The Leading Edge
The newsletter of the MIT Soaring Association
October 1999

Contents

Club news

Mark Tuttle

Chief instructor: Phil Gaisford has assumed the role of chief instructor, taking the place of John Wren who stepped down from the position after years of service. Thanks to both men for filling a demanding post in the club.

New pilots: Peter Vickery passed his flight test for his private pilot certificate on Saturday, August 14. Peter's first passenger was expected to be one of his sons. Congratulations, Peter.

New solos: Fred Looft soloed on Sunday, September 19. "I'm told that I was grinning like a Cheshire cat... and that a few could see it from the ground..." Congratulations, Fred.

New badges: Peter Vickery earned his bronze badge in July. Dick Ruel, a GBSC member and MITSA associate member, recently learned that the SSA has approved his flight in the L-33 on July 12 for his silver/gold duration and silver altitude legs. Congratulations, Peter and Dick.

New members: Donald Flye and Aaron Sylvan joined the club way back on May 30, John MacNicol and Roland Martineau joined the club on July 31, and David Ritchie joined the club on September 22. Roland is a glider pilot belonging to GBSC who joined MITSA as an associate member.

John MacNicol responded to my email asking him to write about himself for the newsletter with an unexpectedly good-humored account of vast flight experience. "An opportunity to talk about myself? Why, thank you for asking! I actually have a long history of soaring and flying in Massachusetts and have met several old friends and acquaintances through the club already.

"I'm a glider 'brat,' having spent almost every summer of my youth at one gliderport or another, mostly at Hiller airport in Barre. (I even remember meeting Mrs. Hiller many moons ago.) I learned to fly gliders with Mr. Charlie Hyde in Salem, New Hampshire, and soloed at age 14. I got my private glider license at age 16 at Hiller, and learned to fly single-engine airplanes at Sterling at age 20.

"I attended the annual Wave Camp in North Conway with my father, Allan, from as far back as I can remember until the last year we held it in 1985 when I got my diamond altitude. I also did my bronze duration flight at North Conway. I don't have my bronze badge yet, though, because the only time I seriously attempted it, during the 1986 Region 6 Sports Class contest in Ionia, Michigan, I flew to the first turn point 48 miles away and returned only to have the task denied by the SSA for a bad turn point picture. After this I dropped out of the sport for lack of time. I have tried various times over the years to get back into soaring, but have met with very limited success until this year when I joined the club.

"I am currently a Captain in the US Air Force, stationed at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, as a program manager for the National Missile Defense program. I spent my first year in the Air Force attending pilot training in Columbus, Mississippi, then three years as a C-21 (Lear 35) pilot in Montgomery, Alabama, followed by four years flying the C-141 (four engine, heavy transport, not to be confused with the C-5) out of Travis Air Force Base near San Francisco.

"I have an ATP, private single-engine land, and commercial glider ratings. I hope to become an instructor after I knock the rust off my gliding skills, and even might be talked into getting checked out in the tow plane.

"I look forward to flying with the club and many great soaring days back here in Massachusetts."

Glider for sale: Mark Evans is selling his Grob 102 Standard III and trailer for $25,000. Contact Mark Evans at 617 469-2056 or mevans@payette.com.

Minutes of the Board of Directors

Walt Hollister

August 6, 1999

Finances: Steve Glow and Jim Emken gave a detailed report on lost tow revenue and net costs associated with the Cessna 182 repair. The tear-down and inspection of the engine disclosed a number of discrepancies which could not be charged to the prop strike. These included corrosion found on the piston pins, cam shaft, and tappets, plus cracked counterweights and starter casing. At the conclusion of the break-in flights, an oil leak developed, requiring removal and repair. Steve said the lost tow revenue was comparable to a few years ago when an extreme shortage of instructors reduced the demand for tows. Since our main source of income is from tow fees, the board agreed to a modification of the rates as follows:

Hookup	$10	2,000 ft	$24
500 ft	$13	2,500 ft	$27
1,000 ft	$14	3,000 ft	$30
1,500 ft	$20	Higher	$1 per 100 ft

Maintenance: N117BB is at Plymouth for its annual. Plans were made for Bruce and Phil to tow it back early Saturday morning pending completion of the inspection.

Operations: A general discussion about improving the field operation led to the observation that on a busy day the duty officer is often overworked, and some responsibilities such as the written report of flights and payments suffer as a result. It was proposed that student pilots be assigned as assistants to the duty officer after they sign up with MITSA. The motivations for this are that the student would be getting on-the-job training to become duty officer and the responsibilities of the duty officer would be better performed. The assistant DO could also serve as backup to insure that tow pilots and instructors are confirmed prior to the weekend. Joe Kwasnik volunteered to take the proposal forward to the operations officer.

There was a discussion about actions which could be taken to avoid future prop strikes. Bruce Easom said he would prepare a set of guidelines for tow pilots about where to park and where not to taxi on the grass. Joe Kwasnik volunteered to organize a working party to fill in pot holes Saturday, August 14.

Bruce Easom reported that there is a new orange tow rope with a Schweizer two-inch ring on each end. A weak link only needs to be added to accommodate the smaller European ring. The breaking strength of the rope was tested a 1,150 pounds so it will accommodate the 80-200% of gross weight requirement on all of the MITSA gliders.

Sterling Airport: Since Sterling could close on short notice, it was determined that we should at least make inquiries about alternate airports. Steve Glow is to contact GBSC. Phil Gaisford and Bob Fletcher will seek information from Fitchburg and Gardner airports.

Minutes of the Board of Directors

Walt Hollister

September 2, 1999

Finances: Steve Glow gave an assessment of the year to date as not a financial winner due primarily to the revenue lost while the tow plane was under repair. There is money in the bank and the association is solvent, but it has been a lean year.

Maintenance: Jim Emken reported that the noise coming from the wheel of 117BB is thought to be due to the valve stem rubbing and should be corrected in the next few days. [After the meeting, Jim discovered that the noise is due to a tire and tube of the wrong size that was installed during the last annual, and will be fixed soon.] Tow pilots are requested to anticipate when an oil change will be necessary and report that to maintenance promptly to avoid interference with flight operations. It was suggested that the tow pilots also be taught the procedure for changing the oil and Bruce Easom said he would arrange for such briefings.

Springfield encampment: Bruce Easom reported that all the gliders and tow planes have been moved to Springfield, Vermont, for the September 4-12 encampment. He knows of about 12-14 members who are planning to participate. There are to be cookouts both Saturday and Sunday evenings. Flight operations are scheduled to commence at 8am Saturday, Sunday, and Labor Day.

Juniors: Peter Vickery presented a report on the progress of the Juniors. The three most active juniors can be ready to solo by the end of the summer. With the start of school the Wednesday night flying will be switched to early morning and late evening before and after regular operations on weekends.

MITSA Blue Book: There was considerable discussion of the draft version of the operating rules now resident on the Internet. On the issue of unscheduled flight operations, it was decided that there has to be a qualified duty officer present, and that duty officer should notify the board of directors. Notification could be done by email or telephone. The new rule is more liberal than the old rule in order to encourage additional flight operations while maintaining sufficient supervision for flight safety. The rule will be explained in a new paragraph on unscheduled flight operations. On the issue of tow-pilot standardization, Bruce Easom will draw up a new written guideline. He also volunteered to prepare a list of the private gliders with their competition numbers, et cetera, to help tow pilots determine when the next glider for tow is from MITSA. It was agreed that the duty officer should be equipped with a hand-held radio, but the purchase of a new hand-held for use by duty officers who do not have their own would be put on hold. When the Blue Book is completed an updated version will be published in the newsletter.

Cross-country

Jim Tsillas

Jim Tsillas sent the following report to the club about flying on August 4. —Editor

First off, I'd like to thank Ira Blieden for organizing the day and for GBSC for towing us.

The day started off looking marginal with wisps of cirrus passing overhead from north to south and a few frayed cumulus at high altitude, but by 10:30 it looked like the cirrus was moving away and more and more cumulus were visible to the north and west. Most of the private gliders launched between 11:00 and 12:00 with Roy Bourgeois flying his ASW-17, Ira Blieden in his LS-3, Steve Sovis in his ASW-20, and Errol Drew in his LS-7. I assembled the PIK-20 and launched about the middle of the pack.

Ira had declared a 500K task which consisted of two trips out to North Adams. Roy, Steve, and Errol also decided to head west. I decided on a more northerly route with my goal as an out-and-return to Springfield, Vermont.

The conditions were "interesting" with more than expected cloud cover and a mixture of weak to moderate lift. Many clouds seemed to produce little or no lift, but occasionally up to six knots could be found. The strategy which seemed to work best was to keep over the high ground and wait for the six knots, passing over the weak lift unless one got desperate.

I started my trip by heading west along Route 2 to Orange, following the promising looking clouds along the way. My intent was to turn north from Orange and follow the high ground west of Monadnock to Keene. This strategy worked although I had to settle for a slow climb in a two-knot thermal to gain enough altitude from Orange. About an hour into the trip I was able to reach lift west of Monadnock as planned and was now headed towards Keene. A large blue area between Monadnock and Keene necessitated a good climb to 7,000 feet (which was cloud base in that particular area).

I arrived at Keene about one hour and forty-five minutes into the trip and spent some time surveying this unfamiliar area. I could see the Connecticut River to the west and saw that there were several private small strips (such as Welcome) to the northwest straddling the river. Lift was available along the valley and I arrived over Welcome some 15 minutes later. But I was still some 28 miles from Springfield and the conditions in that area did not look as good.

Fortunately, there is an abundance of fields along the river so I decided to go for it keeping to the east of the river over the high ground. I was rewarded with good lift about half way and arrived just south of Claremont some two hours and 30 minutes into the trip.

Unfortunately conditions to the west over Springfield (which was now visible) did not look good and started to deteriorate over Claremont just as I had arrived in the area. I gradually lost altitude as I tried to decide if heading back south was not a bad idea. Reaching 3,000 feet agl, I made up my mind to go for Springfield, with the possibility of a long retrieve. Crossing over the Connecticut, I noticed a number wisps forming in the area around Springfield—sure enough, it was a group of cumulus just starting to form. I arrived at the nearest at about 2,000 feet agl and was greeted by a young bald eagle who had probably found himself in similar circumstances. A quick climb to 6,000 followed and I turned Springfield three hours into the trip.

Figure 1: Phil Gaisford and Karl Krueger waiting for a wire launch at the Springfield encampment.

I was now in a much more comfortable position being high and upwind (there was about a six-knot wind) of Sterling. I returned east across the river and following strong lift south and east arriving between Monadnock and Keene some 15 minutes later. From 7,000 feet, I estimated that crossing the blue hole between Monadnock and Fitchburg was doable. Despite the sink along the way I arrived near Fitchburg with 3,000 feet. I estimated that Sterling was within easy reach but decided to accept some lift southwest of Fitchburg, extending my flight another 20 minutes.

I was very pleased on landing to have completed my longest cross country to date. My next goal will be to fly a triangle of North Adams, Springfield, and Sterling.

Malta or bust

Peter Vickery

This is a story I originally wrote for the Citibank U.K. house magazine and describes a junket I took in 1980.

The met. forecast for Wednesday, June 18, 1980, made fairly good reading. With the exception of a small cold front holding over central France, the wind was from the northwest at about 20 knots and visibility was 20+ miles. Almost perfect conditions, but for what and why.

The 18th June signaled the start of an event that I and three friends had been working towards for the previous five months. We formed the crew of a Piper Twin Comanche and were leaving Biggin Hill in southeast England to take part in the 11th International Air Rally of Malta, which was to be attended by aircraft and crews from Finland, U.K., France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and Austria. To say we were just the crew is somewhat of an understatement, since two of the crew members actually owned the aeroplane. Of the four, I was the least experienced, having only 100 hours single engine time in my log book. My three friends, between them having logged thousands of hours, were Mike Edmonds, one of the owners and a branch manager for Barclays Bank; Lionel Vizer, the other owner and garage proprietor; and Ted White, a ferry pilot and general aviation factotum, also an owner in his own right of a B17-G (the Sally-B), ten AT-6's, one T-28, and a Piper Cherokee.

Mike and Lionel bought the aircraft late in 1979 with intention of not only using it as a touring aeroplane, but to refurbish it and enter it in the Malta Air Rally. During one of the many conversations at the flying club about previous years' rallies, I expressed an interest in taking part, and they very kindly invited me along. A lot of work had to be done in order to get the aeroplane "ship-shape and Bristol fashion." Not only did it have to be repainted, but a lot had to be done mechanically and with the avionics.

The aeroplane, once a weather-beaten red color, was resprayed white with blue and gold livery. Having been repainted professionally, we now had the job of compounding it to bring up the shine. The final wax and polish would not be applied until we arrived in Sardinia the day before the rally. This job was completed some three months before our departure date. In the intervening time, the engine cowlings and inspection panels were removed a number of times for various work to be carried out. Each time they were replaced we had to go round and touch up all the screw heads that had been scratched. Additionally, each time the aeroplane flew it picked up squashed bugs, small scratches and the like so we had to go round with the solvent and touch up paint to remove them. It seemed more touch up paint was applied than the original respray.

The interior of the aeroplane was refurbished with new seats and carpets, the instrument panel was resprayed and re-labeled. The undercarriage was repainted, tires and de-icing boots were blacked and the heads of nuts and bolts were painted red in true British military style. All this took five months of work at weekends and many weekdays were spent refining the flight plans and planning stopovers. It seemed as though the big day was always weeks away but all of a sudden it was upon us and from that point until the rally was over everything had to be just so.

A number of trophies are awarded by the rally judges: Highest placed novice pilot; Highest placed lady entrant; 1st and 2nd placed single engine aircraft; 1st and 2nd placed multi-engine aircraft; Most sporting entry; Timed arrival competition; Flight planning competition; Timed section 1st and 2nd place; Longest distance flown; Concourse d'elegance, 1st and 2nd; Overall winner plus 2nd and 3rd.

We were not eligible for the first three of those mentioned above and we had high hopes of picking up a 'pot' for one of the other competitions, even though it was the first time any of us had entered.

We arrived at Biggin early in the morning and loaded up our baggage, such as it was. With a full fuel load and the four of us, we could really only manage overnight toiletries and the clothes we intended to arrive in. Fortunately, we had a number of supporters coming down on a scheduled flight and they brought the rest of our baggage with them.

We took off from Biggin Hill at 0810G for the first leg of the trip to Lydd on the south coast. There were a number of supporters on hand to wish us "*bon voyage*," and the tower cleared us for a low-level pass over the field to wave goodbye. The flight to Lydd took 36 minutes, we topped off the tanks with duty-free fuel, since we were "going foreign," and cleared our Gen. Decs. at Customs and were on our way within 30 minutes.

On the outbound legs I sat in the back with Ted and it was our job to keep the flight plans current, recompute ETA's, headings, groundspeeds, keep the radio and fuel logs up to date, and what seemed a myriad other administrative tasks. The competition for the Flight Planning trophy demanded that all this information be handed in within ten minutes of arrival at Malta and it had to be in immaculate order. There seemed to be an absolute dearth of flight attendants with gin and tonics on this trip!

We departed Lydd, according to my log book, at 0948G for the second leg of the day, to Cannes on the French Riviera. It was our intention to overnight there and, of course, to take in the local hospitality. We had estimated the trip would take approximately four and a half hours cruising at 140 knots, and we arrived at 1406G. Our route took us over Calais to Troyes, to the east of Paris, then south to Autun-Lyon-Montelimar, turning east just before Marseilles, over St. Tropez, and into Cannes Mandelieu Airport. That all sounds fairly straightforward, in severe clear and no ceiling. However, by the time we reached Lyon, that "small stationary cold front" reared it's ugly head and we (actually Mike and Lionel) had some work to do. Sad to say but French air traffic controllers are not noted as being the most helpful around, which didn't help

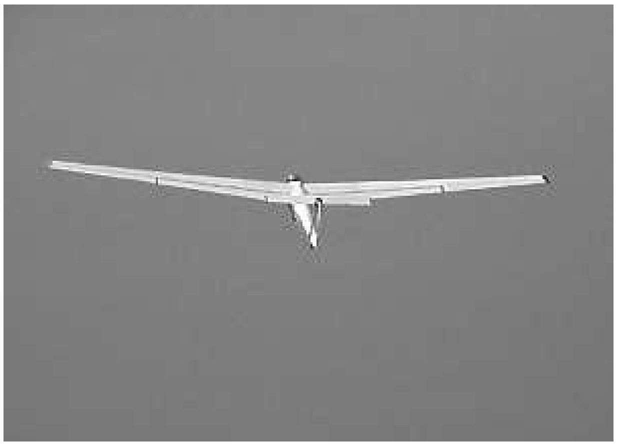

Figure 2: The truck used for wire launches at the Springfield encampment and a Blanik being launched by the truck.

our predicament much. After endless calls we managed to establish contact with a controller who didn't seem to speak the international language of aviation. Fortunately, Ted, who learned his French in a dive bar in downtown Kinshasa supplemented by what he picked up on the back of a Gaulois packet, managed to file an IFR flight plan to get us out of trouble.

Only having done the bare minimum of instrument orientation time under a hood, I can attest to the phenomena of vertigo brought on by spatial disorientation. After some ten minutes in cloud we started to accumulate ice on the leading edges and the props and decided to descend from our current level of 11,000 feet in order to clear it. Ever mindful of our position, we were flying down the Rhone Valley, the cumulus granite surrounding us climbed to 9,500 feet to the east and 5,500 feet to the west, we finally started losing the ice at 5,000 feet, and, it would be fair to say, that's probably not all we lost. Thankfully, we cleared the weather some 30 minutes later exactly on course, the remainder of the journey into Cannes being completely uneventful. Having tied the aeroplane down for the night, a quick inspection revealed the havoc that the icing had wrought with paintwork, I see touch up paint looming!!

We hadn't booked any rooms in advance, smart, huh? June on the French Riviera, but Ted said he knew a nice little place along the beach in Cannes which was very cheap. Sure enough it was clean and definitely cheap but that's because we had the ILS to Mandelieu coming through one window and the Paris-Cannes railroad coming through the door! We managed to locate an extremely pleasant bistro and that well known phrase "cat beer civu play" became worn out by the end of the evening. Of course, we also ate and Ted amused us by eating numerous raw cloves of garlic, remember that.

The next day, June 19, called for two further hops, Mike and Lionel switched seats and Lionel was captain for the day. The first leg to Cagliari in Sardinia and then on to Catania in Sicily staying two nights. This was when my excess amusement of Ted and his garlic cloves turned on me. Have you ever sat in a phone booth with somebody who spent the evening eating garlic, and worse yet been at 10,000 feet with no place to escape: not a pretty sight!! We departed Cannes at 0730G and arrived in Cagliari at 0942G (1142 local time). Mike had arranged that we would take some Italian friends from the local aero club to lunch. We went to a local restaurant, which specialized in fish, the first course being squid and octopus, which didn't do much for Lionel and me. For the main course the two of us decided to be smart and order meat rather than fish, this was not a la carte, it was meat or fish and you took what came. Well, the meat could not be described as tender and certainly had a taste to remember, it turned out to be horse and donkey. Ted had a great time when we arrived in Malta, telling everybody that Lionel and I had the greatest piece of ass on the journey down. We said our fond farewells and set off at 1407G for Catania arriving there at 1623G (1823 local).

Sicily, the land of Mount Etna and the car horn! We decided that we would write up all the good copies of the flight plans from the working copies we had used in the aeroplane. Alas, the best laid plans of mice and men… on checking into a local motel, we met some friends from Biggin Hill also en route to the rally. That well-worn phrase we had used the night before once again took center stage, only this time in Italian as fine as the previous night's French. The next day was spent working out on the tarmac in sweltering heat, putting the finishing wax and buff onto the aeroplane—not to mention a little touch-up paint, of course. There was much friendly banter between ourselves and the other crew from Biggin, they were parked some way from us across the apron. The Italian police didn't appreciate people wandering around their taxiways and promptly came out to tell us so. Ted took command of the situation and agreed with the police that we were irresponsible and he would make sure we didn't do it again. It was only after the police had gone, that I realized Ted doesn't speak a word of Italian but was very good with his hands! The evening was spent finishing off the flight plans.

We returned to the motel, there was no more we could do now, tomorrow was the big day. The flying had to be exact and flight plans, fuel logs, radio logs had to written up first time, no rewrites tomorrow. Would it be an early night in preparation for the big event, no it most certainly would not.

Saturday, June 21, the day we had been working towards for five months was finally here. The aeroplane was spotless and the crew likewise, in our black pants, polished shoes, white airline shirts, and Barclays Bank ties (don't ask!).

Each aircraft was allotted a time (our time being 1050G) to be overhead the VOR beacon on the Island of Gozo (no Gozo), which is the smaller island just to the west of Malta, and at exactly 1,500 feet. The "Arrival Trophy" would be awarded to the crew arriving closest to their time (we are talking in seconds) and at the prescribed height. We departed Catania at 0853G for another two-hour leg across the Mediterranean. I cannot begin to describe the nervous tension, nay panic, in that aeroplane as we attempted to judge our run across the beacon from about 12 miles off the coast. Four people with their own idea of how to get there to the very second. Fortunately, only Mike was handling the controls, otherwise it would have looked like a scene from Waldo Pepper's Flying Circus. Mike's eardrums were reverberating with "open the throttles," "close the throttles," "watch your height," "go to full power," and sundry other comments about every five seconds. In the event, we crossed the beacon 20 seconds late on our watches. Having made the turn at the beacon we went straight into another trophy possibility, the Timed Section. Each aeroplane's cruising speed had to be declared on the entry forms and was subsequently allotted a time to fly from the Gozo VOR, maintaining 1,500 feet, to overhead the tower at Luqa International Airport, our Twin Comanche had 7 minutes 56 seconds to complete the distance. Having approached the beacon at 90 degrees to the direction we needed to reach the tower, the throttles were opened and we each counted the time down (just to be helpful for Mike!). As we passed over the tower we all felt we had made the run to the second, the official time keeper didn't agree with us and had us off by four seconds.

The tension melted away as we turned downwind to land at Luqa on the final of our outbound landings. We taxied to the parking area where earlier arrivals were tied down and their crews were already in the bar. Our back-up team, who came down on the scheduled flight, were there to greet us and, better yet, one of the Rally hostesses with a tray of glasses and a bottle of champagne, you don't get that kind of service at Biggin Hill. The flight plans, fuel logs, radio logs were completed and handed in for scrutiny, as they had to be within ten minutes of landing.

The nine of us headed off to the reception to gab about the outbound experiences and to reflect on how marvelously we felt we had done. The results were to be announced at a formal dinner on the following Tuesday. In the meantime, there was much sight-seeing to be done, beaches and bars to be visited, and a number of functions were laid on by the organizing committee. Some 50 crews and their associates took part in the rally and we were all staying at the Grand Verdala Hotel. Needless to say, there was revelry and rivalry aplenty.

The prize giving was held on the hotel terrace on Tuesday evening and the results were as heavily guarded as the Oscar night results. The presentations began and our crew edged closer to the dais, in order that we did not have too far to walk when our names were announced. We felt we had excellent chances in at least three of the competitions, alas it was not to be, we're still waiting for our names to be called. The disappointment was tempered somewhat when we received copies of the tabulated results, we had placed ninth overall out of fifty and had been in the top ten placings for all the competitions we were eligible for, with the exception of one, not bad for first-timers.

With the rally over we could afford to totally relax until Friday, when we had to bid our hosts farewell and resolved to return in '81 to win. We left Malta on Friday, June 27, at 0930G heading for Cagliari to refuel and then on to Cannes for an overnight. Lionel was captain for these two legs and I was in the right hand seat. Lionel got us airborne and established in the cruise and I took over to fly to Cagliari. However, things were not to go as smoothly as on the outbound trip.

Having reached a safe altitude the electric fuel pumps were switched off. A few minutes later the port engine started to cough (always happens when you're over water!), the electric pumps were switched on, and the engine settled back into it's normal rhythm. The decision we now had to make was return to Malta and get the pump problem sorted out or push on to Cagliari, and a large chunk of the Mediterranean, and get it fixed there. We decided to take the risk and push on to Cagliari since the servicing facilities at Malta left something to be desired. My next problem was how did I fly the aeroplane whilst cuddling an inflatable dinghy? Four pairs of eyes studied the RPM and fuel flow meter all the way and the sight of Sardinia on the nose was quite comforting. Lionel took over at 1,000 feet for the landing at Cagliari and on touch down he discovered that the port brakes had failed. Fortunately, Cagliari has a reasonable length runway and we rolled out to the end without incident at 1215G. If the servicing facilities at Malta left something to be desired, they were non-existent here. Knowing that there was a Piper agent at Cannes, we decided to refuel and push on. On making inquiries about refueling, we learned that everybody had gone home, presumably for their siesta. We, therefore, decided to go since we had enough fuel to make Cannes. Departing at 1505G, Lionel took us up to cruise and I took over. Our intent was to track the VOR at St. Tropez. Those of you that know the area will know that Cannes is midway between St. Tropez to its west and Nice to its east.

The plan was to track the beacon until about 20 miles off the coast and then turn in towards Cannes, which we duly did. Unfortunately, when the coast line hove into view it did not look as we expected it to, nor did it match the map. Subsequent conversations with Nice air traffic control revealed that the beacon had been moved all the way up the coast from St. Tropez to Nice (make sure you always carry a current map!). Being low on fuel and some distance further east than we wanted to be, not to mention fuel pump and brake problems, we now needed to make Cannes pretty desperately. On calling Cannes approach, they gave us a standard pattern and approach but on hearing of our problems they allowed us to make a straight-in. Lionel put it on the numbers and we rolled out without further problems at 1730G.

Saturday morning, June 28, saw all of the faults fixed by an extremely competent French engineer (yes, I know it's an oxymoron) and we took off for Biggin in brilliant sunshine at 1105G, but like all good things, that soon came to an end. The bad weather that had been plaguing the U.K. the week before was now over central and northern France. Fortunately, the Alps and high cumulus granite were behind us when we reached the weather, and apart from brief glimpses of Mother Earth through small gaps in the cloud, we flew through heavy rain and cloud for two hours. The weather finally cleared as we crossed the French coast and the green fields of Kent appeared on the nose. From the coast to Biggin all went well and we touched down at 1554G bring the Malta Air Rally experience to a close for 1980. Well, almost to a close, a welcome home party had been organized in the club bar, where all our experiences were relived and relived. The bad ones didn't seem so bad after a few pints, but then most of the best flying is done at the bar.

We made some mistakes and we had some great fun, next year it will be champagne from the "pot" we bring home.

Footnote: Ted White asked me to join him on the rally the following year, in one of his AT-6's which we refurbished specifically for it. Five months before the rally, I had to back out due to an impending wedding. Another friend, Mark Campbell, took my place and they flew to Malta, completing the rally. During the days following the official activities some of the other crews from around Europe and old friends asked Ted to "display" the AT-6, which he and Mark duly did. Tragically, something failed during a slow roll and they both died in the ensuing crash.

Please fly safely, please carry a current map.

Duty roster

Al Gold

MITSA Duty Roster
October-December, 1999

Date	DO	Instructor	AM Tow	PM Tow
10/2	Kwasnik	Krueger	Gammon	Friedman
10/3	Loraditch	Johnson	Poduje	Hollister
10/9	Ruel	Krueger	Clark	Easom
10/10	Nordman	Rosenberg	Gammon	Friedman
10/16	MacNicol	Baxa	Fletcher	Pugh
10/17	Sovis	Bourgeois	Clark	Easom
10/23	MacMillan	Gaisford	Fletcher	Friedman
10/24	Rossoni	Johnson	Hollister	Pugh
10/30	Timpson	Krueger	Gammon	Clark
10/31	Vickery	Rosenberg	Poduje	Easom
11/6	Tsillas	NA	Fletcher	Friedman
11/7	Watson	Baxa	Hollister	Pugh
11/13	Wong	Bourgeois	Gammon	Clark
11/14	Blieden	Gaisford	Poduje	Easom
11/20	Brine	Johnson	Pugh	Friedman
11/21	Drew	Krueger	Hollister	Pugh
11/27	MacNicol	Bourgeois	Gammon	Clark
11/28	Kaynor	Bourgoeis	Poduje	Easom
12/4	Emken	Baxa	Fletcher	Friedman
12/5	Gold	Rosenberg	Hollister	Fletcher
12/11	Koepper	Gaisford	Poduje	Clark
12/12	Kwasnik	Johnson	Gammon	Easom
12/18	Looft	Krueger	Fletcher	Friedman
12/19	Loraditch	Rosenberg	Poduje	Hollister
12/25	Evans	Rosenberg	Gammon	Pugh
12/26	MacMillan	Bourgeois	Clark	Eason
1/1	Rossoni	Johnson	Hollister	Friedman
1/2	Sovis	Krueger	Clark	Pugh

Parachutes in the news: The AvWeb newswire (www.avweb.com) printed the following story on July 26, 1999: "In a case that makes one ponder our legal system, a skydiver who broke his foot in a collision with a plane that went on to crash, killing all four aboard, has been awarded $180,000. U.S. District Judge Michael Posnor ruled that ATC was to blame for the accident, because controllers at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, should have issued a warning when they saw an airplane fly into an area below the jump plane in the moments before the 1993 accident. The judge also blamed the deceased pilot, Elliot Klein, saying Klein had no business flying after taking medication for depression. Posnor ordered the government to pay parachutist Alfred Peters $180,000 and reimburse an insurance company for payments totaling $104,000."