



A Piece of History

BY JOHN McAVOY
EAA CHAPTER 62

We receive many accounts of Young Eagle activities each day. Many, like the following story demonstrate how a Young Eagles event can turn out to be something special for pilots, volunteers and participants alike.

When you hear the name San Francisco, you probably envision cable cars, rolling hills and the Golden Gate Bridge. The San Francisco Bay Area encompasses over 3000 square miles and has a population of 20 million in 30 cities, including San Jose and Oakland.

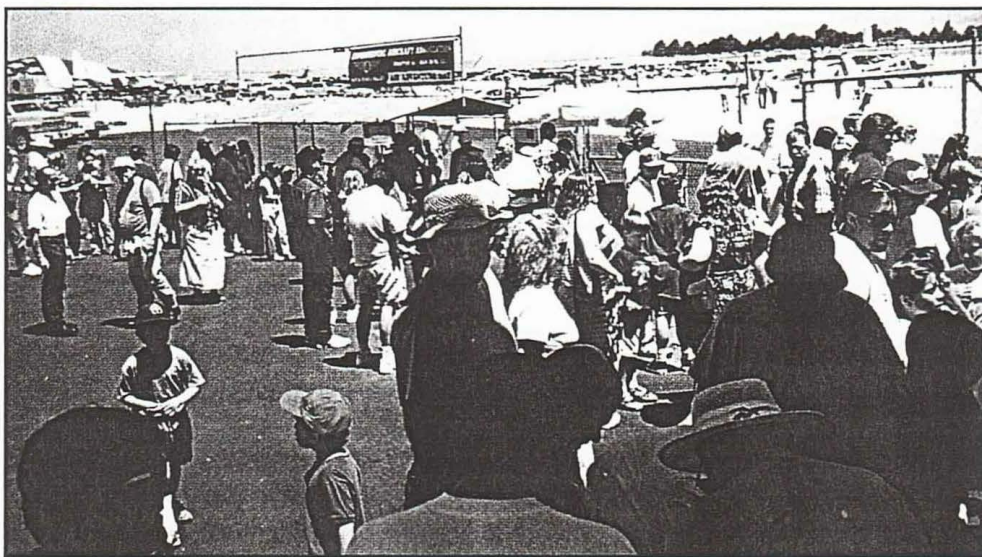
At the southern end of San Francisco Bay lies the historic Moffett Field. Moffett's 70 years of diverse history include the honor of being the homeport for the U.S. Navies Dirigibles, most notably the Macon and the Akron. The massive hangar that used to house these giant, lighter-than-air ships is now a national monument and serves as an icon to the south end of the area and Silicon Valley.

NASA's Ames Research Facility is co-located with Moffett. The NASA ramp once bustled with activity ranging from Helicopter lift and noise research to the DC-8 flying laboratory and the recently retired C141 flying telescope.

In recent years, NASA and the Navy have significantly reduced flight operations at Moffett as part of their downsizing activities. Only an occasional transient NASA T-38 or USAF C-130 now occupies the enormous tarmac. Flight operations are also sig-



EAA Chapter 62 held a large Young Eagles event at Moffett Field in California during the 1998 International Young Eagles day. More than 50 aircraft participated in the rally.



The flightline staging area where Young Eagles are registered before their flight. Note the "World's Largest Flag" on the left. More than 5,000 volunteers helped unfurl the flag in an event sponsored by a local radio station.

nificantly reduced to transients and an occasional U.S. government contract air shipment from one of the many companies in Silicon Valley.

Like all military installations, the field is closed to all but official government business. The control tower is still active and averages 10 to 15 operations per day. But during a warm summer day

last year — International Young Eagles Day — Moffett Federal Tower would handle a record 1,700 operations.

The planning for this event began almost a year earlier, just as the 1997 event was winding down. In order to hold this event at Moffett, EAA Chapter 62 had to secure the sponsorship of one of Moffett Field's Airfield Opera-

tions organization. Headed by Garey Tiffany, the group has sponsored Chapter 62 and the Young Eagle's program for the past five years.

Participation at this event has steadily grown year after year. This year's event was part of an overall larger group of events. A local radio station, KSFO - 560, sponsored the unfurling of the world's largest flag. More than 5,000 volunteers of all ages helped in the opening of the flag of the United States of America. A newcomer to this year's event was a Special Olympics "Pull a Plane" rally. Sponsored by Federal Express, the "Pull a Plane" pits local civic organizations in a tug of war with a Federal Express DC-10. The group that can pull the plane the farthest in the shortest amount of time is declared the winner. Proceeds go to help the Special Olympics.

Young Eagles is giving kids an opportunity that just isn't available anywhere else. Over 600 kids and 50 aircraft participated in the day-long event.

One of the reasons Chapter 62 has been able to continue to secure permission is the planning and dedication that the members put into this event. As in all Chapter 62 Young Eagles Events, areas of responsibility are defined and carried out by individuals within the chapter.

Chapter 62 member, Ray Hutchings, heads up pilots and flight volunteers. Ray admits that finding pilots for this event is no problem as his phone rings

off the hook when word gets out that you can fly in and out of Moffett for this event. Ray also coordinates between NASA and Chapter 62 to ensure flight routing, flight safety and the always-present administrative paperwork functions are carried out.

Brian McShirley probably has the largest responsibility with his crew. They are responsible for the flight line safety and ground movement of both aircraft and people. Although Brian and his group of volunteers are just that, volunteers, each and every one performs their job in such a safe and professional manner that NASA's airfield management office has praised Chapter 62 for our safety approach both in the air and on the ground.

And of course, Young Eagles. Judy Stout and her team of volunteers have streamlined the registration process. Once the kids are signed in, Judy assigns them a number. When the child's number is up they fly with the next available pilot and plane. While the pilot and kids are airborne, Judy shuffles the paperwork and prepares the certificates. Just keeping the paperwork straight for an event of this size is a monumental task.

Like most Young Eagles rallies, this was the first time many of these youth have even been close to an airplane, let alone able to fly. The flights typically lasted 20 minutes to a half an hour. The pilots and ground crews did their utmost to ensure this was a positive, memorable experience for both the

child and the parents.

As the end of the day approached, a quick meeting with NASA's public relations chief Carl Honacker and the Moffett Federal Airfield's top leader, Geary Tiffany produced the praise "A job well done to all who participated."

We'll be looking forward to doing this again next year.

Editors Note: EAA Chapter 62's 1999 event is once again scheduled on International Young Eagles Day, June 12. No matter how small or large a Young Eagles event you may be a participant, we can all learn from Chapter 62's organization and attention to detail. Enjoy safely flying Young Eagles this year. We look forward to hearing your success stories in the months to come! By the way, don't forget to visit our new Gallery on the Young Eagle Flight Leader pages of EAA's web site. There you'll read about more success stories. ♦

We'd Like to Hear From You!

If you have photos and stories from your Young Eagle experiences, please feel free to share them with us. There are a number of ways to contact the Young Eagles Office.

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