

Save this Date!

The TALOA Alumni Association's 2007 reunion will be held at Oakland's Western Aerospace Museum on **Saturday, September 22, 2007**. Further details and a reservation form will be in the next newsletter. **Hope to see you there!**



Reunion 2006

By Arue Szura

Only 51 TALOANS attended this years' Transocean Air Lines reunion but the event was no less enjoyed. The TALOA Alumni Association's board of director's didn't know that the Reno Air Races were scheduled for the same weekend we had settled on for our 2006 reunion. I suspect that many went to the races and this might have been one of the reasons so few came to our reunion. This time we checked the date of the air races for 2007 so that we wouldn't make the same mistake again! So be sure to save Saturday, September 22, 2007 for the next reunion. We hope to see you there.

For the 2005 reunion Ed Dijeau did an admirable job of tending bar (wearing his colorful Hawaiian shirt!), And we also thank him for donating so many bottles of wine from his personal cellar for the party. This year the Farmer and Kearns families did a superb job at the bar, plus bringing the drinks, snacks, setting tables with checkered cloths and doing whatever it took to make the day pleasurable for all. Both families, even the younger third generation members pitched in.

Ramona Finlason, bless her heart, did her usual good job of greeting everyone, providing name tags, and keeping track of those who attended (see list on the next page).

The dinner was delicious as usual, and Bingo has become a big hit. There were plenty of winners and plenty of prizes. Next year there will be even *more* exciting prizes so plan on getting to the game.

Until we meet again, Aloha!



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Rosemary Blasquez	Pat Stachon Kearns	Martha Palmquist
Ken Boyd	Tamsin Kearns	Paul Purdy
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Sylvia Clough	Barbara Killian	Nita Robeson
Billie Downing	Robert Killian	Siguard Sivertsen
Stuart Downing	Mark Kolar	Joe Stachon
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Dan Farmer	Marion Maclin	Arue Azura
Janet Stachon Farmer	Norene McCarthy	Bob Toynbee
Ramona Finlason	Mary Beth McKinney	Jeane Kennedy Toynbee
M.C. Garcia	Marvin Miller	Holly Veale
Derrel Gibbons	Eric Moberg	Ron Winiker
Bob Glattly	Edith Nelson	Chris Zaloumis
Ed Herring	Nya Nelson	Sarah Purdy Zaloumis



Second Generation TALOANS Needed

If one of your parents worked for Transocean Air Lines or one of its subsidiary companies, then you qualify to join the Board of Directors for the TALOA Alumni Association! Please volunteer in order to keep this unique organization of aviation pioneers going into the future! The board meets just four times a year – the first Thursday of February, May, August, and November for about two

hours for lunch at noon at Francesco's Restaurant on Hegenberger Road, near the Oakland International Airport. It's easy, it's fun, and takes very little in the way of commitment, mostly for the annual TAL reunions. Besides, you will hear stories you've never heard before! Please contact Sarah Purdy Zaloumis at 925-786-4444.



Notice Regarding Dues & Membership

Beginning January 2007, TALOA Alumni Association dues will be \$20/year due to rising costs for postage and publishing the newsletter. If you know a former employee

of Transocean Air Lines or one of its subsidiary companies please tell them about the alumni association. We need more members!



OAKLAND'S WESTERN AEROSPACE MUSEUM desperately needs volunteers! It's an exciting place to be! You will meet people from all over the world who are interested in aviation history. If you live in the area of the museum and have even a few hours, one day a week please consider volunteering. Docents, cashiers for the gift shop, painters, electricians, typists, tour guides for the Short Solent Flying Boat, general clean-up work, etc., are needed. **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL AIR MUSEUM!** Please call 510-638-7100 if you can help. "Flight Galley,"

a cookbook containing international aviation recipes is available for purchase at the Western Aerospace Museum gift shop. This cookbook makes a great gift for only \$12.00 each. You can help not only the museum but also the TALOA Alumni Association by purchasing the cookbook. A portion of the proceeds from the sales of "Flight Galley" goes to our association. There are also all sorts of other interesting gifts available in the gift shop so please stop by!



James Fite Helmer (1915-2006)

It was fitting that James Fite Helmer, a longtime commercial airlines navigator who flew by the stars, passed away peacefully on a clear night with a full moon on Friday, October 6, in Reno, Nevada. Jim was born June 15, 1915 in Jackson, Tennessee. He moved to California at age of eight, with his Mother, Ione, and two sisters, Fran and Elizabeth, after his Father, Adrian traveled first by trans-continental train to locate a desirable area to raise his children. They landed in Piedmont, where Jim, Fran and Elizabeth all attended Havens Elementary School and Piedmont High School. Jim starred in track and football at Piedmont High. He was recognized by his football coach, Brick Johnson in 1980 for his football accomplishments, and was inducted into the school's Sports Hall of Fame in 2006, for breaking the school record in 1933 in the 100 yard dash in 10.0 seconds. He went on to star in track at U.C. Berkeley, where he was part of a World record breaking 440 yard relay team, only to take second place behind the University of So. Ca., which won the race. Jim stayed close to track & field well into his seventies as an official every year at the California Relays in Modesto. He also served as a Marshall in the Hawaii Open Golf Tournament from 1988 to 1996. Jim married Mary Wilson in 1940, and had four children, Scott, Adrienne, Jeffrey and James. Because Jim's parents took their family many times to vacation in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Jim developed a love for the area, so in 1950 he and Mary moved to Boulder Creek, Ca., and one year later moved to Ben Lomond, Ca. to raise their family. Jim's mother Ione, moved to Ben Lomond as well after her home and Antique shop were flooded on Pacific Avenue in Santa Cruz in 1955.

Jim began his career as a navigator with Pan American Airlines in 1940. His first flight to Honolulu had to ditch in the Pacific Ocean. Being a sea plane, after repairs were made and the load was lightened, Jim and the flight crew eventually took off from the water and landed successfully in Honolulu. He wrote home that all went routinely, not to worry his wife and children. Jim went on to fly for Transocean, World, Japan, and United Air Lines on overseas routes from San Francisco to Asian countries, Pacific islands, and Alaska. He transported troops and materials in the Naval reserve during World War II and the Korean War, and completed 36 successful missions for the Air Force as part of the Military Airlift Command during the Viet Nam War. Mary, who preceded Jim in death in 1962, operated Helmer's Antiques in Ben Lomond, specializing in selling fine china, relics and furniture that Jim would ship home from the Orient.

Jim married Isabel Witky, in 1965 and she preceded in death in 1983. In 1984, he married Louise Hallsted and moved from Ben Lomond to Reno in 1986. Jim and Louise loved to travel, and would divide their time between their three homes in Honolulu, Reno and Talent,

Oregon. He is survived by his wife Louise, his three children, Adrienne Johnson of Lodi Ca., Jeffrey Helmer of Corralitos, Ca., and James of Ben Lomond; eight grandchildren; Phillip Johnson of Acampo, Ca., Douglas Johnson of Stockton, Ca., Teresa Sanderson of Germantown, Tenn., Natalie Calder of Fairfax, Ca., Shelly Garcia of Kapaa, Kauai, Dylan Helmer of Santa Cruz, Ca., Kimberly Yao, of Aptos, Ca., and Christopher Helmer of Santa Rosa, Ca., and ten great grandchildren; Louise's two children, Robert Fulton and Carolyn Rutledge of Talent, Oregon; his sister, Fran Wollrab of Bend Oregon, and many nieces and nephews. Jim's son Scott also preceded him in death in 1989.

Jim led an active life right up until his last month when he hosted family and friends attending the Hot August Nights car show in Reno, and the prior year when he rode a motorized scooter around Lake Almanor with friends. He enriched his family with longtime friendships from colleagues from the airline industry and people he met from all over the world. By his wishes, there will be no formal services, but the family will hold a private celebration honoring Jim's life on October 28, in Ben Lomond. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made on behalf of James F. Helmer, to the Piedmont High School Sports Hall of Fame, 800 Magnolia Av., Piedmont, Ca. 94611.



IN MEMORIAM

Jim Helmer

Robert G. Judd

Gerald Ponsi

Norman Mahaffey

John Russell



Robert G. Judd

Gerald (Jerry) Ivan Ponsi

Robert G. Judd, 89. Died Aug. 21, 2006 in Eugene, Oregon of natural causes.

Mr. Judd was born February 8, 1917, in Forest Grove, OR to Richard and Jessie Judd. He grew up in Oregon and Washington where he graduated from Yakima High School in 1935 after lettering his junior and senior years in tennis. After learning to fly through the government-subsidized Civilian Flight Training Program he joined the Army Air Force and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Mr. Judd was stationed in Delaware, Okinawa, and India during the war having flown "over the hump" during WWII.

After WWII he worked for a number of air transport companies until he joined the FAA in 1965 as an air carrier operations inspector in Anchorage.

After retirement Robert spent his retirement years in California and Oregon enjoying golf and family.

He is survived by his sons and daughters-in-law, Robert and Lynda Judd of Los Alamos, NM, Richard Judd and Lee Ann Gardner of Chugiak, AK, and his daughter and son-in-law, Sharon and Steve Ogle of Eugene, OR. He has 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Memorial donations may be given to the Latin America Community Assistance Foundation, PO Box 21000, Castro Valley, CA 94546.



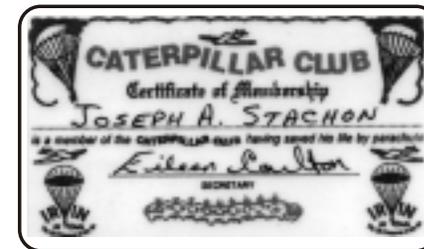
A 54 year resident of Hayward, Jerry passed away Nov. 2, 2006 at the age of 85. He grew up in Berkeley, CA where he developed a love for aviation. He played football in high school. He served in Europe during WWII in the 474th Fighter Group of the Army Air Force. After the war he began a 42-year career working at the Oakland Airport, starting with Transocean Air Lines and ending with his retirement from American Airlines in 1988. He was very proud to have worked on the Berlin Airlift, participate in the "monkey run" that assisted in the development of the Polio vaccine, and to be on the ground crew on two John Wayne movies, The High and The Mighty and Island in the Sky. Later, he was very involved in organizing the union and became a shop steward and president of TWU Local 505.

He believed in staying healthy and worked out his entire life. He loved good automobiles and tinkered with his 1954 Austin Healey. He was always ready to meet with old friends and attended Berkeley High, the 474th Fighter Group, and TALOA reunions.

To honor his request no service will be held. Instead, please raise a glass and toast to a life richly lived. The family asks memorial contributions in lieu of flowers be sent to the Western Aerospace Museum, PO Box 14264, Oakland, CA 94614.

THE CATERPILLAR CLUB

As Snoopy the "Peanuts" dog said in the beginning of his many novels, "It was a dark and stormy night" when we departed Karachi on January 29, 1944. We were headed to India and our destination was Gaya. Ten hours later, our destination and alternate airports were all closed due to weather, so when we ran out of fuel we bailed out of the aircraft and we landed by parachute in Biakunthpur. Thanks to Paul Purdy and his investigative team, 62 years later I have my caterpillar pin (given to people who have had to parachute to safety). NOTE: For information on how to order a book about the Caterpillar Club go to www.caterpillarclub.org.htm



Little Kids - Big Memories

By Jeane Kennedy Toynbee
Daughter of Captain Frank Kennedy

By the time I was 5 years old, my father had been making trips to Hawaii for a number of years and enjoyed taking the family there whenever we could go. Flying was different – not a lot of regulations. Our family would go out to the airport Friday after school and see if there were enough open seats on the flight to Honolulu for the 3 of us, my mom, sister Pat, and myself. My dad preferred to ride in the cockpit. As a matter of fact, I never knew him to ride anywhere else in a plane at anytime in his life. Transocean Air Lines reserved rooms for crew members at a few of the hotels in Honolulu so we always had a place to stay. It was so easy.

My father loved Hawaii. He had favorite beaches for swimming, surfing, shell gathering, etc.

I had started kindergarten at Lewelling School in San Lorenzo so on Monday, after returning home from one of our swimming adventures, I had a story for "Show & Tell." I told the kindergarten class that my family had gone to Hawaii over the weekend to go swimming. The teacher made me sit in the corner for the rest of the day for telling such an unbelievable story. "Show & Tell" was not to be used to tell lies, she said. While in Hawaii, I had picked out a postcard for my teacher and mailed it to her. A few days later, she received the card.

Still, I don't think it dawned on me until years later that my father had a fantastic & enviable job and that his

family was often included in his exciting adventures. That realization would come about the 5th or 6th grade. It was then that I realized the boys that hung around were no longer interested in building forts with me. They now recognized my father as a celebrity and wanted to know all about being a pilot.



Picture of me, 1952, Honolulu



✉ Mail Pouch ✉

ROBERT R. THOMPSON: Rembering Orvis Nelson and TALOA circa 1951-1953. Was referred to you by John Pidcock and Ben Soldo, fellow associates at Oakland Airport and 130 Bush St., San Francisco.

TED CAMPBELL: Dear Pat (Kearns): I'm sending the enclosed dues check to you. Sorry it's so late in being mailed. Will be 83 years of age on July 1st. Trying to survive on Social Security. It is extremely difficult. Would enjoy the reunions but am partially disabled and don't get around much anymore. Say hello to Arue for me. She really helps keep things together for all these years. May God bless you and yours with all good things of life today and always. Thank you your help, too. Vaya Con Dios...

RALPH K. REQUA: Dear Ed: I was cleaning out a shelf in

my library and found an old copy of the TALOA newsletter. It dawned on me that I have not received a new issue in some time. Is the newsletter still being published? If so, I'd sure like to get back on the mailing list. Although I never worked for Transocean Air Lines I know several people who did and consider myself a friend of Transocean. I'm still flying for UPS as I approach my 65th birthday. I am, of course, in the F/E seat. I never thought that I'd end my flying days as a "plumber." But I feel lucky to have this opportunity to delay my retirement as I still like the job, at least most of the job.

BOBALLARDYCE: The reprint of Arby Arbuthnot's article about his flight's role in the 1949 ditching of a Transocean DC-4 off the coast of Ireland brought back a lot of memories. I hired in at Transocean about then. The event was a hot topic. (See the Arbuthnot article below.)

✈ Atlantic Ditching ✈

By Arby Arbuthnot

Just before daylight on the morning of August 15, 1949, as captain of Flight 917, I was approaching the coast of Ireland after completing another routine Atlantic crossing. I was notified by Shannon radio that a DC-4 somewhere in our vicinity was about out of gas and expected to ditch.

In the meantime another TWA flight with Charlie Adams as captain had made contact with the flight and attempted to lead it back to Shannon. However, its fuel gave out and it ditched approximately ten miles off the Irish coast.

We reached the scene just as the flight went down and I was sure I had seen either landing lights or flares. I asked the navigator to get a good fix and, since it was not light enough to see anything at water level, I decided to proceed into Shannon, discharge our passengers, refuel, and return to the scene.

In the meantime, the crew and passengers on the ill-fated flight had made a successful ditching, in itself a remarkable job of piloting considering it was night, four dead engines and a moderate sea.

We soon arrived back in the area and located the rafts. They appeared to be overloaded and we decided to make an attempt to drop one of our life rafts hoping it would inflate and land near enough to be useful. I flew over them at about one hundred feet and, when everything looked just right, I signaled the two crew members who had the raft positioned at the rear door to kick it out. When the raft hit the water either it did not inflate or it split open. In any case, it sank like a rock.

At this time, I noticed several fishing trawlers about five miles from the life rafts. Due to the rough seas, the trawlers could not see the rafts so we made a pass directly over them and dropped one of our landing flares. This enabled the fishing trawlers to home in and approach the rafts and, after a great deal of maneuvering, they managed to rescue fifty of the

fifty-eight that had been aboard.

As we made our final pass over the rescue scene, my navigator took some pictures from the rear door.

We returned to Shannon, picked up our passengers and continued to Paris. After we arrived in Paris and I found out that the navigator had pictures of the rescue, I suggested we contact the wire services in Paris and see if they would be interested in buying them. The enclosed picture that appeared on the front page of the New York Daily Mirror was taken from the navigator's film.

The money received for the film was enough to take all the crew out for a night on the town in Paris.



Stranded before TWA plane in Paris are members of craft which tossed flares to Skymaster downed off Galway, Ireland.

Crew members in the above picture are: Arbuthnot, Cole, Sawyer, Cullen, Williams, Lowery, Halvest, Jones, Nightwain Burke.

Colonel Soriano's B-17

By Joe Stachon

As the years go by, I am frequently reminded of the very unusual accomplishments of Transocean Air Lines.

One such reminder occurred at the latest reunion. While talking to Jeane Toynbee, Captain Frank Kennedy's daughter, the subject of Colonel Soriano and his very special B-17 came up. This was a B-17 which TAL had acquired and pushed out to the nth degree for Colonel Soriano's use as a private executive airplane. Jeane was able to find a photo of this airplane and I am including it with this note.

One of the special features of this B-17 was a very comfortable easy-chair out in the nose where Colonel Soriano would sit and view the scenery as Captain Kennedy and his crew flew him all over the world.

About Colonel Soriano: He was one of the top officers in the Phillipine Army under General MacArthur during WWII. He owns the San Miguel Brewery along with many other enterprises in the Phillipines. Note the name on the nose of the B-17, "San Miguel."

Editor's Note: Captain Frank Kennedy's account of the "San Miguel" B-17 will appear in the next edition of the TALOA Newsletter. Stay tuned!!



✈ Albatross ✈

By Stu Jones

Thought you'd might get some amusement out of this story, here goes...

Read about this SA16, AKA "Albatross" (and it sure was an occasion!) in this newspaper about a month ago. They were giving an "open house" walk-through at the Old Hilo Airport.

Since I "cut my teeth" on one of these beasts way back in 1957, as a grand new co-pilot with Transocean, I was eager to go down to the airport and give it a look-see. When Gil Thomas got me into my first flight in one, I thought it was the size of a locomotive! (My previous flights were mainly in Taloea's Cessnas, Pipers, and the big one, a Piper Aztec for awhile on charters.) Took me damn near a year for me to catch onto water landings (well, not too bad) and water takeoffs (bloody awful!).

Anyway we went down to the Hilo airport, stood in line, and just before we boarded to peruse the interior, the assistant airport manager, a real nice guy, came up and whispered; "You wanna take a flight in this?" Of course I was surprised, but I said, "hey, for sure." Elva answered in the negative, she don't like flying that much, the manager knew me from our EAA meetings and fly-ins, (real nice guy.) He goes over, and whispers to the captain. I was told that after my walkthrough "stay onboard and sit in one of the spare seats. (Only had 9 or 10 in the cabin, the rest of the cabin was composed of racks for surfboards and had a "coffee bar" in the rear. If you can believe that!)

When the last "rubbernecker" got off, they closed the doors and I got invited into the cockpit, on what used to be the navigators seat. I had told the captain that I used to fly these old boats back in the 50's and 60's. I even happened to have a picture of one, and I think that's why he moved me into the cockpit. He looked like he was 18 years old, but he did one hell of a job.

After a smooth takeoff, we flew up the east coast of the island on a kind of "sightseeing" tour. I took the earphones off to answer a question from someone, and remembered just how noisy those damn birds were. This was a "B" model. By the way an ex Coast Guard ship. Then returned to PHTO. Had to shoot an ILS because the rain showers moved in. Locked the needles all the way down (also had glass on the panel too.) Greased the landing and taxied in. Smooooth Pilot! Oh, by the way, his co-pilot was a gorgeous blonde, about 25 years old (38-34-36.) If my eyes are accurate, we never had that when I was flying all around the trust territories! Man times have changed!

You can see from the newspaper what their flight is all about. Sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines, and whatever "Billabong" is. Hope you enjoy the pics and little story...

Best to ya,
Stu

P.S. I heard they're down in Samoa. (Where do I sign up?)

Friendship Tours

By Mary Beth McKinney

In June of 1956, I was hired as a stewardess by Transocean Air Lines and soon afterward became a tour guide. These tours usually consisted of groups such as members of various Chambers of Commerce, Better Business Bureau groups, or doctors and their wives, etc. The tours usually originated out of OAK or SFO airports. The fares were extremely reasonable and included airfare, hotel accommodations, and transportation to hotels in HNL. We would leave SFO or OAK early Sunday AM and return eight days later on a Monday. Flight time was about 23 hours on a DC4, so by the time we arrived in HNL we knew each other on a first name basis, and that it was impolite to refer to going home as “back to the States” but that “back to the Mainland” was proper.

When we arrived in HNL we were greeted by Hula dancers, beautiful Hawaiian music, given ginger leis, Polynesian drinks, and then limos took us to the Edgewater Reef Hotel, our paradise home for the next few days.

My first activity on Monday morning was to check with the Hawaiian Visitors Bureau to learn what local activities were available for my passengers for the next few days and post them on the information board in the basement of the Reef Hotel. Now we could make reservations.

Monday was a free day. Tuesday morning we took the Mt. Tantalus tour and visited the Punch Bowl Cemetery. When we arrived at the cemetery, Ed Sullivan was there and I introduced him to my passengers, who were thrilled. We then had lunch at the Waioli Tea House where they served beautiful Hawaiian foods that weren't available elsewhere. The desserts were yummy, especially the coconut cream and banana cream pies!

You couldn't miss the Circle Island Tour on Wednesday, which included visiting many wonderful historical places such as Hanama Bay, and a drive over the Pali. Beautiful day! Thursday we would meet the Lurline cruise ship, visit the Arizona, or go on an outer island tour. Friday night we toured various nightclubs. The Hawaiian Village nightclub featured the wonderful singer Alfred Apapka, who was known as the “Bing Crosby of the Islands.” Saturday was a free day, and on Sunday we attended a Luau at the Queen Surf Hotel. The pig was to go into the imu at 3 PM. It was an elaborate feast, very ceremonious.

On Monday we boarded a Transocean Air Lines' De4 for the trip back to the Mainland after bidding a fond “Aloha” to Hawaii.



Mary Beth McKinney



Long Ago – But Not Too Far Away

By Ted Campbell, Class of '43-I

It was a very special day – graduation from Santa Ana Preflight School for U.S. Air Corps Aviation Cadets. The powers had selected Pilot Training for me, and I was floating on a cloud. The first round of the program had been met and conquered. Physics, math, meteorology, navigation, ships and planes identification sports like judo – well, you know the usual curriculum. Now I tightened the belt a notch, ready for the next round.

G.I. buses book us to Santa Ana, where we boarded the troop train. Orders pronounced our destination a Sequoia Field, Primary Flight School, Dinuba-Visalia, California. The “grapevine” was indicating that the aircraft there was the Ryan, PT-22 type. It was a low-wing monoplane. Really “hot stuff.”

As the countryside slipped past us, my mind's eye was trying to quickly grasp the multitude of racing thoughts and scenes that may well foretell my immediate future. I had never before been to Visalia. It would be a new and memorable adventure.

The train was slowing now. The engine was blowing a very loud whistle and clouds of steam temporarily screened our view. As we disembarked, lines of cadets all gripping that wonderful invention – the B-4 bag, our wartime suitcase – were formed and roster was called. G.I. buses were quickly filled. After a short trip through the growing maize and grapevines, destination reached was Sequoia Field, our new, temporary home.

Unloaded, we again formed ranks, as an officer called each of our names. We quickly responded with a loud “yo,” and took our positions. On completion of roll call, someone saluted the officer and flatly replied, “All present and accounted for, Sir.” Being in alphabetical order, we were assigned to barracks. Roommate Scott Carlisle and I became friends. We constantly exchanged ideas and goals we wanted to achieve.

Everyone went to the dining room next, where all of the officers and staff were introduced. After their short “words of wisdom” were digested, it was time for our first mess. Cooks and waitresses said their welcome, and a sort of warning was sounded as to some of the waitresses' married status – “Beware and take care, boys!” I thought the food was good at Sequoia.

After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, we were ready to see and meet the ground school classrooms and instructors. Next was the athletics department and “muscle men.” They would be strict, but as the so often mentioned, “It's for your own good.”

Next morning, after the “usual” proceedings, we were marched toward the flight line. This was, after all, the day we had been waiting for. At the north end of our buildings area, we moved through a gateway.

Overhead hung a sign that I will never forget. It read, “Through this passageway pass the best pilots in the world.” My feet never touched the ground until we passed the corner of Hangar Number One.

I then became conscious of many rows of parked Ryan PT-22 aircraft. They all displayed proper U.S. Army Air Corps identification, with beautiful paint colors. Took my breath away. After some hours of experience and learning, they were referred to as the “Maytag Messerschmitt.” I will forever be able to identify this plane by its sound. There is no other like it, as one hundred sixty-five “horses” do what I love most.

After rounding the hangar corner, we approached the area referred to as “ready rooms.” In the time ahead, and when not flying, we could spend time there discussing aerial proceedings and maneuvers. Above us, on the north side of the hangar, was the control tower. It had no radio that we could use. So all taxi, takeoff and landing procedures were governed by powerful light signals. There was no choice or alternative but mandatory memorization. Your life and maybe others depended on correct execution.

Five names at a time were called. Those five would be called a “Flight,” and given a number for identification. We then met our flying instructor. Cadets William Burke, Norman Cabel, Vincent Capano, Scott Carlisle, and I met Frank W. Chenoweth, civilian instructor. For several years, we learned that he had been a crop-duster throughout the San Joaquin Valley. After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Government searched for experienced pilots to teach incoming cadets. Everything happened quickly. So civilian pilots were processed later and given a commission. One of the most important qualities about Frank W. Chenoweth was, as the sign hanging overhead as we passed through the passageway so aptly made the point, that he was indeed one of the best pilots in the world. I will never forget the first instruction he gave to us: “Flying is the second most important principle to learn. Landing is the first.” I also think he had a sense of humor.

We then went to a Ryan parked on the ramp. He explained how to ground inspect for anything that may be incorrect or liquids dripping or even moisture on a surface. Inside the cockpit, he explained all instruments and how to interpret their indications. Instructor sits in front cockpit. Since there is no radio, a “gosport” setup. Through a funnel shaped mouthpiece mounted in front cockpit, instructions could be given, which traveled back to the cadet through rubber tubing attached to metal earpieces in the cadet's helmet. This setup would mean that no “backtalk” could occur. However, he taught various visual and physical signs that “spoke” our meaning well. This technique has a language all its own.

The overall training procedure was then explained. Your first ride was called the \$1.00 ride. We would have to “solo.” At twenty and forty hours flying time, a check pilot would ride with you and write a progress report. One should attain a total of sixty-five hours and graduate on to a Basic Flight School. Just before graduation, our instructor would give us a \$5.00 ride. Cadet got to sit in front – instructor would be the “cadet.” We felt that would be a real thrill. It was.

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My turn for the first ride came. I climbed in, sitting on my parachute. He checked to see that I was buckled in and all O.K. Then he stepped in front, and softly spoke to me through the gosport. "Ready?" I nodded. Then he said, "Follow me through and get the feel of everything I do and every control I use." I took the control stick and placed my feet into the rubber pedals. My left hand went to the throttle arm. After checking all the controls by observation of their movement, he started the engine and moved out of parking. I looked at the control tower and saw a green light. The nice "gal with the light" was to have a very important influence on our lives. Again the gosport sounded, "Make sure you watch all instruments, follow me through all movements, relax and enjoy the trip." We were to use the huge "tarmac" runway areas for takeoffs and landings. There is a concrete runway (310') used by larger, heavier planes that visited on occasion. A C-47 looked really big to us, there to complete some official base business.

A green light told us to go. Up, up, and away. The earth was shrinking slowly. When we reached a thousand feet, the soft words came through my earplugs, "We make a 45° standard rate, right turn, out of the traffic pattern." He continued, "One thing I want you to learn now, and remember all the days of your flying experiences, become a RUBBERNECK. Practice, practice, practice it, until it becomes a part of your nature – automatically. When you are in a combat zone and an enemy gets on your tail – and you don't see him – it will be bye-bye Ted." I have remembered, practiced and perfected the rubberneck action to this day. I just automatically do it, even when driving my auto.

We reached about eight thousand, turning, watching, and climbing, when the soft voice queried, "Where is Sequoia Field?" I instantly pointed over my left shoulder. There it was. In his mirror, mounted on the right side of his canopy, I saw a grin spread across his mouth. Through my earpiece once again came those soft instructions, "You must learn to recover from a stall and a spin. When by yourself on solo rides and you enter one, either on purpose or by accident, you must be able to recover before you and Mother Earth meet up. Otherwise, you will never have the chance to practice. Learn well, my son." We completed several of each. Mr. Chenoweth was an excellent instructor. I learned a great deal from him. Example: "When doing a snap-roll, lower the nose a little, gain speed, then do the snap." It worked. "Learn to know the 'feel' of your ship. You can tell when she is about to stall. Then you can react sooner and more safely. It might save your life one day." When doing snap-rolls, I liked to hear the wing struts 'whistle' as round we go. Then it was my turn to try a couple. Don't know if he was disgusted or happy, but he said, "Enough for today. Let's go home." When near the field, he said, "I've got it, follow me through on the controls and closely observe our altitude and location to the field. Today, we observe a right hand traffic pattern. According to the wind sock, we land to the west. You enter the pattern on a forty-five degree angle, at one thousand feet. When approaching the field at about this distance, make a forty-five to the left, placing you on a parallel course, known as the

downwind leg. When padding the end of the runway by a good gliding distance, make a ninety degree turn to the right. You should have received a green light to land, by the tower. You are now on the base leg. When you can line up with the runway by making a standard right turn, do so, losing altitude at a rate that will land you in the first third of your field length." We touched down. After parking, we got out and stood beside the plane. We went over most of what had happened. Then he asked if I had any questions. I told him that I had truly enjoyed the flight and was anxious to go up again. My enthusiasm was because I had learned a lot. Each of the five cadets took their turn going up with him. This is identified in your flight log book as dual time. One day he said, "I want you to shoot a couple of takeoffs and landings today." So I began to wonder what I had done wrong. Around we went, making sure I watched everything very closely. I didn't know how I could improve on the second trip. As I taxied back to do a third trip, I heard softly these unbelievable words, "Pull over here and stop. I'm tired today. Gonna get out. You take it around again by yourself." The thought of what was happening almost blew my mind. I slowed, then stopped, and he got out, promptly sitting down on his parachute, smiling. He looked up at me, eyes twinkling and said, "Your turn now. Let's see you do it." From that moment on, it was as if he was still in the front cockpit, telling the instructions through my ear plugs. Green light, line up with the tarmac, give her throttle, and up, up, and away. One thousand around, green light to land, "spread the butter on the bread." I will swear to you, it seemed like one of the best landings that I ever made. After parking that sweet baby and getting out, he grabbed me in a bear hug, patted me on the back, and we shook hands.

When we marched back to the barracks at days end, our flight stopped near a fifty gallon barrel that had been filled with water. The first ten cadets of our class that soloed got a head-first dunk into the barrel. After that scene, there was some very fast changes of uniform. Oh well, all in a day's work, huh? My flight log book read, "Seven hours, 35 minutes to date." That evening my girlfriend had a long letter coming.

On Sundays, we took a G.I. bus to Visalia. Vince Capano had a beautiful, operatic tenor voice. He was always asked to sing a couple of solos. I was so sad to hear that he was washed out of pilot training. He could not solo within the maximum specified time. One had to either "do it" or move out. Time cannot wait. I later learned that Bill Burke and Scott Carlisle washed out during Basic School. Halfway through Advanced School, Norman Cabel was eliminated. I never heard from them again. As fate would dictate the final phase, out of our original flight of five, I would be the only one to graduate and receive our ultimate dream – Wings!

We received thorough ground school. I remember so well, sitting in class, when the "rivet-poppers" started their takeoff runs. It's a mystery as to where these nicknames sprouted. But we were having fun.

Our twenty hours and forty hours progress check rides made by one of the officers approached and passed. By this

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time we really showed the assurance we felt. On my forty hour check ride, the cool voice came back to my ears, "You have a dead engine. Find a place to land." We happened to be near the town of Dinuba. There was an auxiliary field there, used by Mr. Chenoweth and me once before. Seeing the wind sock there I quickly planned an approach, and down we went. When we reached approximately twenty feet elevation from the beginning of the strip, the officer pushed full throttle and said those oh so stimulating words, "Let's go home." After parking and a pause beside the Ryan, he asked how I had made it look so easy. All I could muster was, "My lucky day, Sir." He just smiled and said, "Keep up the good work, son." I really let out a big sigh of relief. Lucky? Boy, you can sure say that again. Probably lost five pounds on that ride.

There were some officers who had been commissioned in another branch of the military, who now desired to win their wings in the Air Corps. Although they were officers, their status was as a cadet. I became friends with a first Lt. name of Guernsey. He suggested that we could designate a certain area to meet, when we were both scheduled to fly, and observe the aerobatics of each other. Later, we would offer constructive "tid bits" that might help us do better. It does help when someone can actually see the action take place. I do not know if he received wings or not. I hope so. He was indeed a nice person and a true gentleman.

One day after "working out" solo, I walked into a "buzzing" ready room. I learned that an instructor was giving some dual time to his cadet, and had asked for demonstration of a slow roll. When half way around, the cadet was really shocked to see his instructor whiz by his windshield, falling below. The roll was quickly completed and the cadet banked sharply, observing and following his instructor down. His parachute blossomed. As soon as it became certain where he would land, the cadet pushed throttle and "high-tailed" back to the field. Transportation had just been dispatched to pick up that frustrated and embarrassed instructor. Moral of this story? Always check your seat belt!

On occasion, we would observe a tall man protruding above the fuselage of another ship, from the front cockpit. It quickly became known that he was Instructor Soltmarsh. We wondered how he could fit in that small space. We also felt sorry for the cadet trying to see where to land the Ryan.

One day Mr. Chenoweth stated that he had a "surprise" for us. We were going to fly our first "cross-county" trip. He handed maps to us and pointed out our route. Fly westward until you could see Highway 99 and parallel the railroad. Make a ninety degree turn to the right and follow them until near the city of Fresno, California. The Chandler airport was located in a southwesterly direction, just before Fresno. We were to land, taxi to the side area, where Mr. Chenoweth would be waiting. Return to the Sequoia Field would be directly over the town of Dinuba. We would see some new territory. I'm quite sure the others enjoyed the trip as much as I did.

My log book indicated sixty-one hours, twenty-five minutes. Mr. Chenoweth said, "Today you have earned a \$5.00 ride. I'm the cadet – you crawl into the front seat."

After the first few minutes, it seemed a little peculiar. Then I began to enjoy it. Now I could talk to him and watch him in that mirror – oh boy! After take off and climb-out, I asked for a snap-roll and a stall. What a way to go. This was fun! Then he wiggled the stick and tapped the top of his head. That meant, "I've got it." Holy-roller, I guess he did have it, "the right stuff." He did everything a Ryan can do. What a plan he had. After a hammerhead and a stall, we rolled into a four and a half turn spin. The ground was about ready to reach up and grab us. We zipped up over fences, cows, and other sturdy objects. I'm certain that someone could have phoned a complaint, but later thought better of it, muttering to themselves, "Oh well, it's just one of those crazy fly-boys from Sequoia Field." I'll remember that ride all of my days. Mr. Chenoweth was at his very best – absolutely magnificent. It was only a minute or two before breathing recommenced.

Graduation day was about to happen. A personal appointment with the photographer was scheduled. We wore a fleece-lined B-2 flight jacket, white silk scarf around the neck, leather helmet and goggles. Oh yes, I almost forgot – our widest, warmest smile. When the picture came back, it was of course admired, and all of our friends signed it, somewhere.

Fred Borns was our Cadet Commandant. His home was located in Los Angeles, as was mine. We became good friends during the course of events. Our orders read we had three days before reporting to the Basic Flight School, Minter Field, Shafter (Bakersfield) California. We planned to visit our families and report in at 8:00 a.m. sharp. The following Monday, Fred picked me up at our designated corner in Glendale. We were joyfully talking about our family, visit, and high with anticipation of starting Basic School, when suddenly we heard a very loud "bang" and the car began to vibrate. We had a flat tire and no spare. We were now faced with a rather large "catastrophe." We had made it to about the top of the grapevine pass, but no service station near. I'll spare you the details of what happened next. But I must enlighten you with the fact that we finally were able and did report in to the base adjutant at 10:00 a.m. – two hours A.W.O.L. He could have "washed us out" of flight training. At this point of the war, many pilots were needed, to say the least. Oh well, I do believe that's another chapter in my "book of life."

"I hear you, five by five – over and out!"

