

## Toys For Tots 2007

Lucky for us in the Vintage Mooney Group, Carl Swepston arraigned a fabulous fly in for us to Ramona CA on Sat. Dec. 15, 2007. It sounded like a lot of fun and a chance to participate in a good cause, the Marine Corps own Toys for Tots.

### The Planning

I had three weeks notice before the fly-in so I wrote an email to a list of people who have let me know that they want to fly with me. Leslie was the first to respond, so I wrote back "You're on." I have flown with her three times before and she was always a fun gal, so I looked forward to it.

A week before the flight, I was at the hangar putting air in the tires when Dave, my A&P stopped by and said he would be pulling my airplane apart for the annual inspection on the next Wednesday. No, no, no I replied, it is not until January and I have a VMG fly-in next week. "Oh, I thought it was due." He replied. Well, that got me to thinking so when I got home, so I pulled my aircraft log books down from the shelf where I keep them, and lo and behold, I was past annual. According to FAA regulations my Mooney had just become unairworthy because of the calendar. I was grounded.

What was I going to do? I had let Leslie know that I would take her and now I couldn't. I wrote an email to several pilots that might be able to take us in their plane. One wrote back saying he would be in Florida that weekend. I felt stuck in the middle. I had a red shirt that I wanted to wear. By now my wife had gone Toys for Tots shopping for me and had picked up a Santa hat. I really wanted to attend. I wrote an email to Leslie explaining how I was stuck without wings. At the same time she had emailed me that she really wanted to bring a special friend along. My future was changing from gray to bleak.

Then Santa (John Elwell at Corona) came along saying he could take me, and Leslie too. He did not yet know about her 'special friend' request. Then somehow Santa2 (Ransom Hicks from Cable in Upland) came along saying he could take someone, so he flew over to Corona. I introduced everyone and it was decided that I would ride with John and the 'young people' would ride with Ransom.

### The Flight

I was surprised with the acceleration an E model has when we were departing, even though it is a 1965 M20E. It has the power of an F or J model, but with the smaller and lighter 'short body'. John's engine is nearly new and powerful. We departed a minute behind Ransom and passed them before the halfway point. I was also amazed at how different the instrument panel was compared to the one that I am familiar with.

After we took off , it was fairly clear so a picture was in order.



The south side of Corona



John Elwell oh, so comfortable and proficient at the controls



Ten minutes later we caught up with Ransom Hicks

The Fly-in Friendship

Another 15 minutes and we were there. It was cool and breezy when we arrived but the sun made it comfortable. Everyone was milling about and enjoying themselves.



Jolie Lucas in the breeze



Should have gotten the Cutest Mooney award



Those beautiful Mooney tail feathers



Thanking Carl Swepstn for putting the fly-in together



Christmas colors - or – Starboard and Port



Charles Montgomery is currently taking ground school and shopping for a flight school



Bo Donovan the Ramona airport manager showed us just how close last month's wildfires came to the airport



The VMG group – the toys – the Marines and their truck.



The board presented yours truly an award after lunch

## The Flight Home

I missed not being able to fly, I guess I am spoiled. It was interesting to see how comfortable John flew his Mooney. It was a quick and smooth ride in the afternoon sunshine. He terminated the flight with a smooth 'squeaker' landing. He knows how to 'wear' an airplane



His hand just rests on the yoke and she knows how and where to go



After the flight somebody has to fill her up again

Enough red and green for a while. I went back to my hanger and looked around for a Blue Can.

Ed Shreffler  
12/15/2007

Photography by Phil Corman and ed