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# EAA Chapter 569 Newsletter

Lincoln, NE



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## Meeting Announcement

**Date:** Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>

**Time:** 7:30pm

**Program:** Tom Winter

Tom, a member of the [Omaha Soaring Club](#), will share with us his experience flying gliders.

**Place:** Duncan Aviation Engine Shop  
5000 NW 44<sup>th</sup> St – Lincoln, NE

### President's Message Cristi Higgins



I am among one of the lucky folks that called John Cox Sr. my friend. I got to fly his Archer and we often talked about what a nice airplane it is to fly. He rarely missed a 569 event on top of staying very active otherwise. Always a gent and I will miss seeing his big smile. I celebrate and will keep in my heart his spunk. They call it YOLO now a days standing for You, Only, Live, Once meaning live life everyday like it is your last. John was a great example of just how to do that.

The B-17 is coming to town June 12th - 16th! Shout it loud and far! We are off to a good start promoting and setting up the event. Silverhawk has once again opened their doors to us helping with planning and the things to do list. I am looking forward to an

excellent tour visit.

Things are all set up for our camper Nicholas to go to Air Academy in August. We have many Young Eagle events we are being asked to do. Please send me an email or call if you are willing and able to fly some kids. We will be doing the YE rides at the State Fly In this year in York June 7th as well as our annual event in Beatrice June 15th for Homestead Days. It is looking to be a busy year but remember how many folks we have been able to help support recently and sending a youth to Air Academy is pretty awesome too.

Happy Landings, Cristi

## John F. Cox



**John and his furry friends after a Chapter breakfast in 2011. John, 86, was killed at the Beatrice Airport on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Services were held in North Platte, NE on March 24<sup>th</sup> with burial at the Fort McPherson National Cemetery near Maxwell, NE.**

**Remembrance of Things Past:**

**Arrow Airport**

*By Tom Winter*

Harald Dreimanis was a photographer for the Lincoln Journal. We met when the paper did an item about my recumbent bike in the 70's, and I kept up with him. Finally, I helped his daughter clean out his house, a somber, close friend duty. She awarded me two mementos of her father, his log book and his (leatherette bound!) Nebraska Airport Directory. There is no date on it, but J. J. Exon was the governor.

These are gifts that keep on giving. Of course, I delight to be reminded of Harald, but also I see the past of our airports, in particular this one: Arrow Airport! How I miss it! June 28, 1972, I took my Cessna coupon and a five dollar bill to Arrow Airport and got an introductory flight in a 150. I

still remember the details of the preflight, I still remember the flight. I concluded that I had many responsibilities to square away before following up, which I finally did a quarter century later.

People and their planes made Arrow airport unique: As some of you know, Rollie Woodruff flew out of there with his Curtiss-Wright Junior replica. Ken Ruhnke kept his Smith Miniplane there, and on football Saturdays, kept the engine running, awaiting the next Nebraska touchdown: then he would launch and try to bust the balloons! Pilot question: Would you rather watch the game, or would you rather watch Ken!

Drive up there now, and overlook the

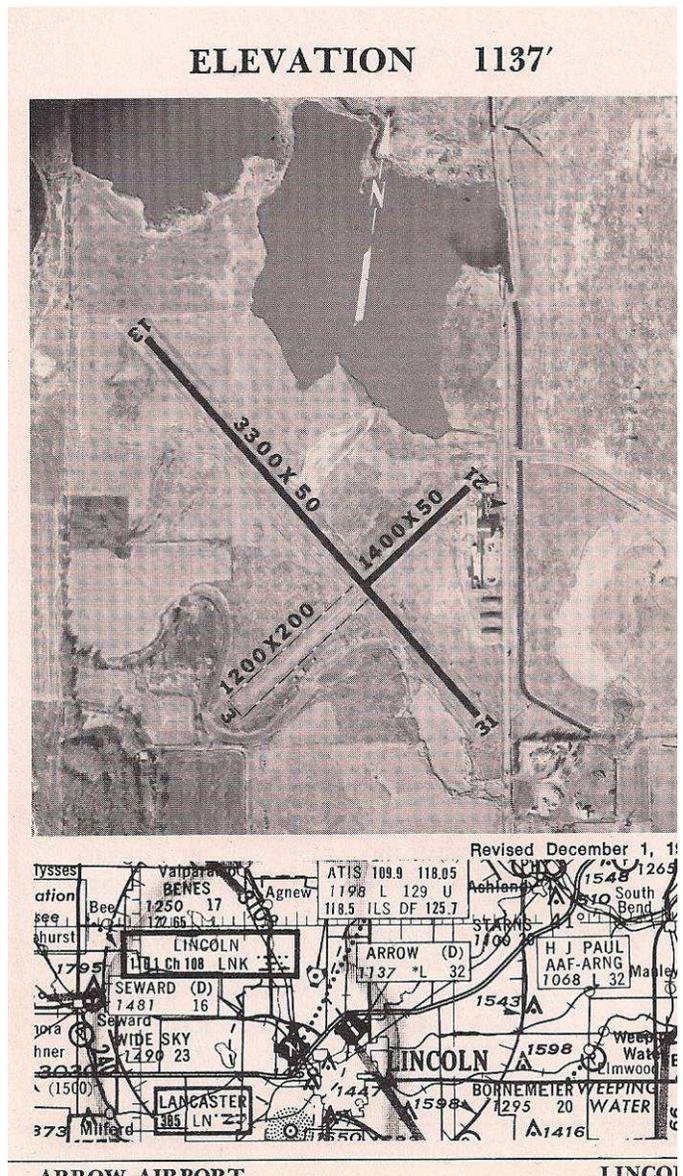
smooth grass of the covered-over landfill. Now close your eyes and see, for instance, Rollie launching the C-W Junior! Oh, the nostalgia!

I close with this request: If you have memories of the people and planes of Arrow Airport, please share them with me. We can at least keep the ghosts alive...

*(Contact Tom Winter at [c150gpilot@yahoo.com](mailto:c150gpilot@yahoo.com) if you have any Arrow Airport memories to share. – Ed)*

ARROW AIRPORT	LINCOLN
LATITUDE:	40° 52'
LONGITUDE:	96° 39'
FROM CITY:	4.8 Mi. NNE
CITY POPULATION:	148,092 (Unofficial)
RUNWAY SURFACE:	Turf, bituminous
MAINTENANCE:	Mowing, snow removal
LIGHTING:	Runway, windsock, windtee On Request
STORAGE:	Hangar, tiedown
OPERATOR:	Owl Aviation Inc.
MANAGER:	Geoffrey C. Gallup
RADIO:	Unicom 122.8 MHZ
REPAIRS:	None
FUEL:	80, 100 Oct. "Limited Service"
ATTENDED:	Daylight Hours
WEATHER SERVICE:	Lincoln FFS — Tele. 402-477-3929
REST ROOM FACILITIES:	Modern
OVERNIGHT:	None at airport
MEALS:	None at airport
TRANSPORTATION:	Taxi

**NOTE:** Airport licensed by the State in Category D because of trees and a fence block the approach to runway 31.



**Book Review –  
*The Wild Blue***

***The Men and Boys Who Flew the  
B-24s Over Germany 1944-1945***

*By Dennis Crispin*

About a year ago I found an interesting book in a discount store's bargain bin. Recently I finally found time to read it and found it a quite interesting work.

The Wild Blue – subtitled The Men and Boys Who Flew the B-24s Over Germany 1944-1945 is a 260 page paperback first published in 2001. Stephen E. Ambrose is the best selling author of a dozen or so historical and biographic works covering WW-2 and some well known people of that era.

The book covers of the history of George McGovern and his crew flying B-24s of the Fifteenth Air Force over WW2 Europe. Woven into the narrative are the stories of a number of other pilots, crewmen and support personnel. There is no attempt to novelize or edit the story. It is pure history as derived from news records and personal interviews. There is very little technical information about the B-24 Liberator bomber itself. Instead the book focuses on the personalities, hopes, dreams, stresses and fears of the airmen caught in history's largest and most violent struggle.

There are many little tidbits that collectively tell the story, some that I have not seen elsewhere.

Just flying the airplanes was a very dangerous business. A significant percentage of the airmen killed in WW-2 were from training and non-combat operational

accidents.

When McGovern's crew was sent overseas they voted to name their airplane the Dakota Queen in honor of McGovern's wife. Once in the combat zone they did not receive assignment to a specific B-24, but flew on next-plane-available assignments. So what ever plane they happened to be flying, they called it the Dakota Queen, regardless of the name that someone else had painted on the side.

Air warfare was an endeavor of youth. The average age of the bomber crews was 19. George McGovern was a combat pilot at 21. The squadron commander was a 23 year old Captain. The group leader was a Lieutenant Coronel at age 25. Typical flight experience for American pilots going into combat was 350 hours. German pilots usually had less than half that. Japanese and Russian pilots often went into battle with less than a hundred hours training. The German artillery crews that were shooting at the bombers were even younger. Many of the AA gun crews were as young as 14.

The Fifteenth Air Force flew out of hastily constructed bases in Italy.

McGovern found the people of Italy in a very bad state – much worse than the worst conditions that Americans had endured in the Great Depression. The Italians considered the Americans, not as conquerors, but as liberators who had freed them from the hated Germans.

A B-24 with the hydraulics shot out had no brakes making landing a dangerous undertaking. In such a

situation the pilot might have the waist gunners tie their parachute harnesses to the gun mounts, then, as the plane touched down, throw the chute packs out the window and pull the rip cords. The opening chutes would act as air brakes to slow the plane. McGovern learned of this technique from older pilots and used it once to make a successful emergency landing. He received a Distinguished Flying Cross medal for saving his plane and crew on that occasion.

The usual military "chicken shit" didn't exist on the air bases. Officers and enlisted men visited each others service clubs. Most of the crews were on a first name basis regardless of rank. Uniform standards were non existent – one pilot wore his cowboy boots even while flying. The book's author says that it certainly wasn't General George Patton's Third Army.

The twelve hour missions well exceeded the crews' bladder capacity. Urination was difficult with the heavy multilayered flight suits and the relief tubes were often frozen in the extreme cold. Sometimes the gunners would inadvertently urinate in their flight suits during the stress of combat. This resulted in extremely severe frost bite,

The B-24 was a physically difficult plane to fly. A standard joke was that you could tell a Liberator pilot by his enlarged left arm (from horsing the bomber around.)

All of the enlisted personnel on the bombers were promoted to the rank of sergeant before their first mission. (Much to the

consternation of the infantry, where a man might never make sergeant in the entire war.) This was because it was found that the military oriented Germans gave much better treatment to NCOs in their prison camps. (In much reading about WW2, I had never before seen this explanation.)

On the forward air bases, each man could draw a weekly ration of five bottles of beer. But it was always warm. So the ground crews would stash their beer in out of the way spots on the bombers and the beer would be nicely cooled when the plane returned from the mission. An inside joke among the flight crews was that the real reason the maintenance guys took such good care of the B-24s was to protect their beer.

Capri and a couple other off shore islands were set up as R&R camps. When General Eisenhower found that a couple luxury villas had been reserved for him and another General, he blew up and ordered that the facilities were for the troops and not the brass.

New pilots in the theater of operations had to fly 5 missions as copilot with an experienced crew before they could take command of a bomber themselves. So McGovern was five missions ahead of the rest of his crew in the quest for the 35 missions that sent a man home.

McGovern's navigator, a personal friend, often volunteered for extra flights to build up his total. He was killed in action at about 20 missions.

McGovern completed his 35 missions just before hostilities stopped. After Germany

surrendered he was one of the pilots that used the B-24s to fly the leftover food from the American bases into Germany for distribution to the starving German people.

When the European war was over, the high time crew members were given an immediate discharge while those with less than 30 missions were sent to the Pacific for more duty.

The books most touching story involves a bomb run on military targets near Vienna. A 1000 pound bomb jammed in the release mechanism. McGovern turned the plane away from the city over open country while the crew struggled to release the now armed bomb. When the bomb finally fell free it dropped into a farmyard destroying the farmhouse and other buildings.

McGovern knew that South Dakota farmers were always in their houses for dinner at noon and supposed that Austrian farmers did the same thing. When he returned to base, he received a telegram that his wife had just given birth to a daughter. The possibility that he had destroyed an innocent non-combatant family on the very day that he learned of his daughter's birth haunted McGovern for years.

Many years later McGovern was being interviewed on Austrian television. In a discussion of the WW2 bombing he related the story of the errant bomb. Shortly afterward the TV station was contacted by an Austrian farmer who thought that his was the farmhouse that McGovern has described. The farmer said that, on that fateful day, he had seen the American bomber coming and had gotten his family safely away from

the farm buildings. The farmer went on to say that he so hated Hitler and the Nazis that if his own farm had to be bombed to shorten the war, he didn't mind. After many years, the revelation finally put McGovern's mind at ease.

The Wild Blue is not a book for you if you are looking for a neatly crafted plot in an exciting adventure. Real history rarely works that way. But if you are looking for a realistic description of what it was like to be on a bomber crew in 1944, this work will provide it for you. Extensively footnoted and with a complete bibliography and index it will be a valuable research tool for anyone needing information on WW2.

The book does not contain any information on George McGovern's later political adventures.

*(What a great find in the bargain bin! Thanks Dennis. – Ed)*

**The  
B-17  
is coming  
Friday, Saturday & Sunday  
June 13, 14 & 15, 2014**

At Silverhawk Aviation  
Lincoln Municipal Airport  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Ground tours \$10.00 individual  
\$20 family.

Prebook flight experience \$409 EAA  
members, \$ 449 non-members.

To reserve your adventure in living  
history:

Call 800-359-6217

Email [b17@eaa.org](mailto:b17@eaa.org)

Information at [www.b17.org](http://www.b17.org) &  
[www.eaa569.org](http://www.eaa569.org)

**Minutes of the Club Meeting  
March 4<sup>h</sup>, 2014**

The meeting was called to order promptly at 7:30 PM CST by President Higgins.

The presentation for the evening was a presentation by Mark Musick, Major General, retired, author of the book "Boxes". The book is about the story of Howard Hughes and an alternative ending to his life.

Howard Hughes father died in 1924 leaving Howard a fortune of some \$500,000,000.00. That was a lot of money to inherit at age 19. Howard led an incredible life of secrecy and intrigue involving contracting with the CIA and other government agencies including the recovery of a Soviet submarine and satellite based communications systems.

The source of the story is Ms Eva McClelland who reports having met Howard Hughes in Panama. They were reported to have been married in 1970. Mr. Hughes was a difficult person to have a relationship with and their marriage had its challenges. Howard Hughes was said to have been described as a tall commanding figure and also as a 90 lb. weakling during the same period of time. An interesting mystery to read.

Ms Jamie Cox, freshman at UNL, presented her vision of a flight club at UNL. Jamie asked the membership for their support. Since a motion had been made for a donation of \$500.00 at a previous meeting, the motion was seconded and was passed by a majority of the membership present.

Vice President Gomon asked for a show of interest in supporting a visit by the Aluminum Overcast, the EAA B17 bomber on June 12 through June 16th. The membership showed their support and Keith will lead the effort.

Young Eagles will be flown on June 7th at the fly-in at York and June 15th at Beatrice.

The Chapter welcomed three new members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM by President Higgins.

Respectfully Submitted  
Doug Elting, Secretary, Chapter 569

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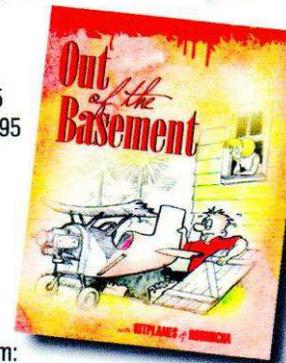


Check out Doug Prange's Aerial Photography work at [www.prangephotography.com](http://www.prangephotography.com).

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**Fly the Fortress!**

EAA's B-17 Bomber "Aluminum Overcast" is an example of the American heavy bomber that stood firm during the toughest days of World War II. See one and four this historic, pristine - and actually flying! - aircraft!

June 13 - 15  
Silverhawk Aviation (KLNK)

## Events

**York Airport (JYR)**, EAA Chapter 1055 Fly-in breakfast on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month. 0800-1000. Free will donation.  
**Crete Airport (CEK)**, EAA Chapter 569 Fly-in breakfast on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month. 0800-1000.

**June 7**, Nebraska State Fly-in, York, NE (KJYR)

**June 13 – 15**, B-17 tour, Lincoln, NE, <http://www.eaa569.org/>, <http://www.b17.org/>.

**July 19 – 20**, **Defenders of Freedom Open House and Air Show**, featuring the Blue Angels, Offutt AFB, Bellevue, NE., <http://www.offuttairshow.com>

**July 28 - Aug. 3**, AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI, <http://www.airventure.org/>



### Young Eagle News

Tom Trumble is seeking Young Eagle pilots for an event on May 9<sup>th</sup>. It will take place from 8:30 – 1:30 at the Department of Aeronautics. If you can help Tom give 28 8<sup>th</sup> graders rides on that day, please contact him at 402-540-6089.

#### Upcoming Young Eagle Events

June 7<sup>th</sup> – York (State Fly-in)

June 15<sup>th</sup> – Beatrice (Homestead Days)

John Cox

2279 County Road 2425

DeWitt, Nebraska 68541-2518

