



# RVator's Log

Newsletter of the Twin Cities RV Builder's Group

## Shop Notes

- Doug

### September 2021

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#### Upcoming Events

**TC RV Builders Fall Lunch. Faribault Airport. Saturday, September 25, at noon. Details on page 8**

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**Minnesota Wing  
Van's Air Force**

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In 1998, NBC newsman Tom Brokaw released his outstanding book titled "The Greatest Generation." That phrase has come to describe those Americans born from 1900 to 1920 and whose lives were defined by the depression of the 1930s and then World War II. According to the Veterans Administration, 16 million Americans served in WWII and as of May of this year about 325,000 remain living. Today even the youngest veterans are in their early 90s. Noteworthy WWII aviators like Dick Cole, Chuck Yeager, Bob Hoover and others have left us in the past several years. It's hard to imagine that WWII pilots were literally kids with just a couple hundred hours flying big, heavy, complex aircraft designed and built by the thousands in a matter of months.



This year we decided to sit out going to AirVenture (only the 4<sup>th</sup> time in 51 years!). But the Wings of the North's Air Expo was slated for the weekend prior and Flying Cloud is only a 45 minute drive away. My two grandsons Chet, 8 and Clay, 5 are now just the right age to enjoy a morning checking out the warbirds with grandpa.

Before heading out to the flight line we went inside the recently completed JetLinx hangar lined with the usual aviation related booths and displays. But what really caught my eye was a chance to meet and greet a variety of noteworthy veteran pilots. A cool part of Air Expo is the chance to meet WWII, Korean and Viet Nam pilots. Chet loves drawing the Grumman Corsair and we first met Colonel Joe McPhail who actually flew the Corsair in WWII.



Photo by Max Haynes

As we walked along the row of tables I was surprised to see B-17

navigator Jim Rasmussen. In 2009, I flew Jim and his granddaughter to the annual Minnesota Veteran's Gathering at Camp Ripley. Me and Tom Irlbeck made several of those veteran's flights during the mid-2000s where several dozen light aircraft each flew a WWII vet to that year's event which was usually a luncheon and perhaps a flyover of WWII aircraft. I introduced Jim to my grandsons and asked if he remembered me and our flight 12 years ago. He said he did and mentioned that his granddaughter is now a mother with two kids. Jim is now 97 years old and still actively involved in WWII veteran's activities. Minnesota Public Radio did a nice piece on him a couple years ago. Take a few minutes and enjoy the story of one of the Greatest Generation [at this link HERE.....](#)



Chet, Clay and Jim – Air Expo 2021



Friend and co-pilot Joel Moore, Jim's grand daughter, and Jim – On the way to Camp Ripley 2009 (Bonanza courtesy of Bernie Weiss)

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## Lee Hanson wins Bronze Lindy

-Frank Huber

Lee Hanson did not set out to build an award winning aircraft, but was obviously influenced by his hangar partners at the Buffalo Airport, where he built his RV-14A. Mike Reid's RV-7A won the Outstanding Craftsmanship award and Bruce Top won a Bronze Lindy for his F-1 Rocket in 2014. He initially wanted to build an RV-8, but decided on the RV-14A because two of his three children fly and he felt the RV-14A was a more practical airplane, offering aerobatics and good cross country flying. Lee began his project in September of 2016 after receiving the tail kit He retired from NWA/Delta in December of 2019 as a A-320 captain. He completed his project and received the airworthiness certificate also in December 2019.



Lee found overall, the riveting and making metal parts & assemblies was fun and very rewarding. The fiberglass, not so much. Lee found the fiberglass work the most difficult part of the project. He had to cut off many corners of kit fiberglass parts and remake them for proper fit, especially the tail fairing and wingtips. The cowl and wheel pants also took a lot of work. Running all the wiring also took him a lot of time. He rarely considered the entirety of the 'whole' project and what a gargantuan task it was, but just followed the directions and constructed one part, one assembly after the next, and just kept plugging along.



As you can see from the picture of Lee's instrument panel, his aircraft is equipped for IFR flying. Lee says the folks at Stein Air were absolutely awesome. They are extremely knowledgeable, and will fully support you with service after the sale. He highly recommends them! His panel is equipped

with Garmin Dual G3X 10.5 Displays, GTN 650 Nav, G-5, GTR 200 2nd Radio, Audio panel, 507 Auto pilot panel, GTX 45R Transponder, servos, engine interface and more. His aircraft is powered by a YIO-390 EXP Thunderbolt, Airflow Performance FM-150 injection engine, driving a 3 Blade MT V-12-B propeller. The beautiful paint job was done by Midwest Aircraft Refinishers in Hibbing, MN.



Lee did his forty hours of test flying using the EAA Flight Test manual. He has found the aircraft will cruise at 140 kts IAS (155 kts TAS) at 62% power using 9.5 gal/hr at 5000 feet. His aircraft stalls at 52 kts with full flaps and 61 kts clean. The stated range for the aircraft is over 800 miles, which is greater than Lee's range. He is planning to do a lot of local flying with some trips to Texas and Arizona in the future. Lee has done an outstanding job building his award-winning RV-14A. He is planning to attend the September 25, MNVAF's event at SteinAir, so we all get a chance take a look at this beautifully built aircraft.

*Ed note: Some pretty nice workmanship is coming out of Buffalo, MN. Here's some glamour shots of Lee's inspiration:*



Mike Reid's RV-7A



Bruce Top's F-1 Rocket

## It's All Out There

- Doug

There are still several of us RV fossils in the group that recall the days when we sent out a REAL paper copy of our newsletter composed of repurposed dead trees and delivered by one of those mail guys (or gals) to a metal box on top of a pole at the end of your driveway. The internet changed all that of course and now we can whip up a newsletter and zap it to your mailbox (that's the one inside your computer) in a couple seconds.

With the universe switching to all things and everything on line, RV related email lists morphed into online forums and websites. I've seen some builder websites with such detail that I question that the builder may spend more time documenting the build on line than actually building the aircraft. Perhaps that is not such a bad thing as the ranks of RV builders and RV pilots have exponentially grown such that one can probably track down someone on line who has had the same questions that you have, made the same building mistakes as you have and posted it somewhere in the ether world.

Here is a undoubtedly a small list of internet resources that you may or may not be aware of:



**Van's Aircraft.** The mothership reworked their website a couple years ago and

it is a wealth of info on the various models of kits produced in Oregon. If you are a newbie to the RV world, this is a great place to educate yourself. It is the go-to site for customer support and especially service bulletins and other important information for builder's and pilots.



**Van's Air Force.** Doug Reeves first put together a crude message board in 1997 and today it has grown to the largest RV- related internet source in the known universe. With about 30,000 forum accounts and over 50,000 "lurkers", you can very likely get an answer to your questions here (but just remember what you find on line may or may not be accurate so when in doubt, contact Van's for the final authority on construction and flight operations questions.)



**Van's Aircraft Builders.** This is a very comprehensive site with a wide array of building tips, videos, links to RV related vendors. You can spend a LOT of time exploring this site!!!



**Baseleg Aviation.** Vic Syracuse is one of the RV most prolific internet personalities. He heads an RV maintenance shop near Atlanta and stays busy doing condition inspections and prebuys for potential purchasers of ready-built RVs. Vic has written two books on amateur-built aircraft, given multiple forums at AirVenture and recently started a series of informative RV-related videos on You Tube focusing on the care and feeding of your RV.

And of course we have **Facebook**. If you're one of a zillion FB users, you'll find RV Facebook groups that will fill up your feed everyday with all the pixels you could ever ask for. Just search on:



Van's Aircraft  
 Van's Aircraft Builders  
 Van's RV-6A  
 Van's RV-12 Builders  
 RV-10  
 Van's RV-14  
 Van's RV-7

## The Grand Canyon via RV

- Tom Berge

In January 2020 I planned a white water rafting trip down the Grand Canyon with my friend Joerg from Austria. Having made the trip twice before, I was looking forward to a third adventure.



Unfortunately, that pesky Covid interrupted our plans due to the closing of international borders. One year later, with Joerg making his case to the powers that be in our government, he was allowed into the US and we launched mid-July, 2021 for a combination RV trip to Flagstaff, AZ and 6 days on the Colorado River enjoying some of the best white water around.



The RV portion of the trip was pretty straight forward. Late on day one to Wichita, KS to beat out weather covering the upper plains and I have to confess, the Double Tree hotel right on the airport has very good chocolate chip cookies. Day two was off to Dalhart, TX for breakfast and then Flagstaff, AZ. Total time was 7.5 hours which is not bad. That evening we met the rest of the guests going on the rafting trip and got the lay of the land as well as some basic rules. And then the fun began.



If you've never been on a white water rafting trip, I highly encourage you to give it a try. The water is refreshing to say the least, meaning cold. The air was hot, meaning well, hot. The first day was over 115 degrees. But as the group leader said, being hot is an option. The water is 48-52 degrees year round so plenty of cooling opportunities are available. Of course you still have to dump the stuff over yourself and at times that took courage. Another option was to just jump into the river. The first four days the water was crystal clear. Late on day four the rains started and by evening there were flash floods turning the water chocolate brown. Hey, we're in the wilds of the desert, these things happen.



The not so pristine Colorado River after thunderstorms

Every day we did hikes to different parts of the canyon seeing some spectacular sights. It is hard to describe the beauty and pictures just don't do it justice. We saw Big Horn sheep, deer, Blue Herons, ducks and Rainbow Trout.



The guides were wonderful, the food delicious and the trip lived up to our expectations. On this trip one of the boats was called a Dory which, how should I say it, is stiff compared to the rest of the boats which were inflatable rafts. On day two I decided to spend the day riding the roaring twenties in the Dory. The roaring twenties are a section of the river where there are rapids every mile or so for twenty miles. The Dory has a lot more action than the inflatable rafts. A lot more! It was on this day I was given a chance to run the oars and I thought sure why not? Couldn't be that hard rowing a boat, could it?



Just before the "water loop!"

Being a flight instructor, I spend lots of time trying to teach students how to fly an RV. To me, it's so very simple. Just do this, this and this and you know how to land an RV. Watching the guides run the oars, they were sooooo smooth. Lots of hand action, oars out of the water, oars in the water, turn this way, turn that way. And of course there were the rapids and all that entails. But they made it look so simple. Well, let me tell you, it took every last bit of my mental bandwidth just trying to keep the boat in the current going straight, and I came up short. The eddy's were trying to turn me, can't hit the walls. The rest of the people on the boat were relying on me to keep them safe. Then I managed to water loop the boat but regained control. Overshot the camping site and had to oar back up the river in the eddy. I was drained. And all this was at around 4 knots! Afterwards I thought to myself, this is what my students feel like when they are trying to learn how to land an RV at 70 knots. The parallels couldn't be better. While rowing a boat in a big lake doesn't seem too hard, like landing on a 10,000 foot runway, rowing down a river with rapids, rocks and eddy's sounds awfully similar to landing with turbulence and cross winds. I'm sure with enough practice I would catch on, just like my students eventually figure out how to land.

On the last day of our rafting trip, we were dropped off at Pipe Creek. This was at mile 89 out of 226 if one were to do the entire rafting trip of 14-15 days. We had packed up our backpacks the night before and upon being dropped off, started the hike up the Bright Angel Trail leading to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. This is a 7.5 mile hike climbing 4500 feet. Our early morning start allowed us to get past the Devils Corkscrew, an exposed portion of the hike during a cooler part of the day. Certainly wouldn't want to get caught there in the heat of the day. From what I recall 16 years ago when I last made this hike, the steps were higher. Each step is up and up and up. Saw more deer and Big Horn sheep on the way up. 16 years ago I made the hike in 4 ¼ hours. This year it took 5 ¾ hours. I must be slowing down in my old age!

The return trip was just a bit more sporting with the monsoon rains. Thank goodness for XM/ADS-B weather. A bit of bobbing and weaving got us out of the mountains via Albuquerque. Our initial destination of Dalhart, TX for the overnight was changed due to a giant thunderstorm. We ended up on the south side of Amarillo, TX then back to Wichita, KS for more of those wonderful, warm chocolate chip cookies. Last leg departed for home through smooth, cool morning air. Return time ended up at 7.5 hours as well. 369TB ran great, kept us safe and got us home in time for lunch.

(Note: check out the club website ([mnwing.org](http://mnwing.org)) for some video clips.

## Twenty Years

- Doug

*This coming week marks the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. Probably no event in aviation history has had such an impact on airline travel. In the weeks after I recall threat briefings from air marshals, secret ATC passwords required prior to entering NYC airspace, and ad hoc security procedures both official and otherwise. Here's a piece from the RVator's Log vault written 10 years ago. Where were you on 9/11?*

### September Memories...

It was a perfect Tuesday in Minnesota. Clear, no wind and pleasantly cool as I pulled 464EM from the hangar at Lake Elmo. Life was about as good as it could be. I had been flying right seat on the 757 for about a year "living the dream" as they say. I had recently bought Mike Eesley's RV-4 and with another week of vacation ahead of me, it was time for another pancake run to Eau Claire.



The night before I had called fellow NWA pilot and RV builder Kevin Knutson and invited him to come along. He lived near the Lakeville airport so the plan was to pick him up and then scoot to EAU and enjoy some great food and conversation.



Kevin was waiting when I landed at LVN around 0730. I shut down and he squeezed his 6-foot-plus frame into the very small rear seat. RV-4s were not designed for long-term passenger comfort but it was only about 25 minutes to EAU. We climbed out quickly in the crisp morning air. We were well clear of the Class B airspace so we only listened to Unicom for departure and arrival (EAU did not have a tower at that time). It was a perfectly smooth flight to Eau Claire as we motored along enjoying the scenery of southwestern Wisconsin.

We landed and taxied up to the terminal building, shut down and heading into the building, first making a pit stop in the men's room. As we entered, another guy was coming out and asked, "What are you guys doing flying here? Don't you know we've been attacked and all airplanes are grounded?" What was this guy talking about? We were totally clueless and crossed the hall to the café where several customers were clustered around a TV in the adjacent bar. That's when we saw the black smoke coming from one of the World Trade Center buildings on the CNN broadcast. How could some little airplane have hit the tower on such a clear day in New York?

We ordered our pancakes and frankly only half-watched the broadcast on the TV through the doorway. But suddenly we saw the unmistakable shadow of a Boeing hit the second building and my plate of blueberry pancakes lost all their appeal. Like everyone else watching this horrible scene, we really could not believe what was happening. We sat spellbound watching the broadcast for a time and then it was announced that all aircraft in the U.S. had been ordered to land. Kevin and I asked each other, "Now what?" I called my wife back in Hudson and told her where we were and what was going on. She might have to come get us but I'd let her know later.

Well we weren't just going to sit here. We hatched this plan to just head out to the airplane, takeoff, fly to Lakeville, drop off Kevin, and I'd high tail it back to Lake Elmo. No one was on the airport so we figured if the airport manager or someone intercepted us as we taxied out, we'd plead ignorance (I think the statute of limitations has run out by now).

So that's what we did. We strapped in, taxied across the airport unchallenged and took off for Lakeville. About halfway back, I tuned in ATIS at MSP and listened to the urgent NOTAM requiring all aircraft inflight to land at the closest airport immediately due to a national emergency. Now we were starting to think maybe we had screwed up. Here were two professional airline pilots knowingly violating a FAA emergency mandate. Thoughts of our licenses (and careers) evaporating ran through our minds. I suggested to Kevin that we make a beeline to Lake Elmo and I'd drive him home ASAP.

A slight right course correction put us on a direct path to 21D. I think we were the only airplane in the sky around the Twin Cities as we flew back to Lake Elmo. We put the RV away and I drove Kevin home as we listened to the radio news on the drive to Lakeville.

The following Saturday was our MN Wing September Picnic. VFR flight was still banned so our aircraft turn-out was limited to Tim Mahoney who filed IFR in his C-172. It was a somber yet welcome picnic as we gathered together that cloudy Saturday. Several of us were airline pilots flying the 767 and 757 and



had our own visions of just what went on during the last moments of the hijacked aircraft. When I went back on the line the following week, everything had dramatically changed. No clear procedures for securing the cockpit had been implemented so it was rather hit and miss. One semi-official mandate was for the first officer (namely me) to pull out the fire axe and have it at the ready whenever the cockpit door was open in flight. I questioned just how effectively I could

dispatch an unwanted intruder barging into our cockpit. Cooler heads finally prevailed and strict measures and procedures were finally clarified and are still in place today. The ten-year anniversary of 9/11 will be reviewed and replayed many times over this month. Certainly no event in the last decade has had such a significant effect on aviation, both commercial and general. Thankfully we are still free to build and fly our RV aircraft. It is a privilege to be cherished.

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## ***Twin Cities RV Builders Fall Fly/Drive-In Lunch***



**Saturday, September 25, 2021 - 12 noon**

**Stein Air's Hangar  
Faribault Municipal Airport, Faribault, MN**

After a lost 2020 COVID summer Stein Bruch and his staff at SteinAir have invited us back to their beautiful hangar for a fall get-together. Eatin' starts around noon but if you want to come earlier, the Faribault Airport is having an open house from 0800 to noon.

Everyone is invited whether you fly an RV, spam can, or even have to drive! Lot's of good food and fellowship is on the agenda. See ya then!!!



**For fly-ins:**

Program your GPS present postikon direct to KFBL. The Stein Air hangar is located on the north ramp at the east end of the airport.

**For drivers:**

Go south on I-35 and exit at the Shieldsville, Rte 21 exit. Go west and you'll see the airport entrance immediately on your left.

Lost.... Call Doug at 651-398-1184

