

# TIGER TALES

The Newsletter of the Thorp T-18 Mutual Aid Society

Issue 8 December 2012



Only in Olney, IL! Read's Inc drives a Thorp down mainstreet!

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**From the Editor – Lee Walton**

Happy Holidays Thorpies! I hope everyone had a great 2012 and is looking forward to the year ahead. I'd like to apologize for not getting this edition of "Tiger Tales" out sooner I guess I'll blame it on the holidays again.

In the end 2012 was a pretty darn good year for the Thorp group, it had its moments that may not bring a smile to our faces but all in all we had five Thorp gatherings (including Sun n Fun and Oshkosh), tornados were a no show at Sun n Fun, Fredericksburg was hot but not "Texas Hot", it rained as always at Oshkosh but the ground held up and the sun came out each day to say "hi", the KVIS gathering looked like a huge success and once again Kentucky Dam State Park became a Thorp enthusiasts paradise for one weekend.

As the year closes I still find myself without a flying Thorp, I'd say "Thorp-less" but I of course still have a project in the garage that I'm striving to have complete for Oshkosh. I'm feeling confident it will be airborne by then but having the Phase 1 complete is another story. At this point I'm thinking Kentucky Dam is more likely.

A few pics ...



So gents, as we look forward to 2013 remember this is the "Big 50" for the Thorp. I have set up a schedule of events on the main page of <http://thorpaircommand.com> (listed later in this issue). Please keep yourself up to date as I hope to update it regularly. If you have any suggestions please feel free to send them to me at [leewalton@yahoo.com](mailto:leewalton@yahoo.com) or through the forum site.

Lee

P.S. Hate to bring this up but if you have not paid your 2013 dues this will be your last. I've set up site at;

[http://thorpaircommand.com/thorp\\_admin/memberlist.php](http://thorpaircommand.com/thorp_admin/memberlist.php)

This shows the membership status of all MAS members. FYI there's an underscore between "thorp" and "admin" (i.e. thorp\_admin).

Dues are \$25 per year and can be paid via check to

Thorp Mutual Aid Society  
5000 Schuler Unit E  
Houston, TX 77007

Or PayPal to [thorpforum@thorp18.com](mailto:thorpforum@thorp18.com)

**Kentucky Dam 2012** – Lee Walton

Kentucky Dam was once again a fantastic weekend of Thorpin'. I've said this before but I think I put in more hours that weekend than I do throughout the rest of the year! This year I rode along with Wendell Green in N51863 and as usual when heading that direction we left a day early (this year on Wednesday) to spend a day/night with Gary Green at "The Valley" in Cotter, AR. For those who are not aware Gary is in the final stretch of completing a homebuilt PA-11 (Cuby) and it is quite the piece of work! I cannot imagine a better machine for an afternoon hop around the patch at 61AR. If he has that airplane complete by the Spring Gathering you can bet he'll have a line wanting rides.

The next day the flight of two Thorps departed AR for Olney, IL or as it should be known "Central US Thorp HQ" home to David Read, Derek Fritschle, Roy Farris (close enough), Eric Smithenry, Scott Stine and who knows how many potential Thorp builders/pilots. The detour allowed me to pick up N4588 or "Puppy" as I have come to call it. Now owned by Eric Smithenry, as it happened Eric was not using the airplane that weekend and he was kind enough to allow Roy Farris and me borrow it for a few days.

A short hop down to Kentucky Dam saw the Florida contingent of Bob Highley and Bill Williams awaiting us on the ramp. The plan this year was to arrive a day early (which may now become tradition) and let the experts ring us fledglings through some more advanced formation work. Thanks to Gary and Bob for taking the time to work with us, it was well worth the extra day!

All in all we had a great showing without going into granular detail on each day I'll touch on the highlights and let the pictures do the talking.

First, as usual the pinnacle of the weekend for those of us that love to fly and eat (think that covers all of us) was the Saturday Fish Fry down in Murray, KY. This year was no different as the food was as per usual fantastic! I'd like to point out that usually the fish is caught and fried by the Jim Fain and his airport bunch out Kyle Oakley Field, this year however there was a scheduling mistake and they had it catered in out of their own pockets! I think I speak for all Thorpies that we cannot thank him enough! If you run into Jim at Sun n Fun or hopefully pull through KCEY and buy some fuel please give him a huge thank you from all of us!

Second, we actually had some press show up this year! I'm not quite sure how it came to fruition but I was contacted early on by the local paper about our event and asked if we would mind a reporter come out to take some pictures interview us etc. As it turned out we had two local papers show up! The articles are printed here in this issue don't read too close the facts are a tad bit off!

Third and most notable is that this year was our dear friend Teresa Scola's year to pass the torch of KY Dam administrative duties on. Again from all of those who attend this event we all see how hard Teresa as worked to keep things rolling and "Heard the Cats". I learned from the TX gathering that's a daunting task! Teresa thank you from all of us!!!! We look forward to watching you relax and watch the rest of us run around as you have done for the past 22 years.

And now friends I'll let the pictures do the talking ...



Look for another "Lookalike" next year ;)!



Jim Paine on the wing of N51863, I had the honor of flying with Jim (as did David Read) N51863 I've known Jim since I was 12 years old as has N51863. I'm sure if the old girl could talk she'd say the same!



All in line for Fish! (And just about every side knew to man!)



Gary Green holding court (more likely a FW forward discussion) around NX218V



Look at this gaggle!!! Doug Shinn (now owner of Ken Knowles T-18CW and my S.O.B. (son of builder) brother in arms, Gary Green and Bob Highley



Don Doubleday (passenger Jerry Sharp)



Wendell Green (passenger Lee Walton)



Bernie Fried



Bob and Susan Highley



Les and Margie Conwell in the Red Rocket!



Gary Green



Richard Bentley



Bill and Debbie Williams



Roy Farris and Eric Smithenry's N4588



Tommy Sloan in his father Gene's machine



David and Karen Read



Barbara Shaffer



Andy Hill in the rear seat and his grandson Trevor Nielson at the fly-in event held at Kentucky Dam airport.

### Fly-in unites pilots and enthusiasts across area

Submitted by  
William Jordan

Over the weekend of October 6-7, Kentucky Dam airport confirmed that pilots are the nicest people in the world.

Kentucky Dam was the site of the annual "Thorp T-18 Owners, Builders, and Pilots Society" fly-in and reunion. The airport is just one of several fly-in venues that include the annual Experimental Aircraft Association in Osh Kosh, Wisconsin, the showpiece fly-in for home built, or "experimental" aircraft in FAA parlance. Kentucky Dam is a favorite destination. The group dined at Patti's Friday and was headed for the game dinner at the Harbor Lights restaurant in the park Saturday evening.

The Thorp T-18, as pilot/owner Dave Read of Olney, Illinois, explained, was the model for a homebuilt airplane that could be built by nearly anyone for a reasonable price. They ranged from two-place models, like Read's, to foldable wing single place aircraft and included one with a retractable gear. The Lycoming engines ranged from 125 to 190 horsepower which moved the little 1000 pound planes along at 130 to 160 miles per hour on about eight gallons

pecially liked and owned the fast and nimble Thorps. Gary Green of Mountain Home Arkansas also noted that pilots and their families came from all over: Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas "and probably a few I missed" he added with a grin.

When Lee offered me a ride... well, that was an offer I couldn't refuse, so I strapped my overfed 6'3" frame into Dave Read's two-place Thorp and we were off. Another Thorp climbed behind us as a wingman. Read explained there were numerous retired and former military pilots in the organization and formation flying was one of the skills they practiced and a trademark of their arrival and departures.

Calvert residents that watched the four-plane formations break away to the right in sequence were watching the beginnings of a "360" degree overhead approach to land, one commonly used by military pilots to sequence aircraft in for landings rapidly and safely.

Read generously let me fly his plane over Kentucky Lake. I did a series of S-turns and found it to be responsive and extremely easy to fly (though I sloped the nose through the horizon a few times adding and losing

high-wing yellow aircraft with the familiar bear cub logo on the tail. Andy Hill, a former Navy pilot and his grandson Trevor Nielson flew the Piper PA-11 from Cape Girardeau. Trevor, a 20 year old Aviation Management student at Mankato State University in Minnesota was preparing for his FAA Commercial rating test so we'll probably see him in "Ice Pilots" in a year or so, perhaps in the right seat of a C-46 or DC-4 flying in the far Northwest Territories and Alaska.

I told him I had watched from the pilot's rear seat my flight instructor and crop-duster father climb out of the instructor's front seat on a crisp November day 45 years ago. My dad buckled his seat belt over the now empty seat of the Piper J-3 Cub, the PA-11's earlier version, and told me to make two touch and go landings, a third one to a full stop and taxi in to shut down. I was going to solo after 7 hours and 45 minutes of dual flight instruction, on my 16th birthday. My mother had driven me to the airport because I hadn't gotten a driver's license.

"Remember to roll your trim back since I won't be in the front seat," he shouted over the engine noise and I taxied out on the gravel runway and

the grass and the laughing and scratching began as the "cold ones" were opened and the lies and war stories began. Dan laid out the agenda for the next 2 days and the first order of business was to get everyone that had arrived tied down and checked into billeting as we had an appointment with Tahoe Joe and a few of his famous steaks ! We had a great time at the steak house and then we all mounted up for a short drive to Ira and Missy's beautiful house for more in depth discussions, chips and cold refreshments! Ira and Missy's back yard is something to see! One word describes it...HUGE! After a few hours of technical talk (BS) it was time to return to the BOQ and get ready for day two.

By 0900 on day 2 we had more Thorp's arriving and by 1200 we had about 15 T-18's resting comfortable on the grass. Several FAM rides were given to the locals and Cubes gave Dean Cuke and Lou (Junkins) an acro check out in their A/C. In the mean time the ramp discussions continued around most of the A/C to see any new changes that the owners had incorporated. In the mean time Gloria and Missy and Dean Cuke's wife had prepared an OUTSTANDING homemade Mexican lunch complete with all the trimmings! If you left the area hungry...I can't help you! As the lunch hour wound down Rich Brazell gave a comprehensive brief on what should be packed in a land survival kit to be carried in your A/C. His experience in the Military having attended several survival courses and his recent flight to the Spring Fly-In in Texas, that included the flight along the Southern US Border, pointed out the importance of carry at least a few important items in your "kit." The rest of the Forum time was left open for General discussion. By about 1700 the flying had been done and it was time for the weary Aviators to huddle around the beer cooler and share the day's experiences! As the sun went down the laughter got louder and the days

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### KVIS Gathering 2012 – Rich Brazell

The usual suspects began to arrive around 1300 local on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of Sept. at the EAA picnic area for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual KVIS Fly In. The "new" area was a big improvement over last year as this meeting place had a pasture (grass), shade trees, covered patio and new picnic tables on a concrete pad. Dan and his crew also had multiple shade canopies and more than enough comfortable chairs. To make things even more enjoyable there was the occasional cool breeze taking the edge of the Central Valley heat! By about 1500 we had about 6 T-18's resting on

accomplishments became "World Famous!" A good time was had by all.

To put on one of these Fly-In's takes a lot of hard work AND the outlay of personal \$\$\$\$. Dan and Gloria along with Ira, Missy and Dean Cuke with his wife Melanie did an outstanding job! The new meeting area is PERFECT and can accommodate even a few more T-18's next year. One important item to report is that Classic Sport Aircraft has not been sold. Mike and Frankie Archer still own the business and are taking orders. They want to retire (I don't blame them) so no telling how long before the business will be sold.



Tony Ginn



Another Thorp related pow wow



.... and again!



Lou Junkins



Rich Brazell showing off his handy cowl check design



Dan Eggleston



John Evens



Dean Cuke



Jim "Cubes" Grahm



The late Dave Flatter and N118GG, rest in peace old friends!





Won the Mayors Award



Dave in the cockpit, not leather jacket, goggles and flying helmet.



Looks like Dave was miserable!



The team.



Dave installed a fridge motor and hung a "prop" also red lights shining out the cowl intakes.



Taking it down ... this was no small task! Of course I'm sure putting it all together was worse!



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**Quick "Thorp Racer" update – Jim "Cubes" Grah**

A few pictures Jim sent me, looks like it's coming together!



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**Firewall Through Hole Options – Rich Brazell**

Lee: Thought you could use an article for the next TT issue. I believe Bruce Finney posted a message using the Avery Firewall pass thru. When I was routing wires thru the firewall I was looking for a way to make it easy and affordable. The SafeAir unit required too many holes for me and was a bit expensive, so this is what I can up with...

I used an AN816-10 fitting. The edges at the ends were too sharp for me so I took a countersink and reamed the ends a bit. I then took a bench grinder 3M wheel and polished the ends to smooth them out even further. I had to drill two holes in the fire wall, one port and one starboard. The port side fed the ignition and 12 volts to the power panel. The

Starboard side fed the engine instruments. With the hole(s) drilled for the AN fitting it was only a matter of bolting on the fitting. I used a high temp gasket material (I made my own firewall gasket using a gasket punch). On the cockpit side a nut from an electrical conduit clamp (the other end of the AN fitting it a pipe thread) and this nut worked perfect. It even has raised edges to help lock the nut in place. I also put a washer on the cockpit side. With the AN fitting in place, it was time to feed the wires. I cut a small section of Fire Sleeve and fed the wires thru. I also put red RTV sealant on the ends of the fire sleeve to keep out any oil from seeping into the raw ends of the Fire Sleeve. I also wrapped the wires with some spiral wrap before passing the wires thru the fitting (probably not necessary, but I did it anyway).



Once the wires were passed thru the Fire Sleeve and the fitting I secured the Fire Sleeve with SS tie wraps. Right now I have 115 hours on the fittings and see no problems. Total cost for all the materials about \$5.00.



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#### Land Survival Kit – Rich Brazell

At the 2012 KVIS Fly In I gave a 15 minute lecture on basic land survival and the contents that should be in your minimal survival kit. As I stated at the beginning of the brief, most pilots don't even think of any type of survival items to take with them in their aircraft. "It won't happen to me!" Just as you see on the 6 o'clock News there are several incidents a year where families driving thru the mountains or the desert get stranded and are not prepared. Not even for one day let alone a 2-3 days. Having been through several Navy survival courses, including SERE School (I am sure Cubes could tell a few stories also) I can tell you there is nothing that will take the morale out of you faster than being in a survival situation and the sun goes down and you are cold and wet! The sun can be shining and the day time temps are very comfortable, but as soon as that sun goes down and especially with no cloud cover the temp. can drop to freezing. That goes for the mountains as well as the desert. SERE school

will make you a believer! For those not familiar with Navy SERE school it is on the web. Now that I have your attention we can discuss the basic items that SHOULD be in your kit. Every kit will differ (you can add to the basic items in the kit as you see fit), but it should contain these basic items to help keep you alive for a min. 72 hours. I say 72 hours as that was the estimated max. time NAVY SAR (or any SAR) would come and rescue you.

**SURVIVAL KIT ITEMS (BASIC KIT)** My kit is for one person! Kit size with all items enclosed...7" x 10" x 3" Weight about 3 pounds?

1. Water...Number one item. You can buy the pouch/Emergency water at any Army/Navy surplus stores. Just be aware of the exp. date. Mine are good until 2017. Cost about 50 cents each. Pack as many as you can. I could fit (6) in my kit. Just be aware you can go about 3 days w/o water and 3 weeks w/o food. In place of the pouch water you can carry a canteen or some type of bottled water. The pouch type takes up less room.

2. Shelter...Number two item. You need something to protect yourself from the elements. Sun, wind, cold, rain. I got (2) of the "Heat sheets/blankets" from Wal-Mart along with a "Space Blanket." The big concern is to conserve body heat. A few chemical hand warmers are also a good idea. Believe me you DON'T want to be wet AND cold!

3. Water proof matches, a signal mirror (can be seen up to 20 miles away), Leatherman tool, flashlight (with extra batteries), a Laser Rescue Beacon (very visible at night...20 + miles!), whistle (a whistle will carry farther than the human voice), small pack of Kleenex tissues (not for blowing your nose). I even included my 1963 Boy Scout compass. Yes it still works!

4. Basic First Aid Kit ...A tie for Number 1 and 2 assuming you are not injured. None of the

above is useful if you bleed to death! Gauze, large compress bandages, alcohol prep wipes, first aid tape, standard adhesive bandages. I included a small vial of aspirin ...in this case I will self medicate in violation of the FAA! Add as much to this part of the kit as you want. The Hefty bag has all my First Aid items and other items I want to keep dry.

5. A few Nutri Grain bars. Just remember it takes water to digest food.

Don't forget your ELT. I still have the old style Ameri King ELT. It can be taken out of the aircraft and with the supplied antenna you can transmit and receive on Guard frequency.

As I briefed at KVIS should you have to make an off field landing, especially on an unprepared surface try and transmit your position (to anyone) before you reach terra ferma! Guard freq. would be best if you have time. If you land/crash and have a belly antenna like I do your AC VHF radio may be inop. If this is the case try and use your cell phone..."Can you hear me now?" You may also have one of the handheld GPS beacons. Even if you suspect your aircraft antenna is damaged try to use the radio anyway! Use ALL the available comm. assets you have.

Once you have landed/crashed assess your physical condition after you have gotten out of the AC. Bleeding? Broken bones? There may be a possibility you may go into shock. This is where the "kit" will pay for itself! Is very careful lighting any fires for heat/signaling especially if you are injured. If you have a broken leg you will have a tuff time out running a forest fire! Placement of the kit is also very important. It will fit nicely under the seat, but it may not be readily accessible in a hard landing. I strap my down behind the seat in my small baggage compartment.

Military pilots go thru several survival courses including land and water survival during their career. 1-2 days of ground instruction and then sent on their merry way into the wilderness to put that classroom instruction to practical use. My intent is not to teach you how to survive in this brief write up, but to get you thinking that I may need some type survival kit especially in mountainous terrain or crossing the desert SW. You can build up any type of kit you want! From the items I already had on hand at home the additional items only cost me less than \$20.00.



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### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Schedule/Events – Lee Walton

As most Thorpies/T-18'ers are aware, next year will be the 50th Anniversary of the Thorp T-18 design. We will be celebrating throughout the year at Sun n Fun, our Spring Gathering at "The Valley", Oshkosh and finally at KY Dam in the Fall. We will use the main page at <http://thorpaircommand.com> to keep everyone up to date and informed of our plans.

At this point here's what we planned so far at Oshkosh. In addition I'm working with EAA to make sure we have plenty of Thorp related activities to keep us busy. I can say at the very least we will have reserved parking and a rally area on the field. I have proposed several other events but do not want to mention them until we have the plans solidified.

Also keep in mind that Bob and Bill are working to make Sun n Fun a Thorp 50<sup>th</sup> "Kick off"

Regardless please strive to attend all of the Thorp events this year if you can folks. This is the big 50 and we need to show it.

**Airventure/Oshkosh 2013**

Thursday August 1st. Annual Thorp Lunch/Forum EAA Nature Center Tent #1 12:00 noon

Friday August 2nd. Thorp Dinner/Awards Banquet Roxy Supper Club 571 N. Main Street Oshkosh, WI 54901 7:00 PM

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**N31DB lives on at Scaled Composites** – Barry Hall

Though you guys would like this, Barry Hall sent this to me a while ago...



Brain Maisler of Scaled Composites now owns Bob Dial's old machine.

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**Upcoming Events**

04/09-04/14 Sun-n-Fun Lakeland, FL Note: This will be our Thorp 50<sup>th</sup> kickoff event. Details will be posted on the website and in the next issue of "Tiger Tales".

06/07-06/09 The Valley, (61AR) Cotter, AR Gary and Maxine Green will once again be hosting our Spring Gathering.

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A **BIG** Thanks to both David Read, Jim Grahah and Rich Brazell for their contributions to this issue of "Tiger Tales".

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In the next issue (so far):

N118LW update – Lee Walton

Thorp Racer update – Jim Grahah

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary updates

**CLASSIFIEDS**

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Thorp Documentation



Original Thorp Mutual Aid Society mimeographed/typed articles which go back to 1966 up to the paper TMAS publication.

John Thorp's T-18 Construction Articles published in Sport Aviation as he was releasing his drawings...compiled in book format.

TMAS Newsletters published until the new electronic version

Other T-18 articles.

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Contact Barry Hall: [Barry.Hall@ch2m.com](mailto:Barry.Hall@ch2m.com)

Thorp T-18W Project

Tom Worth still has a T-18W project for sale in Washington State for sale. He says he's ready to listen to reason on the price as he needs to vacate the hangar.

Contact Tom Worth:  
[wocon@att.net](mailto:wocon@att.net)  
(253) 576-2730

Parting out damaged Thorp

Hurant Karibian is parting out 407HK or will sell it as is for \$10K. The O320 is old but has only 2065TT and about 650 SMOH. If anybody is interested he'll send them a detailed list of what is good or repairable.

Contact Hurant Karibian: [hkaribian@yahoo.com](mailto:hkaribian@yahoo.com)

Carbon Fiber Spinners

I'm still making carbon fiber Thorp Spinners/Back-plates.

\$250 plus shipping

Contact: Lee Walton [leewwalton@yahoo.com](mailto:leewwalton@yahoo.com)  
713-303-1043