



DECEMBER MEETING

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2011 MEETING

EAA Chapter 1373 meeting Dec. 3, 2011 at Graham's hangar at Delta. Despite the snowstorm, 16 people attended.

1. Reminder -- dues are due! Send your \$24 check to Art Pontow.
2. We elected the following officers: Directors Herb Anderson, Lowell Manary and Byron McNew. Pres. Graham Meyer, VP Don Huckeby, Treas. Art Pontow, Sec'y Bob Said. Eagle Flight will be run by Norm Pesch and Bill Patterson.
3. Discussion of when/where to schedule Eagle Flight activities, how to structure, how to promote. One popular idea: have a fly-in of every variety of homebuilt we can find locally or invite from far and wide, then advertise locally to attract young and old (maybe at different times) to see how you, too, can afford to get into the air like we did. These would be stand-alone activities, not part of someone else's big show.
4. Lowell displayed more glass/plastic parts he made for the Spirocco -- unidirectional carbon tape and BID using West System epoxy. Secrets of how to get 100% (well, maybe 99.6%) saturation of every fiber.
5. January 2012 meeting will be at Graham's shop just past the end of Nowhere Road in Eckert where there will be an airplane to look at, and some keen welding demos. Don't miss it.

Submitted: Bob Said, Secretary



The Devil Made Me Do It

By Bob Said

It is surprising the number of ingenious schemes a Marine Corps combat correspondent can dream up to wangle extra-legal stick time in military aircraft. But all you really need to do is write a story about some pilot that gets printed in his hometown newspaper, and you're in like Flynn. And since you are already getting paid to do exactly that every day, the fringe benefits just keep piling up. The more successful you are at digging up angles that appeal to editors as sure-fire stuff for their local readers, the more clippings get mailed from home and the more willing the pilots are to let you play with the controls -- provided, of course, that you know at least something about them. Some of them even gave me serious, valuable flight instruction. (Considering the passage of time I feel obliged to define the term 'in like Flynn.' It refers to a swashbuckling movie star -- a good one in his genre, I might add -- named Errol Flynn, who was a notorious womanizer. He used to share a house on Malibu Beach with another world-class smoothie, fellow movie star David Niven. They called the place Cirrhosis by the Sea and it has been rumored that they entertained many ladies there to the complete satisfaction of all concerned.) Anyway, considering that it was my assigned mission to write gripping news stories about Marine pilots in combat, I was able by these means to get beaucoup stick time in just about every kind of plane the Marine Corps had access to from one end of the Far East Command to the other, provided it had two or more seats. And some of them had a lot more seats, such as the two and four-engine transport planes on loan from or flown by Marine Transport Squadron (VMR) 152. It was in an R4-D Gooneybird of that category that the unhappy event which follows took place.

It was a fairly grungy day with cloud and some light rain and turbulence, and we were flying from Korea to Tokyo. Because the pilot (whose name I have fortunately forgotten) had in his shirt pocket a news clipping from home featuring himself and written by myself, he felt he owed me a favor so he let me get in the co-pilot's seat and fly the airplane while he supervised. I wasn't doing at all badly, holding altitude well and only drifting off course a degree or two now and then. By the time we approached the Tokyo area I was feeling like Eddie Rickenbacker at the controls of his Spad as I dialed in Approach Control and announced our arrival. I even managed to follow their vectors to position us for the landing. It was when they told me to switch to the tower frequency and handed us off that bad things began to happen.

Do you remember the late Flip Wilson, the hilarious black comedian whose trademark punchline was "The Devil made me do it"? Well, a second after I had dialed in the tower frequency the Devil himself invaded the cockpit through the aluminum hull above my head, seized my hand in his, mashed my thumb down on the mike button and broadcast in my cockiest voice, "Haneda tower, this is Buck Rogers in Marine two five seven, coming in on a hot rocket from

the moon. Landing instructions, please." In about five seconds came the reply in a cool, professional *female* voice (I had not known that women were working the radios at Haneda). This gal obviously had handled hotrocks pilots before because she said, "Haneda tower to Buck Rogers in Marine two five seven, please circle the world three times. Flash Gordon is in the pattern." Circle the world? Three times? I cringed, I shriveled, I died. Every pilot for 300 miles in every direction had heard that exchange of transmissions, and 53 of them immediately filled the air with

EAA 1373 JANUARY MEETING

WHEN: Saturday, January 7, 10:00am

WHERE: Graham's Workshop, 20550 Nowhere Rd., Eckert

obscene comments. Air Force pilots were ribald, Navy pilots were contemptuous, nobody was sympathetic and my pilot was livid. He knew the bad taste of this was going to last a long time. Of course he immediately snatched the mike, told the tower that his co-pilot had just suffered a sharp attack of brain fever but no ambulance was needed, then completed the landing formalities in a manner more likely to satisfy whoever might review the tapes. All I could hope for at this point was that we would land and park close to the ops building so we could slink quickly out of sight, but no such luck. Ground Control had heard the whole sordid thing and deliberately parked us on the farthest corner of the apron, so we had to deplane and walk across about three million acres of bare concrete without even a Follow Me jeep to hide behind. Up in the tower a whole row of faces peered down on the unfortunates, and they had apparently been busy on the phones because people came out of buildings all along the flight line to gawk. Drivers stopped their vehicles and got out on the running boards for a better view. Humiliation City. It was a long time before I could swing another front-seat ride with the transport people, but I maintain to this day that I was blameless. Any unbiased person can plainly see that it was all the Devil's fault.



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