



Holiday Greetings From AAHS



A Year-End Message from AAHS CEO Jerri Bergen

AAHS is coming to the end of this year’s runway, fast and hot, overloaded and dancing on our rudder pedals to negotiate a safe turnoff to the New Year. The turbulence of this year’s building improvement activities has significantly impacted our pre-set goals. We had hoped to have a more integrated website available to members this year; to reach out to several aviation institutions with similar goals, and accumulate a reserve of articles for publication in the *AAHS Journal*. None of these worthy goals have been met yet, although we’ve made some progress.

But—we’ve partnered with Flabob airport management to re-build our aging office building (it has known safety issues) and create secure storage for AAHS’s collections for to access and enjoy. Disruptive though it has been, this venture will create a more productive preservation environment.

We have to give a tremendous word of thanks to the several volunteers who have jumped in to help with moves, book sales, design discussions, training, and many other unanticipated tasks. This year has seen big wins with our eBay sales, up 150% from last year, thanks to the efforts of volunteer Julie Oppen. President Tyson Smith has generated several professional quality graphics (our sales booth canopy, volunteer posters, and marketing material) that we’ll be able to put to immediate use in 2026 campaigns. Heather Wilson has led the charge in physically organizing all AAHS materials (a first!), making future cataloging much easier.

We’re still (figuratively) way over gross weight—it will be a struggle to get airborne next year with the building construction to manage and New Year commitments. But with our volunteers, your patience, a focused plan and a generous benefactor, we are setting ourselves up for much smoother flying in the future. ➔



(L) Things are gonna get messy during the HQ building refurb! (Center) Jessica Moulding, visiting the office for the afternoon, gets drafted to label books in the temporary storage containers. (R) Charles Shaw, AAHS office Manager, goes to work at his temporarily relocated desk.



(L) Deck furniture and (R) patio seating on the far side of the containers, all donated by AAHS Treasurer Les Whittlesey.



From the Editorial Hangar . . .

Not much we can add to Jerri’s summation. In many respects, 2025 has indeed been a trying year for AAHS. Things have not always gone as anticipated, and there’s plenty of work still ahead—and not enough people to get it done with the speed and thoroughness we aim for. The editorial hooch is something like 280 air miles, or several miserable hours on the Arizona backroads and I-10, from the Flabob aerodrome, so we don’t get over there as often as we’d like. But when we do, it’s always a pleasure to hang out for a bit with the AAHS HQ crew and see what they’ve managed to accomplish. Kudos to all hands!

The renovated facility should be ready for a grand opening sometime in early to mid-2026. There are still some unknowns regarding the overall soundness of the building, a WWII-era airfield structure that has undergone multiple and mostly undocumented modifications since. What will be required to bring things up to snuff and how long that will take remains for the moment uncertain. But when the construction dust settles and the AAHS office is ensconced in the new digs, plan to drop by for a visit if you’re in the area. Meanwhile, it’s business as usual, within the constraints Jerri described in her message. *Flightline* will continue to chug along, bringing you AAHS news, bits (sometimes obscure ones) of aviation history, along with book reviews, the latest of which follows. Our thanks again to Daniel Yesilonis of Casemate Publishers for furnishing the material.

As noted in recent issues of *FlightLine*, old age is taking its inevitable toll, not just on ye editor but among AAHS membership as a whole. We don’t have the data to state it for a fact, but it’s a safe bet that the majority of our members are on the cusp of Medicare, and many are well beyond. Not enough new members are joining, and too many of those who do are “one [year] and done.” Unless that trend can be altered, the eventual outcome is obvious.

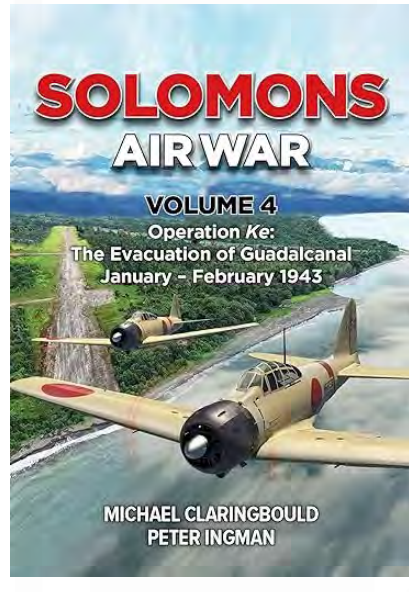
The world has changed dramatically during the nearly 70 years since AAHS was founded. Today, almost any subject can be explored at the click of a mouse, with instant gratification. But there’s still plenty of room—and need, we think—for the sharing of information and imagery that relate to aviation history. AAHS will continue to facilitate that, as it always has. Unfortunately, it’s a more difficult task than ever. Nonetheless, we have to believe there are folks out there who have grown to love aviation and aviation history, just as we did as youngsters in the 1950s and 60s. Who and where are these people, and how do we engage them? That’s a topic AAHS must urgently address, and soon.

You can help by sharing your ideas, gripes, or suggestions with any of the AAHS team. Go to <https://www.aahs-online.org/about/contact.php> and select your target. Alternatively, ping us here at *FlightLine*: FlightLine@aahs-online.org. We’ll see that your message gets into the proper hands. This will likely be our last blast (or gasp) for 2025. Enjoy the holidays, be safe out there, and stay with us as we move forward in 2026. ➔

Joe Martin
AAHS *FlightLine* Editor



Book Reviews



Solomons Air War, Volume 4 **Operation Ke: The Evacuation of Guadalcanal January-February 1943**

By Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman (2025)

ISBN: 978-1-764-19371-9

184 pages, with sources list and index, four maps, numerous b&w photos, 16 digital renderings, and 14 aircraft profiles.

Available at <https://www.casematepublishers.com/> or through Amazon.



This fourth volume in the Solomons Air War series covers the very successful evacuation of the remnants of the Japanese 17th Army at the conclusion of the long and bloody battle for Guadalcanal. Operation *Ke*, as it was known to the Japanese, was arguably their best planned and executed combined operations effort of the entire campaign. From the Allied perspective, which essentially meant the U.S., efforts to interdict the several “Tokyo Express” runs that pulled off Operation *Ke* were less than spectacular, due in part to bad weather, the mix of aircraft types, and the primitive conditions on the Guadalcanal airstrips. At the same time, the Japanese were able to effectively concentrate large numbers of both naval and army aircraft based in or staging through bases on Bougainville and the newly opened field on Munda, New Georgia. In terms of overall air strength, it was a two-month fight on close to even terms. Aircraft carriers took no part, although both U.S. and Japanese carrier squadrons were temporarily shore based.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, the first two being an “Air Power Overview” of the opposing forces. Combat operations are covered virtually day-by-day, broken consecutively into nine chapters centered around a particular battle or Tokyo Express run. Chapter 12 Covers the unopposed U.S. occupation of the Russell Islands, Operation CLEAN SLATE.

Among the conclusions set forth in the concluding chapter is that “perhaps the superb reputation of the Lightning in the Pacific is questionable. Indeed, a factual history of all aspects of the P-38’s use in both the [Southwest and South Pacific] theatres gives an alternative view to well publicized accounts of its combat prowess.” There’s some elaboration on that comment, of course, and it’s an interesting proposition to entertain.

As with all the Pacific air wars books, by Michael Claringbould and his collaborators, every attempt is made to “evenly match the records from both sides, “made possible through the collecting of “credible Japanese primary source information made accessible only in recent years.” Separate appendices tabulate and collate daily losses of aircraft and crews, Japanese (5 Jan-27 Feb 1943) and Allied (1 Jan-28 Feb). Appendix three, “Cumulative Aircraft Losses & Fatalities,” totals loss statistics relating to the four volumes in the Solomons Air War series.

These volumes are not “revisionist” histories in the usual sense of that term, but they do shed new light on hitherto little-known or misunderstood episodes in the Pacific air war. Some long held and cherished beliefs will be shown not to be supported by “the facts” as they are now understood. ➔

Review by Joe Martin

