



VOLUME 27: ISSUE 2 • MARCH 2012
A PUBLICATION OF THE PINE MOUNTAIN LAKE AVIATION ASSOCIATION

March 3rd – William M. Behrns
An American Ace in WWII's CBI
presenting

"The San Joaquin Siren"

at 6:00 PM at a pot luck at the Jeff & Vicky Benzing's hangar

Our March speaker is William M. (Bill) Behrns from Stockton, CA. Bill flew in the China, Burma, India (CBI) theater in World War II where he became an ace flying P-38 Lightnings with the "Twin Dragons" – the 459th Fighter Squadron at Kurmitola just outside of Dhaka (formerly Dacca), which is now the capital of Bangladesh.



The title of his talk is "The San Joaquin Siren". It's the name he attached to his P-38 in which he flew the majority of his combat missions. There were thirty-two pilots initially assigned to the newly formed 459th squadron in early 1944 at Kurmitola. No two pilots were from the same state. It was not a coincidence. The Air Corps planned it that way. They faced over five hundred enemy aircraft known to be operating in the area at the time. The loss of multiple pilots from the same state would be noticed.



As was expected, their losses were high. Four of them came home.

Bill is a "home boy". He was born in French Camp not too many miles from here and raised in Stockton. He attended the College of the Pacific (music history) and UC Davis (agriculture), but his future was locked in when he attended an air show in Modesto one day in May of 1941.



Eventually, Bill took and passed an Army Air Corps test, entered flight training at Kern County airport; passed through Santa Ana, Santa Maria and Merced County Airport, and got his wings at Muroc (now Edwards Air Force Base). Eventually he transitioned



to the P-38 and was shipped off to the Far East to form a new squadron. The rest he will tell you about.

Bill left the Air Corps after the war and eventually ended up in charge of lot sales for Boise Cascade in

a new development called "Pine Mountain Lake" somewhere in California. ♦

President's Message by Marle Hewett

J.R. Williams' talk at our first meeting of the year at Kay Meermans' place was fantastic. His knowledge of World War I aviation was very impressive. It was like he knew the name of every aviator that participated in that struggle whether he be German, English or French. J.R. confided that he and his wife journey across the Atlantic every two years or so to track down more leads, visit sites of famous aerial encounters and trace the personal lives of combatants on both sides.

His detailed analysis of the last day in the life of Manfred von Richthofen was amazing. He convinced us all that he had the specifics of Manfred's demise nailed; the exact location of the gun that fired the fatal shot on a ridge and the gentleman on the trigger; by name and rank. Yes, the war's most renowned fighter pilot was downed by ground fire.

We'll get another war story next month. This time it's Bill Behrns, a P-38 ace from the CBI (China, Burma, India) theater in World War II. Bill is ninety plus years young and his story is compelling. He is a local boy to boot having grown up in French Camp and schooled in Stockton.

If you've detected a trend in this year's speaker lineup – guilty. The fighter and attack world of military aviation just happens to have occupied a significant portion of my life. I hope you enjoy the lineup.

A couple of notes from the meeting: As you noticed, we've added two specific trash cans labeled "aluminum cans" and "glass". We will add a third entitled "plastic". Everything else goes into the generic trash cans. The idea is to minimize what we have to pay for trash disposal.

I need some enthusiastic folks to sell 50-50 raffle tickets at our meetings. You get to meet lots of members and help out our club. Thanks to Norm and Jerry, we had a raffle after all for our February meeting. Thanks, you guys, for volunteering! I didn't realize that our usual crew was not in attendance until late in the "happy" hour. Fortunately, things worked out.

We're doing well with dues; ahead of last year's pace. Forty three percent of you have paid up to date. If you haven't yet sent in your membership

form, please feel free to do so. We're getting there!

♦

Good News

Our February Meeting

Our first meeting of the year featured a fascinating speaker, J.R. Williams, President of the all-volunteer League of WWI Historians. His presentation on "The



Last Flight of the Red Baron" kept us all engaged--aviators and non-aviators. Bonnie Ritchey was instrumental in getting J.R. to PML. Thank you,

Bonnie!

We were warm and well fed in Kay's beautiful hangar. Thank you, Kay.



Another New Pilot



On January 27th, another member earned her private pilot's license. Congratulations to Janet Gregory Pilot! See the big smiles on Janet

and her instructor Larry Jobe. Janet had her first flying lesson in 1978 and then had a long hiatus, and now in 2012, has achieved her goal. It was a grand party. Way to go, Janet!

Welcome to Our New Members

**Brent & Charmaine Murphy
Rick & Patti Kennedy
Lloyd Case & Vicki Lynn**

Donate Movies to the Library

—Virginia Gustafson, FOGL

Did you know the Groveland Library offers DVDs you can check out like books—for free!

Unfortunately our collection is skimpy and rather dated. But there is an answer—you can donate the DVDs you no longer watch. Other people will enjoy them and you'll clear out some space! We can even give you a tax-donation receipt. Thank you ! ♦

Safety Corner
by Norm Peebles

Simple Flight to Death Valley

Last month Patty and I went on the Fly Out to Death Valley with the PMLAA group and had a wonderful time. The flight over was really not much. We just had to traverse one of the largest mountain ranges in North America, climb to an altitude where supplemental oxygen could be required, pick an appropriate altitude for cruising, worry about turbulence and down drafts, stay out of the Restricted area, worry about the MOAs that we would be flying into. Not to mention the weather report, can we even make it over and back? On this one simple flight there were a minimum of six flight rules that directly impacted our flight, not to mention the many more that have an impact on every flight we take.

Let's start with our preflight action (91.103) weather, forecasts, fuel, runways, TO/Land distance, etc., all completed with no problems. Since I don't have oxygen, I must stay below 14,000' MSL and I can only stay above 12,500' MSL for thirty minutes (91.211). I planned for a crossing altitude of 13,500' MSL which would give us the appropriate altitude for our course (91.159) and it would only require me to stay at that altitude for only twenty minutes or so. Since we were planning to be above 10,000' MSL, we needed to insure that our transponder was operating (91.215). VFR weather minimums would apply (91.155), but we had great weather for both Saturday and Sunday and smooth conditions over the mountains. All the northern MOAs were cold and we contacted Joshua Approach just to make sure (AIM 3-4-5). The Restricted area started at 20,000' MSL, so there was no problem there (91.133).

Even a simple flight ends up being a challenge. We all have accepted this challenge by becoming aviators and if we don't keep up with all the rules and regulations, these challenges could bite us and ruin our day. I purchase a FAR/AIM almost every year and go through Part 91 and the AIM with a yellow marker and highlight those parts that will have a direct impact on my type of flying. It only costs about \$10.00 and it's a good review and helps keep me current. It's a good way to prepare for the Bi-annual also. But let's not forget about the most

important rule, Part 91.FUN... it's all about the FUN OF FLYING! ♦

From The Airports Manager
by Jim Thomas

Residential Through-The-Fence

At the February 6th Airports Advisory Committee meeting held at the Groveland Community Hall, I talked about the history and status of the FAA's policy on Residential Through-The-Fence operations which the FAA calls "RTTF". For those that are unfamiliar with the term, Residential Through-The-Fence (RTTF) is the FAA's term for private residential property adjacent to or near an airport where a resident is allowed to taxi their plane to the airport and use the taxiways and runway. FAA uses the term "fence" to refer to an airport's property line, not a physical fence. For several years now, the FAA has had a policy that RTTF was incompatible with a federally obligated airport (an airport eligible to receive FAA grants for airport improvements). The Pine Mountain Lake Airport is considered by the FAA to be an airport with RTTF and so the FAA has refused in recent years to provide us any Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants.

In September of 2009 the FAA issued a revised Compliance Guidance Manual called Order 5190.6B which is the FAA's policy manual. This is used by the Regional and District Airports Offices for guidance in conducting their business. The RTTF policy provided by Order 5190.6B was confusing and as a result the FAA issued their Compliance Guidance Letter 2011-1 titled "FAA Implementation of Interim Policy Regarding Access to Airports from Residential Property and Review of Access Arrangements" in March of 2011. A main requirement of the Compliance Guidance Letter 2011-1 was that an airport with RTTF must prepare and submit an "Access Plan" to the FAA for their review and acceptance prior to issuing any grants.

To many it looked like the FAA was solidifying their RTTF requirements but Congress got into the act and included RTTF language in the recent FAA Authorization Bill which passed the House on Friday, February 3rd and the Senate on Monday, February 6th. The legislation has only 57 narrow lines of text addressing the RTTF issue compared with the 10 pages in the Compliance Guidance Manual which took a 26 page Compliance Guidance Letter to clarify! My feeling is that the FAA (which is without

and administrator right now) is going to take their time in formulating new policy based on the recent RTTF legislation. Consequently, I think it is very unlikely the RTTF issue is going to be resolved in the near future. I'll continue to keep the PMLAA members and the flying public informed of significant RTTF developments. ♦



2012 Meeting Calendar

Date	Program	Location
March 3	Bill Behrns, P-38 pilot WWII China, Burma, India theater	6:00pm – Pot Luck at Jeff & Vicky Benzing's hangar
April 7	Einar Enevoldson, NASA test pilot "Soaring Above the Clouds"	6:00pm—Pot Luck at Carol Simpson's hangar

BOARD OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS – 2012

OFFICERS

President , Marle Hewett	962-0701
VP, Airport Affairs , Eric Henderson	962-0832
VP, Social Affairs , Kathy McConnell	962-5854
Secretary , Charleen Beam	768-6151
Treasurer , Kay Smith	962-6986

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Speaker Coordinator , Allen Craig	962-6757
Fly-Out Coordinator , Ken Helling	962-7597
Safety , Norm Peebles	962-1990

COMMITTEE CHAIRS - CONTINUED

Property , Ed Peters	962-6267
Multimedia , Ken Codeglia	962-6270
Phil Hickerson	962-6714
Membership , Kay Smith	962-6986
Roster , Carol Simpson	962-0943
Legal Counsel , Renie Leakakos	532-1958
Webmaster , Silvano Gai	962-6378
Newsletter Editor , Judy Hewett	962-0701
Airports Manager , Jim Thomas	533-5685

PML Aviation Association

PO Box 131
Groveland, CA 95321