



Stratolaunch completes second captive carry flight with TA-0 test vehicle



Stratolaunch screenshots

Stratolaunch completed its second captive carry flight with the Talon-A separation test vehicle, TA-0, Jan. 13, 2023, at the Mojave Air and Space Port in Southern California's High Desert.

This was the ninth flight for the company's launch platform, Roc.

The flight set a new duration record lasting a total of six hours and reached a maximum altitude of 22,500 feet, representing another important step forward in the company's near-term goal of completing separation testing with TA-0.

Primary test objectives included flight outside of the local Mojave area for the first time and evaluation of the separation environment. Roc and TA-0's onboard data systems provide critical information on the aerodynamic loads and moments prior to release of TA-0, helping to ensure safe separation of the vehicle from Roc. The flight team also practiced chase formation and communication sequencing for the upcoming separation test.

A flight data review will determine the next steps on the test timeline. Stratolaunch continues to progress toward separation test and its first hypersonic flight of TA-1 within the first half of 2023.

"Our amazing team is continuing to make progress on our test timeline, and it is through their hard work that we grow closer than ever to safe separation and our first hypersonic flight tests," said Dr. Zachary Krevor, CEO and president for Stratolaunch.

"The thorough evaluation of release conditions will provide data to reduce risks and ensure a clean and safe release of Talon-A during future tests," Krevor said. "We are excited for what's ahead this year as we bring our hypersonic flight test service online for our customers and the nation."



Stratolaunch creates advanced program office in Indiana

Stratolaunch and Purdue University have established a partnership dedicated to accelerating the time required to design, build, test and fly hypersonic vehicles.

Stratolaunch will establish the Stratolaunch Advanced Programs Office at the Convergence Center in Purdue's Discovery Park District in West Lafayette, Ind., to ensure the goals of their collaboration will be rapidly achieved. The office will be led by an experienced advanced design director with support staff that will offer opportunities for student internships.

"I'm excited for our partnership with Purdue because of the positive implications it has for streamlining our nation's hypersonic design capabilities," said Dr. Zachary Krevor, CEO and president at Stratolaunch. "Reducing development and test timelines of hypersonic vehicles is paramount to achieving critical leap-ahead technologies."

Through their collaboration Stratolaunch and Purdue will leverage the university's world class multi-disciplinary hypersonic design methods, ground test facilities, faculty, staff, and students to anchor ground simulations. By combining this capability with Stratolaunch's rapid prototyping fabrication, flight test service, as well as hypersonic flight test data from the Talon-A, the integrated team will develop methodologies to accelerate the design to fly time of hypersonic systems.

"Stratolaunch's unique capacities to provide access to flight data in long-duration hypersonic conditions complements Purdue's advanced hypersonics laboratories and the cutting-edge research by our faculty to advance these technologies while providing our students with real-world learning experiences," Purdue President Mung Chiang said. "Stratolaunch's office at Discovery Park District further strengthens Purdue as an epicenter of hypersonic research and testing in the country."

Stratolaunch recently funded a one-year collaborative research project with four Purdue faculty experts and their graduate students to explore and establish a foundation of best-in-class computational and experimental capabilities, which can be used to create the most comprehensive suite of flight-validated air vehicle design optimization tools.

"Any effort to increase the speed of 'continuous learning' in hypersonic



Courtesy photograph

Purdue University and Stratolaunch leaders announce their collaborative partnership on Jan. 19, 2023 during a hosted reception at The Convergence Center for Innovation in the Discovery Park District in West Lafayette, Indiana. Pictured, from left, are Stratolaunch President and CEO Dr. Zachary Krevor, U.S. Congressional Representative of Indiana Jim Baird, Vice President of Discovery Park District Institutes Dr. Dan DeLaurentis, and Purdue University President Dr. Mung Chiang.

systems design and deployment is a major win for our nation's defense," said Dan DeLaurentis, vice president for Discovery Park District institutes. "The world-class Purdue computational and ground test research capabilities, combined with a the premier hypersonics flight test capability of Stratolaunch, is exactly such an effort, and yet another new avenue for developing and retaining the best talent so desperately needed in this domain."

Mojave-based National Test Pilot School acquires Flight Research Inc.

by Cathy Hansen
special to Aerotech News

The National Test Pilot School at the Mojave Air and Space Port has reached an agreement to acquire Flight Research Inc.

NTPS was established in 1981 at Mojave and is the only civilian test-pilot school in the United States. In 2016, NTPS became the first test-pilot school in the world to be certified as a Flight Test Authorized Training Organization by the European Aviation Safety Organization.

Flight Research is a world leader in aircraft maintenance, advanced flight training specializing in upset prevention and recovery training, flight test support, preparation for space travel, and custom high performance aircraft support and flight training.

A news release announcing the deal, stated, "On behalf of the NTPS Board of Trustees and the board of directors of Flight Research, Inc., we are pleased to announce the acquisition of Flight Research Inc assets and the creation of a new NTPS not for profit Business Unit, Flight Research International LLC."

The release went on to say, "NTPS is The World's Test Pilot School. Our mission is to educate and train military and civilian aviation personnel so that each graduate increases flight test competency, improves flight test and aviation safety, and enhances the aerospace profession worldwide. We complete our mission through our professional Test Pilot and Flight Test Engineer short and on-demand courses. NTPS is accredited to award Master of Science Degrees and maintains an EASA certification."

James E Brown III will continue to lead the NTPS School as president, and Patrick Garman,

NTPS Enterprise CEO, will serve as the interim CEO of the NTPS Enterprise and acting President of Flight Research International.

"The joining of NTPS and FRI increases operational efficiencies and enables both NTPS and FRI to serve the international flight test and aviation communities with a broader set of flight test and advanced flight training options," said Garman.

Retiring Chairman and CEO of Flight Research, Inc., Bill Korner said "It is a natural fit bringing these two exceptional companies together with the ability to offer customers the very best in services that further the safety and advancement of aerospace."

Brown is well known in the flight test community and is a graduate of the USAF Test Pilot School, Class86A at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

He received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering at Virginia Military Institute and master's in management at Troy State University.

Before coming to NTPS, Brown was Chief

Test Pilot on the F-22A and F-117 at Lockheed Martin and was Chief of Flight Operations at Lockheed Martin Skunk Works. He has more than 9,600 flying hours in 141 different aircraft.

Garman has been chief marketing officer at NTPS since 2019. He served as a Master Army Aviator with more than 300 combat hours in the AH-64A helicopter. He served as an Engineering Test Pilot at the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, earned his bachelor of science in general engineering at the United States Military Academy and Masters of Business Administration, at Salve, Regina.

He previously served as senior vice president operations at Sierra Nevada Corporation; vice president corporate programs at Sierra Nevada Corporation; Project Manager for Longbow Apache Attack Helicopter, U.S. Army PEO Aviation; Department of the Army System Coordinator, U.S. Army Staff, Pentagon; commander, AH-64D Remote Training Company, Mesa, Ariz., and commander, Apache Attack Helicopter Company, Fort Hood, Texas.



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Wreaths Across America mobile education exhibit makes a stop in the Antelope Valley



Photograph by Vicki Fisher

Vietnam War Navy Veteran, Phil Roberts signs the welcome home poster at the Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit at Lancaster Cemetery on January 24, 2023. The poster contains signatures of the veterans who have been welcomed home by the mobile education unit since December 2020. This will then go on display at the Wreaths Across America museum in Maine.



Photograph by Adrienne King

Wreaths Across America Ambassadors travel across the country with this unique 48-foot exhibit. On Jan. 24, 2023 the mobile unit visited Lancaster Cemetery.



Photograph by Adrienne King

by **Adrienne King**
special to Aerotech News

Lancaster Cemetery, AV Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, and Vets 4 Veterans hosted the Wreaths Across America's mobile education exhibit on Jan. 24, 2023 at the Lancaster Cemetery.

Wreaths Across America Ambassadors travel across the country with this unique 48-foot exhibit. The exhibit represents the TEACH pillar of the Wreaths Across America mission, sharing information about the veterans and those who serve our country, and how everyone can play a part in remembering and honoring them.

The event welcomed more than 150 visitors including a group of students from Antelope Valley High School. Additionally, the event welcomed home 18 Vietnam veterans. The veterans were presented with a certificate, cap, and a few other pins and the opportunity to sign the big card.

Wreaths Across America is a national nonprofit whose mission is to "Remember our fallen U.S. veterans, honor those who serve, and teach your children the value of freedom."



Courtesy photograph

Vietnam War Navy Veteran, Phil Roberts is presented a welcome home certificate by Vicki Fisher, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) volunteer.



Photograph by Vicki Fisher

Vietnam Veteran Mike Bertell, leader of Point Man Antelope Valley, is presented with a certificate welcoming him home. Stacia Nemeth, treasurer of Point Man Antelope Valley is also pictured.



Photograph by Adrienne King

Vicki Fisher presents Vietnam Veteran Phillip Walin with a welcome home certificate at the Wreaths Across America's mobile education exhibit on Jan. 24, 2023 hosted by Lancaster Cemetery.



Photograph by Adrienne King

Above and below: Lancaster Cemetery, AV Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, and Vets 4 Veterans hosted the Wreaths Across America's mobile education exhibit on Jan. 24, 2023.



Photograph by Adrienne King

Edwards' F-35 conducts first flight with TR-3

A developmental test team from the 461st Flight Test Squadron conducted the first flight of an F-35 in the Technology Refresh 3 (TR-3) configuration on Jan. 6, 2023, at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

Maj. Ryan "BOLO" Luersen, a U.S. Air Force experimental test pilot, piloted the mission in tail number AF-7, a specially instrumented flight test aircraft and the first with TR-3 upgrades installed. He executed a functional check flight profile to verify aircraft airworthiness and system stability. The 50-minute flight, which took the jet to 35,000 feet at speeds just shy of the speed of sound above the Mojave Desert, marked the start of an extensive flight test campaign. Developmental and operational test flights will continue through 2023 to ensure safety and prove warfighting capabilities.

"This is a significant achievement for the F-35 program," said Lt. Gen. Mike Schmidt, program executive officer, F-35 Joint Program Office. "TR-3 is the F-35's critical computer processing electronics upgrade that will continue to provide all our pilots with the capability they need to be successful against any adversary. There is still a lot of work to do and I am confident that our industry partners and government team will get the job done."

TR-3 provides the computational horsepower to support modernized Block 4 capabilities for the F-35 including: new sensor suites, more long-range precision weapons, improved electronic warfare features, more powerful data fusion, and increased cross-platform interoperability. These capabilities provide the warfighter a combat-edge to identify, track, engage, and survive against advanced air, ground, and cyber threats. TR-3 significantly updates core processing power and memory capacity, which will allow the F-35 to run advanced software packed with state-of-the-art warfighting capabilities.

"The F-35 Integrated Test Force at Edwards AFB is proud to have executed yet another first-flight within the F-35 program," said Lt. Col. Christopher Campbell, commander of the 461st Flight Test Squadron and director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force. "Technology Refresh 3 modernizes the computational core of the F-35 air vehicle. Therefore, new TR-3 hardware and software affect nearly every aircraft feature. Today's event was just the start of a comprehensive flight test campaign that will both verify and improve the safety, stability, and performance of the whole F-35 weapon system



Lockheed Martin photograph

An F-35A takes off from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Jan. 6, 2023. A developmental test team from the 461st Flight Test Squadron conducted the first flight of an F-35 in the Technology Refresh 3 (TR-3) configuration at the base. The 50-minute flight, which took the jet to 35,000 feet at speeds just shy of the speed of sound above the Mojave Desert, marked the start of an extensive flight test campaign.

in this new configuration."

"Today's first flight is an important step in enabling future capabilities to ensure F-35 remains unrivaled across the globe. We look forward to continued collaboration with the JPO and industry partners to deliver TR-3," said Bridget Lauderdale, Lockheed Martin vice president and general manager, F-35 Program. "Our mission is to provide our U.S. service members and allies with an aircraft that will guarantee 21st century security so they can deter and defeat threats and come home safely."

The TR-3 program has overcome technical complexity challenges with hardware and software, and is now on-track to deliver capability to the U.S. and its allies starting in 2023. The government and

industry team continue to find innovative ways to ensure delivery of critical capabilities to defeat future threats. Lessons learned in the execution of the TR-3 program will be applied across the entire Block 4 modernization program.

The F-35 is the premier multi-mission, fifth-generation weapon system. Its ability to collect, analyze, and share data is a force multiplier that enhances all assets in the battle space: with stealth technology, advanced sensors, weapons capacity, and range. The F-35, which has been operational since July 2015, is the most lethal, survivable, and interoperable fighter aircraft ever built. The F-35 will serve as the backbone of the U.S. fighter fleet as well as 16 other nations for decades to come.



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Airports panel pressured to oppose leaded avgas

by **Larry Grooms**
special to Aerotech News

LOS ANGELES—In their first meeting of the New Year on Jan. 25, members of the commission responsible for oversight of the five county-owned airports received instruction from the Board of Supervisors to take an action in support of an environmental movement to ban the use of leaded aviation gas.

The instruction adopted by supervisors was delivered by representatives of the Aviation Division of the Department of Public Works, which manages the general aviation airports. This was the first meeting with incoming chair Christena Pascucci holding the gavel, as well as the first meeting for the new commissioner Justine Johnson. The commission reacted with surprise and many questions about what implementing the supervisors' intentions could do to harm general aviation, not just at embattled

Whiteman Airport, but countywide and nationally.

In 2022, supervisors tasked the commissioners to assist in fact-finding to engage the Federal Aviation Administration in expediting closure of Whiteman.

Pascucci and other commissioners quickly realized the unintended consequences should Los Angeles County lead such a method as a means to shut down controversial Whiteman by getting the Environmental Protection Agency to declare use of leaded fuel in aircraft a human health hazard.

The problem with the plan, commissioners pointed out, is that unleaded aviation gasoline is still in the early stages of formulation and testing. Airports Division executive Jason Morgan said, "There is no viable replacement."

Other commissioners, and members of the public who spoke online at the 10 a.m. virtual meeting said the real hazard to human life would be pushing rules and

regulations ahead of scientific reality of the science. At present, only a handful of lead-free fuels are being tested, but not compared for compatibility in aircraft using different blends from different airports. That was cited as a critical safety issue.

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, LA County 5th Supervisorial District, although unavailable for an interview, said through a spokesperson on Jan. 26, "The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to direct the Interim County Counsel to send a five-signature letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to

pursue eliminating lead from aviation gasoline. I remain a firm supporter of the county's regional airports, including William J. Fox Airfield in my District. I believe we can continue to support the aviation industry while pursuing safer and cleaner fuel types."

For clarification, Barger's communications director said in response to a question suggesting, "the Board of supervisors has asked execs from the Department of Public Works on the Aviation Division to facilitate the suggestion from Pacoima Beautiful that leaded aircraft fuel be banned."

The clarification points were:

- The Board took action as a result of a motion that came from Supervisor Hilda Solis, LA County 1st Supervisorial District.
- The motion directed County Counsel to send a five-signature letter to the U.S. EPA to eliminate lead from aviation gasoline and supporting EPA's strong endangerment finding on leaded aviation gasoline.
- The Department of Public Works — to Barger's team knowledge — does not have any role in this matter.

Process changes enable airports panel oversight

by **Larry Grooms**
special to Aerotech News

LOS ANGELES—Meetings of the Los Angeles County Airports Commission have changed this year from largely statistically-based staff reports on operations to two-way discussions from which commissioners extended their oversight role in advising the Board of Supervisors.

Working from a revised agenda and format focused on performance and project status, executive staff with the Aviation Division of the County Department of Public Works, gave commissioners more detailed information on longer range projections and progress reports and deadlines on more immediate activities.

Focusing on years-long inaction to update airport databases, and modernize public information technology sys-

tems, Division of Airports executives and commissioners voted 8-0 to create and appoint a subcommittee in February to expedite the airports marketing and public information hardware and software work. That discussion stimulated the thought that many people not involved in aviation are unaware of the economic, employment, public service and safety, recreational and commercial benefits a local airport brings to their communities.

It was suggested that one county airport put up a billboard at the entrance, alerting motorists to all the many benefits, activities and opportunities the airport had to offer.

Addressing tenant objections to research methods used by a county consultant in recommending rent and rate fees for airport users, division staff reported to commissioners the restrictions on airport revenue, and projections for insolvency without additional funds in a few years.



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412th Test Wing helps celebrate 'First Flights' in the Aerospace Valley

by Adam Bowles
Edwards AFB, Calif.

The 412th Test Wing at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., helped celebrate the First Flights in the Antelope Valley with a dinner and consideration panel co-hosted by the West Coast section of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots in conjunction with the Society of Flight Test Engi-

neers and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Jan. 20, 2023.

The event was held at the John P. Eliopoulos Hellenic Center in Lancaster, Calif.

According to the Society of Experimental Test Pilots' constitution, the goal is "to promote education of members, of those directly associated with aeronautical activities, and of the general public concerning those endeavors peculiar to the profes-

sion of the experimental test pilot."

"It's a joint meeting of lessons learned," Brian Sandberg, President, Society of Experimental Test Pilots. "We are trying to get all of our members and non-members who are involved in the flight test industry to come together and learn from each other and share best practices in flight test in a relaxed setting."

Col. Grant Mizell, 412th Operations Group commander, was on site to moderate the First Flight Consideration Panel which symbolized the Aerospace Valley coming together and recognized the people of Edwards as the hub for all of these amazing first flight successes.

The First Flight Consideration Panel included Dan Canin, Experimental Test Pilot, Lockheed Martin; Bob Hood, Retired Air Force colonel and test pilot at Northrop Grumman; and Evan

Thomas, Director of Flight Operations for Stratolaunch, LLC, who spoke about their first flight experiences, past mistakes and how to mitigate those mistakes.

"When we do flight testing, test pilots fly and flight test engineers plan the test," James Sergeant, Society of Flight Test Engineers, explained. "Learning from each other in a more casual environment and exchanging information; it's very important to keep us all safe when we are flight testing and trying to get our programs done."

Sergeant's comment mirrored another tenet of the Society's constitution: "To promote that part of the aeronautical endeavor wherein there lies the moral obligation of the test pilot to the airplane passenger, the commercial, private and service pilot, without affecting the competitive structure of industry."

Left: Col. Grant Mizell, 412th Operations Group commander, moderates for the First Flight Consideration Panel. The panel included Dan Canin, Experimental Test Pilot, Lockheed Martin, retired U.S. Air Force Col. and Northrop Grumman test pilot Bob Hood, and Evan Thomas, director of flight operations for Stratolaunch.



Col. Grant Mizell, 412th Operations Group commander, receives an award for moderating for the First Flight Consideration Panel.



Air Force photographs by Adam Bowles

At the First Flights dinner, the First Flight Consideration Panel speaks to attendees. The panel consisted of Dan Canin, Experimental Test Pilot with Lockheed Martin; Bob Hood, retired U.S. Air Force colonel and Northrop Grumman Test Pilot; and Evan Thomas, director of flight operations for Stratolaunch.

On this date...



Feb. 4, 1948: Douglas pilot John F. Martin made the first flight of the Douglas D-558-2 Skyrocket at Muroc Army Airfield in California. The aircraft, equipped only with the jet engine, was launched from underneath its B-29 mothership. The goals of the program were to investigate the characteristics of swept-wing aircraft at transonic and supersonic speeds with particular attention to pitch-up (un-commanded rotation of the nose of the aircraft upwards), a problem prevalent in high-speed service aircraft of that era, particularly at low speeds during takeoff and landing, and in tight turns.

Feb. 4, 1969: The North American XB-70Valkyrie, tail number 62-0001, made its final flight. The aircraft, with NASA test pilot Fitz Fulton and Air Force Lt. Col. Emil Sturththal, were the crew for the flight from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. Upon arrival at Wright-Patt, Fulton closed out the plane's log book and handed it over to the curator of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.



Feb. 5, 1971: Apollo 14, third U.S. manned Moon expedition, lands near Fra Mauro, and Alan Shepard and Edward Mitchell walk on Moon for four hours. This was the third manned lunar landing. It was nine years, eight months, 30 days, 18 hours, 43 minutes, 58 seconds since Shepard had lifted off from Cape Canaveral aboard Freedom 7, becoming the first American astronaut launched into space.



Feb. 7, 1984: Space shuttle Challenger astronauts Bruce McCandless II and Robert L. Stewart went on the first untethered spacewalk, which lasted nearly six hours. The STS-51-L mission launched Feb. 3, and landed Feb. 11, after deploying two communications satellites.



Feb. 8, 2012: NASA 911, the Boeing 747-146 that was used as a space shuttle carrier, made its last flight, a 20-minute hop from Edwards Air Force Base to Palmdale Plant 42 in California. In 38 years, the aircraft accumulated 33,004.1 flight hours, which is relatively low time for an airliner. NASA 911 made its first flight Aug. 31, 1973, and flew in commercial service with Japan Airlines for 15 years. It was obtained by NASA in 1989 and turned over to Boeing for modification as the second Space Shuttle Carrier Aircraft. NASA 911 is on display at the Joe Davies Heritage Airpark, Palmdale, Calif.



Feb. 10 1962: American U-2 pilot Gary Powers, shot down and arrested in the Soviet Union May 1, 1960, is exchanged in a well-publicized spy swap. Powers had been flying a CIA U-2 reconnaissance mission from Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, over the Ural Mountains when he was shot down.

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Melvill, Rutan donate Long EZ's to EAA Museum

by **Cathy Hansen**
special to Aerotech News

Mike Melvill and Dick Rutan have been friends for more than 50 years.

Melvill is the former vice president and chief test pilot at Scaled Composites, SpaceShipOne pilot, and America's first commercial astronaut; and Rutan is a former U.S. Air Force Vietnam fighter pilot, and record-setting Voyager aircraft command pilot.

These guys are true friends and they always could bounce ideas off of each other and come up with sound solutions. They built their Long EZ aircraft side-by-side at Mojave and when the planes were completed, they flew them side-by-side in the air.

Both men are now in their 80s and have made the decision to display these record setting aircraft in the Experimental Aircraft Association Museum in Oshkosh, Wisc.

Mike and Sally Melvill were first to

In the phonetic alphabet used by pilots, S stands for Sierra and H stands for Hotel. In the U.S. Air Force SH stands for something entirely different! Use your imagination. (Smile.) Of course, fighter pilot Dick Rutan believed he was SH! (And, I'll bet he was!)

As a Tactical Air Command fighter pilot during most of his two decades in the Air Force, Rutan flew 325 combat missions in Vietnam, 105 of them as a member of the Super Sabre FAC (Forward Air Controller), a high risk operation commonly known as the MISTY's.

While on his last strike reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam in 1968, he was hit by enemy ground fire, forced to eject from a flaming F-100 and was later rescued by the Air Force's Jolly Green Giant helicopter team. Before retirement as a U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel in 1978, Rutan had been awarded the Silver Star,



Courtesy photographs

Ole Blue, Dick Rutan's Long EZ.

play was, "That's half way around the world — why don't we go on around the whole world!"

There are many Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) chapters around the world, so the trip quickly became a tour from one EAA chapter to another.

They had to add external fuel tanks for the long flights across the oceans. Dick said, "The external tanks were supposed to be temporary, but after the EA flight, I turned the starboard tank into a High Maintenance Support Pod. You can get a bunch of stuff in a 25-gallon tank."

They had to plan a route that would be doable for their little home-builts. Finding the shortest route across the Atlantic posed a problem, but they finally agreed on a route.

Mike and Dick departed Mojave on April 4, 1997, and headed east. They crossed all the world's oceans, visited 14 countries, traveled more than one and a half times the distance of the equator, and returned home to Mojave on June 24, 1997.

They flew long 18-hour flights over the ocean at night, and Dick said that he was just hanging onto Mike's strobe light in the black void.

Mike painted names of all the places they visited on this remarkable flight, the date that they left Mojave and the date they returned.

Some of the trip was heavenly and extremely interesting. Tahiti, Easter Island and the Galapagos Islands were some of their favorite stops. The huge statues on Easter Island were mysterious and awesome. The animals on the Galapagos were unafraid and beautiful.

It's fun to know people who are driven to pursue such an intrepid adventure that others only dream of doing. There was no fun in the terrible storms they encountered — just pure terror!

Mike said people kept asking how they stayed awake during their long legs over the ocean; his reply was simple, "You can't sleep when you're terrified!"

They traveled 38,791 statute miles, used 2,108 (U.S.) gallons of fuel with a total flying time of 232 hours. Around the world in 80 nights!

Mike Melvill — first commercial astronaut

Mike's Long EZ was often seen

In a quote from an AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association) 2013 article: "Mike raced motorcy-



Dustin Riggs and Dick Rutan with Ole Blue Long EZ. Riggs persuaded Rutan to let him reassemble Ole Blue. Riggs first flight in the aircraft was in February 2013 at the Plane Crazy Saturday event at the Mojave Air and Space Port.



Mike Melvill's Long EZ

donate their Long EZ to the museum and recently word was received that the aircraft had arrived in Oshkosh.

Dick Rutan said, "Since both planes, Mike's and my Long EZ 'Ole Blue' were both built together and flown together, it's only fitting that Ole Blue join Mike's EZ for enshrinement in the EAA Museum at OSH. We are in the process of making that happen." In an email Dick said, "Ole Blue first flight was April 3, 1981."

It always made me laugh when I saw the registration number or N-number on Dick's airplane — N69SH.

five Distinguished Flying Crosses, 16 Air Medals.

EAA Friendship Tour

In 1997, Melvill and Rutan set out on an exciting and terribly hazardous trip flying their homebuilt Long-EZs around the world with the EAA Friendship Tour.

It all began when Mike told Dick that he wanted to fly his own homebuilt airplane to his hometown in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Mike asked Dick if he would like to fly along in formation. Dick's re-

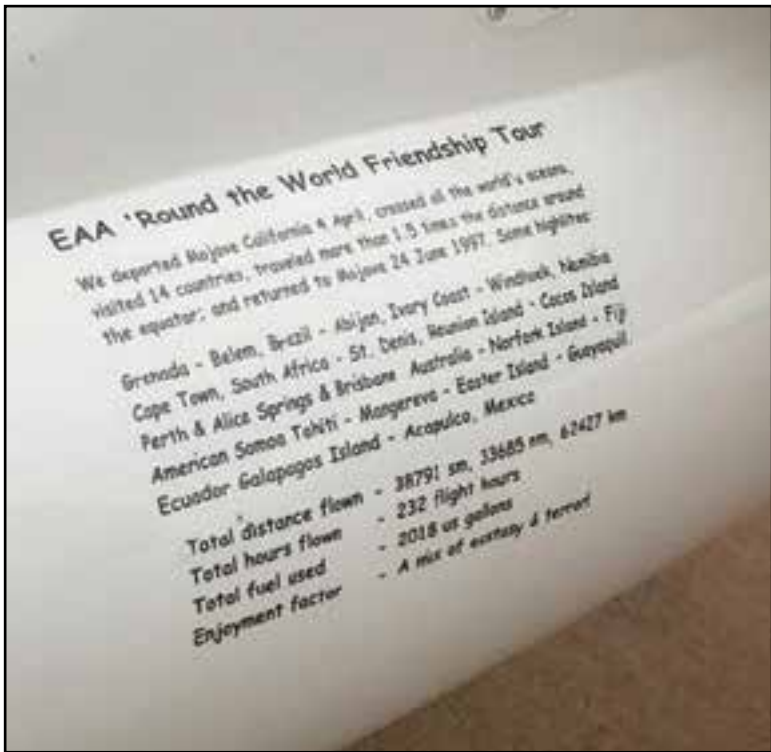


Dick Rutan (left) and Mike Melvill planning their around-the-world Long EZ flight.

at Plane Crazy Saturday held on the third Saturday of each month at Mojave Air and Space Port, which, by the way is a spaceport, due to Mike Melvill and Brian Binnie piloting the Burt Rutan/Scaled Composites/Paul G. Allen's SpaceShipOne into the aerospace history books and winning the Ansari X-Prize in 2004!

cles and became a machinist at 17. He married his childhood sweetheart, Sally, and they immigrated to the United States in the late 1960s. He became a U.S. citizen in 1972."

Extraordinary men and extraordinary aircraft — a great combination! I am looking forward to seeing the two Long EZ's at the EAA Museum, hopefully near the Voyager Gallery!



Following the around-the-world flight, Mike Melvill painted a list on the side of his Long EZ of all the places he and Dick Rutan had visited.



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Who in their right mind thought this was a good idea?

Artist tagged for L.A. public mural painted ‘depravities’ of U.S. troops

by **Dennis Anderson**
special to Aerotech News

One of public artist Sandow Birk's paintings depicts an Army soldier in Iraq ogling a bare-breasted woman in belly dancer or "harem girl" attire, and that painting is titled "The Soldier's Dream."

A painting titled "In The Palace of Saddam" shows another soldier in body armor cradling his automatic weapon as he gazes longingly at a seductively posed female soldier, supine on cushions.

Yet a third painting, "The Riddle of the Sphinx," appears to show a soldier wagging his finger at yet another bare-breasted figure, a winged sphinx come to life, gazing at the pile of skulls behind the soldier's boots.

One painting titled "Hero One" shows a slumbering G.I. Its companion piece, "Hero Two," is a painting of a wide awake Middle East suicide bomber who looks prepared to detonate. The artist apparently removed the "Hero Two" title from his website after controversy erupted.

The paintings are from the artist's series dubbed "Depravities of War." Metro, serving metropolitan Los Angeles and one of the largest public transit agencies in the nation, commissioned Birk to create a mural that would display at the entryway to the VA's Greater West Los Angeles Health Center, one of the largest hospitals in the nation serving veterans.

The artist was selected without the panelists having seen "Depravities of War," and with no veteran participation in the artist selection.

It's a fair statement that veterans who became aware of this are not happy. Several spoke out at a recent special meeting of the Los Angeles Veterans Advisory Commission.

"Just the fact that he was considered for this work shows how brain dead the people are who are running this show," said Diego Garcia of the ad hoc coalition called the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Garcia was

among the half-dozen speakers at the meeting decrying the selection process.

I serve on the Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission, but these opinions are mine, and personal. The commission is advisory, so commissioners enjoy no lofty powers, which is OK by me. If something comes up at a monthly meeting that we think the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors should know about, we discuss it. Then we vote on a recommendation.

Low on the pyramid of power as we are, everyone appointed to the commission is a veteran but our agenda is pretty modest against the big map of veteran crises in America, but one thing is certain. Like most people, veterans do not like to feel ignored, or insulted.

A reasonable person, seeing "Depravities of War" might understandably conclude that the artist's view of soldiers who served in Post-9/11 conflict are displayed in a light to show them to be lecherous and depraved. The suicide bomber was titled as "Hero Two" until that paintings title was scrubbed from the online exhibit.

We still have 17 veterans a day committing suicide. Vietnam and Post 9/11 veterans continue to experience homelessness. Agent Orange-triggered illnesses kill veterans 50 years after Vietnam. The president recently signed "PACT Act" legislation to fund medical help for veterans poisoned by "burn pits" in Afghanistan and Iraq — 20 years after the 9/11 wars began. Troops there were tasked to burn oil-soaked human waste, discarded junk, plastic, solvents, and sometimes body parts. So, it was unhealthy, and troops are still getting sick.

Closer to home, a different Los Angeles advisory commission is trying to make the Department of Veterans Affairs keep its promise to make the VA's Greater West L.A. Healthcare System serve veterans only, rather than vested Westside interests. The 388-acre VA grounds were promised as a home for vets, not affluent recreationists using VA tennis courts.



A section of the proposed Sandow Birk's mural for the future LA Metro station adjacent to the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center.

It's in keeping with that promise that the mission of our two commissions converge as sounding boards for redress of grievance. With the Metro station at the VA hospital due to open in 2027, if the project advances, artist Sandow Birk will be paid a hefty commission to create a veterans' mural.

As for the mural proposal Birk submitted that was the basis for his selection, nothing of the veteran experience in included in his concept art. Instead, it depicts a Navy dirigible of 1930, a ship and a submarine all named "Los

Angeles." Also included is a pastoral scene of Los Angeles that dates back to dinosaurs. Veterans are nowhere to be seen in his concept art.

Metro states it consulted with veterans, but veterans in public hearings aren't buying that. It appears no veterans were consulted in the Birk commission. The selection panel appears to have had little to no veteran insight. And it was veterans who found out about Birk's body of work.

This is not over. There will be more hearings. And more questions will be

asked. One question would be, "Who thought picking this artist would be a good candidate to paint a mural about veterans?" Had they seen his art?

Editor's note: Dennis Anderson, a licensed clinical social worker, serves on the Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission. An Army veteran, he deployed to Iraq with the California National Guard to cover the war as an embedded journalist reporting for newspapers and Editor & Publisher magazine.



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Sgt. Alvin York: The greatest soldier of all time

by Bob Alvis
special to Aerotech News

Spending your life around the military and educating yourself about the sacrifices, heroics, and commitments, you realize it's pretty easy to look at all branches of the military and find many individuals who have gone above and beyond their oath and served in a manner that made them legendary.

With all the men and women who have served in the United States military in every war and conflict, it seems like trying to find that one soldier who transcends them all would be difficult.

Funny, while researching a different subject matter, a story I thought I knew very well came to light and the further I went down that trail, the more I learned about a soldier who was pretty famous, but his back story and life overall made me realize that his military service added up to considering him the greatest soldier of all time.

Few would have guessed at his humble birth in a one-room cabin on Dec. 13, 1887, that Alvin Cullum York would become the standard of excellence for a military man.

Born in Pall Mall, Tenn., Alvin York was the third of 11 children. Raised on

night "after being very drunk and fighting." His mother, who had continually pleaded with her son to change his ways, asked him a simple question: "Alvin, when are you going to be a man like your father and your grandfathers?"

York recalled, "I promised my mother that night I would never drink again; I would never smoke or chew again; I would never gamble again; I would never cuss or fight again. And I have never drunk any whiskey, I have never touched cards, I have never smoked or chewed, and I have never fought or rough-housed since that night."

When World War I came around, those that fought it called it the "war to end all wars" as it was as brutal as any war could have ever been. The mechanized weapons and the trench-style warfare produced killing fields that could be called the worst of all time.

When the draft came for Alvin, he had become a devout Christian and as killing went against his teaching, he fought with himself as to which leader he should answer to: His God or his country.

In June 1917, at age 29, Alvin York received his notice to register for the draft. On the same day York started a diary which he kept faithfully throughout the war.

Being called to take up arms in war caused a conflict within York. His ancestors had served in war since the American Revolution and York felt that "my ancestors would want me to do whatever my country demanded of me." Yet, at the same time, York reasoned that "if I went away to war and fought and killed, according to my reading of the Bible, I weren't a good Christian."

York decided that God's law must take precedent over family tradition or the laws of man. When York registered for the draft he wrote simply on the form, "I don't want to fight."

He attempted to be exempted by reason that his church forbade its members to kill. But his exemption was denied on the grounds that his church did not expressly prohibit killing during war.

York's crisis of conscience was not settled until, according to York, "I

prayed and prayed. I prayed two whole days and a night out on the mountain-side." Ultimately, York decided that God had given him the go-ahead to "answer the call of my country."

Alvin arrived in France on May 21, 1918. His unit first saw major action during the Battle of Saint-Mihiel in September 1918. By this time York had been promoted to the rank of corporal and given command of a squad. The drive was a success and the American Army moved on to the Argonne Forest for the last major drive of World War I. It was on Oct. 8, 1918 in the Argonne Forest that Cpl. Alvin York performed the acts of extreme bravery for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. When the movie of Sergeant York came out with Gary Cooper playing Alvin, you would think such an event could only be dreamed up by backroom movie makers who were detached from the reality of the battlefield and more interested in selling tickets than dealing in facts. But back in those old black and white days of film, the stories pretty much reflected the reality of what actually happened.

York's battalion was charged with advancing across a valley and taking the two hills on the far side. The Germans, however, were dug into the hills with machine gun emplacements and had a complete view of the valley. According to York: "It was kind of a triangular shaped valley. So you see we were getting it from the front and both flanks. Well, the first and second waves got about halfway across the valley and then were held up by machine gun fire from the three sides. It was awful. Our losses were very heavy."

York and the other squad commanders assigned to the left flank of the advance, quickly realized that the hills would be impossible to take from the front without significantly more men. They decided to attempt a sneak attack by advancing around the enemy's flank and attacking from the rear.

At this point the combined forces of the squads, including York's, was 17 men. Upon advancing undetected around the enemy's flank and approaching from the rear, the unit stumbled across the headquarters of the machine gun regiment. The Germans were eating breakfast at the time and were completely surprised by the Americans. Most promptly surrendered, but one German shot at York, who quickly killed the German with one shot. The Americans disarmed and assembled the Germans, but by this time the machine gunners on the hill had been alerted to the Americans' presence.

According to York: "There were about 30 of them. They were commanding us from a hillside less than 30 yards away. They couldn't miss. And they didn't!" The machine guns took out nine men, including an officer, leaving Corporal York in charge. It was at this point that York began to make history. As the initial blast of machine gun fire hit the Americans,



Courtesy photograph

Sgt. Alvin York and his mother on return from World War I.

York was standing out in the open. York wrote in his diary: "Those machine guns were spitting fire and cutting down the undergrowth all around me something awful ... I didn't have time to dodge behind a tree or dive into the brush, I didn't even have time to kneel or lie down ... As soon as the machine guns opened fire on me, I began to exchange shots with them."

This is just the beginning of this amazing story and, as I said, his actions so legendary that I will end it here and pick up with the rest of the story in the next issue, as I want to make sure you can judge his actions and see if they

would fit your definition of the greatest of all time.

Also, I want to also share the amazing story that began after his military career was over when good times and good deeds ended up costing him dearly and having him end up penniless and in dire straits with the country that awarded him the Medal of Honor.

I can't wait to share "the rest of the story." It's the type of story that will make you think about how conditions, personalities, and a lot of spirituality can define a man or women for all time.

Until next time, Bob out ...



Courtesy photograph

Gary Copper played Sgt. Alvin York in the 1941 movie "Sergeant York."



Courtesy photograph

The brave of American hero Sgt. Alvin York near his life-long home in Tennessee.

a small farm, the son of a poor blacksmith left school after the third grade, admitted that in his youth he was "wild and bad for five or six years."

He recalled: "I used to drink a lot of moonshine. I used to gamble my wages away week after week. I used to stay out late at night. I had a powerful lot of fist fights ... I knew all the time I was going along this kind of life, deep down in my heart, that I was doing things that were not right."

Alvin told of coming home one

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The following Property consists of: Furniture, Wall Art, Appliances, Personal Items & More

NAME:

Tina Fuentes • Luis Torrez
Amanda Harper • Rosi Becerra
Doris Schonfeld • Richard Rivera
Jessica Terracciano • Calvin Mitchell
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0308 Calzada, Patricia
0574 Siebenhoven, H. Von

Date: January 23rd, 2023 Signed NOVA STORAGE

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Business & Professional Code Section 21700-21707

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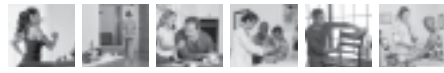
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E307 Guynes, Sabrina
E313 Payton, Virles
G586 Duran, Tracy
B079 Sharp, Debra
F541 Lawrence, Mechelle

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