

EAA CHAPTER 534

Newsletter

9/23/2013

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and share the wealth of knowledge available.' If there are any suggestions as to what the membership would like to see more or hear more of; please let the chapter officers know. Our chapter has two projects at the hangar now;



proceeded to Steve Tilford's hangar and RV. Steve's project has progressed nicely and hopes to get more time to work on it when he retires full time in January. I was able to get a few pictures showing the work he has completed so far. *Nice work Steve!*

AUGUST 31ST CHAPTER MEETING WRAP UP

-Laura Vaughn

Our Aug 31st chapter meeting was opened by our President Arnold Holmes. One major concern addressed was the fact that our chapter meetings have seen dwindling attendance, as was the case at today's meeting. The question was brought, "What are the members not receiving when attending that keeps them from coming?" One major component of membership is the ability to draw on the many experiences of all the other members.' Chapter meetings are a great way to enjoy the friendship of others



work is in progress on Lou Larsen's Pietenpol aircraft, and also on the chapter's GN-1 Air Camper (*version of Pietenpol*). The work on Lou's is being done on Thursday mornings, and the work on the chapter's project is on Saturday mornings. All members are welcome to participate; all helping hands and minds are appreciated. After the meeting at the CAP/EAA building we

September 28th...

Chapter 534 meeting will be a pancake breakfast at the chapter hangar, then a GN-1 Air Camper (*chapters' Pietenpol*) work session. Your family members are always welcome.

October 26th...

The chapter meeting will involve a visit to Club Crafters.



Airport Community Profile Lewis Puckett

Just mention Lewis Puckett and you're talking about Leesburg Airport history. Lewis was born in Winchester Kentucky and his father moved to the Leesburg area to follow family. When Lewis was 14 years old, he took flying lessons in a Piper J-3 Cub and earned his pilot license at 16.

During his senior year in high school, he and two other boys quit school and joined the Air Force, it was about 1958 and he was sent to South Korea. Although in the Air Force, he volunteered for and was assigned to an Army

Ranger Unit. They were sent to Viet Nam and from there to Cambodia. They were on a special mission and stayed with a unit of the Khmer Rouge unit. He was a rifleman and on one mission he was wounded with a shot in the leg and was treated by a Khmer Rouge doctor, who removed the bullet. The doctor bandaged it up and Lewis was on his way the next morning with his Ranger unit. He served with this unit for a year and three months.

He returned to Elgin Air Force base and took advantage of the opportunity to obtain his AA and BS college degrees. All he wanted to do was fly and, with his college degree, was qualified to apply for flight duties. The Air Force had more pilots than they needed and subsequently, he had to finish his four year Air Force duties without being able to fly. He said that this was "a hard pill to swallow."

Later, in 1963 or so, he took a crop dusting job in Nebraska. The operator put him in a new Piper Pawnee and sent him by himself to Presidio Texas (across the Rio Grande from Mexico) do dust cotton. He remembers getting sick and it was 150 miles to a drug store. He didn't tell his boss in Nebraska that he was sick for fear of losing his job flying the crop duster. He said that he made good money and purchased a crop duster in Nebraska. That turned out to be a bad deal due to dry weather and he lost his money that he had invested. He had to call someone in Florida to come to Nebraska to pick him up, as he said, "with my head down and my tail between my legs."

Back in Leesburg he worked at the airport for Mister Bill Cubage, sold cars and anything else to get by. He earned his AP, and IA certificates, single and multiengine, instrument ratings and is certified in Cessna I and II aircraft. Sometime later he

and Mister Cubage got a 'lifetime' lease on parcels of the airport from the City of Leesburg. These leases were later changed to twenty five year leases with five year renewals. Lewis built the 50' by 50' hanger that is now used by Chapter 534. He later added on a 20' section onto the back and built the 50, by 100' adjacent section. He also built the other hanger just north of the EAA hanger.

He started his own crop dusting business in 1964 using Piper Pawnee aircraft, later shifting to Cessna Ag Wagons then on to 600 HP Grumman Ag Cats. He then went to helicopters, first the Hughes 500 then on to Hiller copters. Although accomplished in fixed wing aircraft, he had to learn to fly helicopters. They serviced the citrus, vegetable and melon industries in Central Florida. He said that he's landed in water and orange groves along the way.

In the original 50' by 50' hanger, there were several aircraft built. There were three Pitts, one a flat wing model and two round wing models, a Glassair III, a Rearwind Speedster, a Fairchild 24 with a radial engine (rebuilt) and an EAA Breezy. He said that he had so much fun taking passengers for a ride in the Breezy. The passenger would be in the front seat, out there in midair and he could see them 'holding on tight' when they left the ground.

Lewis's latest business has to do with 'Hazard Reduction Burning' used to back burn sections to keep wild fires from spreading out of control if possible. They originally used a machine on the back of a truck that left a burning napalm trail as the truck drove away. After that, Lewis developed a similar system mounted under a helicopter. Later he developed what can be called 'fire starter balls'. These are small, ping pong size balls containing a chemical. As they are

deployed from an aircraft (helicopter), a machine on the helicopter injects them with another chemical. As they fall to the ground or land in a tree, the chemical reaction starts a fire.

Lewis developed this machine which is assembled here in Leesburg. There are over 500 of these injection machines distributed all over the USA, in Mexico, Australia other places. Lewis's business partner and Vice President, in his company, AEROSTAT Inc. is Howard Pollit, aka Howie.

Lewis has been active in EAA for many years. There was no chapter in Leesburg, therefore he was a member of Chapter 74 in Orlando and was Chapter President for two terms.

Not only active in aircraft and airport endeavors, he was on the Leesburg City Counsel for twelve years and served a Mayor of Leesburg for one term.

Young Eagles Rally
9/21/13:



Kurt Russell on
Flying:

