



CORBEN COURIER

Published for the members of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 93, Madison, Wisconsin

DECEMBER 2007

The Chapter 93 monthly meeting will be held at **7:00pm, Thursday, December 20, 2007**, at the Chapter clubroom, Blackhawk Field, Cottage Grove, WI. Our own **Rob Tweed** will demonstrate hands-on, how fiberglass is used in aircraft construction, along with a short show-and-tell presentation.



ANNUAL BANQUET (Make your reservations now!)

Our party will be once again at the Windsor Country Club on **Saturday, January 12th**. Our featured guest will be **Mr. David Jensen**, Deputy Airport Director, Dane County Regional Airport (Truax Field), and he will give a video presentation on the history of the airport and its changes. Let's get a big turnout for this banquet!

The cocktail hour will begin at **5:30pm.**, with dinner at **7:00**. It will be served buffet style, with baked chicken, roast beef, cole slaw, pasta or tossed salad, green beans almandine, and whipped potatoes with gravy. The cost will be \$25 per person. Contact **Earl Martin** at 825-3286 or **920-255-0094** (cell phone) or e-mail at earlmartin@excite.com, with Annual Banquet as the subject line.

IKE AT D-DAY

From the December 2007 issue of *The Smithsonian*

All over England, the vast task of loading the invasion fleet was going on. Rural Roads were lined with ammunition dumps, and huge numbers of vehicles, from heavy tanks to jeeps, motorcycles and bicycles, were being assembled — for the invasion was like an intricate jigsaw puzzle: Everything had to be packed and loaded so that all would come off in the right order on the beaches. Tanks had to be laboriously backed into the LSTs, or landing-ship tanks, so they could come down the ramp onto the beach with their heavier frontal armor facing the enemy and their guns ready to fire; ammunition and medical supplies had to be placed so they would arrive on the beach at the same time as the first troops; hundreds of

thousands of two-way radios had to have their frequencies set so they could communicate with each other. The tasks were endless.

Nothing, it seemed, had been left to chance. The only thing over which the supreme commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had no control - was the weather.

All the same, late on the evening of June 5, when the great fleet bearing almost 170,000 men was already at sea, and the paratroopers were already on their way through the dark night sky to their drop zones in Normandy, and the midget submarines were rising to the surface to mark the boundaries of the invasion beaches, Winston Churchill, getting ready to go to bed with tears running down his cheeks, said to his wife, Clementine, "Do you realize that by the time you wake up in the morning 20,000 men may have been killed?"

On no pair of shoulders did these concerns rest more heavily than those of the supreme commander himself. Eisenhower commanded some 3 million men — nearly 1.7 million of them American; 1 million British and Canadian; the rest Free French, Polish, Norwegian, Czech, Belgian and Dutch. This was the largest international alliance ever assembled.

Only two things could stop the invasion. The first was the possibility that the Germans had discovered where and when the landings would take place, but from intercepted German radio traffic and clandestine broadcasts from French resistance groups, there appeared no evidence of this. The enormous fleet put to sea without any sign that the Germans had even noticed it - another consequence of the Allies' control of the air, and another example of the failure of Hermann Goring's *Luftwaffe*. Had some of the new German jet fighters been modified as high-altitude, high-speed photoreconnaissance aircraft like the Royal Air Force's PR Mosquitoes and Spitfires, the fate of the invasion might have been very different; but on Hitler's orders, the jet fighters were being converted into light bombers.

The weather, and particularly the tides, were Eisenhower's greater concern. The invasion could take place only when the tides were at their lowest ebb, in order to expose the mined obstacles that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel had placed in the water in such staggering quantities, even though the price for this was to increase the distance the troops would have to cross over open beaches in the face of enemy machine-gun fire once they were onshore. Also, there had to be sufficient moonlight the night before the invasion to enable the transport and glider pilots to find drop zones for the paratroopers and for the paratroopers and glider pilots to see where they were landing.

Low visibility might be an advantage for troops landing on the beaches, but it would hamper airmen flying the bombers and fighter bombers, and perhaps make parachute drops impossible. High winds would raise surf on the beaches and again might make it necessary to cancel the parachute drops; but a totally windless morning would shroud the beaches in smoke and make it difficult for warships to reach enemy targets accurately with their big guns. In short, to succeed, the invasion required a remarkably complex combination of factors, and these would be available only on certain days of each month. June offered only three dates: June 5, 6, and 7.

At first, the onslaught had been fixed for dawn on June 5. As the ships were loaded and the troops moved south, Eisenhower himself moved from his headquarters outside London closer to the invasion fleet at Southwick, outside Portsmouth, where General Bernard Montgomery, commander of ground forces, and Admiral Bertram Ramsay, the naval commander in chief, had their headquarters. By June 1, the intricate operation was in motion: The great battleships were at sea, the men were on the move, the vehicles were loaded and the systematic bombing of key points of the French railroad system was already in progress. The only difficulty was the weather: low clouds, high winds, intermittent heavy rain and rough seas, with more of the same forecast for the foreseeable future.

Late on June 3, Eisenhower reluctantly made the decision to postpone the invasion by 24 hours, from June 5 to June 6, even though much of the invasion force was already at sea and the troops were packed in the ships like sardines, adding seasickness to their woes. Eisenhower was aware of their misery, and he was even more conscious that every hour the fleet was at sea increased the chance that it might be discovered by a German E-boat or submarine.

The morning of June 4 offered no visible improvement. Rain poured down; wind rattled the windowpanes of the headquarters at Southwick; low clouds scudded past, driven by high winds. The sea was a dark gunmetal gray, with heavy surf breaking on the beaches and a heavy swell farther out, where the ships of the invasion fleet rolled and pitched. Uncomfortable at the best of times, the troopships were now a nightmare, with toilets backed up; men vomiting anywhere they could; and the sour odor of dense cigarette smoke, vomit and unwashed bodies permeating the low, crowded, dimly lit compartments in which the troops, their bulky equipment and weapons were densely packed. Many of the men actually looked forward to the moment when they could clamber down rope nets into the Higgins boats below and head for shore. They were wrong, however - as they would shortly discover. Being packed into a tiny, open Higgins boat in a rough sea, with waves breaking over the sides, was no picnic; nor was moving down the ramp onto the beach while carrying almost 100 pounds of gear and ammunition straight into steady, well-aimed German machine-gun fire - if you were lucky enough to make it to the beach, that is, rather than being dumped into water above your head by a coxswain too eager to get his boat away to wait until it touched ground, or being blown into the sea when the boat touched a mine or was hit by German artillery fire.

(To be continued)



AIRCRAFT IDENTIFICATION

This month's aircraft has a floral nickname, was designed by an eminent racing pilot and was destined to be manufactured by a company when WWII came along and they had to build PT-19s instead. Who designed the airplane, what's its nickname, and who was going to manufacture it?

Last month's aircraft was the British dive bomber, the Fairey Barracuda. It was most famous for having bombed and sinking the German battleship Tirpitz.

BOOK RE VIEW

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, First Lady of the Air by Kathleen C. Winters, 2006, MacMillan, 212 pages, including nine illustrations, plus 21 pages of notes, sources and bibliography, and a good index.

Of the 13 chapters of the book, the first three go back generations in each of their families, to show how completely different Anne and Charles were, not only in their background, but also in their temperaments.

They met in December 1927, in Mexico City, where her father Dwight was ambassador. She soon got her first airplane ride in a Ford Tri-motor, piloted by Charles. Their engagement was announced in February of 1929 for that May.

She was only 5'2" tall, barely shoulder height to her husband. During their first year of marriage, she flew with him 30,000 miles. By the end of the second year, she was a licensed pilot, radio operator (Morse Code), and navigator, was the first woman to become a first class glider pilot, and was the first woman to fly (as a passenger) the South Atlantic.

Almost half of the book details two survey flights for Pan Am in their two-place Lockheed Serius on pontoons. The first, in 1931, was from New York north along Hudson Bay to the Yukon, Point Barrow, and Nome, and on to Japan and then Shanghai and Hong Kong. The second circled the Atlantic from New York in a very zig-zagging flight that covered Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Scandinavia, Russia, Europe, Africa, South America, and the full U.S. Atlantic coast back to New York. Anne wasn't just a passenger, she worked hard as a co-pilot, navigator, and radio operator, and even being pilot in command for five hours at a stretch while Charles took pictures. They met very interesting people along the way, some famous and some very primitive. Some nights, they spent completely away from civilization, sleeping on the water in the Lockheed.

Telling the details was possible because Anne faithfully wrote in her diary every day. The Lindbergh's had four sons and a daughter and all the flying was possible because they had two good babysitters, their mothers. I lost track of how often they moved, and in how many countries they lived.

It is a fascinating story that we thought we already knew, but we really didn't. The story continues to their deaths, he in 1974 at age 72, and she in 2001 at age 94.

There are five copies of the book in the Madison Public Library System.

Fred Leidel

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The weatherman conspired against us for the Chili Fly-in. But a handful of hardy Chapter members showed up and had a great two-hour hangar-flying session. Fortunately two of the attendees came with chili and crackers and along with a pot of my bad coffee, we made the most of it. We even had one airplane in attendance (see **Don Ripp** for details).

Our next big event is our annual banquet on January 12 at the Windsor Country Club. Please make your reservations at this month's meeting or give **Earl Martin** a call. The price is \$25 per person and you can pay in advance or at the door.

And, don't forget your calendar orders and to pay your dues before the end of the year to get a discount.

This is my last President's Report. The last four years have flown by. It has been a wonderful experience and I want to thank all the members of Chapter 93 for the honor of serving as your President. You are a great group and have always been supportive of your Chapter and its activities and projects.

Once again, THANK YOU and as always, fly safely!

Gary Chenier

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chapter 93 Membership Meeting, November 15, 2007

The following people were elected/re-elected as Officers and/or Board members of EAA Chapter #93:

President--Don Ripp

Vice-President--Dick Hartwig

Treasurer--Patty Plantz

Secretary--Earl Martin

Board Member--Lowell Zerbel

Board Member--Bruce Gebhard

Gary Chenier reminded members to place then- order for the 2008 EAA calendar with Earl Martin. Gary also reported that the roof work had not been completed to date. Gary also reminded members that it is time to renew your Chapter membership. Gary asked for volunteers to bring chili and other items for the Chili Fly-in to be held on December 1st.

Gary also reminded members that the Chapter Annual Banquet will be on January 12, 2008, and to make your reservations with Earl. You can make your reservations at the next meeting or you can contact me at 825-3286 (home) or 920-255-0094 (cell) or e-mail at earlpmartin@excite.com with Chapter Annual Banquet in the subject line. I hope to see you all there.

Dick Hartwig won the tape donated by Bud Rogers. Thank you, Bud, for donating the tape to be used as a door prize. Our speaker this month was Ken Geishirt, who was in the South Pacific as a tail gunner on a B-17 during World War II. Thank you Ken for sharing your experiences with the members of our Chapter.

Earl Martin

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EAA Chapter 93 publishes *Corben Courier* once a month for and about its members who are interested in all phases of aviation. Articles to be submitted must reach the editor by the first Saturday of the month. Meeting night is the third Thursday of the month unless otherwise stated. Members may advertise items free of charge. Business card size ads are \$5 per month or \$50 per year.

Disclaimer: The *Corben Courier* newsletter serves as a clearinghouse of ideas and suggestions for homebuilt aircraft and owner operated aircraft. No responsibility or liability is assumed, expressed, or implied for the suitability, accuracy, or approval of any information contained in this newsletter. Any parties using suggestions or ideas expressed herein do so at their own risk without recourse against anyone.