

# WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



## A Hero Goes West

By Frank Almstead

We lost a friend last month. Much more than a friend, really – he was a hero, an educator, and a gentleman. William H. Holloman III, known to us as just plain Bill, passed away following a heart attack; he was 85 years old. Bill was best known for being a member of the Tuskegee Airmen. Born 21 August 1924 in St. Louis, MO, Lt. Col. Bill Holloman flew with the 332nd Fighter Group in World War II. Bill flew his P-51 Mustang from Italy against targets in Germany, Austria, and other Eastern European countries. As if one war wasn't enough, he was called back to serve in both Korea and Vietnam and later became a professor of history at the University of Washington.

Holloman, a kid infatuated with aviation, successfully completed the Aviation Cadet examinations in August 1942 at the age of 18. After waiting months for class selection, he began training with college courses at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama and later graduated in class 44-H from Tuskegee Army Air Field in September 1944.

Holloman was rated in several great fighters of the war including the P-40, P-39 and P-47. However, it was the P-51 Mustang that became his favorite mount. The 332nd painted their aircraft with distinctive red control surfaces and tails, and throughout the campaign in Europe, the "Red Tails" were noted as a fierce bunch of fighter pilots who went the extra air mile to protect bombers.

After World War II, Colonel Holloman worked in South America and flew small commercial planes in

Canada. Later as an Air Force reservist, he was called back to active duty for tours during the Korean War and in Vietnam. It was during that time he switched services and became the first black helicopter pilot in the Army. Training helicopter pilots in Greenland, he became a leading instrument examiner and check pilot. He then served as Director for Safety and Standards, first in Vietnam and then in Europe.

Colonel Holloman, having amassed nearly 17,000 flying hours and becoming a Master Aviator, retired from the service in 1972. He went on to complete his degree requirements in Business Administration at the University of Maryland, and History at the University of Washington. Bill was a founding member and the first president of the Sam Bruce Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. Bill was a member of the U.S. Army Black Aviation Association, the P-40 Warhawks Pilots, the

P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots, and the P-51 Mustang Pilots Associations, plus assisting the Western Washington Squadron of ALO's in Air Force Academy and AFROTC recruiting. He was an honorary member, and a huge presence within the Cascade Warbirds.

In retirement Bill may have done what he considered his finest work, he started educating people, not only the younger generation, but anyone who would listen about history and aviation. He hosted panels about military aviation at Seattle's Museum of Flight and toured the country sharing his story. Bill Holloman was a legend to all who knew him and will be sorely missed. 🌟



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★★★ Cascade Warbirds ★★★  
EAA Squadron 2 Newsletter

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Articles can be submitted via e-mail, to the editor's address. Deadline for submission of articles is generally two weeks prior to the next publication, but earlier is always appreciated!

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## Editor's Page

By Frank Almstead

It's been an a Summer full of surprises  
I so far and I got another one in the mail the other day. I was flipping through the stack walking back to the house and I saw an unusual letter from the EAA. When I opened it I was suprised to see the following:

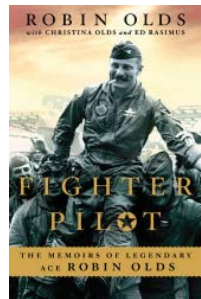
*CONGRATULATIONS! You have been selected as one of the recipients of the 2010 EAA Chapter Newsletter Editor Awards. EAA is pleased to have this occasion to recognize the exceptional quality of your chapter newsletter. The creativity, consistency and high standards that your newsletter exhibits are evidence of your*

*hard work and dedication. The 2010 EAA Newsletter Editor Awards will be presented on Saturday, July 31,2010 during the Chapter Leaders Breakfast at the EAA AirVenture Museum Founders' Wing. Once again, please accept our congratulations! Placing so highly in the EAA Newsletter Editor Awards is truly an outstanding accomplishment.*

As you know, it's not an award for the editor, but for you, the contributors and supporters of the Warbird Flyer. I firmly believe that because of the quality of your input we are able to produce the best newsletter in the country. We'll have to wait and see what the judges think. ✪

## Media Review

By John Clark



### *Fighter Pilot: The Memoirs of Legendary Ace Robin Olds*

Authors: Robin Olds with Christina Olds and Ed Rasimus

Hardcover - 416 pages (April 13, 2010)

St. Martin's Press; ISBN-10: 0312560230

**F**ighter Pilot is the long awaited biography from Brigadier General Robin Olds, one of the greatest combat pilots and leaders to wear a U.S. Air Force uniform. This biography was written in General Old's own words, which were collected from his memoirs and transcribed recollections. Completing the work after his death were Christina Olds, Robin's daughter, along with Robin's friend, author and fellow fighter pilot, Ed Rasimus.

In his 32 years of service, General Olds flew combat in two wars separated by more than 20 years and giant leaps in combat aircraft technology. Contrast the guns-only armament and piston engines of the P-38 and P-51 to the multi-crew, afterburning, radar and missile equipped features of the F-4 Phantom. Though the aircraft changed, his aggressiveness and superb leadership did not. He learned from the very best. General Olds was fortunate to have known, and been mentored by some of the greatest leaders the USAAF had produced: Carl "Tooney" Spaatz, Hap Arnold, Tex Hill and Hub Zemke among many others.

Also told are the two additional wars he fought at home and abroad: those of the Cold War and a war against a seemingly endless assignment to the Pentagon. Flying made the Air Defense tolerable but endless hours at a desk left him weary and nearly disillusioned. One gets the true sense that he was a non-nonsense individual that did not suffer fools lightly. Just as often as not, he let them know as well. As he ascended to the rank of Brigadier General, he was forced to give up his ejection seat and accepted a seat as the commandant of the U.S. Air Force Academy. With retirement after 32 years of service came a move to his beloved Rocky Mountains in Colorado to enjoy a civilian life full of skiing, traveling, and speech giving.

The reader is given a grand story-telling experience as though Robin is recounting his life from across the room. You share his excitement, energy, passion for flying, and at times heartfelt disappointments in his career and family life. This biography is highly recommended to anyone that wishes to know more about the life and times of this great leader of men. ✪

# CO Cockpit

By Greg Anders

I recently had one of “those sorties” that makes it clear that assumptions in flying will cause you trouble.

I had the privilege of flying the A-10 Thunderbolt II with the Idaho Air National Guard in the 190th Fighter Squadron. At one point in the squadron’s history (late ‘40’s) the squadron primarily flew the P-51 but had some T-6’s for proficiency training. I had the opportunity to paint my T-6 in the squadron colors and fly an IDANG T-6 while still flying IDANG A-10’s. A brief but entertaining period of my life that is exceptionally rare in Air Force aviation. Even the correct “buzz number” nomenclature of the day cooperated as the T-6 “buzz number” started with “TA.” Thus, I chose to make my “buzz number” “TA-10” as is fitting for my “Training A-10” the “Hog Wild Gunner.”

As it happened one day, all of the pieces fell into place such that I had the opportunity to fly the P-47 Thunderbolt in formation with my T-6 and have our SNJ available as the photo ship. I had had trouble with the P-47’s air-to-air communications before so I briefed the procedural portion of the sortie very carefully in case we had trouble communicating with each other. I had not had trouble with the air-to-ground communications. And, yes, you can have trouble in air-to-air but not air-to-ground.

The photo shoot went very well because of the thorough briefing. We had initially done the T-6/P-47 pictures, and then the T-6 cleared out to get some individual pictures of the P-47. Also, I was recovering back to the P-47’s home at Paine Field, and the T-6’s were recovering back to Bellingham. So once we were finished, I started towards Paine and the T-6’s started towards Bellingham. Once they had finished communications to get back together, my attempt to say thanks over the radio made it immediately clear that not only was I having trouble with air-to-air communication, my transmitter on the Jug had completely failed. I quickly decided that the best plan was to not try to recover at Paine in their Class C airspace as a NORDO (No Radio) aircraft so I turned back north and caught up with the T-6’s. I’d let them take me back to Bellingham and get me cleared to land.

And my briefing had been very thorough right up until we got to this scenario. So when I pulled up and rocked my wings, the photographer started shooting more pictures and neither pilot noticed me for a bit. Since I was on the wingman’s side, I switched over to the other side at which point I was noticed by the pilots and the T-6’s assumed I would land behind them after going up initial. Sure, in retrospect, my T-6 driver sees all of the obvious issues with that plan but we were flying and on about a 3 mile initial already so things happened fast and momentum can be a challenging thing to change. The T-6’s broke right so I

broke left. Lead put his gear down and landed so I flew back up initial rocking my wing. The tower figured it out and after I pitched up, cleared me to land.

After taxiing back in I was angrier than a wet cat. How could my trusted wingmen not handle that properly? A guy pulls up rocking his wing and no one really does anything other than tell the tower the guy might be NORDO? I was really ready to dress them down for their failure, but instead I took a cooling off lap in my truck before I went to debrief them and that was the best decision of the day. I quickly realized that since we had been flying together a lot, our briefings had become habitual and that some of the contingency plans that I consider basic had been briefed less and less over time. We had become complacent in our briefings. So much so that it had been a really long time since I had briefed the difference between simple NORDO and a NORDO aircraft that was NORDO because of something like an electrical fire.

In the Air Force we had called this portion of the briefing the “Motherhood” since it was like having your mother ask you if you’d taken your raincoat to school when it was supposed to rain that day. (“of course not Mom, raincoats aren’t cool!”) “Motherhood” was NOT the cool part of the briefing where we talked about flying, fighting and winning. It was the “What ifs” and they were boring.

So, when I got back from my cooling off lap, I debriefed our sortie. The biggest debriefing item was for myself, the flight lead. I had fallen into the trap of complacent briefing and my flight did not perform as expected because of that. But that failure was primarily the responsibility of the flight lead, and as such I had failed. The saddest thing was that I had been failing for a long time but I had gotten away with it because things had been going as planned.

Whatever you want to call it, “contingency plans,” “what ifs,” “Motherhood,” “WTF’s:” brief it thoroughly and don’t assume your flight mates will just know what to do when things don’t go as planned.

In my last “CO Cockpit” I challenged everyone to be their own “Hard ##s” Check pilot and to focus on spinning up their proficiency as we came out of the winter season. And as the “Check Pilot” for my own sortie I had some pretty barbed check ride debrief items for myself. All things that pretty much violated what I had asked everyone else to do.

Sometimes listening to our own advice proves to be the most challenging thing to do. Maybe I need some more practice sorties.....

Sic Tempus Ad Fugit!! ✪



# Squadron News

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## FREE AVGAS

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Got your attention, eh? Two upcoming events in the next quarter require your advance registration. The squadron has been invited to return to the biennial Inland Skyfest at Fairchild AFB in Spokane the weekend of July 23–25. If you want to go, check with Ops O Curt Kinchen (ptcurt@gmail.com) to see if there are any rooms left. This has always been a great event and in 2008 over 150,000 folks showed up just to see Cascade Warbirds (and the jet demo team). One reminder: You'll need to have your DD forms current; you can find the blanks on our website at [www.cascadewarbirds.org](http://www.cascadewarbirds.org). The second event requiring advance registration is the Third Annual Vintage Aircraft Weekend at Paine Field in Everett. This year it will be held over Labor Day (Sept 3 - 5) and has been much enjoyed in the past. To get on the rooming listed here, check in with XO (and VAW Liaison) Dave Desmon (davedesmon@yahoo.com). Other events that may be of interest to you are list on the back page of this newsletter in the Quick Look column.

## IS RENO FOR YOU?

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If you didn't know, the squadron arranges for two reserved-seat boxes at the Air Races each September. If you would like to attend with other squadron members, we still have some seats available. The cost for the entire week is \$320; contact Fred at [fred@fcsmyth.com](mailto:fred@fcsmyth.com) if you have any questions. By the way, we also take reservations for future years in case you are the type who likes to plan ahead. For 2011 the first box is sold out, but you can reserve seats in the second box for only \$100 each. Same contact.

## CWB IN WARBIRDS

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Subscribers of WBA's Warbirds magazine may have noticed the June cover – a beautiful T-37 "Tweet" and it belongs to our very own Paul Walter of Milwaukee, WI. His is one of only two civilian owned T-37's in the country. Be sure to get your hand on the issue and read his story plus that of his son Joe. They are great articles describing the search for a jet warbird, flying the T-37 and their long term plans for the jet. The articles include some great sketches by Joe during his USAF training. Good job Paul, and thanks for taking another turn as a warbird custodian.

Sharp eyed members would also have noticed John Session's *Impatient Virgin* in trail on the July cover of Warbirds. The P-51B is featured in some excellent photos accompanying three living history stories of pilots who flew the B model Mustang over Normandy circa D-Day. Lastly, a well written article describes the development of the Malcolm hood, which is a rare and distinctive feature of the *Impatient Virgin*.

## NEW MEMBERS

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We'd like to introduce new members and we urge you to say "Hello" when you see an unfamiliar face.

Chris Brown	Mukilteo, WA
Adrian Cooper	Vancouver, BC
Kevin Crotty	Mill Creek, WA
Wolfgang Czaia	Clinton, WA
Mike Lehman	Caldwell, ID
Susan Lehman	Caldwell, ID
Jeffrey Lustick	Bellingham, WA
Kevin O'Keefe	Everett, WA
Mark Peterson	Boise, ID
Dick Storgaard	Ferndale, WA
Scott Urban	Pasco, WA
Drew Watson	Edmonton, AB

## B-17 COMMITTEE

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The EAA has confirmed that Warren Nadeau and the B-17 committee have set the bar, once again, as the top scoring tour stop in the nation. The EAA's B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* arrived at Boeing Field on 24 May under the dreary skies of the wettest May in memory. The media flights on arrival day went off very well thanks in large part to the efforts of Tony Caruso in spite of the less than sunny WX. 25 May was a 30 hour inspection day for the airplane and while the rain didn't cost us any revenue flights I'm sure that the mechanics would have been happier if they hadn't been squishing around in their shoes. We were down for two days due to low ceilings and rain. This caused a very low crowd turnout, as well as some cancellations of pre-purchased flights. The economic downturn has had a negative effect on the tour this year and Seattle was no exception. Lastly, the *Liberty Bell*, a B-17 that preceded us by 3 weeks didn't help our ridership either. A very large THANK YOU is due to all the volunteers who braved the rainy skies, got soaked to the skin, and hung in there to make the tour the best possible. There were 26 Cascade Warbirds in addition to the Civil Air Patrol who did duty on the weekend. In the end, the score was 181 total riders with 151 of those for revenue.

## YOUR LAST ISSUE

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If the date after your name on this newsletter mailing label is 12/09, we'd like you to send \$20 for your 2010 dues to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Otherwise, no more issues for you – or any other goodies we might dream up. It's really a nearly painless way to help us "Keep 'em Flying."

# Squadron News

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## SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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The squadron is in its fourth year of awarding scholarships to deserving area youth. We concentrate on teens in the 16- to 18-year-old group who plan some phase of aviation in their futures. Also, we have expanded our offerings this year to appeal to more students. In 2010 we have continued our partnership with EAA for their Air Academy at Oshkosh. The first selectee this year is Nik Steele, a resident of Rochester, WA, and a recent graduate of Tumwater High School. Nik has had a very busy several years. He is already enrolled in South Puget Sound Community College and has been a member of the Lewis County CAP for the past two years. As if that wasn't enough, while in high school he was selected to the UN Youth Program. He's even well on his way toward his aviation goal. He's a line worker for Jorgensen Air Service at the Olympia

Airport, a volunteer at the Olympia Museum, and has even found time to log over 45 hours flight time in seven different aircraft models. Nik is looking for an appointment to the United States Naval Academy and will apply for flight school after graduation; he hopes to become a Navy fighter pilot.

Our second attendee at the Air Academy will be Katie Brueske of Olympia, WA. She's also a recent graduate of Tumwater High School where she spent several years involved in different aspects of music. She was a member of and participated with such diverse groups as Women's Choir, Concert Choir, and the Olympia Youth Chorus.

Katie's passion for flying centers around the utility of aircraft; she wants to become a pilot so she can participate in life-saving flights to areas inaccessible by other means. We wish her the best.

This year we expanded our program by teaming with Wings Aloft, a flight school located on Boeing Field in Seattle. Scholarship winners will be enrolled in Private Pilot Ground School and will also have the opportunity to take two



flights in a Cessna 172, both of which can be logged as Dual Received. Our first student pilot is Jessika Montgomery. She's a graduate of Granite Falls High School, where she's already a member of the CAP and an Honor Cadet to boot. While in high school, she was a member of the Honor Society, played soccer and softball, and even lettered in track. She was also in Air Force JROTC and was a graduate of the Cadet Officer Leadership School and was a member of the Kitty Hawk Air Society. Last summer she volunteered nearly a week at the Arlington Fly-In where she spent her time in and around the military vehicle exhibit. Her primary goals

are to become an Aeronautical Engineer and earn her Private Pilot license. We have no doubt she will.

Brandan Brink is the second student who will be attending the ground school at Wings Aloft. He's a junior at the Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale and his experiences are as varied. He spent ten years with the Tracyton Soccer Club and eight years as a Royal Ranger. He's a lifeguard at the Olympic Aquatic Center in Silverdale and also a member of the Civil Air Patrol where he likes to help marshall aircraft. Brandan plans to attend UW after high school and earn a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. He hopes one day to become an airline pilot.

Our third selectee for the new ground school scholarship program is Johnson Vi. Johnson is a 2010 graduate of Renton High School where he spent his after-school hours each year participating in baseball, football, and boxing. Johnson will enroll

in South Seattle Community College this Fall and major in Aviation Maintenance Technology. After earning his Associate Degree, he plans to attend Central Washington University and earn a degree in Aviation Flight Maintenance. Ultimately, he would like a career as either an A&P mechanic or as a professional pilot. We expect he could do either.

Cascade Warbirds would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners, both EAA and Wings Aloft, for the parts they are playing in bringing these aviation possibilities to our area youth. Their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated.

# Unsafe at Any Altitude

By Ed Rombauer

Recently I received a phone call asking if I would be interested in riding on the B-17 as it was flown to its next show stop. This would be a three and a half hour flight from Boeing Field in Seattle to Ogden, Utah. The “sure I would” tumbled out before my mind could react to the realities of a long flight in an un-pressurized, un-insulated and un-heated piece of American history. Also, as there are no “facilities” on board, at least four hours of personal endurance would be required. As I computed the adiabatic lapse rate to determine how many layers of clothing to wear, I thought that this would be a rare opportunity to see what bomber crews had to do to survive their missions in Europe.

Sitting in the back of the old bomber, dressed in multiple layers with a hat and gloves, strapped to a wooden seat, I felt as though I might at least stay warm for the flight. Looking around the compartment I was in, I was aware of the basic purpose that the aircraft was built for. Almost under my feet was a ball turret with machine guns, each side of the fuselage was fitted with a machine gun and far back in the dark tail was another gun position all protected only by the thin aluminum skin of the aircraft. Flight control cables and wiring were in open view and the technology consisted of a plug box for a suit heater and an intercom station.

The engines started and idled for a few moments before starting to taxi. As the tail wheel un-cocked I was unexpectedly thrown up against my seat belt, and then with the screech of the brakes we were on our way.

*“Pilot to crew—check in”..... “Tail to pilot—ready sir, only one more after this one and we get to go home.” “Pilot to tail—start flashing your lamp for the join-up.”*

*“Navigator to pilot—heading of 047 for the first fix—altitude nine thousand.”*

As the bomber took the runway and the pilot added takeoff power, the noise became deafening. Fortunately for

my hearing, I was using a modern set of hearing protectors with built in FM stereo music, something that was not available to the crews who originally flew these aircraft in the '40s (A little Wagner adds to the ambience). Climbing out from Boeing Field, not only was the noise level increasing but there was a blast of cold air blowing through the fuselage. Looking at the ball turret I could see a wide gap around the ball through which the frigid outside air was entering. It was obvious that my multiple layers of clothing would not keep me warm. It was time to move to the radio compartment.

*“Ball gunner to engineer—I’m not getting any suit heat, can you take a look at the power box back here Sarge?” “Engineer to ball gunner—hey Arky, you’ll have to wait your turn, I’m a little busy with the engines right now. I’ll try to get back to you before the German fighters find us. Just don’t turn into a popsicle before then.” “How cold is it Sarge?” “Looks like about forty seven below Arky— you’ll be OK for a couple of hours until we get our fuel*



Aluminum Overcast at Boeing Field (Ed Rombauer photo)

*transferred, then I’ll be back there.”*

*“Pilot to crew—We’re over the open area, you are clear to test your guns.”*

*“Right waist to pilot—My gun keeps jamming Captain, I don’t know what’s wrong with it.”*

*“Ozzie did you clean all the oil off of it?” “We’ve a little time before the fighters hit us—take it apart and clean it with your handkerchief.”*

*“Pilot to crew— We’re climbing through ten thousand, put your masks on and check the regulators for normal. We’ll be up here for over eight hours and we’ll need all the oxygen we’ve got.”*

The radio compartment was warmer as there wasn’t the blast of air from the turret. However at the 150 mph

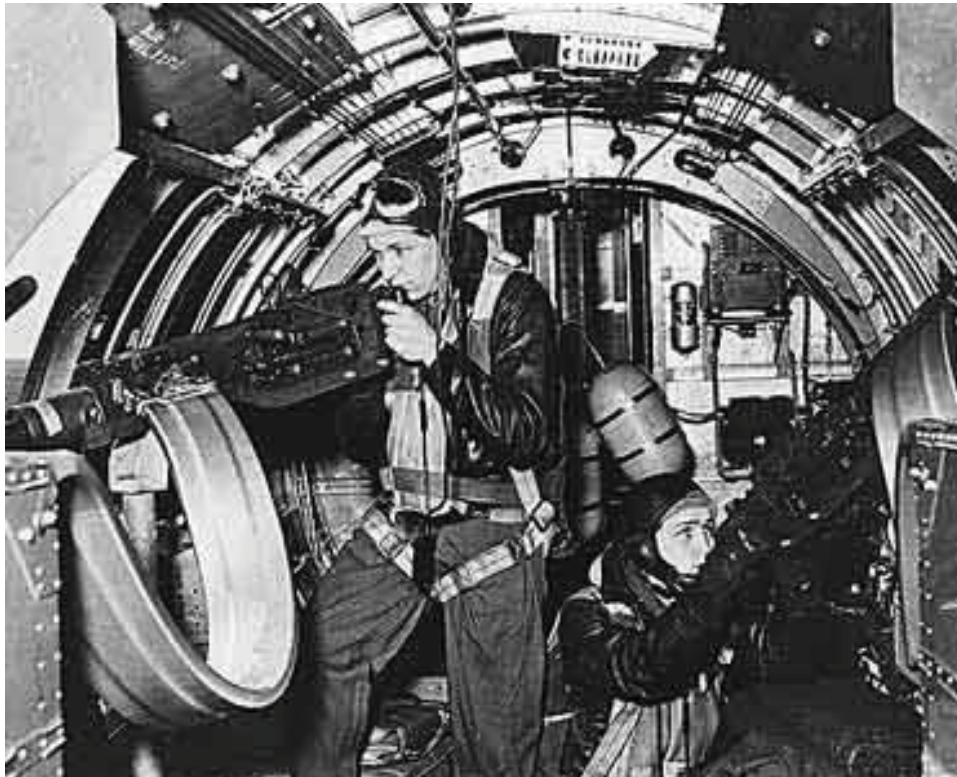


that the aircraft climbed, cruised and descended at, a small quarter-inch rivet hole in the rear bulkhead emitted a jet of cold air into the compartment making it as cold as the outside air. Our five degrees at eleven thousand feet was still far more survivable than the life threatening minus sixty degrees at twenty-nine thousand feet encountered in raids over Germany. Under those conditions, surviving without either oxygen or a suit heater was zero. And when forced to descend to a lower altitude because of battle damage or lack of oxygen, the bomber became easy prey for the German fighters. A no win situation.

The nose compartment of a B-17 is very pleasant, at least in peacetime. As I sat in the bombardier's seat, with the sun shining through the plexiglass nose and the ground spread out like a carpet beneath my feet, it was, as one crewmember said, "like watching a movie." However in combat, it wasn't until you watched the other aircraft around you exploding and falling from the sky, and your friends being thrown from the mortally wounded aircraft, that you realized that this was no movie.

*"Bombardier to pilot—approaching target, give me a level"....*

*"Captain we're bouncing too much to set the gyros." "I know, this flak is really heavy, and it's throwing us around." "OK level set, auto pilot engaged, starting run—thirty seconds to target, standby for release." "Pilot to crew—we lost number four engine, watch out for fighters." "Bombardier to pilot—bombs away, clean drop"..... "I can't get the doors closed." "Pilot to engineer—Sarge go back and crank those doors up, we're losing altitude." "Bandits five o'clock."*



B-17 Waist Gunners (USAAF photo)

*"Sparks, tell Sarge to hurry up with the doors".....  
 "Radio operator to pilot—Captain, Sarge took a hit in the foot and it cut the hose on his mask.".....  
 "Captain, I've got the doors closed but Sarge is out and needs oxygen."  
 "Sparks, get the spare mask from the B4 bag and put it on him." "Tail gunner to pilot—we've been hit in the tail, all the windows are gone and I can't see anything." "Pilot to crew—were losing number three, I can't hold this altitude"..... "if you guys can keep the fighters off of us I'll try to make it back to base."*

As the B-17 taxied up to the terminal in Ogden and shut down the engines, I took one last look around the interior of

this relic of a past war and realized that these aircraft had been both a beginning and an end for many American bomber crews. A beginning in that they were boys when they flew their first mission, excited to be going into battle and then quickly maturing into professional crews, ready to go up against the best that the enemy could offer. An end in that seventy-five percent of them never returned. A

crew member's life in those old bombers was held by four threads: his intercom connection, the oxygen connection, the power cord to his heated suit, and most importantly his connection to his crew-mates and his dependence on them. Upon entering the vintage terminal building, I turned for one last look at an American icon, my thoughts once again turned to the long ago young crews who had flown her. A line from a book and a movie occurred to me, "Where do we get such men?" ✪

# Local Museums Sortie in Support of Col Holloman

By Greg Anders

The Cascade Warbirds were honored to have been able to organize the “Missing Man” formation, perhaps the most magnificent and solemn aerial maneuver ever seen, for one of our most highly regarded members, Col Bill Holloman. The fly-by was supported by four Puget Sound aviation museums, who generously donated the use of their P-51 Mustangs in honor of the mark Col Holloman has left on us all, and as a small token of the legacy he leaves behind.

The “Missing Man” was flown in the “finger four” formation. As the formation approaches, you will see the number three man (on the left side as the formation approaches) begin a slow pull up followed by a turn to the west. The other three aircraft will continue straight ahead with the very obvious “hole” in the formation. This formation is symbolic of the fact that one of our wingmen has departed and left us all feeling that we must continue on with a “hole” in our ranks.

In the lead position was Cascade Warbird Commander, LtCol Greg Anders flying “Upopa Epop,” a P-51D operated by the Flying Heritage Collection ([www.flyingheritage.com](http://www.flyingheritage.com)) at Paine Field in Everett. On the left wing (right side as the formation approaches) in the number two position, was John Sessions in “Impatient Virgin,” a P-51B operated by the Historic Flight Foundation ([www.historicflight.org](http://www.historicflight.org)), also at Paine Field in Everett. On

the right wing, flying the most important number three “missing man” position was Maj Gen Bill Anders, Apollo 8 astronaut, flying “Val-Halla,” an “almost Tuskegee red tail” P-51D operated by the Heritage Flight Museum ([www.heritageflight.org](http://www.heritageflight.org)) at Bellingham International Airport

in Bellingham. On the right wing of number 3, in the number four position, was Bud Granley, flying “American Beauty,” a P-51D operated by the Olympic Flight Museum ([www.olympicflightmuseum.com](http://www.olympicflightmuseum.com)) at the Olympia airport.

We know that Bill Holloman has rejoined with his other departed aviation comrades and is flying with them now. We will miss him and were honored to be his wingman for those short periods when we were able to keep up with his very active schedule. “He has gone to that great rejoin in heaven and flies with angels wings.” And if we know Bill, he’s flying circles around them all. ✪

*“Looking heavenward you cannot help but shed a tear... mournful... lonesome... a hole that screams out almost as loudly as the roar of the engines that pass overhead.”*

-Unknown Author



Bill Baum Photos





# Who Were the Tuskegee Airmen?

Adapted from [www.tuskegeeairmen.org](http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org)

The Tuskegee Airmen were dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when there were many people who thought that black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage and patriotism. They came from every section of the country, with large numbers coming from New York City, Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit. Each one possessed a strong personal desire to serve the United States of America at the best of his ability. Those who possessed the physical and mental qualifications were accepted as aviation cadets to be trained initially as single-engine pilots and later to be either twin-engine pilots, navigators or bombardiers. Most were college graduates or undergraduates but others demonstrated their qualifications through comprehensive entrance examinations.

No standards were lowered for the pilots or any of the others who trained in operations, meteorology, intelligence, engineering, medicine or any of the other officer fields. Enlisted members were trained to be aircraft and engine mechanics, armament specialists, radio repairmen, parachute riggers, policemen, administrative clerks and all of the other skills necessary to fully function as an Army Air Corps flying squadron or ground support unit.

The black airmen who became single-engine or multi-engine pilots were trained at Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF) in Tuskegee Alabama. The first aviation cadet class began in July 1941 and completed training nine months later in March 1942. Thirteen started in the first class. Five successfully completed the training, one of them being Captain Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a West Point Academy graduate. The other four were commissioned second lieutenants, and all five received Army Air Corps silver pilot wings.

From 1941 through 1946, nine hundred and ninety-six pilots graduated at TAAF, receiving commissions and pilot wings. Black navigators, bombardiers and gunnery crews were trained at selected military bases elsewhere in the United States. Mechanics trained at Chanute Air Base in Rantoul, IL until facilities at TAAF were in place in 1942.

Four hundred and fifty of the pilots who were trained at TAAF served overseas in either the 99th Pursuit Squadron (later the 99th Fighter Squadron) or the 332nd Fighter Group. The 99th Fighter Squadron trained in and flew P-40 Warhawk aircraft in combat in North Africa, Sicily and Italy from April 1943 until July 1944 when they were transferred to the 332nd Fighter Group in the 15th Air Force.

The outstanding record of black airmen in World War II was accomplished by men whose names will forever live in hallowed memory. Each one accepted the challenge, proudly displayed his skill and determination while

suppressing internal rage from humiliation and indignation caused by frequent experiences of racism and bigotry, at home and overseas. These airmen fought two wars - one against a military force overseas and the other against racism at home and abroad.

The airmen who did not go overseas and trained at Selfridge Field, Michigan as bomber crew in the 477th Medium Bombardment Group experienced a great deal of racism. These highly trained military officers were treated as "trainees" and denied access to the base officers' club, an act contradictory to Army regulations.

There was a rather heated reaction and the Group was transferred to Godman Field, Kentucky. The unfair treatment and hostility continued at Godman Field and in early 1945, the group was transferred to Freeman Field, IN where the hostilities finally reached a climax. When black officers tried to enter the Freeman Field Officers' Club, against direct orders for them to stay out., one hundred and three officers were arrested, charged with insubordination and ordered to face court martial. Eventually, the court martial proceedings were dropped.

After the war in Europe ended in 1945, black airmen returned to the United States and faced continued racism and bigotry despite their outstanding war record. Tuskegee Army Air Field continued to train new airmen until 1946, with women entering the program in several support fields. Large numbers of black airmen elected to remain in the service but because of segregation their assignments were limited to the 332nd Fighter Group or the 477th Composite Group, and later to the 332nd Fighter Wing at Lockbourne Air Base, OH. Opportunities for advancement and promotion were very limited and this affected morale. Nevertheless, black airmen continued to perform superbly. In 1949, pilots from the 332nd Fighter Group took first place in the Air Force National Fighter Gunnery Meet.

During this period, many white units were undermanned and needed qualified people but were unable to get the experienced black personnel because of the segregation policy. The newly formed U.S. Air Force initiated plans to integrate its units as early as 1947. In 1948, President Harry Truman enacted Executive Order Number 9981 which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces. This order, in time, led to the end of racial segregation in the military forces. This was also the first step toward racial integration in the United States of America. The positive experience, the outstanding record of accomplishment and the superb behavior of black airmen during World War II, and after, were important factors in the initiation of the historic social change to achieve racial equality in America. 🌟

# The Frozen Airmen of the Sierra Nevada

By Peter Stekel

On November 18, 1942 US Army Air Forces Beech 18 AT-7 Navigator 41-21079 left Mather Field, east of Sacramento, California. On board for the navigation training exercise was pilot, Second Lieutenant William Gamber and three aviation cadets; John Mortenson, Ernest Glenn Munn, and Leo Mustonen. Leaving at 0711 for a five hour mission, the crew was never seen alive again.

It took five years for the AT-7 to be found. In 1947, four University of California students discovered aircraft wreckage at over 12,000 feet, strewn across Mendel Glacier in Kings Canyon National Park. The wreckage was

embedded in ice and included both engines, a wheel, and a large portion of a wing. The students found personal effects including log books, a shoe, and the back of an Elgin A-11 watch. After returning home from their trip, the students reported their find to the Army. Three separate missions were sent into the High Sierra to identify and, if possible, recover the crew's remains.

The first expedition was in the fall of 1947. Months had passed since the student's discovery and several feet of snow had fallen on the crash site. Still, the AT-7's two engines were relocated and identification tags confirmed that this was 41-21079 missing since 1942. No remains were found. In 1948 the army sent Captain Roy Sulzbacher, from graves registration service, to the glacier. Twice he was unsuccessful in finding the crew's remains. A week after returning from his second trip to Mendel Glacier in early October, Sulzbacher died suddenly from bulbar poliomyelitis.

Army paperwork continued working its way through the system. With Captain Sulzbacher dead, and with no further intention of searching for the missing crew, the Gamber, Mortenson, Munn, and Mustonen families received letters telling them that their sons had been found. Because the remains were commingled, due to the airplane crash, the families were told a group burial would occur at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, California.

For the next 57 years the wreck was forgotten. Then, in October, 2005, two climbers stumbled upon human remains from the AT-7 melting out of the Mendel Glacier.

The remains were clothed in the uniform of an Army Air Forces cadet and attached to an undeployed parachute. It was a piece of the parachute, fluttering in the wind like a Tibetan prayer flag that caught the climbers attention.

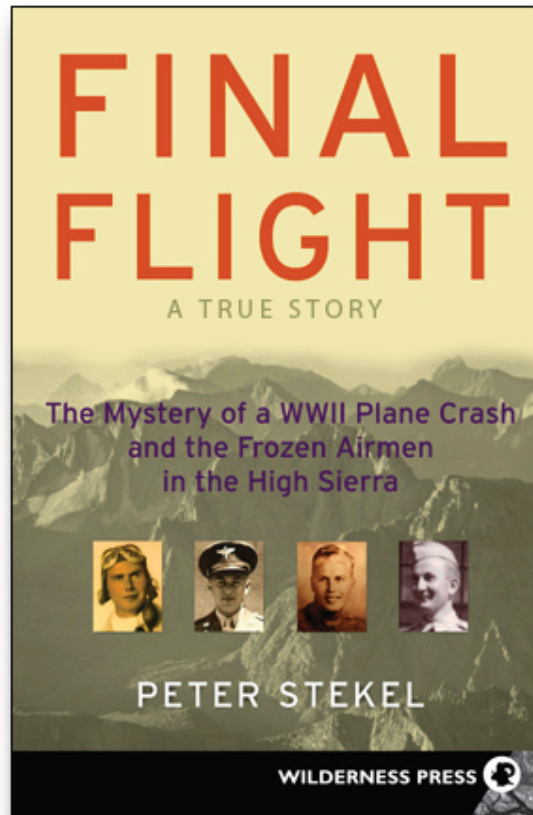
From here, the story gets a little muddy. Official records stated that AT-7 41-21079 departed Mather Field on the morning of November 18, 1942 with the intention of flying north to Corning, California - about 150 miles from Mather Field. How is it that crew remains were found 150 miles southeast of Mather? Since the record shows that four men were buried at Golden Gate National Cemetery, many

people began to speculate that this Frozen Airman was a fifth, undocumented - or stowaway - soldier.

This speculation made no sense. An accident report filed in 1942 [when the plane disappeared and was assumed lost] and another in 1947 [after the wreck's discovery and first expedition to recover remains] specifically said there were only four men on board the AT-7. The 1947 report said no remains were recovered. There was no 1948 report extant but in 2007 Captain Sulzbacher's widow, Julia, vividly remembered her husband's trip to the glacier in 1948 since it took place just prior to his death. She told me her husband came back empty-handed and told her that no crewmembers were found - only airplane wreckage. How could this be when the army told the crew's families that their sons had been

buried together in 1948?

This was not an uncommon action in the years following World War II. Especially with service personnel involved in airplane crashes, there frequently was not much to bury. This was a direct result of aircraft crashing with highly flammable fuel along with unexploded ordnance. Or of being shot down at over 30,000 feet. Knowing that closure was preferred to more opened-ended explanations of how children or spouses were killed, the military often withheld such evidence. In the case of 41-21079, it was probably decided that, since three expeditions had failed to find any remains, and the region was high, wild, and remote, that remains would never be found. Nearly half a year after the Frozen Airman was found, his remains were identified as



Cadet Leo A. Mustonen - a student on the AT-7 41-21079 missing since 1942.

I've been hiking and climbing in the Sierra Nevada since 1965 when I first visited Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks with my boy scout troop. When I heard initial reports of the Frozen Airman I wanted to know more. Unfortunately, news reports were less than helpful. For someone who knew something about the Sierra I could easily tell that many of the newspaper reports about the mountain conditions were wrong. That was the impetus for me to get involved with the story. My September,

2006 magazine article in Sierra Heritage, "Mystery of the Ice Man," was the result. But it seemed to me that the story deserved more than exposure than from a general interest magazine. I started to explore ways to develop my interest, and then obsession, into a book.

August, 2007, found me on Mendel Glacier with a long-term hiking friend. Since no wreckage had been associated with Cadet Mustonen's remains, I wanted to confirm that an airplane had indeed crashed into Mendel Glacier. Before that, I began a paper search to prove conclusively there were four, and not five, crewmembers on board 41-21079 and that no remains were buried in 1948.

Climbing into the glacial cirque below Mt. Mendel [13,710'], we quickly found plenty of evidence of an airplane. At around 12,500' we found a tire, parts of two engines, and other pieces of wreckage. While my friend continued downslope, I began to traverse across the glacier. In a moment, I saw what looked like a small tree, killed and bent over from the frost. I saw something glinting in the sun. As I moved closer I recognized the shiny object as a ring - a gold ring. I thought, how wonderful! Some climber lost his wedding ring and another climber found it and put it on the branch of that dead tree, so the person who lost it would find it when he came back here, looking for it. But then it hit me. It can't be a tree. There aren't

even any grasses up here. No sedges. No vegetation of any kind. It had to be a person. I had discovered a second crew member from the crashed AT-7! Five months later this second Frozen Airman was identified as Ernest Glenn Munn - Glenn to his family.

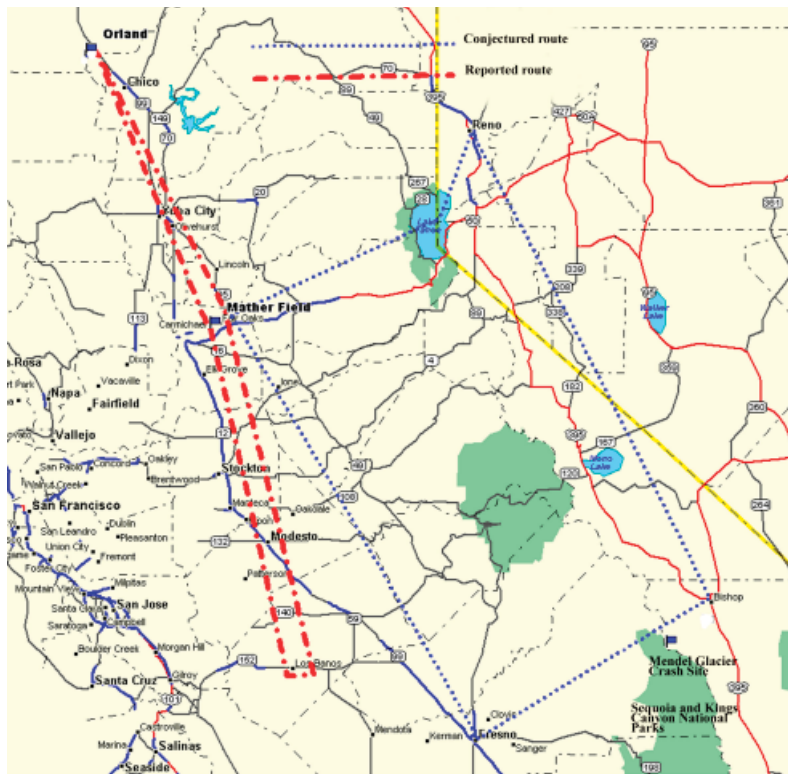
The last part of the mystery of the two Frozen Airman was to explain why they were found south of Mather Field when their reported route on November 18, 1942 had them flying north that day. I found the answer by examining nearly 50 pages of faded teletype messages sent between 1942-1943 by Mather base commander Colonel H.R.

Hewitt to Washington D.C. The route, according to Colonel Hewitt was Mather Field south to Los Banos, north to Roseville, continuing north to Corning before returning south to Mather Field. The airplane crash site in northern Kings Canyon National Park is due east of Los Banos.

It was gratifying for me to discover the AT-7, with three navigators, wasn't so far off-course they didn't know the difference between north and south. But Colonel Hewitt's route for the ill-fated crew only partially satisfied the question of the AT-7 being off-course. It didn't explain why

41-21079 would be flying at nearly 14,000 feet [and higher if they were to be the required 2000 AGL from Mt. Mendel - 13,710 feet] and in the mountains when they should have been at 5000 feet or lower in the San Joaquin Valley.

Answering the route question occupied my next two years. After four years I'm able to narrate an account of the four boys aboard the AT-7 and their final flight. I can tell the Beech 18 story, along with how glacial geology and an unknown weather phenomenon helped me put together a scenario to best explain what happened that day in November. All this has culminated in the writing of *Final Flight - The Mystery of a World War II Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra*. The book will be released September 1, 2010 by Wilderness Press. I'm happy to be able to tell this story in person at an upcoming Cascade Warbirds meeting. 🌟







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**Cascade Warbirds  
Quick Look Calendar**

*July*

- 24-25\* Inland Skyfest 2010  
Fairchild AFB
- 24-25 Concrete
- 24-25 Baker City Fly-In
- 26-1Aug Oshkosh 2010

*August*

- 2 BC Aviation Museum  
Open House
- 7-8 SEAFAIR
- 7 Chehalis Air Fair
- 13-15 Abbotsford
- 20-22 NWAAC Evergreen  
Fly-In Pearson Airpark
- 20-22 Oregon Int'l Airshow
- 21 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI  
"Props and Ponies"
- 21-22 Chilliwack Flight Fest
- 27-28 Madras, OR
- 27-29 Wings over Republic

*September*

- 3-5\* Vintage Aircraft  
Weekend @ PAE
- 3-6 Annual Yak Discovery  
Fly-In, BC
- 4 Bremerton Blkbry Fest
- 10-12 Hood River Fly-In
- 15-19 Reno Air Races 2010
- 18 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI
- 18-19 Victoria, BC
- 19 Mountain Home AFB
- 25-26 CAF - Midland
- 25-26 Chico Air Fest

*October*

- 9\* Squadron Meeting at  
Museum of Flight
- 9-10 San Fran Fleet Week
- 16 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI
- 21-23 Copperstate

\* Denotes Max Effort Event  
See Website for Detailed List

## Check Six



**Lt. Col. William H. Holloman III**