



The Crosswind

Correction

Official monthly publication of EAA Chapter 1232 *Now Including GFCA News (Pages 6/ 7!)*

February Meeting-Hamilton Field Museum

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March 2014

Back in the early 1920s the Army Signal Corps was developing rapidly from its humble WWI status, scratching and clawing to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of military aviation, and was finding its westernmost air post in the Continental U.S., Crissy Field to be increasingly unable to meet their needs. Already hampered by consistent fog and poor visibility, Crissy was already too small for the new, large multi-engine bombers under development at the time, and planning for the new Golden Gate bridge indicated that construction would begin in the next few years rendering one approach to the field nearly unusable. Army planners looked north to Marin County, where the weather was better and land was plentiful.



In an amazing (and unimaginable to us today) act of foresight the taxpayers of Marin voted to tax themselves and purchase the pea farms located on the Bay in far northeast San Rafael, then donated the land to the Army for what would become Hamilton Army Air Base. Construction would begin in 1932, but the base wasn't dedicated until 1935.

Initially Hamilton was host to a squadron of B-10 bombers, but in the late 30s the grass landing area was converted to concrete in preparation of the arrival of the first B-17 models. Unfortunately, the runway proved to be too short for fully-loaded B-17s, so the base became a fighter base, with squadrons of P-40s on hand. It is rumored that several of these initial P-40s were shipped to China to fly with General Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers in the early months of WWII. The base was in the news briefly when a flight of B-17s, which had taken off from Hamilton, flew into the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The base was decommissioned in 1974, but annual Air Force airshows, which had been running since 1946, continued until 1988. These very popular airshows survived the crash of a Thunderbirds F105 and the death of its pilot, Capt. Gene Devlin, in 1964.

We all know the rest, unfortunately. After decommissioning the Marin County Supervi-

sors voted not to adopt Hamilton as its County airport, and a remarkable aviation asset became a decrepit Coast Guard base for over thirty years with rotting, weed-choked empty ramps and runways. Now, those same ramps and runways, which were worth tens of millions of dollars, lie under three feet of saltwater, while our beloved home-drome sits on unstable land in a less-than- optimum orientation with almost no facilities, two miles to the north.



This past month we decided to try something different, and we held our February meeting at the Hamilton Field Museum in the old fire station right on Hangar Row. There we found a remarkably nice facility with two levels jammed with interested displays illustrating the history of the base in photos, uniforms from every era the base was open, detailed scale models of every type of aircraft based at the field, and a Link trainer complete with instructor's desk that looked ready to climb in for an hour of instrument procedure torture, er, training. There was also a nice display of

Hamilton AFB History Museum-February Meeting, *cont'd.*

MMWWD Ranger Matt Cerkel's research on military crashes in Marin, including a large location map and actual artifacts from crash sites (the B-24 nose strut hanging from the ceiling over the display was especially humbling).



In the past fifteen years hundreds of new homes have sprung up on the old base, and

remarkably, all the hangars and even the control tower have been restored and are occupied by a wide variety of commercial tenants. But many of the old base buildings have not fared all that well, the old fire station included.

...given the City of Novato's indifference to the Museum it's a miracle there are any artifacts left to display...

Museum director Ray Dwelly was our host the evening, telling the story of how the Museum came to be located where it is and just how much work he had personally put into the actual renovation of the building. Given the City of Novato's indifference to the Museum it's a miracle there are any



artifacts left to display, much less that it's in an attractive, useful facility. Looking at its current condition it's hard to believe it's the same building pictured here, from 1997.

The Museum is open Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from noon-4 p.m.. and it's a great place to spend a couple of hours on a rainy winter afternoon. Once you do, you'll go back.

March Meeting-Phil Simon Fairly Swordfish

Join us this coming Tuesday evening, March 11, for our March chapter meeting where our speaker will be our own Phil Simon. Phil has put together an interesting presentation on the "Stringbag", the Fairey Swordfish. The Swordfish was a 1930's-era biplane torpedo bomber that, since it was in the RAF's depleted inventory at the start of WWII, saw significant action throughout the war. Phil's presentation covers many of these actions, including the attack that finally sunk the German super-destroyer, the Tirpitz, and videos of it operating off of merchant ships converted to use as "aircraft carriers. As you might imagine, with ship's speed of 20 knots into a wind of 20-30 knots would result in a fairly short takeoff run, and landings that could be "arrested" by deckhands.

There will be pizza/salad/soft drinks for a small fee at 6:30, with the meeting at 7:00.



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Web Gems-This Month's Best

EAA VP Jeff Skiles speaking on the 5th anniversary of the Miracle on the Hudson. About an hour long, but a great personal version of what happened from one of the first people to arrive on the scene: <http://wpt.org/University-Place/miracle-hudson>

J3 Flight <http://www.flyingmag.com/videos/video-channel/flying-in-a-piper-cub?flying-in-a-piper-cub=&src=related&con=outbrainvideo=obnetwork#oid=Y2ZTQwYzqQd2g8raUdzpBnHdAWU21gbE>

Steve Wittman's Olds-powered Tailwind. Wow. This thing MOVES... <http://youtu.be/WsH-j4pF4fE>

Icon Angle of Attack indicator. Airspeed or AoA? Want to start an argument? <http://youtu.be/2wlvpJLcf-A>

While we're at it, why not an Icon promo? If only I had \$170,000... <http://youtu.be/T-aZTi8bY3Q>

Great photos of WW1 airshow/exhibit in New Zealand <http://www.network54.com/Forum/149674/message/1385149639/Photos+from+The+Vintage+Aviator+Ltd%27s+Remembrance+Day+airshow>

Australian Vintage Glider meet—wood, fabric, grass and wind in your face <http://vimeo.com/76203251>

Air Force Museum panoramic shots inside a B-36 <http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=360>

Legendary buzzing of Carswell AFB housing in a B-36 <http://youtu.be/hCViKu9XlbQ>

Two hour-long programs on RAF Bomber Command:

The first with Evan and Colin McGregor, a BBC documentary <http://youtu.be/JnzNJ-RXli8>

...and this one from actual footage of preparation for a 1942 mission http://youtu.be/o7b_w5EX04E



Gross Field Community Association News



Welcome GFCA Members!

When the Gness Field Community Association was formed five years ago it seemed it had nothing in common with our EAA chapter. Since then, however, it has become apparent that the two organizations share more than just a home base; many of our EAA members are also GFCA members, both have a stake in the operation, management and upkeep of Gness Field in particular, and in supporting general aviation in general.

Starting with this issue this newsletter will be distributed not only to EAA Chapter 1232 and its friends, but it will also be going out to the membership of the Gness Field Community Association (GFCA) in an effort to make the two groups more aware of each other's activities. Accordingly, each newsletter will include multiple pages of information regarding GFCA activities and Gness Field concerns ("Marin County Airport"-see below!).

Come for the Breakfast, Stay for the Program...

If you haven't already, plan to come to one of the monthly GFCA breakfast meetings in the Scanlon hangar the second Saturday of each month, 9:00 a.m.. For \$7 you get fresh fruit, pancakes (usually blueberry), scrambled eggs, sausages, coffee, and orange juice, followed by an interesting presentation and more hangar flying.

Airport Open House Day April 12

GFCA has sponsored and organized three really large events in the past four years- Wings Over Marin I and II and the Salute to the Tuskegee Airmen-but in the process found out just how stressful events of this size and scope can be on its members.

As an alternative, we've decided to host a series of very low key open houses; by low key we mean a single Weber kettle for BBQ (free to our guests), three or four interesting aircraft on display, fly a limited number of Young Eagles and maybe even a couple of interested adults. If we're lucky, maybe we can get the CJ boys to take off during the event, make some noise and do a smoke pass or two...

The good news is that we need very few volunteers and very little prep to pull these events off-maybe five or six people on the ground (including the chef) to mingle with our guests. We really want them to come to the airport, see what goes on here, and get to see that we pilots don't have horns. The EAA folks will take care of the few Young Eagles we fly, but if you'd like to fly one or two to get your feet wet let Ken Mercer know-he'll take care of the details.

We'll limit the size of these events by limiting our outreach (advertising) to Novato only. We've found that of all the events held at Gness Field in the past ten years, over 75% of attendees come from Novato. Also, sticking to Novato residents makes sense in that we raised over \$300,000 last year alone that went to Novato schools. We want to build goodwill, educate Novato residents, increase the visibility of the airport as an asset, promote general aviation and get people excited about airplanes again. On a smaller, more homey (and MUCH less stressful) scale than past events.

Call it "Marin County Airport"...

Yep, it's still Gness Field and it still sits on the wetlands at the base of Mt. Burdell, but as part of the effort to show the general public that this airport is a County asset we're going to make every effort to refer to KDVO as "Marin County Airport". It may

sound goofy to us, but just ask yourself how many times somebody has said "I didn't know Marin had an airport!". There will be lots of positive stories in the local press over the next few months highlighting what we do here, and we want to make sure everybody knows this is a revenue-producing, County-owned asset and not a privately-owned endeavor.

Runway EIR

On February 14 the Marin County Board of Supervisors voted to accept the recently-completed Environmental Impact Review (EIR) detailing the environmental effects of the proposed 1000 foot runway extension at Gness. Before the vote was taken there was one last chance for public comment, and various neighbors came forth to criticize the report.

The biggest complaint was that the report did not adequately address noise impacts to the neighborhood, but GFCA members and DPW's consultant both responded that the proposed extension would move the source of the noise a quarter mile further away from houses, and would allow aircraft departing 13 to turn crosswind inside the radio towers rather than angling between the towers and houses, as is now required.

Even though not pertinent to the EIR, there were several negative comments that a longer runway would bring more and bigger jets in the future. Again, the consultant responded with an explanation of the methodology required by the FAA to compute needed runway length for what is known as the "critical aircraft" (which for Gness would be the Citation) already using the airport, and showing that a review of balanced field takeoff performance charts for larger jets showed that the runway would be too short even with the additional



Gness Field Community Association News



1000 feet. GFCFA Bob Spofford also noted that it is unlikely that the Gness fleet will change to include more jets as there are no facilities (no sewer, specifically, which would be prohibitively expensive to run out to the airport), no ILS and there are larger, better equipped facilities nearby in Oakland, Hayward, Napa, Concord and even Santa Rosa.

Supervisor Adams asked "can we restrict the weight/size of planes", and staff responded that no, this would be in contradiction of Federal law. Dan Jensen clarified that he can only inform, not impose penalties, and Supervisor Adams wants some assurance (in the form of an annual report) that "violators" are contacted and counseled. This brings up a very important point, that it's important that we "police" this activity ourselves; when we see someone overfly the homes call them on it.

The next public hearing will be in 4-6 months and will deal with the merits of the extension plan.

Finally, here's an article that appeared in the City section of the Feb 28 Novato Advance, the first of a series of articles in local news outlets by Jamie Cavanaugh aimed at raising awareness about general aviation and our airport:

Marin's Vertical Port

With runways and hangars spread low over 120 acres of Petaluma River wetlands, Marin County Airport (MCA) is a quiet presence, if not a secret, to commuters on 101. But in 54 years as a county-owned facility, its place in Marin is well established.

MCA, known locally as Gness Field (FAA identifier is DVO), serves business, recreation and destination flyers. It is home to 4

flight schools, numerous antique and classic aircraft, and nearly 300 private, corporate, and public service aircraft. Marin's flying community includes 275 General Aviation pilots, a few dozen airline officers (some retired), 14 emergency and public safety professionals, and 2 NASA astronauts -Millie Fulford & Yvonne Cagel.

Government agencies such as the Civil Air Patrol, the Sheriff's Department, the CHP and Coast Guard operate from MCA. Medical transport including both Reach Air Ambulance and Angel Flights provide air access to patients with long distance health care needs.

When not saving the world, however, Marin's airpark offers numerous opportunities for community fun, learning, and involvement. The Gness Field Community Association, formed in '09 to encourage greater involvement in local aviation, brings people together around all things aviation.

Currently, the pilot community is planning a series "inside the fence" events, the first of which will be a low-key Airport Open House on April 12 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. GFCFA will host a bbq, there will be some interesting planes on display, free airplane rides for kids (on a first-come basis), and a chance to tour the facility and see how your local airport works.

Marin County Airport, located two miles northeast of Novato, is operational 24 hours a day, and staffed 8:00 am to 5:00 pm except Holidays. MCA is a general aviation public use airport with a single, lighted 3300' runway, one helipad, and an average of 265 flight operations per day.

Marin County Department of Public Works is responsible for operating the airport. Unlike other municipal services, however,

the airport receives federal subsidies as part of the national aviation network known as Reliever Airports -one of 37 in California. Our location is deemed important to Bay Area transportation flow and is expected to "relieve" the larger metro-hubs in time of emergency. MCA is an FAA airdrome, federally chartered and regulated, but its use, privilege, and enjoyment belong to all Marin residents and visitors alike.

DPW ledgers the airport as an Enterprise Fund because it is self-supporting, eg: all airport operating expenses are paid by income from those who use it. Aircraft based at MCA, including private, corporate, and public service, generated \$616,270 in fiscal 2012 ~primarily leasehold property taxes~ which was split between Marin's general fund (\$315,119) and the Novato School system (\$301,151), fulfilling our "sponsor city" relationship as set by CA State Tax Code.

Flying can be uniquely satisfying for anyone who chooses to master it. Perhaps you crave the perspective of 5000 feet, or want consequence to inspire learning. If you've ever found yourself humming Sinatra's Come fly with me... maybe you should treat yourself just once. Watching a plane in flight can be a rush. Flying it yourself is an achievement.

Your local airport has a range of choices. Here are some of the flying folks on Airport Road: Aeroclub Marin 898-4834, Airward 897-2295, Scanlon Aviation 897-9787, Sea and Sky Aviation 233-4939. All have affordable demo flights, all are meticulously safe, and all can sweep you completely off the ground.

Come see where the airplanes live.

EAA Chapter 1232-Novato, Ca

San Francisco and North Bay California

Ken Mercer, *President/Young Eagles*
Coordinator 415-378-8504
Phil Simon, *Vice-President* 415454-5496
Tom Schiff, *Secr./Treasurer* 415-515-6630

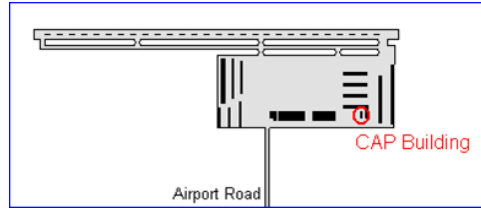
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Our monthly membership meetings are held the second Tuesday evening of each month (except December), starting with dinner at 6:30 and followed by the main presentation(s) at 7:00. Our hosts are the Novato Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol who graciously allow us to use their facility at 400 Airport Boulevard, Gness Field, in northern Novato (in the south parking lot). Here's a crude map, but please do contact one of our officers for more information and/or directions:



In addition to our regular monthly evening meetings, many of us meet for lunch at noon every Thursday at The Club restaurant at McGinnis Park Golf Course on Smith Ranch Road in San Rafael. The hostess on duty can direct you to our "regular" room but again, please contact one of our officers for better directions.

Membership is \$25/yr. and is open to anyone-contact any of our officers (above, left) for details!

Project Report: Cormia/Gaines/Ryan Onex First Engine Run

February 15 was a banner day for Neil 3400 rpm burning either avgas or auto Cormia, Richard Gaines and Tom Ryan, as fuel, and as you can see from the video it marked the first run of the AeroVee it's direct drive and air cooled. The kit engine in their Onex project. Tim Walter takes about 12 hours to assemble, and provided the video below (click on the image to view the video). For those of you who may be unfamiliar with the AeroVee, it's a kitted (yes, YOU assemble it) 2180cc VW conversion developed by AeroConversations/John Monnet, of Sonerai, Moni and Sonex fame, which puts out 80hp at

Incidentally, this is the engine Phil Simon flew behind in his Sonex when traversing all 48 contiguous United States in 2007-8.



Calendar

- Mar 8 GFCFA Breakfast meeting, 9:00 a.m. Scanlon Hangar Breakfast \$7, you don't have to be a member.
 - Mar 11 February Chapter meeting C.A.P. trailer Gness Field Dinner 6:30 p.m. , meeting @ 7:00
 - Mar 12 P.A.P.A. meeting, O69 social time 5:15, dinner 6:15
 - Apr 12 KDVO Open House 11-2 BBQ, static displays, a few Young Eagles
 - May 3 Quality Sportplanes Open House and West Coast Zenith Flying, Cloverdale Airport 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Ongoing Every Thursday Lunch Bunch, The Club at McGinnis Park Golf Club, San Rafael, noon