



Chapter 219

Hermiston

Pendleton

The Leader In Recreational Aviation

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Presidents Corner

As a young man trying to gain “journeyman” status in a crop spraying airplane and the same time, feed my family, I had spent quite a bit of time networking around in the Columbia Basin. In my travels I had met a man named, Hank.

Hank lived in the Yakima area and had spent his career as a field man working in dry land wheat early in the season and then going in to the orchard country around Yakima for the summers.

He would do the fieldwork for wheat farmers, walking the fields, gauging the stage of weed pressure on the crop, and making the recommendations as to weed spraying. He also sold the farmers the chemical and hired his own airplanes to apply the spray. (Kind of a package deal.)

Hank had approached me to bring my Piper Pawnee to Wilson Creek, Washington to do the application for him. The money was right and I knew he had big fields in that wheat country north and east of Wilson Creek. I could see this as a way of getting some good flying before irrigated season began in my area.

Now Wilson Creek Washington is not a very big place. I was told he had rented the “Green House” as our base camp for the wheat spraying. Sure enough, when I circled town, to let him know to come to the airport and pick me up, I spotted the only green house in town!

We had been spraying and fighting the spring winds for about a week when this event occurred. Wind is a killer in the spring, in weed season!

The first field for the day, this day, was north of town and almost a full section (640 acres being a section) and I was eager to continue to get the work done for Hank and for me. It had been a long winter! Long time between paychecks!

The loader had the first load mixed and in the airplane before the sun was up and I took off to find Hank and the field. This was before we started using the paper “Automatic Flagman” markers to mark our swathes. Hank was the marker/flagman with a white flag on a stick. He would wave the flag for me to see where to center the pass across the field, and then, pace off the required distance and mark the next pass by waving the flag for me to line-up on. The morning was murky but I wanted to do the work if at all possible.

On the way out in a loaded Pawnee, it really got murky, but I found Hank and started spraying the field.

The “murky” now had a name and it is -- “FOG”! I hurried as fast as I could to get some load out of the aircraft to better handle the return to the airport and the landing. Landing a full loaded sprayer is a gentle business and to be avoided if possible! If I broke something support was many miles and many dollars away!

Three or four passes across the mile long field and I was pulling up above the light layer of fog, turning around and going back down through the layer to line-up on Hank. On one pass I could see him shrug his shoulders. The only answer was to get lighter and land the airplane. Preferable at an airport!

I finally got what I thought was light enough, and set a course for where I thought the airport was. The airport at Wilson Creek is on a bluff east of town and has the town water tank on its West End. My plan was to make a pass from west to east, spot the water tank on that pass and turn around using the tank as a reference, and land toward the west. I glimpsed the tank and turned in to make my easterly pass for the “procedure”. Ease back on the throttle and let down, very carefully, as I am still kind of heavy. I coast into the fog and cruise by the mix truck and see the loader looking up perplexed. O.K.! If I just kick right rudder the runway has to be just to the right! NO! You said you would “look” on this pass and line-up and land on the second approach.

Stay with the plan!

That was the last I saw of the Wilson Creek Airport, water tank, or anything on the ground for miles!

Now what?

I learned to fly in the Willamette Valley where we always filled our fuel tanks at the end of the day to avoid condensation in the tank over night. Thankfully, I had lots of gas.

I could see the Cascades off to the west but didn't like the prospects in the mountains.

What should I do with the rest of this load? My range and maneuvering would be much better empty but to pickle the load of high volatile weed spray through the fog didn't seem right. I could put that off till later. We were in no immediate danger, if being over a bowl of solid milk was, safe!

Home was to the south so that's the course I flew at about 85 MPH with careful leaning of the 540 Lycoming. Might as well fly for as long as I could because, when this is over, I may not have an airplane!

All my Pawnee had was a compass, airspeed, and altimeter. No radio, no gyros, but big windows!

I flew along for what seemed for hours worrying for an answer and seeing only solid white as far as the eye could see.

It wasn't really more than fifty miles until I saw a hint of the ground. I turned a little east, as it seemed a little more ragged to the left.

Now here is the strange part. The next thing I saw was Clarence Rothaug's house. I had sprayed two summers for a Warden, Washington operation and Rothaug had been one of our customers!

I ducked down through the hole and found room enough under the fog to fly a familiar route back to the Warden Airport! No obstructions, follow fences and roads until the south end of the airport showed up in the windscreen just past the canal.

Wheel it on carefully and all your worrying was for nothing! The tires scuff onto the runway and brakes help me keep directional control. The tail comes down and I move the stick into the extreme aft position. We are still in business! She rolls straight, with 1/2 a load, 1/2 a tank of gas, and ready for something to eat at "Big John's".

The guys at Warden were so surprised to see me come taxiing out of the fog that they bought me breakfast!

Ron

Secretary's Corner

EAA Chapter 219
Clubhouse Pendleton Airport
October 21, 2003

The October meeting was called to order by President Ron Linn at 7 pm. The meeting was attended by: Ed & Dee Betts, Dave & Wilma Cheney, Cub Culbertson, Lee Dudek, Jim DuBois, Jeff Guenther, Tom Hutchison, Dave Kelly, Ron Linn, Ed Nakonieczny, Bob & Lois Potter, Floyd Slinker, Jim Smith, Fred Tenney, Gene Williamson, Tami Kincaid, Gary Zollman, Norm Carrigg, and Bob Irving. Bob Betts was a visitor in attendance.

The September minutes, as printed in the newsletter, were accepted. The treasurer's favorable report was also accepted.

We discussed the open house at Martin Field, and it was decided that if any money was owed to any members for expenses they had incurred, that they should present receipts and be paid. The open house went very well, and a fun time was had by all. Dave said they would try to do a little more advertising of the event next year.

Dave Cheney told us about an incident at Martin Field that involved a forced landing of a pre-war era Taylorcraft. Ron made the point that a lot of us are flying "an aging fleet" and we need to be aware of age problems and maintenance issues.

We talked about the club's project: the Baby Ace. It needs a new prop. The question was: (Should we buy one, or have one built?)

It was mentioned that Bob Nelson could build one. Then the idea of Bob Nelson telling us how to do it and then the club members doing the work came up. It would be a good learning project. It was decided we would talk to Bob Nelson about it.

Jeff Guenther told us about the summer camps at Oshkosh for 12 to 18 year olds. It is called: "Kids and the Future of Aviation Air Academy". If we know of any young people interested in attending, they need to make their reservation by March 1st.

Wilma reminded us that Christmas is quickly approaching and that it is not too early to decide if we want to have another Christmas dinner at the clubhouse. We decided that yes, we want to have it again and that we will have it on Saturday, December 6th, 2003. Dinner will be served at 6 pm.

Dee Betts said she would like to pass the responsibility of supplying the "treats" for the monthly meetings to someone else at this time.

Ron Linn agreed it should be, and thanked Dee for all the homemade goodies she has been bringing so faithfully for so long.

Ron brought doughnuts for us to enjoy this evening, and the meeting was adjourned at 8pm.

Next meeting will be November 18th, 2003

Tami Kincaid, Secretary

Editor's Corner

Calendar Of Events

EAA 2003 Calendar

.December 6 ??? 219 Christmas Dinner,
PDT EAA 2004 Calendar
3rd Tuesday (except June,Dec)
EAA 219, PDT, 7 p.m.

4th Saturday Breakfast, Hangar Workday
PDT, 9 a.m.

Chuckle Corner

Short Final...

Overheard on the Mexico City ground control freq....

F-100: Ground control, F-100 ready to taxi.

Ground: F-100 clear to taxi to Runway 5 left. Follow the 767 ahead of you.

F-100: Where is the '67 going?

Ground: To Madrid ... but you just follow him till before the runway!!!

One in a Million!

Illinois Teen Andrew Grant Named the Millionth EAA Young Eagle

November 13, 2003 - Pilot Rick Ellis, EAA 469164, Freeport, Illinois, was quoted in a recent local feature story about the EAA



Andrew Grant with pilot Rick Ellis

Young Eagles program: "Who knows? The millionth Young Eagle could be someone who flew out of this airport."

