It really began in Eugene, Oregon

By Carol Skinner

As far as the U.S. government and the national media were concerned, the official starting point of the first circumnavigational flight by an aircraft around the earth was Seattle. But for the flyers, the Air Park at Chambers Street in Eugene, Oregon was where the historic flight began.

In the early 1920s, Eugene was the home base for the Forest Patrol, a group of Regular Army flyers on loan to the forest service and commanded by Major H.H. "Hap" Arnold. The Forest Patrol flyers were well known in Eugene. They boarded with local families, moved about in community circles, and generally enjoyed themselves. One of these men, Lowell Smith, commanded that first airplane flight around the world.

The ships were bi-planes, built especially for the Army by Douglas Aircraft, and called Douglas World Cruisers. They were 35 feet, 6 inches from prop to tail, had wing spans of 50 feet, and 12-cylinder, 420 h.p. Liberty engines. Each of the four planes, the Seattle, the Boston, the Chicago, and the New Orleans, carried a pilot and a mechanic. It was a cold April in 1924 while the world waited for Seattle to launch the great adventure. In actuality, the flyers tuned and overhauled their machines at the Eugene Air Park. Each airplane carried a set of maintenance tools — pliers, screwdriver, hammer, wrench, and a flashlight.

One of the screwdrivers was provided by Mahlon Sweet, for whom the Eugene Airport is named, after he used it to help start one of the aircraft as it prepared to leave Eugene for the flight to Seattle and the official beginning of the trip. The planes changed from wheels to pontoons at Seattle and departed at 0847 hours, April 6, 1924, headed for Alaska.

At the same time the Americans were attempting to circumnavigate the globe, at least four other countries had launched aircraft in an attempt to be first. Only the Americans finished the trip.

The Seattle crashed on the way to Dutch Harbor leaving three aircraft on the trip. It took the pilot and his mechanic about 10 days to walk out of the wilderness to a small fishing village on the Bering Sea. The pilot of the Seattle, Major Frederick Martin, had been the commander of the flight. With him out of the trip, Lt. Lowell Smith was put in command. The Boston was lost at sea in the North Atlantic but both the pilot and the mechanic were rescued. That left only two airplanes to finish the trip but they were joined in Nova Scotia by the prototype World Cruiser, named Boston II, making three planes to finish the flight.

The planes first landing back in the U.S. was off the coast of Maine. The next day the World Cruisers headed for Boston where they were escorted by a twelve-plane formation of Army planes and greeted by a reception the like of which the flyers had never seen.

Continued on page 6
Director's letter

By Cynthia Bounds

April 22 - 28 is National Volunteer Recognition Week. I want to take this opportunity to share with our readers the contributions made by three dedicated museum volunteers.

Volunteers are really the lifeblood of the museum, even in its present early form. Programs have been started by volunteers in the areas of aircraft restoration, magazine inventory and categorizing, adopt a magazine project, office help and the creation of the museum's "mini-museum". Development in many of these areas couldn't have started without volunteers leading the way.

Our first weekly volunteer was Mike Schneider who has given nearly 500 hours of his time since the first of this year. Mike spent his first months last fall with the museum typing and cataloging our magazine collection. He has now passed this project on to another volunteer. Mike was the first person to adopt a magazine for the museum, (he actually adopted two magazines). He has answered phones for the office, sent out press releases, helped with the mini-museum and faithfully showed up at his scheduled time each week. Mike is now heading up the aircraft restoration project of the Walt Rupert Special.

Annette Whittington is our office volunteer giving us help in the afternoons answering the phones, typing and handling our inventory. Before Annette came on board with the museum we had no inventory control. Now we have monthly accounting of all of our merchandise. Annette is now working on magazine inventory.

Our third volunteer, Jerry Weinheimer just recently joined our volunteer staff. I want to recognize him for two reasons. First, because he is making a valuable contribution to the museum by volunteering his time.

Second, recognition goes to Jerry because of his dedication and commitment. He travels all the way from Gold Beach just to volunteer for the museum. He has worked on whatever project needed his help. The museum is lucky to have his flexibility and commitment.

As the Oregon Aviation Museum grows and develops, it will play an increasingly important role in the educational and cultural life of the local community, Lane County and the State of Oregon. Its success depends on the support of individuals, businesses and organizations who value the museum's contribution to the quality of life in their community and the State. Volunteering is key in the museum's development of this important role. These people along with many others are paving the way for building a successful aviation museum.

The Oregon Aviation Museum is fortunate to have so many dedicated museum volunteers. By recognizing only three of them in no way discounts the efforts made by many. To all of these volunteers, I ask myself are there really words that express enough thanks? I don't know the answer, so for now all I can say is Thank You from the bottom of my heart for your gift of volunteering to the Oregon Aviation Museum.

It makes a difference!
If you would like information on how you can become a museum volunteer, please contact the museum office at 942-9129.

Every member sign up a new member!!
Accepted as Affiliate of O.H.S.

Oregon Aviation Museum recognized

The Oregon Aviation Museum is very proud to announce it has been accepted as an Affiliate of the Oregon Historical Society. Affiliate status provides recognition of the Oregon Aviation Museum as a viable and established historical aviation museum for Oregon and the Northwest.

The Oregon Historical Society (O.H.S.) is located in Portland, Oregon. It was first formed in 1873 as a pioneer-frontier association of trail and Isthmus-crossers and Horn-rounders. The Society we know today was formally chartered by the state legislature in 1889.

The O.H.S. worked to establish Crater Lake National Park and other national monuments, along with efforts to preserve vanishing pioneer trails and sites. The members identified and purchased fort Clatsop, the long abandoned terminus of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Teddy Roosevelt donated the site of Fort Dalles, the strategic inland headquarters of the Indian country to the Society.

At the turn of the century, the first state park was established at historic Champoeg on the Willamette River (an early trading post and political crossroads), and many local preservation societies were formed in Oregon’s thirty-six counties — all with O.H.S. support. Now the Oregon Aviation Museum becomes an affiliate.

In 1873 O.H.S. started their non-profit publishing program. From that time on the O.H.S. has continued as the state’s leading publisher of historical books, maps and pamphlets. In 1900 the O.H.S. inaugurated the Oregon Historical Quarterly. The Quarterly is now the third oldest continuous and among the most distinguished historical publications in North America. It has enjoyed an uninterrupted publication history from the turn of the century until today.

This affiliation is very exciting for the Oregon Aviation Museum. It is a sign of increased credibility for the museum with the Oregon business community, and with the general public. Affiliate status gives each of you as OAM members the opportunity to join the O.H.S. at a reduced membership rate of $20.00. Membership in O.H.S. gives you access to one of the best historical museums in the U.S. with an excellent library holding Pacific Northwest historical documentation. Also an extensive collection of books, manuscripts, films, and maps are made available to O.H.S. members.

O.H.S. membership gives you access to over 2,000,000 photographs, a genealogical service and a vast reference library.

O.H.S. stands ready to be helpful in every way to its affiliate societies. The Oregon Aviation Museum is looking forward to making use of it's new affiliation and hope that the benefits will be realized by each of the museum’s members.

For your convenience a membership application to O.H.S. is included with this newsletter.
Annual meeting held March 3

Four new trustees were elected to the Board of The Oregon Aviation Museum, Inc. at the second Annual Meeting on March 3 at Cottage Grove. Serving as Trustees for a third year term will be Jim Dwyer, Eugene attorney; Jerry Lausmann, Mayor of Medford; Penn Stohr, Senior Vice-President of Flight Operations for Evergreen International at McMinnville; and Peter Stack, pilot and student at Portland State University. Re-elected to the board was Tim Talen, Springfield, aircraft restorer and aviation historian. New officers for 1990 are: Wilbur Heath, President; Carol Skinner, Vice- President; Elwood Hedberg, Secretary; and Allen Alsing, Treasurer.

Plaques were presented to retiring trustees Hal Skinner and Walt Dunlen, and outgoing Board President, Carol Skinner. Recognized for outstanding service to OAM was Mike Schneider of Cottage Grove, who volunteers regularly at the museum office and has provided subscriptions to two aviation magazines for the museum library. Elwood and Betty Hedberg, Al and Dee Grell, Malcolm and Dee Buffum, and Daniel Streimer were recognized as $1000 contributors to the Pioneer Capital Campaign.

In her President's address, Mike Schneider was honored for outstanding service as a museum volunteer.

Carol Skinner noted several accomplishments OAM had made during the year and announced some events planned for spring and summer. A “Bernard Field Reunion” at the Beaverton Mall is scheduled for April followed by book signings with Oregon authors Walt Bohrer and Barrett Tillman later in the spring. The book signing with Barrett Tillman will also include a display of aviation paintings by Bill Phillips of Ashland.

Tony Baby, Exhibits Director with Promotion Products, Inc. of Portland and formerly Director of Exhibits for the Smithsonian’s National Air & Space Museum, was speaker for the evening. He enthusiastically endorsed the location selected for the museum and encouraged members to develop exhibits using Oregon’s aviation heritage to tell the story of national aviation history. Just as Ashland is the west coast center of Shakespearean theater, Mr. Baby said Cottage Grove and the Oregon Aviation Museum should become the west coast center for experimental aircraft because of Oregon’s strong history with amateur built aircraft. He also emphasized the need to include a strong educational program in museum planning.

Trustees: Tim Talen, Peter Stack, Al Grell, Lloyd Williams, Al Alsing, Wilbur Heath, Malcolm Buffum, Carol Skinner pose for a group picture along with Cynthia Bounds and Tony Baby.

Tony Baby was the guest speaker for the evening.
The year 1944

Christmas eve in China

Ben Deatherage, a museum member who flew the “Hump” in WW11. His enlistment from 1941 - 1945 accumulated Ben 372 missions. Ben flew a trustworthy C-47 named the “Biscuit Bomber”.

This is the Christmas Eve I remember most of all. The place was Yunnanyi, China, the year 1944.

Seven airplanes of the 4th Combat Cargo Squadron were on detached service there. We were supplying Chinese troops in Burma with food. One of the important commodities was giant fermented beans in large clay vase-like jars 36" high and 24" in diameter. Due to vibrations and handling, many of the jars broke. Talk about a perfumed airplane! We flew west from Yunnanyi across the Mekong and Salween canyons. Their rivers were mere ribbons below. Then we picked up the Burma Road with all its switchbacks where it came out of Burma and followed it to Bhamo. The landing strip was in the closed end of a canyon. The landings were made under fire from the Japanese.

The Japanese had broadcast they would bomb Kunming and Yunnanyi and destroy all our planes. They did bomb Kunming, and one plane made it to Yunnanyi. There were lots of airplanes at Yunnanyi flown in from Kunming for safety. The enlisted men tents were located on a ridge about 700 feet above and parallel to the runway. The strip was a rough one to land at, a high ridge at the south end so if you didn’t set it down at the end, it was a struggle to go around. Not much prop bite in the thin air at 6,600 feet as well as a shortage of breath for the Pratt-Whitney 1830 engines.

Clinton Peterman was the pilot on my ship, #876 “The Biscuit Bomber.” Don Fruth, Bradie Cottern, and Frank Johnson were other engineers. I remember these, radio operators, Irving Greenfield, Edward Pawlowicz, Walter Kearns and James Callahan.

That night we had an alert. Just outside our tents were the trenches which we tumbled into. It was very cold and after a couple of hours of freezing and listening to the bitching, I asked the guys if they would like a beer. All hell broke loose, they threatened to throw me out and do me bodily harm. So I had to produce quickly. We had recently moved from India, and I had brought a case of Budweiser in cans along and it was under my cot with a blanket draped to the floor to hide it. After I gave the beer to the guys, it just disappeared. When I got the case back, not one can was left, and not one GI said thanks. Oh well, I never cared for beer in cold weather.

Such was Christmas Eve, 1944 at Yunnanyi, China.

Ben Deatherage

Display being readied

1943 Beechcraft AT-11.

Perhaps the most versatile and numerous twin-engined training aircraft built during World War II was the Model 18 design by Beechcraft. Introduced in 1938, it was submitted for military consideration and became the advanced training aircraft for army and navy aviators.

This twin-engined aircraft trained thousands of navigators and bomber crews, plus flew tons of cargo for wartime production needs.

The museum’s AT-11 was assigned to the bombardment school at Carlsbad Army Air Field in New Mexico. After the War it was purchased by civilian owners and progressively modernized as a business aircraft.

Beech AT-11 specifications:
Wing span 48 ft., Length 34 ft., Gross weight 9,300 lbs., Top speed 215 mph. Powered by two Pratt & Whitney R-985 - 450 hp each.

Found in a salvage yard in Caldwell, Idaho by life-time museum member Tom Urban. The Beech was purchased and the effort to get the ship moved was begun in earnest. That job took a crew of four - Tom Urban, Al Grell, Tim Talen, and Ron Stevens - three days of hard work, “wide load” permits, PUC’s, bees, and lots of “trucker chatter” to get the Beech to Cottage Grove.

The ship will be readied as an outdoor static display. Still needed are two static engines, props, and cowlings. In a military paint scheme depicting its war time service, the Beech will be an attractive display and a tribute to Oregonians who service during World War II.
dreamed. From an altitude of 3000 feet and above the engine roar of the twelve-plane formation, the flyers could hear the excited Bostonians. Following an appearance in New York, the planes landed in Washington, D.C. where they were greeted by President Calvin Coolidge and his entire cabinet. Stops were also made in the U.S. at Dayton, Chicago, Omaha, St. Joseph, Muskogee, Dallas, Sweetwater, El Paso, Tucson, San Diego and Clove Field at Santa Monica where the entire field was covered with roses. The planes continued on to San Francisco and stopped in Eugene where Mahlon Sweet's screwdriver was returned and 8000 spectators including the Mayor and the Governor — the largest crowd ever assembled in Eugene to that time — greeted the flyers. They were honored at a sell-out banquet at the Osborn Hotel in Eugene and nothing was too good for them. A theater and an apartment building bore the name "Lowell" after the popular pilot.

Only two aircraft, the Chicago piloted by Lts. Lowell Smith and Arthur Turner, and the New Orleans piloted by Lts. Eric Nelson and John Harding, completed the entire trip. The planes returned to the official starting point, Seattle, on September 28, 1924 after 175 days, 371 hours and 11 minutes of flying time, and 27,553 miles.

The Chicago is now at the Smithsonian and the New Orleans is at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Note: The Oregon Aviation Museum has just received, courtesy of Gilbert Buvens of McMinnville, plans of the Douglas World Cruiser he obtained from Harry Gann of McDonnell Douglas. Also included was a booklet, "First Around the World Flight", published in 1974 to mark the 50th anniversary of the flight of the Douglas World Cruisers. The museum is grateful to Mr. Buvens for this gift.

Calendar

Author/Artist series set for May 20

The Oregon Aviation Museum is proud to present another unique and exciting aviation event on May 20, 1990 in the Erickson Hangar at the end of Nebula Way, Medford-Jackson County Airport from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Featuring a major display of the work of America's premier aviation artist, William S. Phillips, and a book signing by renowned Oregon aviation author Barrett Tillman, the site of this event also provides a rare opportunity to view a magnificent collection of restored World War II aircraft including a P-51 Mustang, F4U Corsair, PBY Catalina, Mark 8 Spitfire, ME-109 Messerschmit, and others.

At 3:00 p.m. Phillips and Tillman will discuss aviation from the artist and author point of view.

Bill Phillips' paintings hang in museums and private collections throughout the world, including the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C., the Air Force Academy, the Air Force Museum in Ohio, the Pentagon, Oregon's office of the Governor in Salem, the Royal Saudi Air Force in Saudi Arabia, the private collections of Prince Feisal and King Hussein of Jordan, and others.

Barrett Tillman has written 180 articles in over thirty magazines and newspapers in the U.S., Britain, and France. With Commander John Nichols, Tillman has published eight factual/historical aviation books which have become professional texts for the military, including "The Dauntless Dive Bomber of WW11", "Hellcat: The F6P in WW11", and "On Yankee Station: The Naval Air War Over Vietnam".

Tillman formed the publishing arm of Champlin Fighter Museum in Mesa, Arizona, and has been the Executive Secretary of the American Fighter Aces Association since 1983.

This event is co-sponsored by Accents, the Collectors Gallery in Ashland, Oregon, Jack Erickson and Oregon Aviation Museum. There is no admission charge.

Oregon Air Tour begins June 30

The fourth biennial Oregon Air Tour will start at the Cottage Grove Airport on Saturday June 30, 1990, ending at Ashland on Saturday July 7, 1990.

Air Tours were first begun by Tex Rankin in the 1930's when individual pilots flew their planes to small towns around the state, talking with business leaders and promoting the development of local airports. The Air Tours were discontinued during WW11 and the practice started anew in 1984 by the Oregon Antique and Classic Aircraft Club. This year the Oregon Aviation Museum joins the tour to help high-light Oregon's rich aviation history. More information on these events can by obtained by calling the museum office at 942-9129.
Fly with the Aviation Pioneers!
Become a member of the Oregon Aviation Museum

Name of member ____________________________
Mailing Address ____________________________ Phone ____________________________

Annual membership dues:
$10 Annual Associate ☐ $500 Corporate Sponsor ☐ $50 Annual Sustaining ☐
$100 Benefactor ☐ $25 Annual Family ☐ $500 and up Patron ☐

Clip and Send to: Oregon Aviation Museum, Inc., 78833 Airport Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Gifts in excess of your basic dues are tax deductible within the stipulation of the law.
Museum merchandise for sale

Have you wondered where you can get the Oregon Aviation Museum's merchandise during the spring months? It's simple. Just give the museum office a call (503)942-9129 or write 78833 Airport Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97424. We will be happy to mail you any of the items listed below. Please allow 2 to 3 weeks delivery.

PUDDLE JUMPERS—A great toy for the young and the old. They are made of hard wood for durability and they come with their own technical flight manual for $2.50.

FLIGHT JACKETS—These are tailor-made, aviator-style, leather flight jackets. Each jacket is made from hand-selected matched European leathers and can be designed just the way you want it. Price for the Aviator jacket is $225. You may also add original hand painted nose art to your jacket for an additional $120. Call the museum office for more information.

Don't forget to include $1.50 per item for mailing. Be sure to include your telephone number in case we have a question.

T SHIRTS—Available in white, gray or navy blue. In sizes small, medium, large and extra-large, also available in children sizes 6-8, and 14-16. $8.00 for Adults and $6 for children.

HATS—They are a very nice gray corduroy adjustable hat with the museum logo in blue and white on the front. Hats are $7.00.

TOTE BAGS—An off white canvas bag 15" X 12" with canvas straps. The museum logo in royal blue appears on one side. A very durable bag for $12.00.

AVIATION PRINTS—Hand drawn ink prints by aviation Artist Doug Kinsley of a Mig-21F and a KC-135A. Prints are signed and numbered by the artist. They are sold unframed for $18.00.

Look...

In our next newsletter issue for our schedule of airshow events.