



WAHF FLYER

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
WISCONSIN AVIATION HALL OF FAME



“100 for 100” Membership Drive

As a tie-in to the Centennial of Flight, “100 for 100” is the theme of the WAHF 2003 Membership Drive. Our goal is 100 new members by December 17, 2003, one new member for every year of flight!

You can help! Any current member who is responsible for a new member sign up will be eligible for prizes. All you need to do is have the new member write your name on the “referred by” line on the application. Prizes are available. Contest runs from March 15—October 1, 2003. You will receive one chance in the prize drawing for each new member that you refer. Plus, for every five members who

join who are referred by you, you will receive one additional chance in the drawing. More details on enclosed yellow insert. Grand prize is a “Library Collection” of Wisconsin aviation history books, along with 2 tickets to the 2003 Hall of Fame investiture ceremony and a WAHF life membership, valued at over \$300. Prizes are also available for new members who sign up. Get in on the fun and start “selling” those memberships!

Thank you to the EAA Air Venture Museum for generously donating prizes and for their support of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame and its programs.

Backgrounds Vary of 2002 Inductees

In our last issue of the WAHF Flyer, we announced our most recent Hall of Fame inductees. In this article, you’ll learn more about them.

Joseph Abernathy is a retired airport engineer with the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics. A South Dakota native, Abernathy entered the United States Navy’s Civil Engineer Corps in 1942 and built air fields from Guadalcanal to Okinawa. He settled in Rhinelander after the war, and continued to build airports with an engineering company before going to the Bureau in 1972. While employed there, he worked on over 70 airports in Wisconsin.

Abernathy, a private pilot, left behind an indelible mark on Wisconsin aviation through the creation of a safe and efficient airport system.

“Go-to guy” is how many people would describe **Richard W. “Dick” Knutson**, aircraft restorer, builder and mentor. Knutson has restored over 22 aircraft since 1967, from a Piper J-3 and Tri-Pacer to a Stinson 108-1 and a 7AC Aeronca Champ. Knutson was also instrumental in the start-up of the Lodi Airport. But Knutson is best known for his inspiration to hundreds of fellow aircraft builders

and restorers. Presenting the award to Knutson was WAHF Board Member & fellow restorer Duane Esse.

West Allis, WI., aviation educator Earl Pingel has dedicated his life to aviation and education. Pingel has been involved in almost every facet of state aerospace education and has received numerous awards for his achievements from such distinguished organizations as the Air Force Association, the Civil Air Patrol and the FAA. Pingel created Teacher Flight, a program which enables teachers to use aerospace as a learning and motivational classroom tool. Pingel also organized the Wisconsin Aerospace Education Association and is a charter member of the WI Aviation Hall of Fame.

A WWII naval aviator and flight instructor with over 3600 hours in single and multi engine land and sea aircraft, Pingel and two colleagues organized Sky Eye, Inc. in 1959, and published Wisconsin’s first photographic airport directory.

Ellen Baerman presented the award to Pingel’s longtime friend and colleague, Ken Whyte. Pingel was unable to attend due to illness.



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WISCONSIN AVIATION HALL OF FAME MISSION STATEMENT

Collect and preserve the history of aviation in Wisconsin, recognize those who made that history, inform others of it, and promote aviation education for future generations.

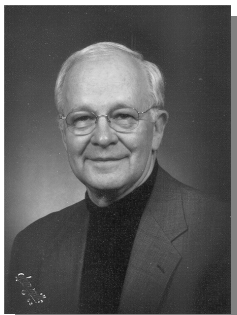
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President's Message...

By Keith Glasshof



Keith Glasshof

The heart and soul of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame is the induction of aviation pioneers into the Hall of Fame. That said, have you wondered how the inductees are identified? I would bet you suspected that there is a central clearing house, a sort of "Who's Who is Aviation" that is queried for candidates. Would you be surprised to learn that member recommendations are the driving force behind the selection process?

In truth there is no "Who's Who" in aviation, at least none that is referenced in the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame (WAHF) selection process. In fact, the selection process is exclusively driven by member recommendations. Each member recommendation is logged to a database that serves as the exclusive candidate pool for the selection process.

As to the actual selection process, prior to the end of each calendar year a selection committee of the board commences the annual selection process. Its first activity is to review the candidate pool—the database of candidates recommended by membership.

Over the period of a few months the committee narrows the field, making inquiries and often referring to the submitting member for additional information. Ultimately, the

committee, prior to the January board meeting, recommends a slate of finalists to the Board of Directors. At its January meeting the Board reviews the recommended candidates and elects the final slate of inductees. Typically, that slate consists of two living, one deceased, and two pioneer candidates.

The next several months are spent attending to the logistics associated with the induction ceremony. Gathering additional data on the inductees and locating their relatives, and attending to all the details that are associated with the event are among the many activities that consume hundreds of hours during the spring and summer months.

Finally, the process culminates with the induction of the slate of inductees into the Hall of Fame during the fall induction ceremony. In all, 55 aviation pioneers have been inducted throughout its history.

As exemplified by the inductee selection process, the WAHF is a member supported organization. We depend upon our membership to be supportive in many ways. That said, there is no better way to be supportive than to participate in the organization by making a thoughtful inductee recommendation. Use the enclosed "candidate nomination form" to participate in your organization.

For great reading...

See the Autumn '01 issue of the Wisconsin Magazine of History to learn more about 2002 WAHF Pioneer Inductee Rellis Conant. In "Flyboy from Westfield, The Barnstorming Days of Rellis Conant, 1917-1925" Michael Goc recounts Conant's colorful story. Available at local libraries and from the Wisconsin Historical Society.

What you'll see in 2003...

The board members and officers of the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame seem to be "bursting with energy" lately, and soon you'll see the outcome. Along with the recent addition of a quarterly newsletter, you'll see several other positive changes as well.

With the Centennial of Flight to be celebrated in 2003, there's no better time for our organization to become more involved in the promotion of aviation education for both youth and continuing education students. The board is working closely with a group of aerospace educators, the CAP, and the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics to develop programs aimed at reaching aviation minded youth and adults in Wisconsin.

The WAHF scholarship fund is growing, thanks to WAHF inductees and others who

have made generous contributions. Your support is also needed to make this program a success. Please consider helping students in pursuit of an aviation degree.

Our "100 for 100" 2003 Membership Drive is necessary to help our numbers grow and to become a more visible, more credible organization in the state of Wisconsin and beyond. Spread the word about the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame with friends, family, co-workers, and fellow pilots, and encourage them to join. With great prizes available, why not?!

We're already looking ahead to the 2003 Investiture Ceremony for exciting new events that evening as well. We'll keep you in suspense for now, but promise to let you know more as the event draws closer.



Logging Time With... *Captain Paul Cassiman*

Hall of Fame inductee Captain Paul R. Cassiman (US Navy, retired) lives in Lemoore, California and attended the 2002 Investiture Ceremony in Oshkosh in October 2002. While our time together was short, we did get a chance to discuss our plans for this column and Paul graciously agreed to an e-mail interview. We developed our interview questions and sent them to Paul just in time for the holidays. He drafted his response over the next six weeks. His words overwhelmed us in both length and in passion. Here then is our much-abridged yet passionate interview with Capt. Cassiman.

WAHF: Tell us a little about your childhood and how you first became interested in aviation.

CASSIMAN: While I was born in Neillsville, Wisconsin, in August 1939, my father took our family to California soon after. He had studied aviation mechanics at the Curtis-Wright Institute, and wanted to pursue his interests in aviation in the Los Angeles area. Many of my early childhood recollections took place in Inglewood, California during World War II.

We first lived in a house off the end of a runway of the Douglas Airfield at El Segundo, California. This was a launch point for trans-Pacific ferry flights to Hawaii and the western Pacific, as well as test flights for aircraft built by Douglas Aircraft Corporation. Douglas Airfield would later become the core of the current Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

There was a dairy farm located off the approach end of a runway, close to where we lived. One night a twin-engine bomber crashed short of the runway. My parents, I and maybe my sister went out to observe the spectacle in the dark. No cows were hurt, certainly a Wisconsin "Dairy State" concern. Can you imagine a dairy farm off the end of LAX today?

My Dad, directly or not, provided a measure of aviation orientation. How much of that bore on a later career in Naval Aviation, I cannot say. Other childhood memories were burned into my mind. The first was the sound of anti-aircraft artillery (AAA). During the war,

AAA was installed on top of the Douglas plant, or close to it. I remember the sounds of AAA when they had their practice. I would recognize it instantly many years later in Vietnam. Second, there were many manufacturers of combat aircraft in Southern California, and I used to relish the sight of them as they launched on their test flights -- one being the Northrop P-61 *Black Widow* night fighter built at their plant to the east of where my family lived.

As the Nation made its transition to a post-war life-style, military aviation was far less evident. My interest in aviation during those years tended to be in the phenomenon of flight represented in model aircraft, such as those I could afford.

WAHF: How did you decide on the Navy? When did you decide to make it a career?

CASSIMAN: In 1961, while working as an engineer in Chicago, there were indications that I would be inducted into the Army, which at the time seemed not too appealing. One of my friends told me that he had qualified for the Air Force Navigator program. He said it was challenging and I went down to Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois to learn more. The upshot was that I could qualify for the Navigator program, but the Air Force had no place for me in their pilot training programs. I then went to the Navy to see what they offered and subsequently qualified for its pilot training program. I wanted to be a pilot, and that cinched the decision for me. I entered Navy pilot training in July 1961.

The "career" decision was far more difficult. On the one hand was the attraction of increased income offered by the airlines and on the other was continued service to the Navy. At the end of a Naval Reserve officer's (I was commissioned in the Naval Reserve) initial obligation to the Service, one has a decision to make: to leave Active Duty or remain. A person can apply to the



Capt. Paul Cassiman

(Story continues on insert, pages 4 & 5)



Logging Time with... *Paul Cassiman, continued*



...Service for continued active duty, but the Navy could decline your application because a law limits the number of officers and enlisted that can serve. So there is a selection process that pertains to a "career."

WAHF: Can you share a story or two about flight school?

CASSIMAN: I want to make clear at the outset that I suffered from my own assumptions that were clearly wrong and contributed to certain personal surprises. The most important assumption was that a flight instructor would "demonstrate" one particular flight evolution or another, beginning with the first flight. That was wrong. After a thorough briefing, the student was expected to perform the evolution.

This was somewhat nerve-wracking considering that my total time in the air at that point consisted of a flight to Denver from Chicago and back in the passenger compartment of a DC-8. The trainee made the first take-off and landing, although the hand of the instructor could sometimes be felt on the stick, as well as pressures on the rudder. Throughout this phase, take-offs and landings were emphasized, moving rapidly into "precision landings" within specified "boxes." This was a precursor of the carrier landings that would be learned about six months later.

The final phase of Primary Jet Training took us back to Pensacola for aerial gunnery and initial carrier qualifications in the North American T-2J "Buckeye" at about a year into the total syllabus. Training was becoming absolute fun at this point. Flying comprised 90 percent of your obligation and one began to imagine himself as a future Fleet aviator. You could do things that Fleet aviators could do. Responsibilities were virtually non-existent. The syllabus began with aerial gunnery over the Gulf of Mexico, followed shortly with the beginning of field carrier landing practice (FCLP) in anticipation of flying out to the carrier for carrier qualifications. The best part of this phase was that one never had an instructor in the back seat. All flights were solo. When there was an

instructor present, he led the flight through the evolution.

When the FCLP portion of the syllabus was complete and the Landing Signal Officer (LSO) said you were ready, the big day came for a flight out to the carrier, led by an instructor. You executed the special procedures taught for the occasion and entered the pattern. But I must say that the first landing was an act of faith because the ship did not look big enough to land upon. The trainee did some preliminary "touch and go" landings and was then told to "drop the hook" for his first arrested landing. That event defies description. You roll out under considerable "G" forces as flight deck directors signal you frantically and bring you up onto the catapult for your first cat shot. My first four arrested carrier landings occurred on 4 August 1962, which marked the end of primary flight training. I then wore the "carrier qualification" insignia on my uniform.

I was sent to Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, in early 1963 to undergo transition training to the Douglas A-4 Skyhawk. This was a six-month syllabus in Attack Squadron 125, one of the two Replacement Training Squadrons (RTS). The other RTS supported transition training for the Douglas A-1 Skyraider. This syllabus included basic familiarization and instrument training, followed by concentrated training in tactics, aerial refueling and weapon systems. This included a two-week weapons training deployment to Fallon, Nevada, where the Navy maintains an extensive training range complex.

As the weapons portion approached conclusion, the final phase of the syllabus began. This was day and night carrier qualification in the A-4. I qualified on USS *Ticonderoga* (CVA-14) in August 1963. I will state that night carrier qualification is one of the most demanding and unnerving flight evolution. There is no horizon, the flight deck at that time was illuminated by red flood lights, and cockpit instrumentation

"But I must say that the first landing was an act of faith because the ship did not look big enough to land upon."

...Capt. Cassiman on his first carrier landing.



Logging Time With... *Paul Cassiman, continued*

...was not as good as today's. Two years of instrument training came into play while struggling with the effects of vertigo around the ship.

WAHF: Can you outline some of your Naval assignments?

CASSIMAN: I reported for duty with Attack Squadron 93 (VA-93) in late August 1963 with a total of 409.9 flight hours. VA-93 was assigned to Carrier Air Wing NINE (CVW-9), which, in turn, was assigned to USS *Ranger* (CVA-61).

The first deployment to the Gulf of Tonkin in *Ranger* was followed shortly thereafter by a deployment in USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65). We returned to Southeast Asia in December 1965 for combat operations in an intensifying war.

In August 1966, following return from deployment, I was transferred to shore duty as an instructor pilot in the Replacement Training Squadron (RTS) that prepared me for my first operational tour in the Fleet.

I returned to NAS Lemoore in early 1970 to begin transition training in the Vought A-7B "Corsair II" light attack aircraft, after which I was assigned, once again, to Attack Squadron 93 (VA-93). This was followed by two combat deployments to Southeast Asia in USS *Midway* (CV-41), as part of Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN (CVW-15).

Subsequent tours of duty included assignment to the Plans and Policy Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the United States SIXTH Fleet Staff in the Mediterranean Sea and then a return to NAS Lemoore for transition training in the A-7E "Corsair II." This was in preparation for assignment as Executive and Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron 94 (VA-94), a unit of Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN (CVW-15), assigned to USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63). Subsequent tours included the United States Pacific Fleet Headquarters in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island; Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam; and the Office of Chief of Naval Operations in Washington D.C. Assignments to the Pacific

Fleet Headquarters in Hawaii, the Naval War College and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations did not involve flying. That said, assignments to non-flying billets required a solid basis in aviation.

I was transferred to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in the Pentagon in the summer of 1988. My initial responsibilities dealt with supervision of an office that was responsible for preparations for mobilization in the case of war. Subsequently, I was moved up to a small office that consisted of three Navy Captains who were responsible for preparing the Navy leadership for meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to deliberate matters of interest to the Defense Establishment of the United States. This assignment meant that I was deeply involved with coordinating the Navy's support of the national response to the Exxon Valdez grounding in Alaska, the National response to the Panama crisis, termed Operation JUST CAUSE; and the Gulf War responses called Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.

In terms of aviation responsibilities, I served as the aviation representative of the United States Delegation to the United States/Russian Federation discussions on the Treaty for the Prevention of Incidents at Sea (INCSEA).

The point here is that early aviation training and experience were not ends unto themselves, but means that took me to a great adventure lasting 32 years. Personally, I have remained happy with my career decision because it resulted in a 32 year adventure that few people could experience. The Navy took me around the world twice and north of the Arctic Circle once. It took me to Europe and Russia. It took me to World War II battlegrounds in the Pacific and Mediterranean Sea. The Navy gave me an exceptional sense of military history. I gained considerable experience in combat and exciting insights into how our Federal Government works.

"The Navy took me around the world twice and north of the Arctic Circle once. It took me to Europe and Russia."

...Cassiman on his decision to make the Navy a career.

To read more about Capt. Cassiman and to see more photos, please check Capt. Cassiman's Hall of Fame page on the WAHF website.





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P R E S E R V E
W I S C O N S I N ' S
A V I A T I O N H I S T O R Y . . .
J O I N T O D A Y !

The WAHF Board of Directors met recently with **Arlo Bartsch, Chairman and CEO of Computer Generated Data, a military heritage database and website**. Bartsch demonstrated his website; one that records thousands of details of the airmen and missions of the 8th Air Force. You will be amazed by the amount of information this Delafield, WI. man has collected and made available. For more information, or to help with this massive endeavor, contact Bartsch at 262-646-5140. www.8thAirForce.com.

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame Officers and Board of Directors were saddened by the news of the passing of Earl G. Pingel, Chairman of The Board. With his family gathered around him, Pingel died of cancer on Sunday, February 16, 2003. Earl leaves behind his wife, Beverly, and their son, Thomas. His leadership in aerospace education and his love of flight will long be remembered. Tom Thomas, WI DOT Bureau of Aeronautics, said of Earl, "We involved in aviation in Wisconsin owe a lot to this high-energy man whose tireless drive and energy will prevail across the state and nation for countless years to come." Cards can be sent to Earl's family at 8545 West Beloit Rd. #1006, West Allis, WI 53227. Please remember Earl and his family in your prayers.

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