

# EAA Mount Rainier Chapter 326 Newsletter

Thun Field – March 2009

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## Meeting Notice

**Tuesday, March 10th, 7 PM  
CAP Building, Thun Field**

**Program: Dynon Avionics**

**Refreshments: Sandra Liebman**

## From the Secretary

February 10, 2009 – EAA Chapter 326 monthly meeting.

Kevin Behrent called the meeting to order.

Visitors: Greg Smith – Interested in building an RV.

Treasurer report \$4911 in the bank. Recent expenses include shirts, building rent, etc.

Young Eagles will be Saturday June 27<sup>th</sup>. Starting next month we will take signups for the various positions that we need to fill. We count on all of you to pitch in and sign up to help.

Andy Hirschberger gave us a quick report on the airport steering meeting. This month they talked about a new strip mall going in next to the airport which will remove some of the trees between meridian and the airport property.

Formation Training – The group started in January. We have flown 2 missions thus far. The sessions are open to all flying RV's in the chapter and each Friday a schedule is published as to who is flying on Saturday. We have been flying about 6 planes per weekend with 2 per plane with instructors and students.

Thanks to everyone for helping out with the NW Aviation trade show at the fairgrounds. We had Smitty's Mustang and Kevin's RV9A on display for the public.

Kevin still has one camp space for Arlington. If you would like to camp with the group, drop him a line.

Tonight's program is on Clover Park

## In Memory of George Alber

George passed away on February 4th. He was a member of Chapter 326 some years back. Here is a bio from our July 1999 newsletter.

I first met George at our recent Young Eagles Day. It seemed odd that I didn't know him because he has been a Chapter member for a long, long time. George says "I'm not a club meeting person, flying is the fun part." He seemed to really enjoy flying the Young Eagle kids in his yellow Bellanca Cruisemaster. George is a regular at Spanaway airport. "Im out there almost every day. If weather doesn't permit flying the Bellanca, then I go out there just to pet it". But unless you hang out at Spanaway, you probably don't know him either.

In WWII, George flew P-38s and P-47s with the 49<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group in the Southwestern Pacific. He was assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron. That is one of the most famous fighter squadrons of all time. George's squadron mates included Richard (Dick) Bong, Ace of Aces with 40 kills and the Medal of Honor. Also his Squadron Commander, Gerald Johnson with 22kills, and his Flight Commander, Jump Oneil, with 8, and many others totaling 271 victories for the 9<sup>th</sup> FS and 697 for the 49<sup>th</sup> FG. And George shot down two Oscars, himself. More on that later.

George was born in Oakland, California and grew up in San Mateo. He wanted to fly but lacked the money so he enlisted in the Army in 1939. George had two years of Junior College so he could enter the aviation cadet program after his enlistment was up provided he passed the Army physical and academic tests. After Pearl Harbor, that whole program accelerated and George entered pilot training, Class 42 H, in March of 1942. He started in PT-17s at the Rankin Aeronautical Academy at Tulare, California. Tex Rankin was a famous, hot-shot air show pilot that had set a record in the 30s with 19 consecutive outside loops.

"The PT-17s we flew had no airspeed indicators or brakes. We judged airspeed by the sound of wind through the wires." After Primary at Tulare, George went to Gardner Field near Taft, California for Basic Training in the BT-13. Then it was on to Williams Field at Phoenix for Advanced Training in the AT-10 Twin Beech. Then he was sent to McChord field to fly the P-38 Lightning. "The strange thing was that fighter pilots were supposed to go to Luke Field (Phoenix) to get aerial gunnery training in the AT-6 and bomber pilots went to Williams for multi-engine training. So I got to McChord with no gunnery training whatsoever. During our P-38 training we were supposed to shoot ground targets at Fort Lewis but that required radio contact with a ground controller and our radios were so bad that many of us missed that training also. Then they moved our Squadron to Port Angeles. We were told to go find our own "targets of opportunity" in the Straights off Port Angeles and not to shoot anything that moves."

In January 1943, George was sent to New Guinea to join the 49<sup>th</sup> FG flying P-38s. New Guinea, just north of Australia, was the first rung in the island ladder that would get MacArthur back to the Philippines. While enroute they diverted into Christmas Island because of a small pox scare. They spent two weeks there in quarantine. Then onto Jungle Survival School near Brisbane, Australia. Then to Port Moresby, New Guinea, and finally over the mountain range to Dobodura airport at Buna.

"We flew fighter intercept and bomber escort missions. On escort missions, we typically flew in 16 ship formations. Four flights of four put together and usually led by the Squadron Commander or Operations Officer. We escorted B-25, B-26, B-17 and B-24 bombers. They were based elsewhere. Dobodura had a wide grass runway that allowed us to take off four abreast. At mid field there was a crossing psp runway used by P-40s. We held it down until we were across the psp so that P-40s could take off over the top of us. Radio silence took priority.

"Japanese fighters were, Zeros, Zekes, Oscars, Tonys and Tojos. Intelligence assigned those names. They all looked somewhat similar but it was important to distinguish between them for intelligence purposes. The P-38 could fly higher, faster, and farther, but could not turn as tight, so dogfighting them was a mistake. Consequently we got a lot of high angle, even head-on shots with a relatively low probability of scoring, especially for a lot of us who had little or no formal air-to-air gunnery training.

"One especially nasty target was Rabaul, a key Japanese base on New Britain, about 450 miles away. Lots of Japanese fighters and lots of flak, both land and sea. We would fly to a refueling strip on Trobriand Island, gas up and wait to join the bombers as they flew over. I remember on one of our missions, a Jap recon plane, "Dinah" showed up and our 16 shipper droned on taking no action. Finally, Dick Bong peels out of the formation alone, runs over and shoots the guy down in flames, and quickly rejoins without a word from anybody or a wiggle in our formation. Marvelous, I thought.

"I was never assigned to Dick Bong's flight specifically, but we often flew together in larger formations. Dick was a good guy. He didn't drink, didn't smoke...he was just a calm quiet guy who could shoot. When his scores put him well above the rest of us, he was allowed to fly missions of his choosing, which of course were those with high probability of fighter contact. The fame he brought to the unit when he surpassed Rickenbacker's 22 kill record justified that. But that achievement grounded him, nobody wanted to risk a hero of this magnitude. He was sent back to the States for publicity stuff for a while but later returned to resume duty with the 49<sup>th</sup> FG and finished with 40 victories.

"I got my first kill dead aft at close range down on the water. I fired into the fuselage and the Oscar rolled over and splat into the water. My second was another Oscar; Jump Oneil shot the leader and the wingman pulled up hard in front of me. It was one of those "look, see, shoot" situations. His engine burst into flames and I saw his parachute deploy.

"I flew 155 missions total. More than most in a 14 month tour...volunteered too much, I guess. Forty of those were in the P-47 Thunderbolt, "Jug." Lots of engagements, a lot of shooting and a lot of missing. The P-47 was a fine machine, a real pussycat but I didn't like the single engine on long trips over the water. Also when diving away after an engagement, a standard

tactic, you got control reversal at very high speed when compressibility became a factor. One amusing encounter in the Jug was when we were scrambled and radar vectored against an unknown. I was on Gerald Johnson's wing. He identified it as one of our own B-25s. It was, but as he slid in for a closer look, the top turret gunner shot into Johnny's engine and knocked off two jugs. I asked, "shall I shoot him?"; "no need for that" was the reply, as we limped home. Maybe turnabout is fate or something, because later on Johnny shot down an Australian CA-13 Boomerang by mistake".

When George finished his tour in New Guinea, he was assigned as a P-39 Airacobra instructor at Ephrata Washington. "What a come down; of all the airplanes I've flown, this is the only one I didn't like. The P-39 was a real dog." Later they switched to the P-63 Kingcobra. In the spring of 1945, Ephrata was closed and the unit was sent to Santa Maria, California to instruct in P-38s. "We had aerial gunnery training at Barstow. I couldn't believe it. After all the other training and combat flying, this was the first time I had any formal aerial gunnery training. Then the war ended and our training mission ended also."

George's enlisted training was in weather observing and forecasting, so he was given a job in San Francisco as a Weather Service Inspector. With that job came a C-47 and a mechanic. "My checkout in the C-47 consisted of sitting in the cockpit with the flight manual in my lap. The mechanic helped me get it started and off we went." He flew to all the weather stations along the Pacific Coast, Oregon and Nevada, sometimes solo in an airplane designed for a crew of three. For the next ten years, George was primarily a weather officer but he was always able to stay on flying status. At Yokota, Japan, he flew the B-26, C-46, L-4, L-5, and T-6. At Langley AFB, Virginia, the Pentagon, and NATO headquarters in France, he flew the T-33. "I always said I needed to fly to see if my weather forecasts were true."

In 1953, George was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group at Kimpo (K-14), Korea. "I got there just as the fighting ended...they heard I was coming. Again, I was there as a weather officer but I flew the F-86. No combat but some fantastic dogfights." After that, George went to Fort Lewis as Staff Weather Officer to the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry and he flew T-Birds at McChord

"The Air Force needed C-130 pilots for Vietnam, so I went to Dyess AFB, Texas in 1966 for that school. Then when I got to Vietnam in 1967, they made me an ALCE (Airlift Control Element) commander at Binh Thuy Air Base. Flying was over. I retired when I returned from Vietnam in 1969 after 30 years in the Air Force."

"As a civilian, I went to work for ASARCO, the big copper smelter on Point Defiance in Tacoma. I was an "environmental specialist," actually a weatherman doing micro-meteorology within a 5 mile radius of the plant. Production had to be geared to the weather in order to control contaminants. A plant supervisor who thought otherwise was fired. Corporate headquarters in New York took it seriously. I retired from ASARCO in 1979.

"I then spent one year restoring a Stinson 108-2 at home and at Spanaway Airport. I Flew it for 3 or 4 years and then traded it for the Bellanca I have now." Obviously George has flown quite a few airplanes. Here is a complete list: PT-17

Kaydet, BT-13 Valiant, AT-9 Fledgeling, AT-10 Beech, AT-11 Kansan, P-38 Lightning, P-39 Airacobra, P-47 Thunderbolt, P-51 Mustang, P-59 Airacomet, P-63 Kingcobra, C-45 Expediter, C-46 Commando, C-47 Dakota, C-130 Hercules, UC-78 Bobcat (Bamboo Bomber), A-24 (SBD) Dauntless, A-25 (SB2C) Helldiver, B-26 Marauder, T-6 Texan, T-33 T-Bird, F-86 Sabre, L2 and L-4 Grasshopper, L5 Sentinel, O-1 Bird Dog, Piper 140, 180, Cessna 150, 177 RG, Stinson Voyager 108-2, Bellanca Cruisemaster 14-19, 14-19-2.

In January 2000, George was coaxed into giving a presentation on his wartime experiences. With the help of his son a slide show was created from old photos taken by George. It was a memorable evening. jb

### When things go bump in your flight

or

how I learned in-flight engine monitor usage...

Andy Karmy

When I built my RV all those years ago, I figured the best thing to do was install full instrumentation for my precious engine. Now all those 172's we all flew back in the training days simply had a single EGT gauge if any and I can't say I ever did much, other than start it up and hope it stayed running. Well fast forward to my shiny new RV which has a nice 4 channel engine monitor with all CHT / EGT / and other parameters monitored in realtime. You all have these right? But what is it telling you, that's the question we need to explore.

I have now had my 3rd inflight plug failure over the 640 hours I've been flying. There are a few telltale signs that you can look for to help indicate what's going on inside your engine. As I've grown comfortable with my engine, there are a set of temps and standards that I can depend on to visually tell that things are good at a given power setting. For me that means at 2200 rpm, in economy cruise, I should see very even smooth EGT's across all 4 cylinders.

So, let's take last week's 3rd failure as an example. While floating above the forests between Hoquiam and Shelton, I look down and one of my 4 EGT's is off the chart! Now it's not hot enough to melt the engine or alert the big red light on my monitor, but it's not normal that's for sure. I think, hey, that's not right, but things are running smoothly and there's nothing but trees down there, so let's keep going. Once I near an airport, I explore a bit more troubleshooting, by simply increasing the throttle, the temp on #3 gets even hotter and the engine starts running rough. Uh oh, not good. As I enter downwind and throttle back to 1800 rpm, I do an in-flight mag check to confirm which plug failed. Yep, top / rear / left side is failed dead as can be. When switching one side off one of the EGT's starts falling rapidly as there is now no ignition in that cylinder.

So, what's going on here, and how do we know it's a plug not firing? Well, the rising EGT is an indication of unburned gas leaving the cylinder due to incomplete firing of the fuel / air mixture. The more power you apply the worse it gets, and the roughness comes from the gas being ignited in the exhaust as it

exits the chamber. Seems fairly simple when you think about it, but it sure gets your attention the first few times it happens.

Fly safe out there - Andy

### How Can an RV-12 be Licensed?

Van's Aircraft plans on submitting the RV-12 prototype for Special Light Sport Aircraft (S-LSA) approval. When this is received, RV-12 builders may build and license conforming airplanes in the E-LSA category.

Although the E-LSA category does not permit builders to vary from the kit or plans (no unapproved engines, propellers, etc. are allowed) it does have some very attractive features. In the E-LSA category, there is no "51%" rule, and no restriction on who may assist in building the airplane. This allows any amount of help, professional assistance or even a fully professional-built airplane.

From the information currently available, Experimental-Amateur Built certification will still be allowed on an individual basis. Responsibility for demonstrating compliance with the "51%" rule will rest entirely with the builder.

Can accessories like lights, autopilots or wheel fairings be installed? In the E-LSA category builder-constructed airplanes must match the S-LSA prototype exactly. Although the RV-12 was designed with these accessories in mind, the initial prototype does not have them installed. We plan to make optional items available to E-LSA RV-12 builders in the future, but at this point we are not sure how long that might take.

### T/S-18 PROJECT

\$15,000

#### INCLUDES:

ENGINE: NEWLY REBUILT LYCOMING O-290D  
PROPELLER: PACESETTER WOOD PROP 68 X 68  
AVIONICS: TERRA COMM, NAV, OBS  
NAVAID AUTOPILOT  
LANDING GEAR, WHEELS, AND TIRES  
TAIL FINISHED  
FUSELAGE AT CANOE STAGE  
FUEL TANK DONE  
WING  
LDS-4 AIRFOIL FOR S-18  
SPAR PROFESSIONALLY BUILT  
ALL WING RIBS COMPLETE  
FLAPS AND AILERONS COMPLETE  
ALMOST EVERYTHING REQUIRED TO FINISH  
PROJECT IS ON HAND

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