

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF
Southern California Wing
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COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

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Photo from Acorn

Pat Brown is one of our first monthly Hall of Famers – see Page 3



National Vietnam War Veterans' Day is Monday, March 29
We remember the role of the Bell UH-1H "Huey" helicopter on Page 7

To Educate, Inspire and Honor Through Flight and Living History Experiences

March 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Museum Closed	2 Work Day	3	4 Work Day	5	6 Work Day
7	8 Museum Closed	9 Work Day	10	11 Work Day	12	13 Work Day
14 Daylight Savings Time Begins	15 Museum Closed	16 Work Day St Patrick's Day	17	18 Work Day	19	20 Work Day First Day of Spring
21	22 Museum Closed	23 Work Day	24	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day
28	29 Museum Closed Vietnam War Veterans Day	30 Work Day	31	Museum Open 10am to 4pm Tuesday - Saturday 12pm to 4pm Sundays Closed Monday and Major Holidays		

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING HALL OF FAME

DEDICATED TO THOSE MEMBERS OF OUR WING WHO HAVE SERVED
FOR MANY YEARS TO MAKE OUR WING EXEMPLARY.



CLAY LACY
CAF ID NO. 3627



RON FLEISHMAN
CAF ID NO. 5316



DAVE WOOD
CAF ID NO. 6220



PAT BROWN
CAF ID NO. 9331

A Stellar Performance!

by Dave Flood

I have never been prouder of our Wing than I was on Saturday, February 20, 2010.

Our Wing Staff held a special meeting that day to discuss and then vote on the future of our Curtiss C-46 Commando twin-engine cargo plane "China Doll."

At least 21 Wing members, including the 7 Wing Staff Officers, got to share their thoughts about how they felt about the possibility of our Wing either keeping "China Doll" or sending her back to Midland CAF Headquarters.

Everyone present at the meeting listened attentively to each speaker, and, though it became apparent there were some basic differences of opinion, there was no rancor or disrespect shown. We were pleased that our good friends and fellow members Bob & Georgia Thompson joined us from Colorado for this momentous vote!

Wing Leader Shirley Murphy masterfully conducted a very positive meeting, with many excellent points being put forward.

The financial concerns about keeping "China Doll" in flying status were enumerated, and her loss in producing income at air shows was pointed out. On the other side of the coin, some members outlined the positive side of keeping "China Doll" within the Museum Hangar, as will be required by Midland as of October, 2011: she would be out of the weather and always accessible to visitors while inside; she also would be the focal point of the Aviation Museum; and the cost to the Wing would be less and could be covered by tours through her at the Camarillo Air Show and by other projects.

Other members voiced concern that "China Doll" had been our first airplane, and visitors were thrilled to see her and tour inside her – actually absorbing aviation history inside an airplane that represents so many planes of the WWII era. They mentioned all the members, going back to 1981, who had been involved in so many ways with "China Doll."

The role of "China Doll" as the "Highlight" of our Aviation Museum tours was mentioned, and her symbolism as an example of the CAF goals of "Exhibition," "Remembrance," and "Education" was pointed out.

One member reminded us of a financial factor – the use of "China Doll" as a basis for advertisements and music videos, among other potential money-making roles, and that once she was lost to us, that possibility would be non-existent.

A negative view of the Museum Hangar being too cluttered with airplanes as a result of "China Doll" being in the hangar was countered by several members, who pointed out that we can move the smaller fighters and trainers out of the hangar during the day, while visitors tour our

facilities. It was even suggested that some of the fighters, or trainers, or one of the rental airplanes might be moved to the Maintenance hangar. A good possibility of our losing one plane currently on static display to another museum could help to further alleviate congestion.

There were many positive solutions to a problem that has arisen concerning our keeping of "China Doll." But the beauty of our discussion focused mainly on the positive solutions to the problem, rather than rejecting solutions out of hand.

Several members voiced their emotional involvement with "China Doll," and, while the Wing Staff concentrated on a non-emotional, business-like decision concerning her fate, these members reminded us all that our main goals at CAF are to use the airplanes to impress the public visitors to our Aviation Museum with the importance that these vintage planes had made to preserving our freedoms. Emotion is a great part of what CAF is all about. We do not appeal to kids' sense of financial responsibility when we take them into "China Doll," and they say, "Wow! I'm a pilot flying over the mountains to China!"

When we hear a kid (or adult) say how much they are impressed with all our stories about our planes and what their history has been, and what kind of men and women flew them and worked on them – then we have done our job – and we have impressed them through their emotions. I have seen many visitors, after a memorable tour by one of our stellar docents, put a \$20 bill into the donation jar as they exit the Aviation Museum.

One member also reminded all in attendance that "China Doll" is the official airplane of the City of Camarillo, and we would create a very negative feeling with many residents of Ventura County by letting her go. She belongs, in essence, to the people of our community.

The upshot of this memorable meeting was that the Wing Staff Officers, after hearing all of the cogent ideas concerning the future of "China Doll" – voted unanimously to keep her at our Wing as our primary vintage warbird attraction! They made their decision not only by taking into account all the input, but also because of the premise that "China Doll" could recover her costs.

What a shining moment for all of us at the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force! And our "Mother Bird" is still watching over us and pointing us toward the future!



This article from our "Flight Line" of March, 2010

Wing Photo Page I: Navy Centennial Celebration, San Diego



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Ken Gottschall starting his journey in the SNJ-5 #290 to San Diego for the Navy's "Kick-Off" celebration to inaugurate their Naval Aviation Centennial.



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Capt. Mark Hubbard, USN, in the cockpit of our Hellcat, taxiing out to fly to San Diego to represent our Wing in the Navy's huge fly-over. Over 180 planes from every Naval Aviation era flew singly and in formations down the North Island NAS runway.



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

A replica of the Navy's first plane, the Curtiss A-1 Triad seaplane, takes off. It came from the San Diego Air & Space Museum. A great reminder of the early days of Naval Aviation.



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Here's Mark Hubbard flying our F6F-5 Hellcat in front of the crowd of 70,000 that attended the Navy fete. Gene O'Neal was there with his still camera and his videocorder to record the historic events. Gene left Camarillo at 0330 to get to San Diego before the North Island NAS opened. We're glad he did!



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Another significant Navy vintage aircraft is this wonderfully-restored Boeing Stearman Model 75. Many of our WWII airmen began their training in this plane.



©Photo by John Gastaldo

A formation of Marine helicopters flying as part of the huge Navy fly-over, with the skyline of San Diego in the background. Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard planes were represented in the memorable fly-over. Naval Aviation will be celebrating its 100th anniversary during 2011 with many appearances of Navy aircraft at air shows

This page from our "Flight Line" of March, 2011

"Last of a Kind"

Thanks to *Air & Space Magazine*, Nov. 2020, and to *Wikipedia*



The Curtiss SB2C Helldiver

Had it entered the Second World War sooner, the Curtiss SB2C Helldiver might have received a warmer welcome. But the dive-bomber's introduction into service had been hampered by multiple delays. A prototype crashed two months after its maiden flight, a later version suffered structural failure of a wing during a diving test – killing the pilot – and, at one point during its development, the U.S. Navy demanded more than 880 modifications.

Worse, the Helldiver had the misfortune of replacing the immensely popular Douglas SBD Dauntless – a light, maneuverable aircraft that had disabled three Japanese carriers at the Battle of Midway in less than eight minutes.

While the SBD had been dubbed "Slow But Deadly," the SB2C became known among mechanics as "Son of a Bitch 2nd Class."



The Douglas SBD Dauntless

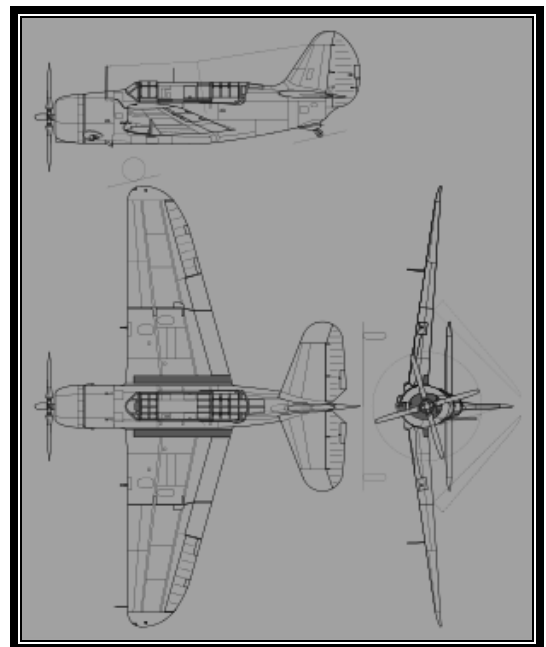
And yet, during the two years following its combat debut on November 11, 1943, the Helldiver sank more Japanese targets in the Pacific than any other U.S. or Allied aircraft. The Helldiver was faster than the Dauntless and could deliver its bombs with more precision. Ultimately, about 30 Navy squadrons operated Helldivers aboard 13 carriers.

Still, the aircraft was continually plagued by problems, due, in part, to poor factory workmanship. The electrical system was unreliable, and the hydraulic system required frequent maintenance.

The Helldiver underwent several upgrades, culminating in the SB2C-5, which featured a modified cockpit that grouped all electrically-controlled equipment in a console on the pilot's right side and all mechanical controls on the left. Instruments were located in panels in front of the pilot.

The Helldiver's days were numbered, however. The development of air-to-surface rockets rendered dive-bombers obsolete. The SB2C remained in service until 1947, but it would be the lasty dive-bomber operated by the Navy.

Specifications (SB2C-4 Helldiver)



Data from United States Navy Aircraft since 1911

General characteristics - SBC2 Helldiver!

- **Crew:** 2
- **Length:** 36 ft 8 in (11.18 m)
- **Wingspan:** 49 ft 9 in (15.16 m)
- **Height:** 13 ft 2 in (4.01 m)
- **Wing area:** 422 sq ft (39.2 m²)
- **Airfoil: root:** NACA 23017; **tip:** NACA 23009^[49]
- **Empty weight:** 10,547 lb (4,784 kg)
- **Gross weight:** 16,616 lb (7,537 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 1 × Wright R-2600-20 Twin Cyclone 14-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engine, 1,900 hp (1,400 kW)
- **Propellers:** 4-bladed constant-speed propeller

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 295 mph (475 km/h, 256 kn) at 16,700 ft (5,100 m)
- **Cruise speed:** 158 mph (254 km/h, 137 kn)
- **Combat range:** 1,165 mi (1,875 km, 1,012 nmi) with 1,000 lb (450 kg) bomb-load
- **Service ceiling:** 29,100 ft (8,900 m)
- **Rate of climb:** 1,800 ft/min (9.1 m/s)

Armament

- **Guns:** **2 × 20 mm (0.787 in) AN/M2 cannon in the wings
 - 2 × 0.30 in (7.6 mm) M1919 Browning machine guns in the rear cockpit
 - 4 X 0.50 in (13 mm) M2 Browning machine guns, two each in gunpods mounted on underwing hardpoints (optional)
- **Rockets:** 8 × 5 in (130 mm) high velocity aircraft rockets
- **Bombs:** in internal bay: 2,000 lb (910 kg) of bombs or 1 × Mark 13-2 torpedo^[50] on underwing hardpoints: 500 lbs, (230 kg) of bombs each



A Curtiss SB2C Helldiver with bomb bay doors open

Bell UH-1H Iroquois

By Chris Klimek, *Air & Space Magazine*, March, 2021

A single-engine workhorse, the “Huey” became a symbol of the Vietnam War



The Bell UH-1H Iroquois helicopter, affectionately known as the “Huey”

The unmistakable sound of its main rotor blade was almost as distinct as its bulbous frame. Long before the Vietnam conflict had ended, the “Huey” was probably the most recognizable helicopter in the world.

More than 5,000 Hueys operated in Vietnam; around 2,500 were lost to enemy fire.

Initially conceived as a utility helicopter optimized for internal stretcher carriage, Huey variants became jacks of all trades, thanks to the reliability of its turbine engine, a revolutionary upgrade from the reciprocating piston design of earlier models.

The Huey became the taxi of the new “air mobility” school of warfare, with gunships escorting troop carriers into enemy territory and clearing landing zones with rockets and machine-gun fire before other ships landed Marines or Army units & made a quick withdrawal.

The Huey latest variant, with a 1,400 hp engine, could carry 4,000 lbs. of personnel or cargo 285 miles. The Huey retained its role as medivac, carrying about 2,000,000 wounded during the war.

Future visitors to our Museum can see our Bell UH-1H Iroquois “Huey” on display.

The Association of Old Crows

By Col. Michael A. Herrera, CIV NAWCWD

On Wed evening Jan 25th, the Local Point Mugu Chapter of the Association of Old Crows hosted a “Salute to the Warfighter” reception at the Commemorative Air Museum. This event was held in conjunction with 42nd Annual Electronic Warfare Symposium which took place 24 -26 January. This year’s theme was Collaborative Electronic Warfare. The main topic discussed by close to 400 industry government and military representatives in attendance was how to work together to increase Department of Defense (DoD) Electronic Warfare capabilities in an era of increasing threats and decreasing budgets.

The Commemorative Air Force – Southern California Wing’s Aviation Museum was chosen for the “Salute to the Warfighter” reception not only for showcasing classic warbirds and other aviation memorabilia but also because it was a highlight of last year’s symposium. EW aircrew from the EA-6B Prowler community and the EF-18G Growler community with recent experiences in operations over Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya were saluted by the local industry sponsor, L-3 Communications who led a series of toasts to those aircrew who continued in the long tradition of flying in harm’s way in the service of our nation. All in attendance agreed that the atmosphere of saluting today’s warfighters among the history of those that preceded them was a highlight of the symposium.

The Association of Old Crows co –sponsored this symposium, along with the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWC-WD) Point Mugu. NAWC-WD supports the Airborne Electronic Attack mission for the DoD through Lab facilities and operational support for the EA-6B Prowler, and its successor, the EF-18G Growler.

The EA-6B Labs support the primary mission of the EA-6B Prowler; to suppress enemy air defenses in support of strike aircraft and ground troops by interrupting enemy electronic activity and obtaining tactical electronic intelligence within the combat area. The EA-6B Labs operate 24/7 in support of the warfighter, working to help provide an umbrella of protection for strike aircraft, ground troops and ships by assisting the EA-6B platform to effectively jam enemy radar and electronic data links. The EA-6B Labs are also involved in several GWOT (Global War on Terror) programs to bring additional new capabilities in short time to the war fighter.

As the mission of EA-6B Prowler airborne electronic attack transitions to a new platform, the EA-18G Growler, the EA-18G Lab is working to make sure the battle group of the future will have continuing sustained electronic jamming support to meet the ever-changing threat. The Lab is connected via a secure network with the F/A-18 Advanced Weapons Laboratory at China Lake to ensure that present Prowler capabilities are successfully transitioned to the Growler during post-production upgrades.

The Association of Old Crows is an Association with heritage tracing back to World War II. During World War II Allied Electronic Counter Measure officers, tasked to disrupt enemy communications and radars, were given the code name of “Raven” to provide a degree of security to their existence. After WWII, a group of Raven operators were directed to establish a SAC flying course in ECM operations at McGuire AFB, New Jersey. From all accounts from those present at the time, the students changed the name to “Crows” and those engaged in the profession became known as Old Crows.

Today the Association of Old Crows (AOC) is an IRS 501(c)(6) non-profit tax-exempt professional association with over 14,500 members including 65 chapters from 19 countries (comprised of 29% government and active duty military and 49% defence electronics industry).

The Local Point Mugu chapter of the AOC and EW professionals at NAWC –WD look forward to our salute to the warfighters next January.



U.S. Navy Photo

A Grumman EA-6B Prowler and a McDonnell-Douglas EF-18G Growler flying over Mount Rainier. They are painted in WWII colors in celebration of the Naval Aviation Centennial.

This article is from our “Flight Line” of March, 2012

The Grumman XF5F-1 Skyrocket



The Gman XF5F-1 Skyrocket

Intended for use on carriers, the Grumman XF5F-1 Skyrocket had folding wings and was intended to have an airspeed of over 300mph. It used two Pratt & Whitney Wright R-1820 engines, and first flew on April 1, 1940. Although it had good flight characteristics and a maximum speed of 383mph at 20,000 feet, it had engine oil cooling issues, excessive drag, and trouble with its landing gear doors. After testing, the Navy instead chose to order production of another prototype aircraft with folding wings: the Vought XF4U-1, the iconic Corsair.



The Skyrocket with wings folded

The aircraft had a unique appearance: The forward "nose" of the fuselage did not extend forward of the wing. Provisions were included for two 20 mm (0.906 in) Madsen cannons as armament.

Unlike any other fighter aircraft that had ever been considered. The design was for a lightweight fighter (under 10,000 lbs maximum takeoff weight) powered by two 1,200 hp Wright R-1820 engines, with propellers geared to rotate in opposite directions to cancel out the effects of each engine's torque, promising high-speed, and an outstanding [rate of climb](#).

The XF5F Skyrocket had a twin tail assembly that featured a pronounced dihedral to the

horizontal stabilizer. The main landing gear and tail wheel were fully retractable.

Specifications (XF5F Skyrocket)

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 1
- **Length:** 28 ft 9 in (8.76 m)
- **Wingspan:** 42 ft 0 in (12.80 m)
- **Height:** 11 ft 4 in (3.45 m)
- **Wing area:** 303.5 sq ft (28.2 m²)
- **Empty weight:** 8,107 lb (3,600 kg)
- **Gross weight:** 10,138 lb (4,600 kg)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 10,900 lb (4,955 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 2 × Wright XR-1820-40/42 Cyclone nine cylinder radial air-cooled engine, 1,200 hp (895 kW) each

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 383 mph (616 km/h, 333 kn) at sea level
- **Range:** 1,200 mi (1,800 km, 1,000 nmi)
- **Service ceiling:** 33,000 ft (11,000 m)
- **Rate of climb:** 4,000 ft/min (20 m/s)
- **Wing loading:** 33.4 lb/sq ft (163 kg/m²)
- **Power/mass:** .23hp/lb

Armament

- 4 × 0.5 in (12.7 mm) machine guns
- 2 × 165 lb (75 kg) bombs

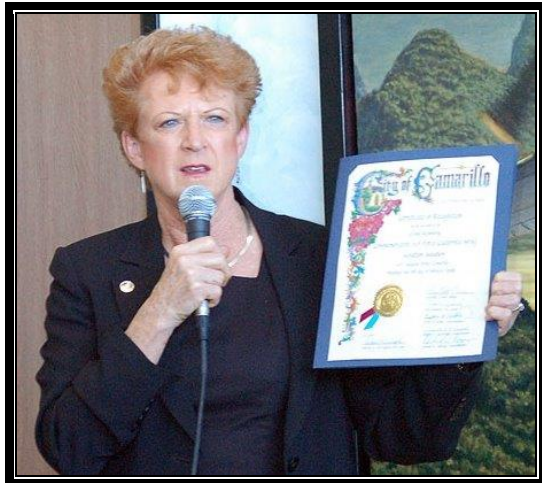


Wing Photo Page II– Museum’s Grand Reopening a Solid Success !



© Photo by Frank Mormillo

Sarah de Bree, Museum Director; Casey de Bree, Finance Officer; Camarillo’s Mayor Charlotte Craven; and Wing Leader Steve Barber at our Reopening.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Mayor Charlotte Craven presenting a certificate from the City of Camarillo to the Wing in appreciation of the Museum.



© Photo by Frank Mormillo

Wing Leader Steve Barber thanking Mayor Craven and all who attended the Museum’s Grand Reopening.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder www.vg-photo.com

Jim Hinckley, with a big smile after his ride in SNJ-5 #290, with Ken Gottschall as the pilot. Ken and Jim did a high flyby for the appreciative crowd.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Another crowd-pleasing flyby was Ken flying the Fair-child PT-19A, with Stephanie Tagliaferri aboard.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

The Museum’s Grand Reopening on Saturday, February 9 was attended by hundreds of interested visitors, who for the first time in months were able to walk through the Museum and around the planes, thanks to the hard work of Wing volunteers who helped to bring the Museum’s safety status to code.

Page from “Flight Line” of March, 2008

THE DOUGLAS DC-5 by Casey de Bree This article from our "Flight Line" of March, 2010

There really was a Douglas DC-5, but few airplane books make mention of it, perhaps because it is a relatively obscure airplane with only four examples having gone into airline service, and eight more seeing service with the US Navy/Marines designated as R-3D/C-110.



Brand New KLM DC-5 PH-AXB in El Segundo in May 1940. It went to the West Indies re-registered as PJ-AIZ *Zonvogal* (Sunbird). It later went to KNILM in Java as PK-ADC, the only DC-5 to survive the war.

The DC-5 was designed in El Segundo by a team led by project engineer Leo Devlin and supervised by the well-known Douglas designer Ed Heineman. It was strongly influenced by the Douglas DB-7 medium bomber design, which found its way into the USAAC as the A-20 *Havoc*, a shoulder-wing, twin engine aircraft with tricycle landing gear. Work on the DC-5 began in 1938 in anticipation of demand for a short-haul feeder transport with the performance of the DC-3, and the prototype aircraft made its first flight on February 20, 1939 with Douglas pilot Carl Cover at the controls.

Interesting features of the DC-5 were a high wing combined with tricycle landing gear. A strengthened keel ran the length of the fuselage to offer protection in the event of a wheels-up landing. It had fully retractable landing gear with the mains retracting outboard into the wings, and full-span wing flaps. The outboard wing panels were slotted, giving the DC-5 near STOL performance. The aircraft had a wingspan of 78 ft. and a length of 62 ft. 2 in. The areas forward of the firewall, exhaust collector rings, control runs, rudder pedals, and pilot seats were from the DC-3. It was designed with accommodations for a crew of three and sixteen passengers in the standard configuration, but would accommodate 22 passengers in high-density configuration. Customers were offered a choice of engines between the Wright *Cyclone* R-1820 rated at 1,100 hp or the Pratt and Whitney *Twin Wasp* R-1830 rated at 1,200 hp. The wings carried 550 gallons of fuel, giving the DC-5 a range of 1,600 miles at 202 mph and 10,000 ft.

KLM was the first to place an order for four R-1830 powered aircraft. Pennsylvania Central followed with an order for six, and Colombian Airline SCADTA ordered two. Shortly after, the U.S. Navy ordered three for the Navy as the R-3D and four for the Marines as the C-110, all R-1820 powered. Then British Imperial Airways placed an order for nine aircraft. After completion of certification, the

prototype DC-5 was purchased by William Boeing, of Boeing Aircraft Company. However, because of the outbreak of WW-II only the four KLM aircraft and the seven U.S. Navy aircraft were produced, the other orders being cancelled. The prototype DC-5 sold to Boeing was impressed into U.S. Navy service as a C-110, leaving a total of only twelve DC-5s produced.

By the time the four KLM aircraft were completed in May 1940 Germany had occupied Holland and KLM sent two DC-5s to its KNILM subsidiary in the Dutch East Indies, and the other two to its West Indies Division on Curacao, in the Caribbean. The DC-5s in Curacao operated there for one year, when they were returned to Douglas for overhaul and assigned to KNILM in Java, who then operated all four aircraft. They carried registrations PK-ADA, PK-ADB, PK-ADC, and PK-ADD.

As the Japanese began to overrun the Pacific, the KNILM DC-5s were used to evacuate refugees to Australia until the Dutch East Indies itself was overrun in April 1942. During an attack on Kemajoran airport at Batavia on the island of Java, DC-5 PK-ADA was about to take off when it was damaged and had to be abandoned. It was repaired by the Japanese and flown to Japan, where it was evaluated by experts from the Tachikawa Aeronautical Institute, and ended its life as a navigation trainer there.

The remaining three DC-5s were flown to Australia, one crashing en route at Charleville, Queensland and was used for spares. The remaining two became part of the Allied Directorate of Air Transport and flew charters within Australia. Only DC-5 PK-ADC survived the war.



Shown in March 1948 at Lydd airport Israel, the last DC-5 in service, the former KNILM PK-ADC, registered VH-ARD of New Holland Airways, then named *Bali Clipper*. It ended its days at the Tel Aviv Aeronautical Technical School in Israel.

The DC-5 was not produced after WW-II because of the availability of thousands of surplus C-47s at give-away prices. The DC-5 design influenced the design of later aircraft, such as the Fokker/Fairchild F-27 *Friendship*, one of the most widely used turboprop transports ever built.

As an aside, the author had occasion to fly in several KNILM DC-5s when a small boy living on the island of Java, having a father who managed the KNILM repair facility located at Bandoeng, Java. The author's family was evacuated to Australia in April 1942 on board a KNILM DC-3 the day before Java fell to the Japanese.

© "Douglas Propellers, DC-1 to DC-7" by Arthur Percy

Wing Photo Page III: Aviation Art



© Painting "Hellcat Fury" by Robert Taylor

Hellcats of VF-6 blast their way across the lagoon at Truk, the major anchorage for the Japanese Fleet – on Feb. 16, 1944. In the foreground is the F6F-3 of Lt. Alex Vracui, one of the Navy's top guns. Through a maelstrom of flak, the Navy planes of Task Force 58 sank 200,000 tons of Japanese shipping, and destroyed 275 enemy aircraft – effectively destroying the base.



© Painting "Victory Over Normandy" by Robert Bailey
Spitfire ace I.F. Kennedy in his Mk IX fighting FW-190s in June, 1944. Kennedy was credited with 12 kills over Malta, Italy and France.



© Painting "Ground Zero" by Don Kloetzke
Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero banking to port as the USS Arizona becomes the burning, battle-scarred symbol of "a day that will live in infamy" – December 7, 1941.



© Painting "Fortresses Under Attack" by Robert Taylor
B-17 Flying Fortresses under attack by Japanese Zeros during the early part of WWII in the South Pacific. For his actions during this encounter, B-17 pilot Jay Zeamer was awarded the Medal of Honor.



© Painting "Pacific Summer" by John Shaw
Lt. Tommy McGuire, the #2 ace in WWII, flying his P-38 of the 475th F.G. against Japanese Zeros over New Guinea.



© Painting "God Shed His Grace On Thee" by John Shaw
A Navy F6F, Army Air Corps P-38, and a Marine F4U fly an aerial salute above returning WWII troopships and warships entering New York Harbor. This painting benefited the Legion of Valor Museum located in Fresno, CA.

Page from the "Flight Line" of March, 2012

“Impossible Odds – He Hoped the Jug was as Tough as They Said it Was”

By Dr. Timothy M. Grace, Historian – 368th FG Association / with George Sutcliffe / *Flight Journal*, April, 2021 Issue.



For 368th Fighter Group (FG) pilot, 1st Lt. George L. Sutcliffe, what began as a routine mission on June 14, 1944, over Lisieux, France, took an unexpected and unsettling turn for the worse. Just minutes before, he and his fellow 397th Fighter Squadron (FS) pilots were looking for targets of opportunity after they had bombed and strafed their primary target.



Photo courtesy of 368th FG Assoc.

Lt. Sutcliffe prepares his parachute for a mission using the squadron pingpong table in July, 1944, at A-3 Cardonville, France.

Suddenly, Sutcliffe found himself isolated from his squadron and trapped in his P-47 down on the deck by 40 Me 109s that had formed two counterrotating lufberrys just below a 2,000-foot cloud cover. With nowhere to run or hide, Lt. Sutcliffe would have to hold steadfast against all odds and fight his way

upward through his German pursuers and escape to the safety of the clouds—or die trying!

George L. Sutcliffe was born in Smithfield, Rhode Island, on February 7, 1923. When the War broke out, Sutcliffe did not have the two years of college education required for the air cadet program. He enlisted in the Navy. “They said I had a deviated septum, and that I couldn’t join until it was surgically fixed,” Sutcliffe recalled for this story. As an alternative for students to test and qualify for pilot training, he completed a five-month course and passed the examination. Although Sutcliffe suffered from asthma [and still does], when he took his physical exam, he did not disclose that fact, or he never would have flown.

Cadet Sutcliffe completed all three phases of flight training in Texas. His primary training was at Avenger Field in Sweetwater flying Fairchild PT-19 Cornells. He completed basic training aboard Vultee BT-13 Valiants at Randolph Field. He finished advance training at Moore Field, flying North American AT-6 Texans.

Sutcliffe’s first assignment was with the 320th FS of the 326th FG in late 1942 at Westover Field, Massachusetts. The 326th was an Operational Training Unit whose function was to train fighter groups in P-47s for overseas deployment to the various theaters of war. Sutcliffe’s flying proficiency did not go unnoticed. The 326th was commanded by Lt. Col. Gilbert L. Meyers. Meyers was about to receive command of a fighter group destined to operate in the War abroad. In anticipation, Meyers told his squadron commanders, including Capt. John D. W. Haesler of the 320th, to select their best pilots.

The 368th FG was activated on June 3, 1943, and before long, 2nd Lt. George Sutcliffe was among the original cadre of pilots assigned to the 397th FS, known as the “Jabo Angels.” Little did Sutcliffe know that he would become a valuable pilot with one of the most successful fighter groups during WW II.

Lt. Sutcliffe flew in the group’s first mission on March 14, 1944. He was an excellent wingman and began to pile up missions, eventually completing 80. He stated, “I think you’ll find out from just about anybody who had 75 to 100 missions that probably half a dozen will stand out. The rest are routine, and many you forget because it is like going to work and coming home. But there are usually a few incidents that stamp some

missions in your mind. I had four that I always remember."

It is the mission that Lt. Sutcliffe flew on June 14, 1944, that is his most memorable. The 368th flew 142 sorties that day, many to provide high cover over the invasion assault areas. Deputy group commander Lt. Col. Frank S. Perego led 36 P-47s off at 0950 hours, and they proceeded to their assigned areas. After being released from patrol, the squadrons flew south looking for targets of opportunity between Alençon and Lisieux.

Squadrons and flights became separated. The 397th FS commander Lt. Col. John Haesler's Whiskey Blue flight [the squadron's call sign] included his wingman Lt. Sutcliffe and element leader Lt. Marv Rosvold and his wingman, Lt. Robert Bechtold.

They were flying at 1,800 feet and preparing to leave, when they were bounced by 40-plus Me 109s. During a wild 15-minute encounter, Lt. Bechtold was hit and had to bail out over Lisieux, but not before he had shot down two enemy aircraft. Lt. Sutcliffe claimed one enemy aircraft destroyed, and Lt. Rosvold claimed one damaged. When they arrived back at Chilbolton afterward, Maj. Haesler said in his report, "It would have been a cinch, but there were just too many of them."

Such is the general description of the mission. A closer look reveals the extraordinary aerial proficiency of Lt. George Sutcliffe. The weather was poor, with a 2,000-foot ceiling, and Sutcliffe's job was to keep his head on a swivel to spot anybody who might attack them from the rear. "Col. Haesler was talking on the mic about how we could not see anything down there worth shooting at," said Sutcliffe. "Everything was quiet," he continued, "Haesler was yakking away, while my head was spinning around.

I looked back, and coming out of the cloud deck were 40 Me 109s. They were headed towards us fast, so I knew that we had to play it quick. I pushed the radio button and tried to get through, but Haesler's still talking about how we can't find anything. I pressed on the button and kept hollering, 'Break left, Colonel; break left, break left,' because I knew he had to let up on the radio eventually."

Haesler was flying a gleaming new silver bubble canopy, while the other pilots flew the older razorback version. Two Me 109s flew up by Sutcliffe's wing and were starting to shoot at him as Haesler heard the call to break left. Haesler broke, and two enemy aircraft in back of him also broke. Sutcliffe broke with his leader and saw three enemy aircraft in back of him. He laid several .50-caliber hits on one of the planes on Haesler's tail and saw him go down.



Photo courtesy of 368th FG Association

395th FS Jug is damaged at Y-34, Metz, France, during Operation Bodenplatte, January 1, 1945.

Sutcliffe continued to make his sharp 180-degree turn. "As I straightened out, I went head-on through a fur ball of 109s that were coming at us. I fired away at any I could get a bead on. As soon as I made that commitment and got in the middle of them, I realized we had picked up more of them and were in trouble. Haesler said, 'Let's get the hell out of here. There are too many of them.' He pulled up into the cloud bank, and Rosvold managed to get up there too. But I had already committed. I was in the middle of these guys, and there were more enemy aircraft above me. I knew I couldn't go through them. Instinct told me, I've got everything forward, full throttle with the water mixture for military power. I figured maybe I could outrun them and dived for the deck. I looked back, and they were coming down. I told myself, 'That's a stupid move.'"

The 7-ton P-47 Thunderbolt was the heaviest single-engine fighter produced in WW II, and it could out-dive any plane. Although this was a distinct advantage forward and the momentum gained from the dive, I was killing the speed quickly as I climbed."



Lt. George Sutcliffe, front row second from left, with pilots from the 320th FS, 326th FG, taken at Westover Field in 1943.

As Sutcliffe climbed toward the cloud bank, he was on the verge of a stall. He dropped the nose and regained speed to resume his climb. Sutcliffe estimates that 10 enemy aircraft chased Haesler and Rosvold into the clouds. By that time, the remaining Luftwaffe pilots had formed up into two counterrotating lufberrys under the cloud deck on either side of him. "Each time I dropped my nose, a 109 from either lufberry was on my fanny and clobbering me, no matter which way I turned.

"When I approached the clouds after recovering from the first dive," Sutcliffe said, "I leveled the nose at a shallow angle to gain some speed. I spotted a guy coming down from the lufberry on my left side. Everything was blinking, so I knew he was shooting at me. I saw tracers flash behind me and realized he was not leading me. He was so intent on getting me that he was closing too fast, and I was sure he would hit me. Live ammunition hit my tail. At the last split second before we collided, I rolled over his canopy. He went under me by about 10 feet, and our eyes met, but not before he hit me with three 20mm cannon shells across the left wing that blew up some of my ammunition. I dived for the deck, regained airspeed and started up in another spiraling turn. Before I reached the clouds, I had to level off to regain airspeed."

One of the times when Lt. Sutcliffe had leveled off, he was alone. While heading for the clouds, he suddenly observed tracers flashing by his wings on both sides of the cockpit. He pulled back the stick, hit the right rudder and did a half-roll. It was too

late, as the center of the plane was hit with a 30mm shell that cut the cable on his elevator trim, which made it hot and heavy. Then he was hit by a 20mm shell in the armor plate behind his head. "I didn't know I had lost my elevator trim, so I went down again and started back, and I realized that this mission was not coming out like I had thought. I pulled on the stick with both hands and legs, really feeling the G." Fighting a blackout, Sutcliffe pulled out of this dive with no altitude to spare. His wings were clipping the treetops.

Sutcliffe climbed again, and as he leveled off, an Me 109 headed down his way much too fast.



Photo by John Dibbs/facebook.com

Steve Hinton flies the Planes of Fame's Curtiss-built P-47G Thunderbolt. At the time of the photo shoot, it was the world's sole flying Razorback. The aircraft is painted to represent Capt. Walker "Bud" Mahurin's WW II Thunderbolt UN-M "The Spirit of Atlantic City."

"He was taking shots at me, but he was also going under me. As he went underneath, he pulled up, and he slid right back to the side, coming back towards me. The next thing I knew, he was flying flight formation with me. He looked straight at me and shook his head. My impression was that he meant there was no way I was going to get out of this jam. I shook my head at him. He was on the verge of a stall but still trying to get an angle.

Finally, I don't know if he dropped his flaps or what, but he actually started to get slower than I was and started to come down so he could just get enough angle on me to fire. I watched him closely, and as soon as I saw his nose coming through where he barely had an angle, I rolled over his canopy and went down again. Each time I leveled off, somebody was right on me. All told, I did this maneuver about five times against the enemy planes."

Sutcliffe was still on full military power, a system where a mixture of water and alcohol is introduced into the engine that provides 300 extra horsepower. It lasts about 15 minutes. "I knew I was getting short because I had been up there a long time. I figured to take my chances before it ran out. I put my nose up and started going for the clouds, watching these guys coming at me. Another pilot overflew me but then slid back up very close. We were both climbing slowly, but before he could get an angle to fire, we hit the clouds. After five seconds, I saw his belly roll off.

I was alone—and what a relief! Immediately my engine lost power, and I thought I was hit. It was the water injection that had finally run out. What a difference that made. I realized everything was working. I calmed down and figured since we were in France, I had to head north. 'Relax, I'm going north.' I looked at my compass, and it indicated I was heading south. I thought it was broken. They teach you to trust your instruments and not to fly by the seat of your pants. I made a 180-degree turn and followed a northerly heading. I was not feeling good about it, but it was the correct thing to do."

When the encounter began, Haesler and Rosvold escaped in the clouds. Some of the Me 109s broke off and chased them, hoping to pick them up as they emerged from the top cloud cover. When Sutcliffe broke out of the overcast east of Le Havre, he was directly over the Normandy coast. He looked around to see if someone had followed him, but there was no sign of enemy aircraft. He realized that by taking the wrong heading into the clouds, he had inadvertently evaded any planes that might have been following him.

Sutcliffe saw two planes heading toward him from the right. He recognized them as Thunderbolts and hoped they belonged to Lt. Col. Haesler and Lt. Rosvold. They were indeed his friends, who proceeded to circle his plane and assess the damage. He had a 20mm hole across the wing, and his tail was badly shot up by the 30mm shell that penetrated the center of the fuselage. He had hydraulic pressure and some control.

Sutcliffe wasn't completely out of the woods. "I looked at my fuel supply and realized I could not get back across the Channel to England. I

remembered they had put down a strip on Omaha Beach for emergencies like this. We flew up the coastline and, sure enough, picked up a little corrugated strip [A-2, Criqueville]. I landed, and the engineers used big shears to cut off the jagged edges from the hits I took. They grabbed 5-gallon Jerry cans and fueled me up. I taxied to the other end of the strip, fired it up, dropped some flaps and took off."

When Sutcliffe landed back in England, he learned his squadron mates had heard he was shot down. "After we landed, I went to the barracks," he recalled. "There were two or three guys picking out some of my clothes that would fit them. They were a bit embarrassed when I walked in but were awfully glad to see me. Right after that, we had to make out a will with what had to go home; everything else they could share and pass around, if you were lost."

Lt. George Sutcliffe was awarded the Silver Star for his action that day. He was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 12 Oak Leaf Clusters during his time in combat. By November 1944, Sutcliffe was one of the first pilots from the 368th who had enough missions and points to be sent home.

"I was assigned to Luke Field in Arizona to instruct some cadets, kind of a step down, but those are things you have to accept. It turned out pretty nice, as I put a class through advance training. Then I was assigned to Punta Gorda Air Field in Florida, where I did some instructing in the P-51. I joined the Air Force Reserve, flying the F-86 Sabre. For personal reasons, I resigned my commission just three days before the invasion of Korea. Our reserve outfit was frozen and activated. But for the three days, I would have been in Korea flying the F-86."



Sutcliffe grew close to two pilots who were killed during the War. One was Capt. Robert S. Anderson, who was killed by small-arms fire over Canisy, France, on July 26, 1944. "His mother refused to believe he was dead until she talked to someone face to face who had seen it. When I came back in November, she flew out to see me, and I told her what happened."

The other was Lt. Norman Langmaid. "He and I were very close, being the only guys from Rhode Island." Langmaid was hit by flak and died near Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944. Sutcliffe has visited Langmaid's grave several times.

He always wondered what happened to him that fateful day, "It's one of those things that happen in war. A comrade loses a buddy." Did he die in agony, trapped in a flaming torch fed by fuel and ammunition?

Sutcliffe returned to Normandy in 2005 with Langmaid's cousin, Richard Shover and his wife, Pat. Eyewitnesses to the crash told them that Langmaid was slumped over in the cockpit when he crashed, indicating that he was hit by small-arms fire and unable to belly-land the plane.

Once enemy troops vacated the area, villagers built a coffin and buried Langmaid in a small churchyard, where he remained until Graves Registration moved him to his current location at Colleville-sur-Mer.

In honor of Langmaid and the visit, the mayor and most of the town's inhabitants held a memorial service. At a church, they were asked to unveil a granite plaque inscribed with Langmaid's name and date of death.

Through an interpreter, Sutcliffe told his hosts of his common background and friendship with Langmaid, saying,

"We thank the people of Saint-Martin-de-Blagny, who risked their lives in order to remove Norman from his broken plane and bury him with honor in your village. Norman will be forever young as he sleeps beneath the hallowed ground overlooking the beaches of Normandy."

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The Mystery of the Missing Shoe

In July of 1943, Sutcliffe was on a training mission over the Merritt Parkway in Connecticut, when his engine quit. "I couldn't find a place to set it down. We were taught to dive at the wing and to fall between the wing and the tail. I looked at the wing and decided I would hit my head and get knocked out. I looked back at the tail. I could be out of here before I hit it.

I curled up in the cockpit, put my arms on the side and shoved straight up. The vertical stabilizer came under me like a huge knife. Anything dangling would have been gone."

Sutcliffe was falling head first, and when he pulled the parachute ring, the jolt knocked off his shoe. He drifted over a farm, and a woman hollered at him, "I'll get you in my car." Sutcliffe told her he needed to get to the plane because it had live ammunition and wasn't safe.

"She insisted, 'First, you come to the house and have a cup of tea.'" Sutcliffe had tea, and the lady took him to the crash site. A fire truck arrived just as .50-caliber bullets began cooking off. Fortunately, no one was injured, and the fire was put out.

Years later, Sutcliffe and his wife, Olive, decided to visit the lady who had helped him that day. "She invited us in for a cup of tea," George recalled. "She said, 'I want to show you something.' We went to a local café, and she asked me to look behind the bar.

Behind the bottles, there was my shoe! That was the biggest thing that had ever happened in the little town. The owner asked me if I wanted it back. I said, 'No, it is yours.' A farmer had found it in his field at harvest time."



A grateful French girl wave to two 368th FG P-47s taking off from an airport in France, WWII.

Theodore 'Ted' Lumpkin dies at 100; member of the WWII Tuskegee Airmen

By **PRISCELLA VEGA, STAFF WRITER, L.A. TIMES**



Photo by L.A. Times

Los Angeles resident Theodore "Ted" Lumpkin, Jr.

Theodore "Ted" Lumpkin Jr., a member of the Tuskegee Airmen whose service as a member of the all-Black unit during World War II helped desegregate the U.S. military, has died at age 100.

Lumpkin, a native Angeleno, died of COVID-19 on Dec. 26 at a hospital, just days shy of his 101st birthday, said his son Ted Lumpkin III.

"We're carrying on his [legacy], but it's an end of an era," his son said.

Lumpkin lived a full life. He was drafted into the military in 1942 when he was a 21-year-old student at UCLA. He was assigned to the 100th Fighter Squadron of the all-Black unit in Tuskegee, Ala., as a 2nd lieutenant with the U.S. Army Air Force.

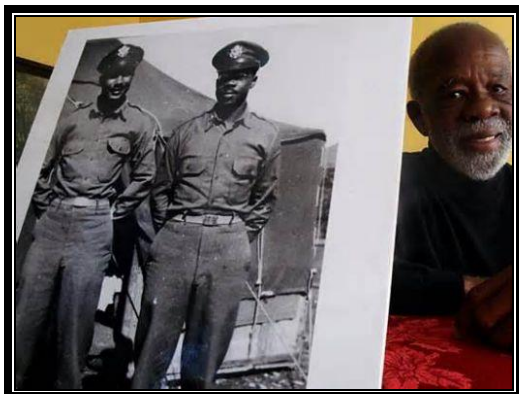


Photo by L.A. Times

He said his eyes weren't good enough to become a [pilot](#), so he served as an intelligence officer, briefing pilots about missions during his overseas combat tour in Italy.



Capt. A.D. Turner & Lt. C.P. (Lucky) Lester, 100 Fighter Squadron, Tuskegee Airmen, WWII

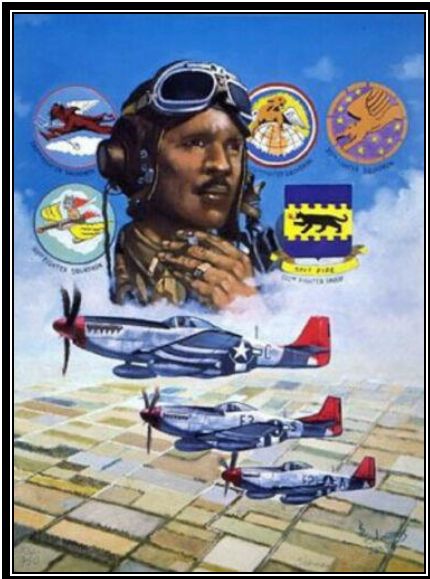
During his tenure in the military, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from USC. He met his wife, Georgia, while he was a student and got married soon after. Years later, he retired from the the Air Force Reserve as a lieutenant colonel.

He started a new era of his life working for Los Angeles County, serving as a social worker among other jobs over 32 years. He later shifted gears again, becoming a real estate broker and opening his own real estate company.

Although Lumpkin played a role in changing the military's culture, his family knew only that he served during WWII, not that he was one of the fabled Tuskegee Airmen.

"He didn't talk about it much. He'd maybe mention some incident or a buddy, but we were married for a number of years until I heard about them," Georgia Lumpkin said. "When I realized who these guys were and what they'd done, I was just overcome at how much they persevered. They did not bow down. They achieved things that detractors said they couldn't, weren't capable of doing."

Lumpkin's son said that when he was young he was watching the television show "That's Incredible!" when the announcer introduced members of the Tuskegee Airmen.



Poster showing patches of all Tuskegee Airmen squadrons, with three of their "Red-Tailed" P-51Ds

"Who the heck are these guys? Then, there's my dad walking onstage," he said. "He never talked about it, but from there it took off like wildfire."

The Tuskegee Airmen received Congress' highest civilian recognition in 2007 with the Congressional Gold Medal. Nearly two years later, President Obama invited the surviving squadron members, including Lumpkin, to his inauguration.

Now, only eight original Tuskegee combat pilots and several support personnel are still alive, said Rick Sinkfield of the Tuskegee Airmen Inc.. All are in their 90s or older.

Lumpkin traveled frequently across the nation and abroad with the Tuskegee Airmen Inc. He served as president of the Los Angeles chapter, a national board member and western regional representative. He was also a board member with the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation. During presentations alongside other colleagues, Lumpkin often encouraged people to do their best every day to overcome what he described as their "own Tuskegee experience."

Although these projects took up most of his bandwidth, family members said he always carved out time to spend time with them, even if it meant boarding a flight and heading directly to a music recital or a wedding.

"I think he really enjoyed doing it," his other son, Kelly, said. "I couldn't have kept up with his travel schedule."

Before Lumpkin tested positive for COVID-19, he was able to live life on his own terms. He enjoyed taking drives down Pacific Coast Highway and had recently purchased a new white Kia Sport. He wore his mask during errands. He'd occasionally call in a takeout order at the Hilltop Coffee and Kitchen in Inglewood for a breakfast sandwich. He learned how to use Zoom for virtual conferences and board meetings.

"As tragic as it is with COVID taking him, he still won in the game of life. He still got to do everything anybody should want to do," Kelly said. Lumpkin Jr. is survived by his wife, two sons, one daughter, several grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



Red Tail Tuskegee Airmen P-51C flying with an F-16 Red Tail Viper of the Alabama Air National Guard.



Tuskegee Airmen Patch of the 100th Fighter Squadron

“Hope Floats”

From *Air & Space Magazine*, September, 2020, and also thanks to *Wikipedia*.



Seversky SEV-3 floatplane version

In 1933, the Seversky SEV-3 was the world’s fastest amphibian and the first aircraft built by the Seversky Aircraft Company on Long Island, says Josh Stoff, curator at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City, New York.

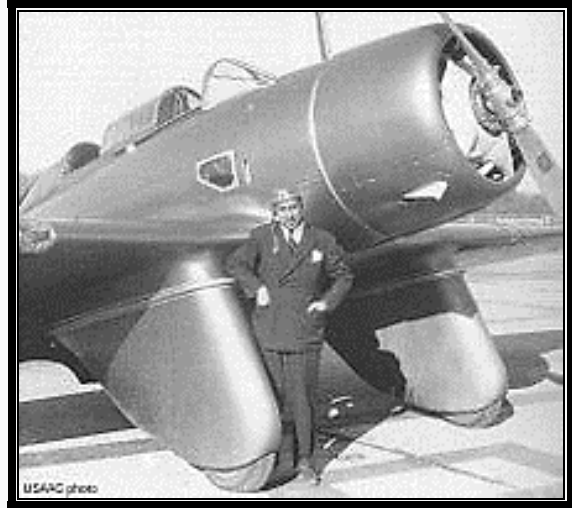
The SEV-3 was an all-metal cantilever low-wing monoplane powered by a nose-mounted 420 hp (313 kW) [Wright J-6](#) Whirlwind radial engine. It had two cockpits in tandem, a forward cockpit for the pilot and a rear cockpit for two passengers, both with sliding canopies. It could either be fitted with twin amphibious floats which had main wheels fitted in the floats to allow it to operate from land, or with a fixed [tailwheel undercarriage](#) with the mainwheels enclosed in large fairings.¹

The SEV-3 first flew as a floatplane in June 1933, demonstrating excellent performance as both an amphibian and a landplane. It was built in small numbers mainly for export.

An SEV-3 established a world speed record for piston-engined amphibians in 1933, and on 15 September, 1935, a Wright Cyclone-powered SEV-3 set a record of 230 mph (370.8 km/h) which stood for 49 years.

A landplane version was also developed with conventional landing gear.

The design influenced a long line of Seversky and later Republic aircraft, eventually leading to the development of the P-47 Thunderbolt.



Alexander de Seversky standing before the SEV-3XAR, the landplane version – autumn, 1933

A landplane version was used by the United States Army Air Corps as a basic trainer with the designation BT-8, 30 of which were ordered in 1935. This proved grossly underpowered and was quickly replaced by the [North American BT-9](#).

“Only one was built,” said Stoff, “and it was sold to the Spanish Republican Air Force in 1936. It was shipped to Spain, then disappeared during the Spanish Civil War. Could it still be in Spain somewhere?”

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“Reap the Whirlwind”

From *Air & Space Magazine*, September, 2020



Britain’s Westland Whirlwind fighter

The first twin-engine, single-seat fighter in the RAF. It entered service in 1938, and only 100 were built. It lost out to the Spitfire when Rolls-Royce changed from the Peregrine engine to the Merlin engine.