



North San Diego County Vernon Payne Chapter 286

President: Bob Wilson Vice President :Mike Talmadge Secretary: Dave Leedom Treasure: George Pruitte

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Wilson at 1910 hours, Thursday, July 3, 2008..

Old Business

Treasurer George Pruitte reported that a \$ 350.00 check has been designated for the Norman Miller memorial plaque.

Kermit Davison described the memorial in more detail. The plaque will be mounted on the outer wall of the Memorial Building at Oshkosh and each plaque will bear about 30 names. A book displayed inside the Memorial Building will feature Norman Miller's picture and life events. The details for the book must be in by April of 2009. Kermit has volunteered to see that all deadlines are met.

New Business

There was no new business to be reported.

15' Before The Break

Glenn Snavelly introduced his topic by pointing to an impressive array of mainly first place trophies for model plane competition..

Back in the days when model planes were painstakingly constructed from balsawood components Glen was the terror of the skies. His meticulously constructed craft out flew the competition, no mean feat in the days before radio control when balance and aerodynamic perfection determined flight quality. Before retiring from model competition in 1970, Glenn had amassed 38 trophy's, 98 per cent of which were first place.

Featured Speaker: Albert Shower

Albert Shower is a remarkable survivor of the group of brave pilots who flew the RA5C Vigilante. The program began with 250 pilots: of that group, 35 pilots remain. About a quarter of the group were killed in crashes.

Shower's aviation experience began in the cockpit of his fathers B-29. He earned his wings from the Naval Academy in 1961 and flew an A4 in Viet Nam. On return he received a degree in aeronautical engineering. He later joined the elite group flying the

EAA Chapter 286, July 3, 2008 Minutes cont.:

mach 2.5, RA5C Vigilantes, a specimen of which now resides on display aboard the Midway in San Diego Harbor.

Albert Shower retired from the military in 1983 and began the business that is the subject of the featured talk: Ferrying Planes Across the World.

Economics dictate that flying a plane across the world is much more cost-effective than transport by ship. A representative comparison is \$ 8,500 by flight versus \$ 35,000 by ship. Each flight is an adventure. Over the open sea, life and death hang on the flawless performance of both engine and navigation. Over the polar regions GPS function is erratic and the pilot must resort to fundamental navigational skill, using whatever celestial markers are available.

Ferrying an aircraft across the world is not an exercise in tedium, as might be supposed. Engine function must be monitored continuously and fuel consumption measured against distance flown and remaining. Over very long flights, particularly those traversing the poles, landmarks are often very difficult to discern and there is very little margin for error.

Business and political factors must also be reckoned with. Some entities view the long distance flyer as fair game for extortion in fuel, lodging and landing fees. And some remote areas with low traffic must charge high fees to compensate for cost. For example, a remote Greenland air strip charges \$ 5.00 for a single banana and \$ 300.00 per night for space on a bunk. A beer goes for \$ 30.00.

Polar flight poses special challenges. GPS systems fail and the pilot must fall back on classical navigation protocols involving knowledge of time and celestial markers.

The presentation was illustrated with beautiful photos that captured the loneliness of cross-ocean flight and the bleak Arctic wastes that merged terrain and sky in a featureless gray white.

The ferry pilot's trade puts man and machine to their limit. It is an interface of skill and wit and courage. All in all, the featured talk was a remarkable tale told by a remarkable person.

The meeting was adjourned at 2105 hours.