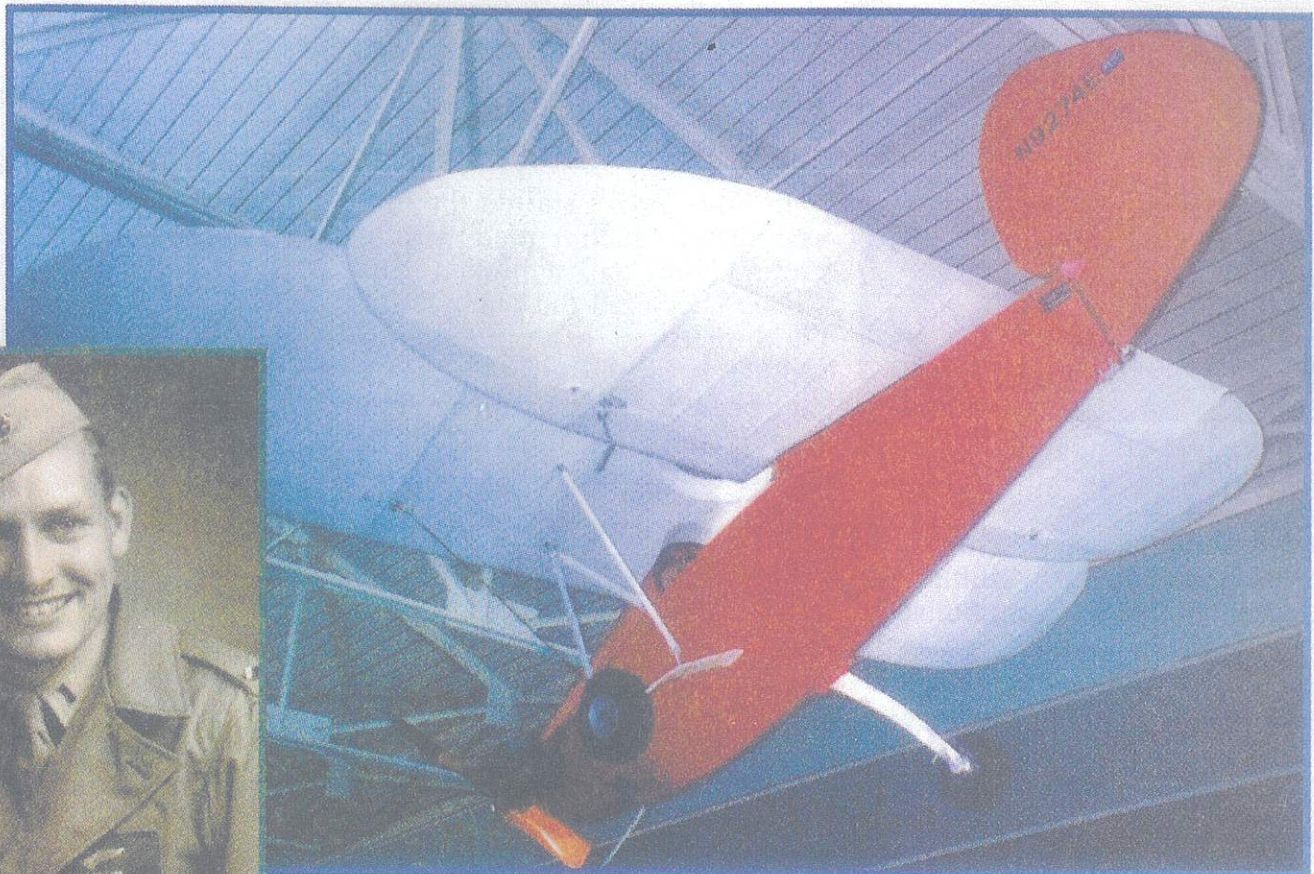


2 My life journey

3 News from you

6 Bernard Domont's letter

7 Classifieds



This homebuilt aircraft is now suspended from the ceiling of Sawyer International Airport, Gwinn, MI. Pictured to the left is a younger Elton A. Barnum, who is the creator of this piece of flying art.

Oshkosh EAA
Flea Event
Date: Friday
August, 1
2003. Same
old early
morning.

Plane on display in Gwinn, MI

Editor's note: This story was submitted by Gerald L. Hanninen, a close friend of Elton Barnum.

By Gerald L. Hanninen

This past summer, while on my way through the Sawyer

International Airport, I spotted a Mignet Flying Flea on display in the concourse. The typical features: short fuselage and two large wings in tandem; set up on a tri-cycle landing gear and sporting a four cylinder,

two cycle engine. It was the engine that gave it all away: "Well, Barney, you finally did it," I said out loud. I knew who the builder was even before I read the placard. The red fuselage

Continued on pg. 4 - ON DISPLAY

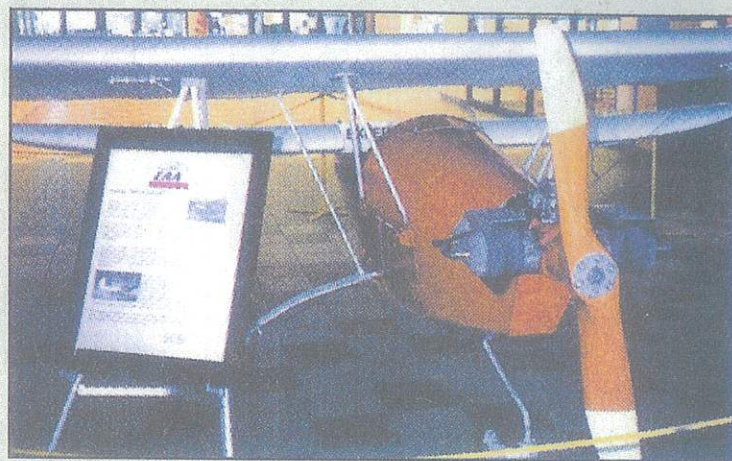
ON DISPLAY Continued from page 1



Elton Barnum with his Flying Flea during construction. Above: The control panel of the HM-293.



Front view of Elton's plane on display.



Barnum's Flying Flea was previously a floor display at the Sawyer International Airport in Gwinn, Michigan.

and tail contrasted nicely with the white wings and struts "What a cute little airplane," someone said.

I had seen the engine type in action before, screaming across the Kansas sky (Ft. Riley Military Reservation) like a 'bat out of hell'. They would often approach at only 100 feet off of the deck and doing 200/mph. A number of the troopers were obliged to respond with a middle-finger salute as we slogged along through the heavy, sticky, Kansas mud!

The engines were designed with a high power-to-weight ratio and were expendable. They powered the radio controlled drones which were used by the U. S. Army for photo-recon ops. The little birds were painted red.

A number of the elevated range sites were littered with red aluminum. "Okay, Barney, it's your choice."

The placard identified the aircraft as a Pou du ciel/Flying Flea. Model HM 293. Specs and performance data are as follows:

- Wing Span20 ft.
- Length14 ft.
- Empty Wt.370 lbs.
- Seats1
- Construction Material: Wood, metal, fabric.
- Engine: McCullough 4-Cylinder, 2-cycle/72 hp.
- Design cruise speed: 70 mph.
- Folding wings.
- Good slow flight characteristics.

Builder: Mr. Elton Barnum.

The aircraft was completed in 1996; inspected and licensed as an amateur built experimental airplane. The attractive display was the work of EAA Chapter 850 of Marquette, Michigan.

It was at an EAA Chapter 439 meeting that I was first introduced to Mr. Barnum. The chapter was known then as the "Michigamme" chapter and Barney was one of the founding members. The licensed pilots in the group regarded Barney as a "pilot's pilot." Over the ensuing years I would learn the truth of the matter: a USMC combat pilot in WWII and the Korean Conflict; a test pilot specializing in rotary wing aircraft. At the

ON DISPLAY Continued from page 4

time (1984) Barney was flying both fixed and rotary wing aircraft for the State of Michigan.

It seemed as if the "flying load" followed Barney wherever he went. Flying a Beech T-34 Mentor on forest fire patrol one day, Barney ended up low and fast over a "blowout" trying to spot a fire crew who were being cut off by the advancing flames. He got their "bacon" out of the way.

On one of his last flights, for the Michigan State DNR, Barney and a game biologist were up tracking the movements of the newly introduced moose herd. "The weather was just awful; The wind was gusting so high—believe me—you didn't even want to look out along the wings!"

Why build a Flying Flea? Barney's initial response came as a real surprise. Apparently, years ago, there was this comic or newspaper strip character—let's call him "Smilin' Jack"—who flew around in a small, light weight aircraft—maybe a Flea—and did good deeds; rescuing damsels in distress, bringing the bad guys to justice, and so on. Whoever he was, he made quite an impression as far as Barney was concerned. If Barney hadn't built a Flying Flea, then he would have built a Zodiac Cri-Cri, or Cricket.

Actually, one of the main reasons involved the slow flight envelope of the Flea and the ability to land and takeoff in short distances. When Barney showed me his proposed runway, some serious head scratching began.

The Flea project took shape slowly. It involved a learning curve for Barney. How do you weld 4130 alloy steel tubing? Make your own prop? Design you own tricycle gear? The EAA Chapter groups provide a sound basis for this work. In the end Barney's little bird was his own handiwork...a plans built aircraft.

There is an old saying that goes something like this: when we reach the end of life's journey, the only thing we possess of real value is our good name and reputation. There is a Wall of Honor in the Sawyer International Airport. One tiny block reads:

ELTON BARNUM

Capt. USMCR. Hel Pilot. Evac Korea. SBD Pacif

"Blue skies," Barney,

"Nothing but blue skies."