



# AAHS FLIGHTLINE

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USCG Sikorsky MH-60T Jayhawk, 6042, painted in 1950s era colors as part of the 100th Anniversary of Coast Guard Aviation. Photo taken at EAA AirVenture July 2016. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)

## Centennial of U.S. Coast Guard Aviation

### Highlights of What's Inside

- Centennial of U.S. Coast Guard Aviation
- AAHS Membership Rate Increase
- EAA Oshkosh AirVenture 2016
- NAMF Radford Award to Lt. Cmdr. Thomas A Beard, USCG (Ret.)

### Regular Sections

- Book Reviews
- New Members
- Folded Wings
- President's Message
- Wants & Disposals

Early in 1916, two visionary Coast Guardsmen, 3rd Lt Elmer F. Stone and 2nd Lt. Norman B. Hall, approached the commander of *USCGC Onondaga*, Capt. Benjamin M. Chiswell, with the idea of using aircraft as an aid in their mission of search and rescue. They saw the benefit that aircraft could potentially provide to assist ships in distress and to search

for disabled vessels and obstructions to navigation.

With Captain Chiswell's backing, a feasibility plan was put together to evaluate the concept. What was needed was access to an airplane to test the plan. The *Onondaga* was based in Hampton Roads, Va., close to Newport News where the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor



The Douglas Dolphin was one of the earliest aircraft that the USCG ordered in number, eventually acquiring 14 of this type in the 1930s. Here we see USCG RD-4, #137. (AAHS photo archives, AAHS-57385)



*A similar number of Grumman JF-2 Ducks were also ordered. During WWII the USCG operated a number of navy Ducks as well as seen here by a J2F-6, BuNo 33563. (From the Gerald Balzer collection)*



*This Northrop RT-1 (1D-7) Delta was initially used as personal transport for Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury. (AAHS photo archives, AAHS-57207)*

Co. Flying School was located. Chiswell, Hall and Stone presented their plan to Curtiss and Capt. Thomas S. Baldwin, head of the flying school. Curtiss and Baldwin saw the value in this program and supported it with a Curtiss Model F flying boat and a pilot.

The tests proved so promising that Baldwin offered to place a plane at Stone's disposal for the purpose of conducting additional tests. Captain Chiswell requested that Stone be assigned to aviation duty for this purpose. With the U.S. Navy approval, on April 1, 1916, Stone, soon followed by 2nd Lt. Charles E. Sugden, reported to the U.S. Navy Aeronautic Stations, Pensacola, Fla., for assignment to naval flight training.

Thus were the beginnings of the U.S. Coast Guard's aviation operations.

WWI saw the Coast Guard being transferred to the operational control of the USN and it would not be until after the war that the Coast Guard would return to its primary role of search and rescue. The early 1920s saw Coast Guard aviation languishing, not due to a lack of interest, but more from the lack of funding that all the postwar services experienced. In the mid-1920s, the Coast Guard became involved in smuggling interdiction, specifically rum-running. During 1925, aircraft were evaluated as to their possible effectiveness in this role, which proved successful – so much so, that in 1926 the service acquired five aircraft, three Loening OL-5s and two Vought OU-4s, specifically for this activity. Air stations were opened at Ten Pound Island in Gloucester Harbor, Mass., and Cape May, New Jersey.

In the early 1930s, Coast Guard aviation began to grow with the acquisition of five North American PJ aircraft in 1932, followed soon thereafter with 14 Douglas RD Dolphins and 14 Grumman JF-2s. By 1935, the service had 19 enlisted pilots and 17 additional aviators graduated from flight schools. The end of Prohibition in 1937 found the Coast Guard with 39 aircraft, eight air stations and one detachment. Though the primary mission of these aircraft had been smuggling interdiction, the Coast Guard had chosen aircraft that could also fill roles associated rendering aid to those in distress on the nation's waterways. In 1938, alone, the air service provided

warnings of impending danger to 1,931 people and 355 ships. This included assistance to 266 people in peril including 125 medical cases, 10 of which required landing in open seas. The air operations located 87 disabled vessels and 21 obstructions to navigation. Coast Guard aviation was evolving its operations into what is recognized today as its search and rescue mission.

With U.S. entry into WWII, Coast Guard's primary mission became coastal patrol, a mission it was ill-equipped for in the beginning. At the beginning of the war, the service had 51 aircraft, none of them armed. In spring 1942, 53 Vought OS2U-3 Kingfishers were transferred to the service for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) activities. It would not be until 1943 that the Coast Guard would acquire combat-ready aircraft with ASW. 1943 also saw the establishment of the first Navy Air Sea Rescue unit in San Diego, Calif., under the command of Cmdr. Watson Burton, USCG. This unit's primary mission was to provide search and rescue coverage along the west coast in support of pilot training. The squadron was all Coast Guard and equipped with nine Consolidated PB5Y-5As. In 1944,



*During WWII, the Coast Guard initially operated Vought OS2U-3 Kingfishers for anti-submarine patrols along the U.S. coastline. Here are four assigned to USCG Air Station Salem in 1943. (USCG photo from the C.H. Hamilton collection)*



*Sikorsky helicopters such as this HO4S-3G have been a mainstay of the USCG helicopter fleet from the 1940s up until the mid-1980s when the Aerospatiale HH-65 Dolphin was introduced. (Photo by Steven Miller, AAHS-D001345)*



*The Coast Guard began acquiring Grumman UF-1Gs (HU-16) Albatrosses in the 1950s to serve their SAR needs. (Photo from the C.H. Hamilton collection)*

complete responsibility for search and rescue in all navy sea frontiers was given to the Coast Guard. The navy transferred 90 PBY-TAs, 23 Martin PBM-5s, five Consolidated PB2Ys and four Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberators to the Coast Guard to support this mission. The navy also commissioned 175 naval aviation cadets to the Coast Guard, nearly doubling the size of the aviation personnel.

WWII also saw the Coast Guard develop the use of helicopters for military operations – both for rescue and ASW. They designed the hydraulic hoist and rescue basket and were instrumental in the development of the “dipping” sonar [See *Folded Wings*, Stewart Graham]. It soon became evident that the helicopter could safely perform operations impossible by any other means. The helicopter became and remains today a vital asset in the Coast Guard rescue mission.

Following the war, the Coast Guard would be given responsibility for search and rescue operations upon and above the maritime waters and adjacent areas of the U.S. and its territories. These responsibilities included being the coordinating agency in fulfilling U.S. obligations to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Though with a reduced staff and fleet, the service continued to provide

exemplary service in this role. Beginning in the 1950s, the fleet would see replacement of the obsolete SAR aircraft with Grumman UF-1G Albatrosses with more than 110 being delivered by the mid-1950s. This fleet would be augmented in the late 1950s with Lockheed HC-130s for long range SAR missions and logistics support.

In 1963, the USCG aviation began integrating the Sikorsky S-62s – designated HH52s – into the service. They would eventually have almost 100 in the fleet. During its 26 years of service, the HH-52s would perform more than 15,000 life-saving rescues, more than any other helicopter in the world.

During the Vietnam War primary responsibility of SAR was given to the U.S. Air Force. With the rapid increase in rescue requirements and a shortage of experienced helicopter pilots, the USAF approached the Coast Guard for supplemental help in 1966. An exchange program was established and Coast Guard aviators, experienced helicopter pilots, arrived fully qualified. The air force operated two Air Rescue Service squadrons, the 40th initially at Udorn, Thailand, and later Nakhon Phanom, and the 37th based at Da Nang, Vietnam. The Coast Guard crews primarily flew with the 37th. During the war, these units were involved in 645 combat rescue operations, with 603



*Beginning in the early 1960s, the USCG began introducing Sikorsky HH52s (S-62) into their fleet. These helicopters would perform more than 15,000 rescues during their 26 years of service. (Photo from the AAHS archives, AAHS-D001354)*



*The Lockheed C-130 Hercules began entering the USCG fleet in the 1950s to provide both long range SAR missions and logistic support. Upgraded versions continue to serve today in the fleet as seen here with this HC-130H, 1502, in September 2003. (Photo by Steven Miller, AAHS-D001611)*



*Dassault HU-25C Guardian, 2141. (From the Steven Miller collection, AAHS-D010255)*

successfully retrieving downed airmen. But not without costs; the 37th ARRS lost 28 men including Lt. Jack C. Rittichier, USCG.

Coast Guard aviation has continued to expand over the years with newer and better equipment being introduced. This includes the introduction of cutters with integrated helicopter capacity, and the introduction of the rescue swimmer in 1984. During the period of 1976 to 1994, the Coast Guard saved 101,729 lives and \$48.5 billion in property. These figures exclude lives saved during the 1980 Muriel Boatlift and 1993-1994 Alien Migrant Interdiction operations.

A concluding example of Coast Guard aviation's role today would be Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In this operation, 76 Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary aircraft flew 1,817 sorties amounting to 4,291 hours in the air. These crews saved 12,535 people. Even more amazing, was that these aircrews were frequently from different duty stations and had never flown together before, yet were able to successfully complete the mission. This speaks volumes for the training provided these crews.

Those interested in more specific information about the celebration of the Coast Guard Aviation Centennial or about some of the many exploits of Coast Guard aviators are encouraged to visit the following web sites. <http://centennial-cgaviation.org>, <https://aoptero.org>, <http://uscgaviationhistory.aoptero.org> →



*The Aerospatiale HH-65A was introduced into the fleet in 1985 to perform short range SAR missions and is typically manned by a crew of three - pilot, copilot, and rescue swimmer/paramedic. (Photo from the C.H. Hamilton collection)*

# AAHS Membership Rate Increase

Starting in 2017, the membership rate to the Society will be taking a fairly significant increase. For the last 10 years, the Society has been creative and resourceful in keeping our membership rates fairly constant while costs continue to rise around us. During this period, we have managed to increase the quality of the AAHS *Journal* (now full-color throughout), provide ever expanding content to the AAHS website and enhance and expand access to the photo archives just to highlight a few. All this while keeping membership rates almost constant (see table below). Unfortunately, time has caught up with us and we find we must increase the membership rate in order to continue to provide these services.

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2016</u>
U.S. Membership	\$39	\$40
Mexico/Canada	\$44	\$48
Rest-of-World	\$57	\$69
e-Membership	N/A	\$25

During the last 10 years we have seen U.S. domestic postage rates (a bulk of our expenses) increase by over 20%, with international rates taking a dramatic jump in May 2007 with the postal service elimination of surface mail. In addition to this there are the normal inflationary increases associated with utilities, office space, supplies and services. While we continue to seek creative ways and resources to reduce these, at some point it may be necessary to pass some of these expenses along to our members.

The **Membership Rates for 2017** will be:

	<u>1-Yr</u>	<u>2-Yr</u>
<b>U.S. Membership</b>	<b>\$46</b>	<b>\$89</b>
<b>Mexico/Canada</b>	<b>\$54</b>	<b>\$104</b>
<b>Rest of World</b>	<b>\$75</b>	<b>\$145</b>
<b>e-Membership</b>	<b>\$29</b>	<b>\$56</b>

These rates will go into effect **November 1, 2016**.

# EAA Oshkosh AirVenture 2016



*Texas Flying Legends' Supermarine Mk. IX Spitfire puts on an explosive performance during the AirVenture air show. This was one of about five aircraft from this group that added to the daily performances. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*

Each year the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) holds its annual get together the last week of July. Each of these events are spectacular in themselves and participants leave wondering how the EAA would ever be able to improve on the event. Yet, each year, they somehow manage to do it – year after year.

2016 was no exception. Attendance this year was of more than 500,000 in spite of inclement weather. More than 10,000 aircraft in addition to more than 1,000 showplanes on exhibit converged on Wittman Field and surrounding airports. This family-oriented event covers all forms of aviation – from drones and ultra lights to vintage and warbirds. Homebuilts are present in prolific numbers along with the classic Cessnas, Pipers and Beechcraft, not to mention less common types. Add to this the emporium of vendors selling everything from aircraft components (new and used), clothing, artwork and services, and you have just about every aviation-related thing

you can imagine at one location.

In trying to tell the EAA AirVenture story, it's a challenge to figure out where to begin. If you have the opportunity to arrive on the Saturday before (the event runs Monday to Sunday the last week of July), you can sit back and watch the intricate ballet of thousands of aircraft landing and being shuttled to their appropriate parking locations. Close to 10,000 aircraft will arrive on the Saturday and Sunday filling up the available parking. This year, by Sunday evening, air traffic control was advising arriving aircraft that if they didn't have a reservation in one of the designated areas, there were no places left to park them and they needed to go to another airport. While this has probably happened before, this was this author's first experience of such a situation.

## Highlights

We'll touch on highlights for most of the aircraft classes



*According to the owner, this 1929 Bellanca CH-300 had two hours on the clock since restoration before being flown from Oregon to Oshkosh. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*



*The 4-place Prescott Pusher home-built design dates from the 1980s and still has a futuristic look. About 30 were built. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*



*Spartan Aircraft Co. produced only 36 Model 7 and 7Ws, 20 of which are still carried on the FAA registry. (Editor's note: This page and the next are best viewed as a spread.)*

on display starting with homebuilts. This year marked the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the Van's RV-3. To celebrate this, Van builders staged a 30 aircraft fly-over midweek. Their formation flying was top notch and impressive for a group of individuals that I would guess don't normally fly formation with even one other aircraft. As of Thursday, there were 566 RVs of all models registered. An impressive number and quite a sight to see row after row of RVs, the construction quality of many that would put any general aviation manufacturer's examples to shame.

In addition to the RVs, there was a large number of other homebuilt designs including seven Swearingen SX, a number of Velocities (4-place Varieze derivative) and Monet designs. Want your own personal jet? Monnett has a Sonex kit that will give you a single-place, jet-powered, fully aerobatic design for under \$100,000.

The Vintage aircraft area always holds surprises for those interested in Golden Age aircraft. This year one could be delighted by seeing eight Spartan Executives lined up in a row – all looking like they just came off the production line. There were only 36 Spartan 7s made, of which 20 are still carried on the FAA registry. So these eight represent a majority of those still likely to be active. Also tucked away in the vintage

area was a 1928 Bellanca CH-300. According to the owner, this beautifully restored plane had accumulated two hours prior to departing Oregon for Oshkosh. Parked next to him was a Curtiss-Wright Travel Air 12W that exhibited a similar degree of loving care in its restoration. Another interesting group was five or six Interstate Cadets, including the newly restored "Pearl," the first U.S. aircraft to encounter the Japanese on December 7, 1941.

One of the real oddities at this year's event was a Luscombe 10. This aircraft is more accurately described as a replica or reproduction as Luscombe built only a prototype shortly after WWII and scrapped it when they determined there wasn't a real market for a single-place sport plane. Only Mooney with the Mooney Mite actually entered this postwar market. Parked close to the Luscombe was another Mooney of interest – a M-10, the Mooney version of the Ercoupe.

There were sufficient other vintage aircraft including Beech Staggerwings, Stinsons, Fairchild's and the like to keep any Golden Age buff busy for a number of days. You could include an accurate reproduction of a Fokker D.VII in this group as well.

Warbirds, warbirds, warbirds. Walking through this area on Saturday evening would have left you with the impression



*Several companies experimented with single-place sport planes post-WWII. Luscombe developed and then scrapped the Model 10 due to a lack of market. This Model 10 is most likely a replica, though rumors abound that it's a restoration. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*



*EAA Young Eagles Program reached the 2,000,000 mark at AirVenture, with the honoree being given a ride by Harrison Ford in his DeHavilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*

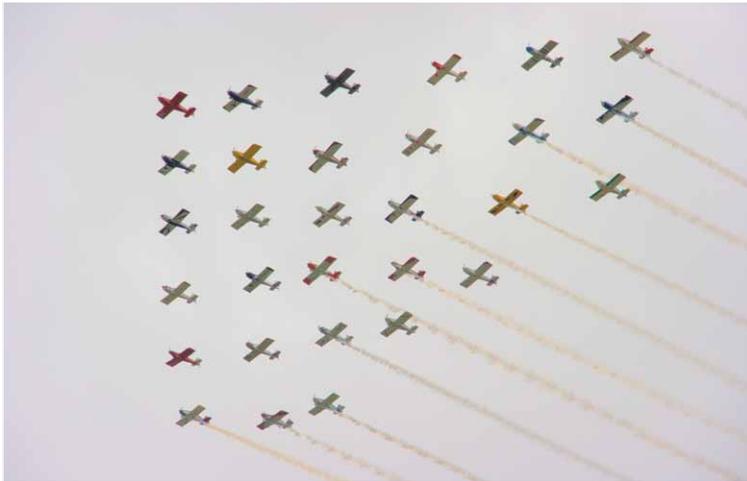


*AirVenture hosted eight of these beautiful, pre-WWII Spartan Executives and every one looked like it rolled off the production line yesterday. A very rare sight to see one or two - much less eight all together - these days. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*

that the warbirds were boycotting Oshkosh. Then, 24 hours later, it looked like an air force had taken over the field. Rough counts showed 18-20 P-51s, two P-40s, a couple of dozen each of T-6s/SNJ, T-28s and T-34s, a couple of F4U/FG-1 Corsairs and three Douglas AD-1s. Throw into this mix a couple of C-47s/DC-3s, B-25s, HU-16s and even a B-26 (that was damaged in a nose gear failure on Thursday) not to mention the numerous liaison and observation types. There were between six and 12 jet trainers of various makes in attendance as well.

But the real highlight was the appearance of the Martin "Hawaii Mars" that participated in flight demonstrations on Monday, Wednesday and Friday (Friday may have been canceled due to a bird strike on takeoff, followed by an aborted water landing that resulted in a hull strike perforating the hull. The aircraft is damaged but repairable. By the way, it's also for sale, so dig out that check book and plan on starting your own unique museum.) It's still amazing to see this 75-year-old behemoth approaching and making a water drop - could really use a couple of these out here in California right now.

If you want to really experience an EAA AirVenture, don't plan to try and do it in one, or even two days. You'll need a full week and even then you are going to miss something.



*Recognizing the 30th anniversary of Van's RVs, 30 RVs of various models performed a formation flyover. Pretty impressive formation for a group of pilots that probably rarely fly formation with even one other aircraft. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*



*One of the last two remaining Martin PBMs, the Hawaii Mars, made the only appearance of this type at AirVenture and flew water-drop performances. Coulsen is looking to sell this aircraft with the Philippines Mars slated to go to the National Naval Aviation Museum. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*



*The Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard were out in force. Here a navy Boeing F/A-18F, BuNo165887, makes a high-speed pass on one of the humid days, producing an interesting condensation pattern. (Photo by C.H. Hamilton)*

# NAMF RADFORD AWARD to Lt. Cmdr. TOM BEARD, USCG (Ret.)

AAHS member and contributor\* Tom Beard has been selected by the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation (NAMF) as the recipient of the Foundation's 2016 Arthur W. Radford Award for Excellence in Naval Aviation History and Literature. Retired U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Tom Beard is a Naval Aviator who served in both the Navy and the Coast Guard, was recognized as editor-in-chief for the three-time award winning book, *The Coast Guard*, is also the author of *Wonderful Flying Machines* and has co-authored or edited several other books. He has published more than 50 magazine and journal articles and has written, edited and contributed to the production of television documentaries. He is recipient of two previous awards for his work.

Tom is a graduate of Evergreen State College, and holds a M.A. from Western Washington University. A navy attack pilot, Beard joined the Coast Guard after 10 years of naval service, continued flying with the Coast Guard, and holds single and multi-engine, land/seaplane, and helicopter ratings, logging more than 7,000 flight hours.

Tom Beard is an avid sailor, holding a Coast Guard Master's license and cruising more than 160,000 miles nearly circumnavigating the earth twice, all the while continuing his writing.

The Radford Award was presented at the Foundation's annual symposium, at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, May 4-6, in conjunction with the Foundation's tribute to the 100th Anniversary of Coast Guard Aviation.

*[Editor's note: AAHS members selected Tom's article "Number Two" Helicopter Pioneer Stewart Ross Graham as the best article of 2012 that appeared in Vol. 57, Nos. 2 and 3.]*



*Lt. Gen. Duane Thiessen, USMC (Ret.), [left], Naval Museum Foundation President and CEO, presenting "The Admiral Arthur W. Radford Award" for excellence in Naval Aviation history and literature to Lt. Cmdr. Tom Beard, USCG (Ret.) at the National Naval Aviation Museum, May 6, 2016. (Photo courtesy of NAMF 2016)*

## NEW MEMBER DRIVE

The AAHS is in its sixth decade of operation and continues to face the challenge of sustaining its membership.

As current members, **YOU** can contribute to the success of helping grow the organization.

Did you know that more than **50 percent of all new members** learned about the AAHS from a friend?

Do you have friends who are interested in aviation history?

Pass them a copy of the Membership Application above and encourage them to join!

Make it a commitment to **recruit one new** AAHS member this year!

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
RECRUIT A FRIEND**

## AAHS FlightLine

**American Aviation Historical Society**

**President:** Jerri Bergen

**Managing Editor:** Hayden Hamilton

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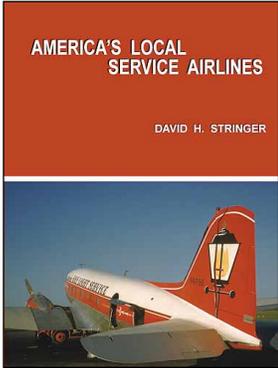
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# Book Reviews

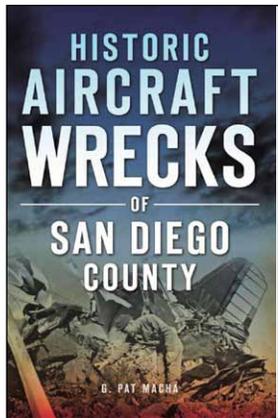
**America's Local Service Airlines**, David H. Stringer. American Aviation Historical Society, P.O. Box 3023, Huntington Beach, CA 92605. Copyright 2016, ISBN 978-0-9801-0921-4, Paperback, 8.5" x 11", 120 pages, 300+ color & B&W images, \$39.95.



This book is a treasure for airline enthusiasts and historians, plus employees who worked for a Local Service airline. But for anyone who ever rode on one or more of the original airlines, it provides a rich trip back into the Golden Age of air travel, when these companies served small towns across the country, connecting them with each other and providing transport to the co-destinations of trunk airlines. The author has thoughtfully provided wonderful maps and clip art, along with pictures of the various airliners, from the earliest prop aircraft to turboprops and jets. The book is a great read.

Jon Proctor

**Historic Aircraft Wrecks of San Diego County**, G. Pat Macha. The History Press, Charleston, S.C. ([www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net)). Copyright 2016, ISBN 978-1-46711-836-1, Paperback, 9" x 6", 152 pages, bibliography, index, 70+ B&W photos, \$21.99.



This book is a continuation of the author's extensive research into aircraft wrecks in Southern California and is a companion work to his books on *Historic Aircraft Wrecks of Los Angeles County* and *Historic Aircraft Wrecks of San Bernardino County*. Through his work and that of his Project Remembrance Team, a large number of wrecks have been located, identified and analyzed with the information often going to loved ones of those killed in the accidents.

The book is laid out in chronological order, starting with the earliest wreck and progressing up to the present day. Included are a number of wrecks that have been located off the San Diego County coast including a Consolidated B-36.

The author takes you through an analysis of each incident and the efforts to locate it following the accident. This includes present day visits to each site with a description of the wreckage remaining. Many of these sites are on private land, requiring owner permission to visit. A number of others are on public land, including state and national, and are often protected under

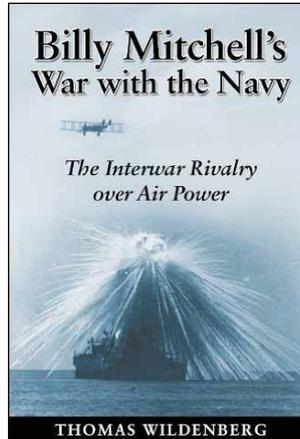
the Antiquities Act.

Through reading about the various accidents in chronological order, the reader is also presented with the evolution of aircraft operations in San Diego County. The reader can follow the growth of military training, commercial and private aviation in the area along with the associated aviation industry that developed to support it.

The book is well written and an excellent source of information.

Hayden Hamilton

**Billy Mitchell's War with the Navy**, Thomas Wildenberg, Naval Institute Press, 291 Wood Road, Annapolis MD 31402. Copyright 2013, ISBN 978-0-87021-038-9, Hardback, 9" x 6", 274 pages, appendices, bibliography, index, 50+ B&W photos, \$34.95.



The focus of this work is the seven-year period during which Billy Mitchell was constantly at odds with the U.S. Navy over airpower doctrine – primarily it was a war over control of the organization responsible for defense of the U.S. coastline. While Mitchell willingly conceded the need for sea-based aviation, a purview reserved for the Navy, he was adamant that the Army should bear the responsibility for coastal aerial defense.

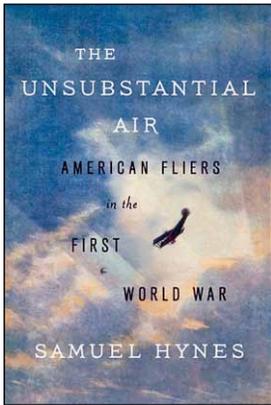
Following WWI, Mitchell was the leading proponent of the importance of air power. Two of his primary visions were that the next war would be fought in the air and the need to establish an independent air force. This message was swimming against the political tide of disarmament and isolationism where the last thing politicians wanted was to increase funding for national defense. Wildenberg's work artfully lays out the intense political struggles between the Army and Navy air arms for the limited resources needed to define and establish the role of aviation within their respective services.

Wildenberg also points out that Mitchell's resignation did little to end this inter-service rivalry for airpower that only intensified in the years preceding WWII. Even today, Mitchell's role and views are met with mixed positions. Though Congress awarded him (posthumously) a medal for his "outstanding pioneer service and foresight in the field of American military aviation," his court-martial has never been overturned with even the Secretary of the Air Force, James H. Douglas, publicly acknowledging his contribution in 1957 while denying a petition to set aside the court-martial verdict.

The book is well written containing new material on the subject that would be of interest to not only those unfamiliar with the details but also those well versed in the subject.

Leland Pugsley

**The Unsubstantial Air, American Fliers of the First World War**, Samuel Hynes, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 18 West 18th



Street, New York, NY 10011. Copyright 2014, ISBN 978-0-374-27800-7, Hardback, 9" x 6", 324 pages, Notes, Bibliography, Index, 22 B&W images, \$26.00.

This book is among a number of new works being issued on the centennial of WWI, and focuses on the American pilots who flew combat for the British, French and American services. It includes individuals who volunteered and saw combat prior to America's entry, as well as those

who were engaged with the American Expeditionary Forces.

*The Unsubstantial Air* is well written with an easy prose, often employing a perspective from the airman's eye, developed

from using diaries and articles authored by these individuals. The work provides insight into the life beyond aerial combat – the proverbial “hurry up and wait” mode of military service operations. A minor negative is that the images are not captioned leaving readers to interpret from the surrounding text what they are seeing, or to flip back to the front of the book where the captions can be found.

The book is recommended for those looking for a single source on American WWI pilots. For those more familiar with this period and the individuals, then they may find the book wanting, as this reviewer found for himself.

Hayden Hamilton

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## New Members

*Editor's Note: Due to search engines extracting and indexing personal information, the AAHS will no longer publish detailed addresses. Please contact the office if you wish to contact a member.*

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Glendale, CA 91202-2054

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Walnut Creek, CA 94595-3840

Kerry Johnston  
Glendale, CA 91202

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El Segundo, CA 90245

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# Folded Wings

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**Eric Melrose Brown**, a renowned British Navy test pilot who shattered records and made history with exploits that advanced Allied fighter power in WWII and quests for jet propulsion and supersonic speeds in postwar aviation, died February 21 in southern England. He was 97.

Captain Brown's test flights established the North American P-51 Mustang as the fast and maneuverable fighter-escort that smothered the Luftwaffe in dogfights over the Continent late in the war and gave top cover for Allied bombing runs into Germany.

His work also demonstrated that aircraft carriers escorting Allied shipping could successfully protect convoys from enemy air attacks, if not from U-boats. And he amassed information that influenced the designs of many Western aircraft, and of aircraft carriers, during and after the war.

In a career that spanned an era from biplanes to the threshold of spaceflight, Captain Brown, by his own accounts and Royal Navy records, flew 487 distinct types of aircraft (does not count variants of types such as the 14 different Spitfire marks that are counted once), and set a world record of 2,407 landings on aircraft carriers, including the first by a jet plane.

He was also the most decorated pilot in the history of the Fleet Air Arm, Britain's naval aviation service.

"Not you again!" King George VI quipped in 1947, when the 28-year-old Captain Brown appeared at Buckingham Palace for a fourth royal recognition in a roll of honors that eventually included his designation by Queen Elizabeth II as a Commander of the British Empire, the rank just below a knighthood.

Captain Brown, a Scot who flew combat missions over Britain, Continental Europe and the Atlantic, and who was the Royal Navy's chief test pilot for many years, retired from active duty in 1970, after 31 years of service. His exploits were recounted in a half-dozen books, including a memoir, *Wings on My Sleeve*.

His experiences often bordered on the improbable. He was caught in Germany and arrested by the Gestapo as the war began in 1939, but after several days of interrogation he was released at the Swiss border as a harmless exchange student — only to become a major asset to the Allies as a combat and test pilot.

He was no daredevil. Relying on superb flying skills and careful estimates of the dangers, he performed screaming power dives, breathtaking pull-ups, acrobatic rolls, high-altitude climbs and chases into the unknown to discover the speed limits and flight characteristics of warplanes. He also trained hundreds of pilots to land on the decks of aircraft carriers.

Captain Brown survived the sinking of his first escort carrier, *HMS Audacity*, which was torpedoed off Brittany by U-boats on the night of December 21, 1941. He bobbed in the icy Atlantic with a life jacket for three hours before being rescued.

He rarely bailed out, but said he survived 11 crashes — mostly hard landings on carrier decks as his plane broke through

arresting wires, lost its landing gear and skidded to a jolting halt with crumpled wings and nose. There were also splashdowns at sea, including one low-altitude stall that sent his plane spinning into the Firth of Forth as Prime Minister Winston Churchill looked on.

With the war nearly over, Captain Brown flew to a major Nazi base in Denmark to test-fly a German jet bomber. He expected the Germans to be gone, but he landed at a still-operational Luftwaffe base. He had only a pistol, but the base commander offered to surrender, and the captain took charge of the base and of 2,000 prisoners until Allied ground forces arrived the next day.

In April 1945, he went to the just-liberated concentration camp at Belsen, Germany, where he saw acres of unburied corpses and "shuffling ghosts of men." He was fluent in German, and a British brigadier medical officer asked him to interrogate the captured camp commandant, Josef Kramer, who was later hanged for war crimes.

After V-E Day, the captain, because of his language and aviation expertise, was assigned to interrogate the rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, the Luftwaffe commander Hermann Göring, the aircraft designers Willy Messerschmitt and Ernst Heinkel, and many Nazi fliers.

After WWII, Brown commanded the Enemy Aircraft Flight, an elite group of pilots who test-flew captured German and Italian aircraft. That experience rendered Brown one of the few men to have been qualified to compare both Allied and Axis aircraft as they flew during the war. He flight-tested 53 German aircraft, including the Me 163B Komet rocket fighter. His flight test of this rocket plane, apparently the only one by an Allied pilot, was accomplished unofficially: it was deemed to be more or less suicidal due to the notoriously dangerous C-Stoff fuel and T-Stoff oxidizer combination.

Sent to the United States, he proposed British innovations for aircraft carriers that proved useful to the American navy, including steam catapults and upturned decks for easier takeoffs. This included launching from the *HMS Perseus* in a Grumman Panther while the ship was tied up at the dock.

Only 5 feet 7 inches tall — colleagues called him "Winkle," for periwinkle — the captain was a compact man who radiated quiet confidence. In television interviews, lectures and public appearances, he was often asked about his fears and feelings in an airplane.

"I don't frighten easily," he told BAE Systems in a 2012 interview. "If a pilot has this perfect harmony of control, you feel you're bonded with it, really. You've got into it and the airplane welcomes you and says 'Thank God you've come, you're part of me anyway,' and to fly like that is a sheer delight."

Eric Melrose Brown was born in Leith, Scotland, on Jan. 21, 1919. His father, Robert, had been a pilot in WWI, and the boy was raised on tales of aviation. By eight, he was flying with his father. In 1936, they attended the Swastika-draped Olympic Games in Berlin and met Ernst Udet, a fighter ace, who took the youth up in a two-seat Bücker Jungmann.

He said that he never forgot the flight — terrifying, exhilarating loops and dives, ending with an upside-down final approach and a roll upright at touchdown.

A year later, after graduating from high school, Eric enrolled at the University of Edinburgh, joined its air squadron and learned the basics of flying. He joined the Fleet Air Arm, and by 1940 he was flying sorties in the Battle of Britain.

During and after the war, he flew every major Allied and Axis prop plane, jet and helicopter, and most minor ones as well. His tests for Gen. James Doolittle in 1944 established the P-51 Mustang as the war's dominant fighter-escort. In late 1945, Captain Brown made the first jet landing on an aircraft carrier — a de Havilland Sea Vampire on the deck of *HMS Ocean*. It heralded a new age of jet-propelled carrier aviation.

In 1946, he achieved a speed of 750 mph in a jet power dive from 45,000 feet. He might have been the first to break the sound barrier as chief test pilot for the Miles M.52, a bullet-like jet designed to fly 1,000 mph. But Britain canceled the project and gave its research to the United States. American Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier, Mach 1, on October 14, 1947, flying the Bell X-1 rocket plane at about 760 mph.

Britain was virtually bankrupt, but surrendering the project was divisive. Captain Brown wrote about it in *Miles M. 52: Gateway to Supersonic Flight*. His other books include *Wings of the Luftwaffe* and *Wings of the Navy*.

After retiring, he became an aviation trade group executive and president of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He quit flying in the 1990s, but continued to write and lecture, living in Copthorne, England.

**Col. Fred V. Cherry**, USAF (Ret.) died February 16 at a hospital in Washington. He was 87. The cause was heart ailments, said his companion of 24 years, Deborah Thompson.

He was a major and had more than 100 combat missions in Korea and Vietnam behind him on October 22, 1965, when his F-105 Thunderchief was hit by enemy antiaircraft fire.

"The plane exploded and I ejected at about 400 feet at over 600 mph," Colonel Cherry wrote in a 1999 collection of war stories by POWs and Medal of Honor recipients. "In the process of ejection, I broke my left ankle, my left wrist, and crushed my left shoulder. I was captured immediately upon landing by Vietnamese militia and civilians."

He had grown up in the Jim Crow South, and his captors made it clear that he could mitigate the harshness of his incarceration, including routine torture, and improve his living conditions by speaking out against the racial injustice and discrimination he had faced as an African American in the United States.

Hoping to capitalize on Cherry with a propaganda coup of disaffected black officers speaking out against the U.S., his Vietnamese captors subjected him to a variety of harsh treatments.

"I spent 702 days in solitary confinement, he added, with the longest period lasting 53 weeks. At one time I was either tortured or in punishment for 93 straight days."

When beatings failed to bring him around, his jailers tried another tactic. They assigned a self-described Southern white boy as his cellmate, hoping that racial antipathy between the

two men would weaken his resolve and produce a propaganda triumph for North Vietnam.

The plan failed.

Instead, the two men, Colonel Cherry and a navy fighter pilot, then Ensign Porter Halyburton, a North Carolinian who had been shot down October 17, 1965, became fast and lifelong friends. Each would credit the other with having saved his life. For eight months, they would live together. But whatever mutual animosity their captors may have hoped for never materialized.

"I guess they thought if they had a Southern white boy taking care of a black man, it would be the worst place for both of us," Halyburton said in a telephone conversation from North Carolina. It turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me."

For eight months, Halyburton changed the dressings on his cellmate's infected wounds, fed him, bathed him and watched over him. "He said I saved his life, and he saved my life." Taking care of my friend gave my life some meaning that it had not had before.

The two men lived in a succession of fetid 10-by-10-foot cells, sleeping on straw mats, benches or the floor.

"I was so inspired by Fred's toughness," Halyburton said. "He had grown up in the racial South [and] undergone a lot of discrimination and hardship. But he was such an ardent patriot. He loved this country. It inspired me, and it inspired a lot of others."

For 2,671 days, Colonel Cherry was held in captivity before his release on February 12, 1973, with the first group of U.S. prisoners of war to come home.

Fred Vann Cherry Sr. was born in Suffolk, Va., on March 24, 1928. He attended racially segregated public schools and graduated in 1951 from Virginia Union University, a historically black college in Richmond.

He then joined the Air Force and, during the Korean War, flew more than 50 combat missions over North Korea.

In the summer of 1966, Colonel Cherry and Halyburton were separated. Halyburton remembers it as, "one of the saddest days of my life." They did not see each other again until 1973, when they met at a military hospital at Clark Air Base in the Philippines after their release from captivity.

Colonel Cherry, who later attended the National War College and the Defense Intelligence School in Washington, retired from the Air Force in 1981 as a joint staff officer assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency. He was a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland.

His awards included the Air Force Cross, awarded, according to the citation, "... for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Prisoner of War, extremely strong personal fortitude and maximum persistence in the face of severe enemy harassment and torture, suffering critical injuries and wounds."

Colonel Cherry and Halyburton, who retired from the navy at the rank of commander, gave joint talks at military institutions and colleges. In 2004, they toured to promote a book about their story, *Two Souls Indivisible: The Friendship That Saved Two POWs in Vietnam*, by James S. Hirsch.

Colonel Cherry also was featured in a public television documentary narrated by Tom Hanks, *Return With Honor*, about Vietnam fighter pilots held as POWs.

**Cmdr. Stewart Ross Graham**, United States Coast Guard (Ret.) passed on August 13, quietly in the presence of his family at his Naples, Maine, residence. Graham was 98 years of age. A devoted family man, Stewart was preceded in death by his wife Mae. He is survived by his sons Stewart Ross Graham of Naples, and William Graham of Jacksonville, Oregon.

Graham served as a Coast Guard aviator during WWII. He is nationally recognized as a pioneer in rotary wing (helicopter) flight. He is enshrined in the Naval Aviation Museum Hall of Honor and the Coast Guard Aviation Hall of Honor.

On September 15, 1946, a major airline crash occurred in wilderness tundra near Gander, Newfoundland. “Stew” spent that birthday flying an early model Sikorsky helicopter, rescuing survivors from the inaccessible crash site. This September, the Gander Airport Historical Society will host a special celebration, 70 years later, remembering and honoring those involved. For his actions in this unique helicopter rescue, he was commissioned “A Knight of the Order of Leopold” by the Belgian government.

Cmdr. Stewart Ross Graham, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), Coast Guard Aviator #114 and Coast Guard and Navy Helicopter Pilot #2 compiled many “firsts” following his three and a half hours of instruction on how to fly helicopters at the Sikorsky factory in Stratford, CT, on October 20, 1943.

Graham was the first Navy test pilot for helicopters at NAS Patuxent River test center as Head of Rotary Wing Development. Today, U.S. Navy ASW helicopter squadrons represent a major arm of naval aviation. The basic tactics that Graham helped develop are currently in use by many of the world’s navies.

Working with Cmdr. Frank Erickson, his mentor, Graham established the “Rotary Wing Development Unit,” at Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City in July 1946. Their goal was to advanced helicopters for search and rescue (SAR). The team imagined and created much of the rescue equipment, helicopter design, and tactics still used today by modern helicopter crews. These included such innovations as the hydraulic hoist and a rescue basket for pick up of survivors.

Graham retired from active Coast Guard service in September 1960 after 24 years. His career began as an enlisted Surfman walking the cold and lonely beaches of Long Island, New York, looking into storm tossed surf for ships in distress. Following his commissioning and designation as a Naval Aviator in the early days of WWII, he progressed quickly, retiring as a commander. His proven effectiveness as a leader contributed significantly to worldwide helicopter development.

Stew’s pioneering efforts in helicopters resulted in the rescue of thousands of people in distress around the globe over the past seventy years. He helped prove the value of the helicopter as a revolutionary aircraft through his own imagination, tenacity, and exceptional skill. Commander Graham was recognized for his contribution to aviation in the Coast Guard Aviation Hall

of Honors in 1995 and in the United States Naval Aviation Hall of Honor in 2004. During his career Graham received the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Air Medals, Knighthood by the Belgium government and numerous other awards for helicopter development.

*[Editor’s note: A detailed 2-part article on the life of Stewart Graham, authored by Tom Beard, can be found in AAHS Journals, Vol 57, Nos 2 and 3]*

**Staff Sgt. David Jonathan Thatcher (USAF Ret.):** One of the last two surviving members of the Doolittle Raiders — who bombed Japan in an attack that stunned that nation and boosted U.S. morale — passed away June 22, 2016, at the age of 94.

Thatcher’s death leaves retired Lt. Col. Richard “Dick” Cole of Comfort, Texas, as the only living airman from among 80 who took off from an aircraft carrier on 16 B-25 bombers to target factory areas and military installations in Japan on April 18, 1942. Afterward, the planes headed for airfields in mainland China, realizing they would run out of fuel, according to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

The mission lifted American spirits five months after Pearl Harbor was bombed and forced the Japanese to spend resources defending their home islands.

Thatcher was engineer-gunner aboard the plane nicknamed “The Ruptured Duck.”

After the bombing, Thatcher’s plane crash landed in the ocean near China. The plane flipped over and all the crew members except for Thatcher were seriously injured. Thatcher was knocked out, but soon regained consciousness, gathered the rest of the crew, administered first aid and convinced some Chinese guerrillas to take the crew to safety in inland China.

Thatcher received a Silver Star for gallantry in action.

Because the bombing run was so dangerous, all those involved were volunteers. Thatcher said they gave little thought about earning a place in history.

“We figured it was just another bombing mission,” he told The Associated Press in an interview in March 2015. In the years afterward, though, he said, they realized: “It was an important event in WWII.”

After his military career, Thatcher worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 30 years as a clerk and later a letter carrier. He retired in 1980. He stayed in contact with the surviving members of the Doolittle Raiders and attended nearly every reunion the group held through the Final Toast in November 2013.

In March 2015, Thatcher and Cole presented the Raiders’ Congressional Gold Medal for heroism and valor to the Air Force museum for permanent display.

Thatcher was born on July 31, 1921, in Bridger, Montana, one of 10 children. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Dawn, three of their five children and seven grandchildren.

→

# President's Message

Our first trip to the Antique Aircraft Association (AAA) fly-in, held over Labor Day weekend at Antique Aircraft Field, Blakesburg, Iowa, was a visible reminder that there are others that have similar objectives as the AAHS. The AAA was formed three years before AAHS, in 1953, by Robert Taylor (AAHS member #58) who felt that there should be a community of like minded folks who wanted to preserve the aircraft that helped develop so much of today's aviation industry. The AAA Labor Day Invitational Fly-in this year was themed 'Back to Basics' (or for true AAA fans 'Back to Blakesburg!'), to showcase the aircraft of our past, in the airframes of early aviation innovators such as the Luscombes, Stinsons, Taylorcrafts, Wacos, Aeroncas, Ercoupes, Pipers and Cessnas to name a few of the variety early aircraft manufacturers, many of whom have been documented in some fashion in AAHS publications over the years.



*Two Porterfields, flown by AAHS members Chris Bergen and Mike Polley, are staged in front of Antique Airfield headquarters, in preparation for an evening photo flight, September 1, during the Antique Aircraft Association Fly-in. Chris Bergen, Mike Polley, Suzanne Cable and Sharon Peterson discuss formation procedures. (Jerri Bergen photo)*

AAA and AAHS share similarities beyond a common interest. The membership count is much the same between the two, as is the spread of members across the United States and internationally. Both AAA and AAHS are a 'by the members, for the members' organizations, managed by member-voted boards, and financially supported through member donations and annual dues. AAA gets a percentage of its annual income through the Labor Day fly-in, while AAHS works to break even with its Annual Meeting. The AAA has 20 chapters spread across the U.S., in various levels of activity, while AAHS has significantly fewer local groups. Both AAA and AAHS provide regular publications as part of their membership service. Both AAHS and AAA (via their affiliation with the Air Power Museum) have significant library collections, now currently available only to their respective members.

It should come as no surprise then that we (AAHS) have taken steps to begin the conversation with AAA regarding a partnership between our two organizations. We don't yet know what the partnership may look like financially or organizationally, but AAA and AAHS Directors agree that the partnership would develop as a benefit to both organizations.

What could this partnership look like? We are exploring the possibility of a dual membership that provides members with access and benefits to both organizations. We can share archival/photo and library material, increasing both the resources and use of our individual knowledge base. We might share publication materials, published articles or references, such as drawings, photos, etc., to support member needs. We'd also be able to put more people with like interests together. In comparing the membership databases between the two organizations, we found less than 50 individuals that were part of both.

This partnership would have another significant benefit to us as a group: We can combine some resources and each be a more viable entity.

It will be exciting to share our passion and interests with other like-minded organizations. In fact, we have also recently reached out to the American Society of Aviation Artists (ASAA) with the similar objective, and have received a positive response. The ASAA management team views a partnership with AAHS as a benefit to both groups.

We have much to do to realize these partnerships, and your feedback is necessary to ensure we build organization ties that help, not hinder these groups. Do let us know what you think, and your suggestions for improvement.

Jerri Bergen  
President

# Wants & Disposals

**WANTED:** Unpublished, good quality images of Curtiss-Wright AT-9 Jeep's and North American O-47 series aircraft in other than factory or manufacturing settings, preferably at station and in service, after December 7, 1941.

Dan Hagedorn,  
Life member 100  
23053 SE 246th Place  
Maple Valley WA 98038  
email: [hagedorn\\_dan@comcast.net](mailto:hagedorn_dan@comcast.net)

**DISPOSAL:** Hundreds of B&W original negatives of U.S. aircraft, mainly 620 size, photographed during the 1970s to mid-1980s decades at \$3 each.

Contact:

Robert Esposito  
e-mail: [baesposit@verizon.net](mailto:baesposit@verizon.net)

**WANTED:** I am interested in contacting any descendant of Bertram "Bert" Acosta, 1895-1954, and/or locating any collections of letters and other papers that Bert may have left. Please contact me with any information or leads.

Mike Gough  
email: [mgough39@yahoo.com](mailto:mgough39@yahoo.com)

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the AAHS. Enclosed is my check (money order or bank draft) for dues as checked below. I understand that I will receive all issues of the *AAHS Journal* published to date during my membership year, plus all issues of the *AAHS FlightLine* (Downloadable from the AAHS website). Individuals joining after October 1, will have their membership begin the following year, but will receive the Winter issue of the *Journal* as a bonus. I also understand that renewal is due at the end of the calendar year in which membership will expire. (Valid through November 1, 2016)

- |                 |                               |                                |
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## AAHS Photo Archive CDs Series

The Society has recently started development of a series of photo CDs. These CDs contain high-resolution scans of negatives, slides and prints from the AAHS Image Library. The resolution of these scanned images is sufficient to make an 8"x10" photographic quality print. Each CD focuses on a particular aspect of American aviation history - be that a particular manufacturer, type or class of aircraft.

As of this date, the following CDs are available. Each CD contains between 70 and 140 images depending on content.

- 1001 Douglas Propeller-Driven Commercial Transports
- 1006 Lockheed Constellations, Part I
- 1007 Lockheed Connies in Color
- 1009 Lockheed P-38/F-5
- 1011 Curtiss Transports
- 1021 Boeing Propeller-Driven Commercial Transports
- 1031 Golden Age Commercial Flying Boats



These CDs are available to members for \$19.95 (\$29.95 non-members) each plus shipping (\$2.50 U.S., \$10.00 International - add \$1.00 for each additional CD). Order forms are available online and on request, but a note along with your donation specifying your particular interest is sufficient.

Proceeds go to support the preservation of the photo archives. Do you have a particular interest or suggestion for a CD in this series? Drop us a line or email the webmaster ([webmaster@aahs-online.org](mailto:webmaster@aahs-online.org)). We are currently researching the possibilities of offerings covering the following areas: Connies Part II, XP-56, Northrop X-4, Bell Aircraft, and Early Lockheeds.