



International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians

July 28, 2010, Oshkosh, USA

Flying Rotarians Get Together at Oshkosh

A nice contingent of Flying Rotarians was able to attend the combined Oshkosh Rotary meeting at the Airventure site and then got together again that evening for a BBQ at Mark & Karen Hagen's motorhome.



U.S. Army Capt. Brian Brennan was the main speaker at the noon Rotary luncheon. On May 7, 2008, after only two months in Afghanistan, the Howell, N.J., native was leading a patrol with three other soldiers and a civilian when an IED exploded under his Humvee. Brennan and his gunner were the only two survivors. They were both thrown 40 feet from the vehicle. Found in cardiac arrest, Brennan was quickly transferred to a field hospital where it was discovered he had sustained a traumatic brain injury, a collapsed lung, internal bleeding, a ruptured spleen, multiple compound fractures in his left arm and a shattered femur. Within hours, both legs were amputated.

Brennan was unresponsive for 23 days until he received a visit from Gen. David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan. After visiting and thanking Brian's family for his sacrifice, Gen. Petraeus tried to wake up Brennan by uttering the word "Currahee" (the motto of Brennan's unit, 101st Airborne) which means, "stands alone." It seemed like Brian had heard him, so on the count of three, he shouted "Currahee" again. Upon hearing those words, Brennan attempted to sit up to attention — his first form of communication since the explosion.

In 2009, Brennan and his family established the Brennan Stands Alone Foundation to ease the burden of those injured in the line of duty by providing financial and emotional support so that they may focus on treatment and rehabilitation. It especially focuses on those suffering from brain injuries.

Today, Brennan is a decorated veteran stationed at MacDill AFB SOCOM (special operations command) in Tampa, Fla. He travels periodically for inspirational speaking and fundraising efforts for the foundation.



Attending the luncheon were current and new IFFR members. The group included Mark & Karen Hagen, Tim Freudenthal, Tony Watson, Rankin Whittington, Paul Lamb, Mike Woods, Dave Daggett, Bryan & Carol Andersen, Jim & Donna Slessor, Tom Maginnis, PDG David Flinn, and Fred & Eileen Bain from New Zealand

On Wednesday evening, Mark & Karen Hagen hosted a BBQ at their motorhome on the EAA grounds. In addition to the attendees from the noon luncheon Jim Munro, from the greater London, UK area, John & Lucille McClure from London, Ontario, Canada, and Steve Johnston from Hawley, MN joined them. Jim is developing an aviation film, John was a WW2 pilot who flew for the RAF from 1942 to 1945, and Steve has built a number of aircraft over the last forty years.



IFFR members at the Hagen RV BBQ.

