

COMBAT

AIR MUSEUM PLANE TALK

Jan-Mar 2023
Vol. 39, No. 1



CAM Car Show

By Kevin Drewelow

Christmas came early to the Combat Air Museum and the Topeka Mustang Club was Santa Claus! The club held their second annual CAM Car Show on Saturday, October 8 and all proceeds went to benefit our Museum. The weather was perfect, sunny and warm with a gentle breeze. The show went very well and it was due to planning and hard work by volunteers from the Topeka Mustang Club and the Combat Air Museum.

The Topeka Mustang Club holds several car shows each year to benefit a range of good causes, and they added the Combat Air Museum to their list last year. Club members expected 60 owners would register their cars; they were surprised and delighted to draw 103; this year's show drew 105 cars.

Car owners began arriving early on the day of the show to get their preferred parking spots. JLG Mexi-Q served some outstanding breakfast burritos and continued with other great dishes throughout the day, augmented by DJ's Catering and Pineapple Dreams. Rainbow Dragon Mobile DJ provided the music and sound support.

Museum volunteers had towed several of our aircraft out onto

the ramp where owners could photograph their cars by each airplane. Royce Kugler of Bad Ass Auto Pics was on hand to take professional photos; many drivers couldn't resist having their cars photographed next to our McDonnell Douglas F-15A Eagle!



(R. Kugler photo)

Other vehicles joined the collectible cars on the flightline. Our friends at the Marine Corps Reserve 4th Marine Logistics Group displayed some of their heavy equipment as a backdrop to their Toys for Tots program. The Topeka Rolling Thunder Military Vehicle Preservation Association displayed a variety of their historic trucks and jeeps, and the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority brought a fire truck and police car.

CAM member Bruce Couch is an avid car collector and served as the Museum's liaison with the Mustang Club. When the subject of trophies came up, Bruce offered to take on that project. He contacted Sam Gomez of Topeka, who is well known for his creative and unique awards made from auto parts. His trophies for our car show did not disappoint!



Car show overview (K. Hobbs photo)

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[Heading photo: (https://www.undiscoverclassics.com/forgotten-fernglass/chris-woodslides-1955-kultur/)

PLANE TALK

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM 2

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

Topeka Regional Airport

Hangars 602 & 604
7016 SE Forbes Avenue
Topeka, KS 66619-1444
Telephone (785) 862-3303
www.combatairmuseum.org

Website Hosted by
Rossini Management Systems, Inc.

Email: office@combatairmuseum.com

Museum Director ~ Kevin Drewelow
Office Manager ~ Nelson Hinman, Jr.
UK Liaison Officer ~ Huw Thomas
UK Correspondent ~ Richard Knight

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MUSEUM HOURS

January 2 - February 28/29
Mon.-Sun. Noon - 4:30
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

March 1 - December 31
Mon.-Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

Closed

New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving, Christmas Day

PLANE TALK

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Megan Garner

Plane Talk, the official newsletter
of the Combat Air Museum
of Topeka, Kansas,
is published quarterly.

*We welcome
your comments.*

Your membership is
important to us.
Join the
COMBAT AIR MUSEUM



From the Chairman's Desk

By Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors

Happy New Year to all of you from the Board of Directors and staff at the Combat Air Museum! In 2022, CAM set an all-time attendance record with 11,682 paid admissions! This number does not include several hundred others who were here for special events, such as the annual Celebrity Pancake Feed, Taps across America, etc., so for 2023 we will set our sights on reaching 12,000, as we don't want to take a step backward. Please tell all your family and friends to visit the Combat Air Museum as we no longer have any interest in claiming we are the "best kept secret" in Topeka, Kansas.

The Museum returned to winter hours **January 2, 2023**. We open to the public each day at noon, take our last paid admission at 3:30 p.m. and close an hour later, seven days a week. We will have staff on duty each day from 9 a.m. to closing. You are always welcome to stop in if you wish or to volunteer during the morning. Feel welcome to give us a phone call or e-mail the Museum any time if you have questions or concerns. We will return to regular hours March 1, opening each day except Sunday at 9 a.m.

This is a good time to remind all of you that the annual Celebrity Pancake Feed will take place, as always, the last Saturday in April which will be on the 29th this year. The best reason for letting you know now is so you can start selling items aside for donation to the **Fly in Market**, a big part of the pancake feed. By now I think most of you know the drill, but please call the Museum at 785.862.3303 if you have questions. We will need all the volunteers we can get to make this a success, so please make a note on your calendar and invite all your family, friends and acquaintances.

What's new at the Museum? Some things that are new are not as visible as others. There are always numerous activities taking place behind the scenes, as you might expect. We have finished completing all the details for bringing our highway signage up to date. We signed the contract which now includes a third highway sign west of Topeka on I-70 which went up January 16, 2023. I want to thank those who have helped make this possible for the year 2023: **Visit Topeka** and the **Shawnee County Commission**, who have recognized us as a great tourist destination and agreed to help with these signs. We thank them wholeheartedly for this support. And when you're at the Museum, thank a volunteer for all they do on a daily basis to keep the Combat Air Museum open.

Last December the **National Museum of the United States Air Force** notified the Combat Air Museum that they had a pair of Lockheed Martin F-16A Fighting Falcons available to loan. Years ago we requested an F-16 and our request was still active. The Combat Air Museum replied that we are interested in acquiring one of the jets. If they approve our request, we'll need to raise funds to transport the plane to Topeka. We hope you'll help support this project. Keep your fingers crossed that we may soon have alongside our F-14 Tomcat and F-15 Eagle an F-16 Falcon, which would complete the big three in our Museum. What a great beginning to the New Year this looks to be for CAM. We still plan to have the F-15 ready for painting in late spring or early summer.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who purchased an annual **CAM Membership**, either individual or family. This really does help our Museum. If for any reason you

Continued on page 3

PLANE TALK

From *Bones* to *Drones* and *Flying* the *Moose*

By Dennis Smirl

Our featured speakers at the October 2022 museum membership meeting and brown-bag luncheon were two Air Force pilots, Colonel Michael Edmonston and Major William Pringle. Both officers presented fascinating information about their past and current assignments along with interesting insights into the nuts-and-bolts realities of their daily duties.

First to speak was Major William Pringle, currently Chief of Student Operations at the Air Force Element at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. A Kansas native, Major Pringle's hometown is Eudora, a community situated a few miles east of Lawrence. He is a recent graduate of CGSC and was previously assigned as an instructor at the Department of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations at the CGSC.

Major Pringle began his Air Force career as a cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, located just north of Colorado Springs, Colorado. He graduated in 2008, completed pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base (AFB) in Mississippi and found himself assigned to fly the Boeing C-17A Globemaster III, affectionately referred to as "The Moose" at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey.

One anecdote he shared with the group involved air-to-air refueling, his first at night, and taking on a full load of fuel from a KC-10 Extender. In a word, thank goodness for lots and lots of simulator time!

After that, Major Pringle turned the spotlight over to Colonel Michael Edmonston, currently Commander of the Air Force Element at CGSC. Also a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, Colonel Edmonston's experiences include flying both the B-1B Lancer and the MQ-1 Predator. A graduate of the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, he was previously the Director of Warfighting Education at the LeMay Center for Doctrine and Development and Education, Air University at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama.

After graduation from the Air Force Academy, Colonel Edmonston went to Sheppard Air Force Base for pilot training. He received qualification training on Rockwell B-1B Lancers at Dyess AFB and then Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota. One of his experiences included a landing at Guam for repairs, and having to wait several months for the needed parts to arrive and be installed. Tough, but duty calls!

Following his time with the B-1B, Colonel Edmonston was assigned to a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) program and talked about the hours he logged piloting RPAs. He said drones are relatively slow and that most of the missions begin a long way from the target, resulting in a long time from takeoff to recovery. He alluded to a high loss rate for the drones, but all things considered, they remain a wise use of military funds,



(l-r) Col. Edmonston, Gene Howerter and Major Pringle (K. Hobbs photo)

returning a lot of applied force for a small investment.

The meeting concluded with an extensive question and answer session followed by some individual conversations. Finally, both Colonel Edmonston and Major Pringle expressed an interest in the museum's collection and received a guided tour of both hangars. ♦

Continued from page 2 *Chairman's Desk*

have missed a copy of our newsletter, give us a call. We will be sending **four newsletters** per year which will now increase from 12 to 16 pages. We plan to mail these newsletters on January 26, April 27, July 27, and October 26. For all of you who always add a few extra dollars when paying your dues, we can't thank you enough, it really helps pay the Museum's bills. We also appreciate it when you pay your dues on the **first billing**, which saves the Museum both money and valuable office time. We hope to see all of you at the Museum. We thank each you for your support and wish you the very best New Year! ♦

Continued from page 1 *CAM Car Show*

Members of the Topeka Mustang Club secured donated items from area merchants which they put into gift baskets for door prizes and silent auction items. Their hard work and devotion to helping in the community resulted in club founder and president Roger Belanger presenting the Combat Air Museum with a check for \$2422! CAM is grateful to have friends like the Topeka Mustang Club and we look forward to making the 2023 car show even better! ♦



(R. Kugler photo)

Erwin Bleckley, Wichita's Highest Decorated Aviator

By Kevin Drewelow

Erwin Bleckley, a Wichita native, Kansas National Guard member and a pioneer observer in the U.S. Army Air Service, earned a posthumous Medal of Honor a month before the end of World War One. Aside from a few historians, almost no one has ever heard of him. Two Kansas National Guard veterans are working hard to change that.

Doug Jacobs and Greg Zuercher, founding members of the board of directors of the Bleckley Foundation, spoke at the Museum's December membership luncheon. Doug's military career spanned 34 years, most of it in the Kansas National Guard. He was the curator for both the Museum of the Kansas National Guard and the 35th Infantry Museum in Topeka and also served on the Combat Air Museum's board of directors. Greg spent 22 years in the military, initially as an F-16 avionics technician in the Kansas Air National Guard, then in the Army as an officer with several interesting assignments.

Both men became interested in Bleckley's story and wanted to find a way to increase public awareness and appreciation of the accomplishments of Wichita's most highly decorated aviator. They formed the Bleckley Foundation in 2018 and their mission statement says, "Honor the memory and service of native Wichitan, World War I aviator and Medal of Honor recipient 2nd Lieutenant Erwin Bleckley, by promoting, protecting and preserving his history and related artifacts." Doug and Greg took turns telling us about Erwin Bleckley's life, death and their work to recognize Bleckley's service.

Erwin Bleckley was a Wichita bank teller when he enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard on June 6, 1917. A month later, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 130th Field Artillery Regiment. Shortly after his unit arrived in France in March, 1918, Bleckley volunteered to serve as an observer and gunner in the U.S. Army Air Service. After completing training, he was assigned to the 50th Aero Squadron in August and began flying combat missions with his pilot, 1st Lieutenant Harold Goettler in de Havilland DH-4 aircraft.

General John Pershing launched the Meuse-Argonne offensive on September 26, committing over 1 million American troops to end the war before Christmas. By October 2, while most units ran into fierce resistance, over 500 soldiers with the 77th Division advanced quickly...too quickly...and found themselves in a pocket surrounded by Germans. For five days the Americans defended an area



2nd Lt. Erwin Bleckley
(USAF photo)

roughly 300 yards by 60 yards. An American news correspondent wrote a dramatic account of "The Lost Battalion" and, despite the fact the unit was neither lost nor a battalion, the name stuck. The 50th Aero Squadron dispatched its aircraft and attempted to resupply the encircled soldiers.

On October 6, Goettler and Bleckley located the soldiers and dropped supplies to them, but were disappointed to see most of the goods fall into German hands. Their DH-4 took a lot of fire which severely damaged the aircraft, but it got them back to their base. They were the only crew to volunteer for a second resupply flight that same day. Captain Daniel Morse, commander of the 50th, said a second flight would be a suicide mission. Bleckley said, "We'll make the delivery or die in the attempt." Goettler and Bleckley loaded another DH-4 and took off. To improve the accuracy of their drop, Goettler flew the DH-4 lower and more slowly, but the Germans were waiting for them. Ground fire raked the DH-4 and immediately killed Goettler. Despite his own wounds, Bleckley guided the badly damaged DH-4 to a hard landing near Binarville, France. The impact threw Bleckley out of the aircraft. French soldiers immediately transported the unconscious Bleckley, but he passed away en route to a field hospital. An American ambulance driver who witnessed the flight said, "I consider it the greatest act of bravery that I've ever seen."

Captain Morse recommended Bleckley and Goettler for the Distinguished Service Medal. The Army upgraded the decorations to the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1922. Only two other American aviators received Medals of Honor during World War One: Frank Luke and Eddie Rickenbacker. Erwin Bleckley was buried in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, Romagnous-Montfaucon, France.

Doug and Greg explained what they've done so far to honor Bleckley, and their plans for the future through the Bleckley Foundation. Doug's efforts resulted in Bleckley's enshrinement in the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame in 1997. After Doug and Greg founded the Bleckley Foundation, they commemorated the centennial of Bleckley and Goettler's final mission in Wichita on October 6, 2018. Three months later, they worked with senior leaders at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita to rename an events center on the base "Bleckley Lounge."



(l-r) Greg Zuercher, Gene Howerter and Doug Jacobs (K. Hobbs photo)

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Tribute to Treasurer *Les Carlson's* Long Service

By Gene Howerter

The first of September 2022 Les Carlson notified us that he wanted to retire from his present position of Museum Treasurer. Les notified Chairman Gene Howerter and CFO, Dave Murray, that his last official duty day would be October 31, 2022. Les previously served as a member of the Combat Air Museum's Board of Directors from May 2009 until August 2020.

As a young man Les Carlson joined the United States Air Force during the Korean conflict. After completing training, Les was sent directly to Okinawa's Naha Air Force Base with the title of Communications Security Specialist. Les remained stationed on Okinawa from 1953 to 1955. His job there was to fly in the "Tail Gun Position" on a B-24, while operating electronics equipment to send and receive intelligence messages. Les says these flights were long and tiresome as each one was an over-and-back trip, between Okinawa and Korea, seeing nothing but water below for about eight hours per roundtrip.

Les' residence after the Korean War was in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota where he resided with his wife Margaret, or "Muggs" to Les and her friends. Les had found his calling in the banking industry and was doing well enough that his management suggested he take the position of Chief Financial Officer at Merchants National Bank in Topeka, Kansas. That is where he moved to in 1969, and he has lived in Topeka ever since.

Former Museum Chairman Dick Trupp knew Les from his church community and pleaded with Les to come to the



(l-r) Les Carlson and Gene Howerter (K. Drewelow photo)

Museum and set up our financial record books, which he did. This was an arduous task as our "official" financial records existed, at that stage, only on a few pieces of paper in a three-ring binder, updated once a month. A personal computer and some software were purchased and Les set about the task of collating the numbers, finding backup for the entries, especially for all the aircraft and other artifacts and memorabilia that the Museum owned, and assigning a realistic value to them.

Eventually the long and elusive task was completed, the books balanced (given his good banking background) and Les has faithfully kept up those records ever since, for 18 years.

Les graciously joined the Combat Air Museum in 2004 as Member # 5230. Since that time Les has volunteered for many and other varied duties besides keeping the financials up to date. Perhaps I should also mention that Les is still, as always, deeply involved in his beloved Lions Club, after serving many years as their president. We still plan on seeing Les at the Museum helping with numerous volunteering duties.

Les, we all want to thank you for your sterling service to both the military and to the Combat Air Museum. ♦

Continued from page 4 *Erwin Bleckley*

Most notably, the Bleckley Foundation has acquired the only original American built airworthy military DH-4 left in the world. The Dayton-Wright Company built this DH-4 in 1918 and it is 85% original, down to the 400 horsepower Liberty engine and data plate. In 2020, the previous owners were conducting a test flight after an extensive restoration. A flight control problem led to a



de Havilland DH-4 (eaa.org photo)

hard landing that caused significant damage. The Bleckley Foundation purchased the DH-4; volunteers are restoring the DH-4 to fly again as time and money allow. It will be painted as the #6 DH-4 Bleckley and Goettler were flying on their final mission. Global Aviation Technologies at Wichita's Eisenhower Airport have donated hangar space for the project. The Bleckley Foundation continues to raise money for the restoration and they hope to return it to flight in 2027. After flying it, they plan to display the DH-4 in the main terminal at Eisenhower National Airport. A life size bronze statue of Bleckley, along with artifacts and photographs, will be near the DH-4 to help tell the story.

Doug and Greg are shedding deserved light on one of Wichita's best-kept aviation secrets. The Bleckley Foundation, its members and volunteers will soon give the Air Capital something else to be proud of and long deserved recognition to Army aviation pioneer and hero Erwin Bleckley. ♦

Museum Notes

By Kevin Drewelow

The arrival of winter with its low temperatures and wind chills has slowed but not stopped our volunteers from making progress at the Combat Air Museum!

Lockheed EC-121 Warning Star... Mike Madden and Mike Welch worked through some frigid days on the EC-121 before inclement weather stopped outside work. They installed both upper rudders and the lower right hand rudder, leaving the lower left rudder and both fixed intermediate surfaces awaiting installation. We found more for them to do inside, however, as you'll soon see.

North American F-86H Sabre... Danny San Romani and his Saturday volunteers have made progress in the Sabre's cockpit. Joe Wulfskuhle, Dominick and Gary Smith helped install the gun camera assembly, magnetic compass, instrument panel glare shield and ejection seat headrest. They will fabricate some small parts missing from the ejection seat next.



Dominick Smith works on the F-86 seat (G. Smith photo)



Welch and Madden install a rudder (K. Drewelow photo)



Volunteers in the new north library room (K. Drewelow photo)



Library looking north through the new doorway (K. Drewelow photo)

space. Our library is open by appointment Monday through Friday to members of the Combat Air Museum.

Kansas Museums Association reception...

The Combat Air Museum was the final stop on a traveling reception held for the Kansas Museums Association on November 7 during their annual conference. The reception began at the Mulvane Art Museum, moved to the Museum of the Kansas National Guard and then on to CAM. Upon our arrival at CAM, we were met by a large group of friendly and enthusiastic member-volunteers eager to welcome the visitors and show them around our Museum. During the conference over the next two days, many museum professionals stopped me to say how much they enjoyed visiting CAM and almost every one of them commented on how so many of our volunteers

attended the event and how knowledgeable they were. I thanked them and explained that our Museum is completely dependent upon our members supporting every event and our daily operation. Their comments were quite a tribute to the hard work and time our members put into the Combat Air Museum!

Toys for Tots... 2022 was the second year the Combat Air Museum supported our neighbors at the US Marine Corps Reserve unit and their Toys for Tots program. Many visitors and Museum members filled the donation boxes in hangar 602 with toys from both our own gift shop and from other sources. Our efforts helped brighten Christmas for some deserving children who otherwise might not have received anything. ♦

Library expansion... After a deluge of book donations overwhelmed the tiny room that has passed for our library, our board of directors approved expanding the library into the adjacent storage room, doubling the size of the library. We're so fortunate to have volunteers with the necessary skills, experience, time and interest to take on such a project. In a matter of days, Nathan Benfield, Gene Howerter, Dave Murray, Mike Madden, Sharon and Ted Nolde, Danny San Romani and Mike Welch all pitched in and transformed the space. They cleared the room and reorganized the gift shop office, opened and framed the doorway, installed new LED lights, painted the walls and put down carpet squares that Stu Entz donated. New shelving will soon follow and may be in place as you read these words. Steve Wodtke, our librarian, is delighted with the new

Girls in Aviation Day

By Kevin Drewelow

The Combat Air Museum held its annual Girls in Aviation on Saturday, October 1 and the weather was perfect! Around 200 girls of all ages came out to see how aviation is for everyone.

They began their day at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard where a variety of women pilots, mechanics and support personnel told their stories of getting into aviation and the necessary education and experience requirements. The girls also enjoyed STEM experiments put on by Kansas STARBASE teachers and toured the museum. They then moved to the Combat Air Museum for lunch and more fun!

There the girls could build and fly paper airplanes, make and drop coffee filter parachutes, see indoor radio controlled airplanes fly, and learn about air traffic control from two women air traffic controllers. They spoke with representatives from the Atchison Amelia Earhart Foundation and Museum and Electra-fying, the Topeka-based group seeking to acquire, restore and fly a Lockheed 10A similar to the aircraft in which Amelia Earhart planned to fly around the world. The girls also found out they could learn to fly with Aviation Explorer Post 8. Even more excitement was outside.

An interesting mix of military civilian and law enforcement aircraft awaited the girls on the parking ramp. A Boeing KC-135R Stratotanker from Topeka's own 190th Air Refueling Wing was open for tours. Two female flight instructors from Vance Air Force Base brought a Beechcraft T-6C Texan II single-engine turboprop trainer. One of the instructors was about to transfer to fly the new Lockheed F-35A Lightning II...more evidence that girls can do anything boys can do! The Kansas Highway Patrol displayed their Bell 407 helicopter next to a Life Star 407. Girls could climb inside the Aviation Explorer Post 8 Piper PA28-160 to see the airplane that might teach them to fly one day! The wind limited the Great Plains Balloon Club to displaying a balloon gondola and occasionally lighting the burners, which always turned heads. The Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority had one of their massive fire trucks open for tours.

With free admission at both museums, Girls in Aviation Day is a great way for young ladies to learn more about fascinating and rewarding opportunities in aviation. A grant to CAM from the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education makes this day possible. ♦



Dave Murray helping girls with paper airplanes (K. Drewelow photo)



Girls make parachutes with skydiver Rance Sackrider (K. Drewelow photo)



Girls tour a T-6C Texan II (K. Drewelow photo)

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In The Hangar: Lockheed's T-33A *Shooting Star*

By Dennis Smirl

One of the historic aircraft in the Combat Air Museum's growing collection is the Lockheed T-33A Shooting Star. Small, two-seated, straight winged, and displayed in polished aluminum with orange and black fuel tanks on the wingtips, it doesn't look like the kind of airplane that would be an important tool in the production of a group of pilots who would pioneer the use of jet aircraft in air-to-air combat. But that's what happened.

Leading the transition from piston and propeller to turbojet-powered fighters, the T-33A Shooting Star came from a relatively simple, but unprecedented, change to the Lockheed F-80C Shooting Star. First, however, a bit of background.

The United States was slow with its entry into the jet age. Both Germany and Great Britain had operational jet fighters well ahead of the United States. In fact, the Luftwaffe had Arado 234 jet bombers months before the United States had the P-80A Shooting Star.

Of course, there was an American jet fighter that preceded the P-80A. In 1942, Bell Aircraft produced the XP-59A Airacomet which used two General Electric J31 turbojet engines for propulsion. Unfortunately, these centrifugal-compressor engines were less powerful than was hoped for. They were also wide, and thereby draggy, because of the centrifugal design, and the resulting aircraft could not keep up with piston-powered fighters such as Republic P-47 Thunderbolts or North American P-51 Mustangs. Basically, they were research and development tools that taught some very valuable (and dangerous) lessons to those who wanted to fly without propellers.

Lockheed was selected to smooth things out a bit with their Shooting Star design. Advances in technology resulted in the possibility of a fighter jet propelled by a single engine. That engine was the Allison J33, a huge advance over the J31 that was, at the time, powering the Bell Airacomets. After some teething problems—one that set the program back three months—the Lockheed P-80A emerged with a performance envelope similar (even superior in some respects) to the Messerschmitt Me-262 Schwalbe. America had produced an aircraft capable of taking the fight to the Nazi's jet-powered Luftwaffe and then... the war in Europe ended. Four P-80As had made it to the European Theater of Operations, but never encountered Me-262s spoiling for a dogfight.

With the war over, research and development of jet fighters slowed but never stopped. The original Shooting Star was produced in a much-improved version: the P-80C which was redesignated the F-80C once the US Air Force (USAF) became a separate service.

As political winds changed direction, and as our former allies, the Soviets, became our Cold War enemies, more F-80Cs were



CAM's T-33 at Glasgow AFB Montana (unknown photo)

needed, and men qualified to fly them were needed even more. There were a lot of fighter pilots with experience from World War II, but all had been flying piston-engine powered aircraft. Learning the intricacies of flying the jet-powered F-80C was an entirely different challenge. Something had to be done, and quickly.

The problem was solved with a fuselage extension to the F-80C. There was a point a few inches behind the pilot's seat where the fuselage could be extended by about one meter to make room for a student pilot's seat, instrumentation, and controls. The Allison J33 engine produced enough power that the difference in weight didn't prove to be a major problem. One concession that was made, however, was removing four gun ports and mounts, so that the T-33A would only be equipped with two machine guns, if it was armed at all.

The development phase of the T-33A proceeded quickly and famed Lockheed test pilot Tony LeVier took the jet on its first flight on March 22, 1948. The aircraft went into production shortly thereafter and production of the series ended in 1959 with a total of 6,557 produced. Lockheed had come up with a winner and the use of the T-33A resulted in a generation of Air Force pilots being trained in the operation of jet-powered aircraft.

The U. S. Navy wasn't about to be left out and ordered a number of TV-18 (later redesignated T-33B) for its jet pilot program and then ordered an upgraded design (the TV-2) which was fully qualified for carrier operations. The aircraft could be catapult launched, trapped using its retractable hook, and had the back seat for the instructor pilot raised several inches for better visibility, particularly on landing.

Other nations wanted their own T-33s. Canada had Canadair produce 656 airframes for the Royal Canadian Air Force, while Japan had Kawasaki build 210 airframes. Lockheed produced a total of 5,691 Shooting Stars for the USAF.

T-33As could be seen at just about every USAF base in the United States and overseas. Many were used for maintaining pilot proficiency for those officers unlucky enough to be stuck with a desk job. One large collection of operational T-33As was stationed



CAM's T-33 today (CAM photo)

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The Grumman F11F's Coke bottle shaped fuselage (K. Drewelow photo)

AREA RULED Aircraft

By Dennis Smirl

One of the questions the casual listener in Hangar 602 might hear—on a perfect day—is, “Daddy, why does that airplane have such a funny shape?” Of course, circumstances would have to be exact. Father and child would have to be standing in the mezzanine art gallery and looking down at the Grumman F-11F Tiger—which does have a ‘funny’ shape—and the bright, inquisitive youngster would have to have a keen interest in airplanes.

It would be easier for the father. He’d only have to say, “That airplane is area ruled,” and then move quickly to the next exhibit. But not the F-4D Phantom. It’s area-ruled, too. And in hangar 604, stay clear of the F-105D because it is noticeably area ruled.

Which is to say that several of our aircraft, when viewed from above, have a narrowed section in the fuselage, giving rise to the observation that certain aircraft look like Coke bottles.

If one looks at the list of obviously area-ruled aircraft, it starts with the Grumman F-11 Tiger and continues with the Convair F-102A, the Lockheed F-104A (maybe), the Republic F-105D, the Convair F-106, the North American XF-107, the F-4 Phantom series, the Northrop F-5/T-38 series, the Vought F-8 Crusader, the Boeing F-15 (subtly done, and bravo), the Lockheed F-16...the list goes on.

What does area rule mean? The simple answer is that as the wing is added to the fuselage, the cross-section of the fuselage must be reduced proportionately. This curving of the fuselage is most noticeable with the Grumman Tiger, mainly because

the observer can look down at the dorsal spine of the aircraft. Imagine the fuselage of the Tiger as a cylinder that doesn’t vary. If nothing else, that would make the airplane easier to manufacture but it wouldn’t go supersonic. Drag would rise in accordance with the increase in velocity, and before the aircraft could even get to Mach 1, it wouldn’t have enough power to go faster. So, as the frontal area of the wing increases, the cross-section of the fuselage decreases, and the overall effect is that the frontal area of the aircraft doesn’t increase and produce unwanted drag.

Now this all sounds good in the wind tunnel. But does it really work?

The proof of the pudding came with the Convair F-102. The pre-production versions (built just for test purposes) were not area-ruled. They were chubby little interceptors that could not exceed the speed of sound in level flight. The aircraft was a total failure because it was too slow and draggy to do the job it was intended to do—intercept Soviet bombers on their way to targets in the United States.

Whitcomb’s area rule rode to the rescue. Richard Whitcomb was a young aeronautical engineer at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. A top-secret concept, it was shared with a struggling Convair in 1952 and the company redesigned and rebuilt the F-102 incorporating Whitcomb’s data. On its first flight, in a climb, the new and smarter F-102A exceeded Mach 1! This data was then shared with North American and shows up on the XF-107. It was made available to McDonnell and resulted in the F-4 Phantom series. General Dynamics incorporated it from the start on the F-111, and so on.

Richard Whitcomb received the Collier Trophy in 1954; it is awarded annually to those who have made the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America, with respect to improving the performance, efficiency, and safety of air or space vehicles, the value of which has been thoroughly demonstrated by actual use during the preceding year.

Without the area rule, jet airplanes would have been little faster than the Lockheed F-80 series and the Republic F-84 series, putting American aircraft at a great disadvantage when facing adversaries. With the area rule, the Air Force, Navy and Marines had, at their time of need, the greatest fighter aircraft in the world. With newer, subtler versions of the area rule, the same is true today. ♦

Continued from page 8 *In the Hangar*

at Peterson Field, Colorado. During the 1960s and early 1970s, Air Force Academy cadets earned their wings before graduation. The 40 Shooting Stars at Peterson Field flew thousands of hours in the process of qualifying cadets as pilots so they could be sent to operational assignments more quickly.

Notably, one very different T-33A was the RT-33A reconnaissance version. A single seater with available space filled

with cameras and other devices, 85 were built, mainly for export under the Military Assistance Program.

Finally, T-33s have been used extensively as chase planes for experimental aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base and as chase for Boeing jettliners for decades. Also, a few T-33As wound up in civilian hands, and continue flying today as performers at air shows or just as pleasure rides for the very wealthy. ♦

A Flight in a RAF Tiger Moth

We are very lucky in the UK that our Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) allows validated operators to conduct experience flights to the public in historic aircraft. By this route I was able to fly in and take the control stick of a genuine World War II Spitfire a couple of years ago and recently, I was able to fly a genuine 1940 RAF Tiger Moth trainer also owned by Aero Legends.

Well, maybe "fly" is a little exaggerated although I did take the stick of this amazing aircraft and flew it around a little once my very experienced pilot, Sam Parker from the RAF Central Flying School at Cranwell, had us safely up in the air. In our preflight chat Sam explained that the large wing area and ailerons of the Tiger Moth meant that it was very responsive and that control inputs from the stick needed coordinated control between rudder and ailerons as a rotation about one axis induces a usually unwanted rotation on the other one. He wasn't wrong.

It was a beautiful sunny day but with a gusty wind of around 25 mph. I was strapped into my parachute – the DH82a version that the RAF used were modified by de Havilland with deeper side doors and raked back struts specifically to allow escape with a parachute, not that this gave me much comfort – then into my seat harness. Sam performed the preflight checks and the ground crew prepared to start up the engine. A few minutes of engine warm up and we taxied out across the grass of Headcorn Airfield (sometimes called Lashenden after its World War II name) for a perfect take-off.

As we reached cruising height of around 2,000 feet and cruising speed of 70 mph, it was great to be in an open cockpit with the sound of the Gypsy Major engine throbbing away. Sam came on to the intercom and said he was happy for me to take over control, and then the fun started! I found the wind gusts threw us about and whilst making corrective inputs on the stick and rudder it was so easy to over correct. At one point I hadn't noticed the plane was climbing and Sam said "level flight please." Compared to my smooth flight in the Aero Legends two-seater Spitfire this flight was more like a fair-ground ride with me at the controls.

However, when Sam took back control, I saw that in experienced hands this plane flew well and we enjoyed some steep banked turns as we flew over the Kent countryside for an hour. Over the intercom Sam said that my experience of flying the Moth



Tiger Moth T7109 (R. Knight photo)

By Richard Knight

was typical of beginners and that the stick was affectionately called the "Pudding Stirrer" because you were constantly having to

move it around to correct movement. I secretly smiled when Sam apologised for his hopped landing!

There is something very special with knowing you are sitting in the seat of an aeroplane that has such an amazing history. Who knows how many Bomber Command, Hurricane and Spitfire pilots had sat in that very seat where I was sitting? Like me, many of them would be trying to impress their tutor at an initial training facility, fighting to control the aeroplane and because of this, many of them would go on to become heroes of the sky in the war. After my flight I was told that RAF ace Johnny Johnson had once flown this plane. By the end of the war Johnson's score stood at 34 enemy aircraft destroyed, seven shared destroyed, three probable and 10 damaged. He was the highest scoring Royal Air Force fighter pilot of World War II. Johnson had flown 515 combat sorties, shot down 34 German planes and engaged enemy aircraft on 57 occasions. Included in his list of individual victories were 14 Messerschmitt Bf 109s and 20 Focke-Wulf Fw 190s. He was never shot down and only took damage once!

Yet another link came from the fact that on the 6th August 1943, under the command of Wing Commander Johnny Johnson, 127 Wing Royal Canadian Air Force, comprised of 403 and 421 Squadrons flying Spitfire Mk. IXBs, moved from RAF Kenley to Lashenden (Headcorn), the very airfield I was flying from. This was in preparation for the D-Day landings the following year because Lashenden was the first of the temporary Advanced Landing Ground airfields planned to support the invasion.

The History of Tiger Moth T7109

The Tiger Moth was originally manufactured at the main Hatfield factory of the de Havilland Aircraft Company. However, with the outbreak of war in 1939, de Havilland developed the amazing DH98 Mosquito and they needed more space in their factory to make it. Production of the Tiger Moth was transferred to the Morris car factory in Cowley, Oxford in June 1940 and T7109 was one of the first planes to come out of Cowley. Built in early July 1940, T7109 was almost certainly still using some parts made at Hatfield and it was probably test flown from an airfield at Witney, close by, as a runway was still being built at the Cowley car factory at that time.

T7109 was delivered to RAF 38 Maintenance Unit (38 MU Llandow, South Wales) in July 1940. 38 MU was tasked with the initial reception, storage and despatch of RAF aircraft.

By February 1941 T7109 had reached 19 Elementary Flying

Continued on page 11



The Tiger Moth's "office" (R. Knight photo)

CAM Sets Attendance Record in 2022

By Dave Murray

Over the last 18 years, paying visitor attendance at the Museum has always hovered around the 9,000 – 11,000 level. We briefly touched the 11,000 level in 2019 before the COVID year of 2020 shut down the nation. Your Museum closed for a full two months and the general quarantine-inspired shutdown devastated the level of attendance during the last eight months of the year that we were able to open our doors. Those months were very bleak times for the intrepid volunteers who bravely manned our gift shop, tour guides, mechanical workshop, or office staffing, to very few visitors. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, and some COVID grant funds, we were able to keep the Museum doors open and to survive the bleak times of 2020.

The situation started to brighten in 2021 when we just missed hitting the 11,000-visitor level again, falling just 11 people short of this historic high-water mark. The more paying visitors that we can attract, the more we can afford to fund restoration works on our historic artifacts and bring in other aircraft or items to bolster our collection.

In the year 2022 we have completely restored/repainted the outside of the EC-121 Warning Star. How proudly that aircraft now sits on the ramp in a new coat of paint with control surfaces reattached. Now, over the next couple of years, we need to begin to fund the repainting of our F-15A Eagle, the CH-47D Chinook, the MiG-17 and the completion of the restoration work on the F-86H Sabre. These aircraft can only be restored when we have the incoming funds to finish the extensive workload that needs to be undertaken.

It is very clear that the long-suffering American public were ready to break out of the COVID-imposed restrictions by the second half of 2021 and to resume some more ambitious vacation or business travelling.

Attendance at the Museum in 2022 started off very well and we consistently hit monthly records, passing the 11,000-mark in late November. Incredibly by year end we had breezed by the 2019 level and reached a paid attendance of 11,682!

That means that we need to set our sights at a goal of 12,000 for 2023. To help achieve this by attracting new out-of-town paying visitors, we are acquiring an additional highway billboard, this time coming east on I-70, towards Topeka, from the western Kansas/Denver area. Billboards and way-finding signs have been a good source of advertising for us, and we are trying to ensure that all major highways leading into the capitol are sign-posted. We have a great opportunity to attract folk who drive east or west of the city on I-70, on Highway 75 from points north and south, or on I-335 coming north from Wichita/Oklahoma.

To fund this new billboard for a test period of a year, we have been able to secure a Transient Bed Tax grant from the Shawnee County Commissioners, a decision for which we are very grateful. The location is just east of Carlson Road on I-70 and it will be up by the time you receive this newsletter.

Keep an eye open for our billboard signs, as you travel the highways leading into Topeka! ♦

New & Renewing Members

New:

Jon Antrim & family | Jacob Cornett | Paxton Dreyer & family | Amanda Hirt & family | Max Lorentzen | Randy & Lisa McAllister | Luke Medcalf & family | Michael Murray | Floyd Palmer | Wes Russell & family | Bruce Wanamaker | Cathy Witte & family

Renewing:

Dale & Marilyn Allen | Bruce F. Baker | Neal Baughman & family | Nathan & Beth Benfield | Ted & Cindy Berard | Dail Blake & family | Col. Jon & Peggy Boursaw | Bradley & Star Caywood | Duane Coash & family | Stef Cunningham | Kevin & Susan Drewelow | Donald & Rebecca Duncan | Spencer Duncan & family | Leonard Faulconer | Chris & Christy Fein | David Hargitt | Frank Holsburg | Ed Lee | Hal & Nicc' Loney | Rodney Longhofer & family | Samantha Lowell & family | John Luna | Ron Lutz | Larry & Nancy Mann | Jerry & Karen Milbradt | Todd Morgenstern & family | Bruce Nall & family | Mary Ann Naylor | George Orff | Loren Otis | Sharon Rosenow | Ron & Annette Shirrell | Wade Salley & family | Dennis & Galene San Romani | Gary A. Smith & family | Dick & Sharon Starks | Cadet Remington Stiles | Don Thun | Marlene Urban | Dr. Howard & Marilyn Ward | Steve Wodtke | Conrad & Sharon Youngblom

★ ★
Continued from page 10 *RAF Tiger Moth*

Training School (ETFS Sealand in North Wales). RAF Sealand was the site of the former Dutton's Flying School, an incredibly important historical location, effectively the origin of the World War I Royal Flying Corps which later became the RAF.

T7109 remained at the Sealand training unit throughout the war until July 1945 when she was transferred to RAF 9 MU Cosford, whose role was to store, maintain, modify, repair and, ultimately, issue aircraft. After short spells at RAF Honiley, 33 MU Lyncham and Eindhoven Station Flight, the aircraft was returned to 9 MU Cosford where she was sold into civilian ownership, initially to the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough in April 1955. ♦



Captain Joe Kittinger
(NMUSAF photo)

Col. Joseph Kittinger Jr., USAF (Retired) 1928-2022

By Chuck Watson

During my sixty plus years of military aviation interest, I have been more than fortunate to fly in exotic aircraft one can only dream of and to meet numerous interesting and exciting aviation folks, but one flight stands out because my pilot was a true aviation pioneer and military hero.

In 1996, while attending a National Biplane Convention in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, an old friend and I plunked down our 40 dollars for a 20 minute flight in a 1929 New Standard biplane being barnstormed by none other than famed early space explorer, skydiver, combat pilot and prisoner of war, Colonel Joe Kittinger. With his recent passing in December aged 94, reopened the amazing life story of Col. Joe "Red" Kittinger.

Born in Florida in 1928, he had an early fascination with flying and after briefly attending the University of Florida, he entered Air Force cadet pilot training and won his wings in 1950. After first being assigned to Ramstein Air Base in Germany flying F-84 Thunderjets and F-86 Sabres, he was transferred to Holloman Air Force Base (AFB) in New Mexico to fly in support of early rocket sled tests and space exploration. In 1957, as part of Operation Manhigh I, he set an early helium balloon altitude test to 96,000 feet and won his first of many Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFC). Later assigned to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, Kittinger became part of Project Excelsior researching high altitude flight and escape systems. It was during these tests that he made three daring ascents and free falls from the edge of space culminating in a fall from 102,800 feet, a record that stood for 52 years. He escaped death on the first jump when his body began spinning hard enough to pull 22 Gs and caused him to lose consciousness; an automatic opener released his main chute and saved his life. On the last flight a pressure suit glove failure resulted in his hand swelling to twice its normal size.

He became an international celebrity appearing on Life and National Geographic magazines and multiple television interviews. He received two more DFCs and President Eisenhower awarded him the Harmon Trophy in 1959; however, some of his notoriety would later come back to haunt him.

In 1965 Kittinger returned to active operational Air Force service, first serving two tours in Vietnam flying Douglas A-26 Invaders on interdiction missions. Afterwards, he returned to the U.S. for training on the F-4D Phantom II fighter before being assigned to Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base as the commander of the famed 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron, known as the "Triple Nickel", the leading MiG killing unit of the war. During this, his third volunteer tour, he flew dozens of combat missions and was credited with one MiG-21 shot down while flying Phantom 66-743. On May 11, 1972, just three days before his tour was to end, he and his weapons officer, 1st Lt. Reich, were shot down by a MiG-21 while pursuing another jet. They both ejected

from the burning F-4D and were captured and imprisoned in the dreaded "Hanoi Hilton" for eleven months. Col. Kittinger became the ranking prisoner of war (POW) officer and was tortured early on. In a visit with him in Bartlesville, he was

excited to find out I was friends with retired Air Force Lt. Col. Ken Johnson of Derby, Kansas, a fellow POW and a Triple Nickel pilot who was shot down over Laos the previous December. He recounted how he was wearing Ken's copper POW bracelet when he was captured, and how he received beatings when he would not confess he was Maj. Kenneth R. Johnson. It was several days before the Vietnamese finally realized that they had a famous and high ranking pilot, resulting in more punishment. He was repatriated in March of 1973, promoted to full colonel, and sent to the Air War College in Alabama. After finishing that assignment, he became commander of the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing at Royal Air Force Base Lakenheath in Great Britain, flying Phantoms before retiring from the Air Force at Bergstrom AFB, Texas in 1978. He amassed over 7,679 military flight hours, 480 combat missions, and 9,100 hours in various civilian aircraft.

In retirement, Col. Joe worked for Martin Marietta and became vice president of flight operations for the Rosie O'Grady Flying Circus, barnstorming across America in a 1929 New Standard biplane with his wife Sherry. Not content with all that, he went on to set numerous balloon records, being the first to fly a gas balloon solo across the Atlantic, and working with NASA on a new balloon project that was later canceled. 10 years ago, at the age of 83, he joined the Red Bull Stratos project as capsule communicator and advisor to help Austrian Felix Baumgartner finally break his old altitude record. Kittinger is in the National Aviation Hall of Fame and most recently was honored by his hometown of Orlando, Florida with the Col. Joe Kittinger Park complete with a mounted F-4D in 555th TFS markings that proved to be an actual Phantom he flew in Vietnam. Joe authored numerous articles and published his autobiography entitled, "Come Up and Get Me"

As I recently looked at the Combat Air Museum and the Museum of the Kansas National Guard's MiG killing F-4s that were both former Triple Nickel aircraft, it dawned on me they were probably flown by Col. Kittinger himself while he was commander...and I fondly remembered the jolly, smiling red haired guy in the back cockpit in Bartlesville grinning as he did wingovers and stunts for the customers lining up to buy a ride in a piece of history being flown by a pilot of historic stature. Rest in Peace, Colonel Joe. ♦



Kittinger departing the gondola
(NMUSAF photo)

Into the Blue: *Soaring Lessons*

By C3C Remington Stiles

[Editor's note: CAM member Remington Stiles is in his second year at the United States Air Force Academy (USAF) in Colorado Springs. He writes brief articles about his experiences for our newsletter.]

The first summer of a cadet career is Basic Cadet Training (BCT). The next three summers are divided into three periods. The summer after BCT typically consists of an airmanship course, Combat Survival Training, and three weeks of summer break. Airmanship can be parachuting, flying gliders, learning to operate Remotely Piloted Aircraft, or space operations. I was selected to fly gliders this summer.

All glider operations take place at the Benjamin O. Davis Airfield located at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Upper-class cadets serve as the soaring instructor pilots for the students after completing an upgrade course. Typically, the instructor controls the aircraft for the entire first flight, and familiarizes the student with the aircraft and the area of operations. As students gain more experience they are allowed progressively more time controlling the aircraft until they reach 14 flights with an instructor and complete the program or, if an instructor pilot deems them safe and competent in the glider, complete a solo flight without the instructor.

After their fifth flight, an experienced instructor pilot takes the student on an aerobatic flight. This flight is entirely different from the other flights that the students have experienced to this point. Typical training flights endeavor to remain straight and level, with gentle maneuvers and acceleration, typically at a relatively low airspeed. The aerobatic flight takes students through hard accelerations at high speed, often entering inverted flight.

At the end of the course, students can apply to become instructor pilots. If selected, they take an additional airmanship course during the academic year in which they learn the skills and knowledge necessary to instruct students safely.

At the end of this summer I applied and was selected for the Cadet Soaring Instructor Pilot upgrade course. The program lasts for an entire year or about 900 hours, and takes place during and after the academic day. Next summer I will return and train students who are just as I was a year ago! You can learn more about the USAFA Airmanship course online at <https://www.usafa.edu/facilities/davis-airfield> and https://instagram.com/usafa_soaring?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=. ♦



AFA TG-16A sailplane
(sailplanecafe.com photo)

2023 Calendar of Events

January

- 1—New Year's Day, Museum closed
- 2—Winter hours begin, Museum open noon-4:30 p.m.

February

- 1—Winter hours continue through the end of the month
- 13—Membership Luncheon, Brown Bag
CAM Art Curator Chuck Watson will speak about his aviation art and the people and aircraft he has encountered throughout his career
- 16—Aviation Day at the Capitol

March

- 1—Regular hours resume, Museum open 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- 12—Daylight Savings time begins

April

- 10—Membership Luncheon, Brown Bag
- 29—CAM Celebrity Pancake Feed and Fly-In Market

★ ————— ★

Visitors

1,002 people from 36 states, Puerto Rico, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iraq, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Scotland, South Africa and South Korea visited the Combat Air Museum in September.

In October, 1,348 visitors from 36 states, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain and Nicaragua toured your Museum.

1,067 people from 32 states, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Portugal visited the Combat Air Museum in November.

In December, 479 visitors from 24 states and Ukraine toured your Museum.

Pilot's Notes: a Book Review

"Black Lion One: Topgun Trailblazer" "I Could Never Be So Lucky Again"

by Donald Auten

Reviewed by Chuck Watson



This biographical story of the career of Captain John Monroe "Hawk" Smith is interesting by the fact the author is also a retired Navy captain who spent his years in the light attack and adversary communities, while his subject was a fighter pilot above all else. Naval aviation is and always has been home to larger than life characters and

leaders and "Hawk" Smith cut as large a figure as any in many decades. The author spins a good narrative of Smith from his earliest days in training, flying the F-4 Phantom II, cruises aboard the USS America, his role in the early years of Topgun including serving as its commander, the training in the F-14 Tomcats, a winding path to final service as a Commander, Air Group (CAG) and promotion to captain, to his retirement in 1993.

His early days were in VF-126, the adversary squadron that became a part of the overall Topgun experience for post-Vietnam fighter pilots, and he quickly established a reputation as an almost unbeatable foe in air to air combat, pulling tricks from the large stock of tactics he had mastered. After those experiences, Smith headed off for transition training in the F-14, where he soon became the go-to guy on fighting with the Tomcat and pushing it to previously untried limits. Throughout the stories the author recalls Hawk's many port calls on cruises, butting heads with higher ups, his love of his family, and his motivating and caring for those under his command. Smith became widely respected in the fighter communities, although he often had unorthodox ways of dealing with myriads of squadron problems, rules and red tape.

His skills and reputation landed him a command of Topgun, tours as both executive officer (XO) and then command of VF-213, the Black Lions, a squadron that was worn out, dismayed, unable to find parts and get sorties in the air. A good deal of the story tells how he took this poorly performing unit and turned it into the premier Tomcat squadron in the entire Navy. Smith had a knack for finding good junior pilots and top notch maintainers and driving them to be the best while also leading from the front. Although becoming the best unit was tough, the fun times and morale was always something Smith included that made him so respected by his troops and a character the Navy brass didn't always agree with. John Monroe Smith reached his ultimate goal of becoming a CAG before he flew off into retirement with his supportive and understanding wife known by all as "Miss Jenny."

Naval aviators are never short on egos and competitive drive between different flying communities, so it's refreshing to have one retired Navy captain telling the story of another captain in such a colorful and adoring manner. This book is an easy two evening read, hard to put down, and will be a treat for any naval aviation fan or military historian. ♦

by James Doolittle with Carroll Glines

Reviewed by Lt. Col. John Phumb, II, ANG (Ret.)



This is my very brief take on the autobiography of Gen. James B. Doolittle, who, with respect and convenience, shall be referred to as "Jimmy."

Jimmy was born on December 14, 1896. He married Josephine Daniels on December 24, 1917. Jimmy and Joe remained married for 76 years until Jimmy's death in 1993 aged 96! As to their lives together, I quote Jimmy's last line in the book, "Thanks, Joe, I couldn't have done it without you!"

Jimmy's early years are covered well. We'll just say he led an interesting life from the start. He said aviation came into his life in 1910 at age 13. An aviation meet was held near his Los Angeles home and sparked his interest. Two pilots performing were Glenn Curtiss and Lincoln Beachy...Jimmy was hooked!

Jimmy joined the Flying Cadets in 1917 and gained his wings and commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps Reserve a few months later. He asked to be sent to France to join the battle, but was destined to serve as a flight instructor and, eventually, a test pilot.

After the Armistice, Jimmy chose to remain in the military. He engaged in many activities representing the Air Corps and set many, many records. During this time, Jimmy continued his formal education. He received his Doctorate of Aeronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the first issued in the United States.

During the interwar years, Jimmy worked in flight test, research and development, record attempts and the one thing he thought was his main accomplishment. He developed the methods for "blind flying" and conducted the first takeoff and landing using only instruments. This flight earned Jimmy the Harmon Trophy and paved the way for all-weather flying.

Jimmy resigned from the Army Air Corps in February, 1930 to accept a position with Shell Oil. The next month he applied for and was awarded a commission in the "Specialist Reserves." For the next 10 years with Shell, Jimmy continued in the "flying business." Indeed he did!

In July of 1940, Jimmy was asked to return to extended active duty in the Air Corps. He organized and led the B-25 bombing of Japan in April, 1942, for which President Roosevelt awarded Jimmy the Congressional Medal of Honor. Jimmy rose in rank and held many command positions during World War II, including command of the 12th and 15th Air Forces in Italy and the 8th Air Force in England.

After the war, Jimmy returned to Shell Oil and until 1980 held many active positions in that and other businesses.

Obviously, this reviewer makes little attempt to cover what this man meant to aviation. The reviewer does suggest you read this most fascinating biography. If you share an interest in aviation and history, you will be rewarded. ♦

Ways You Can Support the Combat Air Museum



Dillon's Community Rewards Program ★

If you shop at Dillon's and have a Plus Shopper's Card, you can help support the Combat Air Museum with just a phone call or a few keystrokes. Dillon's Stores donates millions to non-profit organizations. Our Museum benefits from CAM members who have registered with Dillon's Community Rewards Program. Enrolling in this program will not increase your grocery bill and will not affect your fuel points.

Enrolling in the Community Rewards program is a one-time event and no longer requires annual registration. If you've already signed up, no further action is required. Go to www.dillons.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow to create a Dillon's account before enrolling in the Community Rewards program. You can also call 800.576.4377 and the Dillon's customer service representative will register you. You'll need to provide them with the Combat Air Museum's five-character Non-Profit Organization (NPO) account number, GA302. Thanks to your generosity, each quarter the Museum receives a check from Dillon's that really helps us maintain the collection and facilities and provide the classes and service our visitors enjoy. Last year, Dillon's donated \$815 to CAM; that amount is less than the previous year because we have fewer donors than before. If you haven't joined, why not take a few moments now to do so: Dillon's and CAM will do the rest!

Amazon Smile ★

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Volunteer ★

The Combat Air Museum exists solely upon the money we raise from admissions, donations and gift shop sales. We rely on volunteers to run our gift shop, and the need for these volunteers has become even more urgent under current conditions. We'll train you for this crucial and enjoyable task. If you could spare one day a month please call the Museum at 785.862.3303 and ask for Nelson, our office manager and volunteer coordinator.



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in the vilest weather
is a sad delay
for a pilot gay,
who is very nearly dying
for some complicated flying,
for the whizz! bang! crash!
and the hurricane's lash
and the wires that hum zoom! zoom!

COMBAT 16
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it's extremely sad
to recline at leisure
and to contemplate the pleasure
of the coughing scream
of a great Sunbeam,
or the rumbling voice
of a good Rolls-Royce,
or the buzzing drone
of a nice Le Rhone-
the extreme exhilaration
of a little aviation,
and the grip and tear
of the ice-cold air
and the wires that hum zoom! zoom!

*Flight Commander Jeffrey Day,
DSC. RNAS, 1896-1918*

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