

AUGUST 2017

EAA Chapter 25

ON FINAL

MINNEAPOLIS/ ST PAUL, MN

“Flight Lines”

- from Mike York
EAA Chapter 25 President

July seems to be the peak for recreational aviation in the Midwest. The annual AirVenture fly-in convention in Oshkosh was attended by record breaking crowds. In spite of the overall decline in general aviation, EAA membership is at record levels. I believe this is a testament to the improved leadership at EAA headquarters and overall interest in aviation's future. I personally encourage all of you to stay engaged in any way you can, to support aviation in an effort to maintain the freedoms we have in this great country.

I suspect a great number of our chapter members attended Oshkosh this year. I'm jealous. For the first time in 30+ years, I missed Oshkosh this year, due to a planned family vacation to Germany. My son was in Germany this summer taking classes in Berlin. The trip was organized by my three adult children and focused on visiting historical castles, palaces, and significant



historical buildings. In addition some emphasis was placed on WWII history, as my father in law was captured on the 1st day of the Battle of the Bulge and was a POW for many months. I also have always had an interest in WWII history.

I was hoping to come back and talk about all the cool aviation “stuff” going on in Germany. Well, that is not going to happen. I can say that I was in Germany for two weeks, across the country in eight different cities and besides commercial airliners I saw one balloon, one trike, and from a distance, a light twin. I did see a couple of medical helicopters. Overall I thought it was pathetic from a GA perspective, no Cubs, Champs, RVs, Cessnas, Pipers, etc. and certainly no Pietenpols to be seen, not even a business jet. I do feel fortunate to have the opportunity here in the US to commit “aviation” if I choose. Seems the cost of fuel (2 times or more) and landing fees etc. puts a damper on flying, a low approach and go around is charged at 80% of a landing. The experience reinforced the fact that we need to stay vigilant in preventing addition regulation and fees on the greatest GA environment in the world.

This month the presentation will be by yours truly. I will review a little history of WWII aviation and it's impact on Germany, complete with selected pictures from my trip.

I hope you plan to attend the meeting on August 16th and look forward to seeing you all!

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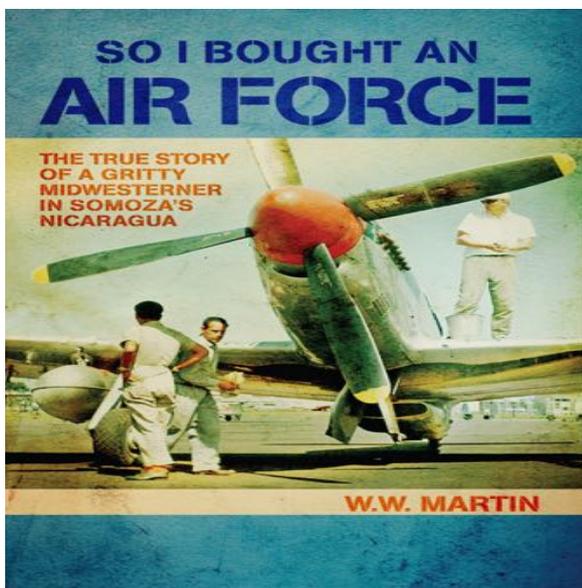
EAA Chapter 25 Banquet News!!!

It's hard to believe, but the state fair starts in two weeks. When it ends, on Labor Day weekend, we will be less than one month from our banquet. OMG!! So, it's time to place your order for banquet tickets. Our speaker, Will Martin, author of "So I bought an Air Force" will make a presentation on something most of us only dream about, but he actually did. Buy a WWII fighter aircraft. He didn't just buy one...he bought a whole air force.

We are changing banquet locations this year and will spend the evening at "The Royal Cliff" in Eagan. It's located just off Cedar Ave. to the west on Cliff Road. The exciting part is they claim we will love the food. It is not catered in, but made fresh, on site. Online reviews are outstanding. Social 5:30 pm, dinner 6:30 pm.

It would help me greatly if you would send your ticket request ASAP. Tickets are \$25 each. **So, check your calendar (Sunday October 01) and mail me your request!** Thank you!!!!

Patrick Halligan
4379 Kaufmanis Way
Eagan, MN 55123



WILL MARTIN BIOGRAPHY

Will Martin holds a commercial pilot certificate and multi-engine and instrument ratings. Flying "El Gato," the P-51D Mustang he restored, he has performed in many air shows including Oshkosh Air Venture, the Chicago Air and Water, the Commemorative Air Force, and the Illinois Antique Airplane Association B-17 Reunion. He is the founder of EAA Warbird Squadron 4.

Will's first plane was a Ryan Navion. Most of us learn to fly and then buy an airplane. Will bought the airplane and then learned to fly. Over his lifetime he has piloted more than forty types of planes. Those he subsequently owned include a Beechcraft C-45, D-18, T34B, Bonanza and Queen Air; North American P-51Ds, a TF, T-28A; a Piper Apache; a Cessna 401 and 402; a Douglas B-26; and a Republic P-47. He has logged time in an Aeronaca; a Stinson Station Wagon, and a Gull Wing; a Beech Baron, Twin Bonanza, Duke, Travel Air, T-5, and T-34A; a Piper TriPacer, Arrow, and Aztec; and a Republic Seabee, among others.

The retired president of a business consulting company, Will has served as a director of the Chicago Better Government Association, the Chicago President's Association, and various manufacturing companies. He has been a featured speaker for numerous aviation, business, and civic groups.

A former sailboat racer, he is a lifelong member of the Chicago Yacht Club. He graduated from the Chicago public schools where he wrestled on both the city and Illinois state championship teams. He received a B.S. degree from Bradley University. Will is married to a Minnesota native, the former Patricia Daggett, and the two of them now divide their time between their lake house near Detroit Lakes and a condo in the Naples, Florida area.

Warning! Attacks by Poisenous Snakes Possible

By Lou Martin

In 1962, I was an Air Force major, stationed in Misawa Air Base, Japan, and an aircraft maintenance officer for an F-100D fighter squadron. I maintained my pilot proficiency by flying T-33s and an occasional flight in the F-100F.

During this early stage of the Vietnam War Misawa was charged with sending pilots and staff officers to Saigon for 120 days temporary duty. The U.S. military mission was as advisors and not publicly known. I talked to pilots who had recently returned and although they were not allowed to engage in flying combat missions they said that their tour of duty was very interesting. Based on their reports and my inclination for adventure, I put my name on the list of volunteers! On Saturday morning, September 29, 1962, a personnel officer informed me that I was being sent to South Vietnam for 120 days. "When do I leave?" I asked. As he handed me my orders he said, "On Monday's courier flight to Tokyo, where you will then proceed to Tan Son Nhut Airport, Saigon. There you will be advised of your specific duty assignment."

I had been expecting this so it was no great surprise to my family. I knew that my wife could take care of things until I got back. I was excited about going however, I did feel guilty in leaving my ten-year-old daughter and two-year-old son for up to four months. I called my assistant (Chief Master Sergeant Hank Moon) to let him know that I was leaving and that he would be in charge until I returned. He said to tell my wife that if she needed anything not to hesitate to request it.

The following Monday, I boarded a C-47 for Tachikawa AB, Tokyo Where I was to be joined by another major. I secured a room in the BOQ where I was informed that I was scheduled to depart the next morning on a C-130 for Saigon. When boarding the aircraft, I met my fellow TDY major, a C-54 pilot named Avon Ernst. Later that afternoon we landed at the Saigon Ton Son Nhut Airport in a pouring rain and were transported to a nearby tent where we presented copies of our orders to an Air Force sergeant.

I asked him if he knew where we would be assigned during our TDY tour. "I have no idea, major," he said, "What you and your friend should do is secure rooms in the Majestic Hotel in downtown Saigon and make a daily check of the bulletin board for assignment instructions." We threw our B-4 bags into the trunk of a staff car, which drove us downtown. We walked into the hotel lobby on Wednesday, October 3, 1962 and were immediately impressed by the old world charm of this classic French colonial style hotel.

The Majestic Hotel was built in 1925 during the golden age of the French Colonial period. It contained 122 rooms and 30 executive suites, which provided an excellent view of the Saigon River and was within walking distance of shops and tourist attractions. It had a large swimming pool and an open-air skyline bar on the top floor, which offered a panoramic view of the city and surrounding area.

I was assigned a room with a balcony overlooking the Saigon River and a bustling street producing boundless bizarre noises. The river was awash with small boats to ocean-going vessels. Men, in black pajama-style loose-fitting garments, shuffled up and down the street, while women in silk dresses and wearing large "pizza-size" straw hats followed close behind. The area was packed with taxicabs belching smoke, motorized and pedal-powered Pedi cabs and rickshaws. It appeared that the taxicab drivers thought that their engines would stop if their horns were not blowing continuously.

After a shower and a change into casual civilian dress

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*August Young Eagles Update
By Kris Olson*

Chapter 25 flew 25 kids on Saturday, July 15th at Airlake Airport. The pilots that flew the kids were Frank Ahlman, Alan Knutson, Mark Kolesar, and Paul Pankratz. The ground crew that helped were Ron Hoyt, Aaron Kasic, Dick Reinke, Alan Ross, Mike York, David Olson, and Kris Olson. We have 6 pilots that have flown kids for us this year. They have flown 114 kids so far. The kids and their parents appreciate the work of all of our volunteers. We have some more pilots that are interested in helping fly kids. We can use help with ground crew. People can help an hour or as long as they are able to at our events.

Our August 19th Young Eagles event will be at the Airlake Airport from 9 am to 12. Our September 17th Young Eagles event will be at the Terminal building at Fleming Field - South St Paul Airport from 9 am to 12. There is an opportunity to volunteer with the Girls in Aviation Day event run by the Women in Aviation Chapter. It will be held at Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie on September 23rd. People can help with the Young Eagles rides area or with the expo. Interested people can let me know and I can get them information and sign them up to help. There is a lot of interest from kids and parents for this event already. This is the 3rd year that this event is being held.

Upcoming Aviation Events

Some web sites to find local aviation events:

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/events/flyins-and-events.html>

<http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-bus/aeronautics/trng-events/flyins.aspx> ,click on a month to download the Wisconsin events calendar.

<http://www.socialflight.com/event-planner.php?id=cqlymi>

Mark your calendar for Sunday October 01. That's the date of our 2017 annual chapter banquet. We are changing venues this year, as we will enjoy an evening together at the Royal Cliff in Eagan, MN.

On Final

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my friend and I went to the open-air skyline lounge for a drink and had to elbow our way to the bar through men in civilian and military dress. Officers ranged in rank from major to general, with a 25 cent drink in one hand and a snack in the other.

The few American females present seemed to be enjoying themselves as they were surrounded by horny-looking men competing for their attention. Trays of free snacks were everywhere and the temperature (since it was early October) was near perfect. (I wondered if my 120 days in Vietnam would be spent in such luxury or billeted in some tent in the snake infested back-woods of South Vietnam.)

We had dinner that night in a large dining room, adorned with crystal chandeliers, exquisite silverware and crystal and white-gloved waiters. It was obvious that the European style living, established by the French was still being followed. However, what seemed out of place were the little lizards running up and down the walls and across the ceiling. A colonel sitting at an adjacent table noted our concern and asked if we were new to Saigon. I told him that we had just arrived that afternoon. He chuckled and said, "Those little lizards are called Geckos. They have microscopic suction cups on their feet which allows them to hang from the ceiling." He continued, "Their chief diet is grabbing mosquitoes with their lightning-fast tongues. We consider them our friends as they are innocuous, not venomous and help control the spread of malaria-carrying insects. The only caution is to hold a hand over your soup when they are on the ceiling above your table." Our French style meal was scrumptious and I rushed through my soup before a Gecko had a chance of adding his own brand of indigenous flavoring.

The next morning we checked the bulletin board and finding no assignment notice, we headed for the dining room for breakfast. After eating, we hired a 19-year-old Vietnamese female guide, who spoke Vietnamese, French and English and an air-

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Stuff for Sale/Wanted

"Wanted: a partner in the building of a Murphy Rebel. This is a High wing, all metal plane with a gross weight capacity of 1650 lb. I can be contacted at 952-8884380 or rrhoyt@ieee.org." Ron

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Trivia by John Schmidt

During WWII, what product of Marston, North Carolina helped US pilots win the war?

Answer pg. 9

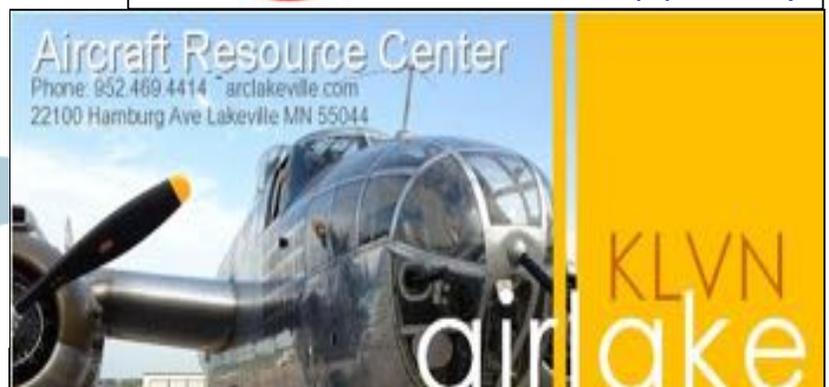
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conditioned limousine to show us the sights of Saigon. In the fall of 1962, the emerging war had not yet reached Saigon and it was still referred to as the "Paris of the Orient." Sidewalk cafes were everywhere, along with excellent French and European culinary style restaurants. The temples, museums and cathedrals were open to all visitors.

The following day the bulletin board was still void of any assignment instructions so we contracted with our guide and limousine driver to continue with sightseeing. We finished the day by treating them to dinner in a top-scale French restaurant. With no duty assignment posted we continued our "tourist-like" activity for a full week, branching out further each day with our guide exposing us to additional restaurants and interesting sights. However, after a week of acting like tourists I told Avon that the following morning I was going to put on my uniform and take the 7 a.m. work bus to Tan Son Nhut Airport to see if I could find out what I was going to do for the next 110 days. Avon said, "I'll go with you."

Arriving at the same tent that we had reported to a week earlier we found a different sergeant staffing the desk. I asked him if he knew what our duty assignments would be during our 120-day TDY tour in Vietnam. "Who are you, and where did you come from major?" was his response. He then asked for a copy of our orders, after reviewing them he suggested that we obtain a room in the Majestic Hotel and make a daily check of the bulletin board for further instructions. I told the uninformed sergeant, in a stern voice, "We arrived in Vietnam seven days ago and a sergeant sitting in your chair told us to get a room in the Majestic Hotel and check the bulletin board every day for further instructions. We have been doing this for the past week and still waiting for someone to tell us what we are supposed to do. We have visited all the tourist spots, eaten in all the five-star restaurants, and don't want to stand around waiting for the latest copy of the Stars and Stripes for four months. If you have nothing for us to do release us and let us return to Japan, where I personally have an important job in maintaining F-100 jet fighters."

As I was concluding my unyielding comment, an Air Force bird colonel, dressed in starched fatigues, walked around from behind a partition and gave me a dour look! He then in a demanding voice said, "Major, I've been listening to your bitching, and I'm getting a little tired of it, so knock it off!" "OK. I'll stop bitching, but can you tell me what my job in Vietnam is?" I snapped back. His response, which I will never forget, "Major, just like the rest of us you are doing your job by just being here. You are one of President Kennedy's 17,000 military advisors. We're like firemen without a fire to fight, but with one difference, we don't have fire engines to polish while waiting for something to happen." Softening his approach, he said, "Do you know what a TMC is?" I said that it is usually an abbreviation in reference to "Transport Movement Control." Noting

that, he seemed impressed. I added that I had flown C-119s for several years and this was a common term in troop carrier operations. Hearing this he said, "Well, I may have a job for you if you're interested. How about your quiet friend standing there (referring to Avon) does he have any troop carrier experience?" Avon spoke up and said that he was an operations officer for a C-54 squadron in Japan. "Well," the colonel said, "I think I may have something that you two officers may be interested in."

The colonel asked if I was familiar with the Fairchild C-123 Provider. I told him that I was, but had never flown it. He continued, "That doesn't matter, as you and your buddy will not be required to fly them, just oversee them." He said that a squadron of C-123s were being based at Don Muang Airport, Bangkok, with the mission of providing logistical support during the construction phase of military bases in Thailand. To support the mission, the general in charge of Joint Task Force 116 has requested that two field grade officers, experienced in troop carrier operations, be assigned to his staff to help organize an airlift support operation. He asked if we would be interested in taking on the assignment. When we said that we would, since we have seen all the tourist sights in Saigon, he smiled and said that orders would be prepared and we would leave for Bangkok the next day. We returned to the Majestic Hotel, enjoyed an excellent dinner, while quickly eating our soup as geckos were racing across the ceiling.

The next morning we were on an Air America DC-4 for Bangkok. We were met by our new boss, a pleasant non-rated Air Force major, who said he had reserved rooms for us in a hotel in downtown Bangkok and that a staff car would pick us up each morning and drive us back to the hotel in the evening. He added that our OIC was a Stephen D. McElroy (Mac), a spit and polish brigadier General commissioned in 1933 and although a pilot thought it was a mistake when the military eliminated horses and open-cockpit airplanes. "Can we assume, from your description, that the general is a little strange?" I asked. "Don't quote me, but you nailed it exactly," he replied. As we headed for our hotel, I noted several C-123s parked on the Royal Thai Air Force ramp and several U.S. Air Force Reconnaissance RF-101s and F-84s bearing Royal Thai Air Force markings.

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The Fairchild C-123 Provider is a short-range twin-engine assault transport designed for airlifting troops and cargo in and out of unprepared airstrips. It evolved from earlier designs for an assault glider, but was equipped with engines at the end of WW II. The first Providers produced entered service in July 1955, and by 1969, 184 were modified with two J-85 jet engines for increased performance, when flying low-level defoliant spray missions in South Vietnam. The C-123s that we would be associated with were not equipped with jet engines, but the standard Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine of 2,300 hp each. It had a wingspan of 110 ft., a maximum gross weight of 60,000 lbs., a cruising speed of 170 mph, and cost \$602,000 (equal to \$3,370,000 today).

Reporting for work the next morning, we were shown a tent that would be our TMC. It was one of many, aligned in a perfect row, which we were told was General Mac's requirement. According to our boss the general would make frequent inspection visits and would raise hell if even one tent stake was out of alignment. Our tent was located next to a larger one used by the headquarters staff, and was the only one with air conditioning. C-123s were already flying support missions, but on a "you-call-we-haul" basis. Our mission was to set up a airline type operation with published departure and arrival times, for overlapping airports, which would be used as "hub stations." In addition we were to publish flight schedules, establish basic parts supplies at each airport and develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), advising crews on messing facilities, refueling procedures, telephone numbers and if the need arose, overnight lodging. To accomplish this Herculean task it would be necessary for Avon and I visit each airport. The first thing we did was procuring a large wall map of Thailand that identifies the airports under construction. They included Don Muang (Bangkok), Chiang Mai, Korat, Nakhon Phanom, Takhli, Ubon, Udorn, and U Tapao. Since many of these bases were under construction, our C-123s were required to land and take off on partially completed runways, taxiways or ramps.

Within a few days, more C-123s began arriving, after flying from the U.S. via South America, Morocco, Turkey and India. It appeared that most of the crewmembers had seen too many John Wayne movies as they stepped off their aircraft wearing leather hip holsters containing Smith & Wesson .357 magnums or .45 caliber pistols with glistening ivory handgrips and wide decorative leather belts ringed with polished rounds of ammunition. (I am sure their protective weapons must have weighed about ten pounds, and General Patton would have been proud of them). Avon and I did not want to disappoint their desire for an "OK Corral-style shoot-out" by telling them that the only dangers they faced when flying in Thailand were mosquito bites, poisonous snakes, VD, diarrhea and that their expensive side arms would not be effective in protecting them against any of these combat hazards. We knew that within a few days they would figure this out and leave their weapons in their footlockers. (This is exactly what happened and our fear of being shot by some C-123 crewmember accidentally discharging his

weapon was no longer a problem.)

Avon and I took turns in visiting each airport and formulated appropriate support procedures. We transferred them into published SOPs, along with flight routes and departure and arrival times for each location. We then plotted the entire operation onto a large map of Thailand and covered it with plastic, which allowed for erasable grease-pencil notations. We placed this map in General Mac's command tent, which was used for flight following during a daily 3 p.m. briefing. Within 30 to 45 days, our C-123 Provider Airline was a reality and everyone was pleased with its dependable on time operation. The Provider was an extremely reliable aircraft and the crewmembers were great to work with. They were housed in open-bay barracks on the Royal Thai Air Force side of the base and were off duty two days per week. When not scheduled they would head for downtown Bangkok which provided all forms of entertainment for young American warriors 7,000 miles from home.

Avon and I, for the first two weeks, maintained rooms in a Bangkok hotel, which was convenient for enjoying the Thai night life. However, General McElroy thought we were having too much fun and directed that we move out of our air-conditioned hotel rooms and into a BOQ building on the Royal Thai Air Base at Don Muang Airport. We were assigned a steel cots in an open-air bay with a community latrine down a long hallway. We ate in the Thai Officers' Club, known as the Air House, which provided a tropical like atmosphere. There were many nights that I did what I could to support the Air House by spending several hours enjoying a variety of cheap liquor. Following these marathon drinking sessions, I would head back to the BOQ by walking along a narrow concrete sidewalk illuminated by low wattage bare light bulbs.

One night, I was skipping back to my room, while struggling to stay on the narrow path, since on either side were high weeds populated by a variety of snakes. In the dim light, I noted a long black object spread across the sidewalk and for some odd reason (influenced, I am sure, by my inebriated state of mind), I thought it was a garden hose and I stepped on top of it! However, it was a large Black King Cobra snake, enjoying the relative warmth of the concrete. The King did not appreciate being disturbed and quickly coiled, spread its hood and in a very aggressive manner lunged out at me with a menacing hiss while spitting a spray of venom. Since I was now three feet in the air, he missed my leg and before he could recoil for another attack, I was several feet down the path and running like

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hell. The incident had an immediate sobering effect and would be an excellent method of shucking the effects of alcohol, but I don't think it will become a popular ascetic remedy.

Sometime later, after contributing to the coffers of the Air House bar, I was returning to my room and cautiously calculating each step, when navigating the narrow path. I entered the BOQ quietly as most of my bunkmates were already asleep and engaging in a lively snoring contest. Approaching my cot I noted that the mosquito net above my bunk was untied and touching the floor. Apparently, the Thai maid, after making the bed, forgot to tie it up into a knot. However, I did not give it much thought and stripped down to my shorts, and bare feet. After a visit to the latrine, I walked back to my dimly lit cot, grabbed a hold of the mosquito net and gave it a good shaking. When I did, my heart almost stopped! From the bunched up net a three-foot long "Banded Krait Snake" scooted out, crawled across my bare toes and disappeared under an opening in a screen door. During the brief moment, it took to slither over my toes, its black body and yellow bands were clearly visible. I immediately sobered up and it took me a long time to go to sleep.

The Krait snake is 15 times more deadly than a cobra, as its venom is a powerful neurotoxin that affects the central nervous system, causing respiratory failure.

However, I was not the only one that had to deal with snakes. Aircraft crew chiefs, performing sunrise preflights, carried long sticks and flashlights. King Cobras would wrap themselves around warm tires and brakes for protection against the relative nighttime cold. The crew chiefs would spot them and sling them out onto the ramp. The snakes, pissed off from being disturbed, would slither off into the tall grass, while announcing their displeasure with loud spitting sounds and spreading their threatening looking wing-like hoods. It was not unusual to count 20 or more heading for the weeds after being dispatched by crew chiefs.

The Thai Air Force operated an 18 hole golf course with lush green narrow fairways but with knee-high weeds on both sides. There were warning signs in the clubhouse that stated "Warning when playing this course use caution as there are poisonous snakes in the area".

This warning was not issued without justification. An Air Force major hit a ball into the weeds and decided to retrieve it. He was searching through the high grass when he disturbed a napping King Cobra that struck him in the chest. His golfing partners helped him to the clubhouse and called for medical assistance. However, from the time he had been bitten to the time he reached medical attention was too long and he died from respiratory paralysis. A terrible loss in exchange for not wishing to take a one-stroke penalty.

One of our NCOs kept a small squirrel monkey named "Mickey" as a pet. He was a well-mannered little guy who reminded me of the type of monkey organ grinders use. I would stop by to see him on my way back from lunch bringing him bits of fresh fruit, which he dearly loved. When the sergeant left for the U.S., he brought Mickey over to my tent and asked if I would like to have him. I welcomed the gift and he now had a new friend. (I was sorry I did not have an organ to grind). He was tent-broken and when he wanted to go outside, he would chirp loudly. I would put him on a long nylon cord and when he wanted to come back inside, he would scratch on the screen door. He would often sit on my shoulder while I was working at my desk, or curl up inside my pith helmet to take a nap. He loved to play tricks and would often grab my pencil and dash around the tent while I chased him to retrieve it. He was a great little companion and admired by everyone, even our hard-nosed General McElroy liked him!

One day I tied him outside while I went to lunch, but when I returned he was gone. The nylon leash was cut, or chewed through, and there were fresh blood spots nearby. I and my colleagues searched the area (except the tall grass) looking for him, but with no luck. I believe a King Cobra, which can reach a length of 16 feet, dragged him off. I hope he is in monkey heaven, because he provided me and my friends with many smiles while faithfully serving as one of President Kennedy's 17,000 military advisors.

The above article is an excerpt from Lou Martin's book "Close Encounters with the Pilot's Grim Reaper."



*Trivia answer from pg. 5
By John Schmidt*

'Marston Mat' (subsequently often misspelled "Marsden") is the nickname for the perforated steel matting used for temporary runways. First used in Camp Mackall in Marston, NC, some 2 million tons were produced. Hap Arnold, watching US parachutists practice in 1941, called Marston Mat "the year's greatest achievement in aviation warfare." A runway 200 ft wide and 5000 feet long could be created in 2

days by a small team of engineers. The perforated Marston Mat has been repurposed, post-war, to build roads, create fence, and even store wine bottles.

<http://www.airspacemag.com/multimedia/these-portable-runways-helped-win-war-pacific-180951234/?no-ist>

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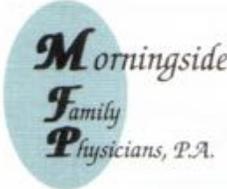
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Excerpt submitted from a local student's aviation scholarship application for an MATA (Minnesota Aviation Trades Association) scholarship.

My name is Nick Niziolek. I live in Bloomington MN and go to Jefferson High School. I am currently 15 years old. My mom is from Australia and my dad is from here in Minnesota.

Flying is my favorite thing to do. I live for anything to do with flying.

When I was young, I loved to get balsa planes from hardware stores, especially the ones with a rubber band powered propeller. As I got older, my interest in flying continued to grow.

My grandpa is my biggest aviation inspiration. He used to tell me about all the planes he flew and how much he enjoyed it. My grandpa flew for the Australian Royal Air Force and a program called Angel Flight. This program is a volunteer air rescue/transport for injured people in Australia that don't have access to an ambulance or hospital. He flew an old twin engine Beechcraft that he fixed up. He had two other planes besides his Beechcraft. He owned a T-28 Trojan (complete with covered bullet holes!) and a homebuilt stunt plane.

My grandpa flew from Australia to Minnesota to see us when I was 11 and take me flying. He took me on my first flight in a plane, a Cessna 172 sp at Thunderbird Aviation. My first flight was so cool! It made me feel free and gave me a new perspective of the world I live on. My grandpa loved flying. When I flew with him that first time, I remember him walking out onto the tarmac with me and my dad and saying "I love the smell of jet fuel in the morning!" He loved seeing my interest towards flying. After that flight experience, I was hooked on flying.

Later that year my family took a trip to the Oshkosh Air Show. Oshkosh was one of my most memorable aviation experiences. Along with all the planes and flying machines, there was an EAA tent. I met a pilot named Mark Kolesar at the tent. He flew at AirLake, an airport near where I lived. He invited me to come fly with EAA.

Shortly thereafter I signed up as an EAA Young Eagle and began going to EAA monthly Young Eagles' flying days. Mark took me up a number of times in his Beechcraft Bonanza A-36. I even had my 11th birthday at one of these days. My friends loved it. EAA helped me jumpstart my basic knowledge of airplanes and continue my enjoyment of flying.

I started my flight training with a summer camp at Thunderbird Aviation at Flying Cloud when I was 12. That was the first time I flew in an Archer. I grew to really like flying Archers and I am still flying them today. I have flown with Thunderbird aviation ever since. I have logged almost 30 hours of dual instruction there along with a ground school course. Given the cost of flight lessons I have decided not to get my car driver's license. This way my parents can pay for flight lessons and not car insurance.

Around the beginning of my flight training, my grandpa was diagnosed with bone cancer. Soon after, he became unable to fly. My family and I went to visit him in Australia, During the trip, I asked all the airline pilots on the way to log my flights in my EAA log book. My grandpa showed me his T-28 Trojan, twin engine Beechcraft and homebuilt stunt plane. I really enjoyed seeing his planes and how he loved to fly. A photo showing his love of flying hangs on my wall. (See photo.)

A few months later, I came home from school to find a large box by my front door. It was addressed to me from grandpa. It had all his aviation gear, including his military helmet and his headsets. I still use his headset to this day! Not long after, he passed away. I miss him, but he is with me as I fly.

Outside of my private pilot training I work on model RC planes. I started out with a Cub and progressed to building kit planes, including a (Guinea) from Flitetest. I flew the Guinea for the past couple of years. Flitetest is an RC airplane company that not only sells planes but shows you how to make them yourself. I learned that all of their planes can be made out of dollar store foam board. Foam board is super cheap, light and easy to build with. Recently, I accidentally cracked a wing of one of my RCs while trying to land in too much wind. Instead of giving up, I designed and built my own plane and reused the electronics. (See photo.)

I also enjoy designing planes on Simple Planes and other design simulators on my computer. I use these programs to test out some of my designs or to determine flight characteristics for my existing models.

Flying is more than just something to keep me busy. Flying is an experience, where I can feel free and get away from things. It allows me to do what I love and work towards my future!

This Scholarship money would help me continue doing what I love. I would use this money towards my continued flight training and working towards my goal to solo this fall on my 16th birthday. I am looking to go to the University of North Dakota to get a degree in Aerospace Engineering or another aviation based degree. I will also work towards becoming a commercial pilot. Please consider me for this scholarship so I can continue working towards my future in aviation.

Regardless of what I do, I can't imagine a day where I don't fly.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nick