



Illinois Valley Beacon

December 2010

Chapter 563 Chartered in 1976

Volume 17 Issue 12

The **First Breakfast** will be held on the **First Saturday, December 4th**, in the EAA Hangar from 8:00 to 10:00.

The **Holiday Dinner** will be held on the **11th of December** instead of the regular meeting.

The **Second Breakfast** will be held on the **Third Saturday, December 18th**, in the EAA Hangar from 8:00 to 10:00

The **Directors Meeting** will be held on the **Third Thursday, December 16th**, in the EAA Hangar starting at 7:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend.



Holiday Dinner

Our Holiday Dinner is an evening out with the other members and their significant others. The dinner will be held **December 11th** at Bernardi's Restaurant in the Lake of the Woods Plaza on Rt. 40.

The menu this year will be family style chicken, all you can eat,

We'll meet at 6:30 for cocktails and dinner will be at 7:00.



with sides of spaghetti and ravioli, or rib-eye steak, or fish.. The prices range from \$13 to \$23

Report of Metropolitan Airport Authority
of Peoria Board Meeting on November 24,
2010

By Greg LePine

Meeting was called to order at 12:00 Noon.
Much was discussed such as;

Airport Operation: Landings were up 11%
Business up 5%
Tower operation up 21%,
there was a discrepancy to
the FAA reporting

New Terminal: All is on schedule for a
January open house as all floor tiling, millwork,
carpeting, wiring, cleaning, as well as having
everyone transferred and up and running.
Caterpillar Globe sketches were passed out for
further discussion.

The meeting was opened to the floor so I
stood and introduced myself and was attending on
behalf of the local EAA Chapter 563 and thanked
Gene Olsen for allowing us to use the board room
for our November meeting and for the tour that
followed. I further stated;

A: We want to increase our membership and
possibly gain a club house meeting room but
first we wanted to know what was going on for
the future of Mt Hawley and the only way to
really hear it first hand was to attend the PIA
Board meetings.

B: We would like to see twelve foot high fence to
keep the deer off the runway.

C: Sure would be nice if the black top hangar
areas were black seal coated, painted and kept
up like the Kewanee Airport.

D: When will the runways be lengthened?

E: When will the expansion occur as to the west
side of the field?

F: Regarding lengthening the runway I was
informed an impact study is slated for some
time in 2011, with work planned for 2012-
2013. With regards to the other work and

reference airport these funds have to come
from the state of Illinois as Mt Hawley is a
feeder airport and falls under these rules.

The MAAP thanked me for attending and
representing the EAA.

EAA Chapter 563
November 11th, 2010 Chapter Meeting
Minutes

Meeting called to order by President Bob Young
at 7:00pm at the Greater Peoria International
Airport in the third floor conference room.

Secretary's Report:

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the
October meeting as posted in the newsletter.
Seconded by Morrie Caudill and passed by voice
vote.

New Business:

Due to the scheduled activities for the evening
the only business that needed to be conducted
was the vote for the officers and directors for the
2011 year.

Bob Young presented the slate of officers set
forth by the nominating committee for vote by
the Chapter members in attendance.

The slate:

President Bob Young
Vice President Kent Lynch
Secretary Don Wolcott
Treasurer Jerry Pilon

Since there were no nominations from the floor a
vote was taken and the slate of officers were
elected,

The slate of directors was as follows:

Marty Martin
Morrie Caudill
Chris Tate

A nomination of Greg Lepine was made from the
floor.

Sam Sisk Stated that Marty Martin would rather
work with the Young Eagles program and would
request that he not be elected to a director
position.

Member vote was as follows:

Marty Martin 2

Morrie Caudill 18
Chris Tate 18
Greg Lepine 16

Chris Tate introduced our host for the evening, Airport Director Gene Olson. Gene took the members on a tour of the new airport Terminal. It was very obvious how proud Gene is of the new facilities.

Respectively Submitted;
Your Secretary Donald Wolcott

**MINUTES OF EAA 563 BOARD
MEETING
November 18th 2010 at the Chapter
Hanger**

The meeting was called to order by Chapter President Bob Young at 7:07 pm.

Those in attendance were Bob Young, Kent Lynch, Morrie Caudill, Don Wolcott and Chris Tate. And visitor Greg Lepine. This constituted a quorum.

Secretary's Report:

The October board meeting minutes were read by Don Wolcott. Motion to accept by Kent Lynch seconded by Chris Tate approved a by voice vote.

Treasure's Report:

Jerry went thru the report comparing this year to last year for both income and expenses. Both income and expenses were up for 2010. So far there have been \$672 raised in the raffle for the Gee Bee with expenses of \$310.

Old Business:

Kent brought a catalog of name tag holders and permanent name tags to look at. The board still needs to make a decision on what to use for member name tags. Jerry stated that he would pick up some stickon tags for any visitors for Saturdays breakfast.

New Business:

It was decided to keep the membership dues the same for 2011. Morrie made a suggestion that the

chapter should send a letter to all members reminding them to pay the 2011 dues and to include a self addressed stamped envelope to return them to Morrie for recording. This will help in getting all paid members credited in the correct manner. A motion to approve was made by Bob and seconded by Don and passed by voice vote. Greg was asked if he would be in charge of greeting visitors at all Chapter events and he agreed. Don made a motion to appoint Greg as the official greeter, seconded by Kent and approved by voice vote.

Bob handed out a list of questions that applicants need to answer to qualify for the EAA Air Academy Scholarships the Chapter will be giving to the winners. It was decided to go ahead and use some of the Young Eagle points the Chapter has been given for flying Young Eagles to secure two positions for the Air Academy.

Our visitor Greg Lepine brought up the possibility of getting additional tools for the Chapter to have available for Chapter projects. To date all tools that the Chapter has have been donated. The English Wheel is not being used and maybe we should see if there is anyone in the Chapter that would like to give a presentation on how to use it at a Chapter meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05

Respectively Submitted; Your Secretary Donald Wolcott

Correction to Al Lange's Obituary
I appears Al's Stinson is still at Greater Peoria Airport. It is not listed on the FAA list of registered airplanes in the 616 area code. I don't know the particulars.

GB PEDAL PLANE

Don't forget your GB Pedal Plane tickets if you want a chance to win this great gift for a child. If this raffle is successful we will consider making one of these again next year. There are many different models to choose from. The drawing will be held at the Holiday Dinner.

This article was written by Dr. Mark Depue, Director of Oral History at the Abraham Lincoln Museum in Springfield, IL. It was published in the FarmWeek newspaper for veterans day. Sam brought it to me from Lacon and you all should read it. Ernie will be 90 years old in a few months and he is still flying his C-150 to Lincoln (AAA) every Wednesday to have coffee with the old Hooterville crowd, of which few are left.

Freedom is not free

An Illinois veteran's WW II story

Editor's note: Ernest Thorp, 89, is a member of the DeWitt County Farm Bureau and still flies his own plane. Thursday is Veterans Day, and FarmWeek honors all veterans for their service to our country.

Ernest Thorp had two consuming passions when growing up on a farm outside Wapella — farming and flying. A child of the Depression, he has had plenty of opportunity to pursue both over the course of years.

Thorp was a college student at Illinois State University in 1941 when he earned his civilian pilot's license. Two years later, he was training to fly B-17 Flying Fortresses.

By early 1944, Thorp was engaged and in England, serving as a copilot on missions over

MARK DEPUE
guest columnist

Europe. He felt very much like a target whenever he flew missions in the lumbering B-17, always part of a tight formation of aircraft headed to Germany and back. They were exposed and vulnerable in those formations, prey to German fighters, and fat targets to alert flak gunners.

"Average life of a B-17 — 231 days or 21 missions," Thorp wrote in the diary he faithfully maintained throughout the war. Even so, it was safer to stay in the formation, protected by an intricate web of interlocking machine gun fire woven by scores of .50-caliber machine guns.

The target for Thorp's 18th combat mission on Aug. 4, 1944, was an oil refinery in Bremen, Germany. Not until

the morning mission briefing did he discover he would be the copilot for a green crew in a bear up old aircraft, otherwise, it seemed like a routine mission.

The formation was hugging the German coastline when it ran into flak, with Thorp's No. 1 engine taking a hit. Thorp and the navigator were able to get things under control, and argued for staying in the formation, but the pilot insisted on turning back for England.

That maneuver took them away from the safety of the formation and back into the sights of vigilant flak gunners.

Soon No. 4 engine was gone as well, and the resulting fire gave the crew no choice but to bail out over the North Sea.

A thankful Thorp was eventually rescued by a sympathetic German fisherman, himself a POW in England during World War I. For the next year, Thorp concentrated on surviving while being shunted through a succession of POW camps.

The first stop was Sulag Luft III (later to become famous as the Great Escape camp). Unbeknownst to him, the Red Cross had initially reported him dead to his fiancée and parents back in Illinois. Only when Thorp got a chance to mail a letter home did they discover the truth.

chronicling his daily struggle to survive, carefully recording both the significant and mundane.

By the spring of 1945 rumors of the war's end and the Americans' liberation swirled through the camps. Thorp was at Stralag VII-A near Mooseburg when he spotted several "P-51s with red tails manned by Negroes," straddling the railroad that ran near the camp. "We could see them circle in the position, dive down and see the flash of fire from their machine guns," he wrote.

April 29 was Thorp's personal "liberation day," the day when American troops finally reached the camp. "We shook hands with all the G.I.s we could get a hold of ... My feeling of elation gave me a funny feeling in the stomach and stomach as well as tears in my eyes."

It was the first of many emotional moments for Thorp as he made the slow but inexorable journey home to Wapella, ever closer to realizing his dream of a reunion with his fiancée and family.

Thorp remembers well his arrival in New York City harbor. "The biggest impression I had" he related 64 years later, "was when we passed by the Statue of Liberty ... There wasn't one word — it was strictly silent as we passed by that Statue of Liberty. We had no words for us that statue — what it stood for ... That was really a moment that I didn't think would happen, but it did. We were home."

Too many of us today take our veterans and their sacrifices for granted. Hearing stories like Thorp's reminds us of the real price of freedom.

Mark Depue is the director of oral history at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield. You can listen to Ernest Thorp's entire story and share of other veterans online at http://www.alplm.org/oral_history/projects.htm.



Ernest Thorp

"Dear Fika," he wrote in that first letter. "By now you know I'm safe and well. I have been very lucky and grateful to God ... Don't forget to cover all the past home news. Please send me double-edged razor blades, shorts, wool socks, toothpaste, and pajamas — and chocolate."

When Soviet armies pressed into the German homeland, the prisoners were transferred from camp to camp, moving steadily deeper into the German interior. Chaos and uncertainty ruled the day, and through it all, a gnawing hunger was Ernest's constant companion.

Only the occasional Red Cross package kept the specter of starvation at bay, and those became scarcer as the German empire crumbled around them. Despite the constant turmoil, Ernest managed to maintain his diary.





ILLINOIS VALLEY CHAPTER 563

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stamp

address



The Regular Chapter 563 meetings will be held at the Chapter Hangar at 7:00pm on the second Thursday of each month.

All Chapter 563 breakfasts will be held at the Chapter Hangar from 8:00 am to 10:00 am on the first and third Saturday mornings.

The Chapter 563 Directors meetings will be held at the Chapter Hangar on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm.