

# PIREPS

## NEBRASKA

Good Life,  
Great  
Journey

NDOT Division of Aeronautics

# 26th Annual Nebraska Aviation Council Symposium

David Moll

For three days in January, aviation professionals came together to enjoy educational programs and networking with other professionals, including pilots, mechanics, airport operators and vendors of aviation products, all with an emphasis on safety. Jean Ballamy with the Omaha TRACON started the event talking about how ATC can help with most any problem pilots run into, as long as they communicate. Tom Chandler with AOPA finished off the Safety Meeting with details on filing ICAO flight plans.



Tom Chandler

Thursday was a full day of speakers, with John Speckin from the Kansas City FAA discussing privatization of the FAA, plus how the ill effects Continuing Resolutions (CR's) signed by Congress have on normal operations, and long term planning, for the FAA. Mark Kimberling, President and CEO of NASAO, gave a "View from Washington", reiterating how CR's badly affect the grant process of upgrading airports. The positive sign Mark gave to the crowd is



John Speckin - FAA

that Nextgen is on time and on schedule. Dr. Tara Harl from Kansas State University then discussed ACRP (Airport Cooperative Research Program) and how to use them, plus encouraged everybody to participate. Khalil Jabar, the Deputy Director of Operations for the Nebraska Department of Transportation, brought the audience up to date "One Year Later" after the merger of the Department of Roads with the Department of Aeronautics, forming the Nebraska Department of Transportation.

Two of the many highlights during the Symposium's banquet are the awarding of the Wright Brothers Master Pilot award and Airport(s) of the Year. The General Aviation Airport of the Year was awarded to Millard Airport, and the Part 139 Airport of the Year was awarded to Central Nebraska Regional Airport at Grand Island.



NASAO Chairman Ronnie Mitchell with NASAO President- CEO Mark Kimberling

This year the Master Pilot award goes to two well deserving pilots for at least 50 years of flying with no accidents: Scott Stuart and Carl Johnson

Carl Johnson has military, general aviation, and airline credentials, with Type ratings in jets such as the DC-9, 757, 767 and the 777, as well as the Citation 500 series and the



Khalil Jabar -- NDOT

Eclipse, topped off with ratings in the Super Constellation and the Lockheed Hercules.

(NAC IS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

### PIREPS

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## Change!!

Ronnie Mitchell

Winter has been in full operation with storms on the east coast and heavy rains on the west coast. Here in Nebraska all you have to do is wait and the weather will change from shirt-sleeve clothing to stay inside where it's warm days! I've been doing a lot of that thus far, with a few exceptions.

Attending the 26th annual NAC Aviation Symposium and Aviation Maintenance and IA Renewal Seminar was a good start to chase those winter blues away. You will read more about it in the following pages. Then February 19-21 I will attend the NE Aviation Trades Assoc. convention in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Hotel. Aerial applicators are getting ready for the change of season to spring and agricultural planting.

Let me back up just a moment to December 31, 2017. Michael Heurta, the longest serving FAA Administrator, finished his term; Daniel Elwell, who had been the FAA Deputy Administrator, will serve as acting administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Elwell is a former Air Force lieutenant general and former commercial airline pilot for American Airlines. He was previously a senior vice president for safety, security and operations with Airlines for America (A4A), the leading trade group representing most of the nation's major airlines.

Under Heurta's leadership, Basic Med was brought into being on May 1, 2017. This program allows a pilot who has held a valid medical certificate 10 years previously to fly again. One will need to get a physical exam by a state licensed physician, complete the FAA's associated checklist, and complete the online aeromedical course. Then print the course completion certificate and keep it with your logbook or store it electronically. The pilot may then fly an aircraft weighing up to 6,000#, below 250 knots and 18,000 feet.

Talk about change, it's here today, with many other significant changes taking place with certification of avionics as well. What a great time to be in aviation!

## End of a 747 Era

In 1970, when passengers used to dress up to ride the airlines, Pan American Airlines was the launch customer for the Boeing 747. This was the first "Jumbo Jet" to enter service starting decades of long-distance travel. United Airlines retired its last 747 in November, with Delta Airlines retiring its last one in December, ending the 747's use by a U.S. airline. The freighter version will continue to operate, as well as being the airplane of choice for Air Force One. A twin engine Boeing, the 777-200LR, has the record of long distance flying, traveling from Hong Kong to London, an amazing 11,664 nm in 22 hours and 42 minutes.



Director Ronnie Mitchell

## Prep for Testing

Lee Svoboda

I have written on this subject before, but obviously some instructors have not heeded my word about proper preparation of an applicant prior to sending them to an examiner. The first 20 to 30 minutes of a practical test reflects the performance and/or customer service by an applicant's instructor. If an applicant appears before an examiner and either he/she or the aircraft they intend to use for the practical test is found not to be eligible for the test, the instructor has failed to meet the instructor requirements as outlined in the appropriate ACS. Further, in each ACS there is a Practical Test Checklist. If the instructor and the applicant use this checklist, the eligibility portion of the practical test should go very quickly, and the actual test should start within 15 minutes.



Lee Svoboda

Let's take a quick look at how this examiner handles the eligibility portion of the practical test. First, I do like it when the applicant shows up on time. That could set the tone for the test. Assuming IACRA is used, the first thing I need is an FTN and a photo ID. Those two items allow me to enter the IACRA system to review the applicant's file for correctness and to add the ID information. However, I can only look at the file if the Recommending Instructor (RI) has electronically signed the applicant's FAA Form 8710-1, the application form. If the RI has not accomplished this task and can be contacted, and has the capability to enter the applicant's IACRA file, the problem can be solved. However, if the RI cannot be contacted, the test must be rescheduled. If the IACRA file is correct, signed by the RI, the applicant electronically signs the application and we move on to more items of eligibility. I will only cover the Private Pilot in the interest of keeping this article within some limits. Other ratings have fewer, but like requirements. Here is a list of the things that the examiner will check:

Medical certificate—pilot certificate—knowledge test results—graduation certificate (if 141)—flight time records.

Within flight time records; endorsements for TSA, presolo knowledge, knowledge test, solo flight (no more than 90 days old), cross country solo, individual solo cross country trips, 61-107 and 61-109 and finally the most frequently forgotten 61-39. Even though the instructor has endorsed 61-107 and 61-109, the examiner must make sure all the requirements are logged in the flight time records. One that most frequently slips through the crack is the three solo full-stop landings at a towered airport when the applicant trains at a non-towered airport. Then I will check to make sure the applicant has the items of personal equipment listed on the checklist. Most frequently forgotten is a view limiting device. If all this is in order, the applicant should be eligible.

Aircraft eligibility to follow next time. FLY SAFE



## 43 to Go!

Okay, I'll just say it. My vintage Ercoupe and I are both aging. And the fact that we are the very same age, while interesting, is also problematic since we both now require more frequent repairs. Actually, thanks to the fantastic maintenance team at Fremont Aviation (although my medical team is also great), my Ercoupe is probably in better condition than I am.



Jerry Tobias

It was these kinds of thoughts, though, that started me thinking about the goal of attempting to fly to every public-use airport in Nebraska before I eventually park my Ercoupe...or before something or someone eventually parks me. I also had some specific objectives in mind for this mission, as I wanted to do it with purpose, not just do it to log more landings. My intent was to start this state-wide adventure this past summer, but some higher priorities prevented my doing so. The biggest of these "interruptions" was taking the family to Kauai to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. That island was our favorite get-away spot when we lived on Oahu, and we all had a very special and unforgettable time together this summer. How blessed I have been to spend more than 50 years of my life with my best friend!

So, it was September 28th before I began my "Fly Nebraska" mission. By then, of course, I was about out of good Ercoupe flying weather (meaning clear skies and light winds) for the year. And, since I am now limited by LSA rules, I was also hampered by the fewer daylight hours in the shorter fall days. However, I still managed to visit 36 of the 38 public-use airports east of Grand Island this fall, flying 1541 miles, taking dozens of photos, logging 24 hours and burning 100 gallons of fuel in the process (averaging just 4.17 gallons per hour!).

I thought that these flights would be special, and I was right! First, Nebraska is really beautiful from the air in the fall, plus every airport was unique and interesting. I enjoyed everything from the sod strips at Pawnee City and Genoa to Lincoln's massive concrete runways that I had previously only visited in Boeings and various corporate machines. I also encountered several apparently recently resurfaced strips in small towns all over the eastern part of the state. It was great to see these visual indications of local governments' understanding of the important contribution of their airports to their communities and of their commitments to general aviation. But, as always, the people that I met also left great impressions. Every person was a story! More about that later.

I have already planned my routes to visit the rest of Nebraska's public-use airports this next spring (there are a total of 79 in the state). If you haven't done so before, maybe you should consider planning a similar adventure yourself. I guarantee that you won't be disappointed!

## Flying Naked Part 2

Scott Stuart

Alaska almost seemed like a foreign country to me; three time zones difference, I think, had something to do with it. People there were great! As a tourist, you are King and Queen. They welcome you because tourism fuels some of their economy. I stayed at the Comfort Inn at Ship Creek. Good thing, as on my first return to Anchorage from Talkeetna, ATC told me to fly up Ship Creek before turning to Merrill Field. Up-Ship-Creek? I had to hear that twice to "get it". This goes to show local knowledge is of value!!



Scott Stuart

This time I hung out in Anchorage to see the airports I mentioned before heading back thru Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan. In 2002 we went to Homer where halibut fishing was famous; Seward where we saw "only" about 50 Bald Eagles; Valdez and Yakutat on our way to Skagway, Juneau and Gustavus for whale watching; continuing on to Sitka and then Ketchikan. Pack your bags and scout the weather for your travels following our 2002 itinerary.



"Big Boy" multi-engine trainer at Kenai

Again, there are FBO's in the above airports, and each very good and GA friendly! If your plane's legs are long enough, you can fly from Ketchikan to Seattle and thus no customs upon re-entry to the country, about 600 nautical miles.

Seventeen days is just about right, though you'll likely need a laundromat somewhere in there; otherwise you really will be flying naked if you have no clean undies!! As Steve on Hawaii Five-O used to say, "book 'em, Danno" (Dan Williams). Now, I



Ketchikan to Bellingham at 11,000 ft.

say "book Alaska," which is our last great wilderness and flight adventure. You can thank me later or maybe curse me if you get weathered in too long somewhere along the way. Airports are not as numerous as in the lower 48, and thus you need a good "Speed" to fill you in for the flights!

What was my favorite segment of the trip? Sourdough pancakes at The Bakery in Girdwood, and king crab risotto at The Salt in Juneau. Any questions, give me a call. I think I know it all – well, hardly!! Maybe you should be writing YOUR story of YOUR trip to Alaska for Pireps next summer.

Gear down and locked?



## Expectations

Not all surprises are good. With good flight planning, preparation, and frequent reassessment of changing conditions during flight, you can minimize those surprises. This can set up certain expectations for our flight.

We were departing Miami International Airport (MIA) to New York's JFK with a fully loaded 767. The weather at JFK did not seem too bad as it was forecasted to be 5,000 feet overcast but a cold 27 degrees. Even though the weather was technically forecasted to be VFR, dispatch filed two alternate airports for us.



Dan Petersen

The captain was going to fly the leg to JFK and I was to be the pilot monitoring. I usually pull up the latest weather every hour during flight to see the trends in weather and if the actual and forecasted weather matches. Today it did, JFK was still 5,000 overcast with no precipitation. As we descended, ATC told us that there was a report of mixed icing in the descent. This news didn't cause us any concern as this happens fairly frequently during descent. I pulled up the latest ATIS information and JFK was now reporting 3,000 overcast with light snow but with a great visibility of 5 miles. This was our first expectation not met.

We were being vectored for an ILS 22L approach and while on downwind I heard ATC tell another aircraft that the braking action was reported good. This piqued my interest so I quickly requested another ATIS and it was the same as the previous one. As we were turned onto final and cleared for the ILS, the tower controller told us to slow an additional 40 knots. This would be below our final approach speed so I told the tower we were unable. He told us to slow the best we could and a moment later told us to go around due to Air India not being able to make his turnoff in time. Second expectation not met.

As we went around, we went back to approach control to be vectored back around on the approach. Again, I quickly pulled up the ATIS to see if the weather had changed and it had not. We were soon cleared for another approach and were descending on the ILS. As we descended through 2,000, I mentioned to the captain that the weather was obviously not 3,000 overcast. Third expectation not met. We finally broke out at 300 feet and to our surprise it was only about 3/4 mile visibility with moderate snow and a snow covered runway. Fourth expectation not met.

Once we touched down, we soon realized why Air India had difficulty exiting the runway as it was slick. This was our fifth and final expectation that was not met. I reported to the tower that the braking action was not good but medium (fair).

As you can see, even with the best preparation and intentions, things can change in a hurry. It doesn't matter if you are IFR or VFR, don't be surprised by the unexpected.

## A Pilot's Blessings

It's just a great time, as I wish I were a bear hibernating through this week of Siberian weather, to take stock. Well first big thing, blessing number one, may come as a surprise: It's the U.S. of A. We have won the lottery. And pilots know how rich the prize is: Where else is it so doable for a civilian to be a pilot, own a plane, and fly? (If a Latin teacher can do it....)

I like my hangar. Full concrete floor! And (don't tell the Lincoln Airport Authority this!) it's cheaper than if I lived in any another town. It's close enough that I can ride my bike to it. And it's a great neighborhood. Your hangar neighbors are all sociable, helpful – in sum, like old schoolmates.



Tom Winter

And flight itself – what a privilege. When I started, the Boss asked, "but where would you go?" I replied, "Doesn't matter. It's inherently worthwhile, like skating." I was right.

I'm grateful for the shadow that gets farther and farther away from the runway, as the Bluebird of Happiness climbs. I'm grateful for wintry flights in early morning or evening when all the frozen farmponds reflect the sky and look like so many scattered emeralds. I'm grateful for the chance to repeat the sunset. Returning home, watch the sunset. Climb. Make the sun rise in the west! And watch the sunset again!

Of course there are expenses, but as I fly, I ask myself, "What's this worth?" and I cannot assign a number. But the Boss can! And this turns out to be a measure of how very lucky yours truly is:

One such wintry day some years ago at December's end, when flying time was restricted by bringing home bacon, "The Boss" up and asked me how many hours I'd flown. I looked up the number and confessed. She disappeared for some time. Turns out she was doing that thing that no pilot ever does: she totalled up all the associated cost of owning and flying the Cessna 150.

There's no hiding things from her: she was the math major, and she's the accountant, she's the CFO, and she's my manager. She knows.

Eventually, she came back to my favorite reading chair and

- 1) Told me how much the plane had cost us for the year.
- 2) Reported the cost per flying hour, and
- 3) Made me rejoice with her surprising conclusion. She concluded:

- 4) "You need to fly more!"

The logic was impeccable. The fixed costs (hangar rent, the annual, insurance...) are irreducible. But the cost per use, or cost per flying hour is the simplest of equations.  $Y = N/X$

To reduce Y, we can't make N smaller, but we have control – some control anyway, over the number for X.

So here is a New Year's wish for all our PIREPS readers: take X, and make it big! As Joanna put it: "You need to fly more!"



# Ground Clutter

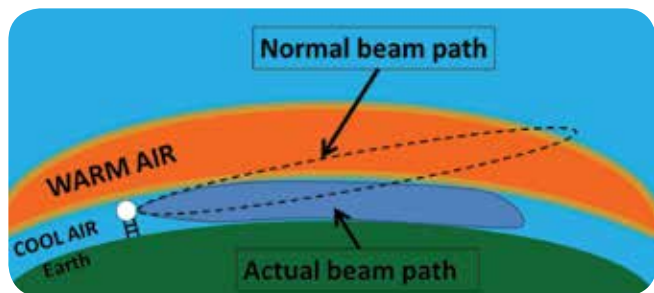
Bill Taylor

It's clear outside with no precipitation in sight, but when I look at the National Weather Service's weather.gov website, I see their radars have ground clutter all around them. Why can't the radar just be tilted upward to avoid seeing all that ground clutter? Pilots who use their own onboard radar instrumentation can do just that; they have the ability to tilt the radar upward to avoid seeing all that ground clutter. They are also able to move the radar downward just enough to see any precipitation but stay above the clutter.

The National Weather Service has roughly 160 radars installed across the contiguous United States, and in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, the Caribbean, and at select Department of Defense locations worldwide. Ground clutter around these radars has always been an issue, most noticeably at night and during the early morning hours. This is due to the earth's surface cooling during the nighttime hours. The cooler air extends upward a few hundred feet, and above this cooler air is a layer of warmer air. This creates a temperature inversion, and when the radar beam hits this inversion it bends back downward to the ground bouncing off objects creating the clutter we see.



Bill Taylor with NOAA



Radar Graphic Picture Provided by Jeff Kelley of NOAA

The National Weather Service's network of radars has different modes the radar can be operated in. During times of severe weather, the radar spins around faster and tilts upward higher. When the weather is quiet it spins much slower and doesn't tilt up nearly as high. No matter what the mode, the first full scan always starts near the ground at the 0.5 degree elevation angle just off the earth's surface. Ground clutter isn't all bad; it can actually be useful when forecasting weather. In the summertime, low level boundaries like cold and warm fronts can be seen more clearly within the clutter. This is important because these boundaries can serve as a focus for thunderstorm development. Smoke plumes from wildfires can also be quickly identified. So next time you see all that clutter around the radar, stop and see if you can identify a cold front moving in. The radar is always telling us something!

# Carb Ice

It was a typical damp, but VFR, winter day on Cape Cod. A brand new CFI I pulled the C-150 throttle to idle and announced

"Engine Failure". My student ran the checklist: Carb Heat—ON, Checked fuel, Affirm Mags—Both, and he picked a nice but short grassy field and set up for landing. Full flaps on short final and I called, "Go Around". Full throttle the engine continued at idle and the huge rocks in the



Dick Trail

field were looking real big as the engine huffed and snorted before increasing to full power. Carburetor ICE! Over the Atlantic on another winter day, I noticed that the four engines on the RC-121 periodically surged and then settled down to rhythm. Concerned, I asked the flight engineer, who told me that they always did that when he injected alcohol into the carburetors on those R-3350 Wright engines to melt the ice because they had no carburetor heat.

A couple of years ago, I pulled the throttle to idle in an 85 hp J-3 one clear but cold winter day out over the Nebraska Sandhills. Again, on the GO the engine was mighty slow to accelerate as we flared over a barely suitable landing spot. It takes a bit for the muffler, cooled during idling descent, to give off enough heat to melt carb ice when power is reapplied. With the butterfly valve closed at idle, Boyle's law tells us that there is a large pressure drop, and hence dramatic cooling, as the intake air accelerates past the throttle valve. Added to that, the gasoline vaporizing also adds to the cooling of the intake mixture and any super-cooled water droplets rapidly accumulate to deform the carburetor throat. That accumulated ice can only be melted by carb heat from the warming muffler when power is again called for as on go-around.

Recently a fellow instructor asking for advice informed me that morning he and a student in a C-172 had the engine quit on rollout for a practice landing, twice. The OAT was right at freezing and the humidity near 100%, perfect conditions for carburetor icing. He told me that he instructed his students to turn Carb Heat OFF just prior to landing, the idea being to prevent dust contamination and engine wear on landing. I suggested that it was a good thing that he didn't attempt a go-around unless he had a real long runway out ahead of him. With Carb Heat OFF there is nothing to melt carburetor ice when more power is called for and the engine just might quit as it did for him on landing.

Pull Carb Heat ON before reducing power and then do not turn Carb Heat OFF until the engine accelerates when power is again called for. Maybe that is why the engine manufacturer puts Carb Heat—OFF on the After Landing Checklist and not on the short final check. Hopefully, a word to the wise as we enjoy flying in Nebraska's cold weather season that is now upon us.



It is with great pleasure to announce the following five individuals have been inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame during the Nebraska Aviation Council Symposium.

## James E. Joyce

James E. Joyce was raised on a farm outside Atlantic, Iowa graduating from high school in 1958. He attended college, receiving his Airframe and Power Plant certificate. Over the next ten years, he worked as a mechanic on corporate aircraft and rentals. During this time he received his Private Pilot certificate.



James Joyce

In 1969, James accepted a teaching position in the aviation maintenance department with Western Nebraska Vocational Technical School in Sidney, Nebraska. Jim retired from the school, now Western Nebraska Technical College, in May of 2006, ending a 36-year tenure. During that time, Jim also served as

a Division Chairman for the technical programs. In 1996, he was instrumental in the project to build a new aviation maintenance facility at the Sidney Airport. Jim and his aviation assistant moved all of the aircraft and equipment from the original location at the Sioux Army Depot to the Sidney Airport.

Jim held his Inspection Authorization for 25 plus years. He inspected and maintained many of the local aircraft. Jim was often times called for advice on resolving a challenging situation.

He was elected to two terms on the Sidney Airport Authority, and served as chairman for several years. Projects in which he was instrumental included the repaving of the main runway and a new 22,000-gallon fuel farm.

James E. Joyce is an aircraft mechanic, but first and foremost he is an educator. His sense of humor and watchful eye made him an excellent instructor. Jim's willingness to share his wealth of knowledge made learning exciting and fun, leaving a lasting impression on those who had the pleasure of studying under him. It's impossible to know for certain, but Jim may have taught well over 1,000 mechanics.

## Stuart MacTaggart

Stuart E. MacTaggart, Col. USAF (Ret.) served 27 years as a U. S. Air Force Pilot. Following his retirement, he spent many years promoting aviation in Nebraska. Stu earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin, and a Master's Degree from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

His military career included serving as Commander of the 328th Bombardment Squadron followed by HQ SAC as Chief of Future Aircraft Concepts; then as head of Air Crew Training for the Command (B52, KC10, FB111, KC135, B1, U2). He served numerous tours in Southeast Asia during Vietnam, flying over 150 combat missions in B52's and C130 Aircraft. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for exemplary leadership, integrity, and unwavering dedication while serving in the Office of the Inspector General, at Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base. Stu was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Meritorious Service medals, six Air Medals, the Air Force Commendation Medal, and many others.



Stuart MacTaggart

Following retirement from the Air Force in 1992, Stu worked as a corporate pilot then as a flight instructor for a major airline. He joined the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics in 1998 and piloted State aircraft flying the Governor, State, and University Officials. He led youth-oriented aviation programs including the Aviation Art Contest and several week-long aviation summer camps. In 2008 he received the Frank

E. Sorenson Aviation Education Achievement Award.

Stu was appointed Director of the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics in 2004 until his retirement in 2009. His outstanding leadership was well-respected by the aviation industry. As Director he worked with FAA and local communities in the administration of the various state and federal programs. Stu improved every aspect of the Nebraska Department of Aeronautics and our State's aviation community certainly benefited.

Stu spent almost 50 years as a professional aviator.

## Peter & Floyd Roueche

The Hershey Flying Service was established in 1949 by Pete and Floyd Roueche as an aerial application business. They started the season in the southern states and eventually made their way back to Nebraska providing aerial application along the way. Their first plane, a 1939 J-3 Cub, was a wreck they picked up for \$400. They bolted on a tank and started spraying.

In 1969, the brothers purchased their first Ag-Cat and fell in love with the aircraft. Five years later, they decided to retire from the aerial application business and go strictly into repairing, refurbishing, and modifying the hardworking Grumman Ag-Cat. They were responsible for building all their jigs and fixtures for the aircraft, a skill they had both learned working in California at the aircraft bomber and pursuit factories prior to WWII.



Floyd and Peter Roueche

Later, they served their country by joining the Armed Forces, Pete as an Army infantry soldier and Floyd as an aircraft mechanic.

The Roueches were responsible for many STC (Supplemental Type Certificate) modifications to the Ag-Cat, along with holding numerous PMA (Parts Manufacturer Approval) replacement parts to support the fleet. Hershey Flying Service became the premier repair facility for Ag-Cats, with a customer base from the US, Canada, Mexico, and numerous countries around the world, including Australia, Chile, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. Goldene, Pete's wife, who worked alongside her husband, once said, "We do pretty much everything from the ground up."

An STC of which The Roueches were most proud was increasing the hopper by 14 inches, allowing it to carry 425 gallons of liquid during a spraying operation instead of the normal 300 gallon capacity. They built the fiberglass hopper and nicknamed the Ag-Cat "The Fat Cat." A series of shops housed the different manufacturing processes: fiber glass, metal stamping and part fabrication, painting, framework, and mechanic work. The ventilated paint shop walls and ceiling fixtures bore one color, that of the Ag-Cat yellow glow!

For years, many young men from the Hershey area were employed at The Hershey Flying Service. Under the tutelage and mentorship of Pete and Floyd Roueche, they gained knowledge, the importance of attention to detail, and a sense of pride in doing a job well. Those life-long lessons have left lasting impressions.

## Eyer L. Sloniger

Moorefield, Nebraska native, Eyer L. "Slonnie" Sloniger went on to have one of the more colorful and interesting careers of any of the early aviation pioneers of the Golden Age of Aviation. Slonnie or Old Number 1 was a Spad pilot in the US Air Service during WWI, then a barnstormer, racer, test pilot, an early air mail pilot moving on to a carrier as a commercial pilot, with over 24,000 hours. Sloniger learned to fly upon entering the Heavier Than Air Division of the US Army Signal Corps because he "just didn't want to walk or brush horses." After WWI, Sloniger was a test pilot and barnstormer for Ray Page's Lincoln Standard Aircraft Company. He flew for American oil companies in Mexico, delivering their employee payroll bomber style to avoid the Mexican Banditos that worked the highways and railroads. During negotiations for an air mail contract in China, Sloniger was confused by the Chinese Army as a Russian spy, was arrested, and almost shot as a spy. Employed by Robertson Airlines, he was one of the pilots that flew the inaugural flight for Contract Air Mail Route #2 with the

likes of Charles A. (Slim) Lindbergh and another Nebraska native, Harlan (Bud) Gurney.

Robertson Airlines eventually evolved into what is now known as American Airlines with Sloniger being the first pilot, thus having the seniority Number One. After 20 years with American Airlines, Sloniger moved to Matson Airlines Director of Flight Operations, and when that venture failed, he flew on demand or charter flights for Cal Eastern.

When Sloniger finally retired, he never took the controls again.



Eyer "Slonnie" Sloniger

He always said, "When I could not do as good a job of flying as I demanded of others, I would stop. A man who keeps flying beyond his time becomes an object of pity."

"You can always tell when a man has lost his soul to flying. The poor guy is hopelessly committed to stopping whatever he is doing long enough to look up and make sure the aircraft purring overhead continues on course and does not suddenly fall out of the sky. It is also his bounden duty to

watch every aircraft within view take off and land."

## Airports of the Year

General Aviation: Millard Airport. Submitted by Jim Beyer and



Jim and Trina Beyer accepting the Airport of the Year award for Millard from Ronnie Mitchell

Oracle Aviation. Millard has a very active full service FBO, including helicopter flight and drone training, plus involvement in EAA, IMC Club and Aviation Nation. Oracle now has a Part 145 avionics shop ready to install ADS-B

Out. The airport has new taxiway lights and RNAV approaches to both Runway 12 and 30.

**Part 139 Airport: Central Nebraska Regional Airport.**

(Grand Island). Submitted by Cindy Johnson, President, Grand Island Chamber of Commerce. Grand Island's fantastic

new terminal received the Commercial Airport Project of the Year from the American Association of Airport Executives, plus the Part 139 Medal of Excellence from the FAA in 2017. New agreements



Ronnie Mitchell awarding the Part 139 Airport of the Year to Brian Quandt and Dylan Evans for Central Nebraska Regional Airport

with American Airlines with service to Dallas, and Allegiant Air to Phoenix-Mesa. Two Vietnam "Honor Flights." New FBO building in 2015.

## PIREPS

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# Events Calendar

- **York Airport (KJYR)**, EAA Chapter 1055 Fly-in breakfast (free-will donation) on the 1st Saturday of every month, 8:00-10:00.

- **Crete Airport (KCEK)**, EAA Chapter 569 Fly-in breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of every month, 8:00-10:00.

- **Norfolk Airport (KOFK)**, Fly-in Breakfast Brunch Buffet Special, the last Sunday of every month, 10:00-1:30. PIC's get 50% off buffet price. Barnstormers 402-316-4099.

- **For sale:** A complete set of Ameriel ODAL lights. Call Diana Smith at Beatrice Airport. 402-223-5349

- **NATA Convention**, Feb 19-21, 2018 at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln, NE. For more information: <http://gonata.net>

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Scott Stuart has been strictly general aviation, soloing in a Cherokee 140 and presently owning a Bonanza plus an experimental seaplane. Scott is a contributing columnist to PIREPS as well as for the last 14 years.



Master Pilot -- Scott  
Stuart

Combined with the Nebraska Aviation Symposium, on Friday, the 47th annual Aviation Maintenance and IA renewal seminar began with Curt Campbell from Duncan Aviation discussing the theory, operation and diagnostics of compass systems. John Barone, with Aerox, followed up talking about oxygen safety and crew oxygen mask inspections. After lunch Joe Logie, with Champion Slick,

updated everybody on ignition systems and spark plugs. David Czarnecki, with Central Cylinder, gave a great presentation on Powerplant Field Inspections and repair. Lee Aerospace ended the first day with a detailed analysis of how windshields differ from one airplane to another and why.

That night at the evening program, the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic award this year was presented to Robert Tooker and Jerry Lee May. Bob Tooker joined Duncan Aviation in 1974, and quickly showed his leadership as the lead mechanic on two Learjet "demates". His maintenance expertise is well known, just as his humor to put the solution into perspective. Jerry Lee May started his maintenance career with the Army rotorcraft division, working into the position of Chief Inspector for his unit. After the Army, he graduated from Kearney State Teachers college and obtained a BA in industrial arts education. Jerry earned his A&P and IA and put those skills to use until his semi-retirement today. Saturday morning finished up the IA renewal program with an extremely interesting program by Brandon Homman on the different types of torque wrenches. He was followed up by Mike Chick Jr. from Duncan Aviation detailing ODA administrator duties. Lastly, Marcus Kloepping from Henkel Corporation talked about Threadlockers and Anti Seize usage.



Charles Taylor Master Mechanics awards to  
Robert Tooker (L) and Jerry Lee May (R) with  
Cheryl Tooker and Vivian May