

The WingNut

EAA Chapter One Flabob Airport (RIR) Riverside, CA



Volume 55, Issue 4

We make flying FUN!

April 2008

Breaking the sound barrier--without a plane!

Joe Kittinger is not a household aviation name like Neil Armstrong or Chuck Yeager. But what he did for the U.S. space program is comparable.

On Aug. 16, 1960, as research for the then-fledgling U.S. space program, Air Force Captain Joseph Kittinger rode a helium balloon to the edge of space, 102,800 feet above the earth, a feat in itself. Then, wearing just a thin pressure suit and breathing supplemental oxygen, he leaned over the cramped confines of his gondola and jumped--into the 110-degree-below-zero, near-vacuum of space. Within seconds his body accelerated to 714 mph in the thin air, breaking the sound barrier. After free-falling for more than four and a half minutes, slowed finally by friction from the heavier air below, he felt his parachute open at 14,000 feet, and he coasted gently down to the New Mexico desert floor.



Kittinger's feat showed scientists that astronauts could survive the harshness of space with just a pressure suit and that man could eject from aircraft at extreme altitudes and survive. Upon Kittinger's return to base, a congratulatory telegram was waiting from the Mercury seven astronauts--including Alan Shepard and John Glenn. More than four decades later Kittinger's two world records--the highest parachute jump, and the only man to break the sound barrier without an aircraft and live--still stand. The retired colonel and Aviation Hall of Famer, now 75, recalled his historic jump at his home in Altamonte Springs, Florida.

Take us back to New Mexico and Aug. 16, 1960.

Joe Kittinger: We got up at 2 a. m. to start filling the helium balloon. At sea level, it was 35 to 40 feet wide and 200 feet high; at altitude, due to the low air pressure, it expanded to 25 stories in width, and still was 20 stories high! At 4 a.m. I began breathing pure oxygen for two hours. That's how long it takes to remove all the nitrogen from your blood so you don't get the bends going so high so fast. Then it was a lengthy dress procedure layering warm clothing under my pressure suit. They kept me in air-conditioning until it was time to launch because we were in the desert and I wasn't supposed to sweat. If I did, my clothes would freeze on the way up.

How was your ascent? It took an hour and a half to get to altitude.

It was cold. At 40,000 feet, the glove on my right hand hadn't inflated. I knew that if I radioed my doctor, he would abort the flight. If that happened, I knew I might never get another chance because there were lots of people who didn't want this test to happen. I took a calculated risk, that I might lose use of my right hand. It quickly swelled up, and I did lose use for the duration of the flight. But the rest of the pressure suit worked. When I reached 102,800 feet, maximum altitude, I wasn't quite over the target. So I drifted for 11 minutes. The winds were out of the east.

(Continued on Page 5)

EAA Chapter One

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**Featured airplane
for April:**

Calendar



April 2008

4th -- First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

12th -- Young Eagles Rally
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

13th -- Chapter Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - noon

13th -- Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

26th -- Design Group Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 10 a.m.

26th--Pietenpol Gathering
Flabob Airport

May 2008

2nd -- First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

10th -- Young Eagles Rally
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

11th -- Mother's Day (no meeting)

17th -- Design Group Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 10 a.m.

18th -- Chapter Meeting Chapter One
Hangar - noon

18th -- Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

June 2008

6th -- First Friday Flicks
Chapter One Hangar - 5 p.m.

7th -- Young Eagles Rally
Chapter One Hangar - 8 a.m.

8th -- Chapter Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - noon

8th -- Board Meeting
Chapter One Hangar - 3 p.m.

15th -- Father's Day

21st -- Design Group Meeting



The Prez Sez...

April is here already and our extra chapter activities start happening. As you know, there have been two workshops in March (RV and ELSA) and our monthly Young Eagles Rallies and monthly membership meetings. The Pietenpol Gathering is April 26th and 27th and we have a special Young Eagles Rally in May. We are also getting ready for our Open House in September.

We are looking for volunteers to be on the Open House committee and one to chair the committee. If you have some spare time on your hands or know of someone who wants to help, please let us know. We will be looking for volunteers in September also to help with the Open House. Last year, the committee did a good job getting ready for the Open House; too bad the weather had to ruin it. We still had a great turnout at our Open House dinner.

Jerry Cortez

Famous racer looking for new home

Hello Leo, Kathy & Jim Pyle,

Attached to this e-mail you will find a photo of N76AQ, Race # 76 - "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" a racing Bi-Plane that was built for, and raced by John Lear (Bill's son).in 1968.



He was then taken over by J.O.Hall and campaigned at the Reno air Races until 1972 when it came in Second in the Bi-Plane Gold Race at 180.040 mph.

It is a Jungster III, that was the first of its type, but

did not get as funded or become as famous as its younger brothers, Sorceress by Don Beck, that is in the National Air & Space Museum, and Sundancer who took over winning when Sorceress retired.

It looks like we are going to lose our hangar in about a month, and I was hoping that you and the students might find this racing bi-plane "Jonathon" interesting enough that he might find a home at Flabob.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Ready

Interesting bit of aviation history...

On October 30, 1935, at Wright Air Field in Dayton, Ohio, the U.S. Army Air Corps held a flight competition for airplane manufacturers vying to build its next-generation long-range bomber. It wasn't supposed to be much of a competition. In early evaluations, the Boeing Corporation's gleaming aluminum-alloy Model 299 had trounced the designs of Martin and Douglas. Boeing's plane could carry five times as many bombs as the Army had requested; it could fly faster than previous bombers, and almost twice as far. A Seattle newspaperman who had glimpsed the plane called it the "flying fortress," and the name stuck. The flight "competition," according to the military historian Phillip Meilinger, was regarded as a mere formality. The Army planned to order at least 65 of the aircraft.

A small crowd of Army brass and manufacturing executives watched as the Model 299 test plane taxied onto the runway. It was sleek and impressive, with a 103-foot wingspan and four engines jutting out from the wings, rather than the usual two. The plane roared down the tarmac, lifted off smoothly, and climbed sharply to 300 feet. Then it stalled, turned on one wing, and crashed in a fiery explosion. Two of the five crew members died, including the pilot, Major Ployer P. Hill. (re. Hill AFB, Ogden, UT)

An investigation revealed that nothing mechanical had gone wrong. The crash had been due to "pilot error," the report said. Substantially more complex than previous aircraft, the new plane required the pilot to attend to the four engines, a retractable landing gear, new wing flaps, electric trim tabs that needed adjustment to maintain control at different airspeeds, and constant-speed propellers whose pitch had to be regulated with hydraulic controls, among other features. While doing all this, Hill had forgotten to release a new locking mechanism on the elevator and rudder controls. The Boeing model was deemed, as a newspaper put it, "too much airplane for one man to fly." The Army Air Corps declared Douglas's smaller design the winner. Boeing nearly went bankrupt.

Still, the Army purchased a few aircraft from Boeing as test planes, and some insiders remained convinced that the aircraft was flyable. So a group of test pilots got together and considered what to do.

They could have required Model 299 pilots to undergo more training. But it was hard to imagine having more experience and expertise than Major Hill, who had been the U.S. Army Air Corps' chief of flight testing.

Instead, they came up with an ingeniously simple approach: they created a pilot's checklist, with step-by-step checks for takeoff, flight, landing, and taxiing. Its mere existence indicated how far aeronautics had advanced. In the early years of flight, getting an aircraft into the air might have been nerve-racking, but it was hardly complex. Using a checklist for takeoff would no more have occurred to a pilot than to a driver backing a car out of the garage. But this new plane was too complicated to be left to the memory of any pilot, however expert.

With the checklist in hand, the pilots went on to fly the Model 299 a total of 1.8 million miles without one accident. The Army ultimately ordered almost 13,000 of the aircraft, which it dubbed the B-17. And, because flying the behemoth was now possible, the Army gained a decisive air advantage in the Second World War which enabled its devastating bombing campaign across Nazi Germany.



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Kittering space jump *(Continued from Page 1)*

What's it look like from so high up?

You can see about 400 miles in every direction. The formula is $1.25 \times$ the square root of the altitude in thousands of feet. (The square root of 102,000 ft is 319 X 1.25 = 399 miles)

The most fascinating thing is that it's just black overhead--the transition from normal blue to black is very stark. You can't see stars because there's a lot of glare from the sun, so your pupils are too small. I was struck with the beauty of it. But I was also struck by how hostile it is: more than 100 degrees below zero, no air. If my protection suit failed, I would be dead in a few seconds. Blood actually boils above 62,000 feet.

I went through my 46-step checklist, disconnected from the balloon's power supply and lost all communication with the ground. I was totally under power from the kit on my back. When everything was done, I stood up, turned around to the door, took one final look out and said a silent prayer: "Lord, take care of me now." Then I just jumped over the side.

What were you thinking as you took that step?

It's the beginning of a test. I had gone through simulations many times--more than 100. I rolled over and looked up, and there was the balloon just roaring into space. I realized that the balloon wasn't roaring into space; I was going down at a fantastic rate! At about 90,000 feet, I reached 714 mph. The altimeter on my wrist was unwinding very rapidly. But there was no sense of speed.

Where you determine speed is visual--if you see something go flashing by. But nothing flashes by 20 miles up--there are no signposts there, and you are way above any clouds. When the chute opened, the rest of the jump was anticlimactic because everything had worked perfectly. I landed 12 or 13 minutes later, and there was my crew waiting. We were elated.

How about your right hand?

It hurt--there was quite a bit of swelling and the blood pressure in my arm was high. But that went away in a few days, and I regained full use of my hand.

What about attempts to break your record?

We did it for air crews and astronauts--for the learning, not to set a record. They will be going up as skydivers. Somebody will beat it someday. Records are made to be broken. And I'll be elated. But I'll also be concerned that they're properly trained. If they're not, they're taking a heck of a risk.

We're Still Around!

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Friday Flick

George Peterson Documentary

WWII U.S. Naval Armed Guard

Friday, April 18, 2008



5:00 PM

@

EAA Chapter One

Hangar 16A

During World War II the United States Navy Armed Guard were U.S. Navy gun crews serving at sea on Merchant Ships.

The assignment as an Armed Guardsman was often dreaded because of the constant danger and because the merchant ships were among the slowest to receive updated equipment.

Our own George Peterson spent four years with the United States Navy Armed Guard as a gunners mate.

Please come view this documentary shared by one of our own Flabobians, George Peterson, who will talk about his service experience.

Join your fellow Flabobians for an evening of
Film-Friendship-Pizza & Drink
\$5.00 Donation

EAA Chapter One

Membership Meeting

Brick
Purchases
Benefit
The Building
Fund

Lunch will be
provided!!

Bring your favorite
salad or dessert
dish!!

April 13, 2008
at noon

Join us at the Chapter One Hangar for an
afternoon of fellowship & fun!!

SEE YOU THERE!

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