

# PIREPS

## PIREPS

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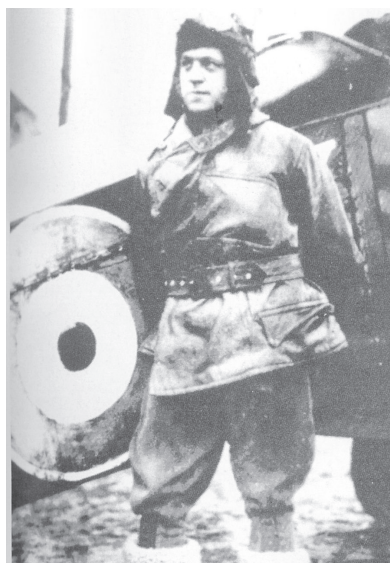
## NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Journey.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Nebraska's World War I Ace

By Penny Rafferty Hamilton, Ph.D.



**Orville Ralston served in both World War I and World War II. Lt. Ralston photographed in 1918. He scored aero victories against German Fokkers on the Western Front in Europe. (Wikicommons)**

As we approach Memorial Day to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country, World War I aviation hero, Lt. Orville Ralston, deserves our respect and admiration. Born in Weeping Water in 1894, when Glover Cleveland was president and our National Society of Pershing Rifles was forming at the Lincoln University of Nebraska, young Orville was destined to fly.

Ralston attended Peru State College and was planning a career in dentistry. When Europe was entrenched in World War I, he left dental school to head north to Canada to join in the Allied cause. After flight training, Ralston joined the Royal Air Force fighting on the front lines in Europe. Piloting a Royal Aircraft Factory SE5a in British Ace "Mick" Mannock's flight 85 Squadron, our intrepid Nebraskan gained two air victories against German Fokkers on July 24 and August 22, 1918.

Soon, U.S. Army Air Corps 148th Aero Squadron welcomed the budding Ace to their ranks. As a day pursuit fighter squadron flying British Sopwith Camels, their mission was to engage the enemy on the Western Front. To reach the five aerial wins, Ralston first teamed with fellow American pilots in the Squadron for the next victory. Then, on September 26 and October 3, 1918, Orville engaged two more D.VIIs to become an Ace.



**U.S. Army Air Corps pilot, Orville Ralston, earned Ace status in World War I flying British-built Sopwith Camel single-seat biplane fighter airplanes. (Wikipedia)**

## Pireps has Gone Electronic

**Beginning With The August – September 2020 Issue Of Pireps, The Publication Will No Longer Be Available In Print Form.**

**If You Would Like To Receive Pireps Electronically, Please Send A Current Email Address**

**To: [david.morris@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.morris@nebraska.gov)**



**Nebraska World War I Ace, Lt. Orville Ralston, flew a Royal Aircraft Factory SE5a in the famous “Mick” Mannock’s RAF flight 85 Squadron. Mannock became the top British Ace of World War I. (Wikicommons)**

After the November 11, 1918 Armistice to end World War I, Ralston returned to dental school in Nebraska. He opened his dental practice in Ainsworth and Valentine. He never gave up his love for aviation. But, wait, there is even more to this inspiring story. Dr. Ralston was recalled to military service during World War II at the rank of Major.

He was assigned to Great Falls Air Base in Montana, flying the four-engine B-17 Flying Fortress. Tragically, during a routine training flight on December 30, 1942, B-17F #42-5123 crashed, killing all 12 on board. As we remember our Gold Star casualties and families this Memorial Day, please remember we live in the home of the free because of the brave like Orville Ralston. ■



## Nebraska Department of Transportation

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During Women Of Aviation Worldwide Week (#WOAW) we want to celebrate and thank all of the hard-working women at NDOT who contribute to the field of aviation.



## State of the Industry

By Dan Petersen

The airline industry has seen its ups and downs ever since its inception. I started my airline career almost 32 years ago and have been furloughed twice. It always seemed to go in cycles every 10 years or so with the highs and lows of the economy. There are two times that caused devastation of the industry that no one saw coming: 1) the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and 2) the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic, a pilot shortage had been forecast and the airlines were hiring at a blistering pace. The airline that I fly for was hiring over 1,000 pilots a year and pilots were upgrading to captain or to wide body aircraft very quickly, with no end in sight. When the pandemic hit, travel declined as states, cities, and countries shut down. The airline industry reacted by furloughing thousands of pilots and offering early retirement and leave packages that were difficult to turn down. The airlines were hemorrhaging millions of dollars a day while they parked large portions of their fleet.

All of this had to be crushing to those who aspired to someday start an airline career and ride the big hiring wave. The good news is that demand for travel has come back stronger than the airlines predicted. Airlines are recalling all their furloughed pilots and are even hiring again. Our airline recalled all furloughed pilots and are planning on hiring an additional 300 pilots by year end. We still have quite a few pilots who will reach the mandatory retirement age of 65 in the next several years, and that will require the airline to keep hiring for some time.

For those of you hoping for an airline career, things are looking up. I still think it is the best job out there and have no regrets choosing this profession. I still have fun flying airplanes, seeing all the beautiful sights from the air, and visiting new destinations – with the bonus of getting paid to do it. If you ever had a teacher tell you that “no one will pay you to stare out a window,” the joke is on them. ■

## Our Future Aviators



Ann B. Richart, AAE

SPRING IS HERE!!! The snow is melting, crocus and daffodils are pushing up through the ground, the robins are coming back, and school kids are interested in flying! EAA Chapter 569 brought two separate groups of students to the Lincoln Airport (LNK) in April to give them a Young Eagle experience. Young Eagles is a program created by the US Experimental Aircraft Association, designed to give children ages 8 to 17 an opportunity to experience flight in a general aviation airplane while educating them about aviation. The program is offered free of charge with costs covered by the volunteers.

As we prepare for our second summer in the coronavirus pandemic, it is so rewarding and grounding to see the enthusiasm that these young students have about aviation. After a year of restrictions, the kids – and pilots (!) – were more than ready to take to the air. Pre-flight some of the students were shy and a little nervous. Some were antsy and ready to go. Once they got back on the ground, though, every single student was excited and thrilled with their experience.

They started out, masked up, in the NDOT – Aeronautics conference room at LNK. We gave them a short briefing on Nebraska's airport system, some information on all the careers available to them in the aviation field, followed by a safety briefing. Then, they took to the sky! After the fact, they shared with me that it was fun to see their house or school from above, they liked listening to controllers talking to their pilot and others nearby, and they were intrigued by the dials and instruments.

We're going to be relying on these kids to be our pilots and mechanics in the future. It will be their voices talking to pilots from the air traffic control towers. Some of these students will be managing our airports and maintaining our pavements. Kudos to EAA Chapter 569 for getting these kids up in the air before the end of the school year.

Other chapters and individuals – I encourage you all to find a young adult who is looking for direction and take them for a ride in your plane. Talk to them about all the exciting opportunities coming up in the aviation industry and make sure they know that industry experts are predicting shortages in all the aviation-related job fields. It's up to each of us to spark the interest in our amazing field and get the next generation of aviators started! ■

### OUR VISION

A dynamic aviation system which enhances quality of life through infrastructure and services that meet the diverse and evolving needs of all Nebraskans.

# General Aviation Appreciation Month

By David Morris



## Airventure 2021 NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) Now Available.

By David Morris

The Experimental Aircraft Association's (EAA) AirVenture 2021 68th fly-in convention, scheduled for July 26 – August 1 at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, WI, now has the NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) available by clicking on [https://www.eaa.org/apps/airventure/notam/notam\\_request.aspx](https://www.eaa.org/apps/airventure/notam/notam_request.aspx) to download the NOTAM or order the printed booklet. The NOTAM is in effect from noon CDT on Thursday, July 22, until 8:00 p.m. CDT on Sunday, August 1

The free 32-page booklet is an absolute must if you're flying an aircraft to the AirVenture 2021 event in Oshkosh. While many of the procedures are similar to previous years, there are updates in many areas of the World's Greatest Aviation Celebration. The NOTAM should be part of every pilot's pre-flight preparation when planning a flight to this event. ■

On April 7, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts proclaimed May 2021 as Nebraska General Aviation Appreciation Month. This proclamation helps shine a light on general aviation and reminds us all that general aviation is not just a form of transportation but supports the

commercial wellbeing of communities throughout the nation.

In Nebraska, general aviation supports 3,895 jobs, resulting in \$132 million in labor income. General aviation also stands to be at the forefront of the overall economic

recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. As indicated by this proclamation, our nation's aviation infrastructure represents an important public benefit, and Congressional oversight should be in place to ensure that it remains a public system and serves communities of all sizes. ■

# The 100-Dollar Haircut

By Tom Winter



Tom Winter, before and after his 100-Dollar haircut, pictured with Colleen of Kiel's Barber Shop in Fremont.

I've decided that needing a haircut is just another excuse to get out and fly! That's why I call it the 100-dollar haircut – better for the waistline than the burger!

The old white hair was long. (See my before picture!) The ol' white mop was considerably overgrown from staying home and "covidianly" avoiding dense people. Now, someone like Kermit Weeks can get away with a ponytail, but he's not married to Joanna, so it really was time.

My recent haircuts had meant a flight to Scribner, where I unfolded the folding bike, and rode the four miles on County Road J to Hooper, where Don's Barber Shop is smack in the center of the town's historic block, and where \$10 gets you looking like a soldier boy. And, it's right next to a very nice restaurant.

But it was time to explore, so I decided to fly to Fremont for a two-fer: (1) Check if the construction has started on the new terminal building, and (2) get a haircut. Here's an "Executive Summary:" (1) I got the haircut, and (2) they've prepared the ground for the construction of the terminal.

The wind being from the south, I had to start the wrong way, but I was happy with how quickly the departure turned me loose. Wind at the Fremont Airport (FET) was about 45° off 14-34, and gusty, so the landing was an exercise in concentration.

I was glad to notice that foundation work has started and got a picture right out the windshield – but got a better one later, on climb out. And the haircut? Nobody in the terminal building could guide me to a Fremont barber shop!

Somebody said, "Styemasters," to which I snorted, "I'm not going to no beauty parlor!" Finally, Deb turned to the yellow pages. "It goes from 'bank' to 'basement,'" she said. No luck there, but she dug out a visitor's guide and found me a barbershop downtown on 6th Street.

## Pleasant Ride

I pulled out the folding bike, flipped it open, aired up the tires (sitting in the plane for weeks between rides always means the tires soften) and hit the road. I stopped many a time along the way to admire and even photograph some of Fremont's old houses. Fremont is in the wide Platte Valley, and it is all level – unlike Lincoln, which is one darn hill after another – so the pedaling was easy and relaxing. A pleasant, two-mile bike ride later, there I was, in front of an actual barber shop, Kiel's.

Inside the shop, two women are each busy cutting hair. One stops to ask, "What can we do for you?" I pull my locks sideways on both sides: "Take one look at me, and then take a guess."

How much is a haircut?" \$20. "Okay, I've got a 20 in my pocket."

I asked Colleen (say "CO leen") to take before-and-after pictures with my camera, and she also took pictures with her cell phone. "I had no idea I was such a handsome dude," I said when she had finished. The only fly in the ointment: She shaved my neck with a straight razor. The back of my neck had never been shaved before, and now the bare and shaven skin itches. Another time, I'll just ask to taper the hair at the neck.

It was a pleasant bike ride back, with the wind picking up. I took my time to enjoy the ride. Back at FET, I folded the bike, stuffed it, and launched. On climb out, I got a good view of the new construction, grabbed the camera and one-handed it through the pilot-side window. The picture turned out!

It was a bumpy flight all the way to 4,500 feet. Wind at LNK was 16G22, but at 16, that is right down the runway. Very nice landing.

Of course, in a few weeks I will need another haircut. I'm already planning on trying Central City, where they also have a century-old Opera House! ■



Aerial view of construction site for the new Fremont airport terminal building.

# NEBRASKA STATE FLY IN AND AIR SHOW



Fathers Day Fun For The Whole Family

## Featuring WWII B-29 Superfortress "Doc"

### Saturday

- 9am – 5pm B-29 Static Display
- 9am – B-29 Passenger Flight
- 11am – B-29 Passenger Flight
- 8pm – 11 pm Hanger Dance – Hosted by
- 10pm Night Show – Radial Rumble T6



- Larry Bartlett Parachute Drop
- Rob Ator Pitts S-2
- Doug Roth - Staudecher
- Jessie Panzer Pitts
- Erik Edgren - Taylorcraft
- Jeff Setterly - T6 Radial Rumble
- Brian Correll - Pitts S2S

### Sunday

- 7:30 am Drive In / Fly In Breakfast
- 10:30am Open to the Public
- 9:00 – 3:00 Car Show In Front of Terminal
- 9:00 1st B-29 Flight
- 8:00 – 3:00 Aircraft Mfg. Display – Cirrus / Piper
- 8:00 – 3:00 Static Aircraft Display
- 9:00 – 1:00 Kids Can Fly Exhibits – EAA Hanger
  - Propeller Shaping
  - How Engines Work
  - Riveting a Name Badge
  - Radio Work
- 9:30 Designated Pilot Examiner Panel Discussion
- 10:30 '99's Compass Rose Dedication
- 10:45 2nd B-29 Flight
- 11:00 Learn to Fly Seminar
- 12:00 Kids Ping Pong Ball Drop
- 10:30 – 1:30 Food Vendors
- 12:30 – 2:30 Airshow!  
Tribute to Harry Barr



# Fathers Day Weekend June 19 & 20

# True North vs Magnetic North

By David Morris

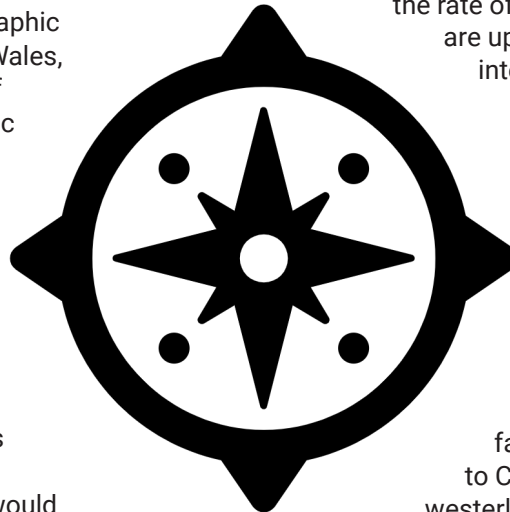
As we know, True North (Geographic North) is the direction toward the fixed point we call the North Pole. Magnetic North is the direction towards the north magnetic pole, which is a moving point where the Earth's magnetic field goes vertically down into the planet.

The magnetic North Pole is located between 200 to 600 statute miles south of the geographic North Pole, on the island of Prince of Wales, depending on the current wandering of the magnetic North Pole. The magnetic North Pole was discovered in 1948 by Paul Serson. He used a special instrument that measured the direction and dip of the magnetic field.

An area on the Earth's surface where these two poles align is what is known as Greenwich, in the United Kingdom. The poles' alignment means following direction from the magnetic compass to the magnetic North Pole would also navigate you to the true North Pole. Greenwich, England is known as the home of the prime meridian.

Recently, for the first time in approximately 360 years, it is said that at this historic area the magnetic compasses pointed directly at the true North Pole. This occurrence is due to the changes of the magnetic North Pole location with time.

The angle between alignment of the two poles is referred to as "declination." The location change of the magnetic North Pole is slow, and this provides challenges of predicting the declination for a particular area on Earth. At some locations, alignment of the two poles is very unlikely at any time, based on predictions. This is because the rate of change is slow and prediction models are updated at approximately five-year intervals.



A hiker using a magnetic compass must be mindful of declination. If the walker disregards the local value of declination, they may walk in the wrong direction. Perhaps Douglas Corrigan (often referred to as "Wrong Way Corrigan"), an American aviator and one of the builders of Charles Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis", experienced this declination factor as he navigated from New York to California. After initially taking up a westerly heading from Brooklyn, New York, he mysteriously made a 180-degree turn, and 28 hours later landed in Dublin, Ireland. He did admit to a navigational error causing him to misread his compass.

We need to remember, as a magnetic compass is an essential tool for navigation, it does have some inherent errors, and if we understand the cause of these errors, it becomes a much friendlier device .■

## Events Calendar

**Tekamah Fire & Rescue Pancake Breakfast,**  
Hosted by Tekamah Municipal Airport  
Sunday June 6, 2021,  
7:00 a.m. until noon  
\*subject to Covid restrictions

York Airport (KJYR),  
EAA Chapter 1055 Fly-in breakfast  
(free-will donation) on the  
1st Saturday of the month,  
8:00-10:00 a.m.

Crete Airport (KCEK),  
EAA Chapter 569 Fly-in breakfast  
(free-will donation) on the  
3rd Saturday of every month,  
8:00-10:00 a.m.

Fly-in drive in at the Seward Airport  
Saturday, May 22, Starting at 11 a.m.  
until the last plane leaves.  
Contact [derek.whisler@gmail.com](mailto:derek.whisler@gmail.com)

75th Annual Flight Breakfast "Home  
of America's Original Flight Breakfast"  
Harlan, Iowa (KHNR)  
Sunday, June 20, 2021, 7:00-11:00 a.m.  
Breakfast free to ALL fly-ins  
(not just pilot only) Bacon, sausage,  
eggs, toast, milk, juice or coffee

Aurora Airport (AUH)  
Optimist Club Fly-in Breakfast  
Saturday, June 26, 2021  
7:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
Pilots-in-command eat free  
402-694-3633

Pender, NE Fly-In Breakfast  
Sunday, June 27, 8 a.m. until noon.  
Fly-ins eat free.  
Contact John Miller: 816-210-2081

Red Cloud Lions Fly-in Breakfast  
Red Cloud Airport (7V7)  
Sunday, August 8, 2021,  
7:00-10:00 a.m.  
Fly-ins eat free.  
Contact Chuck Stokes: 402-746-3818