



The Twin State Flyer

EAA Chapter 740 Newsletter

Box 5530, West Lebanon, NH 03784
February, 2003

Waiting for Weather

by Dino Vlahakis, 740 Membership Chairman

An all too familiar saying in aviation, particularly GA. That is where I stand at the moment with regard to the Stearman. After the long wait for the engine to return (9 months) we got the airplane assembled and rigged in early December. Hopes to fly it before real winter arrived were dashed by a full schedule at the FBO where the long overdue annual was to be done. November would have been the perfect month.



A Rare Sight—601 out in the Snow

Chris Eaton, Director of Maintenance at Signal instructed me to bring it in on Jan 17th where he had a slot for me. Chapter member Steve Keen was the IA

assigned to “601”. Armed with all my manuals I helped Steve through the process since this was his first “Stearman” job. Since the airplane had been disassembled it was imperative that the inspection be exceptionally thorough. The write-ups were minimal and involved some tie wrapping, bolt replacements and additional safetying of a few items. Steve Christy graciously cleaned and waxed the belly. Tom Williamson and Bill Molloy stopped by and rendered moral support. When we rolled it out of the Signal hangar into the bright (severe clear VFR) sunshine, the freshly painted fairings and “N” struts were



601 Ready And Waiting for Warmer Wx

glistening along with all the waxed surfaces. It was just waiting to be flown again. The only
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Boilerplate

Chapter 740 is a local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association. It received its charter in October 1981 and operates as a non-profit club. Monthly meetings are normally held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Signal Aviation Services building at the Lebanon Municipal airport, W. Lebanon, NH at 7 pm. Visitors are always welcome.

This newsletter is a monthly publication and is sent to all members in good standing, EAA HQ and certain other EAA chapters. A complimentary 3-month subscription will be sent to prospective members on request. Please send address corrections to the editor at 85 Best Rd., Windsor, VT 05089 or email at: twill01@vermontel.net.

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problem was that the temperature was about 0 deg. F with wind gusts in the teens. The chill factor was -20. Even the die hard skiers were staying home. I had all the warm clothes I could put on. The engine started instantly having been at room temp in the hangar. Steve and Jim De Haven checked for leaks and gave me a thumbs up. After a warm-up I taxied around checking brakes and steering and then performed some engine checks. Everything appeared satisfactory. It was very tempting to head for the active but discretion and the fact that my forehead was getting numb dictated putting it in my hangar, to wait for "better weather" like another 40 degrees or more at the least. You can bet if we ever have a mid winter thaw that there will activity in my hangar again.

Ed. Note: It is with great pleasure that I see 601 return to service. Over 18 months ago Dino, Bill Molloy and I disassembled 601 at Rutland airport and transported her back to Leb. Then an agonizing period ensued waiting for the engine repair. Dino displayed admirable tolerance, lots of us suggested various drastic ways to lean on his engine over hauler, but to Dino's credit he refused to be dragged down to our level and took the high road of "wait and see". Besides, the over hauler had the engine, if we took him out, who would fix it then? (Dino's thinking, not ours). Someone asked if the over hauler could still do the work if he had been "kneecapped". "Probably not," said the Great Overwater Captain. So we let well enough alone, and the engine is back, on the airplane, and we all expect to hear the Lycoming echoing off the hills for a long time into the future.

Minutes, January 14, 2003

Stan Spencer, 740 Secretary

I trust everyone is enjoying this unusual warm weather and lack of snow... HA! It's actually been educational preflighting airplanes at -20F and the kids are enjoying the 16' snow banks around the hangar.

Our meeting began with the reminder that our usual February Pot-Luck Supper will be held in March. Our February meeting instead will feature Anne Nordstrom and her presentation on last summers flight to Alaska.

We will also be drawing the winners in the Wes Yancy Medical Fund Raffle. I am sure tickets will be available, and there is some really great stuff to win.

Chapter T-shirts are in! See Bill Molloy to purchase them.

Patches are available from Charlie Zue.

Corky Davidson made it back from Switzerland where he is working on a small project... certifying the King of Saudi Arabia's 747. As a DAR he wanted to remind all builders to record inspections by tech counselors. Especially on areas that will be covered up in the finished airplane. Also be sure that the airplane is complete before you call Corky or you will have to pay to have him come back when it is.

Dues are due! Enough said.

For our presentation, we had a real treat. Don Clausing, author and airline pilot, gave a presentation on Radio Communication Protocol. Don covered simple approach jargon to international communications. He gave us all a little quiz which cleared the cobwebs off our wintering brains and a discussion/review session. In all it was an excellent presentation that helped us become better pilots.

Coming Events

Discussion has occurred concerning plans for the approaching warmer weather (it will come). One suggestion was to designate specific dates for fly-outs, with the destination to be decided closer to the day of the fly-out. I thought this a good idea, and so did others of the Airport Bums Club, and we arrived at the simple formula of designating the first Saturday of each month, beginning May 3rd, to be the dates, running through October 4th. Rain dates will be the following Sunday. Any and all 740 members with aircraft are encouraged to participate. There will undoubtedly be seats available for those who do not have aircraft, and we would like to fill these with 740 members and their companions. Further details to follow.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11th, Signal Aviation, 7 pm. Program provided by Anne Nordstrom, pilot from Concord, NH, who flew her Cessna 140 to AK and back last summer. Also, drawing for the Wes Yancey Medical Fund raffle will occur this meeting, there are still some tickets available, \$25 apiece, prizes are: Garmin GPS 92, I-Com IC-4A Handheld, Custom Aerial Photo Shoot by AEROPIX, an Award winning aerial photo taken by AEROPIX, and two hours dual instruction in a C-172 based at VSF. Only 200 tickets will be sold, any left to be sold can be purchased before the drawing.

March 11th will be the date of our annual pot-luck dinner, again held at Signal, 6 pm start time, please bring the family if possible, and some good eats. Beverages will be provided by the chapter.

We will be scheduling a Young Eagles event to be held at Lebanon Airport, date as yet to be decided upon, it will be late spring or early summer, and volunteers are needed. More details after our next Directors Meeting.

For the April 8th meeting we will have a program given by Mark Natola, local author of the book [B-47 Stratojet, True Stories of the Cold War in the Air](#). Mark's book is a collection of 1st person never before told stories by the men who designed, flew and maintained the Cold War Warrior.

The Perils of Technology

By Rusty Sachs, 740 Vice President

Technological developments are a boon to pilots, and nobody can deny that the improvements in avionics have made the skies safer and easier to move through. But if one isn't careful, technology can sneak around and bite you on the backside. An example is cell phones, and an example of the sort of problem that can arise came up recently at a meeting of the FAA's committee on Operational Errors and Deviations of the National Airspace System. It seems a pilot had used his cell phone to get a weather brief and file a flight plan over the 1-800-WX-BRIEF number.

The problem came about from the routing of the call to the FSS nearest the phone owners home area code, even though the owner is far away at the time. The pilot received a clearance from Waverly to Rogers, AK. He was located in Waverly, Tennessee, but the call had been routed to the FSS nearest his home near Waverly, Iowa. The briefer assumed the call was local, and the pilot took off prior to the expiration time of his clearance. Problem: he'd filed GPS direct, and entered controlled airspace *eleven hundred miles* from where ATC expected him.

So take care! Be explicit about the names of locations when speaking with briefers. And if you file GPS direct, include a few checkpoints along the route to minimize the likelihood of miscommunication.

Some discussion at the January meeting concerned Tech Counselors, whose services are available free of charge for homebuilders. We have two in our chapter, Frank Stites and Marvin Bishop. Tech Counselor visits are essential to getting insurance coverage on your project from the first flight, and are a very good idea aside from the insurance angle.

February's Sport Aviation has a good article on Tech Counselor input and services available to EAA members. The article says it better than I can, go to page 100, February, 2003 Sport Aviation for the information. Please use this service, you will not regret it. —ed.

The Bull Story

Submitted by Rusty Sachs, 740 VP

Close your eyes for a moment, and travel with me back to the springtime of 1966. Recall the images of that era: Lyndon Johnson in the White House, Ed Sullivan on Sunday nights, and a new issue of Life Magazine on the stand each week.

One of the lasting mental pictures of the period is a battered Sikorsky helicopter carrying a bewildered, terrified water buffalo in a cargo net suspended beneath it as it flew over the verdant wet rice paddies and reddish brown rivers. This was American Marines working to win the hearts and minds of Vietnamese peasants.

This is the rest of the story:

Jim Aldworth had led the Marines of Helo Squadron 362 from California to Vietnam in mid-1965, and the ensuing months were nothing if not filled with what we have come to refer to as "learning experiences," those events and mishaps that we promise never NEVER to let happen again. One involved the unfortunate premature death of a mangy old water buffalo in the village of Tam Ky. Whether the animal was hit by a Jeep, rammed by a six-by, or shot by an eager Marine mistaking it for the enemy, is lost to history. All we are sure of is that the poor beast was on its way to the great grazing ground in the sky. Some enterprising got the idea that it would endear the Marines to the residents of Tam Ky if they would arrange to replace the water buffalo. A water buffalo is as essential to the life of a Vietnamese town as the general store is to the United States: it pulls a plow to grow the rice, fathers cows for milk and butter, and, after years of doing that, provides beef and leather for food and shoes. So the Marines went into the little hamlet outside the wire at Ky Ha and purchased a bullock. Roger Cook, who had experience in both the cowboy country of Colorado and the rich ranchland of Texas, was selected to head the team to replace the deceased critter. Phil Turner, a farmer from Iowa, took charge of leading the beast back to the flight line. Arriving on the marston matting in Ky Ha, Ferdinand the Bull was docile. "How ya gonna get him in the chopper, lieutenant?" several troops inquired. "Not a problem, boys. I'm on top of it," Roger explained. "It's just like gettin' him into a cattle truck." He and a couple of guys from maintenance put
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together a ramp, and as Roger held a bucket of grain in front of it, the animal walked into the belly of the bird just as smooth and happy as could be. Old Willy the Water Buffalo looked around, bored. The crew chief - it may have been Dick Houghton - attached a couple of chains across the open door, and sidled past the hind quarters to fire up the APU.

Roger climbed up into the H-34 and Jack Lodge strapped into the left seat. By now the half-ton bovine had become so bored that he decided to take a nap. Somewhere in the archives of the United States Marine Corps, there is a faded black-and-white photograph of the Ugly Angels H-34 number YL 53, Roger Cook grinning like a pig in dirt, with a sleeping water buffalo clearly visible at the knees of the crew chief. Even the roar of the powerful Pratt and Whitney radial engine coming to life failed to disturb the bull's reveries. They taxied out to the ramp and took off.

Perhaps the air rushing through the crew compartment interrupted the animal's dreams. Perhaps its ears popped as the helicopter gained altitude. We'll never know. But this water buffalo woke, took one look out the crew door, saw that the pasture it longed for was now twenty-five hundred feet below, and absolutely freaked out. It bellowed with a roar from the depths of hell, and recoiled backward to the port side of the helo. This, of course, caused the aircraft to lurch into a left bank. "What the hell was that?" hollered Roger, struggling to regain control of the copter. As if on cue, the water buffalo moved forward, throwing YL 53 into a shallow dive. "Houghton! Get that beast under control before we crash!"

The next few seconds of chaos were mercifully ended when the crew chief, seizing the situation as only a Marine can, whipped out his .45 caliber Colt M1941A1, and - waiting until the beast was right at the center of gravity - dispatched the animal between the eyes; it collapsed on the spot.

As they began the final approach into the Tam Ky town square, Roger and Jack realized they now faced a diplomacy problem.

Tam Ky is the capital of Quang Nam province. A wealthy town during the French Colonial period, it features a long green town plaza, lined with palm trees and punctuated by flower gardens, leading to a colonial capitol building. In front of the capital stood a small

brass band in white uniforms, a formation of village elders in formal attire - long coats and cummerbunds, the mayor adorned with a sash across his breast - and about half the population of the province. It was evident to all that this was the biggest event in the political life of Tam Ky in a long time.

Roger landed, quickly kicked the dead animal out of the helicopter, immediately took off, and climbed to altitude. The whole thing took maybe twelve seconds. Three days later, as Roger was returning to the tent that served as the Ugly Angels' Ready Room, he was told to report without delay to the Group Commander's office. Don't change your clothes, don't shave, just get your duff up there most skosh. He hurried.

He hammered on the pine and was told to enter. The colonel stood tall and severe behind his desk. Beside the desk stood an entourage of four Vietnamese. The sergeant major looked stern; the colonel spoke.

"Mayor Cao, this is First Lieutenant Cook.

Lieutenant, this gentleman is Mayor Nguyen Lan Cao of Tam Ky. He wishes to speak to us, and I thought it appropriate that you hear what he has to say."

In halting and broken English, but with undiminished dignity, the mayor alternated eye contact with the colonel and Cook. "Is very generous of American Marines to offer to village of Tam Ky replacement of old, decrepit *carabao* sadly killed by Marines by young and strong water buffalo. Is sad, however. Village hoped the replacement of old dead water buffalo would be a living water buffalo, rather than young dead animal."

Always thinking, Roger saw the light go on over his head. He broke the position of attention, rose his arms in a gesture of victory, and leaped into action. "A *living* buffalo? They wanted a living one? Hell, colonel, we can do that! We must have mis-understood! We can take care of this with no problem!"

Well they did. But never again did a Marine pilot carry a living farm animal that size inside a helicopter. The world's lasting image of Marines winning the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese - a water buffalo suspended beneath an H-34 - was the result of Roger Cook's harrowing experience in the air, and his quick thinking under the scrutinizing eyes of an angry colonel.



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