

EAA Chapter 838 *Contact*

Volume XVIII, Number 3



March 2007

Crisis Departing Kennedy -- Conclusion

By Scott Sellers

In my 30-plus years of flying I've read a lot of "There I was at 5,000" aftermath stories (my wife complains about all the flying magazines I get). My first reaction is usually how dumb that guy was, or I could never be that foolish. On re-reading the first part of this story about myself in the January *Contact* I had a similar reaction. So let me address that viewpoint.

You may recall our Cherokee's electrical system failed on climb out off of 31L departing JFK on an IFR flight plan on a clear VFR Saturday, Jan. 1, 2005. Flying with my dad in his airplane, we suddenly had no alternator and no ship's battery power available. Dad immediately pulled out his handheld radio and called ATC on the departure frequency we were handed off to, only to find he could not hear the radio due to cockpit noise. I was not about to reduce power on the climb over the mouth of New York harbor in order for Dad to hear the radio. Rather I chose to climb to our assigned altitude of 4,000' to clearly indicate we were flying our route clearance, in hopes of warding off fighter jets which might consider us a terrorist threat as well as avoid an FAA enforcement action. In hindsight it is remarkable that dealing with the authorities was almost as much on my mind as safety in such a crisis.

We climbed out through 600' and JFK tower handed us to departure, the digital McCoy radios LED faces got very bright then all went dark on the panel. No ALT FAIL lights, the ammeter needle remained in its 45 degree position as it does when working normally. After the disbelief wore off, Dad and I looked at each other with that "Now what?" expression. Could we possibly have lost both the alternator and battery all at once? Aircraft electrical systems are designed so that when the alternator fails, the battery will power the system for 30 minutes – enough time to land safely with all electrical power.

Sitting in the left seat and having my name of the flight plan, I decided to take the initiative in our otherwise joint decision-making cockpit. "We're gonna continue on our flight plan route and arrive at the FAF (final approach fix) at our EFC (expect further clearance) time just like the lost Com scenarios common in IFR training." Dad agreed and we proceeded across the mouth of the Hudson toward Dixie intersection paralleling the Victor 1 airway per our assigned

route. Our two portable Garmin GPS units immediately switched to their internal power with brand new batteries, and we proceeded on the route clearance so that navigating was not an issue.

The sun was low on the horizon with car lights visible on the ground as we arrived over the coast of New Jersey. We watched uncontrolled and unlit airports go by below, like Monmouth and Lakewood fields. Certain FAA types advised me after the fact we should have landed at such a field per the regulations, and that I was lucky not to be prosecuted by the FAA authorities. But at the time, landing at an unfamiliar field without power and lights, and using the fuel to circle while attempting the pilot activated lighting systems seemed like a risky exercise. Our destination was within 30 minutes, the weather was excellent, and we assumed our flight was being tracked by the radar facilities as we are told any lost Com IFR flight would be. More on this later.

As we neared our destination field of Northeast Philadelphia (PNE) I selected the ILS 24 approach on the GPS--the shortest line to the field. Given the light winds and total darkness, we wanted to get on the ground asap. With the quieted cabin for approach Dad could hear his handheld radio somewhat. Beginning the turn down the runway 24 approach course I realized the pointlessness of circling the tower without lights. It also appeared Dad's handheld radio was not reliable. The normal no radio procedure would be to circle the tower until they see you, at which time the tower shines a green light at you for landing clearance. Without our aircraft lights visible to see the airplane, the tower could not have heard the engine as their only means to identify our aircraft.

Hmmm. Let's see, if New York ATC handed our target off to Philly (as they're supposed to) and we're at the FAF on time (which we were), then we're in protected airspace and they are expecting us. Right? In case they were not expecting us, I decided to fly parallel to the approach course about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in case faster traffic was behind us on the approach that might overtake and surely not see our little Cherokee with no lights. About two miles out we turned the aircraft battery on and attempted a radio call to the tower. The radio's LED lights came on momentarily, then went dark.

Please see **Crisis** on next page



The President's Corner...

By: *Jerry Baker*

A MISSING MAN SALUTE

Harold Kaiser passed away this week. He was soon to be 96 years old. I did not know Harold personally but wish pass on this tribute from his best friend Elmo Halverson: "Harold was a member of our Hall of Fame and was an icon in Racine aviation for 75 years. He was one of the best loved pilots ever on our airport. He served in WWII and Korea and retired as Chief Pilot for Walker Manufacturing. He will be missed." We should all be so lucky as to have a friend like Elmo.

WINGS & WHEELS 2007

Activity is rapidly picking up in preparation for our Sept. 8th and 9th event. We have added four experienced and well qualified people to the W & W committees. They are:

Paul Rogers of Air Shows of Wisconsin. Paul is a professional at this business and he has hit the ground running, having already booked the Green Berets Parachute Team. **Dave Mann** (whom you all know as our Airport Manager) has booked C-130s to pick up the team in South Carolina and provide drop aircraft. He is working on the possibility of combining our event with the Armed Forces Weekend previously held in Milwaukee. (More on this later). **Ginger Minneti** has been an influential member of the Racine area civic event scene for a number of years. She was a member of the Racine Zoo management organization that so successfully funded the Zoo for years through sponsors and donors. She will assist us in our efforts to obtain sponsors and will help us in our promotion efforts. **Steve Jordan** worked with Ginger to make the Racine Zoo Car Show such a great success. Steve has already come up with some great ideas and is excited about the possibilities for W & W.

Your Board of Directors voted last week to grant Paul, Ginger and Steve honorary EAA Chapter memberships for fiscal 2007. Dave is already a member and has been a major participant in Chapter 838 affairs in the past.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Because of the weather situation, I elected to do my travel this past week via "ground vehicle". I drove about 1100 miles and spent 17 hours behind the wheel. I sure miss the good weather days when the Baron could do these trips in 4 hours total. We pilots are lucky to be able to "slip the surly bonds of earth".

I visited my folks in Michigan and my daughters in Ohio. Our oldest is expecting her first child and I was to be there. Didn't happen as planned! I am back in WI, no new grand child. Unfortunately, things will probably happen while I am skiing in Telluride this weekend.

It was good I was in Ohio this weekend (Judy is there being Grandma.), as it was our 40th anniversary. Surprise gift from Judy was paid

up training for a sea plane rating at Jack Brown's Seaplane Base in FL. A great gift!

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Frank Fonk and I are working on a number of interesting and educational programs for our membership meetings. The emphasis will be on piloting and safety. Stay tuned!

Jerry

In Memoriam

Harold K. Kaiser

Crisis continued

This confirmed again our battery was dead, and that we had been running on the battery for the JFK arrival. Unfortunately the ammeter and alternator failure light together conspired to not indicate either problem.

About a mile out from the runway threshold, as we kept searching the airport traffic area for traffic and saw nothing except a large plane on the far horizon. Our 45° approach to the runway threshold was not a view I had seen before. Keeping the flashlight on the airspeed indicator, we slowed down to 80 and quickly pulled on full flaps with the Cherokee's large manual flap handle (if the flaps were electrically operated like my Cessna, there'd be no flaps to use). Dad said he heard the jet on the horizon call 10 miles out on his handheld radio. This was good enough spacing for us to get down and off the runway without risk. Without a landing light to offer depth perception night landings can seem like you're sinking into a black hole. But lights from nearby buildings slightly illuminated the runway centerline just enough to make it visible. We skimmed over the threshold lights, touched down on the numbers and pressed on the brakes. We quickly exited the runway at the first turnoff and could not have been on the runway for 30 seconds.

We taxied up to the hangar and I halfway expected to be accosted by the authorities, but there was no one there. After we pushed the plane in the hangar the realization that I'd better call the tower gave me a sinking feeling of doom – there could be serious trouble here. I just wasn't sure of what type.

Explaining we had just landed to the voice in the PNE tower, the

Crisis continued

response “You just did what!?” was not surprising. “Why didn’t you circle the tower before landing?” she said in a horrified tone. I explained landing seemed like a safer choice since she very likely would not have heard our engine noise inside the tower cab. “Why didn’t you call us on the cell phone?” was the next question. My cell has never worked in the airplane, and this also was not an acceptable answer. Her displeasure with an airplane that landed without clearance, and taxied in without being observed became obvious. “New York said you might be around here so you’d better call them” was her next directive.

“It’s great to hear from you, we’re glad you’re alive. We thought you were dead.” was the joyous response given by the New York TRACON (terminal radar control facility) manager answering the phone. When asked about following our target and handing off to Philly, the answer was less clear. What about launching a search party to look for a downed plane if they thought we went down? It became clear something wasn’t right with ATC’s handling of the flight, given the apparent confusion by both New York and Philly TRACONS. But when all ends well, as in this case, it’s easier to just let it go. In another similar case inside the Potomac TRACON’s ADIZ surrounding Washington, D.C. a FSDO contact explained a lost Com flight busted the Camp David (P40) airspace. This unlucky pilot claimed he continued flying his last assigned heading, but FAA was pursuing enforcement action regardless. These FAA people are usually not nice.

The flight back to Maryland in my airplane that evening into the Washington ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone) airspace was one of those “Why am I subjecting myself to the forces of evil again which might decide to destroy me?” type of trips. Simple things like a failed transponder become a major ordeal when flying in the ADIZ. Pilots there know to declare an emergency if the transponder quits, or risk being vaporized. A friend of mine had his pilot’s license suspended for errantly being a single digit off on a transponder code. How’s that for national security? The return flight to Baltimore was uneventful. Driving home from the airport I wondered if we would be mentioned in tomorrow’s New York news reports. Fortunately we were not a news item.

After filing a NASA report to protect myself from enforcement action (if you’re not committing a crime during the event, and file the NASA report shortly after the flight, it’s supposed to protect the pilot from the FAA attempts to impose punishments) and waiting a week to let the dust settle I called the New York facility back to learn more. A different voice answered the phone, a younger man who sounded like a controller on break. Upon identifying myself and explaining why I was calling he said, “I remember that, I was working the scope that evening.” He referred me to his manager and explained that once they saw we were flying the assigned route and our flight was not a security threat, he did not notify fighters or helicopters to pursue our target.

The New York TRACON manager graciously spoke at length about New York airspace and how ATC was dealing with security issues in the post 9/11 world. Clearly if our flight had turned toward lower Manhattan an aggressive response would have followed. The manager was a life-long New York-area resident who also flies light airplanes around the city, and had done so for many years. It was clear he was being directed by others on security matters who were not familiar with aviation or the New York flying environment. He

was in part functioning as a buffer to support and assist GA from the incorrect corraling by Homeland Security, TSA, and others. I observed this same buffer activity by the Potomac FSDO while living in Maryland – the TSA folks holding authority over FAA are unqualified on aviation matters.

Contrary to the advice of my brother the aviation attorney (he protects pilots from FAA types), I did contact the Philadelphia TRACON to learn more about the flight. The manager was also a pilot and also gracious. She explained that there were internal issues within their radar facility which occurred that evening, and that as far as she was concerned we had done everything correctly under the circumstances. Both New York and Philly facilities indicated they had not filed papers and were not pursuing enforcement action. This was comforting but not absolute. I’ve heard of these cases coming to life many months or even years down the road. Two years later our FAA friends haven’t seen fit to pursue me on this, so I figured it was a good time to write about it.

A year later I checked in with the New York TRACON manager who remembered me and the flight, and offered a tour and visit. He explained they were using our flight for their internal training purposes as an example of how controllers should properly handle a no radio aircraft. It was good to know our flight would be remembered and useful to others. I asked about the idea of writing up this story so that other pilots could benefit. He agreed it would be a good idea.

One other observation: New York controllers are the flat-out best in the business. They handle more traffic volume in less space than anywhere in the world. Think about the close proximity of Newark, LaGuardia, and JFK. All this while dealing with almost daily media scrutiny, hassle from upper management and TSA, along with worn-out equipment. There is no doubt all TRACONS deal with this stuff, but none as well as in New York.

One moral of the story is that if you carry a handheld transceiver without a headset adaptor and connector to an outside antenna, you are probably wasting space in your flight bag. I carry both items but had left mine in the my airplane for the trip to JFK in Dad’s airplane. In hindsight that’s dumb! Another item worth noting is that the airplane’s alternator had about 400 hours on it when it failed. Months later my airplane’s alternator failed at 428 hours. If you’re flying with an alternator with more than 400 hrs on it beware – this is a common failure time threshold for aircraft alternators.

Filing IFR if you are able is another moral. It provides a layer of defense for the GA pilot flying in terminal areas – like Chicago, where so called “security procedures” may be the controlling influence. In this case there was a breakdown of communication between two major terminal facilities (NY & PHL). This is not the first time I’ve heard that a search operation should have been launched but was not. Standard policy is to launch a search party for lost IFR flights within 30 minutes of losing the flight. By the time I called ATC was almost an hour after our flight was missing, and there appeared to be no plans to search for us. The other case was an actual downed airplane that crashed with a seized engine at night in fog. My conclusion is to be prepared with emergency gear on board, especially while flying in places like the Wisconsin outback. When we moved here last year my first trip to Steven’s Point underlined this point – there’s little civilization around in the event you need help.

Please see **Crisis** on page six

Winter Experiences

By R.G. Blocks

Being the last to join a game of crack the whip on ice is good fun if you're twenty. My dad and I joined in such a game when he was sixty-two. Slung from the whip at a high rate of speed his body flew over the surrounding snow bank. There he lay with nothing broken muttering the words, "It is over. It is over."

Break by Brakes?

It was a Cessna 150 and I was a couple of decades younger. Inevitable. The landing was at Monroe west to east, on a snowy aircraft carrier. The runway protruded off the top of a flattened hill and projected over a valley. It might have been a shade downhill. Wisconsin was white with perhaps a half foot of snow on the ground. It was like an aircraft carrier, long, narrow, with a drop off all around. But, unlike an aircraft carrier, there was a cross-wind. It wasn't horrible. It was too cold to thaw. No ice, just snow. The landing was a crab job and the runway long and freshly plowed so I let it roll out and gently applied brakes. It didn't flip over but turned to one side much too rapidly. I let off the brakes, engine rpm, deployed

flaps and opened my door. The right brake was entirely missing. The turn to the left was unexpected. Both brakes had worked before departure. I would only make sharp left turns when attempting to stop. I was sweating. Nearly went off that carrier. Slowly I reversed course. To make a sharp turn right, it took a one toe brake 270-degree turn to the left to get the job done and thus head to the right. Right! Breaking without brakes needs practice. Play the hill, Play the wind. Try, else you might say, "It is over. It is over."

Wearing Pants?

I'm the man of the house but don't like wearing wheel pants. I've never put them on my 172. Wheel pants clog. Pants are a danger in tall grass, freshly cut grass, weeds, slush, icy conditions, mud and snow. Snowdrifts at the best of airports may be a foot or two high where runways cross taxiways in bad weather. If you cross them, try to follow a larger airplane. You want to avoid running the prop through the drift. Snow piles have stones in them. You want to avoid climbing a big snow pile and a prop strike as you heave over the top. You must avoid using brakes around snow. Application of brakes heats brake pads and rotors. Hot rotors in snow, slush, water and mud make iced up brakes. Practice getting by without brakes in the winter. Be a minimalist. Forget wearing wheel pants also. If you freeze the brakes and land with frozen brakes you're liable to be saying "It is over. It is over," as you pay yet another bill for a new set of Goodyear or Michelin mains.

Zero Airspeed Today?

It happens quickly. I've been covered in ice in a matter of seconds. About as fast as you can say start your 180. Problems occur near winter warm fronts. Glare ice is worse. It's heavy and disrupts the airfoil and locks control surfaces. Rime is opaque due to a bit of trapped air; it does what clear ice does only seems lighter and more friable. Either one is unsafe. In many cases you won't be able to

see through the front window almost immediately. The airplane gets really heavy really quick. The leading edge gets a protrusion of ice. Your nice airfoil isn't nice. Your stall speed is getting higher as ice accumulates. You must increase airspeed to stay aloft. However, your airspeed indicator may not work due ice. Immediately begin course reversal before the flight controls freeze altogether and prevent directional change. Be gentle: a shallow turn is prudent. Prudent is good, else you could be saying, "It is over."

Wisconsin Winter Flying Fun Preparation!

Flying in the winter is some of the best. Snow covered ground is a consistent reflector hence low level bumps are minimal at high noon. True the bases are lower and the deck is more solid; but that provides an even smoother flight in general. Avoid going above the deck unless you are IFR qualified, equipped, current and have ATC's blessing. Know your weather. Getting down is a very big concern if you go above the deck. Turn on pitot heat before entry into clouds. If your aircraft does not have pitot tube heat, expect to lose airspeed indication if icing starts. Remember, clouds, rain and cold fog are where the ice is! Simply avoid temptation.

Make sure you have an oil cooler baffle (a plate to prevent normal airflow through your oil cooler) to help insure your oil is hot enough to boil out any humidity. On fixed gear Cessna products be very conscious of front strut compression and free play. Keep the strut cylinder clean to prevent loss of pressure. The strut should keep your nose and prop away from danger. Take your wheel pants off. Preheat your engine (and battery) to improve starting. If your engine and fuel are very cold (as in below zero F) then prime aggressively as temperature falls. Have a safety person nearby with a fire extinguisher. At minus 10 F in a stiff breeze, even with a preheated block, it once took ten primers full, and a full prime shot on cranking to get my 172 going. Fuel was dripping; hence, fire was a possible outcome. A big extinguisher and safety person stood ready.

Take a safety pilot along for a winter practice flight. Check each other out. Fly without looking out the front window. Make gentle one minute turns. Do close-in engine out glides to a landing. Avoid use of brakes. When you're done repeat to yourself, "It's not over. It's not over."

Young Eagles

10 March at 9 a.m. at the chapter will be our first Young Eagles rally for 2007. We hope for spring, although there is little sign of it so far. We rely on our many chapter volunteers. Will you join us,

Kennon Insulated Engine Cover

Photo and text by Tom Schuyler

My plane is kept in an unheated hangar. It has a 120-Watt oil pan heater, which has little effect if the nose is not covered. To have the engine warm for starting on cold days, I used to cover the nose with an old bedspread and keep a 75-Watt bulb on inside the cowling in addition to the oil pan heater.

Kennon makes various covers for aircraft, so I ordered a blue engine cover for my Cherokee 140. Each cover is made to order, and mine took a couple of weeks to get. It fits perfectly and seals up the air intakes in the front of the cowling as well as the bottom openings. The cover closes up snugly with Velcro strips and rubber balls on bungee cords that go through straps on the other side of the cover. I don't think any wind short of a hurricane would bother it. With



the cover on, the oil pan heater alone now keeps the whole engine compartment warm. I feel that now I can fly somewhere, park outside, and as long as I can plug in the heater and have the cover on, the engine will start without need for further preheating. The only

problem is the cover is large and bulky (probably why it works so well) and takes up a lot of space in the cabin when transporting it. On the plus side, the inside of the cover is bright orange, which would make it easy to spot in an emergency. (Maybe you could put it on your plane inside out to keep it from getting shot at during deer hunting season.)

Kennon covers can be ordered from Aircraft Spruce or directly from the friendly people at Kennon.

March 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
Museum Open 10-4				Post 218 Meeting 7 p.m.		Museum Open 9-3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Museum Open 10-4	Hanger Craftsmen 7 p.m.		Museum Board			Young Eagles 9 a.m. Museum Open 9-3
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Museum Open 10-4	Marvels of Mechanical Mysteries 7 p.m.		7 p.m. Chapter	Post 218 Meeting 7 p.m.		Museum Open 9-3
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Museum Open 10-4	Aeronautical Apparatus Aficionados 7		7 p.m. Board			Museum Open 9-3
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Museum Open 10-4	Pacer et al Builders 7 p.m.					Museum Open 9-3

Crisis continued

My first weather briefing here in Wisconsin was one I had not heard in many years: "No weather, no TFR's (temporary flight restrictions, such as when the President travels), and no NOTAMs (Notices to Airmen). Have fun" - was music to my ears.

We constantly hear about how pilot error is the primary cause of aircraft accidents. Mechanical failure caused this event, and was aided by the pilot(s) not having the proper back-up gear on board.

Editor's note: We are very grateful to Scott for sharing his experience and for his thoughtful critique. I appeal to others of our group who can share their experiences. Shoot me an email at the address below.

Pancakes In May

Our culinary delight, known to the world as Pancake Breakfast, is scheduled for 12 and 13 May 2007. Bob and Marsha Helland will direct the festivities, so when they call on you to help, consider it a privilege, and say yes.

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Remain Vigilant

By Scribo

Dave Mann, RAC Airport Manager, says that Homeland Security notified him of the following.

A known terrorist group is reportedly directing supporters located within the US to conduct surveillance of airports in preparation for possible attack. The information is new, and the credibility is still being assessed.

This known terrorist organization has established an extensive network within the United States; however, their activities to date have been primarily fundraising, through both criminal and legitimate activities. This group is not known to have committed any terrorist acts within the US.

In light of the above, we must remain vigilant in reporting suspicious activity in and around our airports, especially activity which might be possible surveillance activity.

Chapter Meeting

14 March 2007

Don Mildebrandt - Kenosha Tower Chief

Chapter 838 Events:

Wednesday	7 p.m.	14 March	Chapter Meeting
Wednesday	7 p.m.	21 March	Board Meeting
Mondays	7 p.m.		Hanger Builders
12 and 13 May 2007 ---- Pancake Breakfast			

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