



Eagle Screams



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Monthly Publication of the Screamin' Eagles

June 2003

The Screamin' Eagles Giant Scale Model Airplane Club meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month. If you have any questions about club activities or meeting location please contact one of the following members.

- President: Rob Goebel (920) 623-5053
Email: robbyg@internetwis.com
- Vice President: Tom Lazar (608) 655-3396
Email: tldazar@yahoo.com
- Treasurer: Le Roy Stuczynski (608) 249-9517
Email: leroy@galleryofaviation.com
- Secretary: Roy Seals (920) 623-4632
Email: royseals@wi.net
- Editor: Le Roy Stuczynski (608) 249-9517
Email: leroy@galleryofaviation.com
- Research Editor: Mike Pirkl (608) 877-0419
Email: MADDOG@ITIS.com

June Meeting:

Don't miss the June meeting of the Screamin' Eagles because it will be the last planning meeting for our fly in. The meeting will be held at the Lodi Quarry Field on Thursday June 12, 2003. Come early and fly but if the weather is inclement we will meet at the City Limits. Regardless of where we hold our business meeting, I am sure we will end up at the City Limits afterwards so plan on grabbing a bite to eat there to show our appreciation for using their place as a bad weather meeting place. It's fun to get together there anyways.

May Minutes – By Roy Seals

Rob called the meeting to order, and proceeded to tell a joke, but everyone had already heard it. Le Roy gave a treasury report.

We talked about the scheduling of our upcoming fly-in. We agreed that it would be a good thing to meet at 7 am to start setting up. Registration will start at 8 am with flying starting at 9 am. We will end at 3 pm and hold the raffle at 1 pm.

We voted on the following. Brats 150, hot dogs 36, burgers 150, chips 1 box, water 2 cases, soda 3 cases diet, Mountain Dew, and

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Member E-Mail Addresses

Carl Bachhuber, carlb@mayvl.com
 Leroy Brandt, lebrandt@execpc.com
 Cal Breunig, calvette63@charter.net
 Dick Buescher, respec@merr.com
 Bill Disch, cbdisch@jvl.net
 Rob Goebel, robbyg@internetwis.com
 Mark Johnson, mcjohnson@jvl.net
 Mike Kimmerly, boatbufs@execpc.com
 Bill Kinney, hukilau@chorus.net
 Wayne Lanphear, bgbird@charter.net
 Tom Lazar, tldazar@yahoo.com
 Bob Miracle, rmiracle@execpc.com
 Mike Pirkl, MADDOG@ITIS.com
 Roy Porter, RJPorter@aol.com
 Roy Seals, royseals@wi.net
 Le Roy Stuczynski, leroy@galleryofaviation.com
 Lyle Stone, lyles@merr.com
 John Thompson, rcav8r@chorus.net
 Joel Wyttenbach, joelwyttenbach@hotmail.com
 Doug Yaroch, a-d-aero@powerweb.net



Member Web Pages

Leroy Brandt - <http://my.execpc.com/~lebrandt/>
 Mike Pirkl - <http://maddogaviation.com/>
 Le Roy Stuczynski - <http://galleryofaviation.com>



Prez Sez – By Rob Goebel

Mike Kimmerly is becoming known as the "Cook and Concession Master" with Le Roy Stuczynski as his apprentice. Over the past couple weeks, these two gentlemen have gone above and

beyond what anyone has expected and really got things moving with respect to the food and beverage department for our event. Thanks guys, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

One last fling at Lodi before the real deal so come on out and help us remember what we're forgetting. See you there!

Thanks.



Minutes – Continued from page 1

Pepsi (Le Roy will see what he can get at Sam's). For condiments, ketchup, mustard, and onions. Le Roy will try to get the bread at the day old bakery.

Mike Kimmerly said he would be in charge of the cooking. We will still need to help out as much as possible in order to give him a break. We are going to check with Joel Wytenbach on getting the meat through Wytenbach Meats. Le Roy and Mike will pre-cook the bra and burgers.

Leroy Brandt will bring a water jug (igloo) to hold water for washing hands. Roy and Rob are going to pick up the raffle gifts and supply the buckets for the raffle. Roy is going to pick up the plates, silverware, napkins, and wax paper for the hot dogs and burgers. Roy is going to type out a schedule for the day so everyone can fill in the time slots so we make sure we have everything covered. Le Roy is going to pick up as many of the items we need at Sam's Club.

Harold is going to do artwork for buttons (Rob is going to make the buttons) so all the Screamin' Eagle members can be identified easily for plane inspections and anything else that people might need help with. Wayne is going to put out signs near the highway in advance people can be aware of the fly in. Lyle, if possible, is going to do our announcing. Rob has all of our pilot registration forms finished. Le Roy said that we had plenty of inspection stickers, and says he has raffle tickets and will have the change for the raffle and concession stand. Harold is going to run the transmitter impound, but we will need help in this area to give him a break. It was suggested that Harley try to get WIBA AM radio to announce our fly-in.

Le Roy said that he was going to limit the amount of flyers in our newsletter so the download time would be less. Wayne suggested that the flyers we receive announcing statewide events be printed and included with the newsletter but not included in the pdf file. Le Roy said he would do an event listing in the newsletter like LARCC does.

Show and Tell

Charlie brought 2 new tail wheels that are available from Sig. They are nice looking and look very sturdy.

Roy brought a picture that was given to him by the gymnastics team he coaches. It had the team members as well as his 1/3 scale Laser that he covered in colors that match his teams uniforms.

Hope to see you at our next meeting at Lodi and hope that we can all show up and lend a hand to make our fly in successful!

See you at Quarry Field.



Trez/Ed Sez – By Le Roy Stuczynski

Well it's true! When you retire there's less time to get things done than when I worked full time (yes Harley I did say work). Maybe it's because the list of things that were undone is finally being addressed. That along with making flagpoles has kept me very busy. I've really got my flagpole design perfected and I think it's a very professional design. I installed one at the MARCS field a couple of weeks ago. Mike Kimmerly and I donated it for the field. Now Scooter has a pole to pee on.

Speaking of Mike, I think we are going to have a money making year from the concession stand this year. Mike is a whiz at this stuff and he actually used to do catering for a living. Every time I called him with prices I paid for stuff he began ciphering (is that a Jethro Bodine term?) and immediately rattled off the profit margin. He's amazing. The treasury is going to be more than drained to kick this off so we need good weather to bring in the bucks.

Cub foods had 24 packs of Pepsi products on sale for \$4.28 with a limit of 2 per customer. However I was able to sweet talk the customer service chick into selling me 8 packs at the \$4.28 price. Mike went back for 2 more when I noticed I didn't get exactly what we agreed upon. Last week I was at Menards and picked up 4 cases of mineral water at a blazing cost of \$2.98 per 24 bottle case. Mark Johnson and I did arrange to get the brats and hamburgers from Wytenbach Meats in Sauk City at an approximate cost of .80 per brat and .50 per hamburger. Again, Mike's numbers were just a whirring. Mike and I plan on pre-cooking the brats and burgers the night before so it will be a quick grill effort at the field.

In case we would be weathered out (heaven forbid), seeing the stuff is pre-cooked, I plan on bring my vacuum sealer so we can bag everything and throw it in the freezer for use at other events or for possible sale to MARCS or LARCC for their events. Mike's mother got the snack size chips for .18 per bag. All I have left is to arrange for the buns and make a trip to Sam's for condiments.

Mike also has rigged up a system for washing hands. Think \$\$\$\$.



Never fail to recognize the supreme sacrifice our troops made to protect our country's freedom!

The following article submitted by - Mike Pirkl, Research Editor

This is an article which tells about the crew chief - the men who kept the fighters and bombers in the air during WWII. When you read this article from "Flight Journal" I hope you remember an old MARCS member who was a crew chief back then; Dick "Tiger" Martinson. Tiger would often say that the plane belonged to him and he loaned it to the pilot. In memory of Tiger.



A CREW CHIEF REMEMBERS

BY MERLE OLMSTED

<http://www.flightjournal.com>

The relationship between a military aircraft mechanic (now called a "maintenance technician") and his airplane can be similar to that of a husband and wife. A mechanic sometimes finds his charge extremely frustrating, annoying and even downright nasty. Despite this, a great affection often develops for this cold piece of machinery—especially if it does well in its assigned mission and is treated right by its pilot or aircrew.

In September 2001, the 357th Fighter Group Association held its final reunion at Dayton, Ohio. As at previous gatherings, P-51 Mustangs with their familiar and much loved red-and- yellow noses were on hand for the festivities. The crowd of veteran pilots and ground crews surrounded the P-51s while having their pictures taken—a clear indication of their long-standing affection for the sleek, 60-year-old fighter. When the mighty Merlins were fired up, and Col. Bud Anderson and Brig. Gen. Chuck

Yeager took off and flew several flypasts, there were doubtless many damp eyes watching. Nothing else sounds like the marvelous Merlin, and the veterans' affection for the P-51 is still strong after 56 years.

When I enlisted in the Air Corps/Army Air Forces in July 1942, my eyesight did not meet the standards for pilot or aircrew duties, so I was destined to become one of the many thousands of men who were needed to maintain and care for the scores of aircraft pouring out of U.S. factories.

After mechanics school, it was off to Hamilton Field, California, to join the newly formed 357th Fighter Group. This chance assignment had a major impact on the rest of my life, and I am forever grateful to the unknown person who typed my name on that roster.

The 357th received its aircraft (Bell P-39s) early in 1943, and pilots, ground crews and every other job specialist spent the next 10 months learning how to be a fighter group. Despite the loss of some 15 pilots during that period, the training was really quite effective, and when the group arrived in England late in 1942, it was about as ready for combat as it could have been.

From February 1944 through April 1945, the 357th Fighter Group compiled an outstanding record; only the 56th Fighter Group, which had been in combat much longer, had a slightly higher number of air victories. The group had 43 aces on its rosters, more than any other 8th Air Force group; 92 men died in the line of duty, and 57 became POWs.

On arrival at our English base near the town of Leiston in East Anglia, we heard that our combat airplane was to be the P-51 Mustang. Other than a few pilots who had trained on Allison-powered P-51s, no one—neither pilot nor technician—had any experience with the type, and most had never seen one. A few men were rushed off to RAF schools, but for the most part, the learning was done by doing—not the best way! The pilots checked themselves out, and the mechanics began to learn how to maintain this strange machine. A few of the early P-51s were handed down from the 354th Group or the RAF, but most were new P-51Bs and Cs, delivered from the huge depots in Northern England.

Of the three major U.S. fighters used in Europe, the P-51 was the easiest to maintain, the P-38 was very labor-intensive, and the P-47 was in between. Aircraft maintenance in the three squadrons was basically performed at two levels: by the hangar crews who did heavy maintenance and by flightline crews, who were directly assigned to specific airplanes. There were also specialists such as those for propellers, sheet metal, instruments, etc., who worked out of their own sections. A further level of maintenance on the base was the 469th Service Squadron; they did the more complicated jobs.

As during training, I was assigned as a flightline mechanic and assistant crew chief with my partner from P-39 days, S/Sgt. Ray Morrison. The third man on the crew was the armorer, who cared for the four (later, six) M2 machine guns. The two mechanics for each aircraft shared the work equally, and the system worked very well.

The flightline mechanics' workday started when the Squadron CQ (charge of quarters) entered the Nissen hut, turned on the lights and

Questions & Answers

In response to my plea for articles for publication, Harold Blossom gave me an article which appeared in Sport Aviation titled Q&A. This particular Q&A article was devoted to World War II Historical Information. Each month, in this block, I will publish one question and answer, some of which may be completely unknown. Ron Twellman of the EAA Aviation Foundation Boeing Library provided this information. Thanks Harold.

Question: What was unusual about the aircraft flown by the German unit KG-200?

A - The pilots of Kampfgeschwader-200 flew captured U. S., British and Russian planes on a variety of reconnaissance and combat missions.

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jarred everyone awake by announcing the day's mission: "Briefing at 0700; max effort, max range." Usually, only the briefing timetargets, altitudes, weather, routes to targets, rendezvous times, etc.

The living areas were separated from the base proper by a mile or two; bicycles, jeeps, trucks and GI shoes provided transportation to the big, consolidated mess hall for breakfast and thence to each crews' individual hardstand—a concrete circle large enough to park one -51 (or sometimes two). Both crew members were usually on hand, but if one was off-duty or busy elsewhere, the other handled the preflight of the aircraft. We removed the canvas wing and cockpit covers and the pitot tube cover, and we pulled the propeller through a few turns, listening and feeling for anything unusual. Compared with more modern aircraft, the P-51 was remarkably unsophisticated. Nevertheless, the preflight inspection as directed in the manual was quite lengthy. Most of these were visual inspections, and many of them had been done the night before as part of the post-flight inspection. All fluid reservoirs were checked, including two separate coolant systems—one for the engine and one for the supercharger aftercooler—and the hydraulics, engine oil and fuel. We always inspected the underside of the aircraft for the coolant leaks that sometimes occurred after temperature changes. It was difficult to distinguish water from coolant just by looking at it, but one taste of the bitter liquid quickly resolved that question. Control surfaces, aileron, rudder and elevators were checked for free movement and to see whether all of their hinges were secure.

When we were satisfied with all visual and service checks, the engine run was next. We used the battery cart to start it, thus saving the internal battery. Because the seat was sufficiently deep to accommodate the pilot's dinghy pack, an extra cushion in the seat helped us reach the brakes and provided a better view. With wheel chocks in place, we set the brakes and fastened the seatbelt around the control stick to provide up-elevator during the power check. With the fuel selector set to either main tank, we "cracked" open the throttle and set the mixture control to idle cutoff. We left the flaps down until engine start.

After visually checking the area around the prop and yelling "Clear," we engaged the direct-drive starter along with the engine primer. As soon as the engine cylinders began to fire, we moved the mixture control to "run." The propeller was already at full flat pitch, and the throttle was set at 1,300rpm for warmup. Since this article isn't a P-51 manual, I will only mention a few of the various checks. After engine coolant and engine temperatures were "in the green," we ran the engine to 2,300rpm and checked the magnetos. With either left or right mag off, the maximum allowable rpm drop was 100. The propeller governor was also checked and the prop "exercised" by running it through to high pitch and back to low; 3,000rpm was maximum for the Merlin, but this was for takeoff and wasn't used on ground run.

The Merlin's ignition systems were sometimes troublesome. The magnetos or wiring were occasionally the culprits, but usually, it was just the spark plugs. Rough engines were common during preflight and flight. At least one source of the problem was the highly leaded fuel that was used, especially late in the War when 150-grade fuel was tried for a while. Sometimes, the fouling could be burned off the plugs by going to higher power settings; this would cause the engine to smooth out. If this didn't work, however, a plug change was called for. British spark plugs gave the best service, but even they seldom held up for more than 15 or 20 hours. The exhaust plugs were no problem to change, as they were on the outside of the cylinder banks, but the intake plugs were difficult to get to—especially on a hot engine. Burned fingers and hands dropped many a plug between the intake manifolds, where they were very difficult—sometimes impossible—to retrieve.

An unfortunate aspect of the "rough engine" syndrome was that a very few pilots who didn't want to fly the mission used it as an excuse to abort and return to base. In these cases, when the crew chief couldn't find any defect, the pilot's flight leader would run (or fly) the airplane and take appropriate action if he couldn't find a defect.

After we shut down the engine and if everything had checked out OK, it was mostly a matter of waiting. Fuel and oil trucks usually cruised the taxiway, and all tanks were topped off after the engine run. Windshield, canopy and rearview mirror were polished for the 10th time or so; the armament man had long since arrived to do his checks and charge the guns, so all aircraft on the field had "hot" guns long before takeoff time. Sometimes, if the gun switch had been left on, an accidental touch of the trigger on the control stick could cause everyone in the area to look for a ditch. As far as is known, none of these incidents resulted in injury, but the sound could cause considerable panic!

The pilots usually arrived 15 or 20 minutes before their engine start time via overloaded jeep or weapons carrier (a light truck). After the pilot's crew had helped him strap in, his goggles and windshield were given a final polish as "start engine" time came. Some 60 Merlins coughed to life around the airfield, then, with chocks away and after its pilot waved to the crew, each aircraft took its place on the taxi strip and snaked toward whichever of the three runways was active that day.

The ground crews and everyone else in the airfield area usually sought a vantage point from which to watch the takeoff—always an exciting spectacle. The sight and sound of 60 heavily loaded P-51s getting airborne remain a vivid memory. Mostly responsible for the heavily loaded condition of the P-51 were the two, long-range drop tanks installed for every mission. "For want of a horseshoe nail," the old saying goes, "the battle was lost." Almost as humble as the horseshoe nail was the droppable fuel tank, so vital was it to the success of U.S. fighters in Europe. Except for the early days, when steel 75-gallon tanks were used, the standard tanks were the paper composition units of 108-gallon capacity built in huge numbers by British companies. (Later on, some steel tanks of the same capacity were used.) The night before, the mechanics had installed the tanks on the wing racks and filled them for the next day's mission. During the operation, they were pressurized by the exhaust side of the engine vacuum pump to ensure positive feeding at altitude. The piping for this and the fuel flow had glass elbows that would break away cleanly when the tanks were dropped. Even though the tanks were pressurized, it was necessary to coax the fuel into the system during preflight. After the selector had been moved to the drop-tank position, the engine tended to die, and the selector was quickly put back to "main"; after a few of these switchbacks, the tanks would feed properly. The drop tanks were never brought home; they were always dropped when empty (or before, if combat required it). With all 15 fighter groups of the 8th Air Force operating, almost 1,800 tanks a day were required. Today, they are very rare. The USAF Museum at Wright Patterson AFB was able to find only one (from the original manufacturer) to install on its display P-51.

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With the Mustang's tanks serviced—they held 485 gallons—2,910 pounds of fuel were on board. Add to this the weight of the guns, ammo and other operational equipment, and the P-51 was heavy. To get airborne, it required most of Leiston's available runway (6,000 feet on the long runway; 4,800 on the other two).

At midday, while the mission was out, the line crews were in a state of suspended animation. It was mostly free time to attend to laundry, read the squadron bulletin board to see when mail call was and check to see whether your name had come up on any unwanted, but unavoidable, extra-duty rosters. There was also time to check in at the small Post Exchange for a candy bar and take in noon chow at the mess hall.

The average mission took four to five hours, and when the estimated time of return (ETR) had come, everyone returned to the flightline. If the group came into sight in proper formation, there probably hadn't been any contact with enemy aircraft. If they straggled back in small groups or singly, it was certain that there had been some kind of action. Missing red tape and smoky gun muzzles were the final confirmation.

As the pilot of each aircraft turned it into its proper parking place, blasted the tail around and shut down the engine, the wheels were chocked, and the mission was over for another day—one more toward the completion of the pilot's combat tour.

After the pilot had departed to be debriefed, the ground crew had considerable work to do to complete the post-flight inspection and attend to any discrepancies the pilot had reported. This sometimes required working into the night, but if you were lucky, the airplane was "put to bed" in time for all to make the normal evening chow.

Joseph DeShay, then a M/Sgt. who served as hangar chief in the 364th Fighter Squadron, provides some further thought on maintaining the Mustang in those long-ago days: "The cold, damp winters of England made it most unpleasant to be working on aircraft in the open. The blister hangars used for maintenance provided little protection from the cold and the elements, and it was not practical to work with gloves on.

"The prime objective in the combat area was to have all possible aircraft available for the next morning's mission. This led to considerable work being done at night when complete blackout was in order to comply with the general blackout throughout England. A small, two-cell flashlight was usually the most lighting permitted.

"The twenty-five-, fifty- and one hundred-hour inspections of the P-51 rolled around fast, owing to the lengthy escort missions that were the group's primary job. Engine changes were frequent, providing the aircraft lasted long enough! Even though the P-51 with its Packard/Rolls-Royce Merlin engine and the Hamilton Standard propeller were three great mechanical marvels, failures were bound to happen. Ground fire and air combat created considerable sheet-metal work, and those specializing in that duty performed some super repair jobs.

"Our group was blessed with a terrific group of mechanics. The armorers, ordnance men, radiomen, cooks, clerks and other specialists all made a fine team."

Whether crews had a close relationship with their pilot depended on several factors, such as how long they had been together and the pilot's general attitude toward enlisted men, etc. Many pilots and crews established lifelong relationships. Years later, several pilots told this writer they regretted not having been closer to their crews; they had been too engrossed in the realities of combat—and possible death—to be so. Considering how dangerous the skies of Europe were in the year 1944, this was a reasonable fear! On the other hand, a very small percentage of pilots—"the Tigers"—actually looked forward to combat.

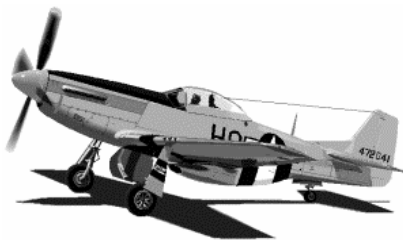
Although the word "hero" probably never occurred to the ground crews, they knew quite well that the pilot was the one doing the fighting—and sometimes, the dying—and they usually had great affection for and pride in the achievements of "their" pilot. Most pilots, in turn, were well aware that their life was in the hands of their ground crews.

There was always a period of depression when an aircraft and its pilot failed to return, and in many cases, the reason for this loss never filtered down to the ground crews. (Often, no one knew what had happened to a missing pilot.) In a day or two, a new P-51 and a new pilot were assigned, and the War went on.

Attached to the pilot's parachute harness was a dinghy (boat) pack that formed a very hard, lumpy cushion. All pilots carried some type of utility knife with which to stab and deflate the dinghy in case of accidental inflation—a very dangerous situation. On the morning of June 6, 1944—D-day—Capt. LeRoy Ruder arrived at his aircraft without his knife. His armorer, Sgt. Willard Bierly, loaned Ruder his knife. On D-day, the 357th Fighter Group flew eight missions and lost three pilots (two dead, one an evader). Will Bierly never got his knife back, as LeRoy Ruder was one who never returned.

"Without their service, nothing can be achieved. I must say that their endurance, their skill, their patience, although different, is in every way the equal of the aircrews'."

These words would be very gratifying for the ground crews of any air force to hear—even though they were uttered by one of the great villains of WW II, Hermann Göring, the head of the Luftwaffe. He was referring to the men who toiled to keep the Fw 190s, Me 109s and Ju 88s flying. In many respects, however, the men Göring referred to probably had much in common with their counterparts across the English Channel.



Keep 'em Flying