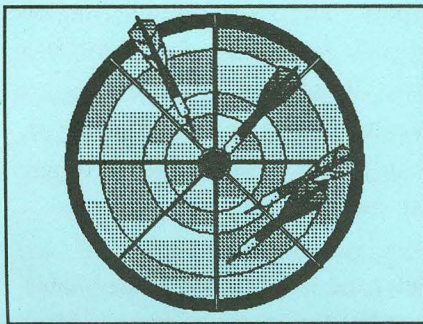


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JANUARY 1995 ISSUE



LET'S GET TOGETHER

Set your sights on the next reunion, scheduled for SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1995, at the Sportsman's Lodge in North Hollywood. Please circle that date on your calendars and join us for another wonderful reunion. We were all part of a very historic aviation era and proud of it. Let's honor it and celebrate our contributions to that time by coming together to raise our glasses to toast the "good old days".

The Sportsman's Lodge has set aside a block of rooms for those attending from out of the region. If you would like to reserve a room at the hotel, please call them at 1-800-821-8511 (from the USA or Canada), and be

sure to tell them you are with the Aviation Pioneers to obtain the rate of \$77 for a single or double, or \$145 for a suite. Reservations must be received by **MAY 1, 1995**, in order to secure the room rate.



Like the little skydiver above, also plan to **drop in** on the Friday, May 20, cocktail get-together at 6:00 p.m. in the lobby area of the hotel. It's a good opportunity to see folks and another excuse for a party.

The cost for lunch will be \$26.50 per person and George Batchelor has again volunteered to host the bar. George, how can we thank you? You have been most generous throughout the years and we want you to know how much we appreciate the

contributions you have made and the support you have given. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

It's true - the reunions get better each year so you won't want to miss the next one. We hope to see everyone who attended last year as well as those who were unable to make it. Don't let rain, sleet, snow, earthquakes, floods, fires or pestilence stand in your way. A reservation form is attached. Send it to us as soon as possible. We want to see **YOU!!**

Our good and gracious friends at The Aviation Book Store have sent us a wonderful new publication on the history of Flight Attendants (or Stewardesses, as we knew them). It is full of pictures from the very early days; a history of uniforms, organizations, etc. Great fun to look at and a terrific addition to a library. We will save it for a door prize at the reunion.

Thanks to all of you who remembered us with Christmas Cards and letters. It is good to hear from

you and interesting to know what you are up to these days.

Joe Bartasavage writes from Arizona that he is still restoring Cessna 195s. His old friend Jack Loughran (both flew for Great Lakes) helps him and Bart tells us that Jack has been a little down since he lost his wife and would love to hear from some of you. He lives in Phoenix and can be contacted at 602/516-0301.

R. B. Hall (remember he and wife Millie wore their flight uniforms to the reunion a couple of years ago) retired from the FAA's Air Traffic Control Center in Kansas City in 1994 and finds it quite a change from 17 years of airline flying, 10 years as a corporate pilot and 10 years operating a contract and charter operation with three King Airls and a Citation.

Frank Lang (Great Lakes) and Russ Cook piloted a 1948 Constellation (one of three still considered airworthy in the world) to Tucson where it will be involved in a two-year restoration to its original condition. When finished it will be pressed into service by the Royal Dutch Airlines. Cook said that the Connie has to be one of the more special aircraft since there are so few left. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Connie, with its dramatic three section tail, was the very first passenger aircraft ever to be pressurized.

Lang, who is currently involved as an aircraft broker and restorer of aircraft, has done some interesting

flying including time as a stunt pilot in Hollywood for such films as "Air America"

Bill Creegan (USMC '42-'46, '52-'53, SSW/Westair/Transocean/Capitol and Cal Eastern/Eastern/President/Aaxico/Saturn, etc.) tells us he is retired, plays golf and cards, reads, listens to good music, does crosswords, drinks martinis and sippin' scotch, eats steak in any form and spends weekends in SFO with his favorite lady. He does not visit strange countries, strange hotels, strange bars or restaurants, carry a suitcase or brain bag, wear a uniform, tie or cap (except on the golf course) but still jumps when the phone rings. Most of all, he enjoys living in his own home and sleeping in his own bed!

Donald Hoirup (Orient-Pacific/Seaboard & Western/U.S. Airlines/ North American/Airlift) is now Executive VP of International Air Carriers which owns Orient-Pacific, Panama Air Transport, Middle East Air Transport and North African Airways. They operate 37 B-707 and DC-8 aircraft.

George Kocisko just completed 38 years in the airline business. In 1956, he started with Flying Tiger Line which was bought by Federal Express in 1989. He is #1 captain on the list flying B-747's.

George and his wife Jonell (also a pilot) have sent us a brochure on the history of Santa Paula Airport (CA) and we would like to share the information with you. In 1927, Ralph

Dickenson bought an OX-5 International and based it at an airstrip on his ranch. The hangar he constructed was soon joined by those of two friends and Santa Paula had its first unofficial airport.

In 1928, the Santa Clara River Valley was flooded by the collapse of the St. Francis Dam. Many lives were lost and much property destroyed. This made land along the river very inexpensive. Ralph decided this would make a great site for an airport - and he could quit tying up valuable farmland. So at \$1000 a share, Ralph and 19 other investors soon had the property, and in August, 1930, the new Santa Paula Airport was dedicated.

Today the airport is an active, viable asset to the community, providing jobs and aviation services to pilots all over the country. Yet it remains a living memorial to the Golden Age of aviation. Within corrugated confines is an impressive array of vintage and antique aircraft, including home-builts, experimental and conventional models. Practically everything is there, from Aeroncas to Wacos - from Cubs to Staggerwings.

Along with the history-making aircraft came history-making flyers. And joining this band of aviators are celebrities, professionals, lay people, all brought together by a common bond: the love of flying.

In an age when technology comes at us like an avalanche, much of that technology is developed and applied at the airport, but not at the expense

of our heritage. Santa Paula Airport advances into the future on wings shaped in history.

Tours of the airport are conducted on the first Sunday of each month. Docents and tours are available from 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. You can refresh yourself at Logsdon's Restaurant (look for the large umbrella) and be prepared to have an exciting look at historical aviation's living, working open-air museum.

Enjoy your visit, but remember that Santa Paula Airport is a working airport, so pay close attention to spinning propellers and moving aircraft. Stay away from the runway and the main taxiway that runs parallel to it. Children should be watched carefully and not be allowed to run and play freely. PLEASE USE EXTREME CAUTION! Bicycles or motorcycles are not to be ridden on the airport. Smoking is not permitted. As a courtesy to the owners of the aircraft: LOOK, BUT DO NOT TOUCH.

Lucien LeClere (U.S. Air Corps, Kansas City Southern Skyways and Flying Tigers) describes his current activities as "Santa Paula Airport Bum".

L. "Pete" Lathrop, who flew for Eastern/United/Douglas Aircraft/ATC/Convair/Lockheed, retired in 1986 at 70 years of age with 22,000 hours to his credit.

Joan Mullery LeBel (California Central/Viking/US Air) has a son, Harper LeBel, who plays professional football with the Atlanta Falcons (number 88) as a long snapper and tight end.

Donald Morrissey (Seaboard & Western/Cal Eastern/Trans Carib/Flying Tigers/World) now owns an Air Freight company in the SFO area.

F. Stanford Nielsen is a video producer (adventure-related) and publishes SCUBA diving publication.

Mary Lou Paulson (Cal Central, North American/Trans Con/USOA/TransOcean) is involved with property management and works with charities.

Kathleen Radford Chapman (worked for Fritz Hutcheson, George Batchelor and Ralph Cox) is in real estate sales and a volunteer teacher to unwed mothers to be - crisis pregnancy.

Clint Secombe describes his current primary activity as a wills, trusts and probate attorney; his secondary activity as flight instructor, both single and multi-engine.

Jerry Senft (Superior Electronics) who provided radio maintenance for just about everyone at Lockheed Air Terminal, joined "Angel Flight" several years ago. He now rides his horse on weekends at Pepperdine University in Malibu and flies his computer.

Dick and Elaine Draper (North American/Standard/McCulloch) are retired in the Hawaiian Islands and Dick describes himself as a golf nut and hurricane survivor.

Hal McNichol (Mercer/McCulloch) is now President of Flight Crews International, Inc. and James Gray (Air Transport Associates and McCulloch) is Sr. Vice President, Operations.

Bret Hart (TWA, 37 years/Flying Tigers/Mercer) now busies himself maintaining and flying light aircraft.

Oh, there are so many of you with such interesting stories we wish we could print them all. One of the benefits of our annual reunion is that you can come and tell us what you did and what you are now doing in person!!

TWO SPECIAL PEOPLE

We told you last year of the death of Hugh Monroe (Great Lakes) and, just a few weeks later, of his wife Mary Lou. It was their wish that their bodies be cremated and their ashes scattered together over Rincon, a favorite camping spot south of Santa Barbara which the family frequented over the years. Recently, their son Scott, also a pilot, was able to fulfill his parents' wish.

FROM ACROSS THE SEA

APA member Robert Davis of Ripon North Yorks, England, has sent newspaper clippings of interest to flyers.

One story is of an experienced pilot who took a member of the public up in a 50-year old Tiger Moth at Rendcomb Aerodrome. Prince Michael of Kent was there, as were one or two local grandees, but this chap didn't look up to much - just an ordinary Joe.

The pilot strapped his passenger in, raised a superior eyebrow, and ordered: "Mind where you put your feet. Don't touch any buttons." Once airborne, the passenger introduced himself as Michael and said he had flown a Tiger Moth some 30 years ago. Could he have a go? The pilot hesitated, but Michael pressed his request. Eventually he was given his go, but not without some sharp and rather fussy comments from the chap in charge as they flew over Rendcomb.

As the pilot took over for landing, he asked his passenger what he did for a living. Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, Chief of the Air Staff, replied: "Oh, I run the Air Force." The pilot, still cringing, begs that his name not be disclosed.

SECOND FLIGHT

On September 7, 1953, a perfect summer day, a bright red Hawker Hunter flew at less than 300 ft above the sea along the Sussex coast on its way to a new world speed record of 727.6 mph.

The pilot was Squadron Leader Neville Duke, then 31, one of Britain's most brilliant airmen, and chief test pilot for the Hawker

Aircraft Company.

At 71, but still an active test pilot of light commercial aircraft, Squadron Leader Duke repeated the historic flight at the controls of another bright red Hunter, a two-seater Mk53. "The Hunter aircraft was the love of my professional life, and it is a great thrill to be able to renew my acquaintance with it," he said before taking off to fly the same course between Bognor and Worthing piers.

With co-pilot Adrian Gjersten, 43, Duke took the Hunter, G-Boom, in overcast conditions at speeds of over 600mph in a low-level flight. Then with impeccable style he climbed G-Boom above a crowd of RAF veterans in front of the Tangmere Museum where his famous Hunter is on display, to finish the 30-minute flight with a victory roll.

Watching the flight, as she did during the record run, his wife Gwen said, "I am quite used to all this by now and I am glad he is still flying."

OBITUARIES

Milton Thompson, who has died at age 67, was an American research and test pilot, courageous even by the standards of his peers.

He began as a research pilot in 1958, when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the US Air Force were experimenting with rocket-propelled aircraft.

He tested aircraft designed to fly at hypersonic speeds of more than 3,300

mph. The only way to reach such speeds in the late 1950s was by using rocket power.

When Thompson flew the X-15 rocket plane - the first aircraft built to fly above the atmosphere - he exceeded 1700mph and flew close to the edge of space. On occasion, he would take the craft to altitudes of more than 100,000 ft. These flights involved a steep climb out of the atmosphere followed by a ballistic trajectory, then a steep descent and finally a glide to Earth.

Thompson was on one of three teams, each of four men, assigned to the X-15 program. The project director encouraged the teams to compete, and bets were placed on who would make the first successful flights.

Celebration parties were held at Juanita's, a large bar favored by gold prospectors. Afterwards all the pilots would race down the Sierra Highway, many of them in high-performance cars.

On one occasion Thompson -- in his 1957 Jaguar -- pushed a colleague's ancient MG along the road at 90mph. When the highway patrol stopped him, Thompson insisted that the MG had broken down and he was trying to get it started.

Thompson was born in Crookston, Minnesota, on May 4, 1926. He learned to fly with the US Navy at age 19.

He subsequently served in the Pacific,

the Atlantic, Japan and China, where he took part in the evacuation of Americans from Tsingtao just before the Communist takeover.

In 1952 he joined Boeing as a structural test and flight engineer.

Four years later he moved to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, NASA's predecessor, at Edwards AFB.

During his nine years as a research pilot, Thompson flew 23 different types of aircraft. He also took part in tests of a dummy Gemini space capsule beneath a Rogallo paraglider; the aim was to enable astronauts to come back to land, rather than splash down in the sea, but the objective was not achieved at that time.

Impressed by his work, the USAF employed him as the only civilian pilot in its X-20 Dyna-Soar winged orbiter, on top of a Titan rocket. Cancellation of that project in 1963 ended his chances of becoming an astronaut, but his spirits were revived when he was recruited to the Manned Lifting Body program. For this he flew M2-F1, a prototype glider dropped from the wing of a B-52 bomber. This project provided important data for the designers of the shuttle.

In 1968, he was appointed director of flight projects, with responsibility for the United States' secret aero-space developments. This led, in 1975, to his final post as chief engineer.

Thompson published "At the Edge of

Space". He had a wife, four sons and a daughter.

Lores Bonney has passed away at age 96, on the Queensland Gold Coast, in Australia. She was the first woman pilot to fly from Australia to England, and the first of either sex to fly from Australia to South Africa.

Despite her heroic feats and distinctive style (she used to dry her laundry in the slip stream of her plane) Bonney's achievements made only a modest impression on Australians.

In 1932, in "My Little Ship" her wood-and-fabric biplane, she became the first woman pilot to circumnavigate Australia, surviving mishaps which included a collision at 2000ft with an airplane angling for pictures.

In 1933, after carefully planning her husband's menus for the ensuing weeks and hoping to break the record set by Amy Johnson, who three years before had flown from England to Australia in 19 1/2 days, Bonney flew from Brisbane to London in a De Havilland Moth with a four-cylinder Gypsy engine at a cruising speed of 80mph. The flight took her across Australia, the Dutch East Indies, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

Bonney was lost in storms, had no radio, and when the weather cleared, dropped a message to a launch at sea which gave her directions by pointing its bow. She suffered food poisoning in Singapore. Then flying along the coast of Siam, she was forced by

fierce storms into a beach landing on Bang Baing, an island near the border with Burma. Dodging a wandering buffalo, her aircraft slewed into the surf and flipped upside down, nearly drowning Bonney in her cockpit.

Islanders managed to pull the shattered Moth to safety, and Bonney stayed on Bang Baing until located by an RAF flying-boat two days later. Her aircraft was then shipped to Calcutta, where it was deemed a write-off. She was advised to go home, but chose not to listen. Having lost five weeks, she rebuilt the Moth and took off for London. After 10 weeks -- during which she contended with more illness, storms over deserts and mountains, emergency landings, oil troubles, red tape and exhaustion -- Bonney eventually landed in London. She has spent 157 hours in the air and covered 12,300 miles.

She was confident that she could improve her time on the return journey, but her father forbade her to fly home because his health would not stand the anxiety.

Four years later Bonney made her greatest flight: 18,100 miles, from Australia to South Africa via Cairo. This time she flew a Klemm Eagle, a small German low-winged monoplane a little faster than the Moth, with a cabin and a Gypsy engine. She christened it "My Little Ship II" and painted it blue and silver.

In the southern Sudan she was caught in a down-draft, hit the ground

violently and tore out the metal tail skid. The Klemm had to be taken by barge down the Nile to Khartoum for repair by the RAF. Bonney reached Cape Town on August 18, 1937, 211 flying hours and nearly 19 weeks out of Archerfield.

Born Maude Rose Rubens in Pretoria in 1887, she adopted the name Dolores, shortened to Lores, while attending finishing school in Frankfurt.

Married to Harry Bonney, a leather goods manufacturer, the couple settled in Brisbane, which she found tedious. Bert Hinkler -- a noted airman and a cousin of her husband -- took her flying. That year he had made the first solo flight from England to Australia, while Lores Bonney had been discouraged by her husband even from learning to drive a car.

Two years later she began to take flying lessons in secret, while her husband played golf. But when he found out what she was up to he agreed to back her.

After the trip to Cape Town, Bonney's plans for further epic flights were cut short by WWII. Afterwards she devoted herself to gardening and charity work.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to those of you who responded to the last newsletter and sent in your membership dues for 1995. To those who added an extra donation, (you know who you are,

even if you wish to remain anonymous) we are very grateful. For those who have not sent dues for this year, please take a minute and do so. It is a great help to us. Another Membership Form is enclosed, as well as a Reservation Form for the reunion.

We were pleased that so many of you ordered the APA Membership Pin. We are quite proud of it and consider it a great bargain at \$7 each. There is a spot on the Membership Form for ordering the pin.

I am really looking forward to the reunion on May 20. We have a great time and it is always so good to see everyone. Hope to see you there.

Take care and God Bless! Terry

REMINDER

In you move, please remember to advise us of your new address. We had several of the last newsletters returned to us by the Post Office as undeliverable. When that happens we have no choice but to remove that name from our roster. And make sure you use our correct address when you contact us:

AVIATION PIONEERS ASSN.
P.O. BOX 1724
STUDIO CITY, CA 91604-0724

GEM OF THE DAY

(The following was written by fifth grader Tommy Tyler of Beaufort, South Carolina, and came to us via Cal Beckley, who says that this kid

has it all figured out).

WHY I WANT TO BE A PILOT

"When I grow up I want to be a pilot because it's a fun job and easy to do. That's why there are so many pilots flying around these days. Pilots don't need much school, they just have to learn to read numbers so they can read their instruments. I guess they should be able to read a road map too so they can find their way if they get lost. Pilots should be brave so they won't get scared if it's foggy and they can't see, or if a wing or a motor falls off they should stay calm so they'll know what to do. Pilots have to have good eyes to see through clouds, and they can't be afraid of thunder or lightning because they are so much closer to them than we are. The salary pilots make is another thing I like. They make more money than they know what to do with. This is because most people think that plane flying is dangerous, except pilots don't because they know how easy it is. I hope I don't get airsick. I couldn't be a pilot and then I would have to go to work."

UNTIL NEXT TIME...