



**SOUTH CAROLINA
HISTORIC AVIATION FOUNDATION**
"Saving the past for the Future"



SCHAF Newsletter for January 2019

Reminder: The next SCHAF Open House will take place Saturday, Jan 12, 2019. 10am-1pm at Hangar Y-1 Hamilton/Owens Airport.

Foundation Happenings-

We here at SCHAF hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season. Here's also hoping that the New Year will be a good one for you and yours. We had lots of exciting things happen at SCHAF during 2018. At the top of the list would be the acquisition of our new, Yale from the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton, Canada. Whenever we pull the plane out on the tarmac, people see her shining and stop by for a look. We have made great progress on the restoration of GF2. The cockpit has been completed. The navigator's area is really starting to take shape and is looking great. We are working hard in so many areas of GF2. You really should stop by an Open House to see the progress. We also partnered with Patriot's Point to assist with the restoration of the antenna on the top of their B-25. We hosted several events such as book signings and even a wedding shower! We have begun discussions of establishing a South Carolina Aviation Museum to permanently house our planes as well as memorabilia from SC aviation history. Phew it was a busy but exciting year! We hope 2019 will be even better.

In looking back at the history of SCHAF, we realized we have not raised the membership dues since our inception in 2010. We decided to raise the basic membership from \$30 to \$40 per year. We are also raising the family membership from \$60 per year to \$75 per year. All the other membership levels will remain the same. Our new membership levels are in line with similar organizations so we hope you understand the change. We are excited about the future of SCHAF and look forward to one day having a permanent South Carolina Aviation Museum.

Historical Notes-

There has been a lot of debate over the years about the original name of GF2. As many of you know, our plane has been nicknamed "Skunkie" for many years. During the war, planes flown during training were not normally named or had nose art painted on them. The designation GF2 stood for Greenville Army Air Base, F squadron, 2nd plane. The student pilot flying the plane when it crashed, Dan Rossman, said GF2 was never named Skunkie. As I stated, there has been much debating over the years about her name. While looking thru some pictures from the recovery in Lake Greenwood, we believe we now have proof to confirm Dan's statement that the plane was never named Skunkie. As you can see in the two pictures below, there is no name on either side of the plane. Our theory is that due to the plane being under water for 39 years, we are sure she had a rather pungent odor. Someone probably joking around wrote Skunkie in the mud and/or nicknamed her Skunkie. It stuck. We believe GF2 is looking much better these days. While we still find red dirt in all corners of the plane, we think she smells and looks beautiful. We want to honor her memory as well as the memory of the pilots who trained in her and the women who built her by no longer calling her, Skunkie. While she is officially called GF2, we may have a "naming of the plane" event in the future.



Part 2 Continued from last month: Col Tik Tokaz and other 1939-1941 Army Maneuvers

His docking place in New York Harbor was the Battery Park at the tip of Lower Manhattan where there was a float plane dock. It was not used since the PDNY aviation department had closed due to the Great Depression. He had a hand tether that he connected to a post to anchor his aircraft and then proceeded to unload his heavy Army mail bags (see below). One day his mechanic forgot to stow the tether in the plane. So, he had to take a chance and leave the plane untethered. When he got back to the dock luckily it had not drifted away.



To deliver two mail bags, he had to carry them by walking through the Battery Park grounds and cross under an elevated train before the walk up through a skyscraper plaza and three or more city blocks. Then turn and go up a few more blocks on a major thoroughfare to the proper post office annex. On his way back, he would stop and buy a New York Herald Tribune at a sidewalk newsstand. One time he was not able to dock his aircraft at the float plane dock due to an afternoon thunderstorm with high winds and surf. He had to taxi further up the shoreline on the Hudson River side where small ferries and pleasure boats were docked and bring his plane into a more sheltered area. It

was a long distance to walk while carrying two heavy leather mail bags. It may have been more than 10 blocks. When he got back to the plane he was exhausted. He then taxied his OA-9 across the busy harbor to Floyd Bennett Field, up a sea ramp and over to the hangars where the Coast Guard amphibian aircraft were parked. He was careful when water taxiing to watch for the large Staten Island ferry (above photo Aug 1939) because it was hard to get out of the way

of it and other ferries due to his slow taxi speed. At the airfield, he probably had a quick lunch while having the aircraft refueled.



He would then takeoff from Floyd Bennett Field and fly north up the East River Corridor to Watertown on the shores of Lake Ontario. To the left is a panoramic view of the city and a B-18 flight from Mitchel Field on Long Island flying through the Hudson River Corridor in the same week he began his mail flights to New York City. You can see Battery Park in bottom right corner of the photo. The B-18 bombers are flying to

Dayton, Ohio to celebrate National Aviation Day established by President Roosevelt on August 19, 1939 which coincided with Orville Wright's birthday.



The Army had their own heavy leather US mail bags with lock specially made for them from 1936 to 1940. It must have evolved from the Army flying the US mail when President Roosevelt directed the Air Corps to fly the mail due to an airmail scandal between the post office and airlines. Captain Tokaz would carry a bag on each shoulder, the Army version US Mail bag (reviewed by Alton Blanks) and walk a few blocks to a US post office annex in Lower Manhattan. The leather bag reached from his

shoulder down to just below his waist. Upon arrival in South Carolina in early 1940, Capt Tokaz was stationed at Owens Field and assigned as a Liaison Officer to the umpire team of General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Chief of Staff, 6th Division during the Camp Jackson Maneuvers. He flew his O-49 Stinson aircraft and reported the positions of the opposing forces to Buckner's team. This is when he met his wife Frances Jones of Saluda at the Lookout Club on River Road in Columbia. He was there to celebrate his birthday. She was with her brother 1st Lt Rudolph M. Jones and his friends. He was in the Camp Jackson maneuvers also as an infantry officer. He later volunteered to become a paratrooper in the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment (jumped on D-Day). The photo is an O-49 aircraft assigned to the 65th Observation Group and parked at Owens Field in Sept 1941. The plane was flown by the 105th Observation Squadron, Tennessee National Guard. Lt Jerome Eichholz was the pilot. They had completed the Louisiana Maneuvers the year before; were federalized and deployed to Ft Jackson. Captain Tokaz in April 1940 was reassigned to Fort Benning, 4th Corps Army Maneuvers where General Buckner had been transferred. Stationed there was Lt. General George Patton and his L-1 observation pilot 1st Lt Paul Tibbetts (atomic bomb pilot). Capt Tokaz was assigned to the Louisiana Maneuvers in summer 1940. He was eliminated when attacked by two P-26 peashooters and grounded by the war games umpires. He failed to use the cloud cover properly he said in his memoirs.



In the air tactics of the era from the late 1930s, the P-26s were probably part of a Balboa flight formation (left photo). The flight leader and a wingman after sighting him would have dived on his slower observation aircraft and put him out of action. He was camped out relaxing at an army airfield bachelor officer's quarters in Louisiana when orders came through returning him to Langley Field and then TDY to the 3rd Cavalry at Ft Myers, Virginia commanded by Col Jonathan M. Wainwright. The unit provided escorts for funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. He felt it was

an honor to be assigned to this prestigious unit. Major Glenn C. Salisbury commander of his squadron was an experienced officer going back to WWI and probably was his way of letting him know where he would end up if he did not improve his airmanship. Colonel Wainwright was promoted to general in November 1940 and sent to the Philippines to serve under General MacArthur.



Akronite In New Parachute Battalion
When members of the newly formed 501st Parachute Battalion go down they first landing the "stove" on the ground consists of the 501st. This will be one of the 501st Battalion, 1st, which was first organized by Maj Glenn C. Salisbury in 1941. This Battalion of Akronites will serve in training for paratroopers, which they must also learn to pack after each jump.

A parachute test platoon formed at Camp Jackson in 1940 and merged with a test platoon at Ft Benning. It became the 501st parachute battalion in 1941. The 501st battalion was transferred to Camp Mackall, NC and two remaining "skeleton" parachute companies were formed as the 502nd parachute battalion. The photo is from the Akron Beacon Journal in July 6, 1941. This unit made two jumps in the Carolina Maneuvers in 1941. The first was a mass jump in Kershaw County and second was a surprise jump with many casualties (umpire decision) in capturing Pope Field and Camp Mackall that put the bases out of action for only a few hours. A rivalry may have motivated the 502nd to choose to attack the 501st who were training in NC. The 502nd had "carte blanche" from Army maneuvers leaders to use whatever airborne tactics and

targets they felt appropriate. Army leaders were delighted with the airborne success but also were perplexed because the loss of Pope Field put all the aircraft (Blue force) out of action for a while. The 502nd accomplished this with 394 paratroopers, 9 officers and 7 umpires who jumped from 37 transport aircraft perfectly timed for surprise. The Blue force's contingency plan was put into action and was able to overwhelm the Red force paratroopers with a larger counterforce of soldiers. The umpires ruled the 502nd paratroopers were defeated.

In Closing-

We would like to thank those of you who renewed your membership in 2018. We will begin sending out renewal reminders based on when you renewed in 2018. If you would like to renew you can either mail a check to the address below or pay via paypal on the website.

If you have something you would like to share in a future newsletter, please send an email directly to SCHAF at info.schaf@gmail.com.

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