

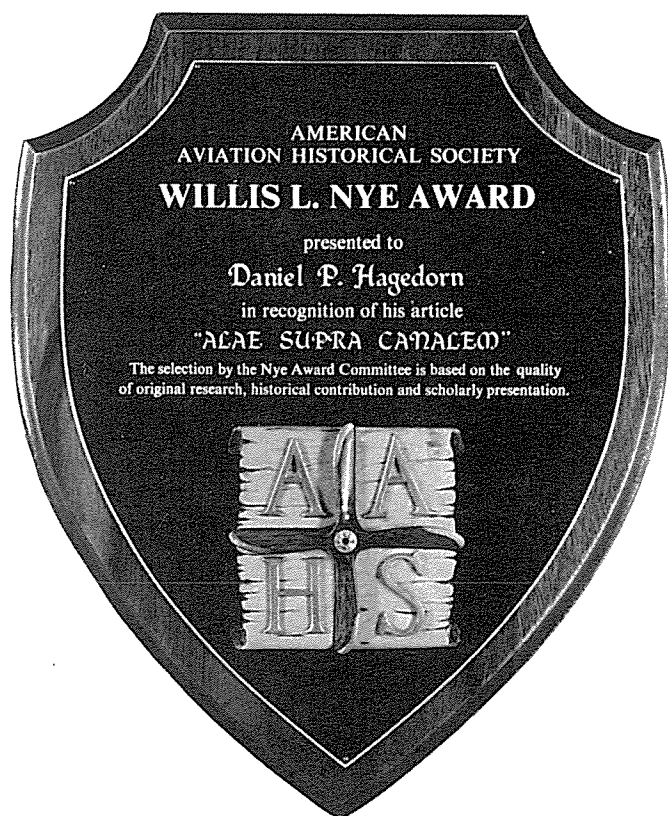
the existing funds to remain dormant and unused for the purpose they were intended. We are confident that in making this move at this time that we will soon be able to implement the full program as it was originally intended. And how do we intend to accomplish this?

The answer is PARTICIPATION. A donation of \$1.00 from each member will be more than enough to put the Memorial Fund on a sound footing. A \$5.00 contribution from each member will enable us to begin the awarding of grants and scholarships in amounts up to \$500.00 per year, and \$10.00 each from every member will make grants of up to \$1,000.00 a year possible. Larger amounts are welcome, in fact we have had contributions of \$100.00 or more. And remember, no matter what the size of the contribution, it is deductible for income tax purposes.

All contributions will be acknowledged by return mail and each donor will receive a black and gold decal. A list of donors will be published periodically in the Newsletter (unless you prefer to remain anonymous). Each year the annual report will include an accounting of the funds collected and disbursed so that you will know where your money is going.

We wish to emphasize at this point, that applications for grants or scholarships will not be accepted until full funding is accomplished to support those grants. We also wish to state that the Life Membership awarded to the winner of the Willis L. Nye Award is an award of merit for past accomplishments, and does not automatically entitle the recipient to receive a grant. Grants will be awarded only on application, and after a thorough review to determine the merit of the project for which the grant will be awarded. Complete rules governing the awarding of grants will be published only after sufficient funding has been obtained to assure a continuing self-sustaining program.

One thing we must all remember. Even though this program carries the name of Willis L. Nye, and is a tribute to his memory, it is your program, your means of advancing the cause of aviation history by providing funds to assist in research that might otherwise not be done.



# NEWS & COMMENT

FROM OUR MEMBERS

## X MARKS WHAT SPOT?

*Dana Bell, Alexandria, VA 22304*

I seem to remember a letter in a past Journal raising a question over the "Center of Gravity" crosses on P-38s and P-51s. A check of my Journal failed to turn up that letter, so I submit the following for the News and Comment Section without reference to the first letter:

A telegram recently found at the National Archives casts doubt on several references to black crosses marking the center of gravity for P-38s and P-51s. Dated 23 December 1943, for Eaker from Echols, signed Arnold, it reads: "Lockheed Lightning airplanes modified to include leading edge wing tanks and North American Mustangs modified to include 85-gallon fuselage tanks shipped to your theater are identified by crosses painted on the front part of the fuselage immediately below airplane serial numbers; black cross on uncamouflaged airplanes and a white cross on camouflaged airplanes. This is to facilitate appropriate disposition of these airplanes upon arrival in your theater."

## ARTHUR PEARCY, JR.

*Llanbedr, Gwynedd North Wales, UK*

In Mauno Salo's review of the Ballantine PB DC-3, he raises the question of my having served with a USAF C-47 *Dakota* Squadron (Newsletter #39, pg. 23). As a matter of interest, I was with the USAF 7531st Air Base Squadron, 7500th AB GRP, here in the UK where we found ourselves operating C-47 Dakotas, not Skytrains. We took delivery of new refurbished C-47s from a civilian base and I discovered they were part of a batch of 50 RAF Dakotas returned to the USAF. On the Douglas production line during WWII they were given RAF serials. I have photos of a lot of these which went to NATO countries after being issued their USAAF serials for the very first time.

## MORE CURTISS TRIPLANES

*Thomas G. Foxworth, Huntington, New York*

With regard to Dan Hagedorn's note, yes, I agree, I erred on the date of the Wasp triplane crash in Bolivia—but so did he! The date was May 20, 1920 (not May 18, as he says). Hudson's grand flight across the Andes was made May 19, 1920, undoubtedly the outstanding South American aviation event of the early years. I'm surprised the editor didn't jump in, to remind us all that the JOURNAL itself published a very scholarly piece, well documented, on the entire affair in the 15/1 (Spring 1970) JOURNAL, pp. 69-73, written by Donald L. DeWitt and illustrated by Robert E. Weiler.

## JAPANESE WARHAWK

*William H. Bartsch, Jakarta, Indonesia*

Further to the story, "Japanese Warhawk" (Vol. 20, No. 2, Summer 1975) and the mystery of the identity of the three American pilots who cooperated with the Japanese when they were captured with their P-40s on Mindanao in May 1942, I have now succeeded in identifying the leader, "Major Snead." He was

actually *Captain* Sneed, Charles N., a pilot in the 20th Pursuit Squadron of the 24th Pursuit Group, according to the roster of the Group as of December 8, 1941, at which time he was a First Lieutenant. Indeed, he was one of the best fighter pilots of the Group, being credited with three of the 103 Japanese aircraft claimed as destroyed by the Group during its short Philippine campaign.

Piecing together bits of information, it appears that when the 20th Pursuit Squadron had lost most of its planes—in mid-February 1942—Lt. Sneed was assigned to serve as an assistant to Lt. Col. Allison Ind's intelligence staff at "Little Baguio" on Bataan, and by the time the base was abandoned in early March 1942, he had been promoted to captain. (See Allison Ind, *Bataan: the Judgment Seat*, pp. 298, 331.)

Apparently Sneed was subsequently transferred to Corregidor, for on 9 April 1942 he took off from there in an old training plane with a load of evacuees, but was forced down in the jungles of central Philippines, making it to Iloilo (Panay) after a succession of adventures, and eventually reaching the final destination of Mindanao with his passengers. For this exploit, Sneed was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

On 25 April 1942, Col. Ray T. Elsmore, commanding officer at the Del Monte, Mindanao, airbase, sent Sneed to Lake Lanao (northern Mindanao) to supervise the handling of the two PBV Catalina flying boats which were to arrive there on 29 April from Australia on their way to Corregidor on the last evacuation mission from that doomed island. This assignment in effect cost Sneed his final chance to be flown out himself. (This information according to the "Elsmore Statement" made to Walter D. Edmonds for his *They Fought With What They Had*) Sneed apparently thereafter reported back to the Del Monte base, from where he led a strafing mission against the Japanese landings of 3 May 1942 at Cagayan, north of Del Monte, and was captured when Del Monte fell a few days later (according to Ushijima's account as translated in the JOURNAL article).

From the above, it appears that Sneed was a very capable, brave, and loyal American, characteristics that need to be made known in any balanced assessment of his actions following his capture.

"According to Ushijima, Sneed was scheduled for transfer from Manila to Japan shortly after he was captured. However, Lt. Col. George H. Armstrong, a former pilot with the 17th Pursuit Squadron in the Philippines and a classmate of Sneed, was reliably informed that Sneed died in a prison camp in Davao, Mindanao. It thus appears that he was never transferred to Manila and thence to Japan as planned, but imprisoned with other survivors on Mindanao."

One further note on "Japanese Warhawk": The "Col. Hoshi" I was unable to identify at the time the article was published turns out to be the commanding officer of the 10th Independent Air Unit, who assumed command of the six Ki-27 Nates of the 84th *dokoritsu chutai* (independent squadron)—one of which was flown by Ushijima—on 23 April 1942 in the final air actions against American forces on Mindanao. (See Japanese Monograph No. 11, "Philippines Air Operations Record, Phase One.")

## AMERICAN BIRDMEN IN PHILIPPINES

George A. Fuller, Mount Royal, Quebec, Canada

Enrique B. Santos' article, "American Birdmen in the Philippines, 1911-1912," which appeared in the Spring 1976 JOURNAL contains some errors and in the interest of historical accuracy the following comments are made.

The author has confused Captain Thomas Scott Baldwin with the Canadian aviation pioneer, Frederick Walker "Casey" Bald-

win. It was the latter who was one of the original members of the Aerial Experiment Association, making the first flight on the Association's "Red Wing" biplane.<sup>1</sup> Although Captain Baldwin was a respected friend of the Association members and attended its inaugural dinner in Halifax, Nova Scotia<sup>2</sup> he was never active in the Association, nor was he ever a member of the Curtiss Exhibition Company, as the author states.<sup>3</sup>

Captain Baldwin did not make the first parachute jump in the USA. He revived and greatly refined an art which had been practiced there first in 1819 when the French aeronaut Louis-Charles Buille is reported to have descended from a balloon in a basket suspended from a parachute at Jersey City, New Jersey.<sup>4</sup>

Lee Hammond was not a participant in the Belmont Park, New York, aviation meet in 1910. Although he did not compete in any of the contests, Captain Baldwin, flying one of his "Red Devil" biplanes, performed at the meet.<sup>5</sup> His pupil, Lee Hammond, only completed his flight training with Baldwin at Mineola, Long Island, during the following summer.<sup>6</sup>

Sources for this information are as follows:

1. Parkin, J.H., "Bell and Baldwin . . .", Toronto, 1964.
2. The Halifax Herald, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1 Oct. 1907, pg. 1.
3. Eklund, Don Dean, "Captain Thomas S. Baldwin: Pioneer American Aeronaut," University of Colorado, Ph.D. Thesis, 1970. (Xerox University Microfilm)
4. Milbank, Jeremiah, Jr., "The First Century of Flight in America," Princeton, NJ, 1943.
5. "Aeronautics," New York City, Vol. 7, No. 6, December 6, 1910, p. 202.
6. Ibid., Vol. 9, No. 1, July 1, 1911, pp. 16, 18.

## NORTHWEST AIRLINES

Arthur Carter, Arlington, VA

Regarding Mr. Galbraith's excellent article on Northwest Airlines, I believe I can fill the gap with reference to the "unknown DC-3 leased from American Airlines." In my youth, I was occasionally fortunate to obtain American Airlines' "Airplane and Engine Directories" that were being discarded. One of them, a March 13, 1939 issue, identifies it as "NC-21745, leased to Northwest Airlines," serial no. 2103.

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Len Morgan, Argyle, TX

David Galbraith's aircraft history of Northwest Airlines in the 1976 Winter JOURNAL is well done. Having wrestled with my own airline's fleet list for years, I know the hard work his article represents.

I take issue, however, with his concluding remark that "... Northwest has become the most consistently profitable and efficient airline in America today." Such a conclusion is not borne out by the facts.

In its annual report on the largest 963 American public companies, Forbes (Jan. 1, 1977 issue), using return on stockholder's equity as a measure of profitability, lists Delta as Number One with 17.3% (percentage of the stockholders' equity per share), Braniff in second place with 17.1% and Northwest in sixth place with 8.3%. This is the measure of profitability over the past five years, incidentally.

In another measure of profitability, return on total capital, again it is Delta at the top, Braniff next, Northwest sixth.

In sales over the last five years (a measure of growth) Tiger International is at the top of the list with Allegheny second and Northwest ninth. In another growth measure—earnings per share—Western tops the list, with Braniff second and Northwest seventh.

"Efficiency" is more difficult to define. If it is measured in the number of passengers moved each day per employee or the aircraft hours logged per day or the percentage of schedules oper-

ated within 15 minutes of timetable or flight crew utilization, Northwest did not head the list last year, or over the last five years. Figures issued by the Air Transport Association and Civil Aeronautics Board will verify this.

All things considered, Braniff is probably the most efficient airline flying anywhere today. Its all-727 domestic fleet and all DC-8 international fleet are textbook models of standardization. Its single 747, employed in daily Texas-Hawaii service, averages almost 15 hours per day in flight, has logged more hours than any other 747 anywhere (even though it was the 100th delivered), has accumulated flight at a faster rate than any other single aircraft in history and—perhaps most importantly—has earned a profit from the first. Now *that's* efficiency!

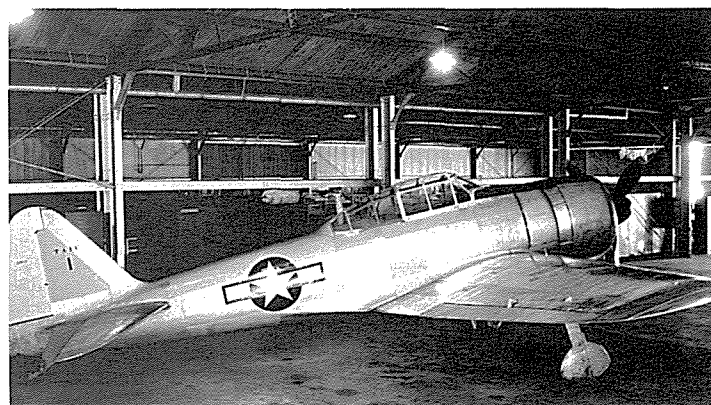


Curtiss HS-2L hull under construction at Ottawa, Canada, November, 1975. This will be assembled with wings and tail surfaces from C-652. Fokker D-VII under restoration in background. (Photo by K.M. Molson)

## “TAME” ZEROS

*Barrett Tillman, Athena, Oregon*

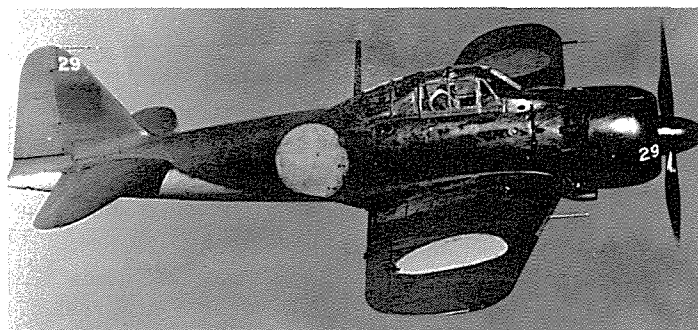
During WW II about 15 Mitsubishi A6M Zero series fighters were brought to the U.S. and flown for performance evaluation and intelligence information. A Navy pilot who flew two of these “tame” Zeros is retired Rear Admiral William N. Leonard, who was credited with six confirmed victories while flying with VF-42, VF-3 and VF-11 in 1942-43.



As is generally well known, the first “Zeke” to fall into American hands was an A6M2 (Model 21) off the carrier RYUJO in June, 1942. This aircraft had sustained battle damage during a raid on Dutch Harbor, Alaska and its pilot, Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga, was killed when the Zero flipped over while landing in a swamp on Akutan Island. U.S. troops found the enemy fighter well enough intact to ship it to San Diego’s North Island Naval Air Station for repair.

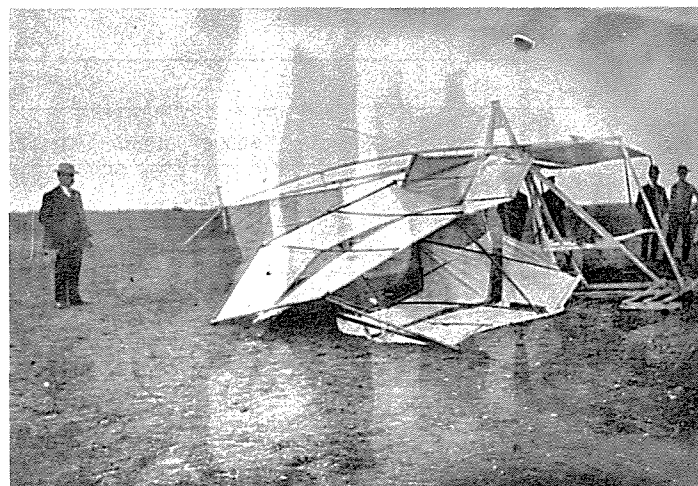
Admiral Leonard relates, “I got hold of the Model 21 in the summer of 1944 when I came home to train new VF pilots. We found it was gathering dust, having exhausted the inquiring of the intelligence types. We put it to work flying against our squadrons so they could see a live and flying hostile type a/c. It was pretty much used up; we had to improvise to keep the hydraulics going, though other systems were surprisingly vital.”

But the “tame” Zero came to an inglorious end. “I had let my old flying buddy, roommate and Annapolis classmate Lt. Cdr. Dick Crommelin check out in it,” Leonard recalls. “While taxiing out he was run into by an SB2C pilot who was not looking where he was going. Result: the Zeke chopped to pieces from tail to the cockpit. Fortunately, Crommelin was unharmed.”



Admiral Leonard returned for brief leave from sea duty in February and March, 1945 and discovered an A6M5 (Model 52) which had been shipped to the U.S. with a dozen other Japanese aircraft from Saipan in mid-1944. Temporarily assigned to the staff of Commander, Fleet Air West Coast, Leonard said, “The 52 came into our hands as a result of some snooping I had done. I managed to get it assigned to us without waiting for the intelligence types to wear it out. It was a low-time, dandy bird. I had only a fleeting chance to fly it as I was again at sea in the Fast Carrier Task Force from March until September. It had about 200 more horsepower than the Zeke 21 and they helped much. My log shows I got five or six flights in each bird before it was all over. I do not know what final disposition was made of the Zeke 52, but I have the left folding wingtip, manifold pressure gauge and air-speed indicator (in knots) from the Zeke 21. Wish I had enough more parts to fly it!”

Happily, Admiral Leonard retains enough information and photographs to be a major factor in compiling the history of VF-11, which will appear in a forthcoming Journal.



Above photo is from the collection of the Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas. It is identified only as “Airship”. If any of you have any information about this aircraft, please pass it on to the Editor AAHS JOURNAL. (Photo via Nick Pocock, Hillsboro, Texas)