



The Flying Wire

**Chapter 124
Experimental Aircraft Association**

**Volume 63 Number 12
December 4, 2024**

Board Meeting (Quarterly)- 5:30 pm

Dinner - 6:15 pm \$10

General Meeting - 7:00 pm

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www.EAA124.org

www.CafeFoundation.org

www.EAA.org

EAA Chapter 124
5550 Windsor Road
Windsor, CA 95492

--- Mail ---
PO Box 6192
Santa Rosa, CA 95406

December 6, 2024 Program

“How to NOT be a Tailwheel accident statistic!”

Please join us to welcome longtime CFI Richard Craig as he tells tales of tailwheels and spells out what it takes to stay off the tailwheel accident statistic list.

Tailwheel flying is tricky business... but also offers some of the sweetest flying we can get.

The school of hard knocks on tailwheel gear is littered with ground loops and nose-overs. Richard’s extensive career as a CFI has taught him how to teach others about the art of the tailwheel.

Richard got his license in 1987 and has over 3500 hours- 1000 in tailwheel! He got his private license in Timmerman, Milwaukee and has been immersed in aviation ever since. He’s a commercial pilot, CFI, and an avid builder with two Cozy 4 aircraft builds under his belt! He also has a special interest in aerodynamic design. He’s got a lot to share.

We hope to see you there!

Dinner Menu:

The December EAA dinner is potluck! Ham and applesauce will be provided. Each of you should bring one of the following to serve maximum four people: hors d’oeuvres, salads, vegetables, casseroles, potatoes, rice dishes, desserts, contributions for the ham purchase (\$10) or whatever you wish to bring. Or combine with someone on what to bring.

Liberty Ships - the S.S. Jeremiah O’Brien

(by Andy Werback)

Back in 1988, I answered a notice in the San Francisco Chronicle about the S.S. Jeremiah O’Brien needing volunteers – specifically, docents for giving the tours on-board the ship. Hum, I thought. This could be interesting. A real ship. And a World War II veteran.

So, our group of new docent wannabees started meeting every Saturday for 4 hours of training and orientation – all about the ship, its history, the Liberty ship building program, maritime shipping in general. Also, general rules about safety, ship’s organization, and escorting visitors. Lots of information. Mr. Phil Sinnott was our primary instructor. He was a WWII Army veteran, a Captain in the Battle of the Bulge, Silver Star, retired as a reserve Lt. Colonel. After the war he took classes at U. C. Berkeley, intending to get a doctorate in education, and wound up being the superintendent of student teachers. Our lead docent at the time was Norm Schoenstein, who had served on-board Liberty Ships as the Third Engineer Officer. Lots of interesting people to meet. For example, you might notice Carl Nolte’s name in the San Francisco Chronicle these days – he was the Chronicle’s reporter on-board the O’Brien for their 50th Anniversary of D-Day 1944 Cruise to Normandy, France, and he wrote Phil’s obituary. (ed. [More about Phil](#))

Typically, on any given tour, we might get a few good questions, but mostly it was all about giving people a sense of what it was like to be part of the crew on a ship crossing the ocean, in convoy, with weather and war-time things to worry about. Occasionally, we would have a visitor who knew about the Liberty Ships or had sailed in one and that was always a good opportunity to get some more historical information. Once, I even met a German visitor who had been a prisoner of war being transported on a Liberty Ship to a POW camp in the United States.

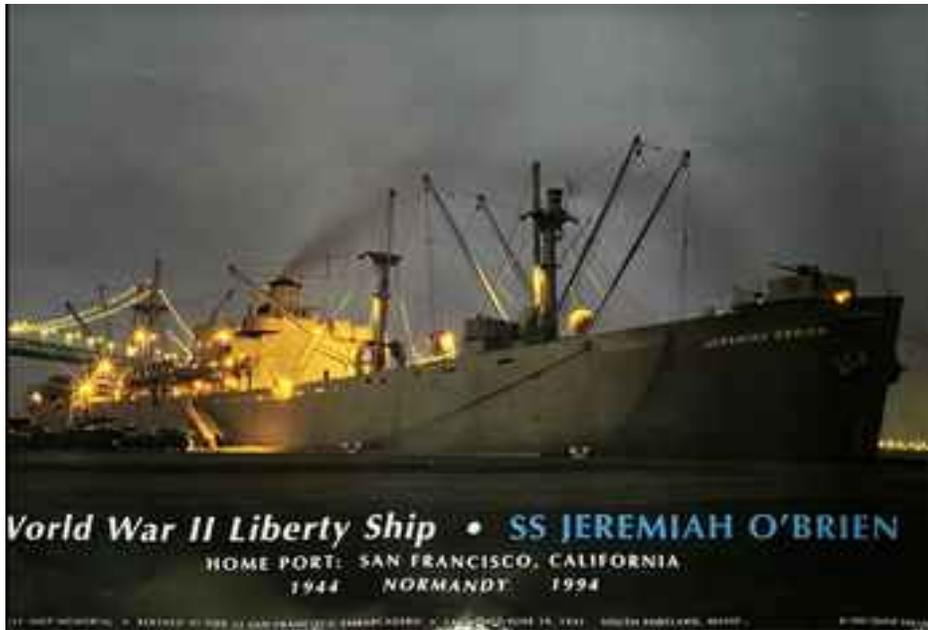
In the Beginning:

The Liberty Ship program was a huge investment in ship building in World War II. The goal was to build ships faster than they could be sunk by German submarines. At times, we were producing 4 (four)

ships per day – for a total of 2710 in just a few years.

The Jeremiah O'Brien was built by the New England Shipbuilding Company in South Portland, Maine, (a new shipyard, but an established company) in just 56 days – the average time for an organized shipyard. And this was just one of 18 new shipyards built exclusively for Liberty ships. Each ship required about 100,000 person hours – and up to one third of the workforce were women. Our local hero was Wendy the Welder – Ms. Dorothy Gimlett, at Marinship (Marin City/Sausalito).

We had a little more local history here – since the Liberty ships were a very fixed design, lots of prefabrication was employed to minimize the final assembly time. Using careful planning and organization, Kaiser's Oregon Shipbuilding Corp. (Portland, OR) put together a Liberty ship in just 10 days. Not to be outdone, Kaiser's Richmond CA shipyard put together one of their Liberty ships, the Robert E. Peary, in just 4 days, 15 hours and 30 minutes. While continuing to maintain the schedule on all of the other ships being built. Incredible. That is a lot of work even with prefabrication. And beyond that, the ships would be fitted out, have a trial cruise, and be handed over to a new crew in one week.



But wait, what is a Liberty Ship?

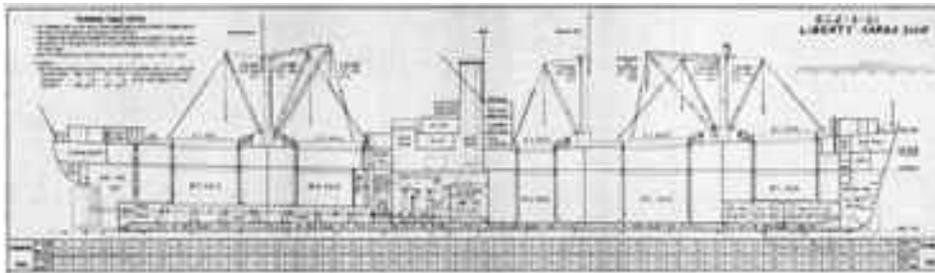
A Liberty ship is a class of cargo ship, specifically an “EC2-S-C1”. Developed from a British “tramp” steamer design that used triple-expansion steam engines and would steam from port to port carrying whatever cargo that needed to be moved. These ships were a very well-known design and could be serviced and maintained just about anywhere the British had been. “EC2” means Emergency Construction, Cargo ship size 2 – 400-450’, powered by Steam, and using the generic C1 design – 5 cargo holds, designed for bulk dry cargo. The “E” in Emergency allowed for non-standard construction. In this case, wooden cabin doors and bunks and some bulkheads instead of all metal for fire safety. They carried dry goods - anything from wheat, beans, canned goods, trucks, tanks, ammunition, cement, steel, to locomotives and boxed aircraft – anything that would fit in the holds or on deck. The cargo booms could handle 5 tons at a time, with 1 “Jumbo” boom rated at 30 tons. They were powered by a 2500 horsepower 3-cylinder triple expansion steam engine (11.5 knots cruising speed!). The Liberty design was modified from the British design by the noted New York maritime engineers Gibbs and Cox to use American standard parts and materials, run on heavy Bunker-C fuel oil instead of coal, and use water tube boilers instead of Scotch fire-tube boilers (heated air going through the pipes/tubes instead of water). They also emphasized modular construction in the design, and welding instead of riveting. Although some shipyards continued to use some riveting, as in the case of the Jeremiah O'Brien.

A ship this size (441.5’ long, 56.8’ beam, 27.7’ draft) could carry about 9000 tons of cargo. (An empty cargo hold is pretty impressive – the largest, #2 cargo hold, is 56’ wide, 70’ long and over 40’ high – that’s 145,000 cu ft in just that one hold). They would sail in large convoys of up to 120 ships. One or two large convoys per week. That is a lot of shipping! And loading and unloading.

The crew of a Liberty Ship was typically about 42-43 men Merchant Marine officers and crew (civilian). Mostly men, but there were a few women in the galley section. They had a deck department and an engineering department to maintain and operate the ship and

its machinery (local labor was used for loading and unloading the cargo). The war-time crew also included 15-20 U. S. Navy Armed Guard sailors to operate the ship's defensive weapons (20mm anti-aircraft machine guns, 3, 4 or 5" anti-aircraft or anti-ship. The O'Brien carries a 3" gun forward, 5" gun aft, and 8 20-mm machine guns).

A Liberty Ship is not particularly classic or good-looking design. In fact, President Roosevelt called them "a dreadful looking object," which morphed into "ugly duckling". But they were cheap, easy to build, and effective. They typically cost about \$1million, and if they served on just one voyage, they would have paid their way. In fact, most all survived the war. The Jeremiah O'Brien made 11 voyages (Europe, South America, South Pacific) and 11 cross-channel crossings immediately after D-Day to Normandy, France. She is the only WWII ship to return to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994. President Clinton was a guest on-board for that event.



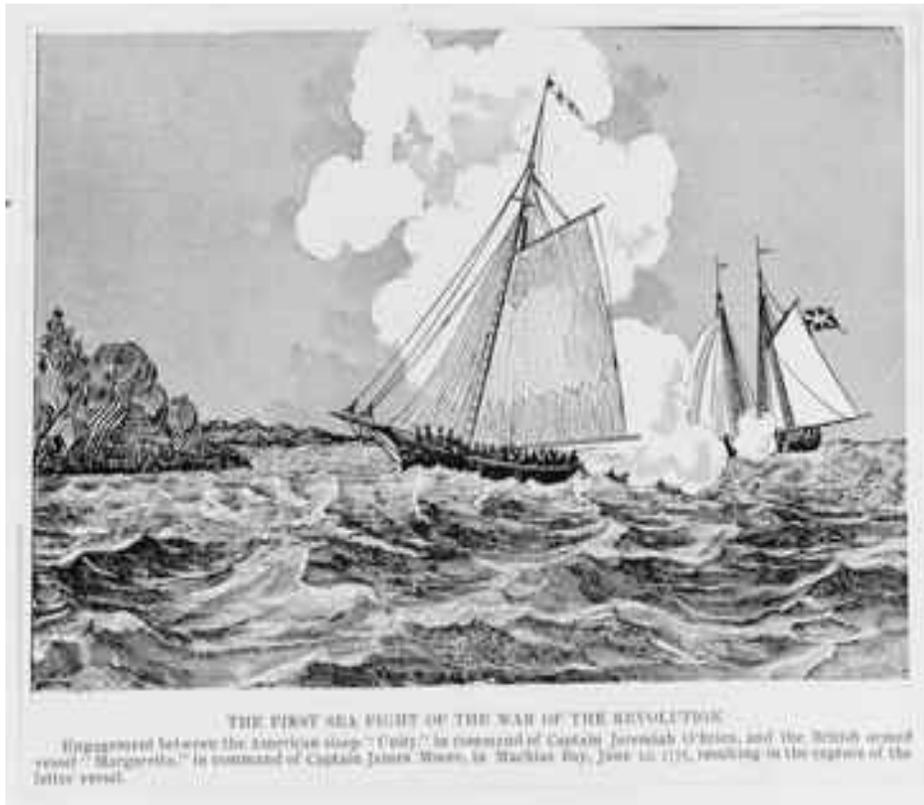
But now we have another problem. How do you name 2710 ships? That is a lot of names - some famous, some not so much. How about Patrick Henry? The name for the first Liberty Ship. Daniel Webster. Susan B. Anthony. Herman Melville. Juliette (Gordon) Low. Stephen Hopkins (There's a story - check it out). Any many more.

Who was Jeremiah O'Brien? How did we get lucky and wind up with the last unaltered and operating Liberty Ship named after him? - He

and his family were lumberman from Machias, Maine. During the period before the Revolutionary War, they produced lumber and shipped it to Boston. But they refused to load lumber for the British. He organized a group of family (5 brothers!) and neighbors on the sloop Unity and captured the armed British cutter Margareta. The Margareta surrendered after the commander, James Moore, was mortally wounded. Jeremiah O'Brien was the first Captain to be commissioned in the Massachusetts State Navy. His letters are included in the compilation of the records of the Continental Congress (and I was able to read them in the base library at the Naval Weapons Center China Lake). The letters were asking for funding and materials to support his crew and operations during the Revolutionary War.



Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, 1744-1818



What about the Steam Engine?

Even if you haven't visited the S. S. Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco (Pier 35 - North of the Bay Bridge), you have probably seen the ship's steam engine.

The O'Brien's engine room was almost made famous by James Cameron's 1997 movie Titanic. They needed an authentic operating steam engine. So the little 19' triple expansion Liberty ship engine (2500 HP and 135 tons!) was scaled up to look like the Titanic's 30' high 15,000 horse power engines (they had 2, the O'Brien just one; Plus they had another 15,000 HP from a steam turbine). They used little light bulbs and some small railings to make it look larger. (For more about the Titanic's engineering - <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/the-propelling-machinery.html>). The ship was offered either Credits in the film or a

\$15,000 donation. They took the donation. So not famous.

The O'Brien used to be at Pier 45, but the fire in the shed a few years back forced a move to a better location at Pier 35. When you do visit, be sure to check out the galley - The stove/oven uses good old-fashioned coal, but the pressure cooker runs on steam from the boilers. And the ship still cruises under its own power - with a full load of about 800 passengers for an experience you won't forget.



Pier 45, San Francisco, May 2020. USS Pampanito and SS Jeremiah O'Brien. Photo by the author

What does this have to do with airplanes? Not much that I can think of. Other than Boxed Aircraft and the above photo.

EAA Chapter 124 's first ever Pilot Ground School a smashing success!

This past month something amazing started happening here at EAA Chapter 124! Thanks to the efforts of some key members of our chapter, EAA 124 has been able to organize and put on our first ever Pilot Ground School for the local community.

Starting this past November 7th, over 55 students descended on the main hangar! All ages attended the initial class, from 12 years old, to over 65 and all ages in between. We had over 6 sets of families attending- Father & sons, Father & daughters, Mother and sons, and even a Grandfather, Father, and Grandson!!

Surrounded by planes, fuselages, Cessna wings and rudders, a Lycoming motor, tools and other aviation teaching aids, these 55 people began the journey of learning the ABC's of aviation. Week 2 saw the class grow by another 5 students to 60 people!! Feedback from the class has been extremely positive and the energy on Thursday nights around the clubhouse has been high!

Longtime 124 chapter member Campbell Potter has graciously donated his time and expertise as an instructor, allowing EAA 124 to offer this class for FREE to any and all motivated individuals!! Campbell is a CFI and CFII and the head instructor over at Mike Smith Aviation in Napa. You may recognize Campbell from his time at the chapter. He and his dad have been long time members, with Campbell literally growing up around the field. They own an RV 7 and a Cessna 172. The 172 is parked at the EAA 124 ramp. They fly weekly.

EAA 124 is proud to offer this service to our local community. Our goal is to vitalize local Aviation and lead the efforts to bring the next generation of Aeronauts into the fold. We envision Chapter 124 as center of Aviation community and camaraderie and a bustling center of both flying and building aircraft. These are only the first steps!! Stay tuned!!

-Dominic Antonio Cerniglio

EAA 124 Chapter President



Flying Canine Companions

(from Scott Holder)

Like many pilots, I'm always looking for ways to justify my flying addiction. While I love the classic "\$200 hamburger" trips, finding opportunities to use my plane for a greater cause makes it even more rewarding. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many services were disrupted—one of which was the transportation of service animals, including those raised by our locally based Canine Companions.

Since its founding in 1975, Canine Companions has been dedicated to providing service dogs to assist individuals with a wide range of physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities. These incredible dogs perform more than 40 tasks, helping to enhance the daily independence of their handlers. Unfortunately, the demand for service animals far exceeds the available supply. To address this, Canine Companions has come up with innovative solutions, such as

puppy cargo runs, to transport these service dogs-in-training to their raisers or training centers.



During the pandemic, airlines halted the transportation of service animals, creating a critical need to find alternative ways to move puppies to their volunteer raisers. This is where a group of general aviation pilots stepped in, forming Canine Companions Aviation Partners. Our very own Josh Hochberg played a key role in organizing this effort. Since the group was founded in 2020, volunteer pilots have completed more than 240 flights, transporting over 900 Canine Companions puppies and dogs across the United States.

For me, flying puppies for Canine Companions has been an incredibly rewarding experience. As pilots, we have the unique opportunity to play a vital role in helping these adorable and

deserving animals reach their new homes or training centers. Knowing that I'm contributing to the journey of these future service dogs—who will one day bring independence and joy to individuals with disabilities—adds an extra layer of fulfillment to my flights.

I've thoroughly enjoyed being a part of this program, completing about two flights per month. To date, I've transported around 60 puppies, and my tail is proudly decorated with paw prints to commemorate each one. If you're a pilot and are interested in flying for Canine Companions, I encourage you to reach out to me or visit their website to learn more about their Aviation Partners program. It's a joy to use our airplanes in such a meaningful and impactful way.

2025 Officer Elections & Election Committee



The November social meeting and dinner was briefly interrupted by required EAA 124 business. Amidst the festivities, socializing, and Turkey dinner, order was called for by current board President Dominic Cerniglio. The task at hand? Elections of Chapter 124 Officer positions for the 2025 coming year.

Ex Board President Mike Tovani took the podium and quickly ran the announcement and board election process. Mike's a long time 124 member, ex-board president, board member, and heads the Chapter's Officer nomination committee. The positions that were up for election were Vice President, Secretary, and three Director seats.

Open nominations were called for from the floor. A rare moment of silence was seen among the general membership! We now know how to get everyone quiet!! With no takers from the floor, the officers currently serving in these positions graciously agreed to stay on for another term. An official election vote was held with the general membership to confirm their election and ratify their positions.

We're happy to welcome again Marlon Young as Vice President, Dave Franco as Chapter Secretary, and Jeremiah James, John Fluno, and George Marshall as Board Directors! We're grateful for their continued efforts and the time they dedicate to making EAA 124 what it is. With their help and the efforts of the rest of the board we're looking forward to stellar new year with lots of growth and activities!!

With Elections out of the way for the moment, Mike Tovani called for help from the general membership with the coming year's Nomination Committee. The Nomination Committee meets over the course of the year and identifies and selects officer candidates to serve on EAA 124's Board. Their selections of individuals end up steering the course of our chapter. It's a small but critical role for our chapter and a great way to get involved and help out with minimal time commitment and maximum impact. Anyone interested in serving on the committee should contact Mike via email at : mtovani@pacbell.net.

-Dominic



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Interesting Aviation Links

(thanks to David Heal)

[e](#)

Pricey Toys [Click Here](#)

Bhutan! [Click Here](#)

Newsletter Editor Notes:

from Stuart Deal

Having a super busy Thanksgiving with lots of responsibilities made me particularly grateful for the articles we can enjoy this month.

Thanks to all our contributors.

EAA Chapter 124 Board Meeting Minutes November 6, 2024

Meeting convened 5:30 pm

Members in attendance- Dominic Cerniglio (President) Marlon Young (Vice President) John Whitehouse (Treasurer) David Franco (Secretary) Larry Rengstorf (Facilities) John Swanstrom, George Marshal, Jeremiah James, Mike Cingari.

September minutes approved.

Agenda: September Meeting Minutes Approved. The meeting went into executive session. Following that interval. A motion was made to approve the upcoming ground school. The motion passed 8 in favor and 1 abstention.

A new nomination committee needs to be formally organized for officer elections. Re-purposing Taxiway Golf Hangar - The president

is going to propose a plan for usage of the hangar which will include chapter build projects and training. Meeting adjourned- 6:15 pm

EAA Chapter 124 General Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2024

Meeting Convened 7:15 pm.

The president called the meeting together and lavished praise on the culinary crew for putting on another fabulous Thanksgiving feast!

The president then addressed the issue of chapter elections. The president asked if there were any people interested in proposing nominees from the floor. None were proposed.

The slate of proposed nominees were approved by acclamation. The slate included these positions for the 2025-2026 term: Vice President- Marlon Young, Secretary- David Franco, 3 directors John Fluno, Jeremiah James, George Marshall.

The president then encouraged all in attendance to converse and deepen their connections to fellow chapter members through conversation. General socializing lasted the duration of the meeting. Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm



Chapter 124 Contact Information

President: Dominic Cerniglio (24/25) (310) 628-9008
Vice President: Marlon Young (24) (707) 479-9994
Secretary: Dave Franco (23/24) (707) 494-4259
Treasurer: John Whitehouse (24/25) (707) 217-2687

Board:

Mike Cingari (24/25) 707 280 0159
George Marshall (23/24) 707 293 4583
John Swanstrom (24/25) 707 758 9017
John Fluno (23/24) 707 315 5524
Jeremiah James (24) 707 291 8445

Membership: Dave Franco (707) 494-4259

Facilities Chairman: Larry Rengstorf (707) 570-5267

Facilities Committee:

Dwayne Green (707) 544-4539
Mike Fenn (707) 481-5791
Mike Tovani (707) 838-1891
Dominic Cerniglio (310) 628-9008

Newsletter Editor and Webmaster pro tem:

Stuart Deal (707) 328-4206

eea124newsletter@sonic.net

Technical Counselors:

Bob Gutteridge (707) 539-5188
David Heal (707) 953-5021
Jerry Rice (707) 431-0206
Kevin Quirk (707) 539-8589
Doug Dugger (530) 526-4997
Rolf Unternaehrer (707) 364-7935

Flight Advisers: CJ Stephens cell: (707) 799-2878
David Heal home: (707) 838-0261
cell: (707) 953-5021

Young Eagles: Josh Hochberg (415) 999-0949

Librarian: Open

EAA Chapter 124 5550 Windsor Road Windsor, CA 95492

Chapter meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. FOOD (\$10) AND SOCIALIZING (free) from 6:15 to 7:00 pm. EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Directions: The site is located on the west side of Sonoma County Airport. Take the Shiloh Road exit from Highway 101 in northern Santa Rosa. Turn left at the stop light (west) and continue to a "T" intersection. Turn left again and follow the road to the EAA sign on the left.

Members are invited to submit articles of interest. You will be notified whether or not an article will appear in the current issue.

Please email articles to: eea124newsletter@sonic.net

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted after that date will be included in the newsletter at the discretion of the editor. All articles are copyrighted. To reproduce any article, please contact the editor.

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