VIRGINIA EAGLES

Official Newsletter of the
Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society

Aviation is proof that given the will, we have the capacity to achieve the impossible.
- Eddie Rickenbacker

The Time Has Come!

Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame Nominations are Due

Official Nomination Form Inside

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VIRGINIA EAGLES

The Official Newsletter of the

VAHS

VIRGINIA AERONAUTICAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Membership dues are vital to our organization's daily operations and the growth of our chapters.

If you have not paid your 2020 dues, please use the convenient envelope inside this issue or call the office and pay by debit or credit card.

A BIG Thank You to our growing number of Sustaining Members

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Cover Photo: The cover photo was taken by 15 year old Sidney during her tour of the Shannon Air Museum. Thank you for sharing Sidney.

Contact the VAHS:

Mailing Address:
VAHS
PO Box 7795, Fredericksburg, VA 22404-7795

Email us: vahsonline@gmail.com
Telephone: (540) 376-3265

Visit us on the Web at
VirginiaAviationHistory.org

HEADQUARTERS CHATTER

Greetings from the Chairman's cockpit. As we "spring" into the time of year when winter bound pilots look forward to getting airborne prior to the hot days of summer so also does the VAHS.

The process to nominate and select the 2020 inductees into the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame is off the runway. The Hall of Fame, located in the Shannon Aviation Museum in Fredericksburg, depicts the history of aviation in the Commonwealth and recognizes those who have made significant contributions to the growth and development on Virginia aviation. Many individual efforts have resulted in the pioneering, growth, or development of aviation and aerospace and should be recorded for future generations. Each year, the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society Board of Directors selects one or more individuals for recognition and induction into the Hall of Fame. Information regarding the selection process can be found on the VAHS website or by calling Sue Baker at the VAHS headquarters. I highly encourage you to nominate worthy individuals for consideration. Nominations must be in by April 10th.

Please let me take this opportunity to recognize and thank Ray Gill for his service as our president for the last year and a half. Ray has been instrumental in increasing membership, beginning new chapters, and in leading the transition of the VAHS headquarters and Hall of Fame from Richmond to the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame and Shannon Airport Campus. We are indebted to Ray and wish him well in his future endeavors.

On behalf of the VAHS I am pleased to commend the Flying Circus and the Williamsburg Airport on their 50th anniversaries. Both will be recognized in the General Assembly through joint House and Senate resolutions. Following are excerpts from the resolutions.

"The Flying Circus Aerodrome and Airshow, an International Aviation Ambassador is celebrating its 50th year of entertaining and educating visitors from around the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world. The Flying Circus is one of America's best and longest-performing weekly airshows and preserves the legacy of the "barnstorming" aerobatic shows popular during the Golden Age of Flight through majestic stunts, the performances of daring wing walkers, and the use of modern high-performance aerobatics aircraft. Aviators affiliated with The Flying Circus have unselfishly performed throughout the 20 United States, bringing this unique experience to countless people who would not otherwise have such an opportunity. The Flying Circus and many of its past and present pilots and administrators are members of the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame and have been an integral part of Virginia's aviation industry and aviation history communities, vividly bringing to life aspects of the Commonwealth's leading role in American aviation supremacy."

The Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport, one of the few remaining privately owned airports in the Commonwealth, has served the residents of the Virginia Peninsula and aviators from around the country for 50 years. The Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport traces its roots to 1967, when Larry Waltrip (Hall of Fame member) asked his parents, the owners of a construction company, about building a new airstrip to replace the recently closed College Airport at The College of William & Mary. The Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport officially opened on September 20, 1970 and is still owned by the Waltrip family. Thousands of people pass through the Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport each year, including business travelers and Tidewater locals; the airport is a major hub for tourist travel to nearby Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens. The Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport houses dozens of privately owned aircraft and further serves the community by supporting the Nightingale Regional Air Ambulance and the Williamsburg Flight Center, which operates on airport property and provides flight training, maintenance, and air tours. Over the course of its history, the Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport has become a beloved community meeting place, with civic groups using the airport's conference room for events and the award-winning Charly's Airport Restaurant providing delicious food to locals and travelers alike.

Congratulations to both the Flying Circus and the Williamsburg Airport.

Fly Safe and Check Six,
Dave Young

Shannon Air Museum: Docent Spotlight

We'd like to thank the docents at the Shannon Air Museum. They are all volunteers and always give a great tour. PLEASE NOTE: Shannon Air Museum will be closed for the month of April due to COVID-19 precautions.

BUTCH COVER - Senior Docent

Meet Butch Cover! Butch loves aviation and enjoys riding motorcycles. He is originally from Ohio, but has lived in Fredericksburg for the past 40 years. He worked for Sydney Shannon as a tour guide in the original Shannon Air Museum, and now continues to share the joy of aviation with others as a docent in the new Shannon Air Museum. Come visit Butch for an awesome tour of the museum!

PAUL CARIKER

Paul Cariker was a Pilot in the marine corps, and when introduced to the Shannon Air Museum by a friend, he was so impressed that he wanted to be a part of it. Outside of aviation, he enjoys cycling up to 5,000 miles a year! Paul's favorite plane in the museum is the Bellanca. To learn about the Bellanca and other rare aircraft, take a tour with Paul at the Shannon Air Museum!

JOEL McGEE

This is Joel McGee! Joel plays baseball, piano, and wants to become a pilot. Becoming a docent was a great way for him to be around aviation, and a great volunteer opportunity as he looks for flight training scholarships in the future. His favorite plane in the museum is the Standard E-1. Come take a tour with Joel in the Shannon Air Museum!

JOANNA REYNOLDS

Joanna Reynolds is originally from Georgia, but has lived in Virginia for much of her life. Her husband was a private pilot, and they enjoyed flying together, rebuilding airplanes, and going to airshows often. She fell in love with the golden age of flight, and has loved getting to be around these airplanes again since becoming a docent. She appreciates each plane in the museum, and can't pick a favorite. Come discover why these unique aircraft are loved by Joanna and so many others!

Chapter News

Warrenton Chapter
Contact:
Dave Darrah, Airport Enterprise Director
PO BOX 198, Midland, VA 22728
Ph: (540)422-8283
Email: dkdarrah@comcast.net

Williamsburg "Eagles" Chapter
Contact:
Terry Riley
3599 Splitwood, Toano, VA 23168
Ph: (757)250-3315
Email: triley02@aol.com

Richmond Chapter
Contact:
Tim Donnellan, Coordinator
Ph: (804)640-0238
Email: Tim.Donnellan@verizon.net

Fredericksburg Chapter
Contact:
Don Serio, Chapter Coordinator
3381 Shannon Airport Cir, Fredericksburg, VA 22408
Ph: (540)376-3265
Email: vahsonline@gmail.com

Northern Neck/Middle Peninsula
Contact:
George Galo
P.O. Box 545, Lancaster, VA 22503
Ph: (804)456-2211
Email: galoga205@gmail.com

Nancy Miller
PO Box 62, Mathews, VA, 23109
Ph: (804)725-7601
Email: nancy.miller99x@gmail.com

There are no scheduled meetings in April. Updates to meeting dates will appear on our website once we have them available.

Northern Neck-Middle Peninsula (NN-MP) VAHS Chapter Quarterly Report–First Quarter, 2020

Nancy Miller, NN-MP Chapter Program Coordinator & VAHS Board Member

• **January- "3rd Annual NN-MP Chapter Show & Tell"**–Attendees brought fascinating books, keepsakes, memorabilia and aeronautical antiques and shared their related compelling stories–from gliders to aviation tomes the sky was the limit, and the participatory session has become a January tradition for the Chapter;

• **February - "The Fabulous C-130"–Wes Werling, Air Force C-130 Pilot**, attracted a new audience segment and wowed the expanded group in attendance with his first-hand experiences, sparking corresponding tales from the audience, many directly acquainted with the C-130 as pilots or ground crew–this session was truly "greater than the sum of its parts;"

• **March - "The Candy Bomber & The Berlin Airlift"**–At 99 years of age, (Ret.) Air Force Col. Gail S. Halvorsen was recently inducted into the First Flight Society's Hall of Fame in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 2019. Read more about this fabulous presentation by logging in to our new and improved Website (virginiaaviationhistory.org).

HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 10, 2020

Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society
Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame
Official Nomination Form

I/We nominate _____ for election to the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame.

Nominee's Address _____

Nominee's Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Nominee's Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Date of Death (if Deceased) _____

If Deceased, Name of Nearest Living Relative: _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Location and range of dates where nominee's qualifying work was accomplished:

_____

_____

_____

Location(s) and the number of years the nominee resided in Virginia:

_____

_____

_____

Nomination Submitted by _____

(Individual or Organization Proposing Candidate's Name)

Address _____

_____

Phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Nominations must be postmarked no later than April 10, 2020 to be considered in the current year selection process. Submit application and supporting documentation to:

Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society
Attention: Hall of Fame Chairman
Shannon Airport - KEZF Campus
P.O. Box 7795, Fredericksburg, VA 22404

Date Received by VAHS: _____

HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS DUE APRIL 10, 2020

Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame

The Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame was created to commemorate and preserve outstanding aviation contributions made in Virginia or by Virginians. Many individual efforts have resulted in the pioneering, growth, or development of aviation and aerospace and must be recorded for future generations. Each year, the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society Board of Directors selects one or more individuals for recognition and induction into the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame.

Criteria for Selection

To be considered, the nominee will have demonstrated through their innovative ideas and dedicated service their commitment to the advancement of aviation and aerospace in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States. The nominee's service and achievements must have been accomplished in the Commonwealth of Virginia or the nominee must be a native-born Virginian or Virginian by choice.

Nominations

Nominations may be made by any aviation organization, any member of the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society, or by any firm or individual familiar with the nominee's achievements. However, each nomination must be submitted on an official nomination form supplied by the Society.

No candidate shall be considered by the Selection Committee unless formally nominated in advance in accordance with these rules.

The Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society Board of Directors shall consider those nominees recommended by the Hall of Fame Selection Committee. The number selected each year shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

All nominees not selected will continue to be considered in succeeding years without having to be re-nominated. However, any additional or new supporting data on behalf of these persons may be submitted at any time and is encouraged.

Nomination Package Format

- All nominations will be submitted on the official VAHS Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame Nomination Form and will be accompanied by documentation supporting the nomination. These documents make up the nomination package.
- Two copies of each nomination package will be submitted to the VAHS.
- Each package must include:
  * An overview of the candidate's achievements and how they have benefited aviation and aerospace in the Commonwealth or the United States.
  * This overview must include specific examples of the nominee's:
    * Achievements toward the enhancement of aviation and aerospace;
    * Contributions to the development of others in aviation, i.e., pilots, mechanics, etc.
    * Service to Virginia in aviation activities either directly or indirectly; and
    * How individuals, organizations or groups have benefited from the nominee's work.
  * A resume-type listing of the nominee's achievements. List dates and places of work accomplished, professional affiliations and awards, degrees held, rank achieved, etc.
  * A brief personal biographical sketch of the nominee.
- The following additional information should be included and is recommended:
  * Letters of Recommendation attesting to the nominee's qualifications.
  * Copies of any photos, newspaper or professional journal articles, and other documentation to support the nomination.
  * Any other information pertinent to the nominee's qualifications.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee is appointed by the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society President. All nominations shall be submitted to the Committee for review of completeness and eligibility. The Committee shall then recommend qualified nominees to the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society Board of Directors for final selection.

Deadline

Nominations must be postmarked no later than April 10, 2020 to be considered for the current year's selection process.

Great Flying Stories

by Tim McSwain, former VAHS Chairman of the Board

Gates Flying Circus was one of the biggest acts of 1927, a year of other Big Acts (see "Lindbergh, Charles A." for example). Based at Teterboro for most of its existence, the Circus employed many unusual characters, none more unusual than Roy Ahearn. There are many tales about Roy, but one in particular rates as a "great flying story". Bill Rhode told the story many years ago, and "no living man's memory runneth to the contrary", we share it here without confirmation.

Roy was flying for the Tidewater Air Circus during the winter of 1926-1927. He had already acquired a reputation as a parachutist, often using a "balloon" chute. This contraption was basically just a round chute that the jumper gathered together like a bedsheet and threw it out of the airplane as he jumped. Anyway, on this occasion, the Circus had a show at Cocoa Beach, Florida financed by a real estate promoter on the beach. The promoter wanted something spectacular, so someone came up with the idea that Roy would set an airplane on fire in midair and jump out as the fire developed. (Are you with me on this?) Roy was promised 50% of the "net receipts" if he survived.

Our Hero scrounged around and found a Jenny for $300, then bought gunpowder, spark plugs and other paraphenalia needed to start a fire in flight. Roy tried to obtain one of the then-new ripcord parachutes, but was not able to find one to borrow, so he borrowed one of the "balloon" chutes. The parachute was stuffed into the back cockpit, while Roy got in front with a rope tied to him and to the chute.

On the human interest side, Roy, age 20, had just gotten married to sweet young Polly who was traveling with him for this show. She was apparently quite apprehensive about this stunt, as compared to Roy, who seemed quite unperturbed.

On the day of the event, Roy hung sacks full of gunpowder on the interplane struts with the spark plugs and a battery rigged so that he could detonate it from the cockpit. Then, for good measure, the wings were soaked with 25 gallons of gasoline and fuel oil. The plan was to climb out over the ocean to 3000 feet, set off the gunpowder and bail out. However, Murphy was as prevalent then as now, so at 1000 feet, the battered Jenny's engine began missing. Roy briefly considered an emergency landing (this whole flight was an emergency) but he had nowhere to park this flying bomb, so after nursing the airplane to 1200 feet, he pulled the trigger and detonated the gunpowder.

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The fire took off impressively, and Roy climbed out of the front cockpit and started to gather up the parachute from the rear. Some of the shrouds had become entangled in the cockpit, so he had to unwind them, and jumped. Polly, watching from the beach, fainted.

The Jenny stalled, fell off and began to spiral down right beside Roy. It wasn't looking good for him, but the chute "ballooned" as planned and the airplane dove away. Roy landed in the ocean and was almost immediately picked up unharmed by a local boat.

The Jenny, however, was not finished putting on the show. It recovered from the spiral and promptly headed straight for the beach, which was, of course, massed with spectators. The sight of a flaming airplane coming directly at them motivated the crowd in the usual manner. Stampede injuries were not recorded because the old girl soon decided that she was done, rolled over and crashed in the surf, leaving only a pathetic little pile of burning fabric.

As Roy got to the beach, he turned to watch the last flickers of the Jenny. Polly, who had been revived, ran after him crying "you're safe!" Roy apparently didn't understand the fuss, and went looking for the parachute that he had dropped when he got to the beach.

Roy Ahearn joined Gates Flying Circus in the summer of 1927. On July 16, 1930, he was killed attempting an outside loop at Teterboro in his Albert Parasol airplane. He was 25 years old.

Remembering Katherine Johnson
August 26, 1918 - February 24, 2020

Katherine Johnson, a pioneering Hampton Roads and American icon who helped American astronauts land on the moon, has died at age 101. She was a member of the Aviation Hall of Fame, inducted in 2017 and will truly be missed.

The subject of the recent hit movie, Hidden Figures, Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson played a crucial role in the development of space travel in the U.S. while blazing trails for African American women. Johnson graduated from West Virginia State.

Using her knowledge of analytic geometry, she calculated the trajectories for the May 5, 1961 space flight of Alan Shepard, the first American in space; John Glenn's orbit around the Earth on February 20, 1962; the 1969 Apollo 11 mission (the first moon landing), and the 1970 Apollo 13 moon mission.

Later in her career, Katherine worked on the space shuttle program, the Earth Resources Satellite, and on the plans for a mission to Mars as well as authoring or coauthoring 26 research reports.

Her advice when interviewed by WAVY's Marielena Balouris last March: ***"Do your best at all times. That's the best you can do."***

Read more about Katherine and our other Hall of Fame members on our website: virginiaaviationhistory.org

WHEN WORLD WAR II CAME TO RICHMOND

Mark Sternheimer

The summer of 1943 was a busy time for the Allies in North Africa. German General Rommel had been defeated and a great many captured German and Italian airplanes and tanks were sent back from North Africa to be salvaged for basic metal. Along with the planes and tanks came many German and Italian prisoners. Richmond, Virginia was a staging area for both the material as well as the prisoners. Most of the German and Italian prisoners were shipped off to Ft. Lee for the balance of the war and the same ships that unloaded the prisoners also had many captured tanks and planes.

At that time my Dad's office was located a few blocks from the intermediate terminal down at Lester Street (now East Main Street). We could see planes being taken off the ships and then shortly after that taken to the scrap yards.

VAHS member, Judge Bill Spain who was a Commonwealth Attorney at the time, told me that a squabble arose between Smith's Iron and Metal Company, located at 17th and Cary, and Lewis Schaefer's Scrap Yard, located on the south side off of Brander Street near Hull Street Station, as to who would get the tanks and who would get the planes. Judge Spain ruled that Smith would get the planes and Schaefer the tanks. Both scrap yards wanted the tanks because of their metal value.

When I first saw the German and Italian planes, I could hardly believe my eyes. Although I had just turned 13 at the time, you can imagine how I felt being able to sit in the cockpits of these fabulous World War II fighter planes. There were approximately 50 planes in the yard, some stacked one on top of the other. On one pile stood the most magnificent MC200 fighter. This had a radial engine with those beautiful cowl bumps that were so popular in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Other planes in the yard were ME110's, Macchi MC202's, ME109's, JU87's, and a few Fiat CR67's. If ever there was an aviation lover's paradise, this was it.

My Dad drove past the yard every day to and from work and kept me advised as to what was going on. After school was out in June 1943, I would ride down to the yard on my bike with a big knapsack on my back. I made friends with the Yard Superintendent and he would let me crawl through the airplanes and remove instruments and accessories which I would then bring back to the scale for weighing. Most things were anywhere from five to ten cents a pound so by the end of the day I would have more than I could carry for about a dollar. Such things as generators, fuel injection pumps, instrument panels, trim wheels, oxygen regulators, valves, etc., were easy to remove, and I had quite a collection by the end of the summer. What escaped me, however, was being able to disassemble a complete DB601 engine. Of course,

... continued ...

most of the fittings were metric, and I had only simple hand tools at my disposal but soon I had all the engine covers removed and peered deeply into the workings of the supercharger, pistons, magneto, and fuel injection systems which were very advanced for their day. I had hoped to be able to convince my Dad to buy a fuselage of an MC202 and let me store it in his garage. It proved, however, to be several feet too long, and even though I offered to cut the tail off, it was just something I couldn't talk him into. There is only one MC202 in the world today that I know of and that is at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

Most of the airplanes had rudimentary instruments with virtually no radio navigation equipment except for a simple radio transmitter and receiver.

Early that Fall a number of the airplanes were partially assembled and taken up to the Thalhimer parking lot at 7th and Franklin for a display and war bond rally. A picture of the MC202 was published in The Richmond News Leader October 12. Many Richmonders had a chance to look at the airplanes while they were on display. Unfortunately none of the airplanes survived too much longer after the parking lot exhibit.

One day in November, my Dad told me they were loading the airplanes into railroad cars and taking them to the smelter. When I paid my last visit to the scrap yard I saw a big electro-magnetic crane try to grab the airplane by the fuselage and lift them into the waiting gondola cars. Because there was so little iron and steel they could not easily load them. Finally someone realized that here was enough steel in the propeller shaft to allow the electro-magnetic crane to grab it. The last recollection I have of these airplanes is them being loaded one at a time hanging by their nose like a fish out of water by the magnetic crane. The yard was soon emptied of all traces of this incredible collection and it is truly unfortunate that no one had the foresight to save not even one for posterity. My Dad helped me take the contour formed armored steel pilot's seat from an MC202 and we made a chair out of it using an adjustable base from an office chair. We assembled some of the instruments, control stick and accessories together, and when we sat in the chair it was very easy to pretend we were again fighting those exciting air battles over North Africa. I kept the pilot's seat for many years but it was so heavy that my wife thought one of the kids would get hurt if it fell over, so we finally gave it away. Fortunately, however, I did save most of the other mementos including a section of the tail which had the Italian squadron insignia.

If any of these airplanes had survived today, its value would have been inestimable as practically all were destroyed after World War II was over.

In Other News: The VAHS has launched a new Website

After months of hard work and dedication, we are pleased to announce the launch of our brand new website! The site has a new design, new features, and new content. We hope you like what you see! virginiaaviationhistory.org

Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society
The Pilot House
3381 Shannon Circle
Fredericksburg, VA 22408

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VAHS
VIRGINIA AERONAUTICAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2020

The VAHS wishes safe and healthy journeys to everyone.

What you need to know about Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Also called: 2019-nCov, 2019 Novel Coronavirus

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus.
The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell.

Take steps to protect yourself:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Check the CDC website for updates & information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/