

the

Cadet Flyer

SUMMER • 2015



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE 63RD PRESERVATION SOCIETY AND THE WWII FLIGHT TRAINING MUSEUM • DOUGLAS, GEORGIA

Colin D. Storey Lt. Col. USAFR, Retired

Colin was born in South Bend,

Indiana in August of 1921. His family moved to Syracuse, NY several years later. He was attending the Syracuse University School of Journalism when World War II started. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in July of 1942. He was sent to Atlantic City, NJ for initial training. After

that he was sent to a civilian flying training detachment at Norwich

University in Northfield, VT. It was here that he first got a chance to fly in an Aeronca Defender, a tandem trainer version of the Chief with a higher rear seat for the instructor pilot. This was the initial aptitude evaluation, taking approximately 10-15 hours of flight time. Having successfully completed this initial phase, he was sent to Nashville, TN for pilot training classification and then on to Maxwell AAF, AL for basic training.



His next orders were to primary flight training base in Douglas, GA (class 44D, squadron #6) flying the Stearman PT-17. He recalled two stories about his stay in Douglas. He remembered going out for a dual, acrobatic lesson one day. Just prior to starting a loop, the instructor asked him to check his seat belt to make sure it was fastened – it wasn't! On another occasion, he was practicing touch and go landings at a nearby auxiliary airfield late in the afternoon. An instructor pilot was always assigned to fly to this airfield and watch/grade the students while they were practicing. Students were not allowed to use this auxiliary airfield unless an instructor was present on the ground. Colin made his last landing and takeoff and headed, he thought, back toward Douglas. He was somewhat puzzled, however, when he saw the instructor pilot's airplane heading in the opposite

direction from the direction he was going. After flying for a period of time and not seeing the Douglas airport, he realized that he had gone in the wrong direction. He turned around and was able to find the auxiliary field again. He landed (although no instructor was present) to get his bearings. Once oriented, he took off again and this time correctly headed back to the airfield at Douglas. On the way back he noticed several aircraft heading in the opposite direction – toward the auxiliary base. When he landed in Douglas, he was met by several officers who wanted to know where he had been. He mentioned something about losing track of the time, which seemed to placate them. Those other aircraft that he saw were a group of instructor pilots going out to search for him, thinking perhaps he has crashed. Of course, landing at an unattended airfield and/or getting lost were both infractions that would earn one an immediate "evaluation/elimination" checkride!



From Douglas it was on to basic flight training in Macon, GA flying the Vultee BT-13 (a.k.a. the Vultee Vibrator). Advanced training was next at Columbus, MS in the Beech AT-11, which is where he received his pilot wings and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. Assigned

to B-17s, his next stop was Sebring, FL to learn that aircraft. His crew was formed and trained together at Drew Field, FL (what is now Tampa International Airport) in October of 1944. Once crew training was completed, a new B-17G was picked up at Hunter AAF in Savannah, GA. The crew departed November 7, 1944 and then proceeded to Europe via Bangor, ME; Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada; Meeks Field, Iceland; and on the RAF Valley, Wales (in western England), arriving on November 18th. A train ride on November 27th took Colin and his crew to the 94th Bomb Group, 331st Squadron located at Bury St. Edmunds (station 468), northeast of Cambridge.

From Rougham AAF he flew thirty-five combat missions, primarily over Germany, from December 11, 1944 through April 9, 1945 accumulating 295 hours in combat. The first mission with his crew was to Kaiserslautern, Germany on December 23, 1944. The aircraft was badly damaged from flak and fighter attacks. Colin's ball turret gunner kept calling him on the intercom on the leg back to England insisting that there was a huge hole in the bottom of the right wing – a hole big enough that a man could pass through it without touching the sides. Colin thought that, since this was the gunner's first combat mission, he was overly excited and exaggerating somewhat. Upon landing at Rougham Field, however, the ground crew all ran over to the right wing after the aircraft was parked. Upon exiting the B-17, Colin saw that huge, gaping hole that the ball turret gunner had been describing – accurately! The flak burst had miraculously



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missed the fuel tanks but had hit the wing spar, cracking but not breaking it. That aircraft never flew again...



Colin also encountered severe battle damage from flak on this 27th mission to Zwickau, Germany on March 19, 1945. The number four engine was rendered inoperative coming off the target. Enroute back to England over western Germany, the number three engine caught fire and had to be shut down. The prospect of an English Channel crossing on two engines and a possible ditching in the frigid waters was not encouraging. The weather enroute home was not good either – a thick cloud deck ending approximately 500 feet above the ground. The decision was made to attempt an emergency landing on the Continent. A gradual descent was made through the clouds hoping to breakout with enough ceiling and visibility to make a successful crash landing. Breaking out of the clouds around 500 feet, an abandoned fighter airfield was spotted ahead. Unfortunately, the aircraft was too high and too close to the grass airfield to land at a speed that would keep the B-17 on the short runway. A two-engine go-around was initiated and a circling, descending approach was made that resulted in the aircraft coming to a stop off the end of that short runway in the mud, almost up-ending the aircraft on its nose. Everyone got out of the airplane without any injuries. It turned out that the fighter airfield had been an old Luftwaffe base near Brussels, abandoned as the Allies pushed the Germans back toward Germany. The crew started walking down a nearby road and few hours later a truck drove by and transported the crew into Brussels. Several days later they were back at their base,



flying the remainder of their missions. It took three different B-17s to complete all their missions. “Round Trip Ticket” was the name of the plane they flew the longest (and left in Belgium). Fortunately for them, that turned out to be an appropriate name.

Colin separated from military service in December, 1945 and was assigned to the inactive Reserves. He was recalled to the active Reserves during the Korean Conflict and assigned to the Pentagon’s Psychological Warfare Division. He retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1981 after thirty years of service. His service awards include the Air

Medal with five oak leaf clusters, the World War II Victory Medal, the European Campaign Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation, the American Campaign Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and Air Force Reserve 20-year Service ribbon.

After the war, Colin returned to Syracuse, got married, and completed his college degree in journalism. He worked in the newspaper business for his entire career, primarily in Rochester, NY for the Gannett Newspaper company. He and his wife raised six children – three boys and three girls – and managed to put them all through college. He was one of the first members of the 94th Bomb Group Association and was an active participant with that group for over twenty years, at one point serving as its president. To this day, he continues to keep in touch with the remaining members of his crew.

In Memoriam

by Hugh T. Harrington



Fitzhugh “Fitz” Fulton Class of 44-J, Test Pilot

June 6, 1925 - Feb. 4, 2015

“Fitz” Fulton was born in Blakely, Georgia. He was a member of the Douglas class of 44-J. However, he learned to fly before he became a cadet. In 1941, at the age of 16, even before he got a driver’s license, he soloed after having washed airplanes and swept hangars in exchange for flying lessons from pilots at his hometown airport. He made 225 trips to Berlin in C-54s during the Berlin Airlift and flew 55 combat missions in B-26s over North Korea. While with the Air Force, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross four times for test and combat flight achievements and the Air Medal five times for airlift and combat flights.



After 15 years as a military test pilot, he retired from the Air Force as a Lt. Colonel in 1966. He was Chief of the Bomber Transport Test Operations Division at Edwards Air Force Base when he retired. He then joined the NASA Ames Dryden Flight Research Center and was the Chief Test Pilot until retiring again in July 1986. While with NASA he flew the X-15 and SR-71 Blackbird prototypes. In 1986, he became the Flight Operations Director and Chief Research Pilot for Scaled Composites at Mojave, California.

Fulton had more than 18,000 flight hours in over 235 different airplane types and had tested most of the military bombers and transports developed since 1950. Some of the significant flight testing in which he has participated includes early B-47, B-57 and B-52 tests, B-58 development, XB-70 research, NASA YF-12 Supersonic Research and the initial 747 shuttle carrier airplane tests. He was the launch pilot dropping the X-1, X-2, X-15, M02, HL-10 and the X-24 rocket airplanes from B-29, B-50 and B-52 airplanes. He flew the Boeing 747 that transported all five of the shuttle launches on its top. He was the only Air Force pilot to fly a Boeing NB-36H with an atomic reactor on board and one of two pilots to fly XB-60 test aircraft. He was the project pilot on the B-58 supersonic bomber program and set an international altitude record of 85,360 feet with the aircraft carrying a payload of 11,023 pounds in 1962. He flew 63 of the 129 test flights of the Mach 3 XB-70 Valkarie prototype.

Fulton was a recipient of the Harmon International Aviator’s Trophy presented by President Johnson as the “World’s Outstanding Aviator for 1982” as a result of test flying in the B-548 airplane. He was a Fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and in 1977 received the Ivan C. Kincheloe Trophy as the “Best Pilot of the Year.” In 1995, he was inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame, in 1999 he was inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

"Flying the Hump" in B-24s!

We recently added an exhibit on the "Hump" pilots who flew over the Himalayas from India to bring supplies to the front lines in China. At least 17 Douglas 63rd aviation cadets and 12 Douglas 63rd instructors became air transport pilots who flew cargo planes over "the Hump." It was not an easy flight – when the "Hump" operation closed down, about 590 aircraft and 1,314 airman had been lost flying across the "Hump."

But others from the Douglas 63rd flew the "Hump" in other ways. We recently found an obituary of one of our cadets, **George Louis Kresa** (1923-2013), class of 1944-I, which contained an interesting statement:

George was "an Army Air Corps Pilot during WWII, assigned to the 375th Bombardment Squadron (of the 308 Bomb Group) and made numerous trips over the 'Hump' between India and China to obtain gasoline, bombs, spare parts, and other items they needed to prepare for and sustain their combat operations."

"The 308th supported Chinese ground forces; attacked airfields, coal yards, docks, oil refineries and fuel dumps in French Indochina; mined rivers and ports; bombed maintenance shops and docks at Rangoon, Burma; attacked Japanese shipping in the East China Sea, Formosa Strait, South China Sea and Gulf of Tonkin."

What?! A bomb group flying B-24s over the "Hump" for supplies? Sure enough, the 308th reached its base at Kunming on 31 March 1943 and began two months of "reverse Hump" operations, flying round trip to India to acquire the gasoline, bombs, parts and other

materiel it needed to stockpile before flying combat missions. Using kits developed by the South India Air Service Command Depot, it converted its B-24 Liberators into fuel transports to accomplish the task. It took about **three** "Hump" flights to supply every combat mission.

General Chennault's memoirs praise the 308th: "their bombing of Vinh railroad shops in Indo-China, the Kowloon and Kai Tak docks at Hong Kong, and the shipping off Saigon were superb jobs unmatched anywhere. When the Army Air Force Headquarters in Washington tallied the bombing accuracy of every bomb group in combat, I was astonished to find that the 308th led them all."

An impressive record indeed! And another Douglas 63rd "Hump" pilot who was also a bomber pilot!

Source used in obituary: Tony Strotman's tribute page at http://www.usaaf-in-cbi.com/308th_web/308_history.htm



◀ Liberator cargo plane is loaded heavily with 300-lb. gasoline drums and cases of ammunition, ready to go over the Hump. The pilot pushes his way toward the cockpit.

Inside the Museum

We've been busy in the museum during the last several months. Many new projects have been under way including adding new acquisitions to museum exhibits, organizing and preserving the artifacts and documents in storage, installing new blinds and "black-out" curtains in the museum, updating the website to mobile format, and developing a smartphone audio walking tour.

Starting in April, we also launched a new education program that includes activity sheets for children,

teacher materials, and school tours. Every school in the county received these education materials. You can look at these materials by going to the For Schools section of the website. We also gave the museum a good "spring cleaning" inside and outside. Come visit the museum to see these new additions. We are now open Thursday-Saturday 11:00am - 4:00pm. A special thanks to our volunteers, Judy and Bob Hackett, Sue and Hugh Harrington, Hank Haklin, and Curator, Danny Bradley who made all of this possible!



▲ Judy Hackett carefully prepares newspaper for storage.



▲ Jr. Naval ROTC from Union Grove High School tours the museum in March.

◀ Blackout curtains not only help protect our exhibits from the sun, they also give us another way to interpret the Home Front.



▲ Boys and Girls Club of Coffee County tours the museum in April.

MISSION STATEMENT

The WWII Flight Training Museum is a non-profit organization that is entirely funded by donation, grants and contributions. It is dedicated to sharing the story of the courage and spirit of the American men and women who became pilots during the Second World War. Our primary mission is to preserve, protect, develop and advance the understanding of our nation's aviation training heritage through collections, research, exhibits and interpretation of the 63rd Flight Training Detachment. Our secondary mission is to try to maintain the heritage and as much of the historical integrity of the Raymond-Richardson Aviation School as possible.

The WWII Flight Training Museum
3 Airport Circle, Douglas, GA 31535 • 912-383-9111
www.wwiiflighttraining.org
email: douglas63rd@windstream.net

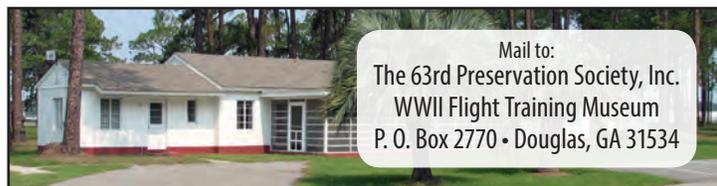
The WWII Flight Training Museum
3 Airport Circle
Douglas, GA 31535

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

YOU CAN HELP!



In December of 2003, a small group of local citizens interested in history, aviation and heritage preservation gathered together to both protect the site of the Raymond-Richardson Aviation School in Douglas, Georgia, and to create and operate a historical museum that would tell the story of not only our community's role in WWII, but also share the lives of the men and women who lived, worked and trained at the facility. Thus, the 63rd Preservation Society was formed.



Mail to:
The 63rd Preservation Society, Inc.
WWII Flight Training Museum
P. O. Box 2770 • Douglas, GA 31534

The WWII Flight Training Museum is operated by this non-profit organization and is entirely funded by donations, gifts and grants. We believe that the museum can make a great contribution to the preservation of our heritage and to the education of both children and the public in general.

Is it a future worth securing? We think so. We hope you do, too. Become a friend of the museum through membership and help us preserve WWII aviation's beginnings.

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2015 63rd PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

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\$50 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- WWII Flight Training Museum card
- Quarterly museum newsletter
- Free visits to the museum for your family and guests
- Opportunity to help restore and maintain vintage aircraft
- Honoring our veterans with your commitment
- 10% discount on museum merchandise
- Participation in special museum events

The 63rd Preservation Society is a 501c3 non-profit educational foundation.
(Proceeds go toward museum maintenance)