

NEWS & COMMENTS FROM OUR MEMBERS

***What Happened to the Wright Brothers After 1903 and 1908?* by F. E. C. Culick, Vol 66, No. 1 Spring 2021.**

We had a number of members' comments regarding this article with several noting that we probably could have picked a more appropriate title. The following are among a sampling of those comments received.

Thank you for publishing the important and informative article "What Happened to the Wright Brothers After 1903 and 1908?" by F.E.C. Culick. Rather long, but the detail was necessary. I might have preferred a different title, since the events after 1903 and 1908 are covered only in the last four pages, but no matter.

The important point is that Mr. Culick has done his homework. I particularly relate to his findings since they are consistent with my own, as covered in my just-published novel *A Romance of Flight* (Mountain Arbor Press, 2021). Wilbur was indeed the primary developer of powered, controlled flight. I may have presented the case in a fictional context, but my account is consistent with that of Culick. Orville obviously wanted equal recognition with his older brother, (see *How We Invented the Airplane*, originally published 1953, from Orville's text of 1920), but the documentation provided by Culick clearly establishes the dominant role of Wilbur.

Again, a significant contribution to aviation history.

Donald Pattillo #20121

The AAHS *Journal* has a duty, I believe, to serve as a platform from whence "revisionist" history can be nominated but I, for one, found this one most disturbing. Wilbur, in his correspondence, almost inevitably used the terms "we" and "our" in describing their work, and the notion that any such a partnership must rise to the level of absolute "equality" is unreasonable.

Dan Hagedorn

Since he was cited by Dr. Culick, we reached out to Dr. Tom Crouch (*The Bishop's Boys*) for comment. After reviewing the article, the feedback he provided stated, that he agrees Wilbur was clearly the one moving things forward before the first trip to Kitty Hawk in 1900. Beyond 1900, Dr. Crouch indicated that he doesn't concur with Dr. Culick's conclusions saying that there are numerous points for which counter arguments could be cited. He stated one of the strongest arguments against Orville being strictly a follower is that Wilbur insisted that his brother write the first long account of their work, "The Wright Brothers' Aeroplane," that was published in *Century Magazine*, September 1908, p. 641-650.

Dr. Crouch also referenced a quote by Grover Loening, who remarked that, "Glenn Curtiss was a great mechanic and Orville Wright was a great engineer."

While I found Dr. Culick's analysis interesting and thought provoking, I think in the end we are left with no clear proof regarding his postulations about the Wright brothers. It seems to me that it is probably a case of where neither could have achieved success by themselves. What may be more likely is that Wilbur was the aerodynamacist or designer while Orville was the engineer that was able to translate concepts and ideas into practical implementations. To say one or the other was the "brains behind the operation" would be disingenuous because neither could have created the Wright Flyer alone.

I think their father stated this most succinctly. "Neither could have mastered the problem alone. As inseparable as twins, they are indispensable to each other." (Bishop Milton Wright, January 16, 1904).

To support this point, one can look at the role that Orville played with the Dayton Wright Airplane company from 1917 to 1923. One of his last efforts in the early 1920s was the Dayton Wright OW-1 (Orville Wright 1). This four-place single-engine aircraft established a number of world records and, in essence, formed the basis of the design of most general aviation aircraft that have followed. And this was an effort made long after Wilbur's passing.

Hayden Hamilton
AAHS Managing Editor

***Superfortresses for the RAF, The Boeing B-29 Washington in U.K. Service*, by Tony Fairbairn, Vol. 66, No. 1, Spring 2021.**

In this article the author mentions that, "...while WW349 was still in the U.K. being prepared for despatch at the Vickers aircraft company at Wisley, Surrey, it was struck by a taxiing Vickers Valiant and so badly damaged that it was written off."

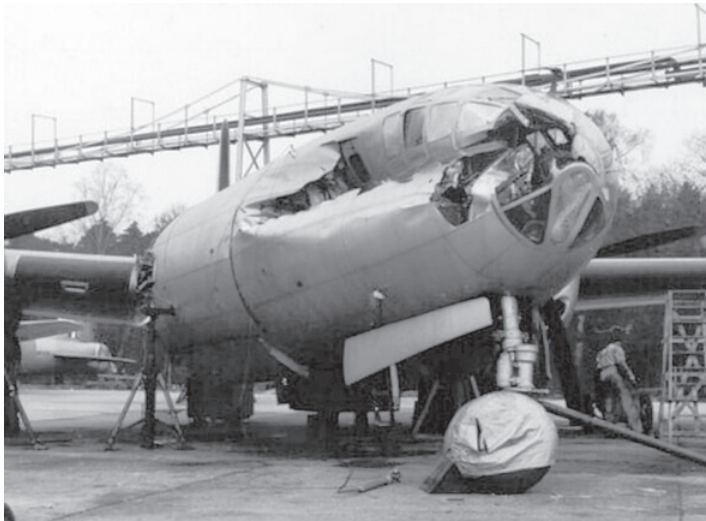
Member Michael West has provided a photo of the damaged aircraft (obvious why it was written off) along with an excerpt of the accident report as follows:

On Wednesday 20 April, 1955, the daily inspection for flight on Valiant WP216 was carried out. The aircraft was granted a Form 1090 Serial No. 57725 at 09.40 hours.

After all signatures had been obtained from Mr. C. Allen, 1st Pilot, a normal pre-flight check was carried out by crew and aircraft taxied to west end of runway and lined up for takeoff. Pilot then taxied aircraft down the runway and returned again and lined up for takeoff. After approximately 5 minutes pilot taxed along runway to return to tarmac apron.

On passing Fire Station, pilot cut all engine power

and aircraft gathed speed, and it was then realized that pilot was gesticulating from the DV window for ground crew to disperse from aircraft path. At this point full nose steering control seemed normal and pilot attempted a complete circle of tarmac having to make a slight diversion to miss crane and driver on apron. The attempt to circle tarmac was unsuccessful and the port wing struck the nose of Washington Aircraft WW349. The aircraft went on and finally came to rest with port wing parallel to fuselage of Valiant WP203, which at that time was being refueled. Both Valiant WP203 and Washington sustained major damage, crew on aircraft coming to rest successfully, jettisoned entrance door.



From Michael West

CORRECTIONS

Our ever vigilant members help us catch errors that slip through all our proof reading, for which we are forever grateful. Member Abbott Hafter caught a number as noted below:

“The Life and Work of Aviation Photographer & Historian William “Bill” Larkins, Part 2,” by Jim Geldert, Vol. 66, No. 1, Spring 2021. Page 11.

Mr. Hafter notes that there are no colonels in the Navy, citing “...his close friend Col. Bruno Shultz, an ex-U.S. Navy pilot and ...”

We contacted the author, who in turn has verified that Mr. Shultz was a commander, and not a colonel.

“Long Island’s Aviation Heritage,” by Robert G. Waldvogel, Vol. 65, No. 4, Winter 2020.

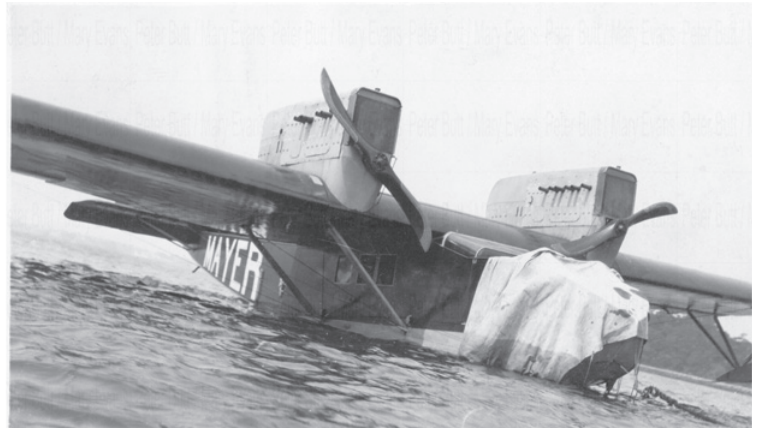
Mr. Hafter notes that the aircraft in the photo on page 310 is actually a Republic P-47D and not a P-47N as noted in the caption. A quick check of Joe Baugher’s USAAF ids, the FAA registry and the Warbird Registry confirm that we misidentified the aircraft. We’ll try to be more diligent in the future.

He also notes that on page 309, the aircraft in the photo is not a Curtiss P-40N, but a P-40M instead. Using the same

sources mentioned above, we have a conflict in that the FAA registration database shows the plane registered as a P-40N. The Warbird registry shows it as a P-40M. We tend to believe that the latter is correct and that the photo caption inaccurately identifies the plane.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

I have a mystery flying boat I am hoping someone can help with. Attached are two images for perusal. I have placed queries on a few social media pages and the best someone has come up with was a mention in a 1920s Philadelphia newspaper.



Peter also has submitted query regarding an ELINT(?) antenna mounted on an unidentified B-17. He believes the photo was taken at a South Carolina Air Force Base, and hopes someone



might be able to provide additional information.

If you can help with either of these, please let the AAHS editor know and we’ll forward the information.

Peter Butt

American Aviation Historical Society Journal, Summer 2021

PHOTO OF WILSON B-3 MID-WING

In the Spring Journal, Vol 66, No. 1, "News & Comments" Dan Hagedorn put out an appeal for a photo of the Wilson B-3 Mid-wing. Life member Bill Lewis indicates we didn't dig deep enough in the literature. He indicates that *The Pilot* magazine published a photo of the Wilson B-3 in their June 1931 (pg.10). It a very small uncaptioned photo, but is the aircraft in question.

The Pilot magazine was published from 1928 to 1939. It started in Los Angeles, Calif., and in 1931 moved to Glendale.



Mr. Lewis goes on to point that that the editors managed to "fat-finger" the spelling of Tony LeVier's name (not Le Vere). We'll try not to do this in the future.



This 1934 Kinner Sportster K, NC14218, c/n 136, is currently in AAHS President Jerri Bergen's hangar awaiting restoration to flying condition. Photographed by Chuck Stewart on May 20, 2000. (AAHS archives, AAHS-S128029)

MOVING

IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO MOVE, PLEASE SEND US YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. We cannot get your *Journal* to you if we don't know where you live. To ensure uninterrupted service, please let us know at least six weeks in advance.

AAHS LAUNCHES AAHSPlaneSpotter.com

The Society has a challenge that it has been working to address. We have thousands of images in the archives that need to be digitized and cataloged. Digitizing is the easy part and we have active programs for scanning both our negatives and slides, in addition to thousands of digital images already available.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS WHO CAN HELP CATALOG THESE IMAGES!!

All you need is a computer with an Internet connection -- no special software or hardware required -- and an interest in taking the time to help us catalog the images. Go to AAHSPlaneSpotter.com and check out the DEMO to get an idea of what's involved.

If you are interested, we'll set you up with a batch of images to work on and give you access to them via AAHSPlaneSpotter.com. Just send a note to the Ivolunteer@AAHSPlaneSpotter.com saying you are interested - please include any preferences in types of aircraft you are comfortable working on.