



## GONE WEST

**A pillar of Chapter 91 has gone west. Pam Ratliff, former secretary/treasurer for nearly thirty years, has left us. Pam was a key contributor to the ultimate success of our organization, and she will be missed. Since Pam had become less active in more recent years, some of our newer member may not have known her, much less been aware of her contributions. So please see the brief article beginning on Page 5 which explains her influence. Pam loved aviation, EAA, and Chapter 91. We're sorry she's gone.**

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### **Special points of interest:**

Our next gathering will be in Monday, March 17 at 7:00 pm. IMC/VMC Clubs meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Next Young Eagles Rally & pancake breakfast is Saturday, April 19, 2025. We're always looking for good ideas for programs. Please contact Chris St. Germain with your information.

- President: **Rob Schmitt**
- Vice President and Young Eagles Coordinator: **Chris St. Germain**
- Secretary: **Becca Danik**
- Treasurer: **Sandy Rice**
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- Newsletter: **Bruce Hood**
- Web Editor: **James Perkins**
- Eagle Flight Coordinator: **Matt Williams**

EAA Chapter 91, Lee's Summit Municipal Airport (KLXT)  
Lee's Summit, Missouri

# President's Corner

EAA Chapter 91 president Rob Schmitt

Winter just won't end. Hopefully this March fifth's blast of air will be the last one, and we can get in some more flying hours in the near future.

Many thanks to all who attended the Annual Awards Banquet in February. The guest speaker was tremendous with excellent information on technologies in the forefront of drone and remote piloting aircraft. The raffle was very successful with a wonderful quilt and aviation print handed out to the lucky winners.

The Hedrick Scholarship is now open once again for applications. These \$1,500 scholarships are a great way to get started or finish up an aviation license or endorsement. We need all applications submitted by April 1. We will award these at the April 17 gathering. If you are interested in more information, please contact me by email at [robert7721@aol.com](mailto:robert7721@aol.com) or 816 309-0099.

More good news: the chapter has received another Ray Scholarship for 2025! If you are interested, please contact me (see above) or Jim Brady by email at [brady13381@aol.com](mailto:brady13381@aol.com).

On a sad note, long-time member and former secretary/treasurer of the chapter, Pam Ratliff, passed away on February 21. A memorial service will be held on March 29, 2:00 pm, at Liberty Street Community of Christ Church, 416 North Liberty Street, Independence, MO.

Upcoming Chapter 91 highlights include:

- IMC/VMC Club: Monday, March 10 at 7 pm. In-person only.
- Monthly chapter gathering, Monday March 17, 7 pm.
- Date for next board meeting: Monday, April 7, 7 pm.
- Hangar clean-up, Saturday April 12, 10 am.
- Hangar setup and potluck dinner, Friday April 18.
- Young Eagles flights, pancake breakfast, Saturday, April 19.



# EAA CHAPTER 91 GATHERING

## MINUTES

February 22, 2025

- I. The meeting was called to order by President Rob Schmitt at 6:04 pm with Matt Williams leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Rob led the chapter in the Pilot's Prayer prior to dinner. Nadler's catered a delightful dinner, and following the meal, updates were provided regarding both the Ray and Hedrick Scholarships. Chapter 91 has applied again this year for a Ray Scholarship and will find out by the end of the month if we were awarded a chance to submit an applicant. The chapter as a result has also opened submissions for those who are interested in being considered for the Ray Scholarship. Layla Cranston, our previous Ray Scholar, is about to start her instrument rating and passed her checkride on November first! The Hedrick Scholarship is now open for applications for the April award. Please reach out to Rob for an application. Chapter camping is opened up again for Oshkosh this year and we have six slots open. The chapter's slots are not completely filled yet, but that can change suddenly. Please contact Rob if you are interested. Young Eagles and pancake breakfasts will start again in April! Rob Schmitt presented awards from EAA to board members, officers, and volunteers who have fulfilled various roles throughout this year. Thank you to all who help ensure this chapter remains successful! Congratulations to those who won the amazing raffle items that were graciously donated to support the chapter.
- II. Calendar: March board meeting; Monday, March 3 at 7 pm.
  - a. IMC/VMC Club: Monday, March 10 at 7 pm. In-person only.
  - b. Next chapter gathering Monday, March 17 at 7 pm.
- III. Presentation – Dave Sizoo – Test Pilot
- IV. Adjournment



Our next meeting of the IMC Club will be **Monday, March 10th at 7:00 p.m. Central Standard Time.**

Safe instrument flying depends on a safe, well-equipped and maintained airplane, and a safe, well-equipped and maintained pilot. This month we will look at the pilot-side of this partnership and examine the ways that your body lies to you in flight. (The FAA calls this “spatial disorientation” – I call it, “you confused your body.”)

Come chat with us and let us know if your head has ever told you that your instruments must be wrong.

**We meet at the Chapter 91 EAA hangar** at the Lee's Summit Airport. Driving directions - take I-470 to Exit 9, Douglas Drive / Lee's Summit Drive, and turn north. At the bottom of the hill, turn right and follow the road to the end. The Larry Young Eagle hangar is on the west side of the parking lot next to the Cessna on a Post.

There is no cost to sit in on our monthly meetings. IMC membership is free to EAA members and guests. Not an EAA member? Ask me about a free six-month EAA membership.

Chris Hope, CFI-I, IMC Club Facilitator  
2018 FAA Flight Instructor of the Year, Central Region

# REMEMBERING PAM RATLIFF



On February 21, Chapter 91 lost a key member. Pam Ratliff may not be well known to our newer folks, but those who have been around a while knew her quite well. Pam was extremely active in the chapter until just a few years ago, but evidence of her presence is still visible. For example, our annual chili dinner was originally created by Pam as a way to say thanks to the chapter members for all the help they gave over the past year. When I joined, the event had already become a staple, so I can't say exactly when it started. But Pam handled everything, including cooking and serving the chili herself. It was only a few years ago that she passed those chores on to others, but the popular event remains.

As a board member, Pam would always bake some tasty concoction to bring to our meetings. Cakes, cupcakes, or brownies, every single offering was absolutely delicious. I recall having to decline her gracious offer to prevent addition to an expanding waistline.

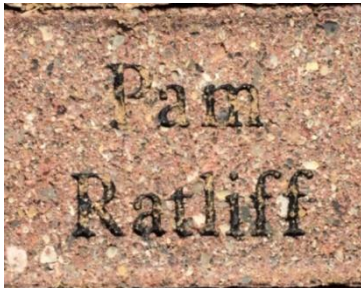
Pam also handled some of the more mundane but essential duties for the chapter, like supplying, resupplying, and maintaining an inventory of food items for our Young Eagles breakfasts and other activities. She also sustained an endless inventory of office and administrative supplies for the office.

Pam served a dual role as secretary and treasurer for close to thirty years. Now, of course, those jobs are handled by two different people (Becca Danik and Sandy Rice). In that position, Pam was able to streamline duties, making some basic services simpler. But one time, it complicated things with the IRS. As treasurer, Pam was responsible for collecting, handling, and accounting for the chapter's money. One year, the IRS performed a routine audit and Pam represented the chapter with the examiner. Her knowledge of many of our inner workings helped convince the agent that the chapter was handling things by the book, but one item did bring pause to the audit. The chapter had borrowed some money to help build one of the hangars, but since no commercial lenders were willing to take on the account, Pam loaned the money from her own pocket. You can imagine how the IRS agent might try to interpret this, since he was dealing with the keeper of records, the handler of money, and the lender all at the same time. But Pam's integrity throughout the audit process convinced him that nothing nefarious was going on, and we passed the audit.

Pam was also a builder and pilot. Before I joined the chapter in 2007, Pam and Larry Young had joined forces to build a Karatoo – an underpowered Australian tube-and-rag high-wing, two-place design that flew a lot. One day, Pam and Larry were flying with Pam performing the PIC duties.

*Continued next page . . .*

## REMEMBERING PAM *Continued*



Suddenly, the prop shed one blade, resulting in a terrifying, violent vibration. Pam didn't panic, but Larry did step in to help shut the engine down and maintain control of the crippled bird before it could shake itself apart. Pam has always given high praise to Larry for his help that day, but Larry said Pam handled the situation like a total pro.

For many years, Pam trekked to Oshkosh, serving as a volunteer. She worked in several areas including ultralights and homebuilts. In 2021, chapter president Mike Dooley nominated Pam for a Volunteer of the Year award, and she got it. That honor recognizes individual chapter members who represent the very definition of volunteerism by giving their time, talents, and knowledge for the betterment of EAA and its various programs. Her name graces an embossed brick that now resides among many outstanding volunteers, including several from Chapter 91.

Pam's husband of thirty years, Stan, passed away in March of 2021. She remained active in the chapter, but began to pare back her efforts. Then when the pandemic hit, her presence was noted less often. It was not long after that rumors surfaced that Pam might be suffering from cancer. She never complained or made an issue of this illness, but it eventually claimed her and took her away from us. Pam truly was one of those unsung heroes who made a quiet but lasting impact on the chapter. She set and maintained standards that support our organization to this day. Yes, Pam maintained a very strong hand on many of the chapter's functions, and insisted things be done in an appropriate manner. But sometimes, that's exactly the level of focus needed to make an all-volunteer organization viable.

You can access Pam's obituary at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/kansas-city-mo/pamela-ratliff-12257386> A celebration of life will be held on March 29 at two p.m. at the Liberty Street Community of Christ Church, 416 N. Liberty Street in Independence, Missouri. Blue skies and tailwinds, Pam.

# LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM



Leave it to a guy with a funny-sounding name to dazzle everyone with his impressive presentation about being a real-live test pilot. Dave Sizoo (pronounced siz-OH) made a deep impression on nearly every attendee with his extensive background and through understanding of a job most of us could only dream about. Dave slanted his presentation toward how he saw the future of aviation – specifically where things were heading. And since the field has changed immensely since most of us were dreaming of flying, it served as a real eye-opener.

In spite of all the incredibly sophisticated aircraft Dave has flown, he still loves the simple ones like a J-3. With that as a backdrop, he launched into a deep exposure of such topics as the automation-enabled pilot, and fly-by-wire technology. He explored such topics as supersonic airliners (including hypersonic travel which translates to aircraft flying at Mach 5 and faster), safety enhancements, space tourism, and advanced air mobility (e.g. EVTOL – Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing) which he believes will completely revolutionize personal movement for humans. I have to confess, his explanation on this topic completely changed how I viewed some of these up-and-coming technologies for the better.

Starting with an aeronautical degree from MIT, Dave went on to become a pilot in the air force. That led his entering the test pilot school where he learned to work with all sorts of unknowns – stall-spins, icing, and other unsavory gremlins. Since a test pilot has no idea how a particular design will actually perform, he must be ready to handle anything. And that can be dangerous.

Dave has logged thousands of hours in many super sophisticated aircraft including rotorcraft. Recently he has spent substantial time in EVTOLs including the Joby. But he's also a builder, having produced an ultralight when he was seventeen which he still has. He recently purchased a Velocity which is his primary cross-country ride. But he has experience in such other names as the A-10 Thunderbolt II, a P-51, F-15, F-16, FA-18 Hornet, F-35B, in addition to a Bell 525, some tilt-rotors, jump jets, the Joby electric, and many others.

After twenty years on active duty in the air force, Dave once again entered the test pilot field working for the FAA. He also discussed how some of the new EVTOLs are being proposed for life-saving work in rural areas. But it was his story of having a landing drogue chute deploy above Mach 1 that truly sold the idea of just how skilled a test pilot must be.

Dave expertly held our attention with his calm explanations of hyper-exciting experiences, and even our non-flying guests were impressed. Thanks for a great evening, Dave!

## THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM

There is an old saying that an expert is defined as someone who and comes from out of town and carries a briefcase. Experience, however, suggests that is not necessarily true. When it comes to an interesting program, who says you have to be from out of town? This month's speaker actually did originate in Canada, but he's been in the States for a long time. And he's still an expert, so we can certainly put that old saw away for now.

John Ford has an interesting aviation background, and this month he'd going to explain what it's like to checkout in a T-6. That airplane checks a number of boxes – military, radial engine, its own racing category to mention a few. It's also a mount many of us have secretly dreamed of riding. You might recall John's telling us about stepping up a seaplane rating in a Twin Beech on floats, so this one should be equally intriguing. But remember, John also owns a Wilga Storch, a fascinating eastern-European design with a WW-II heritage, so with a little encouragement from the floor, maybe he'll tell us a little more about that one too!

John will be featured at our upcoming gathering, Monday, March 17, starting promptly at seven p.m. That will take place at our usual clubhouse located at the Larry Young Eagle Hanger at Lee's Summit Municipal Airport. Just look for the Cessna on a Post and come on in. We hope to see you there.

## PROJECT FOR SALE



**For Sale:** A Merlin single-place LSA mostly completed kit. Technical details available at [www.Aeromarine-LSA.com](http://www.Aeromarine-LSA.com). Project is located in Independence, MO. Asking \$36,500. Mostly completed project was new from the factory in March 2018. All major components completed and just need to be put together. HKS 60hp, 2 cycle engine mounted but never started. Lots of pictures available, or contact me for an inspection and more details. Bruce Luedeman 816 353-6826; please call or text.



# AT THE BANQUET

This year's banquet was once again prepared by Nadler's Catering. The turnout proved better than expected with nearly eighty members and guests in attendance. Test pilot Dave Sizoo's fascinating presentation proved well worth it for everyone.

The raffle brought a financial boost to the treasury. Prizes were donated including Phil Schmidt's FA-18 water color painting, and Hattie Cunningham's quilt. We thank all who donated pieces for this successful fund-raising event.

Winners included Brian Tepper, Jason Cowley, Mary Schmitt, Antionette Ishmael, Mike Dooley, Dennis Bordner, Chirs Hope, Fred Schieszer, and a couple of others I was not quick enough to catch. My apologies to you. But congratulations to all the winners, as well as those who hoped for the best but whose numbers were not called. Better luck next year.



# EAA AWARDS



Left: Sandy Rice,  
treasurer



Right: Becca Danik,  
secretary



Left: Chris St.  
Germain, VP & Young  
Eagles coordinator



Right: Chris Hope,  
IMC/VMC leader



Left: John Rice,  
Technical Counselor



Right: Bruce Hood,  
newsletter editor



Left: Matt Williams,  
IMC/VMC leader



Right: Chris St.  
Germain presents  
president's award to  
Rob Schmitt

# SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES

## Ray Scholarship

Jim Brady, Chapter 91's Ray Scholar coordinator, just announced that the chapter has, indeed, received another slot for this outstanding program. As he has explained many times, interested chapters apply to EAA headquarters to be considered to receive one of these \$12,000 grants. Then, based on whatever algorithms are incorporated, a limited number of scholarships are awarded to the successful chapters. So, Chapter 91 has earned slots for seven consecutive years beginning with 2019. One year, we actually received two, so we have produced seven scholars; we fully anticipate the next winner will make that eight. To be considered, chapters must possess great health and be active. They need to be involved with youth activities like Young Eagles, Build and Fly, or other appropriate programs. Additionally, a degree of successful past experience carries a lot of weight, not to mention having an active pool of potential applicants.

The Ray Scholarships are somewhat restrictive since they are targeted strictly at younger applicants. The winner must be aged sixteen to nineteen for powered flight and fifteen for a glider ticket. They must earn a private license within one year.

Jim has already received a couple of applications and is expecting at least one more very soon. He will activate the chapter's selection committee shortly, and the successful candidate will be submitted to EAA headquarters for the final stamp of approval.

We will keep members advised of the inevitable outcome when that happens.

## Hedrick Scholarship

This is the chapter's own program, funded entirely by internal mechanisms and donations. While the proceeds are considerably smaller, \$1,500 each, availability is far wider, allowing any age to participate and is applicable to any reasonable certification or rating. For example, the money can be used to start, continue, or complete a private, commercial, ATP, instrument, CFI rating; rotary- or fixed-wing. So, it's far more flexible.

Rob Schmitt, in addition to serving as chapter president, has shepherded this program from its inception, and continues to do so today. Rob recently announced that applications are now being accepted, and he plans to award two scholarships this spring. Next fall, he will reopen the process which allows us to award a grand total of four scholarships each year. If you are interested in applying, or know someone who should, be sure to get in touch with Rob at [robert7721@aol.com](mailto:robert7721@aol.com) or 816 309-0099.

# COMING IN APRIL

This may seem a little premature, but the way the calendar works, we wanted to bring a few things to your attention. Yes, this is March, but April kicks off a number of events you might like to make plans for.

First, on Saturday, April 12, we will gather at the Larry Young Eagle Hangar for our annual spring cleanup. That, of course, helps get us ready for our next season of Young Eagles rallies and pancake breakfasts which start the following week, Saturday, April 19.

As a quick note on the spring cleanup, the time really goes quickly since so many volunteers gather to tackle various chores that always need to be addressed. If you don't like yard work, there are always many other activities you can be involved with that are more up your alley. For example, last year, we replaced some of the hangar ceiling fans, and that was a lot of fun! So, there's going to be something you are really good at. We hope you'll plan to join us for this yearly Saturday activity.

April means we will also be starting our potluck cookouts the Friday evenings prior to the Young Eagles Saturday. The chapter furnishes most of the food, but attendees contribute a side dish to share. These cookouts have become a staple for the chapter, and if you haven't attended one yet, you might consider doing so this year.

So again, this is a bit premature, but since some of these events will actually precede the newsletter, we wanted to be sure to let you know about them. But don't worry, we'll remind you again closer to the appropriate dates. Watch your email inbox for the announcements.

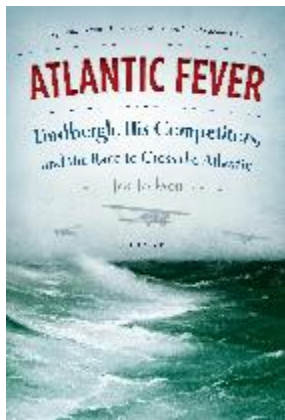
## JASON COWLEY COMPLETES PROJECT



Not long ago, Mike Dooley created a board displaying brass plaques recognizing the successful completion of new aircraft. There are actually two boards located on the southeast wall of our clubhouse in the Larry Young Eagle Hangar. Our most recent recipient is Jason Cowley who finished his Rans S-21 on February 13 of this year. It is now legal to join other aircraft in the skies of America, so be on the lookout for another proud builder sharing the heavens with you. Congratulations, Jason! Well done.

# ***Atlantic Fever – Lindbergh, His Competitors, and the Race to Cross the Atlantic*** By Joe Jackson

Review by Chris Hope, Master CFI



All of us who love airplanes have our own fantasies concerning aircraft and journeys; some of them are possible, some not. For me, I will never land or take off on an aircraft carrier. I will never fly a C-130 on skis (or in any other configuration), and will probably never fly a single-engine propeller-driven aircraft across the Atlantic Ocean. But that does not keep me from reading about others who have done so.

Over the years I have read just about everything that Charles Lindbergh wrote, and an awful lot that was written about him. But when I picked up "*Atlantic Fever – Lindbergh, His Competitors, and the Race to Cross the Atlantic*," by Joe

Jackson, I realized that I really did not know much about other pilots with their eyes on the prize.

And it was a magnificent prize and there was a lot of interest in winning. First, some details about the prize. In 1919, Raymond Orteig, an expatriate French hotelier, put up a prize of \$25,000 for the first person to fly between Paris and New York within the following five years. Although the rules were well understood at the time, they have become fuzzy for many of us over the years. First, the prize was not for the first person or crew to cross the Atlantic. That trip had been accomplished in 1919 by a team led by U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Albert Read. It took eleven days and four stops, but they did it.

And it was not for the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic. That was also accomplished in 1919 by Capt. John Alcock and Lt. Arthur Brown when they flew from Newfoundland to Ireland. No, it was specifically for a nonstop trip between Paris and New York, flying in either direction. But the prize was not awarded within the five-year period stipulated, and so was re-offered in 1924 with no time limit. And even at that, there were no serious attempts for the next three years.

And it was not to be awarded for the first pilot to make the flight solo. In fact, common wisdom at the time was that the flight could not be accomplished solo but needed a crew of two to four.

Joe Jackson has woven a magnificent story.; Sure, we know how it ends, but the side stories of famous names in aviation are what catch our interest. There is Richard Byrd, the man who first flew across the North Pole. (Or did he?) There is Giuseppe Bellanca who put his money and his designs into the ring. (For a touch of history, there are still a lot of fine Bellanca airplanes in the air. Find one and enjoy.)

And other aviator names that were common knowledge after the Great War and through the 1920s but which have faded from our memory: the Frenchman, Rene Fonck, the Allies' "Ace of Aces" during the recent air war over Europe; the Italian,

## **ATLANTIC FEVER** Continued

Cmdr. Francesco de Penedo who had flown all over Europe, South America, and Orient; the American test pilot Clarence Chamberlin; and a score of others. And where did the money come from to finance the aircraft, the fuel, the parts living expenses of the pilots and mechanics? We find people like John Rockefeller with his oil money, Edsel Ford with his cars, and Rodman Wanamaker with department stores in all of the world's major cities.

And then there is the background of the United States and the world at large. The story is spread across the 1920s, a time when anything was possible (except le drinking in the US) and the new national press and newsreels created overn heroes.

Joe Jackson has spun a fascinating story, worthy of your time.

## **MATT WILLIAMS RECEIVES FAA RECOGNITION**



Chapter 91 members continue to pile up recognitions and awards for outstanding service and excellence. In that vein, we are pleased to announce that Matt Williams has recently been recognized as the FAA FFAST Team District Representative Honoree for 2025.

The award is presented to those who have made significant contributions to safety education throughout the year. It was awarded mainly due to the seminars Matt gives through IMC/VMC clubs as well as safety presentations to his local flying club and the Civil Air Patrol.

Matt shares similar honors with others including a CFI and the Aviation Maintenance Technician Of The Year. The premature announcement was discovered online in the February 13 edition of *General Aviation News*. Apparently, Matt knew he had been nominated but was unaware he had won, so our fact-checking exercise unfortunately spilled the beans. It was supposed to have been a surprise, but Matt was gracious and nonetheless pleased to hear he had won. While this award is for the local level, Matt has also been nominated for the national award. We look forward to hearing the results of that contest.

The official presentation is scheduled for March 13 at his flying club meeting. Congratulations, Matt! Well done.

# “The Old Man”

By Earl Downs

In the Spring of 1944, General Douglas MacArthur’s plan of island hopping to Japan was well underway.

The navy carriers brought the air war directly to the enemy, but the land bases manned by the Army Air Corps and the Marines were needed for the long-term plan. One such base was located on the small island of Biak in the Dutch East Indies.

The Army Air Corps based the 9th Fighter Squadron of the 49th Group on the Island of Biak. They flew the Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighters. The P-38 had proven its worth against the Japanese fighters, but its range sometimes fell short of mission demands. The airplane and engine manufacturers worked to improve the range of their planes and sent a civilian technical representative to Biak to teach extended-range flying techniques. The pilots of the 9th Fighter Squadron were surprised to find the civilian was none other than Charles A. Lindbergh.

Lindbergh had practically dropped out of sight during the first years of the United States coming into the war. In the late 1930s he had become an outspoken isolationist and was even called a German sympathizer. Some of the young pilots of the 9th Squadron actually thought he was dead! Remember, a fighter pilot who had reached the age of twenty-five was called “the old man.” Others were surprised he was allowed to participate in the military because of his political views. But, there he was.

At forty-two years old, Lindbergh seemed like a VERY old man to the young pilots. He spent time teaching them on the ground and then was assigned to fly on training missions. The pilots didn’t know what to expect. He taught them procedures they found hard to believe. The military mindset of what engines could and couldn’t do without “blowing up” was extremely narrow. Civilian aviation engine concepts were more advanced. It was hoped that Lindbergh’s name and reputation would persuade the military to listen to him. He was about to fly with them in a high-performance fighter. Would his techniques work? Would he be safe?

After two and a half hours into the first flight, both questions were answered. They had used far less fuel than ever before, flown farther, engine performance was not compromised, and no engine blew up! Lindbergh had demonstrated his knowledge and flying precision for all to see.

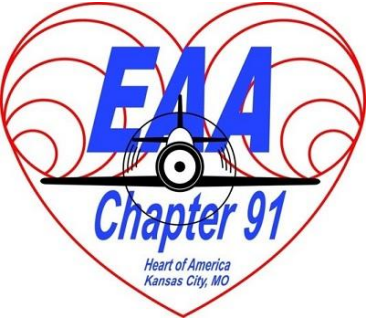
Over the next few months, Charles Lindbergh worked with army pilots in their P38s and Marine pilots in their F4U Corsairs to help prove and perfect long-range procedures. Lindbergh flew more combat missions as a civilian technical advisor. It’s been reported that on July 28, 1944, he ended up in a dogfight and shot down an enemy fighter. The hero of the Paris flight of 1927 became the wise “old man” of 1944 and proved his ultimate loyalty to his country.

Note: Part of what he taught for fuel conservation is what we now call “Flying lean of peak.”

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**THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
**EAA CHAPTER 91**  
**March 9, 2025**



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