



The Flying Wire



December 2025

Volume 64 Issue 12

Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association

Next Chapter Meeting: Wednesday, December 3

Dinner – 6:15 pm \$10

General Meeting – 7:00 pm

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Program: December 3 Meeting

December Social and Potluck!

Happy Holidays Everyone! Please join us for our last meeting of the year on Wednesday December 3rd at 6pm for our Annual Holiday and Potluck Social!

Here at EAA 124, all year long we've been blessed with great presenters and dynamic meetings but there always seems to be the feeling that it would be nice to be able to just chat and hang out together and visit and catch up! What better time than the Holidays?

For the Potluck – Please bring your favorite dish to share with everyone.

Show off your stuff! We're always in need of more main entrees and delicious food! Let's see what you got!! Looking forward to seeing you all and seeing what culinary delights you can dream up.

We hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving - surrounded by friends and family - and we are grateful that you are a part of EAA 124 and our community.

Dinner Menu: a message from Sam!

Our December Dinner is a Potluck – we'll bring the ham, you bring the rest.

If you can't think of something to make, then try getting something from a grocery store deli. Lots of yummy things there. If you still can't make up your mind, check with a friend and maybe between the two of you, you might be able to settle on something from the store. Worst case, bring \$10 towards the ham.



Just remember - if too many of you do this, we'll not have any potluck items 😊

~ Sam Werback



News and Updates

Congratulations...!

To newly re-elected President **Dominic Cerniglio** and Treasurer **John Whitehouse**. And congratulations and welcome to new board members **Paul Hollingworth** and **Campbell Potter**! Chapter 124 is lucky to have such a great leadership team!

Dues Are Due! Please Renew Your Membership by January 1

In case you'd forgotten... **your \$50 membership fee is due by January 1, 2026.**

Please give your check to Treasurer John Whitehouse in person, or mail to our PO Box 6192, Santa Rosa 95406.

Landing Fees at Humboldt County GA Airports

Submitted by John Swanstrom

Humboldt County has started collecting \$23 landing fees beginning March 2025 at the following GA airports in Humboldt County:

ACV – Humboldt County Airport

EKA – Murray Field Airport

FOT – Rohnerville Airport

O16 – Garberville Airport

Additional information from the Humboldt County Aviation Advisory Committee website is available [here](#).

I flew into Garberville airport on April 14, 2025, and landed, taxied back and took off. About a month later I received an invoice from Vector PLANEPASS based out of Philadelphia, PA for \$23. I won't be going to these Humboldt County airports in the future.

Gyro Gyration

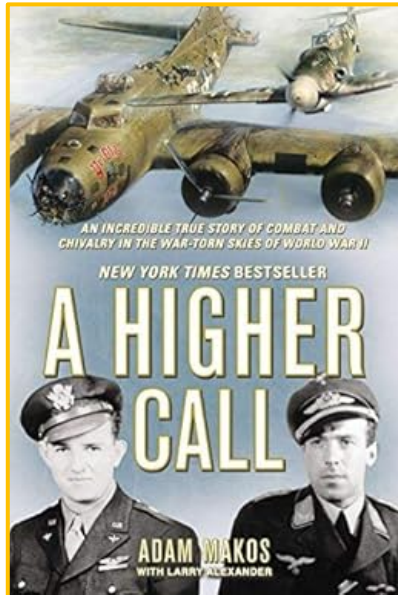
New board member **Paul Hollingworth**, our resident gyroplane advocate, has finally received from the FAA (after a wait of a mere five months) the authorization he needs to offer Discovery Flights and Flight Training in his gyroplane. This is required by the FAA to offer training in any of the so-called Experimental aircraft and now allows him to start training pilots in earnest and building up a business in gyroplane flights, instruction and sales.

Paul is based at Petaluma airport and you can find out more at www.bayareagyro.com



A Higher Call: An Incredible True Story of Combat and Chivalry in the War-Torn Skies of World War II

Submitted by Larry Rengstorf



In December 1943, a German fighter pilot made an unthinkable choice — instead of finishing off a crippled American bomber, he escorted it to safety. For more than 40 years, neither man knew if the other had survived.

Until a single letter, in 1990, reunited them in one of the most powerful acts of forgiveness ever told.

The amazing true story of Franz Stigler, a Luftwaffe ace who risked execution by sparing his enemy, and Charlie Brown, the American pilot whose life and crew he saved, has been made into a short but powerful documentary that you can watch on YouTube [here](#).

The best-selling book of the story, "A Higher Call" by Adam Makos, is available on Amazon and elsewhere.

Aerobatics Video: A Note from Otis Holt

Thank you to all who endured my long-winded talk about aerobatics at the October meeting! I've now managed to edit my two-week experience down to a 24-minute YouTube video. It includes much of the imagery I used in my talk and is presented in full 4K resolution, so it's best viewed on a tablet, monitor, TV or anywhere you can access YouTube. It also includes cockpit audio not available during my talk.



Click [here](#) to watch the video. Enjoy - and let me know what you think!

~ Otis

P.S. Some viewers have told me that YouTube is imposing ads on the video, so as an alternative way to watch the uninterrupted video, this [iCloud link](#) should work through mid-December.

A Little Entertainment – Scenes from Oshkosh 2025

Submitted by Andy Werback

These airplanes actually flew into Oshkosh and were seen while reviewing airplanes to be judged. Presumably they flew out, too!



Where Were the Clippers on December 7, 1941?

By Andy Werback

Sunday, December 7, 1941. Sunday, December 7, 2025.

84 years later. Lots of investigations. Lots of declassified documents. Lots of books and research. But mysteries still remain. One thing that *is* clear is that there are several amazing stories about aircraft and crews and passengers who suddenly became involved in World War II.

Pan American Airways (PAA) had been developing passenger routes from San Francisco to the Orient since 1935, starting with survey flights and arranging landing rights, then spending a year proving the routes with cargo-only flights. By 1940, PAA was flying regular service to Hong Kong by way of Hawaii, Midway Island, Wake Island, Guam and the Philippines. Service had also recently become available to Auckland, New Zealand via Canton Island and Noumea.

SAN FRANCISCO U. S. A.-Hawaii-Guam-Philippines									
Orient Exp.		Pan American Airways Co. (PAAP)						Orient Exp.	
(z)	PM							AM	(z)
Wed.	3 00	....	Lv SAN FRANCISCO, (Alameda), Cal.,... (PST)	Ar	10 30	Tues.			
Thur.	8 30	....	Ar HONOLULU, (Pearl Harbor), H. I... (HLT)	Lv	12 00	Mon.			
Fri.	6 30	....	Lv HONOLULU, (Pearl Harbor), H. I... (HLT)	Ar	5 30	Sun.			
	3 00	....	Ar MIDWAY ISLAND..... (MLT)	Lv	6 00				
Sat.	6 00	....	Lv MIDWAY ISLAND..... (MLT)	Ar	5 00	Sat.			
			(International Date Line)						
Sun.	3 00	....	Ar WAKE ISLANDS..... 165°	Lv	6 00	Sun.			
Mon.	6 00	....	Lv WAKE ISLANDS..... 165°	Ar	7 00	Sat.			
	5 00	....	Ar GUAM ISLAND..... 150°	Lv	6 00				
Tues.	6 00	....	Lv GUAM ISLAND..... 150°	Ar	6 30	Fri.			
(z)	5 00	....	Ar MANILA (Cavite), P. I..... 120°	Lv	* 4 00	(z)			
(x)									
Wed.	8 30	....	Lv MANILA, (Cavite), P. I..... 120°	Ar	1 45	Thur.			
	1 50	....	Ar MACAO..... "	Lv	- -				
	3 05	....	Ar HONG KONG..... "	Lv	8 30				

*—Departure from Manila subject to advancement to previous afternoon as occasion demands.
 All times are approximate other than at San Francisco westbound and at Honolulu eastbound.

By 1941, World War II was well along with the 1939 German invasion of Poland, the 1940 "Battle of Britain", and in June 1940, Germany's invasion of Russia. There was no lack of conflict in Asia either: following its invasion of Manchuria in 1931, Japan began a full-scale invasion of China in 1937 with the stated goal of a "Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Things began to fall apart after that, leading to the events of December 7, 1941 (west of the international date line it was December 8).

On that date, four Pan American Clippers – a Sikorsky S-42, Martin M-130, and two Boeing 314 flying boats – were preparing to fly their scheduled routes or were already in the air.

None of these Clippers arrived at their planned destinations. What happened to them?

The **Anzac Clipper** (Boeing 314, N18611) was flying from San Francisco to Honolulu with Captain Lanier Turner in command. It was scheduled to arrive early Sunday morning, December 7, at Pearl Harbor. About one hour out, they received a radio message about the surprise attack and the crew implemented "Plan A", diverting to Hilo, Hawaii. There, they refueled by hand and immediately flew back to San Francisco, while the passengers made other arrangements to finish their flight to Honolulu.

The Anzac Clipper was turned over to the Navy for war-time operations and continued to fly until 1951 when it was scrapped.

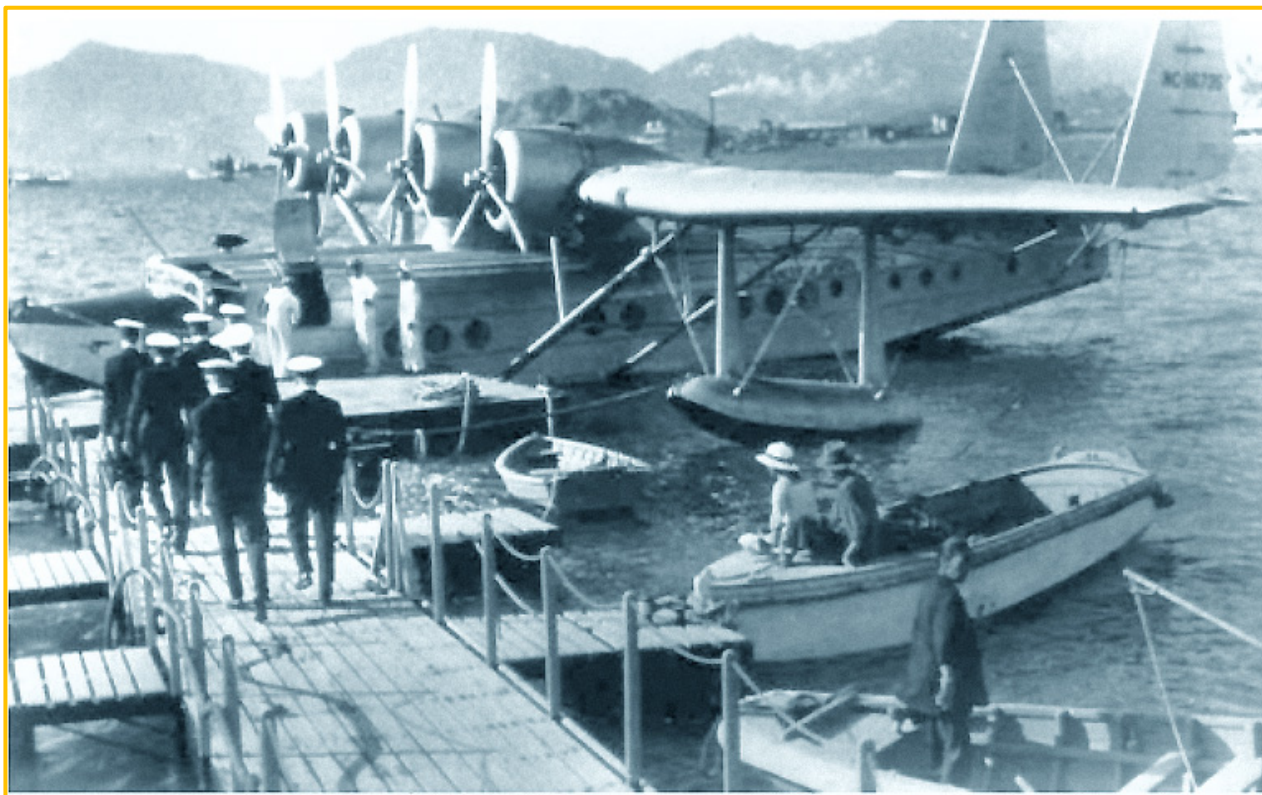


The Anzac Clipper

The **Hong Kong Clipper II**, a Sikorski S-42B, NC16735, was at Kai-tec airport (Hong Kong Harbor) when it was destroyed by the Japanese air attack. The crew, led by Captain Fred Ralph, were preparing for an early morning departure to Manila when they received word of the newly declared war and had to scramble to get out of the way of the bombs and bullets. No one was injured, but the aircraft, fully loaded with aviation gasoline, was destroyed by fire. Amazingly, it survived six passes of strafing aircraft before being hit on the 7th pass.

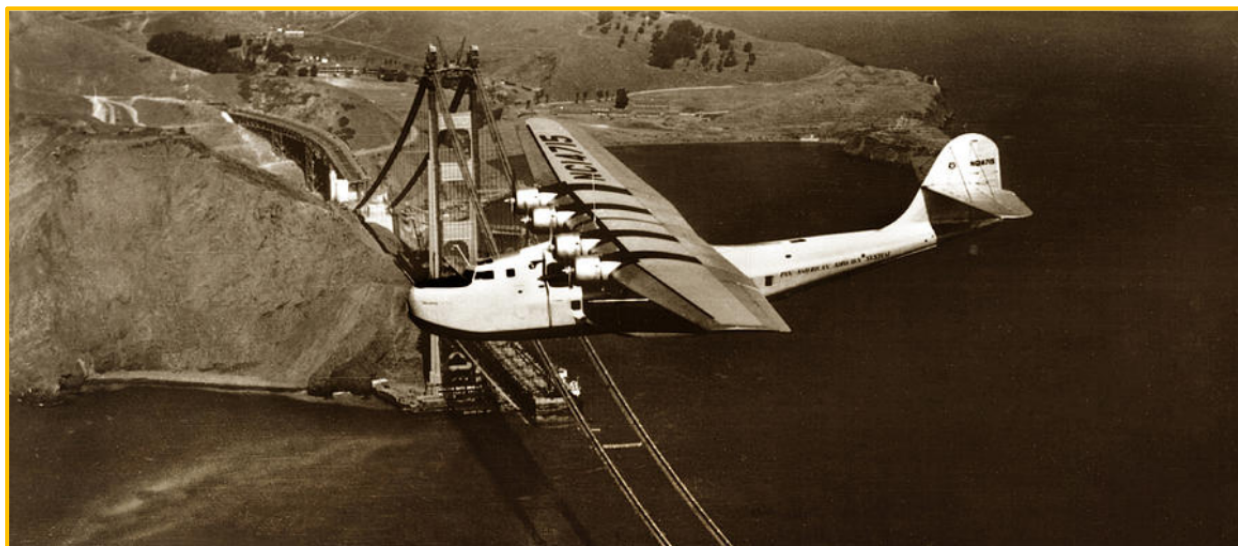
Captain Ralph and his crew were evacuated on a CNAC (China National Airline Corporation, half-owned by Pan Am) DC-2 to Kunming, China. They made it back to New York on January 10, 1942, via a CNAC DC-3 flight over the Hump to Calcutta, India, where they linked up with the *Capetown Clipper*. No one else knew where they were for over a month.

The Hong Kong clipper was originally named Bermuda Clipper, then Alaska Clipper, before becoming the Hong Kong Clipper and being stationed in Hong Kong, because the S-42s did not have the range of the Martin or Boeing clippers.



The Hong Kong Clipper II at the Hong Kong Harbor

In the **Philippine Clipper** (Martin M-130 N14715), Captain John "Hammy" Hamilton was just leaving Wake Island on the way to Guam (westward) when he was informed of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. The airplane returned to Wake to evacuate the PAA crew stationed there. They were in the process of fueling and loading when the Japanese attacked and the aircraft was slightly damaged (only 60 bullet holes! And nothing critical was hit). They took off again with the Pan Am support team to Midway Island (lacking radio direction navigation as Midway had also been bombed) and then had an uneventful trip back to Pearl City, Hawaii.



The Philippine Clipper over the unfinished Golden Gate Bridge, 1937

Finally, we have the story of the **Pacific Clipper**, a Boeing 314, N18602, under the command of Captain Robert Ford. Ford and his crew were in the air early on December 7, flying between Noumea and Auckland, NZ when they also got word over the radio of the Pearl Harbor attack. Rather than return via the war zone (all of the Western Pacific), they were instructed by Pan Am Operations to continue westward to New York. The crew accomplished this incredible feat via Australia, Trincomalee, Karachi, Khartoum, Leopoldville, Natal, and Port of Spain, arriving on January 6, 1942 at LaGuardia, New York. The first commercial round-the-world flight, in fact – albeit unintentionally.



The Unplanned Round-the-World Flight of the Pacific Clipper

This journey was accomplished without the usual maps or accurate weather information, and with a lack of critical 100 octane aviation gasoline, a broken cylinder on one of the Wright R-2600's, and no radio navigation. Truly amazing - a tribute to good training, experience and resourcefulness.

But wait, there's more!

I was scheduled to present the evening's program at EAA 1268 Sonoma Skycrafters, Sonoma Skypark, after having interviewed Chapter member Eugene Marcinkowski for the Veteran's Oral History Program.

Sonoma Skycrafters have a very nice setup in a tee hangar next to the runway, and I sat down to turkey dinner with a friendly couple across from me. We got to talking a bit – he's a retired United Airlines Captain and built an RV-12 after sharing an RV-10 project. Very interesting, and we traded some notes about my trip to New York LaGuardia for a visit to the Pan Am Clipper terminal.

Well, that opened a door – it turned out that I was talking with Tim Steers. Tim's father John Steers retired as a Pan Am Captain, but on December 7th, 1941, he was the 4th Officer on the Pacific Clipper. Holy COW!

Tim graciously gave me a set of documents, including his father's account of the trip, a log of the flight segments, a map of the route, and a bio of Captain Ford.

Here are a few of the details from Tim's documents:

Getting the news:

Left Noumea for Auckland December 7th. about two hours out we received word over the radio that Honolulu had been bombed. At first no one would believe it true. The Captain silenced the radio, then posted watches in the blister, then altered his course about 50 miles - also got out his 38 caliber pistol.

Arriving at Dutch Surabaya, with no advance notification:

At any rate the Dutch had no idea that we were in that part of the world - had never seen a Clipper before in their lives. So when a single Brewster picked us up as we approached Java - he called the ground saying, "Here comes a big one, you'd better come up boys." It was only a minute or two before three more Brewsters joined the first and they moved into position to blast us out of the sky. One

A sample of his flight log, noting landing on the Congo River, a cylinder failure on #3, and 207 hours total flying time from SFO to LGA:

16-17 DEC 41	"	GLADSTONE	DARWIN	11 HRS 11 MIN.	IN BAHRAIN, TO SET UP M.
17-18 DEC 41	"	DARWIN	SURABAYA	8 HRS. 41 MIN.	HEY BOB - REMEMBER THE SHOTG. THE DUTCH M.D. GAVE US.
21-22 DEC 41	"	SURABAYA	TRINCOMALEE	20 HRS. 26 MIN.	
24 DEC 41	"	TRINCOMALEE	TRINCOMALEE	1 HR 08 MIN.	CYLINDER FAILURE #3 ENGINE.
26 DEC 41	"	TRINCOMALEE	KARACHI	9 HRS 40 MIN.	
28 DEC 41	"	KARACHI	BAHRAIN	8 HRS 09 MIN.	
29 DEC 41	"	BAHRAIN	KHARTOUM	11 HRS 16 MIN.	
1 JAN 42	"	KHARTOUM	LEOPOLDVILLE	10 HRS 23 MIN.	PASSED OUR MECCA, PILGRIMAGE
2-3 JAN 42	"	LEOPOLDVILLE	NATAL	23 HRS 35 MIN.	LANDED IN CONGO RIVER
3 JAN 42	"	NATAL	TRINIDAD	13 HRS 52 MIN.	LANDED NATAL WITH APPROX. 2 HR
5-6 JAN 42	"	TRINIDAD	NEW YORK	15 HRS 46 MIN.	TOTAL FLYING TIME ACCORDING LOGBOOK 207 HRS. 22 MIN.

For those interested in learning more, several books and articles have been written about this trip, including:

Books: *(links are to Amazon, but many of these titles are also available via independent bookstores)*

[The Long Way Home](#) (with Captain Robert Ford) by Ed Dover

[Pacific Clipper: The Untold Story](#) by Albert Tucker and Matthew Paxton

[Pan Am at War](#) by Robert Gandt

[Stranded in the Sky](#) by Philip Jett

[Wings to the Orient](#), by Stan Cohen (section on p190)

[Pan American's Ocean Clippers](#) by Barry Taylor

Articles:

[Pacific Clipper](#) (Wikipedia)

[Sikorsky S-42](#) (Wikipedia)

[Pan Am Flight V-1104](#) (Wikipedia)

[Pan Am's S-42 Hong Kong Clipper II](#) (PanAm.org)

[Pan Am Series – Part XLVIII: Skygods](#)

[A Dream Come True](#) – memories of the China Clipper by Catherine Cotterman Hoskins



Chapter Business

EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2025

Present: Dominic Cerniglio (President), John Whitehouse (Treasurer), David Franco (Secretary), Mike Tovani (Facilities), Mike Cingari, George Marshall, John Fluno, Jeremiah James.

Derelict airplanes: Three airplanes have been deemed derelict and have been formally notified that the planes are abandoned property and action will be taken on 2/18.

Lease agreement details: the facilities manager is expecting signed leases and deposits to be filed as soon as possible.

Gate security: The Chapter is going to be more mindful about gate security and Chapter members and AOA badge holders will monitor the comings and goings of visitors and members.

Primary purpose of the main hangar: a motion was made to affirm that the primary purpose of the main hangar is for Chapter general use and Chapter activities and members individual general use is secondary. These include but are not limited to Chapter meetings, Chapter events, Ground schools, Presentations, Members Annuals, Member's maintenance. The motion was seconded and passed 7 in favor 1 opposed and 1 abstention.

Young Eagles: A motion was made to continue the Young Eagles program. The motion was seconded and the motion carried 7 in favor and 1 opposed.

Special Recognition of Controllers: Money for gift cards will be gathered and given to the controllers for recognition.

Meeting adjourned.

EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2025

The meeting opened with the president thanking the culinary crew for another wonderful Thanksgiving Meal! The president asked new attendees to announce their interest in aviation.

Dane Jasper announced that a new airport is opening in Lake County called Walker Ridge. The land is being cleared by mule and hand work. He is recommending that people camp out, as it is a remote location to reach via vehicle.

The president announced that the Chapter would like to apply for another Ray Scholarship. The current Ray Scholarship participant (Sam James) shared his milestones regarding his own path towards getting his pilot's license.

Chapter Election: The leader of the Nomination Committee, **Mike Tovani**, allowed the nominees to present intentions regarding participating on the Board.

- **John Swanstrom** announced that he was honored to be nominated but withdrew his name from consideration.
- **Campbell Potter** announced that he has been a long-time member of the Chapter and believes in growing the Chapter - he especially believes in growing youthful participation. He firmly believes the Chapter is special and worth growing.
- **Paul Hollingworth** spoke about having been associated with several other Chapters but finds EAA Chapter 124 possesses a certain admirable energy that he hopes to foster and build.
- **Mike Fenn** spoke about his long participation with the Chapter and looks forward to keeping in a flourishing Chapter.
- **Larry Rengstorf** then spoke about his long association with the Chapter spanning 50 years. He believes he brings the necessary experience to serve the interests of all Chapter members.

President Dominic Cerniglio and **Treasurer John Whitehouse** were appointed by Acclamation. **Campbell Potter** and **Paul Hollingworth** were elected as Directors by ballot.

Presentation:

Heidi Porch shared her lifelong experience in aviation. She grew up in an aviation family and flew in her father's Cessna 170 as a very young girl. She started in gliders and finally found her way into powered flight and banked many hours as a tug pilot. She then began flying Cessnas as a delivery pilot, ferrying planes to remote locations.

While initially not interested in flying over water, her intrepid spirit led her to deliver planes across the Pacific. Delivering planes throughout the Pacific often involves 20-hour flights over open ocean! She described the communications equipment which was more maritime-oriented than aviation. She described that often communications required having passing airliners relay her position to controllers monitoring her position.

Heidi described the accommodations at Pango Pango which was layover location before

flying on to Australia. After accruing 60 successful ferry flights, she had a fateful delivery flight between California and Hawaii. After conferring with her accompanying ferry plane companion about diminishing oil pressure and after being told there was no visible signs of distress, she followed her gut and called Honolulu with a "Possible Mayday." A pilot on frequency asked for clarification and supported her decision to call mayday.

She then described how her position was validated by a passing Qantas airline. As she prepared for a water ditch, she consulted the pilot's handbook for instructions. She was instructed by her wingman to conduct a full stall landing, but she decided against that advice and decided to do a low-speed full flap landing. She described how quickly the plane skipped over the water and then violently flipped over.

After struggling to exit the plane, she managed to deploy her life raft which initially deployed upside down. Rectifying that issue, she then had difficulty inflating her life-vest. After making it to the raft she signaled Earl her wingman that she and the raft were fine. She had the good fortune of also having a P-3 Orion and C-130 circle her position and drop a location buoy as well as a survival pack including a 30-man life raft.

After coming to grips with the predicament, she had time to consider the fact that she was probably 60 miles from where her fellow ferry pilot and mentor had lost his life. She now knew it was a waiting game, as she waited for a destroyer to be deployed from Pearl Harbor. She knew it would be at least 20 hours before she was rescued. A Coast Guard pilot who had already flown his allotted mission decided to return and drop flares near her location. She was ultimately rescued by a Russian motor launch crew who happened upon her location.

After receiving an honorary Naval aviator recognition, Heidi returned to flying and fulfilled her dream of flying for the Airlines.

Meeting adjourned 8:25 pm



Chapter Business

Chapter 124 Contact Information

President:	Dominic Cerniglio (24/25)	(310) 628-9008
Vice President:	Marlon Young (24)	(707) 479-9994
Secretary:	Dave Franco (23/24)	(707) 494-4259
Treasurer:	John Whitehouse (24/25)	(707) 217-2687
Board:	Mike Cingari (24/25)	707 280 0159
	George Marshall (23/24)	707 293 4583
	John Swanstrom (24/25)	707 758 9017
	John Fluno (23/24)	707 315 5524
	Jeremiah James (24)	707 291 8445
Membership:	Dave Franco	(707) 494-4259
Facilities Chairman:	Mike Tovani	(707) 321-2740
Facilities Committee:	Dwayne Green	(707) 544-4539
	Mike Fenn	(707) 481-5791
	Mike Tovani	(707) 321-2740
	Dominic Cerniglio	(310) 628-9008
	Jenny Hollingworth	jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	Jenny Hollingworth	jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com
Technical Counselors:	Bob Gutteridge	(707) 539-5188
	David Heal	(707) 953-5021
	Andy Werback	(408) 802-5393
	Dominic Cerniglio	(310) 628-9008
	Kevin Quirk	(707) 888-3263
	Rolf Unternaehrer	(707) 364-7935
	CJ Stephens	(707) 799-2878
Flight Advisers:	David Heal	(707) 953-5021
	Jenny Hollingworth	(650) 483-5203
Young Eagles:	Jenny Hollingworth	(650) 483-5203
Chapter Roster:	Mike Tovani	(707) 321-2740

EAA Chapter 124
5550 Windsor Road
Windsor, CA 95492

Chapter meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. FOOD (\$10) AND SOCIALIZING (free) from 6:15 to 7:00 pm. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

Directions: The site is located on the west side of Sonoma County Airport. Take the Shiloh Road exit from Highway 101 in northern Santa Rosa. Turn left at the stop light (west) and continue to a "T" intersection. Turn left again and follow the road to the EAA sign on the left.

How to Submit an Article to the Newsletter

Members are invited to submit articles of interest. You will be notified whether or not an article will appear in the current issue.

Email your article to: jennyhollingworth14@gmail.com

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted will be included in the newsletter at the discretion of the editor. All articles are copyrighted. To reproduce any article, please contact the editor.

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EAA Chapter 124
5550 Windsor Road, Windsor, CA 95492

--- Mail ---

PO Box 6192, Santa Rosa, CA 95406

