

Welcome to

FLIGHTLINE



Newsletter of the American Aviation Historical Society

No. 25-01

17 April 2025

Last October we announced that AAHS *FlightLine* would move away from its legacy 16-page print layout and go to a more frequently produced interactive online format.

The target date for introduction of the new *FlightLine* has come and gone, and for that we apologize. But AAHS is staffed entirely by volunteers, and a pretty small group at that. Time and resources must be juggled accordingly. Meanwhile, enjoy this interim return to pdf, and please bear with us until we can get the tech details ironed out in our online platform.

AAHS's stated purpose is "to collect, preserve and promote the written and visual record of planes, people, places and events involved in the development and expansion of American aviation." *FlightLine* fits mostly in the "promote" part of that mission by keeping readers up to date on activities involving AAHS and offering short aviation-related items of general interest. Although it's aimed primarily at members, anyone who drops by <https://www.aahs-online.org/> can view *FlightLine* numbers going all the way back to 2009.

Back to the Future

In *FlightLine* No. 211, which rang in New Years 2024, we looked at some words that served as a birth announcement for the American Aviation Historical Society. We think it's worth repeating.

In the very first edition of the *AAHS Journal*, Bill Larkins, one of America's pioneer aviation historians and a founding father of AAHS, put it this way: "Our aim is to provide the

stimulation for a greater degree of interest on the part of all the membership, as well as attract new members who have not before realized the vast amount of historical information concerning our own aircraft and aviation activities that needs to be digested, documented, and preserved before it is lost forever."

Those words were written almost 70 years ago, but they're as relevant now as they were then. In short, we hope to encourage—actually, we *NEED*—more involvement from our members. Our vision for *FlightLine* is to enable our readers to share, quickly and easily, relevant aviation news from their parts of the country, ask and answer questions relating to aviation history, and any other matters of interest to our fellow members. It's coming, so *stay tuned and join in!*

Other news

Elsewhere in this belated edition, you'll find more about what's been going on with AAHS, and where we're headed in the future. As always, we welcome feedback from our members. AAHS is *your* Society. Tell us what works, what needs work, and what you'd like to see more—or less—of. We'll do our best to make it happen.

Joe Martin
AAHS *FlightLine* Editor



AAHS Headquarters At Historic Flabob Airport

The aerial view above is looking roughly northeast. The AAHS HQ building is in the yellow boxed area. The other building with an orange tile roof is the airport cafe. So what's inside HQ? The building houses our administrative work areas, as well as the library, photo archives, and a protective "vault" for our rarer artifacts—all integral parts of your Society's mission to preserve and promote the history of American aviation.

Charlie Shaw is the day-to-day presence at HQ during regular hours; 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday, along with volunteers who are on site as scheduled or for special events. For info about HQ or AAHS in general, or to schedule a visit, email Charlie at charles.shaw@aahs-online.org or call (951) 777-1332. If there's no answer, leave a message. The appropriate person will get back to you ASAP.

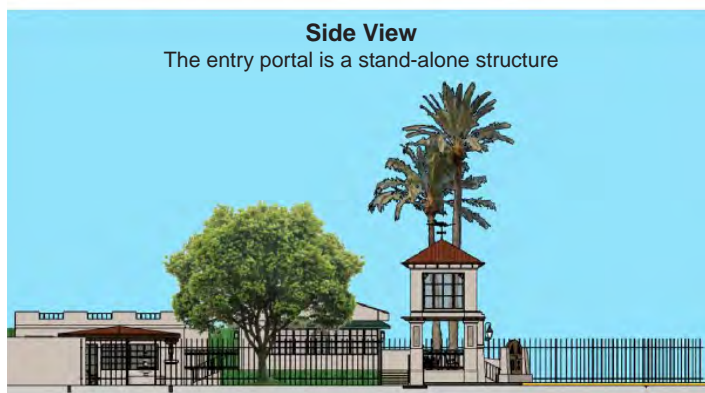
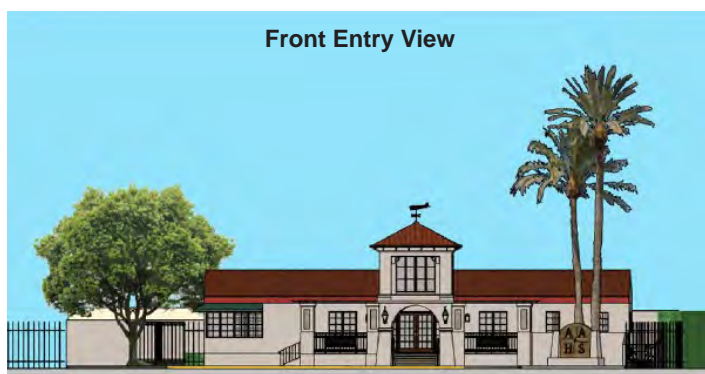
The AAHS Library and Photo Archive

Volunteer Julie Orpen has spent many hours sorting and cataloging AAHS's sizable collection of aviation magazines, not to mention tidying up the general list of library holdings, which now numbers over sixteen thousand items, including individual periodical issues. Another 2025 "electronic goal" is to make this listing available online for those wishing to utilize this outstanding aviation history resource.

More than one million prints, negatives, and 35 mm slides are stored in a climate-controlled area in the HQ building. The place to start researching images is the AAHS Image Library, accessible at https://www.aahs-online.org/resources/search_image_lib.php. Only a fraction of the collection is included, and new images (sometimes lots of them!) are received from time to time. If you have a detailed query, contact Hayden Hamilton at webmaster@aahs-online.org.

The Future at Flabob

Plans are in the works for some significant changes at Flabob, including a major upgrade to AAHS HQ, although *nothing is final at this point*. The renderings below, created by President Tyson Smith, have been presented to airport management as AAHS's vision of an exterior makeover, reminiscent of a 1930s Art Deco style airport entry portal.



NEWS and VIEWS

From the Editorial Hangar

Which would be the five or ten most influential aircraft in history—and why?

Let's begin by clarifying a few terms. Note that I said aircraft, not airplane. *Jane's Aerospace Dictionary*, 3rd. ed., defines Aircraft as "Device designed to sustain itself in atmosphere above Earth's surface, to which it may be attached by a tether that offers no support." That opens the field to lighter-than-air machines.

To use a couple of sports analogies, "most influential" is not necessarily the same thing as "most valuable," or "greatest." For our purposes, let's consider an influential aircraft to be one that altered the way people thought about and participated in human flight. The P-51 Mustang, for example, might be judged the greatest piston engine fighter ever, but did it influence the nature of air warfare? I'd say no.

I haven't started my own most influential list yet, but the Douglas DC-3 would be near the top. Some of the fat-winged Fokkers and the Ford Trimotor were certainly trail blazers, but it was the DC-3 that proved air travel could be safe and reliable, and that operators could make a profit in offering it. Therefore, I'd argue that it was the most influential airliner in history.

While the Mustang or the Spitfire wouldn't make my list, the Messerschmitt Me-262 might, not because of its wartime impact, which was in fact rather minimal, but for the influence it had on future developments. Granted, it was German aeronautical research in general, not necessarily the Me-262 specifically, that sparked the turbojet and swept wing revolutions, but the 262 was by far the best known and most visible catalyst for the post-war innovations which followed.

You get the idea. So sit back with the beverage of your choice and think about an aircraft – or several – that you'd consider to be among the most influential in history. Jot down a few words about it and send your picks to the email address at the end of this page.

Enabling readers to immediately and directly respond to a post like this is a feature we hope to incorporate in the interactive *FlightLine*. Viewers can then add their own comments. The idea is to generate more exchanges of ideas and information, the best and most interesting of which would end up as articles in the *AAHS Journal*.

Should AAHS revive Research Projects?

Speaking of *Journal* articles, in the olden days folks would come across some area of aviation history that sparked enough interest to dig deeper. They'd let us know, then AAHS would assign a project number and ask members to collaborate in adding to the knowledge base, the ideal end result being an article. (Open [this link](#) to see some project examples from 1971.)

Technology wise, doing research of this type nowadays is a whole new world. But contrary to what some would have

us believe, AI doesn't know everything—or where to find it. Us dinosaurs who've been around aviation for a half-century or longer may have flown or worked on that airplane you're wondering about, or know of some dusty old tech order or document that contains the sought-after info.

Again, if this is something that could be of interest and benefit to our membership, give us a holler. If there's sufficient response, we'll look into a restart.

Wants & Disposals

Need to thin that herd of old aviation books and magazines, or maybe you're looking for something to round out a collection? AAHS can help. Drop us a note at the address below describing what you're after, and we'll publish in the next *FlightLine* at no charge.

Book Reviews

Get a new aviation book recently, or maybe bought one that disappointed? Same deal—tell us what you thought of it. If you don't want to do a full-up review, we'll try to find a copy and check it out ourselves, or post your comments (with your permission, of course) and ask other readers to weigh in.

AAHS Collections

AAHS recently received a sizable donation of materials from the Frank Strnad estate. Mr. Strnad was a well respected historian of aviation's early days, particularly of the areas around Long Island which were the sites of some of America's first flying fields and aircraft manufacturing plants. This trove will take some time to sort through and catalog, but we feel certain that we'll find some very nice—perhaps even rare—specimens that will add substantially to AAHS's documentary and photographic holdings.

Spring 2025 AAHS Journal

This edition will go to the printer shortly. Among other goodies, you'll find articles on Howard Hughes' H-1 racer, Floyd Bennett Field, a family fleet of PBYs by CEO Jerri Bergen, and a piece on stick and tissue model airplanes by Steve Johnston.

Remember folks, AAHS relies on you, our members, to provide the *Journal* content. We need more, and we need it more often!



Questions ?
Comments ?
Squawks ?

Flightline@aahs-online.org



At the Recent SoCal Airshow

Standing in front of his beautifully restored Lockheed 12A, board member Les Whittlesey gazes skyward from the ramp at March Air Reserve Base during the 2025 SoCal Airshow, April 12-13.



AAHS is There

(L) The AAHS booth attracted a good number of visitors. The piggy bank was fattened by around \$365 on the day. (R) Volunteer Heather Wilson, HQ office manager Charlie Shaw, and long-time member Ed Martin hold the AAHS fort. (Pix via Jerri Bergen/John Martin)

A No-cost Workshop for Vintage Wooden Gliders

Lawrenceville, Illinois, Airport (KLWV)

Vintage Wood Workshop at Lawrenceville

June 12 – 14, 2025

Hands-on learning experience working with actual vintage wooden gliders will be an added new feature at this year's week-long Wabash Valley Soaring Association (WVSA) Vintage Meet at Lawrenceville-Vincennes Airport (KLWV). The event will be led each day by experienced woodworkers and inspectors. This first-time event is being organized by the VSA, the WVSA and the Midwest Glider Conservancy.

Thursday's introduction (June 12) to vintage sailplane inspection and restoration will be led by Neal Pfeiffer. Friday (June 13) will feature Tom Baker talking about inspecting one's work, regulations and dealing with certification. Saturday (June 14) will provide time for questions and answers, demonstrations and practice, led by Gerry Wild. Each session will start at 9 AM and last about an hour, or until soaring conditions warrant flying rather than working in the shop. When not flying, it should be possible to get more hands-on workshop practice under expert guidance. At least two gliders will be available for the workshop.

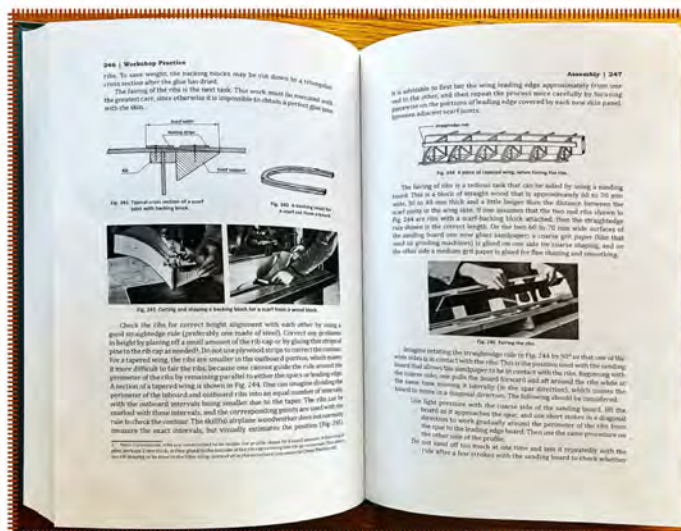
If you would like to attend, send an RSVP to Jim Croce (270) 823-3394 or <b407flyer@yahoo.com>. For further questions, comments or ideas, call Jim Short at (708) 624-3576 or at <simajim121@gmail.com>.



Wing tip repair on a Ka-2B. Neal Pfeiffer photo.

There is no cost for participating in the workshop, but donations to defray costs for materials would, of course, be appreciated.

Jim Short



Wing ribs of a Weihe. Jim Short photo.

Last-Minute Additions

More on the AAHS-Flabob Connection

The airport is planning a major renovation/face lift, with the goal of transforming part of the field into an "aviation history village" (our words, not theirs), which will include AAHS's HQ building, library, and so forth. (More on that in the next paragraph.) The design shown on page two above is our suggestion for the layout. Whatever is eventually done *will be at no cost to AAHS*.

The AAHS Reference Library

Among the foremost items in the proposed AAHS remodel are provisions for a redefined reference library, to include movable "accordion" shelves, greatly increasing the number of items that can be stored in a given amount of floor space. The Strnad estate donation—60+ boxes worth—will likely tax our existing capacity.

We expect the reference library to be one of the more important educational features of the "new look" Flabob.

Flabob Centennial

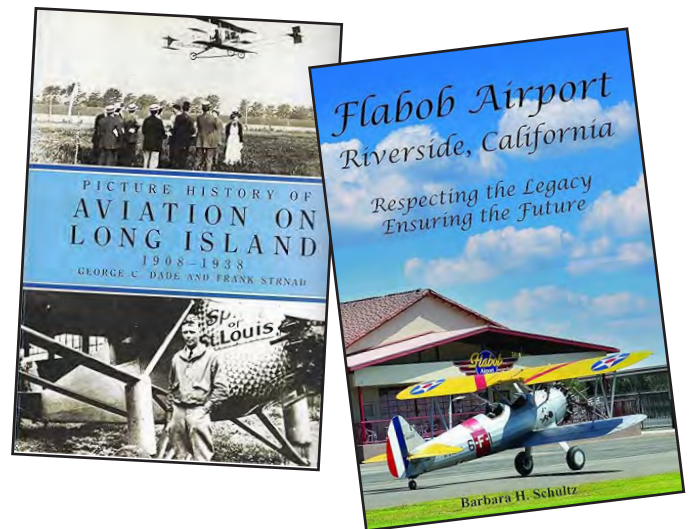
On April 25-27th, Flabob will host a fly-in/open house in celebration of 100 years of flight operations. AAHS HQ will be open throughout the festivities, welcoming visitors and offering a good selection of books and other items of interest for sale.

Among the scheduled airport events are tours of some of the hangars that feature tributes to aviation history. AAHS is developing a docent program in support of support these activities. This will require another squad of volunteers, so if you have an interest in aviation history and would like to share that interest with others while learning more yourself, here's a great opportunity!

Some Flabob History

As part of the 100th anniversary doin's, author and AAHS member Barbara Schultz will make a presentations each day on the very colorful history of the airport. Barbara's book, *Flabob Airport, Riverside, California: Respecting the Legacy, Insuring the Future* (Little Buttes Publishing Co., 2021) is likely to remain the definitive history of this iconic airfield.

A [short article](#) on Flabob's history, based on this book, appeared in the Winter 2022 *AAHS Journal*. The book will be on sale at AAHS HQ during the upcoming events.



Books by Frank Strnad and Barbara Schultz



***At least for now, but we'll be back, so
STAY TUNED !***