

NEWS & COMMENT

FROM OUR MEMBERS

OUR APOLOGIES—To the Minnesota Historical Society and the San Diego Aerospace Museum. The day the final paste-up was made for the article, "Lindbergh's Return to Minnesota 1927" (Spring 1977) the editor's paper stretcher was in the shop for overhaul. In order to squeeze all the copy into the limited available space he cut too deeply into the credit line, and the result is that we are not sure of which darn society we are talking about. The credits should have read as follows:

"This article is reprinted from MINNESOTA HISTORY, Volume 42, No. 4, pages 141-152, copyright 1970, with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society. No further use may be made of this article without specific permission from the Minnesota Historical Society.

"The lead-in photo on page two is from the Reif Collection, courtesy of the San Diego Aerospace Museum. The photos on page six and the left column of page seven are from the collection of Oscar Tunem of Clarkfield, Minnesota. The remaining photos are from the Minnesota Historical Society collection."



OA-10A s/n 43-3924, Foggia, Italy, April, 1944. (Photo by Stan Staples).

OA-10-A OVER SAN FRANCISCO—WHEN?

Stan Staples, Chico, California

In volume 16, No. 1, page 34, a photograph is shown of an OA-10-A, No. 43-3924, in flight over the San Francisco Bay Area in 1943.

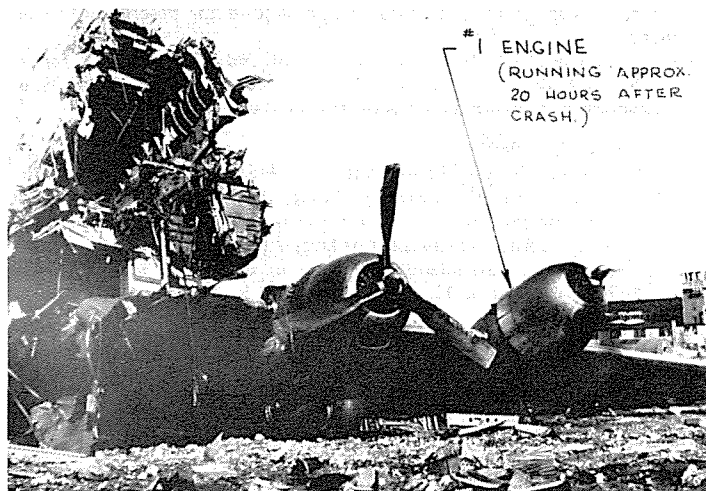
I really suspect that the date should have been 1953; however, that is not the point of this letter.

I thought perhaps you might like to see another view of 924, and am enclosing them for your files, if you so desire.

They were taken at Foggia Main, Foggia, Italy, in April of 1945.

I was a B-24 pilot, assigned to the 461 B.G. 765th B.S. 49th Wing, 15th A.F. based near Cerignola, just below Foggia. I had gone up to Foggia one day when I wasn't scheduled to fly, for the purpose of photographing some airplanes. One of the rescue squadrons, I never did know the number of the unit, operated the OAs from this base. As you can see from the one print, there are at least three ships in view. The one ship is numbered 43-3924. It was painted blue gray, with the white underbelly and wings.

I rather suspect that this same ship did not fly around San Francisco Bay in 1943, painted up in the bright scheme as depicted in the Journal; 1953 I'll buy, however.



C-124 s/n 52-991 (U.S. Air Force photo).

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF C-124C ACCIDENT

Bob Meakin, Huntington Beach, California

On April 27, 1955, C-124 Fuselage No. 297, AF52-991, operated by the 52nd Squadron (63rd TCG) from Donaldson AFB, South Carolina, crashed by Frobisher Bay (Baffin Island), Canada. The accident was reported by Frederic Glasgow, a Douglas Aircraft Company, Inc., field service representative.

Aircraft on cargo mission from Churchill to Frobisher Bay, Canada, crashed approximately 50 feet short of runway while attempting a G.C.A. landing at Frobisher Bay. The pilot made a practice G.C.A. approach to approximately 300-400 feet and then took over visually. The pilot reported that everything was operating normally and that he thought a satisfactory landing was being accomplished.

At the point of impact, the right main gear folded and the right wing sheared at the fillet. The aircraft continued to slide down the runway and veered to the right breaking into several pieces. The No. 3 and No. 4 engines, right wing and nose wheel well were burned. The fuselage broke into three sections. The No. 1 engine continued to run approximately 20 hours after the crash. No volunteers to try to shut engine down! Controls gone.

The visibility at the time of the accident was unrestricted.

No fatalities occurred. The co-pilot was most seriously injured; the radio operator, navigator and scanner were also injured. The pilot and three other crew members were not injured.

NOTES FROM RP 7424 P-40G CLARIFICATION

Eric C. Hart, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In conducting research into the Curtiss Model H81, nothing has, as yet, come to hand which could be taken as the first erroneous mention that the particular P-40 with USAAC serial number 1939-221 was built, or ordered, or converted to the first, or only P-40G; all the foregoing dependent on which reference is used. Lately, it has finally been revealed that there was not one, but several P-40Gs. However, even Mr. Peter Bowers, in his series of USAAC/AAF serial numbers (AAHSJ—Fall 1975) still claims that 39-221 was delivered as a P-40G. Where this information first came to light will probably never be known.

Nothing definite is yet known of just what particular modifications went into turning an original P-40 into a P-40G other than the addition of a new set of wings carrying four .30-cal. machine

guns, instead of two. Various documents, however, list changes in weights and performance which tentatively point to other changes not specifically noted. Hopefully, these will become known in the near future.

One fact, though, can be made known. This is that 39-221 was *not* delivered as a P-40G. This aircraft was built and delivered to the USAAC as a P-40, the 66th P-40 of the original contract. A look at the individual aircraft record card proves this point. Although the card itself lists 39-221 as a P-40G, delivered to Langley Field on 5 August 1940, a thorough study of the entire card makes it evident that the "G" was added after the aircraft had seen service.

Received at Langley, 39-221 was flown 26.7 hours before returning to Curtiss for an unknown reason. Back at Langley, still in August 1940, 39-221 was flown 18.3 hours in September and 29.7 hours in October. Strangely, no flight time is recorded for both November and December 1940, while only 0.8 hours are shown for January 1941.

Taking for granted that 39-221 had been assigned to the 8th Pursuit Group since delivery, the aircraft arrived at Mitchel Field on 21 January 1941. There, it flew 45.4 hours during February, March and April. No further time is listed for the next three months. This is explained under the "Remarks" column as follows, "Wrecked at Mitchel Field 4-5-41 2nd Lt. P.W. Atkinson ground looped on landing."

Also in the remarks column is this important notation: "Re-designated as P-40G airplanes [sic] per Mitchel T-S3 8-14-41."

So it was that 39-221 did not become a P-40G until 14 August 1941, one year and several days after it was first received by the USAAC. Gathering an additional 123.3 hours flying time at Mitchel, Curtiss and MAD in the next three months, 39-221 was assigned back to the Curtiss Co. on 31 October 1941 as an article of Defense Aid with a total flying time of 227.4 hours. A written notation at the bottom of the card simply states: "Russia 8-31-43." from which it can be assumed that 39-221 was sent to Russia sometime between November 1941 and August 1943.

There we have a brief history of 39-221 which conclusively proves that this aircraft was *not* delivered to the USAAC as a P-40G.

THE FATE OF MAJOR CHARLES R. SNEED

W.B. Bartsch, Jakarta, Indonesia

In my letter to you of January 17, 1977 I sent a correction for the "News and Comment from Our Members" item I sent you on December 2, 1976 regarding the activities and fate of Major Charles R. Sneed in the Philippines, 1941-42.

A few days ago I received a letter from the American Battle Monuments Commission with the definitive statement on his fate and would like this to be included in the final paragraph of the item, if it is not too late. If not the last paragraph should read:

"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, Philippines, and a classmate of Sneed, was informed t

Davao, Mindanao. According to the U.S. Army's burial records of Sneed, this is not quite correct; Sneed was actually killed when the Japanese prisoner of war ship *Enoura Maru*, taking Sneed and others to Japan from the Philippines, was bombed and sunk by U.S. aircraft on January 9, 1945 in Takao Harbor, Takao, Formosa. His remains were never recovered and identified. At any rate, Sneed was never transferred to Manila and thence to Japan immediately after

his capture as planned, but imprisoned with other survivors on Mindanao until his fatal voyage to Japan."

Could you make another small change in the text. In the first paragraph, the second sentence should begin "He was Major Sneed, Charles N..." rather than "He was actually Captain Sneed, Charles N..."

Sorry for the confusion on this item, and hope you can publish it in the final version. If the change is too late, I suggest you run an addendum note in the following issue of the *Journal*: With regard to the fate of Major Sneed, the U.S. Army burial records of Sneed—kindly provided me by the American Battle Monuments Commission—indicate that Sneed actually died as a result of the U.S. bombing of the Japanese prisoner of war ship *Enoura Maru*, on which he and other POWs were being transferred to Japan, on January 9, 1945 in Takao Harbor, Takao, Formosa."



JN-4D Nameplate (Photo by Bob Steele).

JN-4D I.D. NAME PLATE

Bob Steele, Burbank, California

Enclosed for informational purposes is a photo of an aircraft ID plate of the type indicated in the article by Ed Young, "A Man of Aviation's Golden Age" on page 28 of the *Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1.

This was the ID plate as used in the 100 JN4-D aircraft manufactured by the Liberty Iron Works, Sacramento, California During WWI. The plate, among others, came to me as having been removed from crashed aircraft at the North Island Training Field, San Diego, California during WWI, probably in the 1918 period.

I thought this might be of interest, as the photo caption on page 28 in which this plate is mentioned indicates that this might be a Martin made product.

POSTWAR HONOLULU B-25'S

Earl Reinert, Arlington Heights, Illinois

RE: Vol. 21, No. 4 "Bicentennial Parade," photo of B-25 as gate monument, at the entrance of the Hawaii ANG Base, Honolulu International Airport. This aircraft participated in the Movie "In Harm's Way." The B-25 was a B-25N N9753Z,



B-25N N9753Z at Honolulu, April 1965. Now on display at Hawaii ANG gate, Honolulu International Airport.

one of a pair of the B-25s filmed in the Hawaii area, with John Wayne in 1964.

One B-25J, N9754Z was believed to have been shipped via freighter to Honolulu, and the B-25N had Tokyo tanks and was ferried over from Frisco for the movie.

Both of these aircraft were stationed at the Honolulu International Airport for servicing during the filming in 1964. In early May of 1965, both were in dead storage at the airport, at which time I photographed them. The B-25J appeared in good flight condition, but not the B-25N, which was missing pieces of the cowling.

One late night in May, 1965, a Waikiki Beach bartender, who was an ex-B-25 bomber pilot, stole the B-25J, fired it up, took off, and proceeded to buzz the Waikiki Beach area. He then returned to buzz the airport, whereupon he hit the old wooden radio control tower. At that moment, the top side of the pilot's cabin rolled back and away. The pilot made an emergency landing and was promptly arrested by the authorities. The B-25J was impounded by the FAA for an investigation.

In the photos enclosed, the plane with the greenhouse nose is the B-25J. The B-25N, survivor of "In Harm's Way," has a solid metal nose, and is shown as it sat at the airport almost 10 years before the Hawaii ANG acquired it and made it into their beautiful gate entrance display.

I was an eyewitness to the B-25J's low level "attack," and there is an article in a *Life Magazine* from May, 1965 for further reference.



B-25J-25 NC (Photo from Nick Williams collection).

B-25—HAWAII ANG GATE MONUMENT

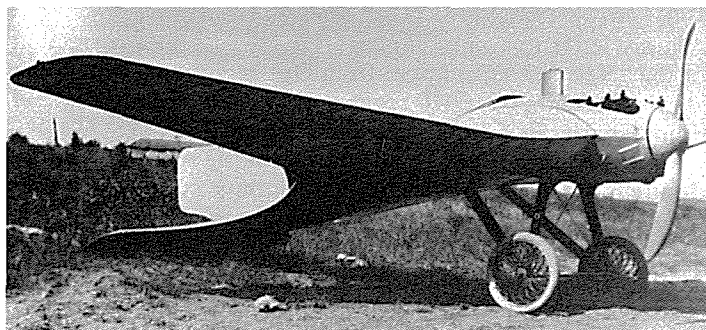
Nick Williams, Cypress, California

In reference to the photo of the B-25 on display at the Hawaii ANG base as shown in "Bicentennial Parade," by Gerry Markgraf (JAAHS Vol. 21, No. 4), I can provide the following information.

This display aircraft and a sister ship sat idle at Honolulu International Airport for a number of years. Though having different nose configurations, *both* were B-25Js: the display aircraft is N9753Z, B-25J-32-NC, serial no. 108-37579, while the other was N9754Z, B-25J-25-NC, serial no. 108-33753. This information came directly from the manufacturer's data plates, although the serial numbers don't correspond with any lists that I have seen.

During the filming of "Tora! Tora! Tora!" in early 1969, N9754Z was destroyed for a sequence in the film. The airplane was painted olive drab and parked inside the entrance to one of the old hangars at NAS Barber's Point/Ewa MCAS. A Zero replica was fitted with pyrotechnic charges, hoisted by crane above the hangar, and dropped through the roof onto the B-25 to simulate a Kamakazi attack. The enclosed photo was taken after this event in May, 1969.

I believe the airplane was subsequently scrapped, along with a large number of BT-13, B-50, C-97, and PBY hulks and bits and pieces that were assembled for background devastation scenes.



WHATS-IT?

One of my correspondents from Finland has sent me this "whatsit" photo of an unknown airplane built by a gent named Salminen here in the US of A. It appears to have been powered by an OX-5 swinging a very highly pitched prop. Also the wheels are spring loaded! Anyone having data on this little bird is urged to write me:

Mauno A. Salo, 12752 Annette Cir., Garden Grove, CA 92640

USAF FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCED

*John W., Huston, Maj. Gen., USAF
Chief, Office of Air Force History*

The Office of Air Force History has awarded a dissertation fellowship for academic year 1977-78 to *Mr. Charles J. Gross*, a doctoral candidate at Ohio State University, to complete his dissertation, "Prelude to the Total Force Concept: The Air National Guard, Mobilization, and the Development of the Tactical Support Mission, 1950-1968."

FORMER SAC AIR CREW/GROUND CREW PERSONNEL

John T. Bohn, Command Historian, Office of the Historian (HO), Hq. SAC, Offutt AFB, NE 68113

We would greatly appreciate your inclusion of the following inquiry in the "News & Comments" column of the next AAHS *Journal* or *Newsletter*:

The Office of the Historian, Headquarters Strategic Air Command would like to hear from current and former SAC air crew and ground crew members on any record flights or other significant flights they were involved in. We would be most interested in photographs, diaries, and anecdotes on such flights. All items will be treated with care and returned.

ADVANCED RESEARCH PROGRAM—MILITARY HISTORY

*B.F. Cooling, Ph.D., Asst. Director for Historical Services,
U.S. Army Military Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA*

The U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013, is sponsoring an "Advanced Research Program in Military History" as one means of stimulating research and study at the Army's major repository for materials in the history of military affairs. Awards will be made to cover expenses while conducting research and writing at this facility. Recipients will be designated "Advanced Research Project Associates."

Applicants must submit a written proposal describing the subject, scope, and character of their project; the time estimated for residence at MHI; how MHI facilities, personnel, and materials will aid in their research project; and a careful estimate of expenses to be incurred for which this grant is requested.

Careful consideration will be given to each project's usefulness for USAMHI and the professional field of military history, as well as the United States Army. Inter-disciplinary projects are encouraged. Both civilian and military scholars in the field of military history are invited to apply to Director, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013.

Completed applications must be returned by 1 December 1977.

EARLE "VANCE" COMBS

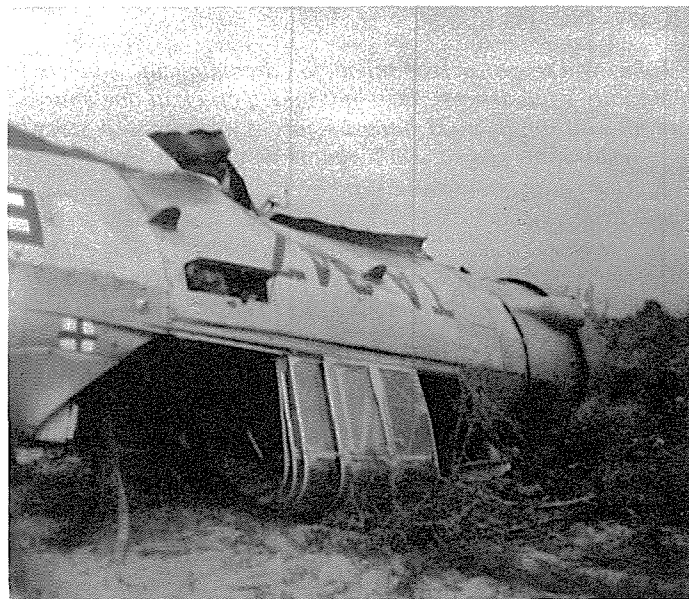
H.G. Buffington, Seattle, Washington

A copy of "Aerial Odyssey" (pg. 286) from the Winter '76 *Journal* was sent to Esther Combes Vance because of the complimentary comments regarding her late husband, Earl—better known as "Vance." It proved to be an interesting development.

Esther now lives in Missoula, Montana, license no. 3180 and is one of the 99 charter members of the Ninety-Nines.

She wrote, "We spent a considerable amount of time with Charlie Meyers and on September 28th he flew a Class B race from Spokane to Portland, Oregon, while a news reporter, Roy Knapp, Vance and I went there with the Stinson Detroiter. At the conclusion of racing events Meyers and Oliphant, a factory pilot, each in WACO 10s, flew to Great Falls, Montana, where the planes were added to those of the Vance Air Service. It was in the racing plane flown by Meyers (1103, pictured in the article) that I used for my solo flight March 3, 1928. A very fine little plane to fly, maroon color with silver wings. We called it the red Waco to distinguish it from the others of the same make."

So, it is a small world after all, at times.



USAF F-6 shot down in Korean War.



USAF F-6 with napalm belly tank, and wing racks for target marking, in Korean War.

T-6 F.A.C.—Korea

James V. Crow, Elmhurst, Illinois

In the Winter, 1976, *Journal*, you had a very interesting story on the T-6 F.A.C. in Korea. Enclosed are five photos, some of which may be of interest as a follow-up in the "News and Comment" section of the Spring, 1977, *Journal*.

I have no other information than what is written on the back of each photo.

Also enclosed is a self-addressed envelope for the return of the photos, but there is no hurry.

WHAT ABOUT LINDBERGH'S BACKERS?

John P. Rathjen, Ft. Calhoun, Nebraska

I really enjoy the Journal's fine articles—especially about the 1920's and 1930's aircraft and pilots, also the men that made the companies "Go." Would like to see a story on Mr. Lindbergh's flight backers—what became of each person from St. Louis, who along with C.A.L. put up their money to take "Spirit" and its flight from a dream to reality. What became of the members after May 21, 1927—did they all go on to be "rich and happy" or did some suffer badly from the great depression?

Also an article on the Robertson (family and) Corporation of St. Louis would be interesting.

I am restoring a 1929 Curtiss "Robin" J6-5 powered. Serial No. 477 - NC-363 K.

John, you've got a real talent for dreaming up subjects for potentially good articles. Why not take a crack at one yourself? I think you might do a bang-up job. A step-by-step story on your restoration project with photos would also make a good story. (Ed.)



AMERICA'S FIRST "FLYING CARPET" (1955)

Stan O'Conner, Akron, Ohio

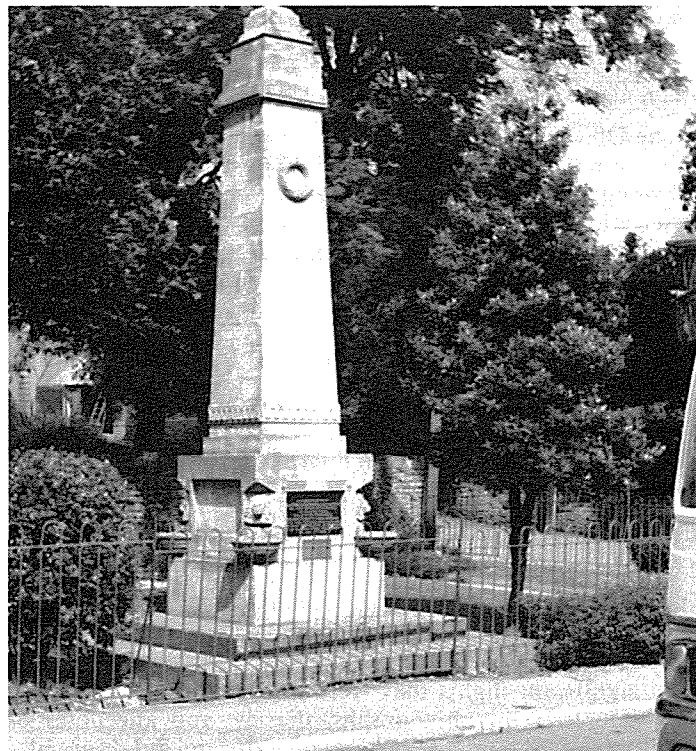
Aeronautic marvels that penetrate sound barriers, aim at far reaches of the earth's orbit and far overlap ordinary human imagination were recently dwarfed by a tiny airplane developed by Goodyear Aircraft.

The plane, man's nearest approach to a virtual flying carpet, is an air-flated craft that can be easily deflated and placed into the family station wagon or the trunk of an automobile. All that is necessary to inflate it is an ordinary vacuum cleaner.

Named the Inflato-Plane, the new Goodyear Aircraft plane can be easily flown from a small field and attains speeds that would satisfy anyone wishing to avoid the bumper-to-bumper Sunday afternoon traffic.

An experimental craft, the Inflato-Plane was designed to test a rubberized fabric developed by Goodyear. The material is called "Airmat" and consists of layers of nylon fabric joined by thousands of dropped threads. When inflated, the layers of nylon are forced apart. The joined threads are stretched taut by the air, forming the wing and tail surfaces. The fuselage is made of airship fabric. Inflated, the material will hold a man perched on either wingtip.

Looking like a glider, the plane is powered by a two-cycle, 40-horsepower engine and was built in less than 12 weeks.



(Photos, R.F. Fowler)

AMELIA EARHART MEMORIAL

R.W. Fowler, Brackenwell, Berks, England

Having seen various photos over the years, of aviation memorials published in the Journal of the AAHS, I was wondering if the enclosed post card and photos would be of interest to you at all? My wife and I visited South Wales for our vacation this year and stayed for several days at a quaint spot near Burry Point. We had to visit the small town several times for shopping, and on one of our visits I discovered the enclosed post card in a newsagent's shop, along with all the other post cards of local views.

Most towns in England have a memorial erected, similar to this one, in memory of the men and women killed in WWI and WWII, and we had walked past this one several times without giving it a second thought, thinking it was the local war memorial! On discovering its real significance I hastily returned and photographed it for the record.