



# THREE ZERO NINER

July 2007

Meets every 3rd Monday in Charlotte, NC

## WE GOT TRIP REPORTS!!!!

**EAA Chapter 309 was founded in 1973 by a small group of aviation enthusiasts. Since that time, the membership has grown in size and experience. Members come with a variety of skill and experiences. Current members have aviation backgrounds ranging from student pilot all the way to Airline Transport Pilot. Several are A&Ps and all share a love of aviation. Membership is open to anyone interested in aviation and learning about the construction of Experimental Aircraft.**

**EAA 309 is a 501 c.3. organization. Your contributions are welcome and may be tax deductible.**

We had several very memorable trips reported for this newsletter. Scott Stout and family rented a 172 in Hawaii, John and Libby Schroeder flew their Lancair ES to Alaska, Steve Glasgow led a flock of RV's including Tad and Terry Sargent, and Ron and Kathy Schreck that flew to Yellowstone. Then Ron Schreck (*he didn't renew this year???*) must not have been too tired of flying, flew to all 109 North Carolina's public use airports in one day!



**John and Libby's** trip report is first (Days: 20; Total Nautical Miles: 6424 (approx.); Flying Time: 46.2; Average Cruise (KTAS) 175; Fuel Consumed: 496.6; Fuel Cost: \$ 2,179.70 (cheaper than flying in one of those big aluminum tubes!!!)

We left home at Lake Norman Air Park on June 2nd wondering a little bit about how it was all going to go. We returned 20 days later trying to describe it as a trip, an adventure, an odyssey or some other way to encapsulate the experience. It was all three and more.

The trip took us to Kennett, MO for a fuel stop and then to Lexington, NE for an overnight – all pre-planned but in search of cheap fuel. If you ever get out in that vicinity, we highly recommend an overnight in Lexington. We made it a point to stay there on the way home. The staff is superb, the gas is cheap, they lend you a modern van for the night. The town is small, quiet but interesting. It has at least one good restaurant – TEP's Bar & Grill. Since one of their industries is large cattle feed lots, you guessed it: it has generous and very reasonably priced cuts of beef. The prime rib ran over the edges of the plates. We stayed at a quiet Holiday Inn Express with amenities that rivaled some of the higher rent accommodations we had on the Alaska portion of the trip. One of the interesting things about the town was its location on the Union Pacific rail line. There were three sets of tracks and no at-grade road crossings at all in the town. All crossings were overpasses. Trains rumbled through at 60 mph and at about 20 to 30 minute intervals. About 2/3 of them were coal trains from Wyoming heading east or empty ones heading west.

On the next leg to Wyoming, we flew over some of the coal mining and loading operations. Impressive stuff. From there, it was on to Evanston, WY for a fuel stop. It was chosen for cheap gas and the runway. The field elevation was 7000+ feet above sea level and with a warm day (density altitude of 8420'), the 7,000 foot runway was about right for my standards! Cheap gas, self serve had been replaced by sticker shock. But as the guy said, they got sticker shock when they had to replenish their stock the previous week. That was the story for a lot more stops on the trip.

The next leg was a short one to Ely, NV for a two night visit with my sister. Salt Lake Center gave us a direct-to clearance to Ely from just west of Salt Lake City – across 3 Restricted Areas. They are in desolate country and rumor has it that the Army conducted some of its nerve gas testing there. We cancelled our clearance when we crossed the Shell Creek Range at 14,000 MSL and cruised into the valleys and mountain ranges where I spent many years growing up, hiking, hunting and camping.

The next leg was VFR wandering around old fishing and hunting grounds to Elko, NV for what became a three night visit, versus the planned two nights, with my sister and her family. It had snowed



**309'ers WEB SITE [www.eaa309.org](http://www.eaa309.org)**

[Previous Page](#) [Home](#) [Next Page](#)

**2007**



**Chapter 309  
Charlotte, NC**

**YOUR NAME**

**EVENT SCHEDULE!**

Saturday, August 4th - 10:00 am. Navigation School at Gastonia Aero Club hangar, Gastonia Airport

Saturday, August 18th - 8:30 AM at Lincoln County Airport (IPJ) Time and Distance Dead Reckoning Proficiency competitive flight

Saturday, September 8 - EAA 309 Fly out & lunch

Thursday - Sunday, October 4-7. EAA's Aluminum Overcast B-17 at Concord Regional.

Saturday, November 10th - Lincolnton Fall Fly In.

Monday, December 10 - EAA 309 Christmas Dinner Party at the Acropolis Restaurant, Cornelius,

**And We need your suggestions and ideas for programs in 2007! Call or Email Kevin Cromie at 704-348-8529 or [kcromie "at" hearstsc.com](mailto:kcromie@hearstsc.com)**

almost 9 inches in the mountains on day two and we had avoid icing in solid, lingering cloud layers over all the area between Nevada and neighboring Oregon and Idaho, especially the Jarbidge Mountains between Elko and Twin Falls, ID. If you want to visit a vibrant Great Basin town with ranching, mining (gold), gambling and sheep herding, this is the place. Be sure to go to the Bil Toki restaurant for a huge family style Basque dinner with three entrees', the best cabbage soup, salad, fries, beans, spanish rice and dessert. Before dinner, if you want a real jolt, have one of their Picon Punches.

If you want a real adventure, rent a car and head for the wide spot in the road named Jiggs, NV. The centerpiece and only real landmark is the Jiggs Bar where real cow hands and miners hang out swapping stories, drinking whiskey and beer from long neck bottles. All drinks and beer are 2 bucks. The owners are 85 year-old Harry (still ranching) and his wife. His stories about the old days of ranching, drinking and mining are absolutely fascinating. He says all his cows have the same name: "Sum' Bitch".

Next leg was to Walla Walla, WA. Because of the weather delay in Elko, it could be for only a one-night visit with my cousin and her husband. It is a beautiful town not far from the Snake River and

The Board had decided that Name Tags will be made for all new members. Contact Earl Fortner - Phone or e-mail Earl at 704-455-5326 or [efortner@vnet.net](mailto:efortner@vnet.net). If you have not received your name tag yet, please contact Earl.

These name tags not only look nice, it helps us learn each other's names - AND if you don't wear yours to each EAA 309 meeting or event, you will be assessed a \$1.00 charge to encourage you to wear yours!

the Columbia, and is known for its wheat farming and "Walla Walla Sweets" – better than Vidalia onions. The town is rapidly getting the name for some of the best wines in the country, so we had to give them a try in the tasting rooms. Land prices are going through the roof as winemakers from all over the world try to buy into the game. The two dozen or so wineries now produce some of the best wines in the world. They say: In the local divorce court, the only decision is not who gets the house or kids or bank account. If there is a winery and vineyards in the mix, that is the big one.

The final leg before the Alaska journey was to Olympia. Icing over the Cascades forced us into going due west through the Columbia Gorge to Portland, thence north to OLM. We were in periods of light-to-moderate rain all the way from the beginning of the Gorge to Olympia. The FSS really busted the forecast. For reliability reasons, I had hardwired the Wx-Worx receiver to the tablet PC and could see what was happening all up and down the coast. About the time I had decided to divert (no alternate required in the FSS forecast), OLM went from a red METAR to a Blue (1000 broken and 4 in light rain) so Seattle APC gave me vectors to an ILS final. Although we could see the ground through a broken deck at the final approach fix we broke out at 500 feet and about 2 miles in mist.

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Chapter Officers**

**President:**  
**Bill Repucci**  
**704-607-4572**

**Vice President:**  
**Kevin Cromie**  
**704-366-8529**

**Secretary:**  
**Bob Allen**  
**704-892-4095**

**Treasurer:**  
**Sam Stewart**  
**704-588-0776**

**Directors:**  
**Bob Dobbins, Dale Ensing, Tad Sargent, John Schroeder, & Bob Thayer**

**Young Eagles Coordinator: Don Sink**  
**Membership: Ken Poindexter**

**Technical Counselors:**  
**Kent Ashton, Neil Stewart, Dale Ensing, Ron Murray, Ronnie Brown and Glenn Babcock.**

**Flight Advisors:**  
**Dale Ensing & Ronnie Brown**

**Newsletter & Web Page Editor:**  
**Ronnie Brown**  
**704.892.5122**

## THREE ZERO NINER

...--      -----      ----.



(Continued from page 2)

### I have always considered having weather in the cockpit as being the single most important supporting tool when flying in IFR/IMC.

I now believe that if you do not have it, seriously consider not flying in IMC. The tablet I have cannot be used above about 10,000 ft. because it tends to trash the hard drive, so I am looking for one with a solid state hard drive. It would have helped on the way home at 13,000 to 15,000 to ameliorate another busted forecast. The other recommendation is to upgrade to "Aviator" - the top service WxWorx has - for any long cross country. It is very helpful to see the Lows, Highs, fronts, winds and troughs. You can upgrade now for a month at a time and go back to "Lite" for local flying.

The trip home was four legs with the first being an overnight stay in Wenatchee, WA to visit my old college roommate and some of his relatives I had met at our graduation. I had not seen him in 49 years. He retired from the Army after 20 years and spent the ensuing 30 running an exotic animal farm in Cashmere, WA. It is another beautiful town on the banks of the Columbia where the Wenatchee River joins the Columbia. There are pear, cherry and apple orchards as far as the eye can see.

The second leg was a direct flight over the Bitterroot Mountains, the upper Rockies and into Billings, MT. The weather, again, was not as forecast because the effects of a low to the north of our planned route had begun to drift faster to the south. When we were asked if we would accept a direct-to-Billings routing, we took it. This kept us moving to the south and less weather.

## Mark your Calendar!

Events Downloaded from [www.southern-aviator.com](http://www.southern-aviator.com)

**Saturday, July 14th - 10:00 am. Navigation School at Gastonia Aero Club hangar, Gastonia Airport**

8/4/2007 Salisbury, NC -- Monthly "First Saturday at the EAAgles Nest" is gathering of flyers at Salisbury/Rowan County Airport (RUQ) (11 am-3 pm)

**Saturday, August 18th - 8:30 AM at Lincoln County Airport (IPJ) Time and Distance Dead Reckoning Proficiency competitive flight**

Saturday, September 8 - EAA 309 Fly out & lunch

9/15/2007 - 9/16/2007 Albemarle, North Carolina -- 2007 Albemarle/ Stanly County Fly-In and Air Show (VUJ), 10am-3pm.

9/22/2007 Farmville, NC -- EAA Chapter 960 Fall Fly-In. Flanagan Field (N08) (10am-2pm). Lunch at noon.  
Email: [webmaster@eaa960.org](mailto:webmaster@eaa960.org) Web: [www.eaa960.org](http://www.eaa960.org)



July 23 - 29, 2007

**GAC**  
GASTONIA AERO CLUB  
[www.flygac.org](http://www.flygac.org)

Based at Gastonia Municipal Airport, GAC is a flying club, with three aircraft, including a Cessna 172 and 182 and a Piper Cherokee 180. Memberships available. 704-892-4095 or [info@gastoniaaeroclub.com](mailto:info@gastoniaaeroclub.com)

## WANT ADS



**1998 Yamaha V-rago 250 motorcycle** for sale. 5000 miles, excellent mechanical condition. This is a cool little V-twin cruiser with a black tank, great for first-time or smaller riders. Asking \$1900. Glenn

Babcock 813-505-6027 (cell)

**RC Allen 22-11F vacuum gyro** for sale, new in the box. This is a flagged, lighted gyro. Sells for \$923 at Spruce; I'm asking \$750. Glenn Babcock 813-505-6027 (cell)

**Watch repair services.** I also have an inventory of used fine watches - both quartz and mechanical, some antique. Gary Witt 704-866-0784

**For SALE: Aeronca Chief** is 1941 model and has a 65-CA engine, The engine has just had a major overhaul with new millenium cylinders and pistons and has approx. six hours since overhaul. The wooden Sensinich prop was overhauled by Sensinich earlier this year. The plane is in annual and all AD's complied with. \$17,500. **Call Earl Fortner at 704 455-5326**

**Cherokee Arrow** is a 1967 with 2006 hours total time air-frame and engine. Engine has never been overhauled but runs fine. Aircraft is full IFR and has Narco mark 12 D radios, ADF, Loran, DME, etc. New upholstery 2004. Fuel tanks were pulled and all hoses and vent lines were replaced two years ago. Never had a gear up landing and never been used as a trainer. Priced to sell! Both aircraft are based at 8A6 Wilgrove and currently flying. **Call Earl Fortner at 704 455-5326.**

## New date for Navigation Class

“Due to limited sign-ups for this Saturday, July 14, the navigation school will be postponed until 10:00AM on Saturday, August 4. Hopefully more members will be able to attend on that date, but the school will be conducted on August 4, regardless. Please plan to attend and reserve your place in the class by sending me an email at [robert-pallen@roadrunner.com](mailto:robert-pallen@roadrunner.com)

## Meet director Bob Dobbins



I was born into an aviation family and have been close to airplanes all my life. My dad learned to fly in 1928 and was involved in aircraft maintenance and flying for most of his adult life. He was a Naval Aviator during World War II and after the war he continued as a pilot in the Naval Air Reserve for as long as the Navy would let him fly. When I was 17, I enlisted in the Naval Reserve so that I could fly with him in Navy aircraft. Unfortunately, my vision was not 20/20 so I was not able to follow in his footsteps as a Naval Aviator.

I learned to fly in 1969 when I was a young engineer working in General Electric's Aircraft Engine Group in Cincinnati, Ohio. Since that time most of my flying has been in Cessna 150/152's and 172's. From 1996 to 2004 I was part owner of a Cessna 172 with Ronnie Brown, John Schroeder and Howard Cochran. Ronnie and I made many memorable flights together including trips to Oshkosh, Sun and Fun, the North Carolina Coastal Air Tour, etc. I currently fly with Don Sink in his Cessna 172 at Lake Norman Airpark. My two sons are both private pilots. My grandson, Chris Yeager, is also a private pilot and is a senior at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He will enter Air Force flight training after graduation in the spring of 2007.

Airplanes and flying have always been a big part of my life.

(Editor's note - if you want to know what all those old airplanes are at a vintage aircraft fly-in, be certain to take Bob Dobbins with you. He knows them ALL!!! And probably flew in a bunch of them with his dad!)



## 309'ers Fly to Yellowstone

**What an adventure! On June 7th, I met 9 other RV's at Statesville, NC for a 8:00 AM departure. Destination: Cody, WY, [almost 1400 NM away](#)**

**Most of us were from the Carolina's, but two flew up from Florida the night before and we were joining up with another couple from Virginia and other from Maine while enroute. Last but not least, Pam was going to meet us in Cody via a commercial flight in a couple days. All together, eleven RV's and seventeen people! See Larry Bowen's web site at [http://bowe-naero.com/mt3/2007/06/yellowstone\\_200.html](http://bowe-naero.com/mt3/2007/06/yellowstone_200.html) for the rest of the exiting story and fantastic photos!**

# THREE ZERO NINER



## President's Corner

by *Bill Repucci*

## Overcast predicted

On October 4<sup>th</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup> your chapter will sponsor a visit from the EAA's B-17, Aluminum Overcast. The B-17 will offer rides from the Concord airport, as they did in the past. Tad Sargent and Chuck Porter have graciously offered to act as the Event Coordinators for the visit. When they call asking for support, I know we can count on you to help. It will take commitment from all members to make this visit a success.

Editor's Note: Bill has been busy with moving his RV-9 to Goose Creek and didn't get a president's corner article to me this month.



## RV-9 Project Status - Bill Repucci

Happy Birthday to me! Today I got the best birthday present ever! We moved the fuselage out of the basement, transported it to the airport and installed the wings with a LOT of help from friends! Thanks everyone. (6/30/07)

A week after moving the -9 to the airport all the control surfaces were installed and connected as well the pitot and AOA lines and a bunch of other little things. With all that done, there was nothing left to do but start the engine. After 48 years of knocking around various basements, garages, owners, etc. the O-290-D2 fired off on the third prop blade, which startled me as I wasn't expecting it to start that easy. A big thanks to Radomir, Tad, Ron, and my wife Nora for their help with this project!

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION



**Dale Ensing's RV-6A N118DE in it's new paint. Paint job by Legends in Aiken SC.**

## Builder and Owner Courses

by *Mike Moore*

Beginning in August of this year, AvWorks will offer workshops for members and friends. The classes will include welding, basic electricity, and others useful to the homebuilder. For more information or questions contact Mike, [michaelmoore@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelmoore@yahoo.com)



**Scott Stout volunteers to lead 309's Young Eagles!!**

# THREE ZERO NINER

...--      -----      ----.

## EAA 309 Navigation School

Saturday, August 4, 2007 10:00 am at Gastonia Aero Club hangar, Gastonia Airport.

This 2 hour school with a CFI instructor is intended for those of you who would like to flight plan using basic navigation equipment and as a refresher before the Dead Reckoning competition on 8.18.07. Primary contact for questions is Bob Allen or Sam Stewart. A \$10 participation fee and which allows participants to log the time spent in class as ground school.

## Dead Reckoning Navigation Competition

August 18<sup>th</sup>-

by John Wigney

Saturday, August 18, 2007. 8:30 am check in at Lincoln County Airport (KIPJ). This is a fun event! Come and demonstrate your skill with compass and chart only round a set course. No GPS or VOR devices will be allowed. All the details are now posted at the Events Schedule page on the EAA 309 website. The event is limited to 20 entries so find your navigator or your pilot and make sure you get your entry in soon. Contact Sam Stewart and John Wigney with questions

We will need two key participants in each plane :-

- (i) An intrepid navigator who can read a stop watch and
- (ii) a resolute pilot who knows where he/she is going!

Please brush up your plotting skills with compass, DG, chart and E6B because that is all you will have. Remember, you will not be able to use GPS or VOR. Pilots, please ensure that you have one of these skilled navigators lined up for the event. They will be snapped up fast.

The format of this event will be a course around 4 or 5 waypoints which will be advised on the evening before.

Planes will be handicapped based on published cruise speed to ensure that all planes are on a level footing. This is not a race. Accuracy of time around all waypoints will be the basis of awarding the winner.

Please let John Wigney or Sam Stewart know if you are interested in attending the July 14 navigation class (this class is NOT required to enter the competition scheduled for August 18 - but if its been a while since you only used dead reckoning and charts to navigate, then you might want to attend this refresher class). **Plan the flight - fly the plan - precisely!**

*(Continued from page 3)*

Although it was mostly a broken condition and we could see the ground, the MEA's and Minimum Vectoring Altitude kept us in the area of icing potential. We had to dodge the clouds a lot. ATC was very helpful by giving us an altitude block and permission to deviate around clouds as required. From Billings, it was through eastern Wyoming and on to Lexington, NE for the night. It was bumpy, but a fairly scenic flight. The next day we flew to Jacksonville, IL for fuel (cheap gas) and about an hour's delay to let a front really clear out of the Columbus, IN area. We requested a direct-to Columbus from the Terre Haut VOR to avoid having to go up to Indianapolis. We had to plan on the Indianapolis caper to avoid a gunnery range to the west of Columbia. They granted the direct and then spent the next 20-30 minutes vectoring us around the range and bringing us in from the south. Go figure. On the whole, ATC really gave us good service, especially when they are informed that the weather is bothering you. We spent a couple of nights with another classmate on his 54 acre "gentleman's" farm and then took the last leg back to 14A – happy to be home but in awe over the journey and experience.

For me, it was a learning and refresher course. I had not flown IFR in the system very much at all for over 30 years. Much had changed for the better, but there was a lot to re-learn and learn new. I really got comfortable flying in the system and having the radar flight following all the time was a great help. Another aspect was learning what that great Lancair ES could really do. It flew like a champ all the way. I came back feeling far more comfortable flying it in many different conditions. The biggest learning experience was the Alaska part of the journey. The next newsletter will cover that in great detail.



## Dear Fellow Aviators,

by Charlie Littwin

Below is info on a Bahamas Fly In. All Aviators are welcome. You do not need to be a member of Caribbean Flying Adventures to go (but it is a "must have in the flight bag" if you fly to the Bahamas or the Caribbean on your own).

Patti and I are going. I have met the organizer and his wife in Jamaica and they are great folks. They will be at booth #4061 in Hangar D at Oshkosh, but if you're interested in the Fly In I suggest contacting him ASAP at [caribbeanflyingadventures.com](http://caribbeanflyingadventures.com) while there is still room. For those not based in Florida a list of hotels is at the bottom for the night before departure.

## THREE ZERO NINER



### Meet new members David and Rebecca Upham....

Growing up in the suburbs of Milwaukee, our house was under the extended centerline for the local GA airfield, and I would always stop and look up whenever someone flew over. My favorite plane was a swallowtail Baron that was based there at Timmerman, and although it may have been just my five-year-old's imagination I could've sworn that he'd rock his wings to me when I'd be out standing in the front yard, waving to him.

My first GA flight didn't come until much later, when I was sixteen, in a Cessna 152 at the local flight school. It probably wasn't the best choice of aircraft for a first flight, as I was over six feet tall even then and that particular plane had no headsets. I'd always wondered what it was like to fly in a small airplane, and now I knew -- loud and cramped!

That could have been the end of my flying, but growing up in Wisconsin (and living so close to Oshkosh) you're never cured of the aviation bug once you've caught it. Even after moving down to Chicago, marrying, and getting a job with Nations-Bank, I knew that I would get my license someday. The realization that it was "now or never" came when my wife Rebecca was expecting our first child. So, in the fall of 1999 I began lessons at Palwaukee airport, just north of Chicago. It took a while -- I lost two flight instructors to regional airlines, and my first flight school folded -- but I passed my checkride in November 2000, three months after our daughter was born. Two sons came along in 2002 and 2005, and time and money became too scarce to allow for much flying.

Still, I had a bank colleague pursuing his commercial and CFI certificates, and he worked hard to keep my focus on returning to flying. When Bank of America transferred me to Charlotte in January of '06 I looked around for a local flight school and instructor. I've flown with a CFI a few times from Concord Regional, but I'm still looking for the right instructor to help me become a safe, proficient pilot once again.

And who knows, maybe someday I can convince my wife to let me start a homebuilt project... Rebecca is a mechanical engineer, after all, so she shouldn't be too hard to persuade. Meanwhile, I'll be glad to vicariously enjoy the projects of my fellow members in EAA 309, and learn what I can about flying in the Carolinas.



### 110 NC Airports in one day!!!

*by Ron Schreck*

Can't say that I'm ready to do it all over again, but a long shower and a good night's sleep are just what I needed after flying for over seventeen hours yesterday! I'm not sure where the idea came from, but at some point I decided that it sure would be neat to touch down at all of the public use airports in North Carolina. Then some idiot (perhaps me) suggested that it might be possible to do it in one day! That's 109 landings in 24 hours! (110 if you count my home field, which is a private airport.) As Tom May, my next door neighbor pointed out, that's a landing every

thirteen minutes. Impossible! As it turned out, after seventeen hours and six minutes of flying time I touched down at all 110 airports (109 public plus one private) and averaged a landing every nine and a half minutes. Total distance, not including circling to land and a few bomber patterns behind "normal" pilots, was 1991 nautical miles and the average speed was 116 knots. The total elapsed time was 19 hours, 51 minutes from the first public airport, Concord Regional Airport (JQF) to the last, Siler City Municipal Airport (5W8). I spent two hours cooling my heels at Currituck County Airport (ONX), waiting for sunrise so I could start knocking off the unlighted airports. First Flight Airport (FFA) at Kitty Hawk was the first unlighted destination and it felt pretty awesome to land at the site of man's first powered flight at first light on Independence Day! Being a holi-

### And losing a member....

Ron Miller sent this note "This is really a goodbye. I am leaving US Airways early to take a position with the FAA as an Aviation Safety Inspector for South West Airlines in Dallas Texas. I hope to see some of the EAA 309th at various fly in across the country. I will be in N623CM."

Ron just completed his RV. He worked in the Simulator Training Facility in Charlotte and set up the tour for EAA 309 where we got to fly and land Airbuses!!! Great thrill! Good luck and best wishes to Ron!

## THREE ZERO NINER

...--      -----      ---.

day, most of the restricted areas were cold and all of the military bases were quiet but a few events did make me wonder if the day was to be successful.

The rest of Ron Schreck's story can be found at <http://groups.google.com/group/ea309>



### 1941 CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF the GLOBE BY PAN AM'S "PACIFIC CLIPPER"

This article is sure to arouse empathy from aviators who have piloted or navigated aircraft over long stretches of open ocean...or imagined the challenges of doing so.

The Round The World Saga of the "Pacific Clipper"  
John A. Marshall

Engines: Four (4) 1,600 hp (1,192 kW) Wright R-2600 Twin Cyclone (1,192 kW), 14 cylinder, air-cooled, radial engines.

Wing Span: 152 ft. (46.33 m.)

Length: 106 ft (32.31 m.)

Max T.O. Weight: 84,000 lb. (38,102 kg.)

Max level speed: 199 mph (320 km/h)

Cruising speed: 184 mph (296 km/h)

Range: 5,200 miles (8369 km)

First flight: June 7, 1938

Ceiling: 19,600 feet

Accommodation: 10 crew, 74 passengers

*This article originally appeared in the August 1999 Issue of "Air and Space Magazine" - This is a continuation of the story that began in the June issue of the 309'er Newsletter.*

It was another hour until they reached the island, and the Boeing finally touched water in the harbor at Trincomalee. The British Forces stationed there were anxious to hear what Ford and his crew had to report from the war zone to the east, and the crew was duly summoned to a military meeting. Presiding was a pompous Royal Navy Commodore who informed Ford in no uncertain terms that he doubted Ford would know a submarine if it ran over him. Ford felt the hackles rise on the back of his neck. He realized that he could not afford to make an enemy of the British military, the fate of the Pacific Clipper rested too heavily in their hands. He swal-

lowed hard and said nothing.

It was Christmas Eve when they began the takeoff from Ceylon and turned the ship again to the northwest. The heavily loaded Boeing struggled for altitude, laboring through the leaden humid air. Suddenly there was a frightening bang as the number three engine let go. It shuddered in its mount, and as they peered through the windscreen the crew could see gushes of black oil pouring back over the wing. Ford quickly shut the engine down, and wheeled the Clipper over into a 180 degree turn, heading back to Trincomalee. Less than an hour after takeoff the Pacific Clipper was back on the waters of Trincomalee harbor. The repairs to the engine took the rest of Christmas Eve and all Christmas Day. One of the engine's eighteen cylinders had failed, wrenching itself loose from its mount, and while the repair was not particularly complex, it was tedious and time-consuming. Finally early in the morning of December 26th, they took off from Ceylon for the second time. All day passed as they crossed the lush carpet of the Indian sub continent, and then cut across the northeastern corner of the Arabian Sea to their landing in Karachi, touching down in mid-afternoon.

The following day, bathed and refreshed, they took off and flew westward across the Gulf of Oman toward Arabia. After just a bit over eight routine hours of flying, they landed in Bahrain, where there was a British garrison.

Another frustration presented itself the following morning as they were planning the next leg of their journey. They had planned to fly straight west across the Arabian peninsula and the Red Sea into Africa, a flight that would not have been much longer than the leg they had just completed from Karachi.

"When we were preparing to leave Bahrain we were warned by the British authorities not to fly across Arabia," said Ford. "The Saudis had apparently already caught some British fliers who had been forced down there. The natives had dug a hole, buried them in it up to their necks, and just left them."

They took off into the grey morning and climbed through a solid overcast. They broke out of the clouds into the dazzling sunshine, and the carpet of clouds below stretched westward to the horizon. "We flew north for about twenty minutes," Ford said, "then we turned west and headed straight across Saudi Arabia. We then flew for several hours before there was a break in the clouds below us, and damned if we weren't smack over the Mosque at Mecca! I could see the people pouring out of it, it was just like kicking an anthill. They were probably firing at us, but at least they didn't have any anti-aircraft."

The Pacific Clipper crossed the Red Sea and the coast of Africa in the early afternoon with the Saharan sun streaming in the cockpit windows. The land below was a dingy yellowish brown, with nothing but rolling sand dunes and stark rocky outcroppings. The only sign of human habitation was an occasional hut; every so often they flew over small clusters of men tending livestock who stopped and shielded their eyes from the sun, staring up at the strange bird that made such a noise. The

## THREE ZERO NINER

...--      -----      ----.

crew's prayers for the continued good health of the four Wright Cyclones became more and more fervent. Should they have to make an emergency landing here they would be in dire straits indeed.

Later in the afternoon they raised the Nile River, and Ford turned the ship to follow it to the confluence of the White and Blue Niles, just below Khartoum. They landed in the river, and after they were moored the crew went ashore to be greeted by the now familiar hospitality of the Royal Air Force. Ford's plan was to continue southwest to Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo and begin their South Atlantic crossing there. He had no desire to set out across the Sahara; a forced landing in that vast trackless wasteland would not only render the aircraft forever immobile, but the crew would surely perish in the harshness of the desert.

Early the next morning they took off from the Nile for Leopoldville. This was to be a particularly long overland flight, and they wanted to leave plenty of daylight for the arrival. They would land on the Congo River at Leopoldville, and from there would strike out across the South Atlantic for South America.

The endless brown of the Sudan gave way to rolling green hills, and then rocky crests that stretched across their path. They flew over native villages, and great gatherings of wildlife. Herds of Wildebeest, hundreds of thousands strong, stampeded in panic as the Clipper roared overhead. The grassland soon turned to jungle, and they crossed several small rivers, which they tried to match to their maps. Suddenly ahead they saw a large river, much bigger and wider than others they had crossed, and off to their right was a good-sized town. The river had to be the mighty Congo, and the town was Bumba, the largest settlement on the river at that point. From their maps they saw that they could turn and follow the river downstream to Leopoldville. They had five hundred miles to fly.

Late in the afternoon they raised the Congolese capital of Leopoldville. Ford set the Boeing down gently onto the river, and immediately realized the strength of the current. He powered the ship into the mooring, and the crew finally stepped ashore. It was like stepping into a sauna. The heat was the most oppressive they had yet encountered; it descended on them like a cloak, sapping what energy they had left.

A pleasant surprise awaited them however, when two familiar faces greeted them at the dock. A Pan American Airport Manager and a Radio Officer had been dispatched to meet them, and Ford was handed a cold beer. "That was one of the high points of the whole trip," he said.

After a night ashore they went to the airplane the next morning prepared for the long over-water leg that would take them back to the western hemisphere. The terrible heat and humidity had not abated a bit when the hatches were finally secured and they swung the Clipper into the river channel for the takeoff. The airplane was loaded to the gunnels with fuel, plus the drum of

oil that had come aboard at Noumea. It was, to put it mildly, just a bit overloaded. They headed downstream into the wind, going with the six-knot current. Just beyond the limits of the town the river changed from a placid down stream current into a cataract of rushing rapids; pillars of rocks broke the water into a tumbling maelstrom. Ford held the engines at takeoff power, and the crew held their breath while the airplane gathered speed on the glassy river. The heat and humidity, and their tremendous gross weight were all factors working against them as they struggled to get the machine off the water before the cataracts. Ford rocked the hull with the elevators, trying to get the Boeing up on the step. Just before they would enter the rapids and face certain destruction, the hull lifted free. The Pacific Clipper was flying, but just barely. Their troubles were far from over, however. Just beyond the cataracts they entered the steep gorges; it was as though they were flying into a canyon. With her wings bowed, the Clipper staggered, clawing for every inch of altitude.

*This article originally appeared in the August 1999 Issue of "Air and Space Magazine"*

*See the August issue of the 309'er for the rest of the story!*



**Can you imagine flying around the world with only this panel?**

# B-17

## FLYING FORTRESS

*Aluminum Overcast*



### **MISSION:**

Charlotte, North Carolina  
October 4th – 7th, 2007

### **AIRPORT:**

Concord Regional Airport

### **DAILY FLIGHT TIMES:**

9:30  
10:15  
11:00  
11:45  
12:30

**MISSION COST: (PRE-STOP BOOKING PRICES)**

**\$359**

per person (EAA Members)

**\$399**

per person (non-Members)

### **WALK UP PRICES**

**\$385 EAA Member**

**\$425 Non-EAA Member**

### **Daily Ground Tours:**

Held after flight operations have stopped for the day

Adults: \$6, Students: \$5, WWII Veterans FREE

Children under 8 (accompanied by adult) FREE

\$10 per family (adults & children under 18)

Special group rates are made available for schools and large groups. Limited availability. Please call for group reservations.

*All dates and times are tentative and subject to change due to weather or other causes.*

**Call 800-359-6217**  
for reservations and inquiries

Visit the B-17 website at [www.b17.org](http://www.b17.org)  
e-mail: [b17@caa.org](mailto:b17@caa.org)



# *Fly the Fortress!*

EAA's B-17 bomber "Aluminum Overcast" is an example of the American heavy bomber that helped turn the tide of battle in World War II. You can see and tour this historic airplane — and actually fly a mission!

**Membership**

**We Need You!**

**Drive 2007**

**As always Chapter 309 is looking for new members. This page should be removed and given to a potential member.**

**The form can be used to pass along enrollment information about the EAA and this chapter.**

**Pass it On!**

## About the EAA

The EAA is for both pilots and non-pilots who are interested in the dynamic world of flight. The organization, founded in 1953, offers activities for the entire family on the local, regional and national levels. EAA also offers support programs for those who are building and restoring aircraft.

The EAA is dedicated to serving all of aviation by fostering and encouraging individual participation, high standards and access to the world of flight in an environment that promotes freedom, safety, family and personal fulfillment.

If YOU like airplanes and the people who fly them, **EAA** is for you! For only \$40 you can be a member. EAA offers something for enthusiasts of every age and interest - pilots, designers, builders, dreamers and doers - anyone who enjoys the unique freedom made possible by flight. All are welcomed into EAA's growing family.

**Call the EAA Membership Department at 1.800.Join EAA (1.800.564.6322) or visit [www.eaa.org](http://www.eaa.org)**



### EAA Chapter 309 Enrollment Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership? (Y) or (N)  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_(H) \_\_\_\_\_(W)  
 E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pilot Rating: \_\_\_\_\_ EAA Member Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Aircraft Owned(?): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Project(?): \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is open to anyone interested in aviation. Dues are \$25 per year. Mail Enrollment Form with Check payable to EAA Chapter 309 to:

Sam Stewart  
13916 Sledge Road  
Charlotte, NC 28278  
704-588-0776

---

EAA Chapter 309  
18816-6 Nautical Dr  
Cornelius, NC 28031



---

**NOTICE: The next EAA 309 Monthly DINNER MEETING will be at 7:00 PM at the Cookhouse Restaurant in Cornelius July 16. Take I-77 to exit 28, turn west onto Catawba Ave. Turn Right onto Torrence Chapel Rd. Go about 1/2 mile to Shops on the Green, turn right. Cookhouse is on the left.**

**Call Bill Repucci at 704-607-4572 for more information.**

