

The California Fire Pilots Association newsletter



Gorgoino fire .(photo Jeremy Ulloa)





This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Andy

N°2/2013

FOREWORDS





When the program about 2 years ago. He was the long time base mechanic at Grass Valley. He was loved by all and everyone knew that if Andy did the work on the airplane—there was nothing to worry about. He was a true gentleman and will be greatly missed. Godspeed Andy. Jeff Cavarra Program Manager DynCorp International, LLC CAL FIRE Aviation Program



NEWS



Coulson Airtanker is in the pit

oulson C-130, Tanker 131, rolling out the hangar on August 10th to be loaded with water for Tank system tests. Jeremy Ulloa was there to cover the return of the C-130's in aerial fire fightingduring the taxiing.



Editor : Jerome Laval. Redaction and graphic design : Cyril Defever Please forward your pictures and articles to: <u>e-mail</u> : jeromelaval@hotmail.com Website : http://www.calfirepilots.com/



by Michael Meadows







Jeronimo Productions

Presents :



SAFETY

" THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY.

Preflight:



The Good : "I'm conscientious about my preflight. I go slow, I check all switches in the cockpit and read the preflight check list to make sure I don't forget things . Seated in the cockpit, I review a couple of emergencies every day and then I step outside and check every part of the airplane. Nice and slow. A good preflight is important to start the day. I like to remain focused, not allowing distractions to interfere with my preflight."



The Bad:" I look around in the cockpit, and make a quick lap around the plane. Nobody else climbs in the cockpit besides me and the mechanic checks everything for me, right? "



The Ugly: "Well, I show up at the last minute, spill my coffee while kicking the tires and turn the props. Tires not flat, props turn...Good enough."



Fire Traffic Area :



The Good : "I slow the airplane according to FTA procedures and make all the radio calls required, reading back the instructions from the first aircraft at scene to be cleared in the Fire Traffic Area. I make sure that I respect altitudes, airspeeds and I keep an eye on every aircraft in orbit or making drops. I look for hazards, wind shifts, spots, escape routes, troops on the ground, water sources... Things happen fast, I'm alert and ready."





The Bad: "Sure I'll call sometimes when I'm close enough from the smoke. FTA procedures..yeah.. well actually I try to be in a stealthy mode. Nobody needs to know where I am. This isn't Team work, is it?"



The Ugly: "Smoke? Chaaarge!! Pedal to the metal and get the hellout my way! Radio calls and Procedures, who needs that? Just go straight for the smoke and figure things out when you get there."

for aerial firefighting

The tactical debrief process

by Trevor Haagenson

aving recently completed Air Force Flight Training and spent the last three years flying the F-16 in the California Air National Guard I have been exposed to a whole new world of aviation. Much of what I have learned is very specific to tactical military flying but a few concepts and ideas could be incorporated into the aerial firefighting environment with the potential for improvements in the way we operate. I believe the tactical flight debrief is one such practice.

The idea of a debrief is to gather all participants immediately after the event and, "tap into the individual perspectives of the team members and examine the event from every angle, ultimately reaching a consensus on lessons learned." (Murphy) The great value of the debrief is that it has the ability to accelerate the learning process and take individual knowledge and experiences and turn it into group or corporate knowledge. The idea is that even if we were all on the same fire together one participant may have experienced or observed something significant or unusual and by discussing this in the debrief everyone can learn from it.

The single most important concept of the fighter pilot debrief is the idea that "rank comes off in the debrief." This is the idea that any participant needs to feel comfortable contributing openly (Murphy). This must include the ability to bring up the mistakes of other participants. This is a

cultural hurdle in most organizations and I believe that the aerial firefighting structure containing a mix of agency personnel and contractors makes this especially tricky. One possible way to overcome this is for the ATGS to lead the debrief and to openly admit his or her own mistakes as well as acknowledging the mistakes of others. Everyone respects someone who can admit their own mistakes and people generally feel more comfortable admitting their mistakes if others are doing so also.

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While there are many different ideas on the best way to organize the debrief I believe that the easiest and most applicable to firefighting is the chronological recreation of events. The basic idea is to simply talk through the flight (or fire) from start to finish. In my fighter squadron we always start with talking about any safety of flight issues. This gets these issues out in the open up front to they are not hanging over the discussion. A checklist for the chronological debrief is included as a separate printable document. It is simply a memory aid to help run through all the events that normally happen on a fire and should not be treated as all inclusive. It includes such items as takeoff, arrival at the fire, aircraft deconfliction plan, target descriptions, drop accuracy, release, and return to base. The leader of the debrief will run through the list and talk to any issues both good and bad with each subject then solicit input from other participants before moving on to the next subject.

In a normal debrief most subjects will have no notable discussion points and will be run through very quickly but one or two will develop into a discussion where learning will occur. An example would be an IA fire where tanker operations were slow and drops were not effective that could lead to discussions about target descriptions, ATGS drop feedback, and tanker pilot selection of right over left traffic. The goal when discussing these subjects should be to clearly recreate what actually occurred then to discuss what could have been done differently to achieve better results. In the example above it is important for someone to bring up that the ATGS was giving "good drop" feedback to drops that landed in the black. This can provide an opportunity for the tanker pilots to reiterate that they require accurate drop feedback especially when an execution error on their part caused the bad drop. It might also allow the ATGS to critique the tanker pilot on how his or her line up was off. It might also generate a debrief point for the Air Tactical pilot if the ATGS was out of position to see the drop at all. The key is that all participants use their memories to recreate what actually happened then use that for a starting point to address possible changes for next time.

Often during a debrief the discussion will tend to spiral down rabbit holes that are very specific. The role of the debrief leader is to constantly assess the value of these discussions against the time available and the quantity of other important topics likely to come up later in



Aviators Debriefing by Maj. Alex Raymond USMCR.

the debrief. One technique is to plan out the debrief if some key problems areas are known upon mission completion. These key areas are called debrief focal points (DFP). The briefer can start the brief by listing the debrief focal points to cage the group's attention to the DFPs. This ensures that all participants thinking about are these things as the chronological debrief proceeds and can selfcensure on other topics to ensure compliance with time constraints. An example of a DFP would be "why did we put a load of retardant in the governor's pool?" The debrief would then proceed chronologically but we would make sure to pay special attention to all the events leading up to the drop.

The tactical debrief is an essential part of the fighter pilot culture. It allows all participants in an event to learn from the experiences of others and to more rapidly grow corporate

knowledge. For these reasons believe it has excellent 1 utility in the aerial firefighting environment. For the debrief to be successful all participants must feel free to contribute and everyone must be willing to admit their own mistakes as well as be unafraid of acknowledging the mistakes of others. I believe that by adopting a version debriefing process of this we can create a continuous improvement process that can continue to make us the best aerial firefighting organization in the world.

References:

Jim Murphy: The power of the Nameless and Rankless Debrief http://www.myarticlearchive.com/ articles/5/070.htm

Aerial Firefighting Debrief Checklist:

• Safety of Flight Issues : ...

Initial Attack:

- Dispatch information /Start /Taxi / Takeoff
- Enroute to the fire
- Arrival at the fire
- Initial Communication with ground resources
- Establishment of aircraft de-confliction plan (Copter arrival, landing, fence)
- Aircraft check-in procedures, terminology
- Initial plan of attack
- FTA Procedures: Communications /Altitude selection
- Fire orientation: General description, Hazards, Terrain,
- Target descriptions: Big to small, clear, concise, understood
- Drop patterns: Left, Right
- Drop accuracy: Start point, Stop point, Wind correction
- Drop feedback
- Retardant effectiveness: Coverage/Quantity level selection
- Helicopter de-confliction execution
- Aircraft Release / Return to Base / Taxi
- Load and return /Shutdown

Extended Attack Add On:

- EA aircraft de-confliction plan (IPs, routes to and from heli-spots, dip-sites, and reload bases)
- Frequency management plan
- Operational and tactical plan
- Plan execution
- Leadplane operations
- Helco operations
- Fuel cycles management

Tanker Base Operations:

- Briefing and briefing products (maps, IAPs, frequency guides)
- Loading and Fueling
- Maintenance issues
- Pit de-confliction
- Mixing operations / Meals / Fuel vendor
- Crew Lodging and Transportation

Trevor Haagenson& Jerome Laval

Mountain Fire

by Steve Whitby

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A fter more than 30 years of operation for French Sécurité Civile, the agency in charge of nationwide aerial firefighting assets, is saying now is the time to consider phasing out soon the remaining 9 Conair Firecat, and find an equivalent performing successor.

Bought in 1982 to reinforce CL-215's and DC-6's, these aircraft have been upgraded with PT-6 turboprops from 1990 to 2000 and a major overhaul (plan 20-20) should provide these planes the ability to serve until 2020.

These air tankers fly Fire patrols by pair when high risk of fire arises (wind, Temperature, fuel moisture). They patrol large response areas, spot fires, drop their loads to stop the spread and report to the command center. Usually these initial attacks drops are enough to stop or slow down these small fires. If not, they call for reinforcement. This Fire Patrol tactic is the "French touch" in term of aerial firefighting but possible only because the French "high fire danger territory" is smaller than the Californian one and because the "heavy duty" is done by the 12 Bombardier 415 using the numerous lakes and Mediterranean shoreline to scoop water.

French Trackers were built more than 50 years ago and even if these aircraft are sturdy, reliable, with an astounding availability and low operating cost, time has come to think about a future replacement platform for initial attack Fire Patrol missions.

Succeeding the Firecat is not an easy task. Aircraft with all the qualities needed for aerial firefighting mission are scarce. The minimum of performances required at affordable cost makes the quest really difficult.

French Sécurité Civile is testing this summer a pair of Air Tractor AT-802F, a well know aircraft, built in Olney, Texas, used worldwide for firefighting and also chose by ▲ French Firecat and AT-802F side by side on Marignane AAB (photo A.Dubath).

Conair to replace their own Firecat few years ago. 3 AT-802F's are already being contracted and used in France by one county; Hérault County Fire Department (CODIS 34).

The Tank has 820 US Gal capacity (130 US Gal less than Firecat version). This aircraft is single engine which seems to be a major flaw for French pilots. It is also slower (150kt compared to 180-190kt for a cruising S-2). Another issue might be wind and turbulences limitations. Southern France is known for its strong winds as Tramontane or Mistral(equivalent to Santa Ana's)

Very low price, low operating costs and new airplane could be attractive for the administration anticipating on budget cuts. The classic land version has two configurations; single or duall seats in tandem. The amphibian version, AT-802F Fireboss (not tested in France), is able to scoop and drop water (Floats, 600 Gallons). These 3 possible versions could be mixed, or not, to suit the needs of the French Sécurité Civile.

In any case, the experimentation is on the way and we should find out about the official final report later this year.

But AT-802F is not the only contender; French Sécurité Civile which already operate 2 Bombardier Dash 8 Q400MR could choose to add more Q400MR or more Bombardier CL-415 "Super Scooper", to their fleet especially when Bombardier is looking for customers to keep the production line going... May be an opportunity for a good deal ?

EADS had announced at the last Paris Air Show the first flight of a Casa 295M with a tank for firefighting scheduled in November. This aircraft is more expensive than the AT-802F, but it's a powerful twin turboprop able to fly over 300 kt with a 20 000 lbs payload. The internal tank (gravity, door system) may be a derivative of the inflating one used with heavy helicopter EC-225. With its Cargo Ramp, this aircraft is truly a Multi Role one and, as an European product, political pressure could help this airplane to become a preferred solution.

Initial attack being a proven tactic, makes the initial attack air tanker a key player now and in the future. Replacing the Tracker isn't an easy task because so far, some say that the only valid candidate to replace it might be another Tracker!

video links on AT 802 : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb4RIjqeE-A&feature=endscreen



▲ Albeit its single engine, the AT-802 low price give it a chance to succeed to the Firecat (photo A.Dubath).

► AT-802F get its callsign "Maya the bee", from a Japanese cartoon, very popular in France in early 80's, relative to its sound and its yellow and black strips (photoA.Dubath).

▼ Casa C-295M, an aircraft similar to the C-27J Spartan, may be presented by EADS to become a new generation Tanker (photo EADS/Airbus Military)..



▼ After more than 30 years of duty in France, the Tracker's era is coming to an end (photo F Marsaly)











Take a look at Julien's artwork : http://exowings.wordpress.com

Progress check on next generation airtankers



when the contracts were announced, so their status is obvious.

As you may know, the USFS announced on May 6 that exclusive use contracts were going to be awarded for seven next generation air tankers. The activation of the contracts was held up by a protest from Neptune Aviation, but the awards finally went to.

Minden Air Corporation; Minden, Nev., for 1 BAe-146

Aero Air, LLC; Hillsboro, Ore., for 2 MD87s Aero Flite, Inc.; Kingman, Ariz., for 2 Avro RJ85s

Coulson Aircrane (USA), Inc.; Portland, Ore., for 1 C130Q

10 Tanker Air Carrier, LLC; Adelanto, Calif., for 1 DC-10

Only one of the five companies had their air tanker fully certified and ready to go when the awards were announced — 10 Tanker Air Carrier and their DC-10. They put Tanker 910 to work around June 1. In fact, their second DC-10, Tanker 911, was activated on a Call When Needed (CWN) contract June 14 and both of them have been flying fires since then. The two DC-10s, which always carry 11,600 gallons, dropped approximately 698,000 gallons of retardant in the month of June.

The other four companies are finishing



the tank installations and still have to obtain a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) from the FAA and have to pass a static test, dropping while parked on the tarmac; then, finally a grid test during which they drop actual retardant from the air into a grid of hundreds of cups on the ground which will determine the volume and consistency of the drop pattern. As far as I know none of the four remaining companies have scheduled a grid test yet with the Interagency AirTanker Board, which must certify all air tankers under contract with the federal government.

Minden Air Corporation

We talked with Lynn Parker, the CEO



of Minden, who told us that they are making good progress on their BAe-146, Tanker 46, and that they expect to make the deadline for full certification, which is in the first part of August. Their tank design is very different from Neptune's design for their BAe-146 which uses cabin air pressure to assist in forcing the retardant out of the tank. Mr. Parker told us their tank totally relies on gravity, having more than 10 feet of vertical head pressure. When asked if the door system was constant flow, he said yes and no, explaining that it is more advanced than a typical constant flow system, and uses advanced technology.

The tank holds about 3,100 gallons, he said, and when empty weighs about 2,000 pounds less than other tanks that may be used on BAe-146s, meaning they would not have to carry reduced loads of retardant as often when density altitude is an issue on hot days at high altitude.

Tanker 46 has passed the static test and meets the required flow rates, Mr. Parker told us. They are still working on the STC, but expect to select a date for the grid test by July 12.

Minden has purchased a second BAe-146 and has already started converting it.



Coulson Aircrane (USA), Inc.

Britt Coulson sent us these photos that were taken June 28, 2013. He told us the aircraft, which holds 3,500 gallons, has been painted and they will apply the wrap, which we ran a photo of earlier, later this month. He said on July 2:

...most of the tank is now installed, gear and all flight controls are checked, tank doors are going on this week, hydraulics are being finished this week as is the floor to complete the tank install. As you can see in the photo, there are wheels attached to the tank. Mr. Coulsor told us they can remove or reinstall the tank in about 30 minutes.

They still have to obtain the STC and the other certifications.

The other two companies

We called and left messages at Aero Flite and Aero Air, but the calls and emails were not returned.



U.S. borrows CV-580s from Canada

by Bill Gabbert http://fireaviation.com/

United States he Government has again borrowed two CV-580 air tankers from the Canadian of Saskatchewan. province Jennifer Jones, spokesperson for the U.S. Forest Service, said they will be in Boise today, Wednesday. They may be stationed there for a while or be deployed to another location.

In June of 2012 there were a total of five CV-580s temporarily in the lower 48 states; one borrowed from the state of Alaska and four



tanker 42, a CV-580, at JEFFCO in Colorado in 2012. Photo by Shane Harvey.

from the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

The CV-580s, produced between 1947 and 1954, have a maximum

retardant capacity of about 2,100 gallons. The piston engines on the ones used in Canada have been replaced by turboprops.



Larry Kraus by Tiller Miller

You can follow Tyler's blog about aerial firefighting:

http://randomramblingsfromnj.blogspot.com/

retardant drops

The tank system used in the DC-7 is an Aero Union multi-door tank system with eight doors where each of the eight tanks holds 375 gallons. Up until now (Dec. 2009) when I have written about retardant tank systems in use by firefighting aircraft (e.g. the Erickson AirCrane and the AT-802), I have written about constant flow tank systems with either one variable single door or multiple doors. As I understand it, both of these systems are controlled by computers. Where the PIC has only to set the desired coverage level and possible the quantity of retardant to be dropped. These systems are easier to use, but come at a price. An Aero Union constant flow variable single door system for the DC-7 would cost at least \$250,000 (perhaps

This serie of articles is an interview of Captain more), representing a significant hunk of change out of Butler's budget.



The panel shown in this photo is located on the copilots side of the cockpit. The red light over the drop arming switch marked "off" is constantly on until the tank is armed, in which case it goes off. By the way, this switch is configured the same way across all of Butler's DC-7 tankers. Moving on, the switch on the left side of the drop panel marked "Flow/High/Low has been disabled as they no longer use the flow feature.



The dial in the photo above is called an intervelometer. Larry uses this dial to set how many tanker doors open at once. In this photo, it is set to safe, meaning that the doors will not open, moving clockwise: LFT is the four doors on the left opening at once, RT is the four doors on the right, and ALL is the salvo of all eight doors opening at once

Continuing clockwise, to open double doors at a time, the dial is set to 1-2, and to open a single door at a time, Larry sets the dial to 1.

Larry Kraus: "As far as the intervelometer, it was a surplus military item, as were a number of parts in the Aero Union 8 door tank. It originally was used for selecting the firing sequence for air to ground rockets on fighter bombers."

We are not done yet, there are two more dials Larry uses, one sets the interval between door openings in tenths of second when pilot-in-command (Larry) presses the drop button that is located on the top left side of the yoke. The second dial sets the total number of doors to open.

Larry explains the settings in this picture: In this picture, they are set to 0.4 seconds and 8 doors. At



130 kt and 150 ft. above the terrain, with the intervelometer set for single doors, I would get approximately a coverage Level 6, or 6 gallons of retardant every 100 square feet (a10 ft by 10 ft area) on the ground."

former passenger cabin, floating beam



Before going any further, it is very important for you to know that this photograph of the passenger cabin of tanker 62 was taken before the ballast items were loaded.

Do you notice the box like structure running across the cabin floor? That is, the floating beam.

The floating beam secures the retardant tank to the aircraft. But it is another important purpose, it helps to distribute the "considerable weight of the retardant tank (1,500 lbs.) and the retardant (27,000 lbs.) across the front and rear wing spars." The floating beam acts like a shock absorber, the floating beam will absorb the shock as the tanker is taking off, flying, and landing.

Not only is the retardant tank, located below the floor of the passenger cabin (in the belly of the tanker), attached by means of the floating beam, there are attach points fore and aft. Larry explains: "Along with the floating beam, the tank has attachments at the forward and aft ends as well. The four attach points at the floating beam distribute the majority of the weight of the tank and retardant to the wing spars, but there are also two attach points near the front of the tank on top near the outboard corners. These attach to a reinforced area of the fuselage where the forward baggage compartment and the hydraulic compartments meet in a bulkhead. There are two similar mounting attach points at the other end of the tank where the rear baggage compartment meets the heater and air conditioning compartments All of these are belly compartments below the floor of the passenger compartment. These mounting attach points don't have the shock absorbing qualities of the floating beam and I've seen individual mounting bolts break on a couple of occasions. Nothing serious, but on apreflight check you can see the tank sag near the broken bolt when it's loaded. On the plus side, I haven't seen one break in the last 15 years."

to be continued...

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operations.

Rich Schlink: "I would like to thank Sonny Hawkins the President of Tiger Performance by offering the CFPA Pilots a 10% discount on the purchase of new helmets. He was the first dealer in the US to sell MSA Gallet Helmets. They are without a doubt the best available flight helmets, used by high risk flight crews worldwide. Sonny has been generous each time I have called for a coworker to make sure they are well taken care of, & any needs expedited. When Calfire Dozer Operator Matt Will died in the dozer rollover a few years ago, Sonny quickly offered a helmet to his partner, knowing the dangers of the job, & hoping never to hear of such a tragedy again. He has been at the forefront of helmet technology, and would like to extend his appreciation to our group. Please call Rich Schlink for the code before you orderonline."



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Jerome Laval : "I would like to tell my appreciation to Sonny and his Team; the customer service is outstanding and I highly recommend Tiger Performance if you wish to get a new helmet or have your old helmet being refurbished.



The aerial firefighting industry converted 23 B-17 to tanker configuration with 1800 US gallons capacity. Fast Airways and Aero Union were the first companies to use them in California, in 1960. Tanker 65 was converted in 1961 by Aero Union and sold to Butler aviation. TBM acquired her in in 1979. in 1983 she was restored in military configuration and now is in RAF Museum of Hendon in England.

Tanker #89 flew with Aircraft specialties and Globe air between 1963 and 1985 is now «Fuddy Duddy» and still flies airshows.







Here's an interesting link from the National Agricultural Aviation Association:

http://www.agaviation.org/content/ lets-be-fair-about-sharing-air

Low-Level Aviators Face Challenges with Tower Obstacles

Wind energy development appears poised for rapid growth in the United States. The U.S. Department of Energy has suggested that wind could supply up to 20 percent of the nation's energy by 2030. Some are advocating for an even more ambitious goal of 25 x '25: a national standard that would require 25 percent of electricity to come from renewable energy sources by 2025. Already, a majority of states have enacted some form of renewable electricity standard, although those standards vary considerably from state to state. The National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) and aerial application industry the support responsible wind power development but are concerned about the unintended consequences that wind energy siting can have on arable farmland and aviation safety. The airspace aerial applicators work in is becoming increasingly obstructed by transmission lines, communication towers, wind turbines and hard-tosee meteorological testing towers. That poses a real concern to the aerial application industry, not just in terms of safety, but also in terms of accessing farmers' fields to treat their crops, since many prime wind-energy development areas are located in rural, agriculturally rich areas. The obvious concerns the aerial application industry has with the construction of towers in rural areas relate to safety. Towers are one of the most dangerous obstacles an agricultural pilot encounters. A single fatal accident in the industry is one too many, and in the past decade there have been seven fatal accidents involving collisions

with towers and an additional 14 fatalities involving collisions with power lines. Nearly 24 percent of the fatal accidents reported over the last 10 years have involved collisions with wires or towers. Without sensible placement and proper marking of towers, farmers may be at risk of losing important aerial application services performed on their cropland. This would detrimentally affect, in some instances, the only method farmers have available to them when the time comes to apply seeds, fertilizers and crop protection chemicals necessary to foster crop growth. NAAA and its state association partners are working hard to make towers more visible for low-altitude pilots and to develop policies that consider aviation safety. NAAA's Tower Safety Guidelines encourage developers not to erect wind towers on prime farmland in a manner that may inhibit aerial applicators' access and ability to treat the land. NAAA has also developed a series of Wind Tower Education Ad Slicks and radio scripts designed to raise awareness about the issues surrounding wind turbines and meteorological towers proliferating across America's farmland. Some ads focus on the dangers of unmarked testing towers to pilots of low flying aircraft; others address the safety and accessibility concerns associated with wind turbines. These obstacles are not just an aerial application concern. Improper wind turbine siting may negatively affect emergency medical flights, aerial firefighters, pipeline patrol planes and other low-flying operations. It is not just an aviation concern. Landowners are being asked to make crucial decisions that will impact farmers and their neighbors for years to come. NAAA encourages anyone considering leasing their wind rights to think seriously about the potential upsides and downsides before signing an agreement. Please explore the following pages to learn more about the impact of wind towers on aviation and agriculture.





Planes» has just landed on the Movie screens and Oshkosh public is, as you can see, very attentive.



A sequel film is in the works, «Planes 2, Fire and Rescue». Stay tuned for Airtankers in a theater near you!



Some interesting links about this newsletter...

DC-7 Video : https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ScqHW8MvW_Y Tyler Miller's Blog http://randomramblingsfromnj.blogspot.com/ French Tracker video : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUWwi1_Hq28 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qITL7L7W_4 Airtractor AT802 video : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb4RljqeE-A&feature=endscreen Fire Aviation, Bill Gabbert's blog : http://fireaviation.com/ Minden Air Corp BAe 146 : http://mindenair.net/main/?p=239

