



AVIATION PIONEERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 16358 • NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA 91615

Dedicated to all the men and women who were the participants and founders of the non-scheduled, supplemental airline industry.

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1992!! That's the day set for the second reunion luncheon of the Aviation Pioneers Association. It will be held at the Burbank Airport Hilton Hotel. Hope all of you have that date circled on every calendar in your home. Last year was great fun and this year promises to be even better. We will meet in the Convention Center of the Hotel this year. Enclosed is a reservation form for the luncheon. Please make your reservations as soon as possible, as we must confirm space with the hotel.

The hotel is holding a block of rooms for those from out-of-town needing overnight accommodations. If you are interested, call hotel reservations at 818/843-6000, identify yourself as being associated with the Aviation Pioneers Association and you will receive a reduced rate. The rooms will be held at the reduced rate until Friday, April 17.

We also plan to have the Hospitality Room open for out-of-towners on Friday evening, May 1, in the main lobby area of the hotel, from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M., with a no-host bar. If you can make it, please do; it was very successful last year.

Our membership is growing and we would like to thank all of those who appreciate the demands of financing a new organization and being so interested in your Association. And again, blessings on those who made donations in addition to their minimum membership contribution.

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT R. "TERRY" DICKASON

I would like welcome the following as distinguished members of our Association: General James Doolittle; Patrick J. Halloran, Lockheed test pilot for the SR71 and U2; Willis M. Hawkins and Charles Wagner, both former Lockheed Air Corporation Presidents; Maureen O'Hara Blair of movie and airline fame, widow of Charles Blair, owner of Antillies Air Boats in the Virgin Islands.

I am very pleased to announce the election of two corporate board members: Nancy Anton, Secretary/Director, and Ruby Mercer, Director. Their contribution to our organization is paramount to the success of the association. Welcome aboard!

I am looking forward to our next reunion on May 2, '92. I know it will be a great one! We all belong to a very unique group of people, having been associated in aviation from its early days, making flying affordable to so many. Some among us started as early as 1937. We are like one big family; we have shared tears and laughter over the years and our bond grows stronger as time goes by. Every year a few fold their wings and go on - to prepare a runway for us to land on. Only one way tickets accepted. HA! It will be great to see them all again, and I am looking forward to seeing each and every one of

you at the reunion on May 2. Thanks for the memories. God bless. (Signed) Terry

LAST FLIGHTS:

We are sad to report the death of James "Jim" Hart at Burbank, on November 26, 1991, following his brother "Red" by not quite a year. The brothers, with friend Fred Atkins (Viking and Central Air Transport) came to Southern California prior to WWII, joining Douglas Aircraft Corporation. Following December 7th, the brothers enlisted, but Red, considered a critical war worker, was sent back to Douglas to help manufacture warbirds while Jim served until the war's end in the military. It was the only time the brothers were really separated. Jim was with Red at Viking Airlines and later managed passenger reservations for North American Airlines at Burbank. He remained with 20th Century operations until Red opened Hart Toyota dealership in Encino where he was service manager. He subsequently worked with and for Red in various other enterprises and more recently managed Hart Video Services in Burbank which processes film into video tape for Hollywood film production companies. He leaves a wife, daughter and 2 sons.

Edward H. Heinemann at Rancho Santa Fe, on November 26, 1991. Ed Heinemann, a contemporary of Kelly Johnson (Lockheed), was a prolific aircraft design genius. Those who served in WWII, Korea and Viet Nam remember his Douglas SBD Dive Bombers, AD SkyRaider-Spads, A-20 Havoc, DC-5, B-26, F3D and A4D, longest production jet fighter in the U.S. (Transocean Airlines manufactured wings for A4Ds). Ed Heinemann treasured his Collier Trophy, one among many awards for his designs. He hoped for a second one to "catch up" with Kelly Johnson's pair. He and Johnson, both from Michigan, were long time friends. Heinemann left Douglas and joined Convair SAN as a consultant. Among his projects, the successful F-16 fighter. He was prophetic and emphatic that we aviation people must and should direct our energies to the young in education and training. "They are the future to which we are obligated. Without them there is no future", he said. In 1974, a stroke affected his right side. He learned to write and draw lefthanded but didn't like computers which might have eased his writing problems.

John "Jack" Vilsack, Altadena, California, died on February 4, 1992. Jack spent many years at Lockheed Air Terminal in flight sales/ticket counter employment with Skycoach and several other carriers and was known for his wit and humorous demeanor. Following the accidental death of his brother Karl (and a few years later Karl's wife Jane) Jack and his wife Betty undertook the care and raising of Karl's four young sons, ages 8-14. Jack and Betty (then in their forties) had no children but made a loving, warm home for the orphans. Betty (who is ill) has told us that no natural children could be kinder to their parents than those loving nephews.

Tom "Brookie" Brooke-Smith, in England, at age 73. One of the leading experimental fliers of his time, Brooke-Smith was the first pilot to make a jet-powered vertical take-off in a fixed-wing aircraft, then translate into aerodynamic flight, and return to hover for the vertical landing. He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.

Eldon W. Cessna, son of the founder of the Cessna Aircraft Company, at age 84, in Inglewood, CA. Working as chief engineer for his father's company, he designed more than 20 planes. Following a brief closing of the company during the depression, he worked for Northrop, Douglas and North American, where he worked on projects ranging from the P-51 fighter to the X-15 to the Apollo moon landings. He is survived by his wife, two children and five grandchildren.

Carl Friend, master aerodynamicist, associated with development of Grumman Rare-Bear. Graduate of Cal-Tech's Science/Aeronautical Engineering School, Carl joined the WWII effort at Lockheed Aircraft in 1938, in design and development. Later worked at Northrop, Bendix, All-American, and consolidated. Was supporter and contributor to Aviation Journals and industry groups. Died January 23, 1991 of previously undiagnosed brain tumor.

THE "WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO? CORNER (Ed. Note: With each issue of newsletter, we will include bios from members, picked at random, to keep you informed about your old friends. Remember, if you aren't a member, we won't have info on you.)

FRED L. AUSTIN, flew with Potter, Aero Spacelines, Mercer, Blatz, Golden State, Aero Commuter, Golden West, Inter Mountain, Fluor Corp., AirCal, American. He started at age 19 with Jack Conroy on the Pregnant Guppy as a loadmaster. He flew with Jack Pedesky, Hugh Monroe, Larry Engle, who regaled him with stories of flying the DC6s and 7s across the Pacific. He feels it important that he had the opportunity to learn his trade from them as well as Poddy Mercer, Charlie Potter, John Pinney, Fish Salmon and other great people from the non skeds. Fred also enrolled his dad, FRED AUSTIN, SR., who was around Burbank aviation in the 1930s.

FRED BENNINGER, Chairman, MGM Grand, Inc. was with Flying Tigers from 1946-67; Western from 1971-78.

DICK BLATZ, Blatz Airlines 1957-64 and Air Nevada '64-70, is now with the Federation of California Race Tracks.

WALTER CARR, Army Air Corp 1940-45, Slick and Airlift '46-79, now retired, enjoys golf and gardening. He advises that you can improve your golf game after 70.

NATALIE CRAFT, wife of the late SHIELDS B. "BUD" CRAFT, joined the association in memory of her husband who lived his whole life in and for aviation.

WILLIAM (BILL) CREEGAN, USMC 1942-46, SSW '46-51, Westair '51-52, USMC '52-53, Taloa '54, Capitol '55, Cal Eastern '56-88, USOA '59, Trans Alaskan '60-61, plays golf and tries to stay out of trouble in his retirement. He asks how many remember the DC-3 turntables on the east and south gate positions at LAT? Also wants to know the name of the rib house on Sherman Way, west of the airport.

ANTHONY DESTEFANO, Flying Tigers 1946-83, keeps busy in his retirement as Vice

President of Tiger Retirement Club. He was with Tigers for 37 years and was the 21st employee hired into the maintenance and engineering department at LaGuardia in New York.

GARY GUILLIAT, Coffin Air Service, Whiteman Airpark 1956-58 (gasboy, flight instructor, charter pilot while attending high school), Mercer '58, Blatz '58-59, American International Airways (Tokyo) '59-60, Slick, Western, World '60-61, Western '61-86, Delta '86-present. Presently flying the TriStar in the Orient and based in Portland, Oregon, he wrote the following: "I had the opportunity to attend the (1991) Aviation Pioneers luncheon this year as a guest of Ruby Mercer. It was a great experience for me as I was a pilot for Poddy during the summer of 1958, and I had not seen Ruby for over thirty years. Although I was only 19 at the time and certainly not one of the movers and shakers of the early non-scheduled airline development, I did enjoy seeing a few of the old pilots and listening to the speakers. As those early years were the formative time of my career, I owe a lot to the people who put their energy into developing these airlines. Therefore, I would like to become a member of the Association and have the ability to share experiences with some of the old-timers. Thanks for your time. If I can be of any help in the future please feel free to call on me."

WILLIAM HELLER, Soloed in a Curtis Robin, Collegeville, PA in January 1936. Did local flying, worked for John B. Kelly, Inc. Construction Co., Philadelphia. "He was Grace Kelly's father and financed my first airplane. I used to drive Grace to dancing school. '41-Joined RCAF, transferred to the US Army Air Corps almost immediately. 1942 B-17 first pilot, acquired a crew and trained before going overseas. '43-45 England in 8th Air Force. Squadron Commander of 360th Squadron in the 303rd "Hell's Angels" bomb group. Flew two and a half combat tours instead of coming back to U.S., since my younger brother came over later as a B-17 pilot and I was able to have him assigned to my base. Two of my cousins, one of whom flew with me in my little plane in the 30s in the U.S., were Luftwaffe pilots during this time and flew against the 8th AF. After war, served in the North African Ferry Division of ATC until Fall of 1945. 1945-54 Philippine Air Lines, stationed in Rome, Italy as chief pilot of PAL European Division. TWA owned 40% of PAL at that time, but later withdrew from company. I did also, and built a small shopping center near Valley Forge, PA. 1955-56 North American (Transamerican) at LaGuardia. 1957-65 Trans International Airlines, later Transamerica. 1980-present retired, operate small "shell" company handling small press work and assist wife RUTH in her real estate business. Travel, play golf, some speaking and narration. Officer in various organizations involving golf and charity affairs."

DAVID HOPPER, Butler 1955, NAA/TAA 1955-57, Skycoach and USOA '57-59, ACTA '59-60, Central Air Transport '60, US Army '60-62, Lufthansa '61-64, TIA/TAA '64-68, Universal '68-72, started Trans American Coach in 1989 with one coach. He now has 5 with 2 more on order. Not getting rich, but having fun and says it's the closest thing to the "old days" that he could find.

JO KELL KOCISKO was a charter stewardess for Mercer Enterprises in 1963. Now a private (commercial/instrument) pilot, she is active in 99's (International Women Pilots).

which will contain a history of each APA member. So please, when you send your information, type it or write very carefully to assure that all information is correct. Sometimes it is hard to decipher handwriting.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

A recent news release stated that Virgin Atlantic Airways will soon offer infant safety seats for use in airplane seats to preclude strapping children into parent's lap. FAA and airline studies indicate their use should result in greatly reduced injuries during accidents. VAA release states they will be the first airline in the world to offer this service. HOWEVER - before 1960, Great Lakes Airlines designed and had manufactured a carrier cradle for infants which fastened to overhead racks for a small fee (\$10). They worked well.

Another swell idea by Great Lakes' powerful thinkers, Circa 1950, was the installation of TV on a C-46 aircraft. The manufacturing company (Pilot TV) coordinated the hook-up. HOWEVER -- there proved a dearth of programming by the time (p.m.) plane left Chicago for the coast. The real sinker was the christening name for the plane, painted in large letters on the vertical stabilizer, "Lady Pilot". Passengers registered immediate terror and complaints about flying with a woman pilot. Was fun while it lasted, and, to our knowledge, was a first.

A memorial to honor women in military service is in the works. It will be planned as a reconstruction of the entrance area of Arlington National Cemetery and will include the approximate 1.6 million servicewomen from the American Revolution to the present. For information write: Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Department 560, Washington D.C. 20042-0560, or phone (800) 222-2294. They need our support. These are our ancestors, grandmothers, mothers, aunts, wives, sisters, and \$15,000,000 must be raised before work can be started.

Aging test pilots battling the aerospace companies have won a battle and maybe the war. McDonnell-Douglas has agreed to raise the pilot age limit from 60 to 65. It appears Lockheed will follow suit. Increased testing for pilots 57 and over will be undergone and jobs found for any whose flying status changes as a result or upon reaching 65.

There is an airline referred to as Con Air. It is run by the air operations Division of the U.S. Marshal's Service, and transports prisoners for prison dates, medical visits, and court dates, etc. Its load factor is high, all trips one-way and every effort is made that passengers do not take flight and luggage is never lost.

A book of interest "Cal Rogers and the Vin Fiz" (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London, 255pp \$22.95) is the story of the first man to fly across the United States coast to coast, 16 years before Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic. (The Vin Fiz can be seen in the Smithsonian). Authoress is Eileen Lebow. The plane was named after a new grape soft drink of the pilot's financial backer, the Armour Company.

One wonderful story from our past concerns a Trans Atlantic Airways DC-3 flight (circa

1949-50) BUR-ABQ-MKC-CHI. A check-up at ABQ confirmed a mechanical involving an expensive part replacement. The pilot fund aboard was insufficient for repairs. Time was past midnight -- no way to wire for funds. What to do? The very versatile pilots solemnly advised the passengers of the dilemma, suggesting they chip in to get the repair done. Much screaming, threatening etc. followed. No bus, train or air flights were available. At last, the good sports on board anted up and the flight proceeded east. Of course, they were reimbursed at the first available stop!! One gallant rider (a doctor) wrote TAA's office to state it was the flight of his life. Nothing like that had happened to anyone before and he had related the story at every gathering he attended for years thereafter. He said he felt he had contributed to the support of the young pioneer airline and loved every minute of the experience -- and we love him.

TO GIVE YOUR AID TO JUMP START OUR ECONOMY

At San-Val Discount Inc., a Van Nuys Airport supply store, 7744 Valjean Ave., (818/786-8274) aviation/space ties, caps and T-shirts are sold. For \$11 you can buy a fly-guy T-shirt that says "THIS IS WHAT THE WORLD'S GREATEST PILOT LOOKS LIKE".

Raven Maps and Images, 34 North Central Ave., Medford, Oregon (800/237-0798) offers exceptional landscapes -- "the next best thing to flying over a state on a clear day".

Tailwinds offers watches with flyer-friendly dials, underwear decorated with aircraft, aviator gloves, a serving tray complete with propeller and for the non-superstitious, "the original version of the jumpsuit worn and designed by Amelia Earhart". P.O. Box 750729, Petaluma, CA (800/992-7737).

The Nostalgic Aviator, 1012 Hollywood Way, Burbank 91505 (818/558-7870) is a gallery/shop with hanging planes, murals, wooden and scale model planes, WWI planes, posters, jewelry, art, neon, books, model planes and blimps from WWII, hand painted leather jackets, etc., etc. Very popular with aviation people worldwide.

From the Hamilton Classics, 47 Richards Ave., Norwalk, Conn. 06857, a re-creation of the actual watch issued to U.S. Army Air Corp pilots during WWII as produced by Hamilton Watch Company. Black dial, luminous numerals, two straps and a state-of-the-art Swiss Quartz movement. Call 800/367-4534 for complete information. Also may be available in your area from retail jewelers, department stores, etc.

For a wonderful browse, stop at The Wing Gallery, 13734 Riverside Drive, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423 (818/981-9464), adjacent to Glendale Federal Bank. You will see some unusual and magnificent art, including that of several aviator artists. They include William S. Phillips, Craig Kodera, Keith Ferris, and astronaut Alan Bean. Their original paintings have been utilized by The Greenwich Workshops for limited edition prints of the finest quality and authenticity. Space does not permit more detail. We will have brochures etc. on our planned Bulletin Board at May 2 reunion. Many other artists using unusual subject material are also represented. This gallery is a real treat. Don't miss it. And would you believe the young woman who assisted your reporter in the purchase of two prints has

a father who operates a flight training school. He has been invited to membership.

In our last newsletter, Whiteman Airport was noted as Whitman and Confederate Air Force, Southern California Wing was noted as Confederated. Sorry about that.

Hope you have enjoyed the newsletter. The next one will come to you under its new official name -- "CONTACT".

As usual, we are runing out of space so will say goodby until we see you at the reunion. Hope everyone will make a determined effort to be with us. Don't forget these important dates:

SATURDAY, MAY 2 - REUNION
FRIDAY, APRIL 3 - DEADLINE FOR REUNION RESERVATIONS
FRIDAY, APRIL 17 - DEADLINE FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS

REMEMBER THE "MAINE"
REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS
REMEMBER MAY 2

SEE YOU THEN!!!