

NOVEMBER 15, 2010

Calendar of Events

Chapter Meeting November 15, 2010

Executive Beech-SIgnature Charles B. Wheeler



IAC Chapter 15

Monthly Newsletter

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IAC 15 Meeting Minutes: 10/18/2010 Submitted by Dave Maine

We met at Executive Beech at the Downtown airport at 7pm. Attendees included Grant Wittenborn, Lee Crites, Bill Coiner, Nan Funkhouser, Brian Von Bevern, John Ostmeyer, Paul Thomson, Tony Schuetz, and Dave Maine.

Lee reported a balance of \$11,968.62.

At Nationals, Paul won Sportsman and the Grass Roots award. Across all power categories, there were 85 competitors. During the week, the weather turned from too hot to too cloudy. So, not all competition flights could be flown. Paul and John (Ostmeyer) were certified as national judges. Aaron McKarten was selected to serve as Contest Director for the 2012 Nationals.

Lee and Nan are planning to visit Roy Thorton on Oct 27. He flew with Harold Neumann several years, and is something of a Harold Neumann historian.

Our next meeting will be November 15, 7pm at Executive Beech, at the Downtown airport.

VISIT WITH ROY THORNTON

On Wednesday, October 27, Lee Crites and I paid a visit to Roy Thornton, Harold Neumann's long time dear friend and flying buddy. Roy described how he and Harold met-Roy was hosting a Kansas City History Aviation Show in 1969. He asked Harold to open the show, but had to meet the approval of Inez, Harold's wife, before he could get through to Harold himself. Harold told Roy, "Inez says you're ok- I can tell you stories." Roy and his family then moved to California for 10 years, but when they returned he got back in touch with Harold.

Roy's brother Pat built model airplanes with rubber band props. He would keep them 2 weeks or so, then set them on fire and throw them out the window and watch them burn. Roy and Pat once flew Mr. Mulligan to the Reno Air Races. Mr. Mulligan didn't like the desert.

Roy has built a model from scratch of every plane flown in the Thomson Races, but I can't remember the years that this encompasses. In total Lee and I viewed 55 model airplanes on display in a room dedicated to them in Roy's house. Harold's airplanes Ike and Mike are wonderful to look at-Mike was supercharged and non-aerobatic, but was faster than Ike.

One of Roy's favorite quotes of Harold's: "I may not be the smartest, but I have a lot of knowledge, and a little wisdom."

That's what it takes for all of us to get through life, right? Thanks Roy, for a delightful afternoon!!!

Nan Funkhouser



Here are a few of Roy's models.



Roy Thornton talking about his models and his years spent with Harold and flying.





Ike, Mike, and Mr. Mulligan



Seaplane Racers



Closeup of Mr. Mulligan

Here are a few candid shots posted on the IAC Nationals website of our Chapter 15 representatives!













Way to go John Ostmeyer and Paul Thomsen!!!



LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT TROPHY!!! Hope Paul can find room in his house!

LOW AND LOADED by Scott McGinnis

That Imaginary Spot (IS)

After watching the Kansas City aerobatic competition this summer I couldn't help but compare some of the maneuvers with those in the Ag-flying business. It looked to me like the only time it closely compared was when a maneuver lacked a visual reference point, for instance.

Naturally, during aerobatic competition the maneuvers must also be precise, even when there lacks a reference point during a change in the maneuver, like creating a perfectly round circle, for example. There is no reference while doing so, and if the maneuver was depicted by radar on paper somehow, it would either be elliptical, oblong, or something other than perfectly round. At least if I'm the one trying to do it.

Take a piece of paper and draw a perfect circle on it, then observe. That would be pretty hard, huh?

I'm very impressed with the competition pilot's attempt at being very precise, and what follows might be of interest:

Pulling-up out of a spray pass and turning the airplane 180 degrees with a return to a specific spot, like one only 60 feet from the point of exit, for example, gets very competitive between Ag-pilots. Follow this simple turn and read how it compares.

Example of a perfect turn-around (180 degrees) using a flagman to mark the width of the return, wind five mph, no object to climb over, and loaded to maximum. Note: There is going to be an imaginary spot (IS) in the air down wind, and above the exit spot. At the (IS), which is approximately 45 degrees downwind of exit, less than 35 feet in altitude at first, it is also where the bank is rapidly stopped, but the climb outbound continues momentarily, then a bank will begin that will allow for the return to the exact new upwind position on the ground, without so much as changing the bank 1 degree through-out the entire turn following the IS. The (IS) must also be where a safe controlled landing can be made after an engine failure, dumping the load, and WITHOUT stalling the airplane. Each subsequent pass the (IS) will be higher and closer to the exit spot since the load will be reduced. When reaching the (IS) the bank is stopped abruptly, the climb is continued until the (IS) speed is reached, whereupon the bank back toward the field is rapidly attained. When the load is about one third of maximum the (IS) begins to look like the pilot is performing a hammerhead, but it is actually quite far from it. In an eighty acre field (one fourth by one half mile) spraying the half mile direction there are twenty-two 60 feet swaths, but 20 turns, considering the entering and exiting field swaths. I have tried to make perfect turns while doing eighty-acre fields, and even though I have sprayed thousands of them, I have yet to accomplish ONE perfect performance through-out the twenty turns required to do the eighty acre field. SM

Thanks Scotty for the insight!!! I've heard you explain this to me before, and now we have it in writing! NF

Here is another installment of Roy's Writings on Harold Neumann:

Later in Chicago he was first in balloon bursting, setting the record that still stands 6.2 seconds after release.

In 1931 Harold won the dead-stick landing contest at the National Air Races in Cleveland, coming within 2' 1" of the target after switching off the engine 1,000 feet above the field. The propeller was then called a stick, and the object was to stop it from windmilling at the beginning of the maneuver. Use of brakes was banned.

It was no accident that Harold came to know Benny Howard. Ben was an airmail pilot stopping at Moline enroute to Chicago, and Harold would go to the airport any hour of the day or night to talk and drink coffee with Benny, who was one of those professional pilots Harold had watched fly over and had admired from a distance for so long. Ben was aiready designing and building race planes and Harold let it be known that he was available to fly for Ben.

Neumann bought a J-5 powered Travel Air. This engine was the same type that had powered Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis. He did skywriting for Chevrolet and others in this airplane. He owned it until he went to work for TWA in 1936.

He also owned and raced a 90 hp Lambert powered Monocoupe. In 1932 It was badly damaged in a midair collision when Harold let a friend fly it in a sportsman only race at the National Air Races, and it had to be rebuilt.

In 1933 Ben Howard hired him to maintain his "Ike" and "Mike" racers and to fly high speed aerobatics in the American Air Aces traveling air show. He was not paid for the formation routines he flew in the show. He missed the National Air Races that year.

After that season Harold flew Ben's racers and performed with them in airshows. United Airlines, for whom Ben flew, had refused to let him race or perform. Harold made several forced landings without damaging the racers.

Meanwhile Howard was building his sixth plane and fourth racer, a big high-wing, cabin monoplane that owed much to the Monocoupe design but able to carry four persons. It was powered by a supercharged 830 hp Pratt & Whitney engine. He dubbed it "Mr. Mulligan."

Painted white with the black racing number 40, it was finished in time for the 1934 Bendix transcontinental dash from Burbank to Cleveland. Neumann and a co-pllot were ferrying it to the West Coast for the start of the race, flying at 17,000 ft. as he had directed until they had to climb to 21,000 ft. to get above severe thunderstorms. The co-pllot passed out from lack of oxygen. It was all Neumann could do to fly a heading to the West Coast. Fortunately, the gas tank they were on ran dry and Harold regained consciousness as the plane descended. It didn't take long to get down to 11,000 ft where Harold plcked a creekbed as the best available crash landing site. About to crash in the mountains with his co-pliot unconscious and maybe even dead, and himself in a confused state from hypoxia, and the fatiguing hours of incredible noise in the octane gasoline in the wing tank used for take off, climb and landing. He reached under the panel and switched to that tank and was on the wobble pump. The fuel pressure guage needle began to wiggle and the windmilling prop brought the engine to beautiful roaring life at the last possible moment to avoid crass landing.

He knew he didn't have enough fuel in the wing tank to run for very long, so he began to experiment with the valves on his co-pliot's side. Trying different valves that fed fuel from the barrels in the back seat, he'd switch off the wing tank. Each time the engine would run briefly then quit. In his mind's eye he could see them rolling these barrels around with rocks in them before filling them for the trip. Maybe the fuel line was clogged with some debris they didn't get out and nothing would help now. He'd switch back to the wing tank, then try another valve until he finally found the right combination. Every movement was a great effort in his exhausted half conscious condition. It was like trying to work and think in a noisy nightmare.

He was able to establish about a 500 foot per minute climb, but when he advanced the throttle further the engine threatened to quit. He had no idea how much gasoline he had in that barrel he was drawing from, but he had the wing tank for reserve.

He found a railroad track and followed it out of the mountains to the military installation at Hawthorne, Nevada.

The American flag was whipping in a strong wind 90 degrees to a narrow, graded dirt strip. There was a lake beyond the strip. He was still in high country, and fearing the engine might not respond for a go around he came in with power, dragging it in on a long approach, with almost no forward vision because the windsheield was streaked with oil from the exhaust. He fiew it right down to the ground before chopping the power to land short in a three point touch down. He was down and rolling, applying brakes, when the crosswind started the wheels skipping sideways. He did not try to hold it because of the side pressure on the gear, and the plane drifted into the graded material along the edge of the strip. This took the gear off and a wing tip was damaged. Also the propeller. Harold was OK and the airplane, which did not go upon its nose, was saved. His co-pilot was still out and turning blue.

People drove up and carried the still unconscious co-pilot to the base infirmary and took Harold to where he could send a telegram to Ben Howard.

We were ploneers in that we were always going into the unknown. Ben had flown maliplanes up to 17,000 feet and he thought the trip across country in the "Mulligan" at that altitute would be ok. I'd gone up to 17,000 feet in the skywriter without any III effects but that was altogether different from flying for hours at that altitude, along with the loud noise and vibration from the engine.

When we got over the mountains their peaks weren't that far below. Then, as i climbed and was turning this way and that to go around and between the worst of the towering thunderstorm cums I began to doze off. It was an erie half-awake nightmare. Like trying to run in a dream and being unable to, my actions became difficult or impossible to carry out. I vaguely remember seeing the altimeter show 21,000 feet. I continued to try to record flight data, but seeing my notes later, I could understand the deterioration of my reasoning. The neat entries became scribbles, and as unconsciousness approached the marks on the pages were more like chicken scratches. It occurred to me later why after 1 got the engine restarted, 1 could not climb out mroe than 500 feet per minute. The engine would want to guit when 1 added more power because it was still leaned to 17,000 ft. The more altitude 1 gained the more power 1 could add. At the time 1 was too confused to realize it but that was the answer. For six months 1 felt the ill effects of being starved for oxygen. You don't get over 1t in a day.

I learned most of my flying by doing. I made that decision early - to learn like that rather than take the school, or formal engineering path. A lot of people have written about my flying, but I never had an inclination to write down the way it was, even when the reporting by others was incomplete, inaccurate, or opinionated. I was, and am a doer. Even today when the weather keeps me in the house my skin begins to itch from inactivity."

1934 was a miserable year.

"The 'Mike' had a supercharged engine. I had taken it to the New Orleans races and while practicing there I hit a gull, which was a bang and a scare. It made a hole and took a lot of fabric off the wing but I got it down ok. When the engine quit during a race I had to make a dead stick landing in a strong crosswind. I couldn't hold it without power, but got it square to the runway as it went off into the mud. It flipped on its back, but it did not cartwheel as it would have done if it had left the runway at an angle. Inez was there with our daughter when they lifted the plane off me and the crowd cheered as we walked away together. '34 could have been worse. I could have been killed. ()

The morning after the "Mulligan" accident inez arrived at Ben's Cleveland hangar headquarters unaware of what he happened. Ben was pretty hot and threatening to fire me, but inez took my part and he backed off. He even sent me airfare to fly back to Cleveland for the races. We flew over the farm where it had all started and I thought how low my fortunes had sunk . I was feeling pretty ionely.

I had contracted to fly the "Ike," which I'd bought from Ben, every day at the 1934 National Air races, but after performing the first day I landed on a rough part of the field, as I'd been requested to do, and I knocked the gear off. I desperately needed the money I'd counted on earning from the performances to follow. I was sick about it, but I had to climb out and go directly to the "Mike", which was waiting at the starting line to race.

The "Mike" lost power during the race and I finished last. When I cut the power back to land the engine quit, but I got it down without hurting me or the airplane.

An inspection the next day showed the supercharger case had cracked, but there had been no thank you - not even a greeting when they came out to pull the airplane to the hangar after the race." (\gtrsim)

1935 was quite a contrast to 1934.

In the 1935 National Air Races at Cleveland Howard racers swept the field. Harold flew Howard's "Mike" with a Menasco engine to win three heats of the Greve race for planes of 550 cu. In. displacement and was awarded the trophy.

Thanks again to Roy Thornton for contributing this rich history to Chapter 15!!!

Respectfully submitted, Nan Funkhouser