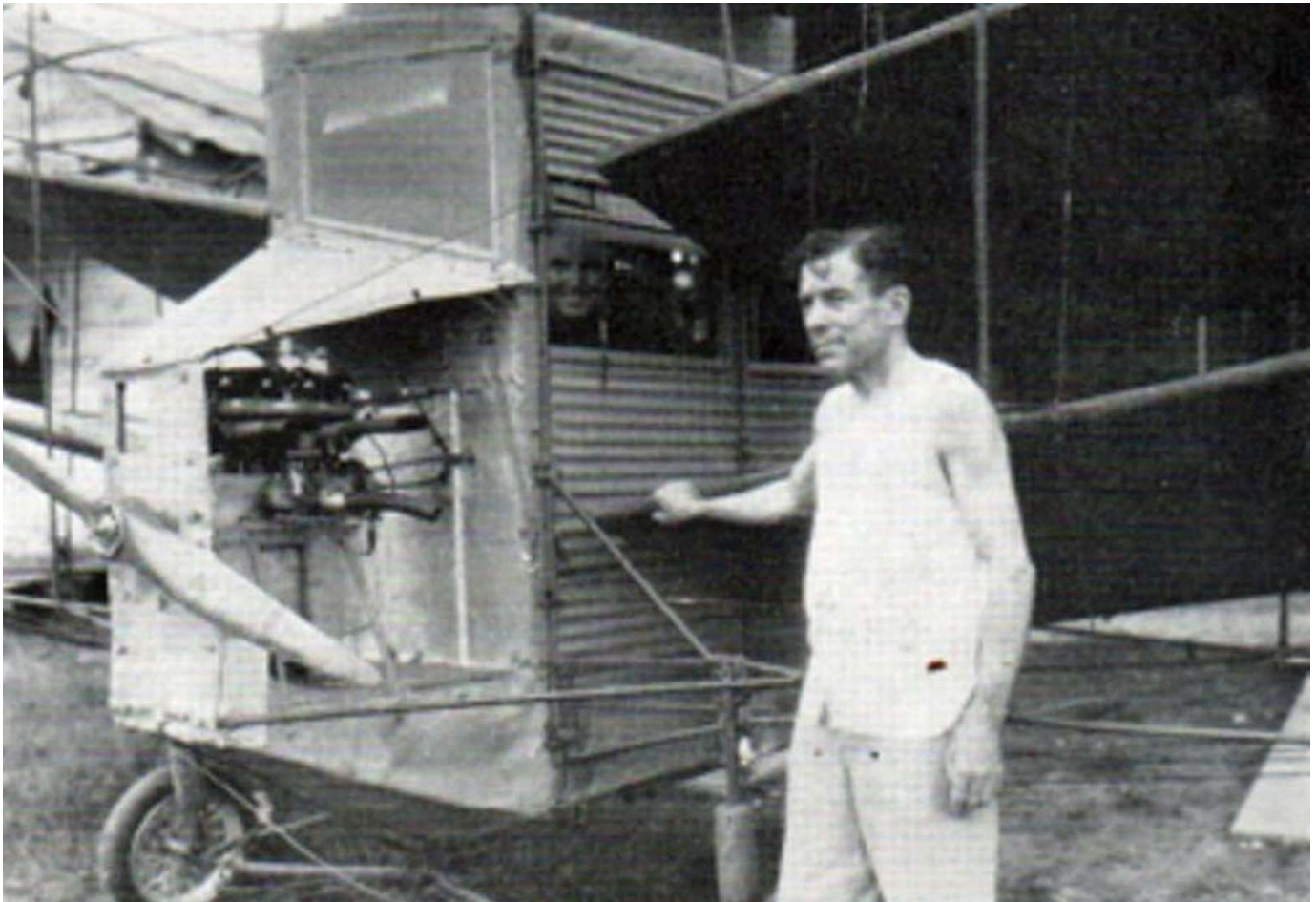
Don't laugh - it did fly! That's the word from Bill Sweet, colorful air show announcer and Director of Public Relations for Mackey Airlines in Miami, Fla., who sent in the photos and facts.

Built in 1935 by Ignacio Patina of Havana, Cuba, a sugar cane farmer who had never

been closer to an airplane than to see one passing overhead, this strange looking bird actually made several short hops (maybe it collapsed after a hard landing!).

In some of the pictures, seated in the cabin ready for flight is "Cuban Eight" Len Povey, famous precision aerobatic ace of that era.

The engine was a four-cylinder air-cooled number taken from an Indian motorcycle. Prop was hand-carved by the builder. See if you can figure out his control system!



Cuban Homebuilt with Builder circa 1935

DR ROSS AME OFFICE MOVED

Many Chapter members use Dr. Burr Ross as their Aviation Medical Examiner. His office has moved to 3811 East Bell, Suite 107, Phoenix, AZ 85032. It is on the southwest corner of 40th

Street and Bell. It's easy to not verify the current address when making an appointment and there is no large flashing banner saying they moved.



“Cuban Eight” Len Povey, in Pilot’s Seat

JIMMY STEWART’S 310

A 1961 Cessna 310F once owned by World War II aviator and movie star James M. (Jimmy) Stewart was dedicated as a monument last month after an extensive restoration effort. Located at Indiana County Jimmy Stewart Airport (KIDI) in Stewart’s hometown of Indiana, Pennsylvania, the monument is the result of five and a half years of work undertaken by Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 993.

According to EAA 993, Stewart’s 310, N6775X, was found in derelict condition at Dallas Executive Airport (KRBD) in 2015. KIDI and the Jimmy Stewart Museum expressed interest in acquiring the aircraft, which was missing its engines, propellers and assorted other parts. Led by Harold Wood, EAA 993 agreed to take on the project, putting in an

estimated 6,500 hours on the restoration and monument construction. The organization says it is currently raising funds to build a children’s playground around the monument.

Jimmy Stewart was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on May 20, 1908. From 1941 to 1968, he served successively in the U.S. Army Air Corps, U.S. Army Air Force and U.S. Air Force Reserve, attaining the rank of Brigadier General. In addition to becoming an instructor for both the B-17 and B-24, Stewart flew 20 combat missions in World War II and received awards including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and French Croix de Guerre. During his movie career, Stewart appeared in an estimated 80 films such as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *It’s A Wonderful Life* and *Harvey*. He passed away on July 2, 1997, at the age of 89.



Jimmy Stewart's 310



Jimmy Stewart's Cessna 310 on Display at Indiana County Jimmy Stewart Airport



Tanker 60

Tanker 60

A deep blue sky stretches overhead as a plane christened "Tanker 60" gleams in the southern Oregon sun. Its rounded tail looms over an otherwise empty ramp, emblazoned with its radio call sign: a big, green "60." Four piston-powered engines, with their propellers synced in near-perfect alignment with one another, look especially sharp. The bulbous orange fire-retardant tank sticks out conspicuously, while its pointy white nose feels decidedly aggressive.

It's a bit hard to believe at first sight, but this piston-powered Douglas DC-7, owned by Erickson Aero Tanker, was the crown jewel of the airline industry in the 1950s before being converted to fight wildfires, work that jets have increasingly taken over in recent years.

Captain Ron Carpinella performed a preflight check on the plane. Built more than 60 years ago, it is one of only a handful of four-engined, piston-powered airplanes left in the world. And among the DC-7 family, it is the last airworthy copy altogether - at least for a few more hours.

Sleek and fast, the DC-7 was, when it debuted in 1953, the flagship of the US airline industry. It cut its teeth flying the first coast-to-coast nonstops in the US, connecting New York to Los Angeles at a then-record pace of eight hours one way.

It soon took its prowess for speed across the oceans too. By 1955, airlines like Pan Am flew the plane from New York and Boston to London and Paris in less than 10 hours, almost two hours faster than most competitors.

United and American Airlines ads featuring the Douglas DC-7. Tanker 60 started its life with Eastern Air Lines in 1958, and likely spent its early years flying up and down the eastern seaboard and into the Caribbean. A photo of a postcard featuring the plane, pinned in Erickson Aero Tankers' Medford office, shows as much. Tanker 60 on layover in Miami, adorned in its original Eastern Air Lines "Golden Falcon" livery.

For all of its achievements, the reign of the DC-7 was short-lived. Tanker 60 rolled off the line only three months before Douglas' first jetliner, the DC-8, began flight testing. Boeing's game-changing 707 was in service by the end of the year. The new jets cut flight times dramatically. Transatlantic crossings went from nine hours on the DC-7 to six on the jets; New York to LA dropped from eight to five. Seemingly overnight, the airplane's main claim to fame, its speed, evaporated. The line shut down in 1958.

Not long after the DC-7's life began, the reign of the piston-powered passenger plane was over. Airlines seemingly couldn't ditch them

Continued on page 7



Tanker 60 Fly By

fast enough, and by the mid-1960s they were largely gone from mainline US carriers. Tanker 60 wasn't an exception, and saw its exit in 1966.

The DC-7 likely would have been relegated to a mere footnote in aviation history had it not stumbled into its calling as an air tanker in the 1970s, a job in which the airplane excelled. The DC-7's airline roots meant it was built with far more safety features than tankers from the military. A total lack of popularity with the airlines by that time made the plane cheap to acquire. The transition from airliner to fire bomber required some changes to the plane. The plane was gutted, notably absent are any creature comforts. Comforts like heating, pressurization and air conditioning were removed when the plane was gutted.

A few original first-class caramel brown seats remain. The plane is full of the tools of the tanker trade: ladders, to make repairs and to enter and exit the plane; oil barrels, in case they need their own oil for an emergency;

personal effects, since crews don't necessarily know where they'll end up for the night.

The plane is full of emergency items like spare tires. Systems specific to aerial firefighting were added, namely a giant, 3,000-gallon retardant tank. The cockpit looks largely unchanged, filled with dials, gauges, and circuit breakers. Besides the tank-control additions, the only modern pieces are a Garmin GPS system, a new radio, and an iPad flight-bag attachment - essentially, a digitized version of a flight bag, which pilots used to carry maintenance manuals, checklists, and maps.

They estimate the Douglas since its conversion, has made thousands of drops, in which a crew pours a mix of red retardant slurry ahead of and onto wildfires. After more than 40 years in the air, saving countless lives and homes, the fire service has declined to renew the airplane's contract into 2021. The recent flight back to its home base in Madras, Oregon would likely be its last.

Continued on page 8

Flying over the city of Madras, Oregon, Tanker 60 lines up with the runway but stays high, executing a maneuver known as an "overhead break" with a graceful bank over the airport before looping around to land. It is a maneuver common to homecomings, dating back to World War I aviators returning to base from a mission.

Touching down at the airbase in Madras, there is no water-cannon salute, and no crowds. Only a few people from Erickson Aero Tanker and an aviation enthusiast who drove up from Bend, Oregon, are there to greet it as it rolls to a gentle stop in the waning light of the day.

The engines shut down, and the cabin noise fades to nothing. For the end of an era, it feels remarkably anticlimactic.

Erickson Aero Tanker plans to keep the plane in tip-top shape over the winter, just in case fire officials reverse course. The company estimates it has enough spare parts to keep it going for another five to 10 years.

The Erickson Aero Tanker 60, barring a small miracle, its contract has ended and its flying days are done. Because, in a rather cosmic way, the fire service is doing the same thing now that the airlines did 50 years ago: moving on to jets.



Chapter member Pat McGarry just finished restoring this beautiful Hiller

Thunder Ads

CURTIS F11C-2 "GOSHAWK"

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SCHWEIZER 1-26C GLIDER

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MISC GOODIES

PARACHUTE never opened used once \$200., **Continental 0-200 case** with data tag and extras. \$500; **RV-3 canopy** brand new never cut \$200, **Beech Staggerwing** carved desktop model with stand, about 12 inch wingspan \$100; **Douglas DC-4 pedestal** with throttles and controls. Perfect for your man cave \$100. Curtis Clark 602 710-4494

ALASKA BABY BUSHWHEEL

tailwheel assembly, Like new. 6x8.5 tire Used but in good shape, Jack Pollack 480 695-4441

LONGEZ AND SONEX

Tom Partin has decided to stop flying and has two airplanes for sale at Thunder Ridge air park (AZ28), a 180hp LongEz and a 120hp Sonex. Contact Bertha Partin at bmpartin@gmail.com

GLASAIR III

Lynn Babcock has his Glasair III for sale. Has every upgrade from speed brakes to air conditioning, cruises at 220 kts. Lynn is the original builder and the plane has been based at Scottsdale Airport its entire life. \$215,000. 480-227-5945.

WANTED ENGINE CRATE

To ship a Franklin two cylinder engine to Australia. Call John at 907 350-8758.

THATCHER CX-4 PLANS & BUILDERS MANUAL

New, never used, donated to our Chapter. Curtis 602 710-4494

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Only flown by little old ladies to church on Sundays. <http://captainbillywalker.com/aircraft-for-sale/aircraft-for-sale>

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\$13,500 Lycoming 0-290-D2, kit for \$3,000 or \$16,000 for both. Bill Refrow 602-843-9862 w7lov@cox.net

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ANNUALS, RESTORATIONS, FABRIC WORK

Eloy Airport Julie White 520-466-3442

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