



# WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



## CO's Cockpit

By Greg Anders

Our squadron has climbed a long way this last year. We have updated our squadron purpose to more accurately reflect what our current mission is, we have re-engaged with Arlington Fly-In in a positive fashion, we have raised the level of professionalism in our already professional marshaller core, we have remained focused on safe operations, and we have already had some very successful squadron functions this year. And, like everyone else, because CWB isn't my only responsibility, I feel like all of that climbing has forced my airspeed to decay a little, and I for one am starting into summer feeling way behind the power curve. Corrective action for that flight condition is to push the nose over, gain a little airspeed while giving up a little altitude or climb angle, and get back to flying right.

Relative to CWB, "airspeed" to me is flying with my friends and enjoying the camaraderie of our squadron mates on the ground. So help yourself, and help the squadron, "push the nose over" and do something with a squadron mate. On the near horizon as I am writing is the Arlington Fly-In. I look forward to seeing everyone there with their aircraft, military vehicle, batons, golf carts, van, or whatever brings them in. But I'd like to emphasize that Arlington, like most of our activities, is a Big Frickin Deal. I'd like to remind our members that we are not NASA, not everything we do has to be a BFD.

During our "squadron purpose" discussion, it was lamented that "we used to get together in small groups all the time. Now we don't." Part of our success that our founders and early members can be VERY proud of is that the squadron has gotten larger. Unfortunately, as a result of being larger, momentum and inertia seem to rule the day sometimes.

I would encourage all of you to feel free to "break from the mother-ship," and do the small things. If it's Thursday, and Saturday looks like it is going to be weather that makes you want to fly to Bremerton for fish & chips, send out an e-mail letting folks know "I'm launching out of Paine in my Navion at 10AM Saturday, going to Bremerton for lunch, two empty seats, lots of empty ramp at Bremerton, hope to see you there!" If you send that e-mail to Fred Smyth (fred@fcsmyth.com), he can forward it to the whole squadron. Or if it's Saturday morning and the weather is good, call a couple CWB buds and just go. Give the Squadron an Ice Tea toast while you are there.

The suggested Toast? "I propose a toast to the Cascade Warbirds!" Response? "To the Warbirds!"

You can bet the folks at the diner will love that! We've been working hard, let's push the nose over and go do some flying!!

Sic Tempus Ad Fugit!! ✪

# WARBIRD FLYER

★★★ Cascade Warbirds ★★★  
EAA Squadron 2 Newsletter

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## Editor's Page

By Frank Almstead

**B**on Jour!! This quarter the newsletter is brought to you from our foreign correspondent's desk in Bourges, France.

Welcome to another great edition of *Warbird Flyer*. It is our second expanded edition and I am thankful that our members continue to contribute to make the newsletter a valuable part of our organization. This time Doug Owens has a written nice summary of the B-17 tour stop. Earl Root has started to pen a great series on the evolution of combat liaison aircraft. Terry Brennan continues with his memorable flights series. And, I'd like to thank Curt Kinchen for sharing his Valentine's day adventure with everyone.

You may have wondered what the *Warbird Flyer* is doing in Bourges, France. Well, it's a long story but it provides a chance to study a little history of the War in Europe. Bourges itself is located in the Loire Valley in Central France. The city was once the capital of the medieval Kingdom of Aquitaine, and later briefly the capital of France.

Bourges was occupied by the Germans for four years during WWII, starting in June, 1940. During the war, the center of the city was spared from bombings. Today it is the largest historical preservation area in France and the Cathedral of St.-Etienne (built 1195-1255) is the standout landmark. However, the airfield outside Bourges was not so lucky, occupied by the Luftwaffe, and later the Allies, who designated it Y.49. Attached is a strike photo from the 487th BG taken on a mission four years to the day after Bourges was occupied. ✪



Let's hear it at [editor@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:editor@cascadewarbirds.org)

## C.O.'s Reflection on a CWB T-6 Accident

By Greg Anders

**W**e have lost a T-6 at one of our Fly-in activities in a landing accident. Fortunately, while there were some minor injuries and a few stitches, both occupants were OK. Hopefully the loss of the aircraft is only temporary and restoration will put her back in the air.

It is my opinion that one of the most dangerous characteristics of a pilot is one where the pilot hears about some aircraft accident or incident and academically evaluates it, all the while smugly believing that such a thing could never happen to him/her. Anyone can be involved in an accident. I'll use my friend Bob Hoover as an example. If anyone thinks they are a better pilot than Bob Hoover, I'd recommend retiring from flying due to delusional incapacity. And even though he is the best, Bob has crashed many

times. So, with a bit of a tongue in cheek flair, while the two of us were sipping Gin and Tonics, I asked Bob about his technique for surviving a crash. And his eyes went from that wonderful happiness that usually dances around in them; to penetrating, dead pan serious. And he leaned in close to me and said "Greg, you keep flying the plane until all of the parts stop moving, then see where you're at when they do."

None of us is immune. And I try to remember that every time I fly. When I roll out on final, I have an extra step in my checklist that is my own personal reminder and it is: "Pay attention or this will be the worst landing of your life." And sometimes, even when we do pay attention, Murphy gets the better of us, and we need to keep flying until all the parts stop moving... ✪

# CWB Support A Successful Tour Stop For The B-17

By Doug Owens

As we buckled down for the longest ever tour stop at Seattle by the EAA B-17 this year, there was some cause for concern about our reception by the ride buying public. The Liberty Belle, a recently renovated B-17, had “cherry picked” our stop by having the Museum of Flight allow it to operate just three weeks before the Aluminum Overcast was to arrive. Our crew of volunteers was ready with abundant manpower (and womanpower) to get the job done nonetheless. And in the end, we could not have asked for a better time. The

flights before the flights for the public, and received good press coverage. Warren Nadeau kindly stepped in to handle management duties when I was required to be away from the field, and Warren also led the team to the next tour stop in Ogden. I understand that Amtrak still has not recovered from the wild goings on during the team’s return home by rail. Bill Junjek manned the gate tirelessly for the entire tour stop. Bill Pearson again did yeoman service in arranging for veterans to show up during the ground tours to offer personal reflections



John Clark captures the Aluminum Overcast on a Boeing Field taxiway during our tour stop

weather was perfect, the people came out in droves, and the airplane performed flawlessly. Our team included the usual suspects, with Pete Jackson in charge of the merchandise trailer, ably assisted by Betty Sherman, Kathy Bauer and Bob Brahm. Also involved were the marshallers, led by Paul Youman and including Rick Bray, Lori Greer, Liggett Taylor, Jack Allen and Ron McInay. It is some thrill to give signals to the pilot in that big aircraft and watch it respond. Bill High provided a cadre of CAP cadets who helped with passenger escort to and from the plane, and several of our CWB volunteers helped in that area also. Tony Caruso did his best to give us good publicity before the tour stop, and it seemed to have a good effect. We had two media

on the wartime experiences they had. And for an extra treat, our own Col. Bill Holloman appeared, along with several of his Tuskegee Airmen buddies, for photographs at the end of the day. And the end of the day was a good one for the Cascade Warbirds. George Daubner told me that Seattle was the winner of this year’s tour by a good country mile. We had 244 seats sold, and the nearest competitor was Denver with only 214. This is not bad for a year that has seen the severe economic challenges we all are familiar with. George indicated that he had added some tour stops at the back end late in the year and he thinks with those stops the overall performance will be within acceptable limits of the budget, and he credits Seattle and the CWB for much of that outcome. BZ. ✪

# Squadron News

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## SQUADRON NAMES SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

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The Squadron recently announced the winners of the 2009 EAA Air Academy Advanced Camp. Representing Aviation High School in Seattle is Garrett Mosier. He's a 16-year-old from Burien who has set a goal to become an aerospace engineer and work for Boeing. He also hopes to become a pilot one day. Representing the Civil Air Patrol from the Spokane area is Brolin Graham. He's also 16 and his time with the CAP leads him to say that he is extremely excited about this opportunity. Both young men head off to Oshkosh for a full week of camp that begins on 31 July. As a bonus, we can expect both of them to attend one of our meetings this Fall and report on their experiences. We wish them an enjoyable venture.

## RACE YOU TO RENO?

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If you are having last-minute urges to join the Squadron at the Reno Air Races, there are still two seats available in our reserved box. It's the second box, actually, but still "show center" and more fun than gastropoda races. For \$320 each, you get reserved seating Wednesday through Sunday and access to the pits for seven days, Monday through Sunday. Plus you get to share in the camaraderie that has made this one of the Squadron's favorite venues. Mail your check to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Your tickets will arrive via the USPS in late July or early August.

## PAY AS YOU GO

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A few of you have not yet taken

the opportunity to renew your membership in the Squadron. Have a look at the mailing label on this newsletter (on the envelope of our Canadian members); if it says 12/08, you're one of the few. For a mere \$20 you can renew and help the rest of us to "Keep 'Em Flying." Mail your check to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Or drop your payment by the Warbird area if you're coming to AWO this year. Thanks for your support.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

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Remember that in January, 2010, the membership will choose its leaders for the next two years. Last quarter the call went out for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. The nominating committee will produce the slate of candidates on which the membership will vote. To date, there has been radio silence. So, I'm transmitting the message again. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in serving on the committee or in our organization, get in touch with Frank at fns5@verizon.net. Remember, if you're not part of the solution, you'll have no room to complain.

## LETTERS

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Do you have an opinion? Is it related to the Squadron or what we do? Would you like to share it with the rest of us? Well, then, take the time to author a missive and send it along to Frank at editor@cascadewarbirds.org. Sometimes there are things other people would like to know, opinions that need expressing, or even questions that can generate useful answers. Don't be shy.

## DON'T FORGET THE CWB MARKETPLACE

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If you have something aviation related and would like to peddle it, submit an ad for inclusion in this newsletter. Current members of the Squadron will be able to place classified-style "For Sale" and "Wanted" ads at no cost. Space limitations may apply on occasion, so the Editor will have the final say each issue on what gets in and what doesn't.

## FRESH FACES

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We're always happy to see more folks join our ranks. We welcome the following warbird enthusiasts.

Mike Miller                      Oak Harbor, WA  
CJ-6A

Mike Jones                      Oak Harbor, WA  
CJ-6

John Geyman                  Friday Harbor, WA  
HE-1

Currie Lee                      Prescott, AZ  
CJ-6A

Gary Hagstrom                  Canby, OR  
CJ-6A

Peter Stekel                      Seattle, WA

Shane Morgan                  Lake Stevens, WA

Gary Shipler                      Bonney Lake, WA

Be sure to show these folks a warm welcome and offer the plane-less among them any empty back seats you may have available.

# EAA Warbird Wings Application

**WARBIRD AVIATOR**    
  **SENIOR WARBIRD AVIATOR**    
  **COMMAND WINGS**  
 (Requirements for each type of wing are printed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of this application)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EAA NO. \_\_\_\_\_ WOA NO. \_\_\_\_\_

List types of civilian warbirds flown, including total time in each:

TYPE	P.I.C.	CO-PILOT

Indicate events and years in which you flew civilian warbird aircraft:  
**(Flying several times at an event counts as one EAA WOA selected aerial demonstration.)**

	YEAR	OSHKOSH	SUN 'N FUN	COPPERSTATE *(1994-1999 only)	ARLINGTON *(2001+)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

**\*Notes:** Applicable Copperstate participation years are 1994 through 1999. Credit for participation at Arlington (Northwest EAA Fly-In) begins in 2001.

\*Flying several times at an event counts as **one** EAA WOA-selected aerial demonstration.

**The requirements for Warbird Aviator Wings** are at least 250 hours time in civilian warbird aircraft as pilot-in-command or co-pilot on a crew-operated warbird (e.g. bomber or transport type) and participation in at least five (5) EAA WOA-selected aerial demonstrations (Air Venture, Sun 'n Fun, Arlington).

**The requirements for Senior Warbird Aviator Wings** are at least 500 hours time in civilian warbird aircraft as pilot-in-command or co-pilot on a crew-operated warbird (e.g. bomber or transport type) and participation in at least ten (10) EAA WOA-selected aerial demonstrations (Air Venture, Sun 'n Fun, Arlington).

**The requirements for the Command Wings** are at least 500 hours time in civilian warbird aircraft as pilot-in-command or co-pilot on a crew-operated warbird (e.g. bomber or transport type) and participation in at least twenty (20) EAA WOA-selected aerial demonstrations (Air Venture, Sun 'n Fun, Arlington).

Return completed application to:  
Warbird Wings Program, EAA Warbirds of America,  
PO Box 3086,  
Oshkosh, WI 54903-3086  
or Fax: 920.426.6865  
Email: [warbirds@eaa.org](mailto:warbirds@eaa.org)

**Office Use Only**

Comments:

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Back Seat Driver

By Ed Rombauer

There's nothing more irritating than trying to drive an automobile while someone sits in the back seat telling you which way to go, how fast to get there, watch out for the other drivers, and that you are not taking the fastest route. In my experience, the person in the back seat is usually someone who knows how to get there but has forgotten where they are going. Back seaters in airplanes, at least those of the tandem type, tend to be either passengers or flight instructors. While your passenger may be too busy (trying to keep their lunch down) to say much, the instructor's function is to impart some wisdom by telling you what to do.

There is, however, another category of back seater. This is the young person who is a passenger but who dreams of being a pilot. This back seater would never deign to tell the pilot what to do, but would instead question him in order to further his knowledge. His mind is like a sponge, absorbing every bit of aeronautical information that is imparted to him. All too often we, as older, experienced pilots will ignore or give little time to these young aviation enthusiasts—at our peril! Remember that the back seater of today may be the front seat driver of tomorrow, and the experienced front seat driver of today will sooner or later wind up in the back seat. It would seem then, that having a skilled, well trained, knowledgeable pilot up front, while you are riding in the back, is to your advantage. The accident statistics of commuter airlines supports the thesis that many of the young pilots of today are inexperienced and lack a basic understanding of aerodynamics.

The big DC-8 was flying well above the midnight wintery weather east of Chicago on its way to the east coast. The front cabin in which I was riding was almost empty, allowing me plenty of space to relax and read a little. A pilot had called in sick and I was assigned to fly his mid-morning departure the next day. It would be a short night. As I sat there with the cabin lights dimmed and the mind-dulling noise of an airliner in flight, I soon dropped off to an intermittent sleep. Occasionally, I would open my eyes and look out the window at the black nothingness punctuated only by the flash of the red rotating beacon.

It wasn't until the loud rumble of the landing gear being lowered that I became fully awake. Looking out the window, I could see the landing lights reflecting into a heavy snow fall with the wing disappearing into the white haze. As my mind became more awake, and having not heard an announcement to prepare for landing, I wondered where in the approach we were. Well, maybe the pilot had lowered the gear a little early and we were still a long way out from the airport. My apprehension was increasing as we descended further into the midnight snow; I was becoming the worst kind of back seater—a nervous one with no input. Looking around the cabin, I noticed that people were still curled up under their blankets, and the flight attendants were standing in the galley talking to one another. Perhaps, I thought, in my sleep-induced haze I had missed the landing announcement and at

any moment the cabin lights would be turned up bright and the familiar landing routine would start. Turning to the window, I again tried to see through the brightly illuminated snowfall. Looking intently into the white glare, I suddenly knew where we were, or at least how close to the ground we were, for I was now starting to see the dim form of a forest of snow-covered evergreen trees!

The DC-8 continued down toward the outstretched limbs of these large, snowy creatures, and in just moments the wing appeared to be skimming along only a few feet above the tops. Catching the attention of a flight attendant a few feet away from me, I quietly said, "Landing," and to myself I said, "I hope." The flight attendant glanced out the window, saw the trees, and ran for her seat. I was now concentrating on trying to see some runway lights through the window—my role as a back seat passenger had definitely changed to back seat driver with a locked door between me and the pilots. I suppose that I could have used my key to open the cockpit door and said, "Excuse me, did you know that you guys are flying this airplane into the ground?" Only in fiction does this ever work, as the writer has control of the ending and dictates whether the ending is either good (as in it's only a bad dream), or bad (as in they all died in the crash). In real life, endings to the story are uncertain.

Just as I thought the engine pods were about to play snow plow in the tree tops, the four engines on the aircraft roared into full takeoff power, and then just as suddenly became almost silent as they went to idle thrust. Instantly, the aircraft hit hard on the very end of the runway, driving every passenger's spine down through the seat cushion; fortunately, a bad landing on the airport was better than a good landing off the airport.

You might wonder what this has to do with back seat drivers. As I later found out in a quiet conversation with the second officer (flight engineer), the Captain, who was flying the aircraft, forgot to tell the flight attendants that they were landing. On the approach, both pilots proceeded to drop below the ILS glide slope and were about to land short of the runway when, at the last moment, the second officer reached forward and pushed the thrust levers full forward, saving the day. This young flight engineer had instantly transitioned from a back seater to a back seat driver, because, I would guess, somewhere in his youth, older experienced people in aviation had taken the time, when he was a back seat passenger, to answer his questions.

This month, CWB is awarding scholarships to two young people to further their education and interest in aviation. Not only should all of us support these scholarships, but we should take the time to answer the many questions the newcomer to aviation may have. Someday we will all become back seaters and the young back seater of today will be up front driving. When that happens, I prefer that he or she has most of the answers. ✪

# Valentine's Day Adventure

By Curt Kinchen

What started out as a fun weekend getaway with the wife turned into an adventure that I hope not to repeat and my wife really doesn't want any encore performances. It was Valentines Day weekend and fellow Cascade Warbird member, George Renquist, graciously offered us the use of his Stuart Island cabin while he was away in Hawaii. It was a beautiful weekend with forecasted nice weather for both days and no risk of getting weathered in as can happen in the Puget Sound in mid February, so off we went.

We loaded up the PT-26 with fuel at Paine and took our normal direct route up the Whidbey shoreline using approach control through the NAS airspace. It's a mostly overland course with a few minutes of overwater south of Lopez Island. During that brief time when an engine failure would result in a pretty cold swim I commented to my wife that "since we're making this trip more frequently we really should get some personal flotation devices". Little did I know that the next day we would get a more galvanizing endorsement of the idea.

Our flight to the island was uneventful and we quickly got the cabin up and running and began enjoying the serenity and beauty of the San Juans.

Sunday morning dawned bright and breezy with a brisk north wind. We had decided previously that if the weather was good we would make our return flight via Port Townsend for a breakfast stop.

When we departed Stuart Island we had about a 15 knot tailwind so I figured our trip to Port Townsend would be a quick one. About midway over San Juan island I noted to Ruth that our tailwind had diminished at altitude (3000 feet) to only a few miles per hour. As we approached the south shore of the island I continued climbing to about 3500 feet. A few minutes later I smelled raw fuel. Thinking to myself, "that's odd, never smelled gas in flight before...wonder that could be". And then it got very quiet.

We all think about what it would be like to have an

engine failure and have to make a forced landing. Many of us are continually looking for places to land should the unthinkable happen. And I'm sure you've all been flying over terrain knowing that should the engine give up suitable options just don't exist. The Puget Sound area is full of places where making a landing isn't going end in good results. We have lots of water and many commonly traveled flight paths that, barring climbing to very high altitudes, simply aren't going to keep you within gliding distance of land. In addition, much of the land is very wooded, hilly, populated, etc. Next time you go flying look at what your options are during the entire flight and

you'll see that there are times when they aren't very appealing.

Anyway, back to our flight. When the engine quit it was quite sudden with little sputtering. I immediately thought a fuel line had broken and was pretty sure I wasn't going to regain power. At the point of engine failure we were about 3 miles south of the San Juan Island shoreline and about 7 miles from the Friday Harbor airport, which I turned



Curt Kinchen Photo

toward. That course direction was fortunate in that it also was to the nearest point of land on the island. Ruth asked what was going on, and interestingly, didn't realize it was a complete engine failure as the prop was still turning. She did, however, know we were going to have to make an emergency landing. I quickly figured out we weren't going to make it all the way to Friday Harbor, but at the same time was sure we would make it to land.

I proceeded through all the things I could think of to get the engine going, but was pretty sure it was going to be unsuccessful. As we approached the shoreline I told Ruth that I knew there were some private airstrips in the area and to start looking for one. None of the roads I could see looked very suitable, with fences and power lines bordering them. I spotted an airplane parked on a grass strip about a mile northeast of us and made a direct line to it. I thought to myself "we're going make it to a runway, how lucky



is that”, but as we got lower I realized the headwind was increasing and our likelihood of actually reaching the strip was diminishing. I wasn’t too worried though as the field, on the same property, south of the groomed part of the strip appeared obstruction free and fairly smooth.

As we turned slightly to line up with the runway my airspeed finally diminished to where the prop stopped turning. Having the field made I attempted a restart of the engine with no success, but the good fortune of leaving the prop horizontal. I figured it was going to be a rough

landing as we got closer to the field, but I had no idea how rough. I landed just at stalling speed and the plane dropped the last couple of feet onto the turf. We stopped immediately.

Later we measured it at a ground “roll” of about 28 feet. It was pretty easy to measure as the main gear made furrows in the very soft and wet ground. It turned

out this corner of the property was much lower than the surrounding terrain and was pretty boggy.

We quickly ascertained we were all right and before we could exit the airplane heard a shout from across the fence of someone asking if we were OK. It turned out to be the neighbor, Diana, of the airstrip owner and she was very helpful in getting us sorted out. There’s no cell phone coverage on that part of the island so we used her phone to start making arrangements for getting home, letting people know what happened, etc. We returned to the airplane and another neighbor, who turned out to have a heavy equipment business across the road came by. He offered up the use of his excavator to lift and move the airplane to higher ground on the airstrip where it would be safe and dry. The owner of the property appeared at about this time and he gave us full run of his house and use of any of his equipment needed to relocate the airplane. Within an hour we had the canopy off, the airplane rigged to be

moved, a ride back to Paine from Friday Harbor arranged and were sitting down to lunch thanks to Diana giving us a ride into town. When returned from lunch the excavator was in position and we easily lifted the airplane using a strap rigged to the rollover structure. An hour later we had parked the airplane to be recovered later and were on our way back to Paine. All together it was about 5 hours from landing to being home.

It was very gratifying to know how willing everyone, strangers and friends, were to drop everything and help.

And later, when the time came to dismantle and move the airplane, I can’t even count how many people offered to help.

So, what happened? A fuel hose, held in place on a barbed AN fitting on the fuel pump with a hose clamp, came loose. Why? When we overhauled the engine 18 months earlier we replaced all the fuel hoses, and with all new hoses, the clamps tend to loosen as

the hose material relaxes. All the clamps were checked for security at the annual, but that had been 8 months prior. The clamp was, I think, still on the hose when it came loose as we found it in the front cowl, probably sliding off during the impact of the landing.

The short amount of time from the engine quitting to the landing was the most startling part of the adventure. With an engine developing no power (versus idling) the sink rate can be astonishing. In addition, the Fairchild PTs have a pretty quick descent rate anyway. I’m estimating it was in the neighborhood of 1000fpm, which gave us about 3 and 1/2 minutes from the engine quitting to touchdown.

The landing in the soft ground and the abrupt stop caused by the landing gear reaching an area of firmer ground broke the gear off. The airplane is repairable with the gear needing replacement, repair of the lower center section wing skins, and replacement of some of the engine cowling. ✪



Curt Kinchen Photo

# The Evolution of Combat Liaison Aircraft in WW II

By Earl Root

It has been known forever in military operations that observation of troop movement is essential to planners. From the basic need to take the high ground, small light aircraft found a role in WWII. After the “Great War” as engines and aircraft manufacturers developed bigger and faster products, it became the obsession of military planners to find new ways to use these advantages. The U.S. Air Corps standard observation aircraft in 1940 was the North American O-47 and the Curtiss O-52 Owl. They both required large technical support, aviation fuel, hard surface runways and they were expensive.

The demonstration of Germany’s Fieseler Fi-156 “Storch” at the 1938 National Air Races in Cleveland began to change the “bigger is better” trend. The “Stork” was a remarkable development. For the first time slow flight was purposely engineered into an aircraft. The ability to nearly hover while landing into a stiff headwind made it possible to operate from dirt roads and small unimproved strips.

After a subsequent flight demonstration of the Storch at Wright Field, the U.S. Air Corps called for development of a similar type. Ryan Aircraft submitted a 450 hp prototype; Bellanca’s entry was powered with a Ranger V-770 of 420 hp. The winner of the competition was Stinson Aircraft’s model O-49 with a Lycoming 295 hp R-680. This was later designated as the L-1, the first of the new L for Liaison designation. It was the Air Corps first STOL type liaison plane that could operate into and out of a 200 foot circle (Don’t try this at home!). While the ground Army could see the advantages of this capability, most Air Corps officers could not believe that slower is better. After all, to them the axiom “speed is life” was as true as ever.

In 1940 the Army held a competition for a smaller, easier to maintain and less costly airplane than the O-49. This resulted in the acceptance of Stinson’s O-62 Sentinel. Later this designation became the Army L-5 and the Navy OY-1. It was powered with the new 185hp Lycoming O-435. After deployment in all theaters of operation it earned the nickname “Flying Jeep.”

When President Roosevelt called for American industry to build 50,000 airplanes William Piper thought the light airplane manufacturers should have a piece of the budget

pie. Piper, along with Aeronca and Taylor Craft sent representatives to Washington to lobby the War Department. But few believed that a 65 hp airplane could help defend America. In June of 1941 their sales effort got a break. The second Army was about to begin maneuvers at Camp Forest in Tennessee and the Air Corps was asked to supply some observation aircraft. It had none to spare. At their own expense Piper loaned eight radio-equipped J-3 Cubs along with pilots. Taylor and Aeronca each supplied two.

Regular Army field commanders had trained, in the 1930’s, with the horse and mounted troops for reconnaissance and had no idea what these “aeroplanes” were to be used for. Finally the umpires at the war games asked to use them to help observe the progress. The umpires reported back to the commanders that these “grasshoppers” worked perfectly to get a clear picture of

what was happening on the ground.

Piper mounted a telephone campaign calling army posts around the country to get interest in purchasing his Cubs for artillery spotting. At Fort Lewis his call was routed to a Lieutenant Colonel who was himself a light airplane pilot. His name was Dwight Eisenhower. He knew the capabilities of the light airplane and what

they could do for artillery adjustment but that no funds were available for purchase. Piper suggested renting and Eisenhower responded that it had not been done but he would try to find a way. Two strong minds made it happen and a rental agreement was signed. By loaning, renting and demonstrating to anyone who would listen, military acceptance of light aircraft for the war effort was slowly achieved.

Serving in WWII as “base hack” or front line combat, the Grasshoppers, Flying Jeeps and in later conflicts the Bird Dogs, did an exemplary job helping defend America.

Next time we will look at the various tasks, from mundane to unbelievable, that were performed by the L-Birds in WWII.

For additional information on this subject, reference...

*L-Birds* by Terry Love

*Mr. Piper and his Cubs* by Devon Francis

*The Stinsons* by John Underwood 🍀



Fieseler Fi-156 Storch photo via Bundesarchiv

# Memorable Flights

By Terry Brennan

While those of us who live on the west coast may wish that the EAA Airventure was staged somewhat closer to home, the long distances travelled by air often offer us a study of the scenery below that might otherwise, and regrettably, go unnoticed. One such opportunity occurred on the first leg of my and George Wilen's return to the southwestern corner of the country following this year's big airplane bash. Strong headwinds at all altitudes forced us down as low as we could legally go, to maximize our speed over the ground, and allowed us a look at life below that we had not quite come to expect.

Wisconsin is not generally recognized for its rolling hills and shaded valleys but the western extreme of the state unfolded beneath our wings in just such joyous topographical variety for mile after mile. Bright green dominates the fields of crops, maturing on hillside and valley both, while a richer verdant hue marks those vast areas awash with hardwood growth. Amazed at the unexpected variety of nature we flew above, we were warmed by its unfolding charm like the mid-day sun of late summer warms the last corner of earth tucked against a hillside.

One cannot travel above this lush mix within nature's plan without admiring the creativity of the local farmers who must deal with the inherent inconsistencies in terrain while they plan crop planting for the season. Following the natural contours of the earth, a field of corn rows looks more like what might roll off the brush of an artist who takes several creative swipes at a canvas, rather than the neat rectangular fields typical of what might be conjured up in the mind's eye when one thinks of the typical Midwest farm. I suspect that the bank angles these intrepid folks must travel while planting and cultivating their hill-top fields would send the ball well out of the cage, if the John Deere were so equipped.

Some may suggest that the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers was home to the cradle of civilization-but I disagree. I think that the farms and the small towns of the Midwest really deserve that title,

and a low level trip across western Wisconsin convinced me I am right. It is here that one experiences a true sense of community and family. The western Wisconsin landscape is dotted with villages and towns nestled in the valleys, where farmer and townsfolk meet, where each serves each other in different ways. Here their children grow up together while attending school in the typical red brick building on the knoll toward the edge of town and the locals gather over coffee to discuss the news of the day. It is here that morality is more important than politics, and it is here that the wisdom of America resides.

Main street in rural Wisconsin may stretch east and west, or north and south, but almost always features a couple of blocks of two story facades that likely date



Southwestern Wisconsin Landscape via [www.uwsp.edu](http://www.uwsp.edu)

back eighty or ninety years, providing space for a wide variety of down-scale retail operations. Everyone who shops in town is treated fairly because everyone in town knows the owner on a first name basis. A water-tower usually rests atop the highest hill, most often with the name of the town printed boldly on its side, a feature appreciated by passing pilots who might eschew the modern GPS and navigate

by dead-reckoning. Perhaps the most notable landmark in each of these villages is the miniscule white church with its steeple straining to reach the tree tops, to touch the heavens, where, if you somehow missed your friends and neighbors during the week, you most always caught up on Sunday. Religion plays a large part in the lives of rural Americans.

Winding roads tie the towns and villages together, marvelously picturesque from down low but lousy for navigation, in a web of cultural and moral commonality that exists as the antithesis of the big city life found along the Interstates. Here the common man is king and his wife, he usually only takes one, is his queen. Oh how the mind wanders as this unique panorama unfolds beneath your wings and perhaps transports you back to your own roots. On this memorable flight I was, as a tiny voice travelled with me and called out every five or six miles, "Come back to the cradle, come back boy." ✪



# CASCADE WARBIRD EAA CHAPTER

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**Have Your Dues Expired?  
Check The Expiration Date Below.**

## Cascade Warbirds Quick Look Calendar

### July

- 4 Tacoma Freedom Fair and Airshow
- 8-12\* Arlington Fly-In
- 12-17 PSAAC Air Tour
- 18 Peace River Airshow
- 18 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI
- 18-19 Thunder over MI
- 24-26 Tri-Cities
- 27-2Aug Oshkosh 2009

### August

- 1-2 SEAFAIR
- 1 BC Aviation Museum Open House
- 7-9 Abbotsford
- 14-16 NWAAC 50th Fly-In Pearson Airpark
- 15 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI
- 15-16 Canada Remembers Int'l Airshow
- 21-23 Wings over Republic
- 21-22 Madras, OR
- 28-29 Chico Air Fest
- 29-30 Oregon Int'l Airshow
- 30 Chilliwack Flight Fest

### September

- 4-6 9th Annual Yak Discovery Fly-In, BC
- 5 Bremerton Blkbry Fest
- 11-13 Hood River Fly-In
- 11-13 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI
- 12-13 CA Capital Airshow, Sacramento
- 16-20 Reno Air Races 2009
- 25-27 Vintage Aircraft Weekend @ PAE
- 26-27 Redding, CA

\* Denotes Max Effort Event  
See Website for Detailed List

## Check Six



Friends of the Cascade Warbirds gather behind the Aluminum Overcast for a photo opportunity. (John Clark photo)