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OREGON AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 553, Cottage Grove, OR 97424

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Our Mission

The Oregon Aviation Historical Society was incorporated in June 1983 through the efforts of a group of aviation enthusiasts who recognized the need to preserve Oregon's rich aviation heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Its purposes are to collect, preserve, restore and exhibit aviation artifacts; to develop facilities for the restoration and preservation of artifacts, public viewing and exhibition of the collection; to establish and maintain an Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame; establish a resource center for Oregon aviation historical research and to disseminate information about Oregon aviation history.

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Greetings from your new President

For those of you who haven't met me yet, let me introduce myself. I am a fourth generation Oregonian born and raised in Portland and now living in Eugene. I own a plans built Stits Skycoupe that was built by Lloyd and Grace Crowell of Roseburg, Oregon. I've been in love with airplanes since the age of eight or nine and finally, twenty-five years later, I became a licensed pilot. The Skycoupe and I became partners in 1985 and it has been a fun and rewarding time. We've covered a lot of ground together including a couple of air tours.



The Society has become an important part of my life. As a native Oregonian, the history of the state is important to me. My family history is rooted in Oregon. When I learned that Oregon was a pioneer in the growth of aviation and was the first to create a department of aviation, issue pilots licenses and certify and license aircraft starting in 1921, I wanted to learn more. Once involved with the Society, I realized the great wealth of knowledge and material that it contained. The protection of those materials and artifacts is of great importance not only to me but should be of great value to all.

My hope is that I can help the organization grow and become the repository for all of Oregon's aviation history. With your help and support, by sustaining your membership, and encouraging your friends and fellow pilots to join our organization, we can become a destination for young dreamers, tourists and fellow pilots alike.

Thanks for your membership and continued support.

Doug Kindred



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2011 OREGON AVIATION HALL OF FAME

By Tom Bedell

As was noted in the March newsletter, the Hall of Fame ceremony did occur April 16. Recognized this year were Rex T. Barber (1917-2001) and Elrey B. Jeppesen (1907-1996). Both men were Oregon aviation pioneers and the Historical Society is honored to be able to recognize their contributions. President Roger Starr served as the master of ceremonies.

Rex Barber grew up in the Culver area of central Oregon. His son, Rex T. Barber, Jr. and grandson Rex Barber honored us with their presence. Matt Simek, an OAHS member and noted videographer, presented a ten minute rendition of a one-hour DVD he had developed. Rex Barber served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, subsequently U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1961. His plane was the P-38 Lightning flown in the Pacific theater through a large number of missions. He is credited with shooting down the twin-engined plane carrying famed Japanese Admiral Yamamoto. Matt's DVD shows graphically how this occurred. You might imagine how exciting this rendition is. Rex was shot down in a P-38 over enemy territory in China, suffering a broken ankle and arm in the process. He returned to duty in January 1945. He flew P-80s in Korea and on one mission flew his plane under a bridge.

Upon retiring from active duty, Rex returned to Culver, OR and owned an insurance business, also serving as Justice of the Peace and as Culver's mayor as well as farming 4000 acres. Rex completed his 84-year life in central Oregon.

Elrey Jeppesen's life was covered with a presentation by Eric Baldwin from Denver, a retired United Airlines pilot and friend of Captain Jepp. Among Captain Jepp's many accomplishments, in addition to flying mail planes and flying for United Airlines for many years, was development of his "little black book" containing notes, route descriptions, maps, drawings and significant information on airports, and points of interest to help guide other pilots. This sideline that he developed while flying mail planes turned into a business in August 1934 when the first charts were sold. Virtually all pilots, especially those instrument rated, are familiar with Jepp charts and manuals.

Eric showed a 15-minute DVD. Although born in Louisiana, Captain Jepp grew up in Odell, OR, subsequently moving to Portland and attended Roosevelt High School. He was enthralled with the new activity of flying and while in high school biked to Pearson Field and ran a hamburger stand. He started to fly in November 1927 and received Oregon license #27. He bought a Curtiss

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Jenny and barnstormed with the Rankin Flying Circus. In July 1928 he went to work instructing at the Rankin School of Flying for short time. Shortly thereafter he got employment flying the mail all over the West during which time he developed the "black book." Following that experience, he flew for the fledgling United Air Lines based in Denver. Captain Jepp's charting business was sold to the Times-Mirror Company in 1961. His biography, *Captain Jepp and the Little Black Book*, suggests he remained active after the sale but was somewhat less than really satisfied with not an every day hands-on role. The book is by Flint Whitlock and Terry L. Barnhart, 2007, published by Savage Press, Box 115, Superior, Wisconsin 54880.

The Denver Airport Terminal was dedicated Jeppesen Air Terminal February 1995. A large statue of Captain Jepp and wooden mail plane prop as well as memorabilia is on display at the terminal. OAHS was honored to receive a statuette replica presented to us by Carl Williams.

Since its inception in 1998, the Oregon Aviation History Hall of Fame now contains 16 highly accomplished people. These are: John G. "Tex" Rankin, Dorothy Hester Stenzel, Lee Eyerly, Charles Langmack, Col. USAF (Ret.), Myron H. Buswell, Kenneth Jernstedt, Marion Carl, Maj. Gen. USMCC (Ret.), George Bogardus, Leslie L. Long, Richard VanGrunsven, Phil Boyer, Raymond E. Costello, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.), Daniel D. Grecco, Timothy L. Talen, Rex T. Barber Col. USAF (Ret.) and Elrey B. Jeppesen.

AROUND THE HANGAR

Hal Skinner, Facilities Committee Chairman

Aviation museums across the country seem to have some collection of models on display. The problem of showing them is a suitable cabinet or glass case that will allow the visitor to appreciate each while still not taking up valuable floor space. Many of those displays do not meet a standard of craftsmanship or tell a theme-based history within the general aviation category.

One collection that exceeds those parameters is right here in our own back yard. Master modeler David Galbraith displays his created art of airplanes at the Oregon Air & Space Museum in Eugene. He builds the comparative military plastic works in an identical 1/72 scale, showing the correct size, one to another. And then, several options of the same type sit side by side, showing a progression of the weapon as it evolves from use in action.

At OAHS, several balsa and paper models of aircraft that are significant to our mission or members are displayed in the library. One, the Jim Wright built Hughes H-1 replica is in the hangar. Bob Brown crafted many plastic models and donated them to us as well. They have been in storage for a later use, but that time has now come.

Satisfying the problem of display, Wilbur Heath and a small crew of "cabinet builders" remodeled the huge glass-faced case that was surplused to us from the University of Oregon Museum of Natural History. The unit has been securely attached to the hangar wall and reversed to make the glass front open to gain access and update the display. It's a great place to show some of Bob's models and that is just what we are doing.

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The display is under construction, but it currently houses the military portion of his gift. The aircraft are hanging in space. There is an explosion of very significant items with a variety of scale, in no particular order and suspended but not flying. They are just placed to be viewed stationary, to be enjoyed as individual aircraft. No pilots are in view, some canopies are open and landing gear are extended. One discovery seems to appear after a previous one has been found.

An artist has been found to complete the background scenery in the display case and when that is completed, more models will be added. All of the military planes are hanging high, with civilian examples to be lower, and finally, a tribute to the annual Jim Wright Memorial Stearman Fly-in. A parking area and landing strip will be a receptacle for placement of about a dozen Stearman models. Some of them will be painted with a design that will be recognizable to many.

We invite you to stop in soon and see how many of these examples you can identify.

PORTLAND FLYING SCHOOLS

By Carol Skinner

(The following article was published in the January 23, 1928 edition of AVIATION, the oldest American aeronautical magazine.)

Portland's fifth flying school has just opened with 20 pupils in attendance. It is the Mackenzie-Goff School, operated by Lieut. Art Mackenzie and R. S. Goff, former automobile dealer. The Mackenzie-Goff Co. is Oregon and Washington distributor for the American Eagle biplane. This school is located at the foot of 29th Street, while a branch school has opened at Hood River, Ore. with 15 students.

Mackenzie, chief pilot and president of the company, gives practical instruction in Portland. The ground course is under the supervision of the Adcox Auto and Aviation School. Lieut. W. A. Davis directs the Hood River branch. Mackenzie, former Army pilot, was recently called to service during the air survey of flood conditions along the Mississippi.

Other Portland flying schools are Rankin School of Flying, Bell Air Lines School, temporarily conducted in Vancouver, Wash., the Hill School, conducted in connection with the Hill Military Academy and the Adcox School.

Tex Rankin offers concrete evidence of the great interest in aviation. On a recent Sunday and Monday his "City of Portland" carried more than 100 passengers despite the fact that the weather was bitterly cold. Rankin operates an air taxi business in connection with his school and airplane agency and is Oregon and Washington agent for flying helmets, gloves, Resistol goggles and other accessories.

MEDFORD AIRCRAFT CORPORATION

By Carol Skinner, OAHS Archivist

Archived at the Oregon Aviation History Center in Cottage Grove are the records of the Medford Aircraft Corporation, which was incorporated July 21, 1919 and dissolved October 14, 1919. The Corporation's records, along with those of Eckerson Flying Service, which was incorporated April 12, 1929, and Mayfly, Inc., incorporated in April 1933, were found under the floor of a building in Medford while being renovated, that formerly housed an attorney's office. The records of the latter two companies are incomplete.

Medford Aircraft Corporation was formed for the purpose of carrying passengers, flying exhibitions, and advertising. The company incorporated with capital stock of \$5,000. The list of shareholders and the stock certificates are included in the collection.

On August 1, 1919 the Corporation filed an "Application for License to Fly Civilian Aircraft" with The Joint Army and Navy Board of Aeronautic Cognizance in Washington, D.C. Under "Description of aircraft or balloon" is written Curtiss JN4D. The pilots listed are Floyd H. Hart and Delbert Jones; both learned to fly in the Army.

Aside from selling rides in southern Oregon, it appears that passenger carrying was mostly to Pendleton, Oregon and Walla Walla, Washington in a Jenny JN4D. Correspondence from the Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company, Mather Field, Sacramento, California, dated June 24, 1919, quotes selling prices of \$2,000-\$4,000 for used airplanes, and \$5,000 for new airplanes. Earl Cooper Aeroplane & Tire Company, San Francisco, California, lists JN4Ds selling for \$2,750-\$3,000 for used and \$4,000 for new airplanes as of August 22, 1919. Boeing quoted a price of \$10,000, FOB Seattle, for "land planes."

Much correspondence is included in the collection covering a wide range of subjects including the IRS, requests for bills to be paid to Associated Oil Company, Standard Oil Company, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, and a notice to a dismissed employee that his salary was overdrawn by \$42.50. They all make for most interesting reading.

Included in the collection is a large stack of "Arrangements for Special Trips" cards, which when signed released the Corporation from liability, and for the sum of \$10.00, plus \$1.00 War Tax, entitled the signee to "one ride in the airplane of the Medford Aircraft Corporation." Other documents in the collection are bank statements, ledger and balance sheets, paid bills, daily passenger reports and pilot's expense lists.

When the Medford Aircraft Company came to an end, the Jenny was sold to a farmer in Walla Walla, Washington and, as part of the sale, Floyd Hart taught the farmer to fly the aircraft. After the sale of the Jenny, each investor who originally financed the Corporation by buying \$100.00 worth of stock, received \$90.00 in cash plus a free airplane ride worth \$10.00, if he so desired.



THE LONGEST AIR RACE EVER

Digested slightly from a 1930 Aero Digest

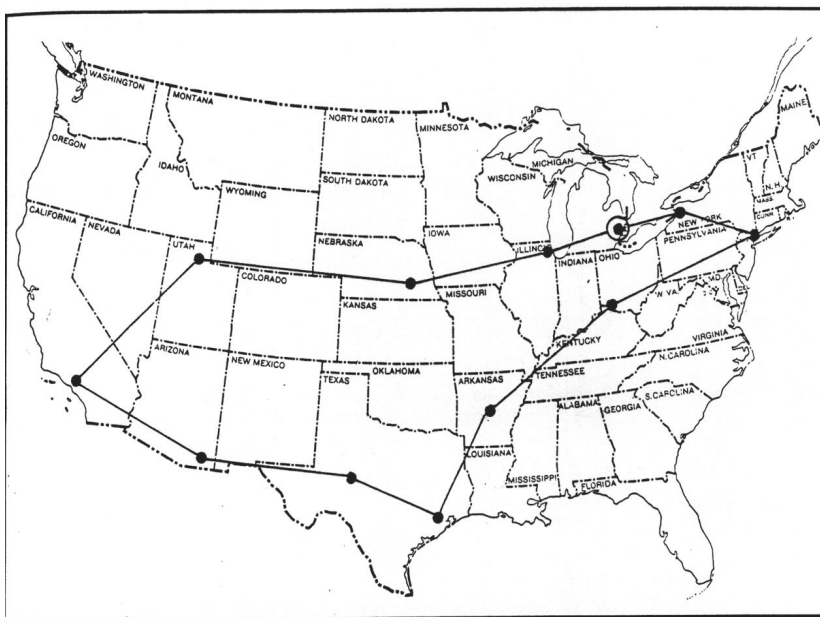
The All-America Flying Derby, longest air race ever held in this or any other country, passed into the annals of successful sporting events when ten of the eighteen pilots who had taken off at 6:00 am on July 21, 1930 set their planes down at the Detroit municipal airport 11 days later. The influence of the race upon the future design of airplanes and powerplant installations will be significant in the future.

The first three prizes totaled \$25,000—a tremendous amount during those depression days. Winner was Lee Gehlbach (Command-Aire), whose cash prize was \$15,000. Second place \$7,000 was awarded to Lowell Bayles (Gee Bee) and Charles Meyers (Great Lakes) earned \$3,000 for third place.

American Cirrus Engines organized and sponsored the event to demonstrate the possibilities of long-distance flight by light airplanes. One requirement for entry was that the aircraft had to be powered with an American Cirrus or American Ensign upright or inverted inline engine. The 5,541-mile race presented all the weather and terrain difficulties of flying that would be found within the USA.

Cities designated as mandatory overnight control stops were Buffalo, New York City, Cincinnati, Little Rock, Houston, San Angelo, Douglas, Los Angeles, Ogden, Lincoln, Chicago, and final stop Detroit. Sometime before the start of the race a Mexico City leg was eliminated.

As evidence of the ability of light planes to attain a high-sustained rate of speed, the race produced particularly surprising results. Lee Gehlbach, the winner, flying a specially built Command-Aire, finished with an overall average of 127.11 mph. Other finishers and average speeds were 2: Bayles (Gee Bee 116:40), 3: Meyers (Great Lakes 107:43), 4: H. H. Ogden (Ogden Osprey 103:90), 5: W. H. Cahill (Great Lakes 98:84), 6: Larry Brown (California Cub 79:47), 7: Stanley Stanton, (Cessna 72:50), 8: Jim Wedell (Wedell-Williams 63:13), 9: Cecil Coffrin (Great Lakes 56:10), and 10: W.H.Holliday (Great Lakes 44:00). Not finishing were Herman



Hainer (Laird), Stub Quinby (Mono Special), **Basil Smith (P.S.E.)**, Joe Meehan (Great Lakes), R. A. Hosler (G & G), J. Kruttachnitt (DH Moth), Harvey Mummert (Mercury), And E.B.Todd (Alexander). The behavior of stock model planes in the race is significant as five of the ten planes

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to finish were stock aircraft. When the race was first announced, inquiries were received from almost all makers of light planes. More than 20 undertook to produce planes for entry, and seven stock models arrived at the starting line.

In addition to demonstrating the ability of light planes to engage in long-distance cross-country flight, the race established the practicality and value of several construction forms for which only experimental evidence had previously been available. Lessons learned from the race were divided into those which apply chiefly to the engines and those which have to do with plane construction. Eleven of the 18 planes were equipped with supercharged engines and five of those were of the inverted type. There were two other inverted motors not supercharged, and 10 planes had upright Cirrus engines, of which five were supercharged.

In the field of airplane construction, it is probable that the results of the race will continue to occupy engineers for some time to come. There were high-wing, mid-wing, and low-wing monoplanes, biplanes, and one parasol monoplane—the California Cub. The high-wing monoplane was the tri-motor Ogden Osprey. Cessna and Mono Special were mid-wing designs, and the low-wings included the Command-Aire, **Pacific School of Engineering Special**, Gee Bee Sportster, Wedell-Williams “WeWill Jr,” Hosler G & G Special, Mummert Mercury, and Alexander Bullet. Biplanes included Laird, De Havilland Moth, a Great Lakes Speedster and four of their Trainers.

The Ogden, with a gross load more than three times that of some of the ships, was a six-passenger cabin plane powered by three Cirrus motors. It was the only multi-engine aircraft entered in the race.

Although Gehlbach’s “Little Rocket” had a wing area of 88 sq. ft., it showed a surprising ability to climb, actually outclimbing ships of larger wing area. This performance contradicts the previously held theory that thick wings with large area are necessary for climbing.

To gain additional lift, Hosler incorporated flaps ingeniously designed with the ailerons so that both turned down together, yet were capable of acting in opposite directions as is necessary for usual maneuvers. By turning both down, Hosler achieved a convex wing, although one with a somewhat sharp angle instead of a smooth slope of the usual wing.

The G & G Special incorporated a single mono-wheel landing gear with skids attached to the wing ends to prevent wing tip damage. Mummert’s Mercury sat closer to the ground than any of its competitors; its inverted engine permitted use of short landing gear legs to clear the prop. It was equipped with retractable wheels which retracted flush into the very thick cantilever wing.

Novel cockpit enclosures were built in many of the planes, Mummert’s ship incorporating a novel enclosure that slid down the fuselage side when not in use. **B. B. Smith** had a sliding cockpit in the **Pacific Engineering** craft which, when not in use, ran forward over the fuselage on a pair of tracks.

Note: B. B. Smith’s plane hangs from the rafters of the History Center in Cottage Grove. It was built by the Pacific School of Engineering in Portland, now Benson High School.

Join the OAHS!

If you're not a member, we invite you to join the Society in its efforts to preserve and celebrate Oregon Aviation History. Fill in the blanks and return to:

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