



A NEW BEGINNING

By Henry M. Ogrodzinski

(Photo by Marian Cavadias)

This article is meant to convey some of the color and emotion at the dedication ceremonies of the EAA Aviation Center for the EAA members who were not able to attend. To fully cover all of the events of July 30 would take an entire issue of SPORT AVIATION. All of us who were fortunate enough to be a part of the dedication have very special memories of that very special day. We will always recall brief interludes which lent themselves to the significance of the occasion. For instance, one EAA member vividly remembers meeting Cliff Robertson in the Aviation

Center's Goldwater Conference area. The world-renowned actor was graciously signing autographs for a number of young EAA volunteers who had helped to make the dedication ceremonies a success. Robertson looked up and gazed across the beautiful, new facility and said, "Isn't this great!"

Future articles in SPORT AVIATION will describe, in detail, both the museum and the conference areas of the Aviation Center. The Center is, of course, the new home of the EAA International Headquarters; and that, too, will be described in the near future.

THIRTY-ONE YEARS ago, Paul H. Poberezny dramatically influenced the course of aviation history when he founded the Experimental Aircraft Association. For those of us who did not attend that first, pivotal EAA meeting at Curtiss-Wright Field in Milwaukee, it may be easy enough to imagine the elements involved in that charter gathering. There was certainly some good humor, a few moments of solemnity, and a quiet confidence in an unlimited future in what Paul has often referred to as "this vast ocean of air above us". The participants in that first EAA meeting could not have known that they were setting the pattern and standard for thousands of similar meetings around the world. Nor, did Paul Poberezny fully realize the impact that the EAA would have on the world of sport and recreational aviation.

July 30, 1983 was another such historic day . . . a milestone in the chronicles of aviation . . . a new beginning. The dedication and preview opening of the EAA Aviation Center attracted many people from many places and all walks of life. They gathered together for a few hours during the 31st Annual EAA International Fly-In Convention and Sport Aviation Exhibition to pay a very special tribute to personal flight and to celebrate the completion of the new EAA Aviation Center. Those who attended the dedication represented, in spirit, the hundreds of thousands of people who have joined EAA since that first meeting in 1953. While EAA has always been an aviation organization, it has been, first and foremost, an organization of **people** working together in their love of flight.

For example, Senator Barry Goldwater, the Chairman of the National Steering Committee for the EAA Aviation Foundation's Capital Campaign, was scheduled to be the keynote speaker for the dedication of the EAA Aviation Center. However, the distinguished Senator from the State of Arizona recently underwent minor surgery; and his recovery period prevented him from joining those who had gathered to celebrate the preview opening of the EAA Aviation Center. In the true spirit of EAA volunteerism, Barron Hilton, Chairman of the Board and President of Hilton Hotels Corporation and active EAA member, graciously stepped forward and accepted the role as keynote speaker.

EAA has never been nor ever will be a static organization. It has always dynamically sought to serve its membership and work with others who are interested in the promotion and development of aviation. The importance of people to EAA was eloquently stated by Barron Hilton during his dedication speech. He said in part, "The Experimental Aircraft Association has demonstrated that scores of dedicated people . . . supported by a strong membership . . . can achieve great goals. Thirty years ago at the first EAA Convention, this would have seemed impossible. But, like the progress of flight itself, EAA has always reached beyond the horizon. The EAA Aviation Center is a tribute to the 'can-do' spirit of EAA. I salute you and the thousands who will visit here to learn and to be inspired by the glory of flight. Thanks to Paul and Tom Poberezny and the dedicated members of the Experimental Aircraft Association, a dream has become reality."

In addition to Barron Hilton, the dedication attracted dignitaries and celebrities from throughout the world of aviation. Special guests included world-renowned actor, Cliff Robertson, who acted as Master of Ceremonies during the dedication; Sam Johnson, CEO of the Johnson Wax Company; Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Thayer; aviation great, Steve Wittman; Federal Aviation Administrator, J. Lynn Helms; well-known radio personality and EAA Aviation Foundation Director, Bob Collins; and many others who participated in the dedication ceremonies including renowned aerobatic pilot, Kermit Weeks, who was signaled out by Tom Poberezny for "being among the first who took the steps necessary to help make our dreams a reality". Greetings and congratulations poured in from local, state and federal officials including a proclamation from President Reagan. In part, the President said, "This notable event serves as a fine expression of our nation's continuing great interest in the development of flight. The Center will preserve the triumphs of the pioneers, builders and dreamers of flight. I commend your organization's devoted efforts to promote safer and more enjoyable and econom-

ical personal aviation throughout the world. Once again, congratulations on this milestone in the history of EAA; and may you have even greater success in the future."

Master of Ceremonies, Cliff Robertson, noted that, "This is the day we get to the top of Mount Everest. This is the Walden Pond of aviation . . . a place to come and reflect. All migratory birds need a place to rest, and this is it." The Academy Award-winning actor is also a writer and poet. During the dedication, he faced the crowd of fellow EAA members gathered around the replica of the Wright Flyer displayed on sand actually brought in from Kitty Hawk, and read a poem he'd written enroute to Oshkosh. He dedicated it to "the museum and the dreamers behind it . . . particularly Paul and Tom Poberezny".

It's your thirteenth summer, and freedom lies ahead:
Freedom from grammar and math, teachers and rules,
and school.

Ninety days of unbridled joy.
Freedom to rise at dawn and pilot your Iver-Johnson bicycle
On a 12-mile journey to boyhood gladness.
That expectation carves a smile on your young face
And the cold morning air brings tears to your eyes and
stings your teeth.

But nothing can stay your mission:
You pedal wildly through that sleepy southern California
town,

On toward the target.
You're Richard Dix, and Errol Flynn —
You're "the ace of aces" on your "dawn patrol".
You couple onto the early morning trolley —
The motorman doesn't notice, or pretends not to,
As you rest your weary legs and hold on for another mile,
Until you reach that sandy sideroad —
You "peel off" — one more mile to go, one tantalizing mile.
A final burst of speed, and then you coast the last one
hundred yards,

The tires humming an unwinding song in the morning
quiet —

Slowly and finally, the stop. You're there.
You stand in reverence.

Lourdes never looked more magnificent than this simple
structure.

This cathedral of boyhood dreams.
This airport.

— "Airport", by Cliff Robertson

Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Thayer, who appeared in his flightsuit in anticipation of his air show performance later in the day, was also a dedication speaker. He compared the EAA Aviation Center to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. "Although it (the National Air and Space Museum) is a little larger at the moment, I can envision a time when this museum will rival Washington's in variety and tone. Young Tom turned on his afterburner and the result is what we see here today." Thayer, of course, was referring to EAA Aviation Foundation President, Tom Poberezny who was roundly praised as the guiding force behind the Aviation Center from its conception, through construction, to preview opening and dedication. "It has been my life for nearly three years," Poberezny said. "Today, the dream of all EAA members and aviation enthusiasts worldwide becomes a reality."

While EAA members the world over have read a great deal about the new EAA Aviation Center, the facility must be seen in order to be truly appreciated. James Remington, Senior Vice President of Philip Morris USA, confided to an EAA member that when he received his invitation to the dedication ceremonies he assumed he was being invited to "another ground breaking". Philip Morris, through its subsidiary the Miller Brewing Company, made a substantial donation to the EAA Aviation Center during EAA Oshkosh '82; and Remington was absolutely thrilled as he approached the new complex with the Tower of Aviation gleaming in the sunlight. "I do not believe that there is another organization in the world that could have accomplished this."



(Photo by Jack Cox)



(Photo by Marian Cavadias)
Tom Poberezny, left, and Paul Poberezny, right, cut the ribbon to officially open the new EAA Aviation Center. Actor/Pilot Cliff Robertson looks on.

Many members, including the business and industrial leaders who have been very important to the development of the Aviation Center, noted that the building was constructed in a phenomenally short thirteen months. It was a common occurrence to hear visitors describe the Center with such superlatives as "awesome", "magnificent", and "beautiful". However, it is completely evident that the EAA Aviation Center is not now all that it will become. It was for this reason that the opening which followed the dedication on July 30 was referred to only as a "preview". In fact, as convention week progressed, small changes and improvements were made in many of the exhibit and display areas. The EAA Aviation Foundation staff is still in the process of moving aircraft to the Center from the EAA facilities in Hales Corners and Burlington, Wisconsin. A dedicated cadre of talented men and women is still designing and building displays and exhibits. Nevertheless, the stunning facility has received rave reviews from the tens of thousands who have toured it.

During the first eight days of the Aviation Center's official life, which commenced on July 30, 1983, fifty-five thousand registered convention attendees toured the facility. During the initial three weeks of the Center's operation, 92,000 visitors experienced

the rich heritage of our aviation history in a truly unique manner made possible by the new EAA building. Informal visitor surveys found that there was no disappointment in the minds of those present. All comments were extremely positive; and many contributors said, "My donation was well spent!" In fact, upon seeing the concrete and steel result of the EAA Aviation Foundation's Capital Campaign, many members took the opportunity to make a contribution. The most popular level of support was to "buy a brick" for the Charter/Contributor's Wall. Members and Chapters will have the opportunity to buy a brick (representing a pledge of \$500 over a five-year period) until December 31, 1983. Many donors pointed out that this was a rare chance to have their names or chapter numbers permanently displayed in a magnificent, world-class museum. Of course, pledges of any amount are welcome and encouraged. Most visitors agreed with Paul Thayer and Tom Hoving in their comparisons of the EAA Aviation Center to the National Air and Space Museum. Hoving, a former Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, a commentator on ABC's 20/20 program, and editor-in-chief of CONNOISSEUR Magazine, was extremely impressed by the facility. In fact, he plans to spotlight the Center in a future issue of his publication.

The formal dedication took place within the museum before an audience of invited guests and convention attendees who were touring the facility for the first time. The official ribbon-cutting took place out-of-doors at 1:00 p.m. Many of the dedication speakers, including Barron Hilton, Father John MacGillivray, Cliff Robertson, Bob Collins, and, of course, Paul and Tom Poberezny, took part in the ribbon-cutting. Hundreds of EAA members and dozens of media representatives were gathered in front of the building to witness and participate in this historic event.

The first few moments of the ceremony yielded a touching surprise, and no one was more surprised than Paul. As a United States Honor Guard raised an American flag on the pole in front of the Aviation Center, Bob Collins informed Paul, and those who had assembled, that the flag was the same one that had draped the coffin of Peter Poberezny, Paul's father. Appropriately, Father MacGillivray then invoked a lovely, ethereal Prayer of Dedication.

A Prayer of Dedication

O' God, in your own image,
You fashioned man from dust,
You shared with him Your power
To know, to love, to trust.

You shared with him a vision
Of cloud, and wind and sky
And challenged man to use Your gifts
To teach himself to fly.

Man dreamed that dream, a vision bright
Through countless ages gone —
Yet only in this present time
The Age of Flight has dawned.

O' God of storm, yet gentle breeze
Accept from humble hands,
This monument to say our thanks
We, airmen, of all lands.

Unite our scattered languages,
In the common tongue of Flight,
That we, united here below
Be pleasing in Your sight.

Today these walls bespeak our praise
We, dust, endowed with flight.
Under the shadow of Your wings
Lead us to Eternal light.

Amen.

As the ribbon was about to be cut, officially opening the new EAA Aviation Center, the Foundation's faithful replica of the Spirit of St. Louis, flown by EAA Director, Captain Verne Jobst, swooped out of the beautiful blue sky. The Spirit, with the sun glinting off its wings, made a graceful low pass in front of the Aviation Center; circled for a second low pass; and, with a wag of the wings, disappeared over the horizon. From that moment on, and for the rest of time, the EAA Aviation Center was open.

Undoubtedly, we will all read and hear more about the Aviation Center, its work, and the reaction of members and non-members alike to the awesome beauty of the facility and its remarkable exhibits. Most importantly, however, the work of the Experimental Aircraft Association and the EAA Aviation Foundation will continue to expand with new programs and the continuation of those that have already been developed and nurtured.

As we move into the future, the EAA Aviation Center will have a far-reaching influence on all aviation enthusiasts and our future in the skies. These activities will be pursued without losing sight of EAA's initial goal of putting hands and minds to work improving the future of both aviation and society. We are entering a whole new spectrum of activity. Together we have accomplished what some thought to be impossible; and together we will continue to investigate, discover, preserve and protect our very special world of sport and recreational aviation.

HOTLINE . . . (Continued from Page 8)

P-12E PUT ON DISPLAY

After nearly a decade of restoration work, the Air Force Museum has placed its "new" Boeing P-12E on display. Dedication ceremonies were held on August 20 and featured Generals Curtis LeMay, Bernard Schriever and Mark E. Bradley, each of whom flew P-12's in his early career.

The P-12E was donated to the Air Force Museum in 1973 by Marcellus Foose and Glenn Courtright of Oak Lawn, IL.

BOB WALTERS SKIFF PLANS AVAILABLE

Bob Walters, designer of the popular Dragonfly, has designed a small, all-composite boat, the Perdido Skiff. Building it, one can learn most of the techniques needed to build a composite airplane without committing to the expense of a full kit. Bob sells a building manual on the Perdido Skiff which includes plans and complete information for adapting any wooden boat plans for foam and glass construction. The price is \$20.00 and the address is: Walters Press, RR 1, Box 1000, Eloy, AZ 85231. Kits and materials are available from Wicks Aircraft.

EAA SOUTH PACIFIC '84

Thinking of joining the tour? Why not make your decision now?

The tour is designed so we can meet local pilots, see new aircraft and visit the scenic attractions of both Australia and New Zealand. Many activities have also been arranged for those not quite so interested in aircraft including additional scenic tours, and visits to places of interest such as sheep stations, art galleries, museums and shops of these beautiful and attractive countries.

Don't forget that this year's tour also includes two days in beautiful Tasmania. The longer you delay your decision, the more you risk the tour being full before you apply. It happened in 1983 and could happen again in 1984.

Unedited comments on the tour from those who participated in 1983 include:

"A never to be forgotten experience."

"Well managed, pleasantly escorted, enjoyable and educational."

"Beautiful country, nice people, good food."

"Very friendly, excellent planning and accommodations."

"Excellent — an unusual opportunity to visit other countries and other EAA Fly-Ins. We found the people there very friendly and hospitable and the countries were beautiful."

"A very well organized tour with every detail worked out so that I could enjoy myself without any concern."

"A fine example of what excellent organization can do for others."

For more information contact: EAA TOUR DESK - South Pacific '84, Travel Service Corp., 179 West Washington St., Suite 915, Chicago, IL 60602, phone 312/236-4322.

LIMITED EDITION COMMEMORATIVE MUG

Approximately 500 of the Limited Edition Commemorative Mugs are now available for \$7.95 postpaid. These consecutive numbered mugs bear a full color rendering of the new EAA Aviation Center.

Only 1000 of these mugs were produced . . . a true collectors item. Order yours now — before they are all sold — from EAA Aviation Foundation, P.O. Box 469, Hales Corners, WI 53130.

TOM FERRARO WELCOMED AS NEW CEC MEMBER

Tom Poberezny and Greg Anderson welcomed Tom Ferraro as the newest member of the Chapter Executive Committee shortly before OSHKOSH '83. Tom is from Atlanta, and will cover the States of Georgia and Alabama. He has been an EAAer for twelve years and active in seven Chapters in his many moves recently. Tom has attended every Convention held at Oshkosh, and he completed a prize-winning Skybolt in 1978 and is converting a Tri Pacer now.

He has expressed great interest in the EAA Aviation Foundation, its Capital Campaign and the communications potential to be realized between Headquarters and EAAers in the field. For EAA members and Chapters in the Georgia and Alabama area, Tom's address and phone number are 5183 Arbor Lane, Lilburn, Georgia 30247 (404/923-1849).