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# Skyraider Sentinel

Skyraider Aviation, Inc • 303-926-0114 • info@skyraideraviation.com • www.skyraideraviation.com

## Skyraider Aviation Welcomes New Club Members!

- Tracy Buxkemper
- Lyle Cox
- Chuck Custer
- Tom Gadbois
- Joe Moore

## This Month in Aviation History



Maverick

**March 22nd, 1915...**  
On this date, the US Navy officially adopted the title of "naval aviator" for its pilots. Previously, Navy pilots were called "navy air pilots" in official US Navy vernacular.

Of course it wasn't until the movie *Top Gun* was released in May of 1986 that the term "naval aviator" made it into the main stream. And it wasn't until 1994 while serving as an Air Force Lieutenant at the Pentagon that my short-lived bid to abbreviate the title to "naviator" was crushed by my commander, who just happened to be a naval aviator. 😊

*"I owned the world that hour as I rode over it.... free of the earth, free of the mountains, free of the clouds, but how inseparably I was bound to them."*

— Charles A. Lindbergh, on flying above the Rocky Mountains

## IF YOU WANT TO FLY CHEAP, BE NICE!

-- By Jim Fox

Let me start by saying that I'm by no means a writer; I'm a nail pounder that loves to fly. Recently I've had the opportunity to buy into a co-ownership of a light sport airplane which has opened up new vistas I never imagined! But far and away the most enjoyable is taking a cross-country trip. Two lessons I've learned in the few trips I've taken is to plan ahead, knowing that the plan will change, and that if you're nice to the people you meet they are more than happy to help you out in all sorts of "interesting" ways. My latest trip was one that both lessons became clear once again.

My original plan was to fly in a circle around the Rockies via New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming then back to Colorado. I knew it was a risk at this time of year but wasn't bound to be anywhere at any time. After leaving Erie and fueling up in Las Vegas, NM (another story for another time) I headed for Payson, Arizona. I had been there earlier in the month so knew about the free campground on the airport and the great restaurant with all-you-can-eat fish on Friday nights. After a restful night in the tent and checking weather, I realized that I needed to go to plan "B", which was to fly anywhere with good weather! So it's off to Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico. A quick look at the sectional, a

few flight notes and here I go. The mountains around Payson are especially pretty this time of year without the 10,000+ altitude issues in Colorado. It flattens out into New Mexico with a beauty all its own. With a gas stop in Las Cruces and a weave around restricted airspace north of El Paso, I landed at Cavern City airport. The airport was a military training location at one time with four runways going everywhere!



Cavern City Airport  
— Photo courtesy of Airnav.com

After taking a fly-over I landed on 14L and taxied to the ramp. From checking AOPA'S airport directory I'd found that they had a courtesy car available, but didn't expect the FBO to be closed. I found a guy having a smoke outside a building marked Southwest Medevac and asked about the car. He went in and sent out Corby, the medevac pilot. He didn't know anything about a car but after some friendly visiting about my trip he offered to let me camp behind the building and after some more "friendly visiting" Tommy, the paramedic, let me use his truck to go to town for dinner. It's quite a walk to town so was glad to

*"Hearing the hangar doors banging together the next morning told me that I wasn't going anywhere skyward this day."*

put a few bucks of gas in the tank. Came to find out that Corby was a former Marine and that's all it took, common ground! He invited me to stay in the oxygen room located in the hangar where the medevac Cessna 414 was parked. Nice room with a restroom attached. No tent set-up! I'd decided to stay and rent a car to see the caverns on Sunday, but after coffee and calling to find out Enterprise was closed on Sunday, Corby offered me his car for the day as long as I fueled it up with premium. I was undecided until I found out it was an Audi S4 turbo! How could I say no?



Carlsbad Caverns  
- Photo courtesy National Park Service

If you've never seen Carlsbad Caverns it's definitely worth the trip, even if you have to drive! Only \$6 to get in, but plan on doing some walking. Spectacular scenery and a great place to get out of the heat as I wasn't used to 85 degrees in March. By the time I got back to town it was dinner at the local Chili's where I bought a gift card for Corby, well worth the ride! With plans on leaving for Liberal, Kansas the next day I bunked down for the night. Hearing the hangar doors banging together the next morning told me that I wasn't going

anywhere skyward this day. Met Doug Chandler, the owner of Chandler aviation, who let me park the plane in his hangar as the winds were expected to blow to 45 knots during the day. Called the Stevens Inn and they picked me up and took me back the next day. Spent the day relaxing and getting to know the town. (A note of caution: stay clear of the guys working on the highway and staying at the hotel, which has a lounge downstairs, but that's another story!). I woke up to beautiful weather and was more than ready to get out of town. Said goodbye to my new friends and headed for Santa Rosa and the blue hole.

SXU, formerly I58 is a great place to stop if you want to camp and hang in the FBO with internet, satellite TV, coffee and not a soul around. Ask for James, the airport manager and he'll hook you up with a free locked hangar for the night. Check to see if the truck stop next to the airport has all-you-can-eat ribs, well worth the walk! Lastly, if you're flying north to Raton look for a paved runway on top of a mountain in the middle of nowhere with a nice hangar but no house, makes one wonder.

So, give it a try. Smile, be interested, ask questions, and see what might happen ...GET OUT THERE.

## Calendar of Events

Come see Skyraider Aviation at these upcoming events:

- April 18<sup>th</sup> – Snow Buster Fly-In, Erie, CO (KEIK)
- May 16<sup>th</sup> – Erie Town Fair/Airport Open House, Erie, CO (KEIK)
- June 20<sup>th</sup> – Boulder Airport Open House, Boulder, CO (KBDU)
- August 22-23<sup>rd</sup> - Colorado Sport International Air Show and 30th Annual Rocky Mountain Regional Fly-In, Broomfield, CO (KBJC)
- September 5-6<sup>th</sup> - 5th Annual Wild West Air Fest and Labor Day Weekend Celebration, Steamboat Springs, CO (KSBS)