



SCHAF Newsletter for June 2013

Greetings to all SCHAF members-

It continues to be a busy spring for the South Carolina Historic Aviation Foundation with things being accomplished and the makings of what could be a busy rest of the year. Let's catch on up what's been happening recently.

SCHAF Board Meeting-

The board of the South Carolina Historic Aviation Foundation met on Thursday, May 30th, 2013 at the Foster Law Offices in Columbia. Present were Cantzon Foster, president of SCHAF and board members Ron Shelton, Ken Berry, and Xen Motsinger and myself. Ron Shelton reported that he and Xen Motsinger hosted the Order of the Daedalians at the Curtis-Wright Hangar. Among those present Gen. Buck Shuler, one of the driving forces behind the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah. In May Ron presented a program on SCHAF to the Civil Air Patrol.

Also discussion of a couple of events that SCHAF will be taking in later in the summer; September 5th through the 7th SCHAF will be at the Triple Tree Aerodrome in Woodruff, S.C. for the annual Triple Tree Fly-In. Triple Tree is a beautiful facility known as the "Augusta National of Aviation." Here's a link to their site: <http://www.tripletreeaerodrome.com> .

On September 27th and 28th SCHAF will be at the Southeast Aviation Expo at the Greenville Downtown Airport. Here's the link for the event: <http://www.scaaonline.com/southeast-aviation-expo> . Anyone who would like to come help share the story of SCHAF please get in touch with one of the board members or me. Would be glad to have any participation possible.

In the near future Cantzon and Ken will be traveling to Texas for a course in B-25 maintenance at the Vintage Flying Museum. Here's a link about the museum: <http://www.vintageflyingmuseum.org> .

Foundation Happenings-

Would like to remind everyone that the second Saturday of each month SCHAF holds an open house at the Curtis-Wright Hangar where folks can get a chance to see and become familiar with our B-25 and also learn about the goals of SCHAF. Putting out the call for members who would like to come by and help talk about our bomber and the work and goals of SCHAF. Come on, get involved.

Earlier in May I had the pleasure of presenting a program about SCHAF to the Camden Kiwanis at the invitation of Tim Hopkins, who is a member of SCHAF and the Camden Kiwanis Club. It was a chance to meet a great group of people who really seemed to enjoy the program. Among those in the audience was Bob Sheheen, former speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives. There were lot of good questions and interest in the goals of SCHAF.

On Wednesday, May 22nd citizens in the Remembrance of Columbia Army Air Base group conducted a dedication ceremony at the CAAB Flagpole Plaza (Biloxi Square). Unveiled were the granite stones that have been added in honor of the more than 230 Air Corps personnel who lost their lives in aircraft training accidents while associated with Columbia Army Air Base from 1942 through 1945. Members of SCHAF were among those present for the ceremony. The

ceremony took place the same afternoon that the Memorial Day Honor Flight returned to Columbia Metropolitan Airport from Washington, D.C. Approximately a hundred people were in attendance. First picture is of the granite monuments. Harold Jones raised the funds for the monuments. Second picture is of Tripp Neal and Cayce Mayor Elise Partin. Neal is the nephew of Lt. Thomas Neal, one of the honorees. Thanks to Bob Lineberger and Billy Rawl for the pictures.



Also want to make mention that Ron Shelton and Bob Lineberger recently traveled to Cheraw where Barry Avent is restoring an F4U Corsair fighter. They were up there when filming was taking place in Barry's hangar for a movie in production.

Historical Notes-

Some folks may not realize it but one of the men who played an important and early role in the development of Marine Corps aviation was a South Carolinian. Major General Lewie G. Merritt was born in Ridge Springs, South Carolina and went to The Citadel. After graduation he was commissioned as an officer in the United State Marine Corps and fought in World War I, including action at the Battle of Belleau Wood, where the leathernecks would gain immortality as the "devil dogs." In 1923 he would begin his training as a naval aviator at Pensacola. He would later become one of the first Marine Corps aviators to qualify to fly on and off of aircraft carriers. Merritt would later develop much of the Marine Corps close air support doctrine and become an advocate of dive bombing and tight coordination between ground and air units in battle. In World War II he would observe operations of the RAF's Desert Air Force in North Africa and would play an important role in the Pacific campaign in positions of leadership with Marine air units. He would retire from the Marine Corps in 1947 as a Major General and embark on a successful career in law and public service. He passed away in 1974. The Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, South Carolina is named Merritt Field in his honor.



Lewis G. Merritt



At the Citadel. Merritt (centre)



In the Pacific during World War II

Good write up on Merritt as a Marine Corps aviation pioneer. [Article on Gen. Merritt](#)

A Challenge-

Here's an area that a foundation member might want to start looking into and researching. Last month I mentioned William Burness Inabinet, a Clemson student who would die flying for the Royal Air Force as a member of one of the Eagle Squadrons. I decided to dig a bit more and found another South Carolinian who was an Eagle by the name of Leon Blanding. He would later transfer into the USAAF and serve with the 4th Fighter Group and also served as CO of the 335th Fighter Squadron. Below are pictures. The first one shows him as an 'Eagle. He is the fourth from the left. He's behind the third man from the left wearing the peaked cap. You can barely see him. The second one shows him in the cockpit of a fighter (my guess a P-38 Lightning).



Now here's the challenge for some member of SCHAF. I've done some quick searches on the internet but have come up with very little. In a blog about the Eagles called [Immigrants of War](#) Blanding is identified as a South Carolinian. Anyone out there interested in trying to track down more information about him; where in South Carolina was he from? See if there are any descendents still around who might be able to provide information or photos, that sort of thing. Anyone interested in taking up the challenge please get in touch with me or one of the SCHAF board members.

I've also tracked down at least four other names of South Carolinians who flew with the RAF or the RCAF and I'll include them in a future newsletter in hopes that someone will volunteer to dig up some info on them. One of the names is of someone from Columbia who flew for the RAF in Burma. Could be it's the sort of thing that someone who is interested in genealogy or research might want to take on.

I mentioned last month that SCHAF was at the 2013 Sparkelberry Country Fair in Richland Northeast. We got to meet a lot of nice people. Forgot to mention some of them had items of interest to talk about regarding aviation history in the Palmetto State. Ken Berry talked to an older gentleman who recounted a boyhood memory of a military aircraft crashing near Neeses, S.C. during the Second World War. He claimed there may still be some artifacts in the area. Ken and I also talked to a gentleman from Lugoff who works in the timber industry and said that during a job in near Kingstree in Williamsburg County he heard of an F4U Corsair that crashed during the war. He also said there might be some artifacts. These are areas we could look into. Someone might want to contact newspapers in those communities and see if they have anything in their archives, or morgues, as they call them in the newspaper business.

Down Memory Lane-

I can remember as a child going with my father out to Columbia Airport to look at the planes. It was sort of a Sunday afternoon tradition. After church and Sunday dinner mom, dad and me

would go out to the Columbia Airport and we'd spend the afternoon looking at the planes come and go. I can remember seeing the Eastern Electras. I remember them in this color scheme and the later scheme with white fuselage and the two-tone blue stripe or 'hockey stick' as it was called. Dad would explain to me the difference between a piston engine aircraft and a jet-prop or turbine engine plane. Always wanted to fly on an Electra, alas, I never did. By the late 60's most of them had been pulled out of front line service. A classic airliner: Lockheed's L-188 Electra. How many of you remember seeing them at Columbia Metropolitan?



Good reads-

A legend in the celluloid world of Hollywood, a legend in the air force and in his day one of America's most popular actors, that describes Jimmy Stewart. Already an Academy Award winner before World War II, Stewart answered the call to arms by joining the army air force and against the objections of higher ups who feared that the loss of such a major celebrity would hurt morale, became a bomber pilot who took part in some of the most fearsome aerial engagements that took place in the skies of Europe. [Jimmy Stewart, Bomber Pilot](#), by Starr Smith (introduction by Walter Cronkite) is an interesting and informative read on a man beloved by a generation for his portrayals of everyday Americans as well as heroes. After the war he would remain interested in aviation and would continue to serve as an officer in the USAF Reserve and would star in hit movies such as *The Spirit of St. Louis* where he portrayed Charles Lindbergh and *Strategic Air Command* with co-star June Allyson. Stewart also starred as well in 1965's *Flight of the Phoenix*. He would also star in another aviation classic called *No Highway in the Sky* based on the book by Nevil Shute, who was also an aeronautical engineer. Stewart would fly as an observer on a B-52 mission during the Viet-Nam war and would retire as a Brig. General in 1968. He was later promoted to Major General on the reserve list. A good book and a reminder of the sort of people who made the "greatest generation" great.

Odds and Ends-

Seventy years ago in May of 1943 one of the most famous raids in aviation history took place when 617 Squadron of the Royal Air Force launched a raid against three major dams in the Ruhr Valley in Nazi Germany using the "bouncing bomb" developed by Sir Barnes Wallis. The squadron would become famous as the "Dambusters" and are still an operational unit of the RAF based at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland. Here's a link to an article in the Daily Telegraph of London providing an hour by hour rundown of the raid that took place on night of May 16th. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/britain-at-war/10061005/Hour-by-hour-how-the-Dambusters-raid-unfolded.html> . A good link on the bouncing bomb <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-two/10060978/Sir-Barnes-Wallis-and-the-Dambusters-bouncing-bomb.html> .

A couple of months back I mentioned the de Havilland Mosquito that took to the air last year in New Zealand and that a group in the UK was also working at making another "mossie" airworthy. Turns out, there's a third group whose goal is to return another Mosquito to the skies.

It's group in British Columbia in Canada. The project is being carried out by company called Victoria Air Maintenance. Here's a link to their project- <http://vicair.net/projects/mosquito> .

Last month a trivia question. We posted a picture of an odd looking aircraft and asked if anyone could name it. Well, the answer is that it's the Capelis XC-12. It was built in 1933. The original design was by Socrates Capelis. It was funded by a number of Greek restaurants in California as a promotional venture. Its operational career was less than impressive and it ended up being used as a movie prop in a number of films including *Flying Tigers* starring John Wayne. The plane was owned for a number of years by RKO Studios who would also rent it to other movie companies. It was used as a ground prop since insurance companies for the studios said it wasn't safe to fly. Anyway, that's the story.

Here's our quiz for this month. Roundels have been used almost since the beginning of modern aviation as a way of marking military aircraft and showing what country a particular plane belongs to. The practice started with the French, was adopted by the British and has spread to air forces around the world. This graphic comes from the website for [Vintage Wings of Canada](http://VintageWingsofCanada.com), a really great aviation history site. Can you name the roundels? Answers next month.



In Closing-

That's all for now, as always if you have news of upcoming events, items of interest, ideas, thoughts or suggestions, or just want to say 'hello,' please [e-mail](#) me or any of the board members for inclusion in future newsletters. Send in comments, kudos and criticisms. If you like we'll include them in sort of a "letters" section. If you know of an interesting fact or item involving aviation history and the Palmetto State, please, pass it on and we'll share with everyone. Also get involved with the foundation. We have a lot going and more is planned. Just get in touch with one of the board members or other members and ask how you help. Your involvement can help make SCHAF an even better organization. Oh, and yes, if you haven't mailed in your membership renewal, do it as soon as you can.

Till next month

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