



2009 Reno Air Races Preview



By Charles E. Stewart

War Hawk, LLC's Curtiss P-40N, N1195N, race number 17, from Meridian, Idaho. (All photos by the author)

The fact that our country is in the midst of the worst recession we have experienced in the past 25 years made little impression on attendance at the Pylon Racing Seminar (PRS) conducted by the Reno Air Racing Association (RARA) at Reno-Stead airport, home of the World's Fastest Motor Sport on

June 17 thru June 20. This seminar is mandatory for all parties interested in qualifying for the September air race.

There were at least 60 racing aircraft in attendance representing the Unlimited, Sport, Jet and Formula 1 racing classes. Noticeably absent were new entrants to the Biplane and

T-6 classes.

RARA announced that very few Air Race sponsors opted out of the 2009 Races scheduled for September 16 thru 20.

"Strega," a highly modified P-51, won the Unlimited Gold Race in 2008 and owner Bill Destefani immediately

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Bill Destefani's highly modified P-51 "Strega," to be flown by Steve Hinton, Jr.

announced his retirement from Air Racing (again). Last year's rumors of young Steve Hinton, Jr. flying "Strega" have finally come true! Hinton will fly "Strega" in the 2009 races as he was certified in "Strega" at the PRS.

Another void in the Unlimited class in September will be Michael Brown and his three racers! He sold his Tigercat "Big Bossman" and two Sea Furies, "September Pops" and "September Fury," to Rod Lewis, owner of "Rare Bear" and the P-38F "Glacier Girl." It is hoped at least to see that gorgeous Grumman rounding the pylons once again!

A few new Unlimiteds will be racing at Reno in September. Two P-40s, an F4U-4 Corsair and a T-28B.

Considering the number of new airplanes in the Sport Class and their relative performance one might expect this class to be the future of Unlimited Air Racing!

For more information or tickets click onto:
<http://airrace.org/aboutRARA.php>



Clockwise starting with photo below



Sport #75 Thunder Mustang, George Giboney, Des Moines, Wash.

F-1 #54 Cassutt III M, Jim Jordan of Las Vegas, Nev.

Jet #12 Aero L-29 Delfin, Mike Mangold, Victorville, Calif.

Jet #25 Aero L-39 Albatross

Sport #69 Lancair Legacy, Tom McReynolds, Palo Alto, Calif.

Unlimited #18 P-40E from Meridian, Idaho, with Unlimited #81 P-51D "Lady Jo" flown by Dan Vance.

Note: All Formula 1 photos on the F-1 race course, Pylon 5. All Sport Class photos on the Sport race course, Pylon 5. All Unlimited photos on the Unlimited race course, Pylon 4.



A SUSPECT HISTORY OF THE SPRUCE GOOSE AIRLINER

By Lloyd Jones

[Editor's note: Following WWII the commercial aviation industry was awash in a sea of change. The war-generated material restrictions were no longer applicable, and the need for long-range transportation capabilities was ever changing by a globalizing world market. In retrospect, it is sometimes interesting to speculate on what might have been, such as this imaginary press release from early 1950s. Sit back and enjoy a story that could have been.]

(New York, October 1949) – It has recently been learned that following its first successful test flight in 1947, the Hughes H-4 was spirited away to a small tropical island in the South Pacific. Although a large hanger was built in California to house the H-4, and photos showing the plane in the building were released to the press, new information proves they were actually pictures of a scale model. Meanwhile, in a cavernous underground factory on this unnamed island, Hughes began construction on a fleet of the giant flying boats.

Howard Hughes, the prime mover behind TWA, was determined to prove the value of his magnificent flying machine after his confrontation with the Congressional Committee. Under his direction six more of the flying boats have been assembled and tested in total secrecy. With the lifting of wartime restrictions on critical materials such as

aluminum, the new planes have been constructed of metal. The original wooden H-4 has been modified to commercial configuration and will be the first to be placed into service.

TWA has just announced the introduction of their new transport, dubbed “Aluminum Albatross.” In keeping with TWA tradition, each plane has been given a descriptive name. Playing on the size of the aircraft, they have been named Hercules, Titanus, Mammoth, Amazon, Colossus and Big Foot.

The planes are magnificent! Huge panoramic windows allow the passengers to observe the less fortunate travelers on the slower transatlantic ocean liners. On the inaugural flight last week, the Captain of Mammoth gave his passengers a rare treat when he buzzed the Queen Mary. There were no (printable) comments from the voyagers on the ship, but the pilot had to return the British flag that was accidentally wrapped around one of the floats.

The competition between TWA and Pan American Airways is well known. Word of TWA's intention to place a fleet of Aluminum Albatrosses into service caught Pan Am completely by surprise. Pan Am has been searching for a comparable plane and even considered a six engine, double-hulled version of their popular Model 314 Clipper. This plane was actually under development by Boeing, the Model 320,* but was quickly abandoned because the construction jigs for the 314 flying boat had been destroyed.



It is not exactly known how Pan Am was able to obtain one of the giant flying boats. Rumors indicate it was won in a poker game. In any case, Pan Am has managed to acquire an "Aluminum Albatross," calling it "Clipper Universe." Due to be placed in service early next year, Pan Am is offering bookings for two unique nonstop flights between New York and Los Angeles. One will take off from New York, head east over the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean and Pacific arriving in Los Angeles four days later. The second is for individuals in more of a rush. After departing New York, the aircraft will transit down the East Coast to Miami, then across the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean to the Isthmus of Panama. After crossing to the Pacific, it will run up the west coast of Mexico arriving in Los Angeles in slightly over 24 hours after departure.

Pan Am's new queen-of-the-air is being touted as offering services associated with first class ocean liner travel! The great wings were large enough to provide staterooms with bunks for the first class passengers, while

those in coach will find the reclining seats quite comfortable. A modern kitchen in the tail is able to prepare food to be served in a dining area having panoramic windows, overlooking the scenic vistas below.

In the front is a magnificent library, and in the evening, recorded music will be played as passengers dance on the floor in the forward viewing area. At night, powerful spotlights, mounted in the leading edge of the wings and in the float pylons, illuminate the area beneath the plane as it skims low over the ocean.

For those with a bit more energy, a shuffle board has been built into the cavernous area between the top of the cabin and the fuselage. This is reached by a small escalator behind the cockpit area.

With a total passenger and crew capacity of 426, TWA and Pan Am are able to offer a quality of air travel that cannot be matched by competing, land-based aircraft.

*Historians take note: This was a real Boeing design study.

Lufthansa Lockheed Constellation Restoration

By Ralph M. Pettersen

Auburn-Lewiston Airport in Maine has become the epicenter of Lockheed Constellation Starliner activity since Lufthansa purchased Maurice Roundy's three Starliners in December 2007. Lufthansa operated four L-1649As in passenger and cargo service from 1957 to 1966 and is currently restoring former TWA Starliner N7316C to fly on international missions. This is no normal restoration, but a three year effort that will result in a pristine "like new" airliner when completed. This author visited Auburn on May 29, 2009, and toured the Lufthansa restoration hangar with Michael Austermeier, Lufthansa's on-site restoration project manager.

Since arriving at the hangar in November 2008, Starliner N7316C has been stripped of all components. The



Michael Austermeier, Lufthansa's restoration project manager for the Connie.

landing gear assemblies have been removed for overhaul and the aircraft is supported by jack stands and specially made cradles. Many structural components, including the control surfaces and leading edges, have been sent to Tulsa, Okla., to be refurbished by Lufthansa subsidiary Bizjet. The capability to perform this type of work has recently



Lockheed Constellation N7316C early in the process of restoration as seen in May 2009. (All photos by the author)

been established at the Auburn facility and work is ready to begin on refurbishing the triple-tailed empennage and other structural components. Six Wright R-3350 engines have been sent to Ray Anderson Airmotive in Idaho for overhaul. The multitude of parts removed from the aircraft, and those collected by Maurice Roundy over the years, have been evaluated, cleaned, cataloged, inventoried and stored for further disposition. Some parts can be used "as-is," but the majority will be refurbished before reuse. A complete survey of the aircraft fuselage has been completed and defects marked and cataloged for repair. Work has also begun on reversing the freight door conversion completed in 1960, with workers removing rivets and sheet metal. The current Maine-based workforce will be supplemented with

Lufthansa apprentice and licensed mechanics this summer when there will be a big work push.

Austermeier says the plan is to have the aircraft ready for her first post-restoration flight in late 2010 or early 2011. After test flights are performed in the U.S. to check out systems and engines, the aircraft will be flown to Hamburg, Germany, where a vintage interior will be installed at Lufthansa's maintenance and overhaul facility. The refurbished airliner will then be painted in vintage Lufthansa colors at Lufthansa's Hamburg paint facility before making her debut on international missions. At some point in time the aircraft will give up her long-time N-number and be re-registered in Germany.

On May 26 the other resident Starliner was towed across the airport and parked outside the restoration hangar. N8083H had been left behind outside Maurice Roundy's house after N7316C was towed to the hangar for the hangar dedication ceremony in November 2008. Austermeier said that they have not finalized plans for this aircraft but it will be used as a "standard reference" when N7316C is put back together. This aircraft will allow mechanics/technicians working on N7316C the luxury of having an example of "what it should look like" reference when they start routing wires, cables and plumbing on the restoration of N7316C.



Cockpit area stripped down to the basic airframe.



Above: Cabin area looking forward toward cockpit. The plans are to reverse the freight door conversion back to the original passenger entry.

Left: Detail of support cradles and restoration work.

Below: Constellation 8083H will be used as a standard reference during the restoration.



Your AAHS Officers and Staff



Left to Right: Robert Brockmeier, Walter Bohl, Tim Williams, Jerri Bergen, Albert Hansen, Paul Minert, (Lower row) Bruce Cunningham, Kase Dekker and Earl See.

You have seen the names. Some of you have even talked to one or another of them. Let's put some faces to those AAHS names and voices so that the next time you have the opportunity to interact with one of these Society volunteers, you'll be able to draw a mental picture of the individual you are interacting with.

Let's start with your Board of Directors. There are nine in total. President and Chief Planning Officer Robert Brockmeier is a former USMC "egg-beater" driver and retired United Airlines pilot. Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Walt Bohl is an Air Force "brat" and retired United Airlines pilot. Vice President and Executive Secretary Tim Williams, a past Society president and retired school teacher. Al Hansen, retired North American engineer, is Vice President and Chief Publications Officer. Our token Dutchman, Kase Dekker - a former airline and travel agent, oversees the management of the AAHS Photo Archives. Past President Bruce Cunningham, retired aerospace engineer, currently manages the library and book review activities. The rest of the Board of Directors is composed of Jerri Bergen, aviation artist; Paul Minert, USAF retired; and Earl See, retired engineering manager.

The task of producing your journals and newsletters is performed by a team. Managing Editor Hayden Hamilton

works with Al Hansen on messaging and content. Proof reading these publications are Earl See, and "remote" volunteer Job Conger (Springfield, Ill.). These efforts are assisted from time-to-time by additional volunteers too numerous to specifically mention, but whose contributions are greatly appreciated by this editor. Hayden is also responsible for maintaining and enhancing the AAHS Web site.

Len Burke, retired USAF freight hauler, retired Douglas test pilot and retired airline pilot, mans our membership operations. Need to know when your membership expires? Need to update your mailing address? Then Len is the person to contact.

In the photo archives, we have two regular volunteers helping with organization and cataloging. Paul Butler and Joe Fumagalli work closely with Kase and have, over the last several months, made a major contribution in organizing the 80,000 plus slides in the archives. While not cataloged at this time, they have the slide collection organized by manufacture and type so that it is relatively easy to determine what is available. Remote volunteers Chuck Stewart and Michael Hoffman have been assisting with cataloging efforts along with Kase. This team has almost tripled the number of cataloged images in the last two years. That's over 25,000 images that have been carefully scrutinized and documented, with the catalog now approaching 40,000 images.

[Editor's note: The most current catalog is accessible through the AAHS Web site via a search tool with aids in finding specific aircraft.]



Left: Len Burke fortifying himself for another session of updating the membership list. Right: Managing Editor and Webmaster Hayden Hamilton



Where you can find Kase Dekker most of the time.



Paul Butler and Joe Fumagalli working on the negative catalog.

Have some free time on your hands that you would like to donate to the Society? Southern California residents are encouraged to stop by the office in Santa Ana on Wednesdays. For those of you more remote that would still like to help out, we are

looking for people interested in aircraft identification and photo cataloging support. This task requires access to a computer with Microsoft Office (Excel specifically) and image viewing software (MS Windows Paint or Picture Manager will work). You will receive digital images on a CD along with an Excel spreadsheet. The task is to record in the spreadsheet as much information about each image as possible. Things like make, model, type, registration number, airline or unit, etc. If you are interested in contributing to this activity, just drop an email note to webmaster@aahs-online.org.

eNewsletter Name Change

You may have noticed that the masthead of this newsletter is different from the past – *AAHS FLIGHTLINE*. Starting with issue No. 167, the AAHS newsletters are published electronically. In order to recognize this change in distribution format, and to provide better identification of the newsletter other than “eNewsletter,” the Society management has decided to re-brand this publication. A number of potential possibilities were researched and explored with *AAHS FLIGHTLINE* being the unanimous selection by the Board of Directors.

The targeted content, form and functionality of this electronic newsletter has not changed, though should the members have suggestions for improvement, you are encouraged to send them to the managing editor at webmaster@aahs-online.org.

We hope you enjoy the publication and thank you for your support.

Wants & Disposals

For Sale: The following books are available at the price listed plus postage.

- The Great Air Races 1909-1939*, by Don Vorderman, 1969, First Edition, \$12.50
- Visibility Unlimited*, by Dick Grace, 1950, First Edition, \$13.50
- Story of the Gates Flying Service*, by Bill Rhode, 1970, First Edition, \$13.50
- Glory Gamblers, the Dole Race*, by L. Forden (auto-graphed), 1986, First Edition, \$16.50
- The Gee Bee Story*, by Mandrake, 1957, First Edition, 2nd printing, \$16.50
- Curtiss-Wright Aircraft 1903-1965*, by Rubenstein, 1964, First Edition, \$16.50
- Jackrabbits to Jets, the History of NAS North Island*, 1967, First Edition, \$18.00

C.D. Perrotti
P.O. Box 1161
Londonderry, NH 03053
Phone: 603-437-1181

Wanted: Photos of the *USS Wolverine (IX64)* and *USS Sable (IX81)*, training carriers that operated on the Great Lakes during WWII. Photos can be overall views, detail views and of training operations engaged on the

ships. Photos are needed to illustrate an article for the *AAHS Journal*. Photos will be returned after scanning and publication.

Please send the photos to the attention of:

Hayden Hamilton
AAHS Managing Editor
2333 Otis Street
Santa Ana, CA 92704

Wanted: Photos of Northrop Model N-165 and Northrop Model N-173 and a 3-view drawing of this project titled, “System 118P.” This is a hypersonic reconnaissance vehicle proposal for the USAF. Contract number is 33(600)-312423. Can trade aviation history material in exchange. Also, searching for photos of airlines, bush planes in Latin America, circa 1930-1945. Can scan-return and/or trade for material. Thank you.

Dave Stern
Psidavid@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings. We hope all our members are enjoying their summer in spite of rather dire and dour economic news. You can take solace in the fact that none of the Board of Directors accepted a pay raise!

On the good news front we can tell you that the photo/slide/negative collection filing is proceeding quite well thanks to Kase Dekker and his stalwart crew. The digitization process will commence in the near future as our Webmaster, Hayden Hamilton, works out the details.

Several years ago we received a collection of over 250 loose-leaf binders from a member who had passed away. The binders (all contain at least 20 inserts) are the compilation of three-view, profile, and cutaway drawings from aviation magazines from 1920 through the '70s. Those of you that are interested in model aircraft plans or seeking additional information on a particular aircraft may find these drawings of interest. We are currently compiling a data base and will make the list available to our members. We hope to digitize all of them, but time will tell.

If you have questions regarding the Society please direct them to the President, Webmaster, or Editor via our Web site. We look forward to your comments, questions and the like and will do our best to respond to them.

Again, have a wonderful summer.

Cordially, Bob Brockmeier
President AAHS

Air Britain Publications Available

The Society has arranged special pricing for Air Britain publications. Members can order selected publications through the Society at discounted rates below standard, non-member retail prices. For example, consider the following:

*AVIATION MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS
OF NORTH AMERICA* \$39.00
plus \$9.50 shipping

*AVIATION MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS
OF THE REST OF THE WORLD* \$39.00
plus \$9.50 shipping

PIPER AIRCRAFT \$79.00
plus \$11.95 shipping

THE LOCKHEED TWINS \$27.50
plus \$9.50 shipping

The first book listed is highly recommended and represents one of the most current, comprehensive lists of North American aviation collections. Orders should be sent to the AAHS office.

AAHS FLIGHTLINE Sign-Up Reminder

For those that want to be notified by email when the next issue of the *AAHS FLIGHTLINE* is posted, please register your email address on-line. You can do this by going to the AAHS Web site "home page." At the bottom of this Web page is a link and instructions that will allow you to register your email address. This is an "opt in" program. Only those that request notification will receive one. The AAHS will not use your email address registered here for any other purpose than to notify you of an *FLIGHTLINE* posting. You have control and may remove or change your email address at any time. Remember that the electronic version of the *AAHS FLIGHTLINE* is in color.

AAHS FLIGHTLINE

American Aviation Historical Society

President: Robert Brockmeier

Vice President & Chief Publication Officer: Albert Hansen

Managing & Newsletter Editor: Hayden Hamilton

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Photo Archives Report

Work continues on several fronts to enhance and expand the usability of the AAHS Photo Archives. This includes additions to the on-line catalog (approximately 600 entries), additions to the on-line preview thumbnails (approximately 900 images). At this time, the on-line catalog contains 38,150 plus entries and there are now over 4,100 preview images.

Work to further expand the AAHS Photo Archive Series of digital photo CDs is progressing with three new photo CDs in the works. These are *Lockheed Connies, Part II*, *Connies in Color* and *Golden Age Commercial Flying Boats*. The *Lockheed Connies* CD is a continuation of the first CD. *Connies in Color* is a collection of color photos from primarily the late 1950s and 1960s and covers most of the major air carriers that operated this aircraft. The *Golden Age of Commercial Flying Boats* focuses on those aircraft commercially operated during this period. Types include the Sikorsky models S-38 through S-43, Boeing 314 Clippers, the Consolidated Commodore, Douglas Dolphin and Martin 130 and 156.

The *Connies in Color* and *Golden Age Commercial Flying Boat* CDs should be available in early September. *Lockheed Connies Part II* will follow quickly after these. Each CD will cost \$19.95 for members (\$29.95 for

non-members) with \$2.50 extra for shipping and handling. That is less than \$0.20 per image including the shipping and handling!

Each Photo Archive CD generally contains more than 120 high-resolution digital images. CDs mostly in color (e.g., *Connies in Color*) may contain less, but we'll pack as many images as we can get on to the CD.



A rare color photograph of the Douglas XB-19 on the ramp at Douglas's El Segundo plant, possibly just prior to first flight (tail number has yet to be applied). (AAHS P001689)

AAHS Print Service

The AAHS Print Service allows members to obtain photographs from the AAHS collection to support individual research projects and to expand personal collections. Images are made from negatives, slides or scans of high quality prints contained in the AAHS collection.

Pricing: Black & White or Color

5" x 7"		\$4.00
8" x 10"		\$6.00
Digital Images	CD base price	\$2.95
	Each digital image	\$1.00
Domestic Shipping & Handling (per order)		\$2.50
International Shipping & Handling (per order)		\$5.00

Ordering Guidelines

1. Order images in numerical order
2. For every requested image, please provide a 1st and 2nd alternative image.
3. The AAHS Print Service is restricted to members only. Please provide name, address, city where your *Journals* and *FLIGHTLINE* are shipped to.
4. Prints are available in two sizes only. Price includes both black-and-white and color images.
5. Digital images will be scanned at a resolution to provide photographic quality 8" x10" images (roughly 3300x2800 pixels) in JPEG format with highest quality setting.
6. Orders will be processed the 1st and 15th of each month and mailed via first class postage.
7. Credit to the AAHS and the photographer or donor of the photo must be expressed if the image is used in publication.

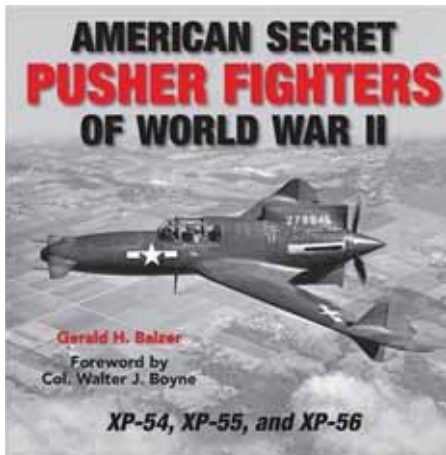
Each order must be accompanied by a check, money order, VISA or MasterCard information (your name as it appears on the card, credit card number, expiration date, and billing address). Send orders to:

AAHS Print Service
2333 Otis Street
Santa Ana, CA 92704-3846



Book Reviews

American Secret Pusher Fighters of World War II, by Gerald Balzer. Specialty Press, 2966 Grand



Avenue, North Branch, MN 55056, www.specialtypress.com. Hardcover, ISBN 1-58807-125-2, 182 pages, 385 b&w and color illustrations, Index, 10¼" x 10¼," Appendices, List price \$39.95. [Editor's note: Specialty Press

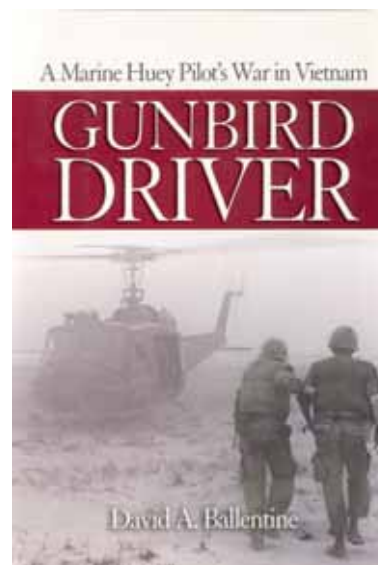
is offering a 10 percent discount and free shipping to AAHS members. See advertisement on page 15]

This story covers the development of three different experimental fighter projects. They are the Vultee XP-54, the Curtiss Wright XP-55, and the Northrup XP-56. All were part of an USAAC research study to explore unconventional designs in an effort to produce aircraft with higher performance than was obtainable by conventional designs of the period. These aircraft were all conceived in the early 1940s and carried on through WWII into 1946. When originally proposed, they all showed great promise, and were on the cutting edge of fighter design. Unfortunately, due to shifting military priorities, as the war progressed, it became clear that they all suffered from critical deficiencies that would preclude them from ever being serious candidates for mass production contracts. These problems varied from lack of a suitable engine, aerodynamic instability, and other factors. In the final result, they were the victims of overly long developmental programs and were overtaken by more conventional designs.

The book is very well written, and contains many interesting pictures and drawings that are presented for the first time. The result is that the reader is treated to a wealth of information about an area of U.S. aircraft manufacturing and development that is not very well known. We enjoyed the book, and highly recommend it to our members.

Paul Butler

Gunbird Driver: A Marine Huey Pilot's War in Vietnam, David A. Ballentine. Published by Naval Institute Press, ISBN: 978-1-59114-019-1, \$28.95. Hardbound with dust jacket, 6" x 9," 276 pages, 30 b&w photos.



The time was 1966-67 and the location was I Corps, the Northernmost military subdivision of South Vietnam. The author flew an armed UH-1E, the Marine Corps version of the Huey helicopter with VMO-6, Marine Observation Squadron Six, out of Ky Ha. That's the setting for this story, but what the author does with it makes for an interesting read.

Klondike Six, the squadron's call sign, was already based at Ky Ha when the author rotated into the squadron. During the next 13 months he transitioned from the new guy to a seasoned veteran who then passed the truncheon on to still other new guys when he rotated out. In so doing, the squadron successfully filled its mission day-in and day-out without missing a beat.

The author takes you on a variety of missions from hauling some of Bob Hope's entourage to dangerous escort missions where the bad guys did their best to cause him and his bird great harm. Along the way he does a short stint on the USS *Princeton* and makes an unwanted trip as a patient to the hospital ship USS *Repose*. You will learn the realities of war as well as the humor.

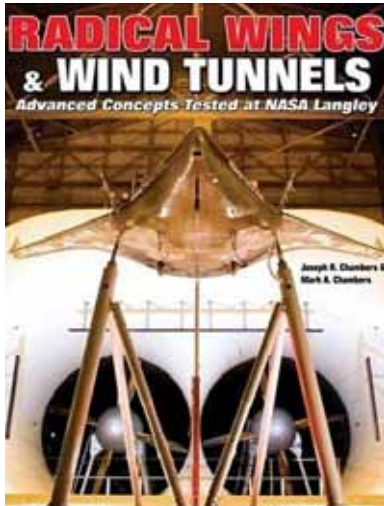
When you finish reading this book you will have learned a great deal about Marine Corps helicopters and helicopter tactics in Vietnam, military jargon, and everyday life at Ky Ha as well as the Marine ground forces they supported. The facts are all there but the author presents it in such a way that the reader understands what he is sharing.

One peculiar aspect of the book is the author's use of four-letter words in the dialog. He does this not in a crude way or for shock value but as he said, "As I traced the episodes and personalities, including my own, the more the individual characters became vivid, the more I remembered how we expressed ourselves, and the more hopeless it was to "clean it up." I have simply allowed my mind to drift back, to lapse into the language of the Marines with whom I served."

The author is an exceptional story-teller who informs and entertains the reader at the same time. He puts you in the cockpit of a Huey gunship as he flies a variety of missions. This book is for anyone interested in VMO-6's operations at Ky Ha, and for anyone looking for insight into the Vietnam War from a helicopter gunship pilot and his crew's perspective. I highly recommend this book.

Larry W. Bledsoe

Radical Wings & Wind Tunnels; Advanced Concepts Tested at NASA Langley, Joseph R. Chambers & Mark A. Chambers. Specialty Press, 2008, ISBN 978-1-58007-116-1. \$34.95. Hardcover, 8.5" x 11," 160 pages with 224 b&w and 66 color photos.



press.com, 2008, ISBN 978-1-58007-116-1. \$34.95. Hardcover, 8.5" x 11," 160 pages with 224 b&w and 66 color photos.

A fascinating history of the development of the NACA/NASA wind tunnels at the Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va. The authors not only provide insight behind the design and development of these wind tunnels, but take the reader through their use to study cutting-edge and radical aircraft designs over the last 77 years. Three unique wind tunnels are highlighted in this work: the Full Scale Tunnel, the 20-foot Vertical Spin Tunnel and the Free-Flight Tunnel.

The Full Scale Tunnel was dedicated in May 1931. The tunnel is a closed-circuit, open-throat tunnel characterized by an open quasi-elliptical test section 60 feet across, 30 feet high and 56 feet in length. This tunnel was capable of test speeds up to 100 mph and was used extensively during WWII in drag reduction studies of full-scale fighters, scout planes and torpedo bombers.

The 20-foot Vertical Spin Tunnel was built in 1941, replacing a late 1920s five-foot design and a 15-foot free-spinning tunnel of 1935. This tunnel has a vertically oriented test section where the airflow allows the simulation of the downward velocity of an aircraft during spins. Models are hand-launched into the vertically rising airstream to evaluate spinning and spin-recovery behavior, tumbling resistance and recovery from out-of-control situations.

The Free-Flight Tunnel allows the study of the dynamic stability and control characteristics of an aircraft model in a free-flying condition. Airspeed and tunnel tilt angles are adjusted to maintain the unpowered model to remain stationary in the center of the tunnel. While the tunnel operator controls the airspeed and tunnel tilt, a "pilot" flies the plane during the test by feeding inputs to the model's controls via thin wires that are kept slack during the flight.

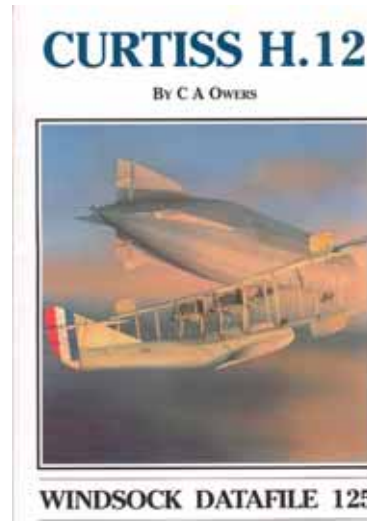
The authors illustrate how these wind tunnels have been used over the years by focusing on the testing of more than 60 radical aerospace vehicles that did not or have not yet entered production. Starting in the 1920s with early monoplane designs, they take the reader through WWII and post-war innovations and continue to current research on hypersonic vehicles, lifting bodies and modern advanced fighters.

The book is an insightful read into the development and evolution of the American aerospace industry, and is amply

illustrated with photographs of the vehicles discussed as they are being tested in the Langley wind tunnels. This book is a recommended read for anyone interested in this aspect of aviation history.

Hayden Hamilton

Curtiss H.12, C.A. Owens. Windsock Datafile 125,



Published by Albatross Productions, Ltd. Great Britain. ISBN 1-902207-94-7, Saddle-stitched, 8 1/4" x 11 3/4," 34 pages, 86 b&w photos plus scale drawings.

The description of the book's cover image states, "'Old eighty six-six-six' - 14 May 1917 and the crew of a Curtiss H.12 from Great Yarmouth encounter German Naval Zeppelin L22

some 18 miles NNW of Texel Island. Moments later, the blazing airship plunges into the sea as incendiary bullets from the flying boat's bow gunner find their mark."

This is an apt introduction to this book about the use of Curtiss H.12 flying boats off the coast of Great Britain to thwart German attacks by Zeppelins, submarines, and even Gotha bombers. When one thinks of WWI aerial combat it is often about the Red Baron, Eddie Rickenbacker, and their fellow band of pilots dueling in the skies over Europe. This book broadens our knowledge to include the little known aerial combat that took place along the coasts of England.

Along the way, author C.A. Owens gives the reader a detailed history of the H.12 flying boat - its lineage, its development, and construction. The book is filled with rare historical photos with additional information about the aircraft's history, which included use by the U.S. Navy. Even though the publisher includes stern warnings about copyright infringements, it includes 1:48 and 1:72 scale drawings of the H.12 for the modeler. A surprising amount of information is crammed in its 34 pages.

As the subtitle indicates, Windsock Datafile 125 is part of the publisher's series of books about aircraft, Zeppelins, and anything that flies. It also recommends other books in the series that provide a more complete picture of this little known aerial battlefield. If you're looking for something different than the usual stories about aerial combat in the "war to end all wars," then you will find this an interesting place to start. One question that lingers in my mind - is the Curtiss H.12 the only American-manufactured aircraft to see combat in WWI?

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The first Convair 880, N801TW, photographed at Edwards AFB, May 1, 1960. (AAHS image S000250)

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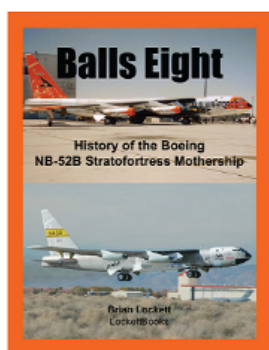
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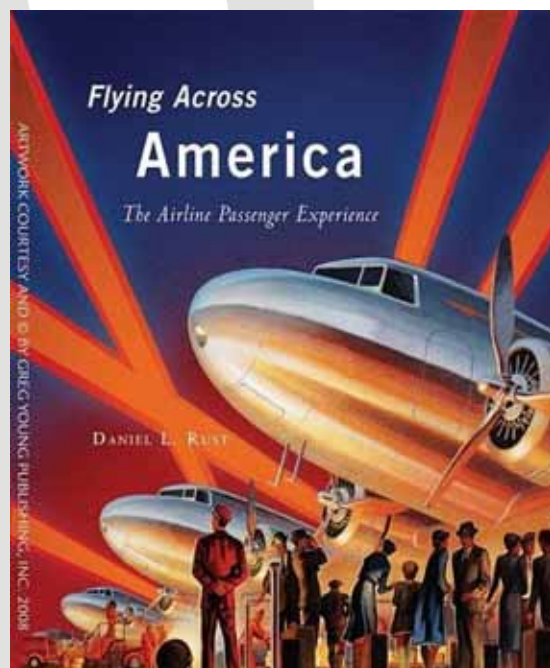


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