



SERVING THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF SINCE 1941

Sacramento County Sheriff's Air Squadron Newsletter

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Folsom Dam Tour:

Understanding the "Balancing Act"

From the penthouse crow's nest lookout station we could see storm clouds approaching over Folsom Lake. "They will be planning for increased water releases soon," said our guide Sgt. Gene Goff.

"But how could that be, we asked – given the low lake water level?"

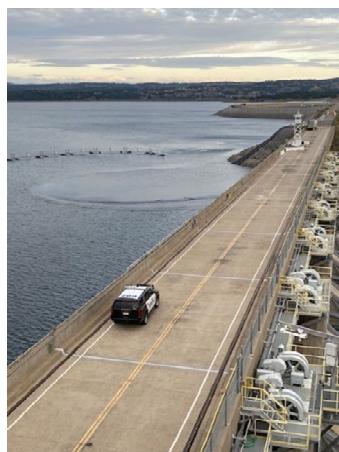
"It's a balancing act," said Gene. "Folsom Dam is relatively small compared to other California dams. And yet it drains a very large watershed area. So Folsom Lake can fill up very rapidly even given some fairly mild storms. Dam operators must always forecast water inflows and react before Lake outflow issues arise."

Sgt. Goff was a tremendous knowledge bank during the Squadron's Folsom Dam tour last month. While Gene and his fellow deputies are responsible for Dam and Lake security, they interface routinely with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation staff (owners and operators of this federal property).

Under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento County Sheriff Department maintains all security functions at both Folsom Dam and surrounding Lake

areas. They know Folsom Dam from top to bottom.

Inside the dam, our group followed a long series of tunnel passageways that included giant hydraulic pumps to operate overflow gates several hundred feet above. Sgt. Goff escorted Squadron members to the dam base with a view toward the water release basin and powerhouse.



Yes, a balancing act for sure!

Dale Terry, Newsletter Editor

**Kyle Woo: Drones, Robotics and AI Specialist
"Counter Drone Systems"**



**Squadron Headquarters
Executive Airport
May 18th, 5:30 pm**

Kyle has worked for defense contractors, the Navy, and the Secretary of Defense building counter drone systems that now protect our government facilities around the world. Growing up in a law enforcement household Kyle has a unique perspective on how counter drone technology coming out of the Pentagon can impact today's law enforcement and manned aviation.

AROUND THE SQUADRON



By Ron Richey

Ever have the need for speed? Apparently **Jim Teel** had the need, he was seen...more like heard.....leaving his hangar at KSAC in his hot rod AC Cobra, to celebrate his 92nd birthday. Jim has never been one to subscribe to low and slow.....more like fast enough to set your hair on fire.



On the other side of the speed envelope (along the lines of the rabbit and the turtle story) is 92 year old **Jim Phillips**, who toured **Folsom Dam** with the Air Squadron a few weeks ago. The amazing tour included walking the width of the dam while inside one of the many tunnels buried within the concrete structure, along with descending down to the very base of the dam via hundreds

of stair steps and back up to the very top of the dam. Jim is seen catching a ride back to the parking area via a dam security vehicle as a reward for making the trek at his age. Way to go Mr. Phillips!



Speaking of age.....have any of our senior squad members been shocked by what is happening in the aircraft insurance business? **Bill Myers of Myers-Pacific Aviation Insurance**, has been my insurance broker for many years and had warned me that the aviation insurance industry was going through a major change with a number of companies pulling out of the aircraft market.

My insurance premiums started increasing annually after I turned 70, but not by a significant amount. This year was my 75th birthday and it's a different ball game now. It appears that a number of companies want we 'old' guys out of twins and airplanes with retractable landing gear.....fixed gear....not so much.

The insurance company that I have been with since purchasing my A36 Bonanza almost 8 years ago, said they would insure me one more year providing I get a fresh medical annually (even though I have 13 months left on my current Third Class) and after age 76, I would have to fly with a co-pilot or get a different airplane.

After conferring with Bill and **Laura Myers**, who checked with several of their underwriting sources, the theme was pretty much the same...insurance is available out there for older pilots, but at what price and restrictions. Bill suggested I give AVEMCO a call to see

what they had available. Turns out, AVEMCO does not have an age restriction, they do require an annual medical/physical which can be either the FAA medical or Basic Med, along with the usual Bi-Annual Flight Review and encourage activities to keep your skills current and sharp.

Cost? I'm paying around \$1000 dollars more this time around for less coverage.....but now it is up to me to decide when I want to switch to something low and slow. (Ron)

Everything that might happen on April 1st...better known as **April Fool's Day** is not always funny...while driving from Medford, Oregon back to Sacramento, **Bill Cox's** wife **Karen** noticed Bill's driving was becoming somewhat erratic, the car kept wandering to the left and Bill was having some difficulty making heading corrections, said his left arm was numb and heavy.

At Karen's insistence, she drove the rest of the way home. The next morning, Bill's doctor told him to get to the emergency room immediately! Apparently Bill was having a master pump failure.....as in a serious stroke.

He spent three days in the hospital and five days in a rehab facility before getting clearance to go home. The stroke partially paralyzed the left side of his body. Now some four weeks later, Bill says he thinks he is about 70% recovered, with the use of his left hand and arm coming back along with better speech patterns and other improvements.

The general consensus is the stroke was most likely the result of being off his meds for a recent hip surgery operation. **Bill plans on attending May's meeting and continuing with his excellent Safety Brief column.**

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Ron's column continues ...



Congratulations are in order for **Jerry Blalock** as the FAA's newest recipient of the prestigious **WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD**, in recognition for his 50 years of professionalism, skill and aviation expertise in promoting Civil Aviation. Jerry's family was in attendance for the ceremony, which took place at our Squadron Hut. (L-R: wife Ann, Jerry, son Sean, granddaughter Amie, daughter Linda, daughter Tracy and son Steve).



Jerry has been volunteering his time over at the Aerospace Museum's *Flight Zone* as a Sim instructor and now he can finally prove to his students.....that he can actually fly a REAL AIRPLANE! Jerry now joins the ranks with Jim Teel and Chuck Asbury as past Mast Pilot Award recipients.



Paul Koscheka, the FAA Team Program Manager from SAC FSDO presented Jerry's award.

Sad news....we have lost one of our long time Air Squad members from what is often referred to as 'the greatest generation'..... **Dr. Herb Hooper** has flown West at the age of 94. Our condolences go out to Mike and the rest of the Hooper family.



If you have flown in or out of KSAC recently, you have heard one of two unusual messages on ATIS.

"Sacramento Executive Tower has ceased operations.....monitor 119.5, contact NorCal" After the weather brief....you hear...."listen carefully, no pattern work, no practice approaches, no flight following due to staffing shortage.

Aaron Carrillo, tower manager, has stated they are having a difficult time filling the tower controller slots and only have two controllers at the present time to cover operations and occasionally the tower will be unattended. Keep a sharp eye out when flying into or out of Exec.

Congrats to new Rancho Cordova Police **Chief Brandon Luke**. Brandon previously served as Assistant to the Sheriff and in that role worked as our link between the Squadron and Sheriff Jones.



Chief Luke began his career in law enforcement as a State Trooper with the Nevada Highway Patrol and as a police officer with UC Davis before joining the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office in 1999.

He has served in a variety of roles, including Deputy Sheriff, Problem Oriented Policing (POP) Officer, Gang Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant over School Resource Officer Program, and Captain. He has held key leadership positions, including Assistant Commander of the Sheriff's Impact Division and Commander of the Main Jail.

Brandon graduated from California State University, Fresno with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology and has completed the Los Angeles Police Department's Leadership program.

Safety Brief:

Preflight inspections



By Bill Cox, CFII

Coming out of major repairs or inspections I plan **taking a couple of hours to just go over the plane in detail with no plans of flying that day**. It's just a day to inspect, put things back (I take all my prize possessions out of the cabin before going to the shop) and make sure the pre-maintenance squawks have been addressed. I look inside any panel openings for loose tools and then plan for an upcoming ride around the pattern – on a VFR day at my home airport.

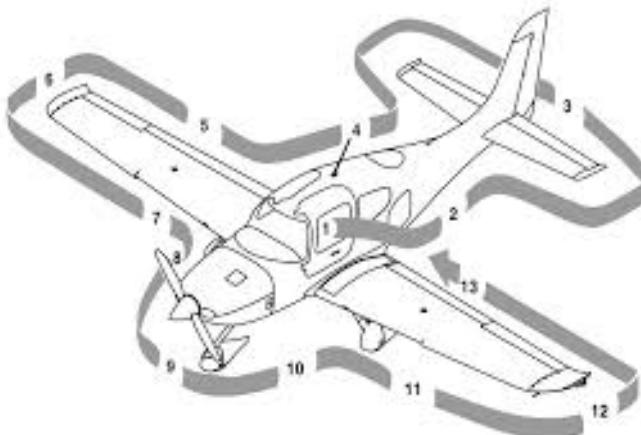
Of course pre-flight inspections are not just important after maintenance, but before any flight.

Preflight does not get the respect it deserves!

I have observed pilots who treat airplanes like cars. They **walk up, get in, buckle up and go** -- no preflight necessary! And, I have observed pilots load their families into aircraft that just left the maintenance shop and fly away, without even a preflight.

In my opinion, there are two reasons that preflight inspection does not get the respect it deserves.

First, many flight instructors are somewhat derelict in teaching the importance of preflight. The "standard practice" is for the instructor to demonstrate a preflight, and maybe observe the student conduct one. From that point on, the instructor will generally say something like: "go ahead and preflight the airplane on your own." The instructor arrives after the preflight is complete, and off they go flying. In a way, the instructor is sending the message "flying is important, so I will observe you when we fly together, but preflight is easy and



The second part of the problem is that **many of us have never learned how to conduct a thorough preflight.**

When we learned how to preflight an airplane, we learned how to check fuel and oil levels, and how to sump the fuel and check for contamination. But **most of us never learned what to look for** in other areas of the aircraft. For example, we never learned how to identify areas on the airframe that were subject to **overstress**. We did not learn how to identify **hardware that is mis-assembled**. We never learned how to identify **corrosion**. We never learned about **common trouble areas** for the specific aircraft model we are flying. The preflight checklist does not help with those.

Mechanical failures in aircraft are rare. However, **almost always**, and well **before a catastrophic failure takes place, there are signs that things are not going normally**. Especially if you are flying the same airplane consistently, being attune to those signs can help uncover problems well before they develop into a catastrophic failure.

While there is no need for pilots to have the same level of knowledge as an A&P IA, having some mechanical knowledge is very beneficial. **It does not take a lot of effort to learn how to identify defects and abnormalities in a preflight.** Investing time in acquiring this knowledge, and then putting it to use before every flight contributes immensely to flight safety.



Commander's Column:

Anti-drone tech: counter UAV

Hello Air Squadron!

Robots, Drones, Tesla,
Artificial Intelligence (AI).

With all the new AI tech, it looks like
the "Future" has "finally arrived."

Self-driving cars, flying cars and
passenger aircraft with only a pilot to
monitor the AI -- the sky is no longer the
limit (I don't know about you, but I'm not
getting in an airplane without a pilot -
It's bad enough when you have to sit in
the back and not
upfront in the
cockpit).

Robots and Drones have been a long time in development, but are now mainstream. One of the first robots I remember is Robby from the movie *Forbidden Planet*. Now everywhere you look there is a new robot helping us with day-to-day tasks.

The University of Tennessee partnered with "StarshipTechnologies" deploying a fleet of 40 autonomous on-demand robots delivering from 16 campus eateries including Einstein Bros. Bagels, Steak 'n Shake, Starbucks, and Subway. Amazon Prime Air is delivering products with autonomous drones and *Top Gun: Maverick* may even have autonomous aircraft for Tom Cruise to shoot down.

There is also a dark side to these autonomous drones and robots when they are used for nefarious purposes. The low cost to use a flying drone as a combat tool makes them ideal for combatants to use many at once and overwhelm their target. Fortunately, the Pentagon has an active program to develop countermeasures for this type of attack.

We are very fortunate to have, Kyle Woo, an expert in the field of Drones, Robotics and AI as our May guest speaker. You won't want to miss this insightful presentation at the Squadron Headquarters, Sacramento Executive Airport, May 18th, 5:30 pm.



Let's Fly!

Ken Lux,
Commander

More Folsom Dam tour photos – by
Tim Pinkney and Dale Terry



COMMITTEE REPORT: RECENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

(Ed. Note: Your Squadron Executive Committee met last month discussing many items of interest to our membership. Here is a summary of recent actions.

Electronic voting: It was agreed to conduct a trial of Squadron voting conducted by electronic program.

Background: Currently our Squadron bylaws require that all matters requiring a membership vote must be conducted by first-class mail with return envelope. Voting is to be confidential.

This process is cumbersome and results in many members never returning their voting documents.

A trial will utilize a software program specifically designed to confidentially record votes submitted electronically. Should the trial be a success, the Executive Committee would recommend that our bylaws be modified in early 2023.

Emeritus member

category: It was agreed to add an Emeritus member category for those individuals who are over 85 years old and who have been a continuous Squadron member for 30 years.

Background: Age takes its toll from all of us. Some members keep right on going, while others have mobility and health issues limiting meeting attendance and activities.

Under this proposal no membership dues would be required for Emeritus members. When attending Squadron meetings with food service, Emeritus members would pay a \$20.00 food tab.

The Emeritus category would take effect January 2023.

Family Day: In September, we will hold a "Family Day" as our Squadron activity. Spouses, friends and children would be welcome to our Hut, visit with a star guest and view exhibits on our grounds. This will be a family-style meal brought in by members – showing us their culinary skills.

Background: Our annual banquet food and venue costs have risen dramatically over past years. Resulting in many members feeling that per head cost has become too high. Family Day would replace our annual banquet on an every-other-year basis. The annual banquet would return in 2023 with Family Day again scheduled in 2024.

Website update: We will add a new category to our website where members can share stories on why Squadron membership has been important in their lives.

Background: Everyone likes a good story. And we believe that prospective members may find these stories to be a motivating influence to join our group. Vice Commander Doug Hunting will be guiding this effort.

Squadron historian: We will add a Squadron Historian position to our committee structure. Photos, newsletters, videos and other "treasures" can be placed in a safe place for future generations of Squadron members.

Background: Our historical documents have been misplaced. We want to be sure that these past and future memories are protected.

Membership certificates: Our annual membership certificates will be distributed at our June Mather Airport meeting. We anticipate our new Sheriff will be able to sign this important way to display your Squadron status.

