

The Flying Wire



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Chapter 124 Experimental Aircraft Association

**Volume 58 Number 6
July 3, 2019**

Board Meeting - 5:30 pm

Dinner – 6:15 pm (\$7)

General Meeting – 7:00 pm

www.EAA124.org

www.CafeFoundation.org

www.EAA.org

EAA Chapter 124
5550 Windsor Road
Windsor, CA 95492

--- Mail ---
PO Box 6192
Santa Rosa, CA 95406

July 3, 2019 Program

Hangar stories, informal presentations

Dinner Menu

Pot Luck! Please bring a dish.

Events Calendar

Please send info about upcoming events!

Please send us information if it comes your way!

August 24 EAA Chapter 124 Open House
Nut Tree Fly-In: [Fourth Saturday Each Month](#)

Bob Gutteridge: bob_gutteridge@pacbell.net
Stuart Deal: aaa124newsletter@sonic.net

Assembling the Mighty Eighth

Leslie A. Lennox, Lt./Col. USAF(ret) sent by Andy Werback

Of all the stories that have been written, and movies that have been shown, about the 8th Air Force, very little attention has been given to what was involved in assembling 1200 B-17's and B-24's each day, to get them in formation to carry out a strike against Germany. Certainly showing bombers under attack by fighters, or encountering heavy flak, was a reality, and are interesting to watch. Also, stories about some of the rougher missions make

interesting reading. But what was going on over England, each morning, could get just as scary to the crews as the time spent over some of the targets. The planning, and coordination, that had to be accomplished during the night, by the operations planners of each Group, so that the crews could be briefed, was unbelievable. If the planners had failed to do their jobs properly, there would have been a free for all among Bomb Groups, in the skies over England. The rendezvous points, altitude, and times had to be precise, and known by all of the crews, before the Eighth Air Force could get in formation. The success of the planners, in accomplishing their mission, enabled the Eighth Air Force to become the most powerful air armada ever assembled. In my view, how this was accomplished is one of the major untold stories of the war.

I was a pilot in the 95th Bomb Group, in late 1944 and early 1945, and what follows is a typical mission, as I remember it, from a crew member's perspective.

Early in the evening, our Squadron Operations would post the names of the crews that were scheduled to fly the following day. There were two ways we could be notified if the Group had been alerted to fly. One was by means of lights on the front of the orderly room, and the other with raising of colored flags. If a green light was on, the Group was alerted, if a red light was on we would fly, and if a white light was on, the Group would stand down. The light was monitored frequently throughout the evening to learn our status and, normally, we would know before going to bed if we would be flying the next day.

On the morning of a mission, the CQ (charge of quarters) would awaken the crews about four or five o'clock, depending on takeoff time. The questions we always asked were, "What is the fuel load?" and, "What is the bomb load?" If his answer was, "full Tokyo tanks," we knew we would be going deep into Germany. Shortly after being awakened, "6-by" trucks would start shuttling us to the mess hall. We always had all the fresh eggs we could eat, when flying a mission. After breakfast, the trucks carried us to the briefing room. All of the crew members attended the main briefing, and then the Navigators, Bombardiers and Radio operators went to

a specialized briefing. At the main briefing, in addition to the target information--anti-aircraft guns, fighter escort and route in--we received a sheet showing our location in the formation, the call signs for the day and all the information we would need to assemble our Group and get into the bomber stream.

After briefing, we got into our flight gear, drew our parachutes and loaded onto the trucks for a ride to our plane. We were now guided by the time on our daily briefing sheet. We started engines at a given time and watched for the airplane we would be flying in formation with to taxi past, then we would taxi behind him. We were following strict radio silence.

We were now parked, nose to tail around the perimeter, on both sides of the active runway, and extremely vulnerable to a fighter strafing attack. At the designated takeoff time, a green flare would be fired and takeoff would begin. Every thirty seconds an airplane started takeoff roll. We were lined up on the perimeter so that the 12 airplanes of the high squadron would take off first, followed by the lead and then the low squadron.

Each Group had a pattern for the airplanes to fly during climb to assembly altitude. Some would fly a triangle, some a rectangle and our Group flew a circle, using a "Buncher" (a low frequency radio station) which was located on our station. The patterns for each Group fit together like a jig saw puzzle. Unfortunately, strong winds aloft would destroy the integrity of the patterns, and there would be considerable over running of each other's patterns.

Many of our takeoffs were made before daylight, during the winter of '44 and '45, when I was there, so it was not uncommon to climb through several thousand feet of cloud overcast. Also it was not uncommon to experience one or two near misses while climbing through the clouds, although you would never see the other airplane. You knew you had just had a near miss, when suddenly the airplane would shake violently as it hit the prop wash of another plane. It was a wonderful feeling to break out on top, so you could watch for other planes, to keep from running into each other. To add to the congestion we were creating, the Royal Air Force Lancasters, Halifaxes, and Wimpys would be returning from

their night missions, and flying through our formations. Needless to say, pilots had to keep their heads on a swivel and their eyes out of the cockpit.

After take off, the squadron lead would fire a flare every 30 seconds, so that we could keep him located and enable us to get into formation quicker. The color of our Group flare was red-green. The first thing you would see, when breaking out of the clouds, was a sky filled with pyrotechnics, so you had to search the sky for the Group flare, which would identify the lead airplane of your Squadron. Once you had it located, you could adjust your pattern to climb more quickly into formation with him. As each airplane pulled into formation, they would also fire a flare, with the lead plane, making it much easier for the following aircraft to keep him in sight. I think most crew members would probably agree that the pyrotechnic show, in the skies over England, in the morning when the Eighth was assembling, was a rare sight to behold.

The order of progression for assembling the Eighth Air Force was to first assemble the Flight elements, the Squadrons, the Groups, the Combat wings, the Divisions and, finally, the Air Force.

As soon as the four Squadron elements were formed, the high, low and second elements would take up their positions on the lead element, to form a Squadron. When the three Squadrons had completed assembly, it was necessary to get into Group formation. This was accomplished by having the three Squadrons arrive over a pre-selected fix at a precise time and heading. The high and low Squadrons were separated from the lead Squadron by 1000 feet and, after getting into Group formation, they would maintain their positions by following the lead Squadron.

Then it was necessary to get into the Combat Wing formation. We were in the 13th Combat Wing, which consisted of three Bomb Groups: the 95th, the 100th and the 390th. Whichever Group was leading the Wing that day, would arrive over a pre-selected point, at a precise time and heading. Thirty seconds later, the second Group would pass that fix, followed by the third Group, thirty seconds later. We were then in Combat Wing formation. The navigators in the lead airplanes had a tremendous responsibility, to

ensure that the rendezvous times were strictly adhered to.

There were three Divisions in the Eighth, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The 1st and 3rd Divisions consisted of B-17s only, and the 2nd Division was B-24s. The B-24s were faster than the B-17s, but the B-17s could fly higher, therefore, the two were not compatible in formation. As a result the 1st and 3rd Divisions would fly together and the 2nd Division would fly separately.

Now that the Groups were flying in Combat Wing formation, it was necessary to assemble the Divisions. This was usually accomplished at the "coast out"--a city on the coast, selected as the departure point "fix." The Group leader in each Combat Wing knew his assigned position in the Division, and the precise time that he should arrive at the coast out departure point, to assume that position in the Division formation. The lead Group in the Division, which had been selected to lead the Eighth on the mission, would be first over the departure fix. Thirty seconds after the last Group in the first Wing passed that point, the second Wing would fall in trail, and so on, until all Combat Wings were flying in trail and the Division would be formed. One minute later, the lead Group in the other Division would fly over that point, and the Combat Wings in that Division would follow the same procedure to get into formation. When all of its Combat Wings were in trail, the Eighth Air Force B-17 strike force was formed and on its way to the target. At the same time the 2nd Division B-24s were assembling in a similar manner and also departing to their target.

Meanwhile, as the bombers were assembling for their mission, pilots from the Fighter Groups were being briefed on their day's mission. Normally, 600 to 800 P-38's, P-47's, and P-51's would accompany the bombers to provide protection against enemy fighter attacks. Fighter cover was not needed by the bombers until they were penetrating enemy territory, therefore to help conserve fuel. fighter takeoffs were planned to give them enough time to quickly assemble after takeoff, and climb on course up the bomber stream to the groups they would be covering. The combined strength of the fighters and bombers brought the total number of aircraft participating in a mission to approximately two thousand.

A major problem that presented itself, on each mission, was that the bomber stream was getting too stretched out. It was not uncommon for the headlines in stateside newspapers--in trying to show the strength of our Air Force--to state that the first Group of bombers was bombing Berlin, while the last Group was still over the English Channel. It made great headlines but was a very undesirable situation. It meant that the Groups were out of position, and not keeping the proper separation. Furthermore, it was almost impossible for them to catch up and get back into the desired formation. This made the entire bomber stream more vulnerable to fighter attacks.

Finally, our planners figured out what we were doing wrong. When the first Group departed the coast out fix, it started its climb to what would be the bombing altitude. Then, as each succeeding Group departed that fix, it, too, would start climbing. The problem with this procedure was that, as soon as the first Group started its climb, its true airspeed would start to increase, and it would encounter different wind velocities. Now it would start to pull away from the Group in back of it, and the "stretchout" of the bomber stream would begin. By the time the last Group had reached the coast out, to start its climb, the first Group would be leveled off, with a true airspeed approaching 250 miles per hour, and the bomber stream would be really stretching out.

The solution to this problem that had been frustrating the Bomber crews for so long was pretty simple. We would no longer start climbing at the coast out, but instead, at a designated time, all Groups would start climbing, irrespective of position. This meant that we all would have similar true air speeds and would be influenced by the same winds aloft. That took care of the problem. It was still possible for a Group to be out of position, because of poor timing, but the entire bomber stream wouldn't get all stretched out.

When you consider the way our Air Traffic Control system operates today, and all the facilities at their disposal to guide each individual airplane through the sky to ensure its safety, it's almost unbelievable that we were able to do what we did. To think of launching hundreds of airplanes, in a small airspace, many times in

total darkness, loaded with bombs, with complete radio silence, and no control from the ground, and do it successfully day after day, with young air crews, with minimum experience, is absolutely mind boggling.

The accomplishments of the Eighth Air Force have been and will be reviewed by historians from World War II on. There never will be another air armada to compare to it. I feel confident that they will never cease to be amazed by our ability to assemble hundreds of heavy Bombers, under the conditions we were confronting, into the devastating strike force we now fondly refer to as, "The Mighty Eighth."

(an additional note from Jim Hergert)

To add to this; our local hero (George Mackin was 99 Oct 18 died 2 weeks before his birthday) told me that it took 3 plus hours to form up his B24's before leaving shore. Then the flights OVER were up to 8 hrs, then flying back. Long days in Oxygen masks (B24's were not pressurized), and scared. Amazing!!

Van's RV-8A Progress Report

(from Robert Ferguson)

Hello All--- Here are two pics of the painting progress to date. Now, on to painting the cowl and canopy frame, then done with that stage. Striping and numbering still to be determined. Then the final assembly. I stuck a paper cut-out Dynon HDX in the panel for looks!

Bob



Willits Airport

(Paul Trexel)

Hi Folks,

For any of you that have flown into Willits airport you know that it can be a little challenging if there is some wind, and most afternoons there usually are, usually out of the west for a crosswind, gusting. The airport has become somewhat notorious for the wind shear on final to runway 34 (and also 16) catching pilots off guard.

I've been based there for about 5 years now and have developed a technique that mitigates the effects of the wind shear, "sinkers", on short final as much as possible, but anybody who makes nice smooth landings at Willits is more lucky than good. :-)

Like any approach, airspeed control is important, but at Willits glide path control is more important than at other airports, because of the topography of the nearby trees and a gully just off the end of runway 34. The prevailing west winds at Willits burble over the trees on approach, and sink into the gully on short final, that's where the sudden sinkers are most prevalent.

Attached are 3 pictures taken on approach to runway 34, starting from about a half a mile out where the trouble usually starts. The approach was flown on the PAPI; you can see the red and white lights of the PAPI on the left side of the runway in pictures 1 and 2 if you enlarge the pictures. It is important to stay ON the PAPI or slightly above in making this approach.

In picture 1 the gully with the bushes on the bank of it just before the runway can be seen. This is where the wind comes from the left usually and sinks into the gully. If an airplane is low, it will get caught up in the worst of that sinker, and a lot of power is required to get through it, avoiding a stall. But then you fly through it and if you don't bring the power back to normal you end up with too much speed, and can float quite a bit. So best to avoid it as

much as possible.

The second picture, the plane is approaching the gully and entering the area of the worst sinkers, but still on the PAPI, on and off the throttle to counter airspeed deviations. The throttle is used a lot more aggressively on Willits approaches than most other airport approaches, very important.

In the 3rd picture, the plane is just about through the sinker area but still with the crosswind and some turbulence. Here's an important part for getting a reasonable landing; the target touchdown point is on the 3rd runway stripe, about 600 feet from the landing threshold. The reason for that is that the third stripe is between banks on the left and right side of the runway that block a lot of the gusty winds allowing for better touchdown control.

The PAPI is set for the standard 3 degree approach slope, but the runway rises 50 feet in the first 2000 feet of runway 34, giving an illusion that the approach is too steep and the pilot is too high. As a consequence, pilots will adjust their approach slope to make it look normal, but then that puts them too low and into the worst of the sinkers and turbulence. Use the PAPI ! 7 rapid clicks of the mic for full intensity.

Because of the slope of the runway, judging the flare focal point becomes a little more difficult. The correct focal point is just about the other end of the runway that you can see, but is actually about 1500 feet from the touch down point, with another 1000 feet of runway that can't be seen from the touch down point because the last 1000 feet is level and higher and out of sight from the touch down point.

The slope of the runway is an advantage in decelerating after landing, and even up to about a 10 knot tailwind is preferable to landing downslope on runway 16, where most of the runway overruns have happened with planes ending up in that gully.

There is a "1/2" sign on the left side of the runway 34, where there is 1500 feet of runway remaining. If you're not down and rolling out before that point, it's time to go around. Go-arounds at Willits airport get the pilot applause for using good judgement.

Smooth landings at Willits take a back seat to getting it down on the touch down point, on speed, on center line as the target. Carrying maybe 5 knots above the normal approach speed for gust compensation is warranted.

Usually the winds aren't a problem at Willits in the summer in the mornings, but begin to pick up about 1 or 2 o'clock until near sundown. If anybody has any questions, just send me an email. Welcome to Willits.

Cheers,

Paul - CFII ASMEL

Fly Mart

Please send changes to eea124newsletter@sonic.net

Cleaning out the Hangar: (4-19)

2 Flightcom Classic ANR Headsets very good condition, \$339 new; \$100 each or best offer
Call Jim Boyer at 707-571-8001, or see at 3504 Banyan St. Santa Rosa

EAA Hangar Spot: (9-18)

Eaa Ch 124 has one Hangar spot available for a RV size airplane, \$110 per month, plus \$200 deposit.
Must be Local & National Member.
Call Larry 707-575-0331 or Marlon 707-479-9994



(Reprinted with permission of John L Hart FLP)

News / Notes From the Editor

If you take a cruise to Alaska, I recommend that you take it with a cruise line that has great food as well as great service. Also, make sure when you are on a boat waiting to get somewhere that you are enjoying the people that came with you.

Interesting Aviation Links

(Thanks to Larry Rengstorf and David Heal)

Desert Rocks [Click Here](#)

Short and Sweet [Click Here](#)

Kinda Strange [Click Here](#)

Man bites squirrel [Click Here](#)

EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2019

Meeting called to order by President Marlon Young at 5:30 PM

Present - Marlon Young, Andy Werback, John Whitehouse, Larry Rengstorf, David Franco, Bob Gutteridge; Terry Freitas... Brien Seeley

Absent - Josh Hochberg, Dan Steinhof, Ben Barker

Also attending - Mike Fenn (nominated new Board member)

Old Business

Minutes - May - Motion to Approve by Larry, second by John, passed

Marlon - eMail a Note to Everyone is done - July 3rd meeting is confirmed, Potluck, favorite stories, no program, possible movie.

Open house Aug 24 - Have a flyer from Dave - very nice. Emails in progress... Bill Conklin will do paella, suggest \$10 donation for food and drink. Thinking of 100 attending. Dave F. - scales are in working order, will have a donation bucket. Everybody needs to help get the word out - invite 10 friends. Will need to do a budget at the next meeting, coordinate some volunteers.

Note on new board member - Must be confirmed by membership; 30 days written notice. Section 7-e special elections. (member notice - Terry F. is resigning, nominating Mike F., election at next meeting; any nominations due before the vote)

New Business

Andy - DART - Motion by Brien to approve the Aug 17 training event provided they comply with security arrangements. Dave seconds. Motion passes.

Andy - PCAM - looking for volunteers for Friday night Performer's Dinner and Saturday Volunteer dinner. Marlon - any interest in sponsoring a table? Larry - motion to do Airshow Bronze sponsorship, Brien seconds. Motion passes (Andy abstains). Individuals are welcome to purchase tickets.

Andy - Tonight's program - Art Hayssen "Mongolian Eagle Hunters Expedition". Larry - please be sure to get the link to the

newsletter into the meeting email announcement. Andy - really need to get newsletter and web posting done earlier so the email can go out in a timely fashion, along with the link.

John W - Treasury report is in the red, but normal for this time of the year.

Larry - CAFE Motor home - ready to go to Creams. Hangars 1-4 are full! And have another plane coming for a few months. Grass is mowed.

Young Eagles - no report, next event is Aug 24.

Dave - Membership outreach is coming, a couple of contacts. Will follow up with last months visitors.

Long EZ - pending work, crew

NOTE - No Board Meeting in July

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Werback

Secretary

EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2019

Meeting called to order by Treasurer John Whitehouse at 7:15 PM.

John thanked the cooks - Sam thanks her crew - Jim, Arlene, Geri, Andy, Duane, Dan and Howard.

Visitors - We had Philip Rendle, Tad Sigmar, John Flynn visiting for the first time. And James Bond, whom we met last month. Welcome!!

April Minutes - Motion to approve, passed.

Darrel Shumard - Long time Santa Rosa pilot and resident, WWII P-47 pilot in Europe. Passed away 7 April 2019. Memorial this June 8, Veteran's Memorial Bldg.

Oshkosh - The usual suspects going, sounds like Dwayne has an available seat.

The July 3 EAA Meeting (yes, the evening before July 4) will be potluck, maybe a movie, watch fireworks. NOTE – No Board Meeting

PCAM – Airshow includes the Snowbirds. Will be looking for EAA members to participate and do static displays. More activities? Riveting, Fabric stitching, Rib building? Wind Tunnel experiment? Sign up for info emails – WingsOverWineCountry.org.

DART – Disaster Airlift Response Team – is alive and looking for volunteers. Meg Hurt, Gail Van, and Art Hayssen of the North Bay DART were in attendance, and we are planning an orientation/training session on August 17, with a mini-exercise for October 26. The Aug 17 event will be at EAA, and the October event on the ramp at SJC.

Newsletter – Thank you Stuart.

Treasurer –John reports that the last month was in the red, normal for this time of the year.

Facilities – Larry reports that the hangars are full, and we have a C170 for a few months on the ramp.

Open House – August 24, in conjunction with YE date. Dave Franco will lead the charge, should be fun. Nice flyer! Emails have gone out inviting all local EAA and PAPA members, plus will have FFAST notice.

VP Report – No program next month (July), and August is Oshkosh reports.

Builder's Reports --Andy reported on the Rat Cub, featured on the cover and in an in-depth article in this month's Sport Aviation. Actually nicely done, just not your traditional paint scheme. Also, looking for volunteers for the WOWC Friday and Saturday evening dinners.

Presentation – Art Hayssen, world traveler, presented his 2019 Mid-February Winter Migration of the Mongolian Eagle Hunters Expedition. Plus pictures and stories from his previous travels to the Hindu Kush at 16000' and a ride in the MI-8 with a leaking propane tank. Images of this distant landscape and culture document a fascinating, but disappearing way of life. Asian eagles, camels, Mongolian horses, sheep, goats, yaks and nomadic herders moving from Winter Camp to Spring Camp over 5 days and 100

miles of walking in minus 20* temperatures over snow covered terrain at an average of 7,600' MSL are the players in this migration. Thank you, Art! That was super! I'm not sure we'd enjoy living at 38 below, but sounds like a great experience!

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Werback

Secretary



**AUG. 24 EAA
CHAPTER 124 OPEN
HOUSE/YOUNG
EAGLES EVENT**

YOUNG EAGLES IS A
PROGRAM FOUNDED IN 1993
DEDICATED TO INSPIRE
ENTHUSIASM FOR AVIATION,
BY OFFERING FREE FLIGHTS
FOR YOUTHS 8-17 AUG. 24
9:00-1:00 P.M.

PAELLA AND TACO BAR
LUNCH WILL BE SERVED 12:00-1:30
\$10.00 SUGGESTED DONATION

**FLY IN, AND HAVE
YOUR PLANE WEIGHED ON OUR
PURPOSE BUILT CAFE
FOUNDATION SCALES!**
LOCATION: EAA FACILITY
WEST END OF TAXIWAY CHARLIE.

PRIOR REGISTRATION
IS REQUIRED FOR YOUNG EAGLES
PARTICIPATION SIGN-UP AT: WWW.EAA124.ORG

COURTESY OF THE FAA
SAFETY TEAM,
THE EVENT WILL HAVE A
SAFETY RELATED PRESENTATION.
**SANTA ROSA EAA
CHAPTER 124 INVITES
EVERYONE TO CELEBRATE
THE SPIRIT OF AVIATION
ON AUG. 24, 2019**
LOCATION: EAA FACILITY
SANTA ROSA
CA. 5550 WINDSOR RD. 95492
PHONE 707 494-4259
WWW.EAA124.ORG

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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 (\$7 sometimes \$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.

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

Please email articles to: eaa124newsletter@sonic.net

or mail to: Stuart Deal
 430 Secretariat Ct
 Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted after that date 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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