



JAMES ARMSTRONG DREXEL, AT THE BOURNEMOUTH AND LANARK 1910 FLYING MEETINGS

by Peter Berry MRAeS

This year is the Centenary of several flying meetings in Europe, particularly the first flying meeting in Scotland, held on the Lanark Racecourse, some 20 miles southwest of Glasgow, from August 6 to 13, 1910.

Twenty-two entrants accepted the invitation to compete and this, only seven years after the first powered flight by the Wright brothers.

There were eleven British competitors, six from France and one each from France, Peru, Holland, Switzerland, Italy and the United States.

The aviators flew three license-built Short-Wright biplanes, six Blériot monoplanes, two Hanriot monoplanes, four Farman biplanes, and one each of

a Humber-Blériot, Voison, Sommer, Cody, Tellier, B&C/Bristol Boxkite and Antoinette design.

Prize money totaled some £8,000, a considerable sum in 1910.

The American aviator, James Armstrong Drexel, had already attended the Bournemouth (England) Aviation Meeting, July 11 to 16, 1910. Flying a 60-hp Gnome-powered Blériot XI, his flying skills had been well rewarded, with some £1,300 prize money for speed, altitude, a cross-country flight of 21 miles including 18 miles over the sea and a General Merit award of £225.

His next stop was at the Lanark Flying Meeting in Scotland, held in August. Here, he again excelled himself, with a total prize money of £1,340. This included the Longest Time Airborne, completing a 67-mile cross-country flight, which gained him the Lanark Trophy and the Scots Pictorial Cup. His best prize of £400



James A. Drexel. (Photo from the Library of Congress via the author)

was for a climb to 6,750 feet, in Grace's Blériot, setting a new world altitude record for the time.

This flight was recorded in *Flight* magazine at the time:

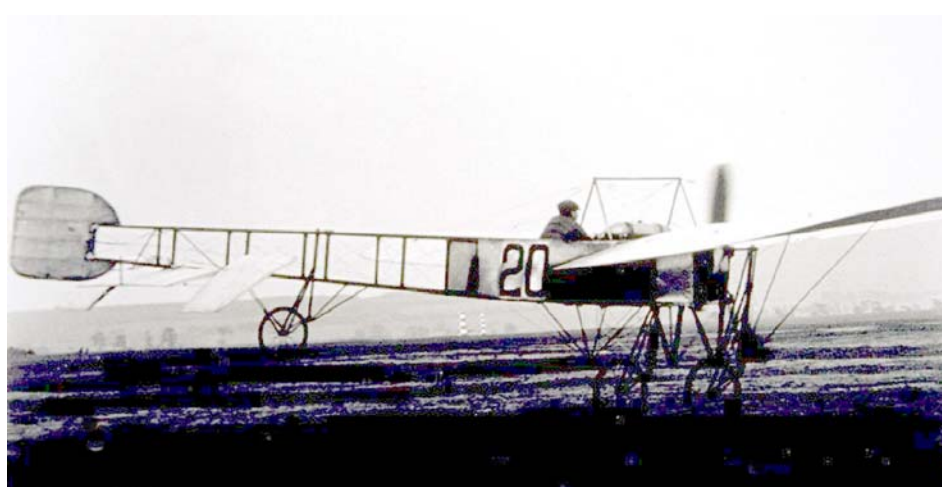
"Thursday, August 11; the sensation of the day was reserved to the last, McArdle and Drexel went for altitude. The former came down after

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Drexel in the Blériot, No.20, departing the flying course at Lanark, August 1910. (Photo from the author's collection)



Left: James A. Drexel prepares for a flight in his Blériot at Bournemouth in 1910. (Photo from the author's collection)

Below: Site of the Lanark Racecourse as seen in 2010. (Photo by the author)

2,730 feet, leaving Drexel still ascending. At about 3,000 feet, the daring American was seen to enter a cloud bank. For a time no anxiety was felt, but as time went on, it was obvious that something had happened. It was known that Drexel only had enough petrol to last him some 45 minutes, so that the descent would have been made to no great distance. After two hours had elapsed without word being received, cars were dispatched with search parties, but at 9:30 p.m., about two and a half hours after he had left the ground, a wire was received from Drexel himself, from Cobbinshaw station, 18 miles southwest of Edinburgh. It appeared that when he came out of the clouds on the descent, he found himself away from the course and, in the fast-growing dusk, was quite unable to locate it. He accordingly sought for level ground on which to alight and finally selected a field near the farmsteading of Wester Mossat. Here, he alighted perfect safety, without any injury to the Blériot.

“The farm folk were naturally greatly surprised. Drexel borrowed a bicycle and rode to the nearest railway station, where he wired to the course as already stated, asking for mechanics to be sent to bring back his machine, which stood in the long grass, looking for all the world like a dead bird.

“Friday, August 12, at about 1:30 this morning, Drexel arrived back at the course, having being picked up by his partner, McArdle, none the worse for his adventure in



cloudland. It appears that Drexel went aloft with the deliberate intention of ascending to the greatest possible height. His machine behaved splendidly, although the engine was tried considerably in finishing the last 50 feet, made with difficulty owing to the rarity of the atmosphere. His greatest difficulty was the cold, which caused him to descend. He was in the air some 50 minutes. The sealed barograph was taken charge of by the officials and on arrival at the course was opened by Captain Taylor, who was charged with height recording. It was found to register no less than 6,750 feet, a world altitude record, beating even Brookins' performance at Atlantic City, by 575 feet.”



The Lockheed Martin F-35B Lightning II begins descending to its first vertical landing on March 18, 2010, at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. The successful test confirmed the aircraft's power and controllability during hover and vertical landing, a requirement that will enable the supersonic stealth jet to operate out of confined spaces on land or small ships. (Lockheed Martin photo)

DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAIDERS

68th REUNION



B-25J "Wild Cargo," 44-30129, N7946C; TB-25N, "Axis Nightmare," 45-8898, N898BW; and B-25J "Panchito," 44-30734, N9079Z during a formation fly-by at Grimes Field. (All photos by Bob Burns except as noted)

The National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) hosted the 68th Reunion of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders April 16-18. Four of the surviving eight members of this organization attended the event, which included one the largest gathering of restored B-25 Mitchells.

Retired Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole, 94, of Comfort, Texas; Maj. Thomas C. Griffin, 92, of Cincinnati, Ohio; Lt. Col. Robert L. Hite, 90, Nashville, Tenn.; and Master Sgt. David J. Thatcher, 88, Missoula, Mont.; came together again to share memories, sign autographs and be recognized as iconic pieces of American history. The other four surviving members of Doolittle's team who were not able to attend were Col. William M. Bowyer, Lt. Col. Frank A. Kappeler, Capt. Charles J. Ozuk and Maj. Edward J. Saylor.

The North American B-25 Mitchell was the aircraft selected by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle to deliver the first bombing raid on Japan on April 18, 1942. The Mitchell soon became the AAF pilots' favorite twin-engine bomber and used in every theater of WWII not only for high-level bombing, but after a number of modifications was used as a low-level attack bomber. Nearly 10,000 were produced, and today there are approximately 200 located in museums around the world, and over 40 still airworthy and seen at most major air shows worldwide.

Also on Saturday, April 17, the Raiders participated in a ceremony to toast and honor their fellow colleagues who have passed away. Following the toast the last survivors overturned the goblets of those who have died since the last reunion. Throughout the weekend the men signed hundreds of autographs and spoke with well-wishers who were eager to see, honor and be a part of American history.

Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley, who attended a dinner in their honor Friday night, said the men continue to be an inspiration to Airmen today. "The Doolittle Raiders

have a very special place in the history of the Air Force," Secretary Donley said prior to the dinner. "They've provided such great examples to us of leadership, of audacity, of innovation and personal courage, in some of the darkest days of WWII."

Over 38 Mitchell owners were contacted months prior to the event to see if they would participate in a MITCHELL B-25 TRIBUTE TO THE DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAIDERS. All the owners volunteered to come for the cost of fuel and housing expenses. A decision was made to invite 25 planes that were capable of reaching Dayton without an overnight or fuel stop. These aircraft were contacted to participate if the funds were available to help pay their expenses. Larry Kelley, owner and operator of "Panchito," volunteered to help this program and did a spread sheet on the costs of bringing the planes to Dayton. It was estimated that at least \$200,000 would have to be raised to make it happen.



Doolittle Raiders display at the NMUSAF in Dayton, Ohio. (Photo from the NMUSAF)



"Show Me" - B-25J, 44-31385, N345TH, owned and operated by the Missouri Wing of the Commemorative Air Force.



"Pacific Princess" - TB-25N, 43-28204, N9856C, of the Warbird Depot.



"Lady Luck" - B-25J, 45-8884A, N5833B, of the Warbird Registry organization.



"Pacific Prowler" - B-25N, 44-30823A, NL1042B, of the Pacific Prowler organization.



"Miss Mitchell" - B-25J, 44-29869, N27493, of the Miss Mitchell organization.



"Axis Nightmare" - TB-25N, 45-8898, N898BW, of the Tri-State Warbird Museum.



"Wild Cargo" - B-25J, 44-30129, N7947C, from the Fighter Factory.



"Yankee Warrior" - B-25C, 43-3634, N3774, of the Yankee Air Museum.

B-25 flightline at the NMUSAF on Saturday, April 17, 2010.



B-25s Participating in Doolittle Reunion

	Name	Type	Mil. Id.	Reg.	Owner
1.	PACIFIC PROWLER	B-25N	44-30823A	NL1042B	Pacific Prowler Org.
2.	YANKEE WARRIOR	B-25C	43-3634	N3774	Yankee Air Museum
3.	MISS MITCHELL	B-25J	44-29869	N27493	Miss Mitchell Org.
4.	MAID IN THE SHADE	B-25J	43-35972A	N125AZ	Arizona CAF
5.	WILD CARGO	B-25J	44-30129	N7947C	Fighter Factory
6.	PACIFIC PRINCESS	TB-25N	43-28204	N9856C	Warbird Depot
7.	YELLOW ROSE	TB-25N	43-27868	N25YR	B-25 Yellow Rose Org
8.	DEVIL DOG	B-25J/PBJ-1J	44-86758	N9643C	Devil Dogs Squadron
9.	LADY LUCK	B-25J	45-8884A	N5833B	Warbird Registry Org.
10.	BETTY'S DREAM	B-25J	45-8835	N5672V	Warbird Registry Org.
11.	AXIS NIGHTMARE	TB-25N	45-8898	N898BW	Tri-State Warbird Museum
12.	MISS HAP	RB-25	40-2168	NL2925B	American Air Power Museum
13.	SHOW ME	B-25J	44-31385	N345TH	Missouri CAF
14.	PANCHITO	B-25J	44-30734	N9079Z	Rag Wings & Radials
15.	TAKE OFF TIME	B-25J	44-30832	N3155G	Claire Aviation, Inc.
16.	BRIEFING TIME	B-25J	44-29939	NL94562	Mid-Atlantic Air Museum
17.	BARBIE III	B-25H	43-4106	N5548N	History of Flight Museum

In the end, 18 plane owners accepted the invitation with one having to scrub at the last minute for mechanical reasons.

The aircraft rendezvoused on April 15 at Grimes Field in Urbana, Ohio, with the Champaign Aviation Museum serving as host for the planes and crews. On the morning of April 17, the Mitchells made their way to Wright Field, landing on the runway between the museum and restoration facilities where they went on static display. The planes returned to Grimes Field on April 18 after performing a formation fly-over at the NMUSAF. This was one of the largest gatherings of B-25s since WWII.



"Panchito" - B-25J, 44-30734, N9079Z, from Rag Wings & Radials.



"Yellow Rose" - TB-25N, 44-27868, N25YR, of the B-25 Yellow Rose organization.



"Betty's Dream" - B-25J, 45-8835, N5672V, of the Warbird Registry organization.



Revell Ad about “You have your secrets...”

by Lloyd Jones

One of the greatest tools in teaching aviation history is the model airplane. Ask any pilot and he'll almost always tell you how building model airplanes influenced his life. Here's the story of how one of these models came about, and how the industry works for accuracy.

When the existence of the Lockheed YF-12 became public, I was working as a research analyst for Revell, the plastic model company. The competition in the model industry was always keen, and model companies guarded plans for new kit developments as though they were military secrets. Our area was isolated in a separate building, shared with the engineering department. We had security doors with entrance codes, etc., and we reported directly to the company president.

Clearly, the YF-12 was a candidate for a new model, but the only reference material we had was a newspaper photo that showed a side view of the plane in flight. We had no clue as to the size or unique shape of the plane. We did have access to aviation magazines and, as each publication appeared, so did their speculation as to the shape and proportions of the machine. We dutifully studied each concept and began developing the model on the basis of those concepts. Then, one day there was a short note in the *Los Angeles Times* announcing that the YF-12A would be revealed at a presentation to the press at Edwards AFB. I called a friend in Public Relations at Edwards and asked if I could get in, but was told only if I had the proper credentials.

I had done work for a local newspaper, so I asked the editor if I could get credentials. He told me they already had assigned a reporter. I told him, “Well, you’ve got two!” I called my Edwards friend, and he added me to his list.

On arrival at the Air Base, I joined the rest of the press corps, went through the briefing. Then we were taken out to the field for the arrival of the plane. It came in low from the east, presenting a good side view, then banked around and made another pass, but this time made a sharp left turn in front of the viewers, exposing its unique shape to my camera! We then were taken into a hangar where one of the planes had been opened up to show some of its interior. Of course we were not allowed to photograph the cockpit or the



Revell research analyst Lloyd Jones with Edwards AFB PR officer and the Revell kit.

ventral fin, triple wheels, corrugated skin and, of course, the markings! But no dimensions had been provided. A scale model needs dimensions!

Now, as a researcher and model builder (I hadn't gotten into designing decals yet!), I had access to such critical information as the size of the insignia, serial numbers, rescue markings, USAF, U.S. Air Force and other common markings, all with specific sizes as specified in T.O. 1-1-4. So, it

was simply a case of being sure to get these objects in the photographs so I could scale the other parts of the plane. But, we still didn't have the overall size.

The following day, there was a photograph of the YF-12A across the front page of the *Times*. It was taken from the top of the main hangar, looking down on the plane. I called my friend and asked him if he could give me the dimensions of YF-12. He said “Negative! It's classified.”

If you've ever been out to Edwards, maybe you have noticed the ramp in front of the main hangar, which is made of large rectangles of concrete. I asked my friend how big the squares were. He laughed, and then said, “That's not classified!”

About an hour later, he called and told me the size of the blocks. The *Times* photo was actually showing the YF-12A on a grid! From that information, we developed the model, and later learned we had the correct length but the wingspan was 6" short (0.08" on the 1/72 scale model) due to perspective. The real clincher to its accuracy was discovered later when we learned General Dynamics was using our model as a reference for radar and wind tunnel tests. They ordered several cases of the kits.

I built a presentation model of the plane to be given to Col. Robert L. “Fox” Stevens, the pilot on the historic speed and altitude flights. He asked me how we got it so accurate and I told him, “You have your secrets, we have ours!”



Photo of a YF-12A on the ramp at Edwards similar to the one that appeared in *Times*. Note the concrete blocks making up the ramp. (Photo from the [Roadrunners Internationale](#) collection)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all members,

We hope your year is progressing well. We are pleased with the number of returning members and hope it will continue. But, each of you setting a personal goal of recruiting one new member would benefit the Society and even potentially yourself. I would like to encourage each of you to try and recruit one new member before the end of the year.

Attention all Aviation Museum Governors, Directors, Guides, Docents, and Gift Shop proprietors. We can use your assistance in expanding our exposure to the aviation-oriented guests at your facility by placing our *Journal* in your gift shop or library. We will be sending a letter to many of the museums in the next month or so, and if we miss your particular site please communicate with us. We will gladly fill you in on the details. Please contact me through the Society's office.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2010 and plan to do so we STRONGLY ENCOURAGE you to use PayPal. This saves us banking transactions fees. You need not be a PayPal member to pay by credit card. Please read the PayPal payment form page carefully for instructions on paying by credit card. If you have any questions or problems with this, please contact the AAHS Webmaster Hayden Hamilton (webmaster@aahs-online.org) and he will assist you with the process.

For members in the Southern California area who would like to get more involved with your Society, there are a number of opportunities. One of our most pressing is finding a replacement for our Treasurer, Walt Bohl, who will be stepping down at the end of this year. If you have experience at managing finances and basic bookkeeping skills, you are the person we are looking for. If not, maybe you know someone we can coerce into helping us in this area.

The photo library cataloging and digitization process is proceeding as planned. If you have photos or slides that you would like to donate please contact us and we will make the necessary arrangements.

We hope you are enjoying *FLIGHTLINE*. Our Webmaster strives to keep it interesting and we appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Cordially, Bob Brockmeier
President AAHS

AAHS FLIGHTLINE

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Folded Wings



A young Elinor Smith. (Photo from the Smith family)

Elinor Smith Sullivan, 98, a record-setting aviatrix who was named by fellow fliers the 1930 female pilot of the year over Amelia Earhart, died March 19 at a nursing home in Palo Alto, Calif.

Miss Smith, who was known in aviation circles by her maiden name, set multiple solo endurance, speed and altitude records. In answer to a male chauvinist challenge, she flew her plane under four bridges along New York's East River, a stunt that landed her in hot water with federal authorities but secured her fame.

Celebrated in tabloids as Long Island's "youthful air queen," "intrepid birdwoman" and "the flying flapper," Miss Smith was featured on a Wheaties cereal box in 1934. Although now virtually unknown compared with her friend and rival Earhart, she was among the flashiest early aviators.

Miss Smith was born Aug. 17, 1911, in Freeport, N.Y. She took her first airplane ride at age 6, her father tying her blond braids together so they would not blow in her face. The sensation and sights mesmerized her, and she was hooked.

Miss Smith became the youngest licensed pilot in the world at 16, after appealing to Orville Wright, chairman of the National Aeronautic Association. Only 117 women were licensed pilots by 1929, and she was one.

She set altitude, endurance and speed records. In 1931, trying to fly above 30,000 feet, her engine died. While restarting it, she accidentally cut off her oxygen and passed out, high over the Chrysler Building in Manhattan. She recovered at 2,000 feet, with her plane "in a power dive right into the Hempstead Reservoir," she said, before managing a landing.

At 18, she was hired as the first female executive pilot of the Irvin Air Chute Co., dropping parachutists. The next year, she became the first female test pilot for Fairchild Aviation Corp. and Bellanca Aircraft Corp. She endorsed goggles and motor oil. NBC radio hired her as a

commentator covering international flights and races.

She was most proud that her fellow pilots voted her the best female pilot of 1930, at a time when her hero, Jimmy Doolittle, was named the best male pilot of the year. It was an honor she didn't expect; Earhart was in the news, but pilots considered Miss Smith a better flier.

Miss Smith married New York legislator Patrick Henry Sullivan II in 1933 and retired from flying at 29 to focus on her family. After her husband died in 1956, she accepted an invitation to address the Air Force Association and soon resumed flying.

In 2000, she became the oldest pilot to complete a simulated Shuttle landing. Her last flight was in April 2001, when she flew an experimental C33 Raytheon Agate, Beech Bonanza at Langley AFB in Virginia.

Lyle Shelton, 76, died April 8 near his home in Bakersfield, Calif., after a long illness. A legend in the air racing world, Shelton along with his aircraft "Rare Bear," set racing records that will be challenging to break.

Shelton was a Navy lieutenant who had missed a connecting flight to Hawaii in 1964, the year of the inaugural Reno Air Races. He volunteered on Clay Lacy's Unlimited P-51 crew that year and was hooked by the sport.

In 1964, he piloted "Tonopah Miss" to a sixth-place finish in the Unlimited Gold Race and the next year flew Mike Carroll's Hawker Sea Fury, placing second in the Unlimited Consolation Race.

In 1966, Shelton joined Trans World Airlines where he piloted 707s, 727s and Lockheed L-1011s until his retirement in March 1991. His love for air racing never diminished. After placing second in the 1966 Reno Consolation Race using a borrowed Sea Fury, Shelton was unable to borrow another aircraft for the 1967 and 1968 seasons. This encouraged him to find a race plane of his own. The pursuit brought him to Valpariso, Ind., where he found and salvaged the Grumman Bearcat for \$2,500. The rest of the story is air racing history.

Shelton scrambled to collect the missing parts and began racing the plane in Reno in 1969 under the name "Able Cat."

Two years later, he renamed it "Phoenix" after the mythical bird that rose from the ashes, and over the years, the name changed several more times to accommodate sponsors. But in 1980, at the suggestion of aviation writer John Tegler, it permanently became "Rare Bear." Shelton won his first Unlimited Gold title in 1973 and followed it with another in 1975, then the four straight from 1988 to 1991.

"Shelton didn't just own the Bear; he flew the bejeezus out of it," Preston Lerner wrote. "... (He) belongs on the short list of greatest air racing pilots ever. But what made him such a crowd favorite was how he won his races. 'Fly fast' was his motto."

Shelton set the Unlimited Class speed record at Reno three times. He still owns the 3K speed record of 528.33 mph.

Shelton stopped flying in 1997, and John Penney has been the primary pilot since. Penney has won four Unlimited Gold titles in "Rare Bear," the latest in 2007. He finished second in the 2009 Unlimited Gold Race.

In 2006, Shelton sold "Rare Bear" to Rod Lewis, a San Antonio oil man and avid warbird collector.

Maj. Gen. Fred J. Ascani, USAF (Ret.), 92, passed away on March 28, 2010, in Alexandria, Va. Born in Beloit, Wis., he was a U.S. Military Academy graduate (1941).

Ascani flew 53 bombing missions in B-17s during WWII. After the war he was assigned to flight testing and logged time in more than 50 different types of research aircraft. In 1951, he set a world speed record in an F-86E at 635 mph around a 100-kilometer closed course. This event occurred at the National Air Races in Detroit.

In 1961, Maj. Gen. Ascani became the program director for the XB-70, and later became vice commander of the Fifth Air Force based in Japan. He retired from the USAF in 1973.

Maj. Gen. Ascani's decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Legion of Merit, two awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, five awards of the Air Medal and two awards of the Army Commendation Medal.

Maj. Gen. Robert M. White, 85, died March 17 in Orlando, Fla. Gen. White was one of just a few pilots to earn astronaut wings flying a winged craft, the X-15, rather than going into space in a capsule.

Robert Michael White was born in New York City in 1924. He entered military service in 1942 as an aviation cadet, going on to fly with the 355th Fighter Group in Europe during WWII. He flew 52 combat missions between July 1944 and February 1945, when he was shot down over Germany. He was held as a prisoner of war until April 1945.

Gen. White was recalled to active duty in 1951 during the Korean Conflict and served with units based in the U.S. and Japan. In 1954 he was sent to the Air Force's Experimental Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB where he was eventually assigned to the X-15 program. He flew 16 X-15 missions between April 13, 1960, and December 14, 1962. During these missions, he became the first person to fly a winged aircraft at Mach 4, Mach 5 and then to Mach 6. On July 17, 1962, he flew the X-15 to an altitude of 314,750 feet – well above the 50-mile altitude the Air Force accepted as the beginning of space. This flight earned him the service's first rating as a "winged astronaut." At the time, only four other Americans, all Mercury astronauts, had gone into space.

During late 1960s, Gen. White was sent to Southeast Asia. He flew 70 combat missions in F-105s, and was awarded the Air Force Cross. He would go on to command the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards before retiring in 1981.

Photo Archives Report

It seems to be a never ending story. Work continues to progress at a moderate pace on cataloging and organizing the AAHS photo archives. All of this thanks to the efforts of Kase Dekker and his team of volunteers.

Work has begun on scanning the Society's glass slide collection. This collection consists of about 900 lantern slides dating from the late 1940s. The slide set appears to cover the development of the aviation industry with a particular focus on military aviation. While few details are known about the origins of the slide collection, a review of their contents leads us to believe that they were produced by USAF personnel at Wright-Patterson AFB. Many of the images include their "negative" number in upper right-hand corner that we find on prints of military aircraft that underwent testing at Wright Field during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The set includes German and British aircraft in addition to those of the U.S. We will be adding this collection to the photo archive database in the near future.

We would like to thank Stephen Miller for his contributions to the collection. In the past, contributors gave prints, slides or negatives to the collection. With the rapid development of digital images, some like Stephen have realized that they can contribute digital images from their collection to the Society. Thanks also to long-time member Gerald Balzer, who is another making similar contributions. Gerry salvaged thousands of Northrop negatives from the trash bin and has been digitizing his collection for ready access. To date, he has sent the Society hundreds of these images covering the X-4, XP-54, XP-55, XP-56, XB-37 and XB-49 and early development of the Curtiss C-46. We hope that others will consider contributing their collections to the Society as well.

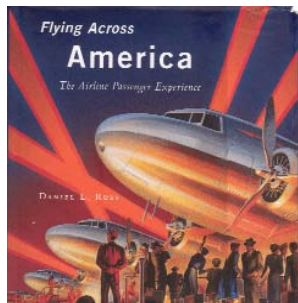
The Society goal regarding the photo archives is to digitize the collection in order to preserve as well as increase its accessibility. Once digitized and cataloged, the information can be put on the Internet and made available to members and researchers interested in American aviation history. The Society is pursuing grant opportunities to accelerate this activity, and members are encouraged to volunteer in helping us achieve this goal.



Bell Aircraft P-63E Kingcobra, 43-11728, ex-Honduran AF now at the National Museum of the USAF. (USAF photo from AAHS photo archives, #P002093)

Book Reviews

Flying Across America: The Airline Passenger Experience



Experience, by Daniel L. Rust. University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-8061-3870-1, Hardbound 10.5" x 11.5," 268 pages, over 100 B&W and color illustrations. \$45.00.

Today passenger planes are delivering travelers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except on very rare occasions such as 9-11. It's an everyday occurrence to hop on a plane and to fly to any destination in the world. Sometimes it takes longer to get to the airport and through security than the flight itself takes.

Weather is rarely a factor any more, but occasionally a blizzard or hurricane will close some airports. Because there are so many passenger planes flying, the closing of a major airport may cause a ripple effect that creates delays at several other airports. But for the most part, people think no more of flying across the country than they do of hopping in their car and driving across town. Some people even commute by air from home to work.

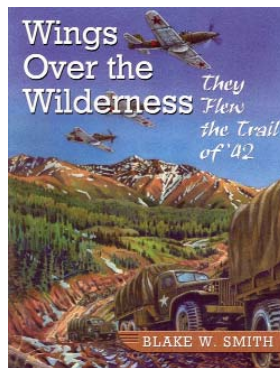
It wasn't always like that. In the early 1920s a passenger shared a compartment or open cockpit with the mail bags. Obviously, passenger accommodations and air travel itself have come a long way. *Flying Across America* gives us a glimpse of what it was really like in those days. It was rugged, but as time went on, the planes got faster, could carry more passengers, and the amenities gradually improved.

Initially, it was the copilot who served the passengers. Eventually that duty was given to a hostess, but she had to be a registered nurse. In 1930 it took 36 hours and 11 stops to fly from Los Angeles to New York. Today it's nonstop in less than six hours. Much has changed since passenger travel started in the 1920s, and that is what this book is all about - what it was like then from the passenger's perspective and how it has changed as the aviation industry grew from a few visionaries. The author tells of the trials and tribulations endured by the passengers and crews, the adventures and misadventures, and how it has become the way we live and travel.

What effect did WWII, the Jet Age, deregulation, and today's security concerns have on the airline passenger's experience? It's all here in this book that is filled with photos, airline advertisements, logos, and interesting facts about the planes, the airlines, and air travel. *Flying Across America: The Airline Passenger Experience* by Daniel L. Rust is informative as well as entertaining.

By Larry Bledsoe

Wings Over the Wilderness – They Flew the Trail of



'42, by Blake W. Smith. Hancock House Publishers, 2008. ISBN 0-88839-595-7, Softbound, 8.5" x 11," 296 pages, with 23 color photos on 8 color pages, 465 B&W historical images. \$39.95.

It became apparent in 1941 that there was a need to find an alternate route for delivery of lend-lease aircraft to Russia, since shipments by way of the North Sea were becoming

problematic due to German sea and air attacks on convoys. Pearl Harbor also awakened us to the need to build up our defenses in Alaska against the possible threat of a Japanese invasion. Thus, the Air Transport Command's 7th Ferry Group was given the task of delivering lend-lease aircraft over the northwest route to Fairbanks, Alaska.

This is a second book by Blake W. Smith and is the continuing story about wartime adventures of pilots who flew the trail of '42 and delivered aircraft to Alaska – the trail stretched 2,400 miles from Great Falls, Montana, to Nome, Alaska. In the beginning it was over vast uncharted areas of Western Canada and Alaska. A joint venture between the U.S. and Canada built or improved a series of airfields and emergency landing strips along the way, which were eventually connected by the Alaskan Highway that was being built at the same time.

This is not some narrative by the author, but the words of the pilots themselves skillfully woven together by the author. It includes stories by the 7th Ferry Command pilots, the Russian pilots and bush pilots, all of whom participated in this hazardous adventure.

For anyone who thinks this was a cake-walk for the pilots, you're in for a surprise. The incredible cold, up to 70° below zero, blind flying in fog and severe icing conditions were the norm, not the exception. As one pilot said, "I'm sure that we all had our share of good and bad times up North, but one thing for sure, we sure as hell learned a lot about flying! I've met and talked to many pilots in SAC and TAC after I got back to the States, but very few who really knew a lot about flying instruments, violent weather, and serious icing conditions. Most of the people thought that these were all subjects people talked about but rarely encountered."

This book is about a little known part of WWII that was just as dangerous, albeit in a different way, as flying combat. The book has numerous stories by pilots who lived them, and some unusual, but interesting appendices – including a letter from the Switlik Parachute Company welcoming a new member to the "Caterpillar Club," and a list of the Russian Air Crash Fatalities 1942–1945.

This is a softbound book with almost 300 heavy slick pages that has one or more images on almost every page. Even though it has a few typos, the kind that Spell-checker doesn't catch, it is an interesting read. It is a book I would

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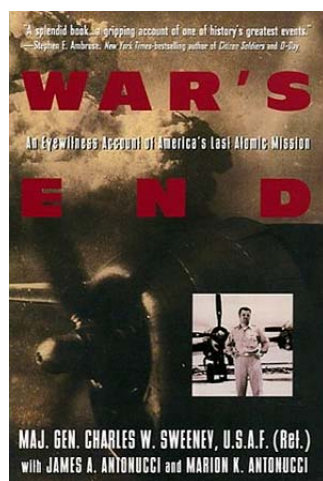
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recommend for anyone interested in learning more about lend-lease deliveries, flying in Alaska, the 7th Ferry Command, blind flying in adverse conditions with only rudimentary instruments, and pilots describing their adventures and misadventures.

By Larry Bledsoe

War's End, an Eyewitness Account of America's Last Atomic Mission, by Maj. Gen. Charles W. Sweeney, USAF (Ret.), with James A. Antonucci and Marion K. Antonucci. William Morrow & Company; 1st edition (August 1997). ISBN: 0-380-97349-9, hardbound with dust jacket, 8.5" x 5.5," 304 pages with photo insert – 13 B&W images. \$25.00.



Charles W. Sweeney loved to fly. Fortunately for him the hand of fate put him in a position where he could fly as much as he wanted and the opportunity to fly just about every type of aircraft in the Army Air Force's inventory – trainers, fighters and bombers. Then one day he received word that a B-29 was coming in to land at his base.

He had never heard of a B-29 and neither had anyone else on the base. It was love at first sight and he knew he just had to fly that plane, which was larger, more powerful, than anything he had ever seen. This is his story that has something for every historian, whether insightful information about the B-29, insider information about

Operation SILVERPLATE, or an eyewitness account of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that literally ended the war with Japan.

Sweeney flew *The Great Artiste* on Tibbets' wing when he flew the *Enola Gay* on the mission to Hiroshima. Sweeney's plane was loaded with instrumentation needed to measure the effects of the atomic (uranium) bomb named "Little Boy" that was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

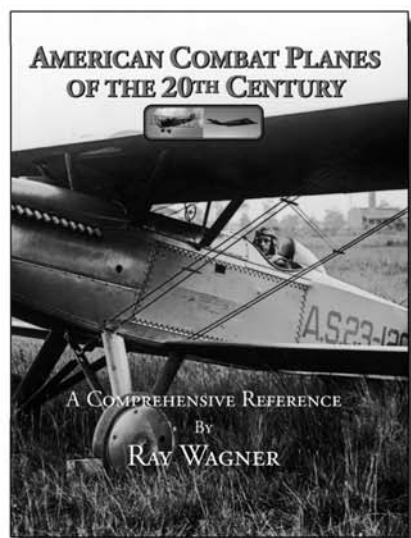
Three days later Sweeney was mission commander flying *Bock's Car* when he dropped the plutonium bomb "Fat Man" on Nagasaki. Unlike the first mission that went off exactly as planned, Sweeney's flight was dogged by Murphy's Law, which more than once almost ended the mission with the loss of the bomb, the plane and his crew. Thanks to his cool-headedness, his extensive experience with the B-29 and the grace of God, he managed to complete a successful mission.

In 1995 when the Smithsonian set up a display about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was warped by the views of history revisionists. Congress called on Maj. Gen. Sweeney to testify as to what he knew. As a result Sweeney knew that he had to document his experiences and involvement with the 509th Composite Group so that his first-hand knowledge of what took place would be recorded for posterity and not be lost with his passing. This book is his eyewitness account that is so necessary to counter today's history revisionists who conveniently overlook the facts in order to present their distorted views that the United States was the aggressor and Japan the victim.

I found the narrative of the B-29 development program both informative and very interestingly written, thanks to

[Continued on Page 12]

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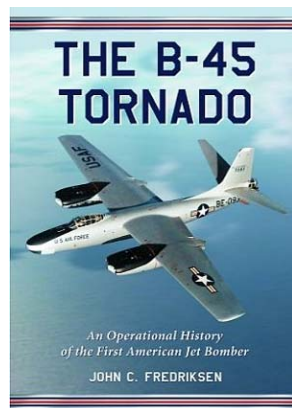
the authors James and Marion Antonucci. Likewise, the creation and training of the 509th Composite Group also provided information that I have not found elsewhere, as well as intimate details of the missions against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But most of all, Sweeney presents the truth that many conveniently overlook today. Sweeney clearly points out that the use of atomic weapons was necessary then to end the war and that it was the correct decision. His hope then and now is that nuclear weapons will never have to be used again.

While this book should be mandatory reading for every History 101 class, it's one that I believe every avid aviation history buff will also want to read.

By Larry Bledsoe

The B-45 Tornado: An Operational History of the First American Jet Bomber

by John C. Fredriksen. MacFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, N.C. 28640. ISBN 978-0-7864-4278-2. Softcover, 7" x 10," 264 pages, 66 B&W photos, 2 drawings. \$45.00.



Overlooked and almost forgotten, the North American B-45 Tornado was the USAF's first jet bomber. Not as stylish as Boeing's B-47, it still served an important role in the transition from

propeller-driven to jet-powered aircraft. The author takes us through the early design challenges and testing of the B-45, amply illustrated with first-person accounts from the engineers, pilots and maintenance personnel that helped bring this aircraft into service. But this is only the introduction of the story.

The bulk of this work focuses on the operational aspects of the B-45 and its variants. The well-researched squadron histories are presented, again, from both the flight crew's and ground personnel's perspective with numerous first-person accounts. One of the biggest operational challenges for those in the B-45 program was associated with the teething problems of bringing a new technology up to operational standards. Equipment failures occurred at a higher frequency than had been anticipated resulting in an inadequate number of critical spare parts. The ingenuity and resourcefulness of the crews at "scrounging" spares to keep aircraft available is well covered, along with their frustrations because of the lack of spares.

This is a well researched and written book that provides excellent insight into USAF operations during the transition to jet aircraft. Definitely an interesting read, even at the somewhat steep price of \$45.00.

Hayden Hamilton



Braniff Lockheed L-049, N2520B, c/n 2081, captured on departure from Midway Airport, Chicago, Ill., on May 5, 1957. (Photo from the Robert Hufford collection, AAHS #32953)

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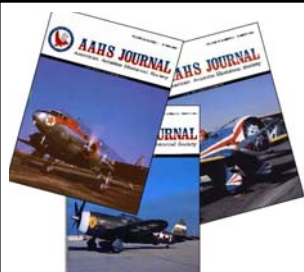
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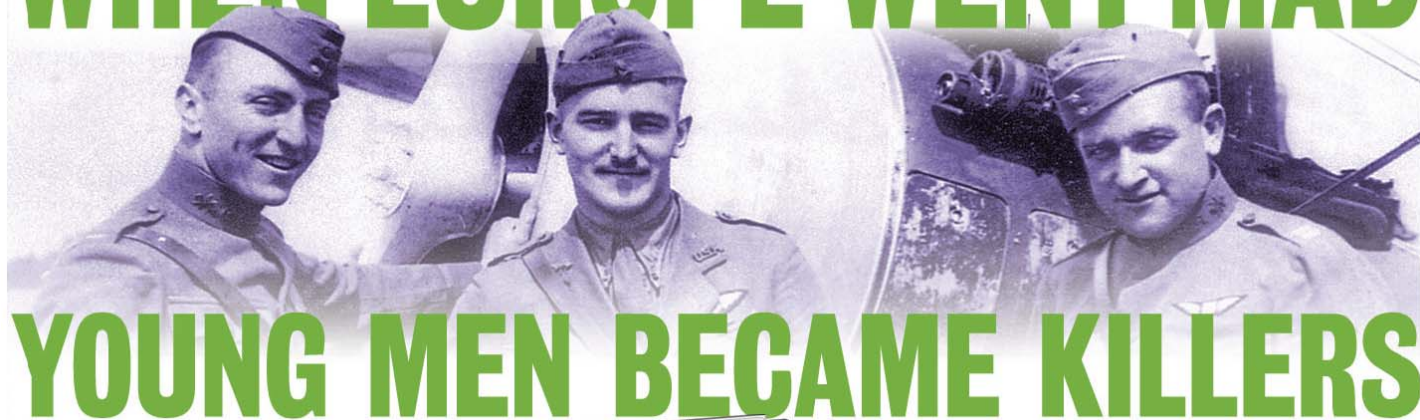
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