



Send photos & letters to: Jeane Kennedy Toynbee, Editor, PO Box 243, Copperopolis, CA
Or email to: jeanenbob@caltel.com If you would like items returned, please include a note along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope

Remember this note we printed in our last issue?:

Subject = William "Bill" Lundy. Bill died of an asbestos related disease recently. He worked at Oakland Aircraft and Engine Service, servicing Transocean's aircraft from 1957 thru 1958. I am wondering if any of your alumni worked there as well? They were owned by Transocean. Finding a co-worker, or someone from around that time frame who was involved in aircraft maintenance would be a huge help to the Lundy family. Some of his exposure occurred while working at this facility at the Oakland Airport. My phone numbers are 800-358-5922 and 618-973-1672 and 314-562-2329 during the daytime please if you come across anyone willing to talk about their experiences. Ron Hoover rhoover@mrhfmlaw.com



Well, we have a follow-up:
Just thought I would let you know how beneficial your newsletter is. In the most recent one you sent to me there is a note from **Boyd Mesecher**. Boyd worked during the same time frame as our client **Bill Lundy** at the same hanger at the airport. I have spoken to him and he was helpful. If I get lucky, someone else will step forward as well. In Boyd's case, while reading the letter I saw when and where he worked and made contact with him in Florida. Ron Hoover *****

My father arranged for me to work three summers in the Cabin Service Department at TALOA when I was a college student. I worked as a summertime mechanic at Hangar 28, Oakland Airport in 1955, 57, and 58. I also worked at NAS Alameda during the summer of 1956. I was a low level mechanic and later "dope and fabric man" at TALOA. I was taught dope and fabric work by a Navy Chief who was a Grumman TBM pilot who had flown clandestine missions over China. I sometimes worked alongside air crews who were mechanics at Hangar 28 when they were not flying in Southeast Asia and marveled at their stories about activities in Saigon, Manila, and Taipei. While picking up crews and transporting them to the Hotel Lemington in Oakland, I observed some very beautiful Asian stewardesses in their company.

I worked on C-46s, DC-3s, 4s, 6s, and 6Bs, Lockheed 749 Constellations and 1049 Super Constellations, and the Short Solent flying boat (seen in Raiders of the Lost Ark) which I primed inside and out and partially painted the exterior with white lacquer enamel. I also worked on the DC-4 used in the filming of 'The High and the Mighty'.

Using a sketch of Arabic letters on a piece of brown paper sack handed to me by one of three gentlemen in gray suits, I painted a DC-4 royal purple and masked and painted Arabic letters in white where the "United" used to be.

My father offered me six or twelve month contracts in Guam and Iran (keep a low profile) in 1956. Later, after I had worked on USAF Titan IIIC development and testing (1961-64), I was offered a career position as a GS-11 Analyst (1966) by a man who rose to be a CIA General, and who helped organize Air America in Oakland. The CIA officer flew to Humboldt County to interview me for the analyst position. I was also offered a consultant contract for service in Africa (1965) and another career position in 1972. I respectfully declined all these offers and remained a college chemistry professor.

I remember my father introducing me to Roscoe Turner, a gentleman who was famous in 1930s air racing circles, at Roscoe's residence near Lake Merritt in Oakland. I also recall visiting Western Sky's facility near Hayward Airport and learning of the good men lost in crashes at Newark, the Pacific and Oakland Airport. All during those years and up to the present, I have maintained great admiration for Orvis Nelson, who my father introduced me to on several occasions. I also met a man in civilian clothes referred to as Colonel Anderson, whose activities I never understood. Enough nostalgia for now, **Miles Mackey** *****



Correction

Jeane; Hi, as usual a great newsletter!!....but, you got the wrong *Val* in my message to you about Tiger's DC-4 ditching mid-way between Honolulu & Wake Island it was the *other* Val (Barrett) = me. I have know Val

Bednekoff for 40+ yrs. We worked together at JAL for several years, and we had a vacation where he and his wife lived, Dauphin Island, AL - outside Mobile. I hope you can see your way to hold another Alumni meeting. Best, [Val Barrett](#) *****

Enjoyed reading the newsletter. Many good stories in there. What an ordeal getting that C-46 wing delivered and installed! The site is now one of my favorites. Thanks, Rick Centore *****

In the June 2011 TALOA Newsletter, page 3, John Davis had asked about who the pilot was for the Doris Day movie "Julie". I think I remember that it was [Roy Minson](#), who at one time was the TAL chief pilot. (Bill Keating certainly should know.) I heard Roy was asked to make a bad landing (supposedly made in the film by the Doris Day character) and he did (at SFO, I believe), blew a tire and slewed around on the runway. The director and cameramen thought that was great but they hadn't loaded film in their cameras because they were just setting up the shots and checking things. They wanted him to do it again. Roy declined to blow another tire on the real take.

The interior shots of Ms. Day "flying" the airplane were taken inside the DC-4 simulator at the TALOA Academy at OAK.

Also, on page 6 of the June newsletter, Rick Centore spoke of a mid-air involving an ex-TAL DC-4:

"On November 21, 1951 the airplane was involved in a mid-air collision in California with an Eastern Air Lines DC-4. The EAL plane landed safely but N79992 crashed on a highway and all three aboard were killed."

I think the ex-TAL '4 was then being used by ONA, and was on a training flight (over Oakland Airport at the time of the accident) when a Cal Eastern (not Eastern Air Lines - EAL) DC-4 (also on a training hop) didn't see them and ran into their rear. [Erik W. Moberg](#) *****

Many thanks for copy of Taloa Newsletter. The article on 'Accident at Amman' and sketch I hope makes for interesting reading for your members. Besides [Captain Waterman](#) you had an Office and Operations Manager in the Town of Amman-which were former offices of Arab Airways. Regards, [Vincent Miles](#) *****

I believe my father worked for TALOA until his death in 1959. I have two wing pins one silver one gold. His name was [Ralph Allen Powell](#) and I believe he worked at the Oakland, CA location. I was wondering if you could tell me what the pins mean. The middle of the pin is the world. Across the top it says TALOA. Across the bottom it says Transocean Airlines. Robert Powell *****

My dad, [Orwin "Gill" Thomas](#) flew the SA-16s out of Guam during the 50s. I would like to hear from people who knew or worked with him during those days. Can you help me? Thank you. Chris Thomas

Readers?

More Information from Miles Mackey The Short Solent.



From the photos you can see how large this aircraft is. When it arrived at Hangar 28, TALOA, it was not



painted outside and had salt water corrosion in the hull. The design was a split level affair with a passenger



cabin on the lowest level, sleeping compartment in the aft fuselage, and a top level reserved for the flight crew, galley crew and attendants.

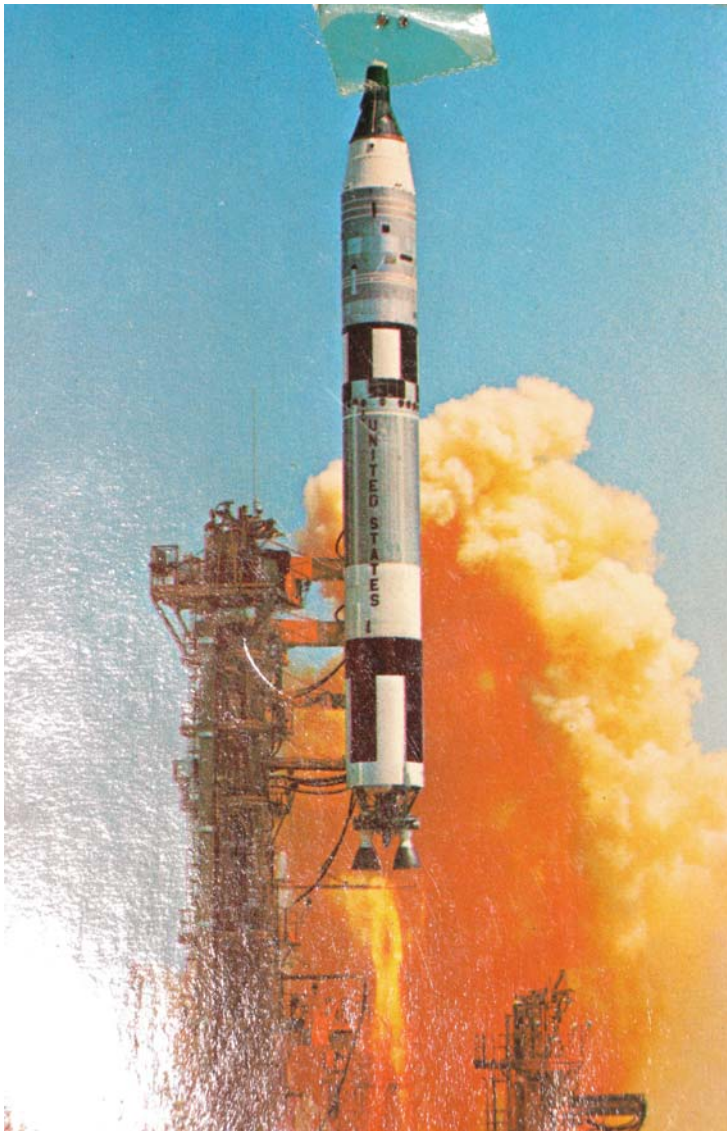
When work began the lower interior was stripped. The 'sheet metal men' removed the corroded hull sections and attached new metal. I then went inside and zinc chromate primed the interior as needed. I later helped prime and paint the exterior white lacquer enamel. I did not finish the job as I had to report to Hamilton Air Force Base for training that summer

(1958). I was saddened to learn that a good friend, Frank, was injured trying to complete the job I started.

The lower level of the Solent was connected to the galley deck by a spiral staircase as I recall. I toured the aircraft when it arrived and even made my way through a bulkhead hatch into the right wing where I observed the fuel tanks (like spam cans) and the rear of the engines. The wing walkway passage did not allow me to stand at full height, but was easy to maneuver in. I was told that the Solent flew from Hawaii to Oakland at a cruising speed equal to that of a DC-4.

USAF Titan IIIC Standard Launch Vehicle.

I worked at the United Technology Center Test Site east of Morgan Hill, CA from September 1961 to September 1964. I was hired as an analytical chemist. Most of my work involved analytical method development and evaluation, but some activities were state of the art research. More specifically, I worked on



the development and testing of solid rocket propellants and adhesives used in the large solid booster program connected with the Titan IIIC. I also worked on the liquid propellants used in the core vehicle, a Titan II and

the trans stage (space bus) which placed the reconnaissance satellites in orbit. Other duties were connected with final inspection before test firings and security issues. I served briefly as a corporate representative on the Joint Army-Navy-Air Force-NASA- DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) Panel on the Analytical Chemistry of Solid and Liquid Rocket Propellants (later known as the Chemical Propellant Information Agency). The Titan IIIC proved to be the USAF's most reliable system with over 200 successful missions until it was replaced with a less reliable system with a heavier payload.



Gratitude for Assistance

I am indebted to TALOA and the clandestine service for financing my education and assisting in the progress of my career. My 39 year career in higher education was given a boost by a professor on the San Jose State College campus who recommended me to Dr. Eugene J Portugal, Cmdr, USN (Ret.) who was president of the newly formed College of the Redwoods in Eureka, CA, where I taught for 36 years. Dr. Portugal was a highly respected Martin Mars navigator (Pin Point Portugal). Gene Portugal became a good friend and told me he had served as a TAL consultant in the early days of Transocean Air Lines' formation.

Add Bill Crawley, a second cousin, to the clandestine service list. I met Bill at Oakland in the early 1950s when he and a partner were on their way to Southeast Asia via TAL transport. Bill served the CIA in Australia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Ireland before recruiting for the CIA at San Francisco Bay area colleges and universities. I suspect that Col. Andy Anderson, an important individual my father introduced me to also belongs on the clandestine service list, but I do not know of this for certain. Miles Mackey *****

A Reader Responds!

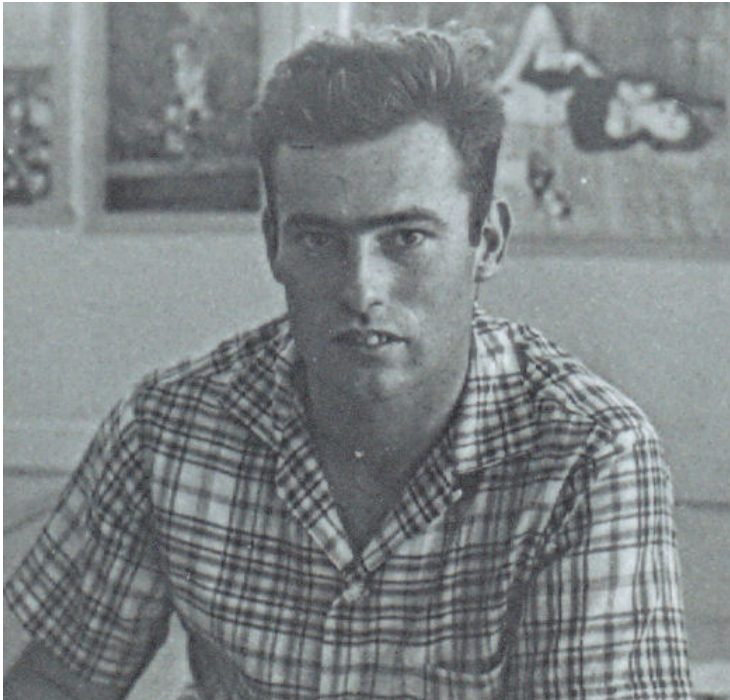
Editor: Remember this note that appeared in our March 2011 issue?

Hi, I think my Dad Donnaca (Dunk) Kennedy was a mechanic on Wake with Transocean in the 50s (he grew up in Ireland but has an American passport). Do you have any records that confirm this? Any pictures or anyone who knew him would be great. Regards, Ciaran Kennedy

Editor: On June 6, I received the following handwritten note:

Ms. Toynbee, I am still piddling along with trying to get my shots of Wake together for you. I work pretty erratically and tend to get distracted easily, have a bad case of wanderitis on the Internet. You'll have to overlook that. I'll get it to you one of these days, weeks, months, sooner or later. Like Justin Wilson used to say, "GAA-RON-TEED".

Upon reading your March 2011 Newsletter, I saw a request from Ciaran Kennedy looking for pictures of a mechanic named Donnaca Kennedy. I was at Wake from June 59 – Feb 62. Early on I worked with this fellow in the photo. He was definitely Irish. He used to



write and receive postcards in Gaelic just to irk the nosy Filipino houseboys & office clerks. He called himself Dennis Kennedy at that time. He was on our crew (Deacon Hedrick, Crew Chief), but I do not remember how long he was there. After all these years things tend to blend. I do remember he was a nice guy – friendly, a good mechanic. He probably talked about his background but it totally escapes me now. The photo was taken in the Quonset huts we existed in, whose section I don't remember.

I hope this may be of some help. [Richard C. Micel](#)

Editor: I then sent Richard's note and photo on to Ciaran and received the following email:

Hi Jeane. That's dad all right. Terrific photo. Thanks so much. Donnaca is the Irish form of Dennis - I should have mentioned that. Dad is 80 in August and in great shape still. He is in training for a fundraising event at the end of the month where he plans to row a dingy 80 km along the river to raise money for cancer care. <http://80at80.blogspot.com/>



We are having a party in early August to celebrate his birthday and this will be a wonderful addition to the slideshow of his life that we are planning to run. I will get him a subscription to you magazine about then also. Thanks again and a special thanks to Richard Micel for replying with the great photo and memories. Ciaran *****

Readers...more help is needed...

Looking for anyone that knew dad. I think my father was an instructor pilot for Transocean during the fifties. Is there any information on a [William Ernest Armour](#) or a [Ronald Backues](#)? William Armour *****

Hello, I am the grandson of [Ray Elsmore](#). My understanding is that he was the VP of Transocean at one time. If there is any history/stories about him I sure would be interested in hearing them. Steve Elsmore
Hi Steve, Here's a contribution by a former TAL employee:

I was called on several occasions to Colonel Elsmore's office to take dictation, but the first time is the most memorable. TAL was in the process of establishing a base on Wake Island and he called me in to take a letter regarding the base. I had never heard one of the words he dictated, so I circled it and later asked him to explain to me what the word meant. I'll never forget his reaction: he leaned back in this chair and laughed out loud. When he finally caught his breath he told me what the word LATRINE meant. I must've amused him, too. [Arue Szura](#)

I am writing a book about [Oliver Andre Rosto](#). He flew his own monoplane in February 1913 and the family has now asked me to write this book. I have opened a small website (under construction):



www.oliverrosto.com and the book is due to come out next year, when it is 40 years ago he passed away.

Mr. Rosto worked from 1952 (1953?) for Transocean Air Lines and did inspection work. A handsome looking man, he was already 72 years old when he started to work for Transocean. He had a background from the CAA/CAB (later FAA) as Air Carrier Inspector

Maintenance. Do you have any idea what Mr. Rosto did with Transocean? We know he traveled a lot around the world on behalf of Transocean and occasionally flew a DC-4, but not too much is known about his work. I had hoped you might shine a light over his activities with Transocean.

I do hope you take the time to reply and look forward to your answer. Kind regards, Rob Mulder

Editor's note: I forwarded Mr. Mulder's note to the 58 Taloans that I have email addresses for. To date, no information. If you remember Mr. Rosto, please write us. *****

Pilot Dies After Driving Truck Into Water

by Leila Fujimori December 11, 2010

An 80-year-old retired airline pilot died Saturday after he drove his pickup truck down a Puna boat ramp and into the water. [Stuart H. Jones](#) of Keaau was a commercial airline pilot who had worked for Japan Air Lines, the now-defunct Transocean Air Lines and Air Resorts, a cargo carrier.

Before retiring at age 63, Jones was a corporate pilot with Kaiser Industries and flew Henry J. Kaiser around, said his widow, Elva. He also worked as a government licensed air dispatcher. Jones, born in Oakland, CA moved with his wife from San Diego to Keaau HI about 10 years ago.

Just what happened remains a mystery. Police told Jones' wife there was no blunt trauma to the body. "It's a straight shot down the road to the ramp, as far as I understand it," Elva Jones said. "The road turns and he didn't make the turn." She said he may have had a heart attack or may have gotten lost when he drove into the water at the Pohoiki Boat Ramp. Bystanders pulled Jones out of his Mazda pickup and performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation until police and fire personnel arrived. He was taken to the Hilo Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. An autopsy is scheduled.

I was stewardess with TALOA 1958-60- happy to see familiar faces online. [Carol Johansen Hill](#)

Webmaster response: Hi Carol, We're so glad you found us! Lots of former TAL stewardesses have contributed stories & photos to the TALOA Alumni Newsletter and we hope to publish many more. You can enjoy reading them at:

<http://www.taloea.org/newsletters.html>

If you'd like to receive your own copy, please consider joining us. You can find info at:

<http://www.taloea.org/members.html>

We'd be honored to publish any recollections or images

you might have. Do you have a photo of yourself circa TAL days? Sincerely, Jeane

Thanks for your fast reply, Jeane. Yes I do have old photos. Will get prints on a few and send. So exciting you all are doing this. TALOA was a rare breed of flyers. I feel honored to have been a part of it all. Best wishes, [Carol\(Johansen\) Hill](#) *****

I have written a book and one of the chapters is concerning the loss of TAL 806 between Wake and Midway. I was a Coast Guardsman then and I wrote the story for the newspapers back at home. The name of the book is History Worth Repeating, and I am the author. It can be purchased at Amazon (publishers) or I can provide if desired. About two years ago I heard from the daughter of the pilot who was not born when her dad died in that crash. I will inform her, but a lot of water has passed around Wake Island, where I served for 9.5 months during the Korean War. I can answer any inquiries about the subject if desired. Thanks, Josh Sparrow *****

Remember this April 2010 inquiry?...

.....Tell Arue I was happy to see her picture and recent honor from the TALOA crew. It is well deserved. I'm trying to find if anyone knew [James Evan Farris](#), a pilot with Matson. He sort of talked his way into Alaska Airlines as a flight instructor on DC-4s after Matson shut down. Later he flew for Alaska and was PIC on the fatal Alaska DC-4 accident at SEATAC on 11-30-47. Gann gave him a different name in FATE IS THE HUNTER, but said he later took his own life. I'm trying to find out if anyone with Transocean, who perhaps was with Matson, knew what ever happened to Farris. Thanks for your reply and keeping the great history of Transocean alive. [Captain Joe Henderson](#), US Airways (retired) IND

We have a follow-up email...

I saw last year you were looking for [Farris](#). I wonder if you ever found him? I have a report written by him where he indicates in his return address he was working for Eastern Airlines out of NY. I have been doing research on an aviator's watch company called Jardur. Jardur supplied Farris and other aircraft personnel with watches for their trip during the Inter-American Escadrille Mission to Mid and South America in 1941. My goal here is to find a picture of Farris and his watch and promote those who wore the Jardur watches on my website:

www.jardur.com

Thanks, Chris Shermer

Editor... so I forwarded Chris's email to him...



Hi Joe, I finally have been sent some news regarding Mr. Farris. The following email came in to me today. Regards, Jeane

Editor...then an answer came from [Captain Joe Henderson](#)...

Jeane: Thanks very much for the e-mail about Captain Farris. I have his Eastern Airlines seniority date and number from the Retired EAL Pilots Association. As far as pictures, the only ones I have are from Matson Lines about the initial flights from the mainland to HNL. He is shown in several of the crew pictures. Interesting about the Inter-American Escadrille Mission. Farris wrote several articles about the mission in the AIRLINE PILOT magazine around 1942-43. Several pictures are shown with him in an EAL Captain uniform in front of the Grumman Goose amphibian he flew Nelson Rockefeller along with others around S.A. First time I've heard about Jardur. You could forward my e-mail to Chris Shermer. I've spent years "on and off" on this project. Don't know if I'll ever finish it, but I really need to try to find a death certificate of Farris. When I have how and when he died, I think I could do an article for AIR CLASSICS. As to where Chris Shermer could get a copy of the ALPA articles, I think all their (Air Line Pilots Association) archives are at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. I found these bound articles in the downtown Seattle library as part of the Boeing Airplane Company private collection. Great to hear from you. [Captain Joe Henderson](#)

A special thanks to [Richard Micel](#) for sending in a CD with images of Wake Island and TAL mechanics. We've added 20 new images to our website. Please check out our Photo Image section (the PEOPLE page) at: http://www.taloea.org/photos_people.html

Jeane: Another great 'Newsletter.' The response that you receive from the members of the Alumni Association is indicative of the worthwhile coverage you provide. Most newsletter editors are happy to receive one response, often a complaint, yet you are having readers add their own recollections to the Transocean story.

The article and drawings on Air Jordan covered a facet of TALOA's operations that may well have been long forgotten. And then, the Air Djibouti piece tied in so well with the Jordanian story. [George Hernan](#)'s story concerning the transportation and installation of a replacement wing on a C-46 at Jidda gave insight into the resourcefulness of all TALOA staff. The story is recounted briefly in "Folded Wings," but the 'I was there' aspect told of the hardships endured.

There remains one question regarding Air Djibouti. When did it cease operating? [George Hernan](#) says he left the company in September 1953, and they were still flying C-46 at that time. I have a photo of a freshly painted DC-4 N9937F taken at Oakland in July 1954 in full Air Djibouti colors. This aircraft was only operated by Transocean for a short time, and was leased from the USAF. It is supposed to have flown for Saudi during 1954, but was reported operating for Transocean in Europe in October 1954. Has anyone got a record of this aircraft in their logbook?

Rick Centore's piece concerning his dad also raised a question or two! Looking at the approximate dates that [Nello Centore](#) worked for Transocean I tried to work out the identities of the aircraft that were at Teterboro, and were flown to Bradley Field. I would guess that these were the aircraft registered in the NC79990 series that were leased from Overseas National Airways. The background to this deal is not totally clear. George Tomkins has acquired these C-54, but did not found ONA until 1950. Be that as it may, he evidently made money leasing the aircraft to Transocean from late 1947.

Rick will find a fine photo of the tail of N79992 on page 25 of "Folded Wings;" and the newsletter editor's father flew it a number of times between November 1947 and December 1949.

Final item: Should have followed my own advise and checked "Folded Wings." There it tells me that the pilots for the Doris Day film 'Julie' were Bill Keating and Royal Minson, and that the former made the bouncy landing at film's end.

Jeane, again many thanks for all the assistance received. Best wishes, [John M. Davis](#), Wichita, KS
Editor: Yes, John, I found entries in my father's logbook for N79992. My father, Frank Kennedy, was flying this aircraft between Guam & Shanghai during this period of history.

Dear Jeane, I have been having trouble emailing since we moved – could not correspond by email. In the last newsletter there was an article signed by George Hernan (*Editor: Actually it was John Davis*) asking about the pilot for the film "Julia". Bill did all the flying for the film. I have pictures of Bill & Doris Day and will send copies to you if you want them. Bill enjoyed working with her and they corresponded after the filming. I had the pleasure along with our son watching some of the filming at Oakland. She was a very warm person. Best wishes, Billie Keating

Editor: You can contact Billie @: 190 Park Lake Circle Apt. B, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. Phone # 925-946-9535, Billie's cell # 925-899-0287

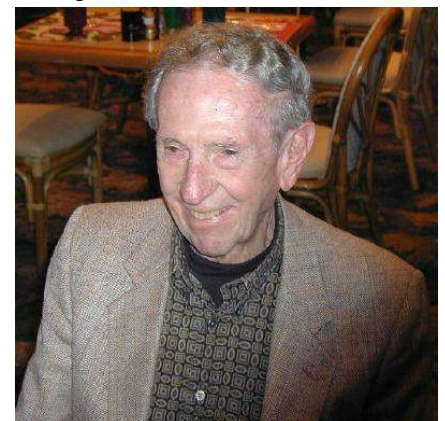
William Keating

Contra Costa Times, July 16, 2011



William Keating Resident of Walnut Creek, William died Friday, July 8, 2011 at the Bruns Hospice in Alamo. Bill suffered a stroke in

November of 2009 and had been cared for at his home in Walnut Creek until recently. Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on November 2, 1915 to Maurice and Grace Keating, he moved to Salt Lake City and subsequently Los Angeles during his high school years, attending both East High in Salt Lake and graduating from Beverly High in Los Angeles in 1933. He attended the University of Utah in 1934-5, before transferring to Flight School. Inspired by the flight of Charles Lindberg as a twelve year old, he and his brother Maury both had long and significant careers in aviation. Bill flew his first solo at Oakland Airport in 1937 in a biplane and went on to fly almost every type of aircraft available until his retirement. Beginning his career delivering the amphibious PBY's for the lend lease program and flying them from San Diego to Bermuda and later to Manila. During the War he flew the B24 and later he went on to fly for Transocean Air Lines, Lufthansa and ultimately World Airlines where he was the Chief Pilot. During the Vietnam War he was one of the principal pilots, at World, that brought a large number of orphan Vietnamese children out of the war zone to safety in California. He flew his own airplanes including a radial engine Howard, a Cessna, and a Piper Apache as well as enjoyed serving as a technical director for several movies made from the books of his friend Ernie Gann, including "The High and the Mighty" with John Wayne. He flew the scenes in the movies as well. His passion was sports cars. His favorite was a hand built 1949 Vignale Ferrari with which he won best in class in 1954 at the annual Pebble Beach Concours Bill is survived by his beloved wife, Billie of sixty nine years, and was a devoted father to his son, Richard Keating, daughter in law, Bonnie Keating, and grandchildren Will, Marie, Nicholas and Lily, brother Jack Keating, sister in laws, Libby Keating and Margaret Keating, and many nieces and nephews. Donations would be welcome at the Oakland Aviation Museum or the Bruns Hospice in Alamo.





TALOA Alumni Newsletter

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Postage
Here

ADDRESS

CORRECTION

REQUESTED



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