Two for the Hall of Fame!

Myron "Buzz" Buswell
by Tom Bedell

Myron 'Buz' Buswell will be honored July 19, 2003 at the History Center at Cottage Grove as one of two inductees for the 2003 Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame. Much has been written and could be written about this Oregon aviation pioneer who lives at the Independence Air Park and continues to fly his Farga Shinn as he approaches his 85th birthday this October. Most of the following comes from an article in the Oregon Antiquers of July 1996 written by Carol Skinner. Only a few aspects have been changed to help make it more current. (Photo: Tom Bedell.)

Buz was born in Portland, Oregon on October 20, 1918. He and Jeanne Briscoe were married in 1947 and honeymooned in British Columbia in a nearly-new Stearman he purchased in December 1945 for $1300. Jeanne passed away January 11, 2003 after an extended illness. One daughter, Lisa Dahl, flies for an Oregon corporation and maintains an office at the Salem Air Center and the other, Annette Whittington of Creswell, serves as a Director of the Oregon Aviation Historical Society. (Continued on Page 3)

Kenneth Jernstedt
by Kegan Frigaard

Flying Tiger ace Ken Jernstedt will also be honored at the HoF dinner on July 19. What follows is an abridged version of his biography, written by his then 12 year old grandson. (Jernstedt photo.)

My Gramps is a marvelous person. In his lifetime, he has done some amazing things! As you read about him, you’ll see what I mean.

He was born in Carlton, Oregon on July 20th, 1917, the firstborn child (of 4) to Fredrick and Mae Jernstedt. He was actually born in his Grandmother's house. His grandfather, my great grandfather, had come to the United States from Sweden in 1870, traveling by boat all the way to New York.

My Gramps grew up on a 135-acre farm on the Yamhill River, in Yamhill, Oregon. They milked cows, took care of stock, grew wheat, and rode horses. For 12 years, he walked a mile and a quarter to school, (every day) across a swinging bridge and through a pasture. He went to Linfield College in McMinnville for 4 straight years and got his degree in Business Administration. Joining the service before the war came along, he learned to fly, and that changed his whole outlook on what he was going to do. In fact,

(Continued on Page 6)
RANDOM FLIGHT

BY ROGER STARR

Perhaps we should change our name to the Oregon Aviation Restoration Society! We have added a third restoration project to our current list. Dave McEwen of Gaston volunteered to take on the initial tasks associated with preparing the Rupert Special fuselage for cover. Dave has his A & P license and flies a very nice 1943 Aeronca L-3 that he restored several years ago. Dave is a member of the Oregon Antique & Classic Aircraft Club and, therefore, has an interest in preserving aviation’s flying artifacts.

The Society saved Walt Rupert’s Heath homebuilt from a junkyard in Idaho a number of years ago. On the way back to Oregon, Tim Talen and his recovery crew stopped near Walt’s home and had him positively identify it as the plane he built and flew back in the 1930’s. It was based at Beaverton’s Bernard airport for many years before that facility became a shopping mall in 1969. Walt set several altitude records with his little single-seat Salmond powered ship.

If anyone has information or pictures of the Rupert Special or other Heath airplanes of the era, we would welcome the opportunity to see them. We have a number of pictures of this popular aircraft, but additional ones may prove helpful in restoring this historical airplane back to the way it looked when it winged high over the Willamette Valley so many years ago.

Mark your calendar for July 19th to come visit the History Center. We will be hosting the Oregon Antique and Classic Aircraft Club’s biennial fly-in that weekend. As part of their after-dinner program, OAHS will conduct the Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame inductions for 2003. Since the Oregon Air Fair will not be held this September, we were in need of an appropriate venue for the Hall of Fame presentation. This would be an excellent time for members to see what is new at the Center and enjoy the added treat of viewing the outstanding aircraft that will be present for the fly-in. Hope to see you on the 19th.

Join the OAHS!

If you’re reading this, you have an interest in Oregon’s rich aviation past. If you’re not yet a member, please join the Society in its efforts to preserve and celebrate Oregon Aviation History. Fill in the blocks below and return to: Oregon Aviation Historical Society, PO Box 553, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Contributor - $100  Sustaining - $50  Family - $35  Associate - $25

Title____  Name________________________  Home telephone________________________

Address________________________

City________________________  State________  ZIP________

Current/former Occupation________________________

Skills and Interests________________________

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Buswell (continued from Page 1)

George Yates soloed Buz June 11, 1938, flying the first plane Yates had built in early 1930 or 1931. (Yates designed and constructed the geodetic design airplane at Bernard Field in Beaverton.) The fuselage is on display at the History Center in Cottage Grove. After soloing, Buz received an Oregon Student Aviation license and Oregon Pilot License in 1939. At that time Oregon licensed pilots and planes and the aviators would have nothing to do with the CAA, forerunner of the FAA. The flyers at Bernard Field were called “Outlaws” because of their disregard for federal licensing.

Buz went on to earn the following ratings:
- Commercial, ASMEL-SES, Flight Instructor (CFI II) Airplane and Glider. He also worked as aircraft apprentice mechanic at Swan Island and at Ryan Air Force Primary School in California after Pearl Harbor. He was awarded “The Charles Taylor” Master Mechanic Award by the FAA.
- Buz spent three years in the U.S. Army Air Force and served as a pilot and co-pilot on a B-24J Liberator with the 5th Bomb Group of the 13th Air Force (Gen. MacArthur’s Far East Air Forces). He was co-pilot on one of the longest raids in history-16 hours round trip. Buz was awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and was discharged as a Captain in 1945.
- Buz’s first aircraft was the low wing “Wimpy” for which he traded his Model A Ford. He redesigned an early-model B-24 displayed at the Hill AFB Museum and built the Wimpy into an enclosed cockpit from the original design by Les Long and built by Ed Ball, Swede Ralston and the Long brothers. Buz has owned 24 airplanes and one sailplane, among them a Taylorcraft seaplane, early model Beech Staggerwing, and a Mooney Mite. His favorite airplane was a 1965 Comanche 260, the last of the four Comanches used in his air taxi business at Lakeview, Oregon from 1960 through 1976 for more than 9,500 hours of Comanche time. Buz estimates he has flown more than 100 different types of aircraft and five different sailplanes. Part of his 100 hours of blimp time was accumulated while working on Loran testing.
- In June 1950, Buz and Jeanne became airport manager and Fixed Base Operator at Lakeview, Oregon, where their daughters were born, raised and taught to fly. For 32 years they provided 24-hour service, Unicom, service cars and service for Forest Service fire bombers under extreme conditions. Buz holds EAA member #571 and was an original member of the American Airman’s Association organized by George Bogardus in 1944. He also is a member of the OX-5 Club.
- Buz has many vivid memories of Oregon aviation. Some that stand out are helping George Yates build the two-place geodetic twin; the August 1938 hangar fire that destroyed the first bi-motor; learning to fly with Gene Pulcipher and Maury Gilbert in George Yates’ Stiper monoplane at Beaverton in 1938; the several tragic accidents caused by foggy weather and pilot misjudgments; and test hopping the French Flea.
- Among aviators Buz has known or flown with are Max Conrad, Paul Poberezy, Bill Piper, George Bogardus, and Ernie Gann. He also met Bob Hoover in 1969 while placing 3rd in a stock plane race flying a 1965 Comanche.
- Buz credits Jeanne for his success in aviation. He continues to fly whenever possible from the Independence airport. One can visit with him at The Annie’s At The Airport restaurant owned and operated by Erin Burns and John Hsu as he often is there with his ready smile and thirst for more aviation news.
- Carol states, and I am sure we would all agree, that she was grateful to Buz for sharing his life and memories. He is a dedicated and shining example for all pilots. Please make a special effort to be at the Hall of Fame ceremony which will be right after dinner (6:30 PM) at the History Center at Cottage Grove July 19, 2003.

At our May executive council meeting, it was determined that we now have sufficient funding to complete the construction of the archival storage room on the mezzanine of the History Center. As soon as we select and install an appropriate heating and air conditioning system, the room can be competed and cataloged artifacts can be properly stored. This is an essential element in helping us preserve the aviation history of Oregon. We are very fortunate to have received the financial support needed over the past couple of years. Our needs will continue, and we are confident that our members will reward our progress with continued funding.
FROM THE ARCHIVES

By Carol Skinner

Danny Grecco - Part 1

Note: Much of the material for this article came from an interview John Patton did with Danny on December 28, 1978. The interview is part of a collection of slides and interviews Patton made with Oregon aviation pioneers. The entire collection was donated to the Oregon Aviation Historical Society in 1988 and is in the process of being archived. Upon completion the interviews and slides will be available to the public for research and viewing.

He was called "Mr. Aviation." He helped construct Silas Christofferson’s aircraft that flew off the top of the Multnomah Hotel in Portland in 1912, and he worked on the Bell X-1 that Chuck Yeager flew to break the sound barrier in 1947. He was named the Best Aviation Mechanic in the west by the FAA in 1968, and he was the first commercial helicopter mechanic in the nation with Bell license No.1. He was a member of the OX-5 and Aviation Halls of Fame. He was a pilot, a parachutist, and a wing walker. He was known all over the Northwest for his death-defying stunts, but the thing he loved most was flying his Great Lakes biplane.

Danny Grecco was born November 10, 1896 in San Jose, California. His family moved to Portland in 1905, right after the San Francisco earthquake. His father, who came from Italy, made plaster of paris figures for the Lewis and Clark Exposition. Danny saw his first airplane fly in 1910 when Charlie Hamilton, who, along with Eugene Ely, demonstrated Curtiss aircraft, came to Portland. The demonstration consisted of taking off, flying around a pattern, and landing at the old Rose City Race Track. The aircraft were trucked to Portland and then assembled for the demonstration. As a side note, Eugene Ely was a Portlander who went back to the Curtiss factory and became one of the best pilots of the day. He is remembered for being the first pilot to land on a ship's deck.

At the age of 10 Danny saw Lincoln Beachey, who was only 18 years old, pilot a powered airship during the Lewis and Clark Exposition. From then on he could think of nothing but flying. His first attempt at getting airborne was the construction of a 15 foot high tissue paper balloon filled with hot air. The hot air came from soaking a double handful of waste in kerosene, placing it in a pan at the opening of the balloon and touching a match to it. The balloon took off in a ball of flame with Danny following as fast as he could on his bicycle. As a result of his experiment, a vacant field and two rooftops in south Portland were set on fire. Needless to say, he received a severe reprimand from his parents but the experience only made Danny more determined to learn everything he could about flying. Despite the earlier reprimand from his parents, they may have had some influence on his decision to build model airplanes. He must have done quite well, because in 1912 he won the Meier & Frank model airplane contest with a Curtiss Pusher.

Danny quit school at an early age and spent several years hawking newspapers on the streets of Portland. His first experience on a successful airplane was in 1911 when he helped Silas Christofferson build the aircraft that he flew off the top of the Multnomah Hotel during the 1912 Rose Festival. Danny worked on the wings and landing gear of Christofferson’s pusher. According to Danny, the airplanes designed and built at that time were always a take-off from another design, such as a Curtiss or a Bleriot. The builders seldom had plans, they just looked at pictures of the airplanes they wanted to copy. This is what Christofferson did with his design copied from a Curtiss Pusher plus some of his own ideas. Christofferson was a good auto mechanic and machinist and he must have also been a good pilot, because with only 75 hours of experience, he had his aircraft off in half the 200' wooden runway atop the hotel. He successfully flew across the Columbia River to the Vancouver Barracks grounds in 12 minutes.

While helping Christofferson build his ship, Danny got acquainted with John Burkhart from Albany who is believed
to have built the first airplane in Oregon in 1910. According to a letter written by Danny in 1980, the flights in that airplane were made under ideal conditions, but even then they could not be called successful by today’s standards. Burkhart was considered a bright aeronautical engineer and was very good at making propellers.

Because of his mechanic’s skills, Danny got a job with the Portland Journal’s owner, Sam Jackson, servicing racing cars and boats for Jackson’s son, Phil. From that job he saved enough money to buy a 50 h.p. water-cooled engine to put on his own homebuilt monoplane, which he flew unsuccessfully in 1915.

The airplane was not a success and, according to Danny, “I was glad I landed safely.” He later sold the airplane to Jim Walker, of model airplane fame, for $300 and a Chandler automobile. While he was building his airplane, he became acquainted with Henry Wong, a bright, air minded Chinese boy. Henry went to Chicago to take a flying course at a school located at the old Checker Board Field, now the air terminal Midway. When he returned to Portland he decided to build his own ship, a copy of the WWI Jenny. The engine was a Blue Ribbon OX-2 thought to be one of only two such engines ever in Portland, the other being Silas Christofferson’s. Henry and Danny built the ship in a rented store space located on 3rd Street between Jefferson and Columbia Streets but the test flight off a small field at Mock’s Bottom near Swan Island ended in disaster and finished Wong’s aviation career in Portland. He was later invited by Chinese government to start a flying school and invited Danny to go with him. However, Danny was involved in his own barnstorming and declined the offer.

During World War I, Danny served as a mechanic in the Signal Corps. His first successful airplane solo was made in 1919, at the age of 23, fulfilling a dream he’d had for many years and marking the beginning of his barnstorming career.

After the barnstorming season was over in 1919, he joined the Oregon, Washington and Idaho Airplane Co. where he served as instructor, chief mechanic, stunt man, wing walker and parachutist. In those days, wing walkers were considered a freak, insane or very courageous. In his later years, Danny considered himself a fool for wing walking but he made good money and was very choosy about who was piloting the plane. He gave 75% of the credit for being a successful wing walker to the pilots because they were always looking out for the performer’s safety. Danny never used a safety harness or parachute while performing, but he didn’t consider what he did outstanding because he had been athletic all his life. He did hand stands on the top wing, plane to plane transfers and hanging on a rope or ladder under the airplane. He would then climb back into the cockpit, put on a parachute and jump from the plane.

The airplane was usually a Jenny or Canuck (a Canadian Jenny) with OX-5 engines. Even in a dive, the top speed was only 65 to 70 mph due to the size of the wings and the many wires. Sponsors, such as The Standard Oil Company, paid for gas for the airplane plus $100 to $150 a month to the performer. If the pilot had to set the airplane down in a farmer’s field, the local Standard Oil dealer would “break his neck to get to the airplane with gas” for the publicity it brought him. Exhibitions were flown mostly at fairs across the state of Oregon, and depending on the crowd, the performers would earn $300 to $1,000. Danny said his most frightening experience as a performer was at a fair in Tillamook that he felt lucky to live through. Despite the fact that the fog rolled in and the performance had to be done only 200’ above the ground, the act went on as scheduled because the performers didn’t want to lose their fee of $300. Danny had just returned to the cockpit following his act, when the aircraft hit a barn while coming in to land, and ended up in a pig pen. Two pigs were killed and the farmer wasn’t very happy, but Danny and the pilot walked away. (To be continued.)
Aviation Day

Aviation day at the Capitol was held May 9. Thank you to Tom Bedell & Gretchen Bencene for their work in planning, setting up and staffing the joint display of OAHS & OACAC.
(Tom is seen with Gail Hill, friend and OPA treasurer.)

Jernstedt (continued from Page 1)

when he was 24, he had the chance to be in The Flying Tigers, so he took it. The Flying Tigers were aviators who protected the Burma Road from the Japanese, who were taking over China and Burma.

In 1941, President Roosevelt published an order that let men resign from their military service to join the American Volunteer Group in China. My Gramps decided to go for it. He went across the ocean on a big ship, to be a pilot, under the command of General Claire Chennault. He spent a year flying there. His record shows he's an Ace and knocked 10 1/2 enemy planes out of the air.

When he came back from China, he "hitchhiked" all the way to Oregon by catching rides on different airplanes. He owned his own business in Hood River, the Coca-Cola bottling company.

Jernstedt also served as a test pilot for Republic, flying experimental prototypes of the P-47 Thunderbolt, and was an Oregon State Senator. The airport at Hood River is named in his honor. He is a worthy addition to the Hall of Fame. Please join us on July 19.

GREAT LAKES PROJECT UPDATE

During the past few months, significant progress has been made to complete a flying restoration of Great Lakes N315Y.

Mike Brown recently moved the fuselage to his shop in Rogue River, Oregon, and is preparing to build a new landing gear. He built two new seats from the Great Lakes plans, and has fabricated and welded aileron parts.

Approximately thirty wooden stringers, which support the fuselage fabric and determine the fuselage shape, have been cut by Wes Hartley and are now being sealed with polyurethane by Al Alsing. Leading edge aluminum coverings for the four ailerons and the aileron bays in the wings were donated by Jerry Disharoon. Merle Mills continues to provide materials, parts, and advice as needed. Tim Talen finished welding the engine mount and is now making plans to duplicate the unique Tex Rankin turtledock.

We are approaching a stage in the restoration where we have to purchase a number of items. For example, Goodyear non-tread, 8:00 x 4:00 tires ($150) and tubes ($75), and a ground-adjustable metal prop and 10-spline propeller hub, both of which are hard to find and expensive. If anyone would like to donate (tax deductible) money for specific items, it would be a big help.

And yes, we still need other money to complete the restoration.

Recently Charles Holmes from Greeley, Colorado, sent an 8x10 photograph of the Tex Rankin Airshow crew that toured Oregon in 1939. The photo shows N315Y and their other aircraft, and 14 individuals, including Tex and Dick Rankin, Bernadine Lewis King, Put Humphries, and Gladys (Howe) Hill who now lives in Denver. All 14 autographed the photo. What a unique example of airshows prior to World War II!

Ron Bartley
Annual Meeting

The Society's 2003 Annual Meeting was held at Portland State University on April 26. Highlights included the premiere of the PBS Documentary "A Brief Flight: Hazel Ying Lee and the Women who Flew Pursuit," and the naming of Gretchen Bencene to the Board. Here are some images of the event.

Producers Montgomery Horn and Alan Rosenberg answer questions from the audience.

WASP wings.

The WASP exhibit proved popular.

Have any of These Lying Around???????

The Society still has a wish list - please review and see if you can help!

Small Milling Machine - Shop Cabinets - 6" Toolbox/Rollaway - Solvent Spray Gun - Drop Work Lights (2)
Metal Shear Metal Brake - English Wheel (or kit) - Variable-speed Bandsaw - Infocus-type Projector -
Die Grinder - CD Player - Digital Camera - DWD Player - Metal Shelving Units

Thank You to the following for their donations: Al Alsing, tug; Darrell Hahn, Oregon Aeronautics books; OACAC, planer/jointer; Rite Aid, shelving.

OAHS RECEIVES WASP UNIFORM

As a result of the Historical Society's participation in the premiere screening of the PBS documentary, "A Brief Flight: Hazel Ying Lee and the Women Who Flew Pursuit", the Society is the recipient of a complete WASP uniform and a 'zoot suit.'

Mary Jane Kenward, Portland, attended the screening and brought her uniform and zoot suit as part of the WASP display. A short time after the screening, she donated her uniform to OAHS. (Above, from left: WASPs Mary Jane Kenward, Kay Gott Chaffey, and Isabel van Lom, with Ray Costello, standing.)

Mary Jane graduated from WASP training on June 27, 1944, a member of the fifth WASP class. Following graduation she was stationed at Minter Field in Bakersfield, California where she did engineering test flying. That was job the men pilots refused to do. They felt if they were going to risk their lives, they wanted to do it in combat. During 1944, WASPs on over 50 AAF training bases were called on to fly and certify the safety of trainer airplanes flown by thousands of male cadets and their instructors. Test flying was a lonely and sometimes hazardous job because every airplane a WASP climbed into had had something wrong with it, from a broken propeller to an exploded engine.

We are extremely grateful to Mary Jane for her contribution representing a dedicated and courageous group of women who served their country during World War II. We plan to have the uniform on display this summer.

- Carol Skinner, Archivist
An example of part of the displays recently completed at the Lenhardt Interpretive Center located a Lenhardt's Airpark just east of Hubbard, Oregon. Several pictures depicting the history of the airport operations over the past 50 years are also available for viewing along with two aircraft owned by OAHS and several of Jack Lenhardt's vintage helicopters. The Society is very fortunate to be able to present Oregon aviation history at this facility. We are grateful for Jack Lenhardt's support.

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