



**Est. 1973**  
**COLUMBIA, SC**



# **NEWSFLASH**

## **December 2019**



## International Plastic Modelers' Society/USA Membership Application / Renewal Form

New ☐ Renewal ☐ IPMS #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Affiliation, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Junior</b> (17 years or younger)	\$17.00	_____	Date of Birth: _____
<b>Adult</b>	One year	\$30.00 _____	
	Two years	\$58.00 _____	
	Three years	\$86.00 _____	
<b>Canada &amp; Mexico</b>		\$35.00 _____	
<b>Foreign</b>	Surface	\$38.00 _____	

**Family** (1 set of Journals) \_\_\_\_\_ ← Adult fee + \$5.00 # of cards? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If recommended by an IPMS member, please provide his/her:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IPMS #: \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Cash	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amount: _____
Check	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check #: _____ Amount: _____
Credit Card	<input type="checkbox"/>	Master Card <input type="radio"/> Visa <input type="radio"/>
		Card Number: _____
		Exp. Date: _____ / _____

Billing Address, if different than above -

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Applications should be printed and mailed to: IPMS/USA, P.O. Box 56023, St Petersburg, FL 33732-6023

Hello Swamp Foxes, Welcome to the December 2019 Newsletter.

Judging by November's builds and works in progress many of us have had some good bench time, I look forward to seeing some of your work at the January 2020 meeting Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 18.00 – 20.00 at Lexington Main Library. Next Meeting is the Christmas Party, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December, see below for details.

November's meeting saw 25 members attend, The President opened the meeting, First business was the Club Officer Confirmations, This was done by a show of hands which was unanimous. It was then onto the rest of the agenda and any other business, After which it was onto the show and tell of Members models and we had a nice diverse selection to enjoy, some really great builds and in progress work as always.

### From the Front Office...

Howdy, all. Here's what's going on...

1. **Holiday Party:** This month's meeting is our Holiday Party. We will hold our usual Gift Exchange; the rules are published in this newsletter. Eat, drink, and be Merry...
2. **June Show:** The Show Committee held an organizational meeting before Thanksgiving. It was productive, and we will be publishing the contest rules and categories list soon. The website has seen a small update: <https://scmegashow.com>
3. **Monthly Programs:** The monthly demonstrations will resume after the New Year. On tap we have a multiple-part Figure Painting demo (Mike Roof) on the books; Mike has also agreed to do a presentation on 3D Printing. There are a few other topics in the works, too.
4. **Area Clubs:** Don't forget the other modeling organizations in the area:
  - a. SCMA, First Monday of the month, 7PM, Genova Karate, 169-B Hwy 378 West, Lexington.
  - b. AMPS Central South Carolina, 6:00 PM, Second Wednesday of the month, Richland Library, 763 Fashion Drive, Columbia.



SUPPORT THE LOCAL HOBBY STORES

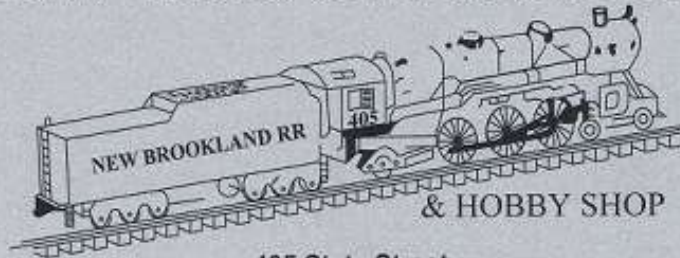


**Augusta HobbyTown USA:**

**592 Bobby Jones Expy, Augusta, GA 30907**

**(706) 855-5003**

## NEW BROOKLAND RR



405 State Street  
West Columbia, SC 29169  
(803)-791-3958

Sponsor of South Carolina Trade Shows  
[www.sctradeshow.com](http://www.sctradeshow.com)

Joe L. Rucker  
Owner



326 St. Andrews Rd. Suite E  
Columbia, South Carolina 29210  
803.736.0959

[hobbytowncolumbiasc@gmail.com](mailto:hobbytowncolumbiasc@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/HobbyTownColumbia/>

SUPPORT THE LOCAL HOBBY STORES

## GIFT EXCHANGE RULES

If you would like to play along, bring a WRAPPED, hobby-related gift (they don't have to be kits—books, tools, etc. are also fair game). Please, make sure the items you have are in good, un-started condition--started kits or kits missing parts are the equivalent of lumps of coal...

The wrapped gifts will be placed into a pile on the table.

Everyone wishing to play along will draw a number chip from the hat. This is your "Player" number. Remember it for later in the game.

Player #1 takes a gift from the pile and unwraps it. The round ends.

In Round 2, Player #2 can pick a wrapped gift and open it, in which case the round ends, OR Player #2 can steal what Player #1 has. In that case, Player #1 goes back to the well, picks another wrapped gift, and opens it.

From Round 3 on, it can get real fun. The player called can choose from the pile on the table or steal from one of the others.

The person who had the gift that has been stolen can either steal one of the other unwrapped gifts or select one of the wrapped gifts and open it.

If they choose a wrapped gift, the round ends.

OR, they can steal from one of the other players.

When it comes to stealing, an unwrapped gift can only be stolen ONCE during each round.

But remember that unwrapped gifts may change hands once EVERY round, so no unwrapped gift is "safe" until the very end.

This stealing continues until every gift has been stolen once leaving the last participant empty-handed. At that time, this last participant will select one of the remaining gifts from the pile and unwrap it. Once that gift has been revealed, this round is finally over.

Note that at any time during a round, a losing participant may break the stealing cycle by choosing to select an unwrapped gift from the pile instead of stealing an already opened gift.

At that time, the next Player (in numerical order) either selects the next unwrapped gift from the pile OR steals an unwrapped gift from someone else, starting a new cycle or round of stealing!

The rounds continue until the last unwrapped gift is selected by the last participant in numerical order or the last empty-handed participant in the last numerical round of stealing.

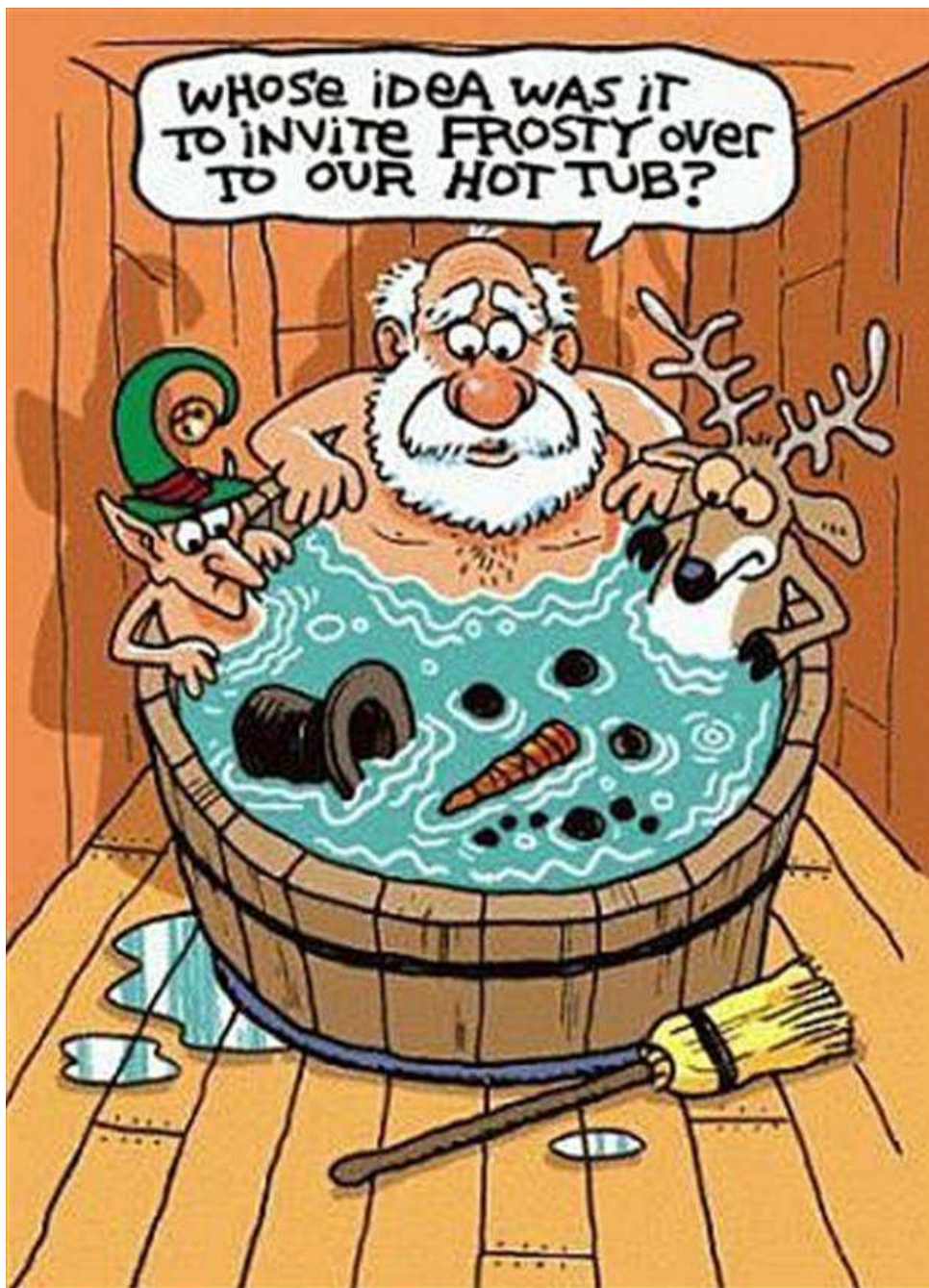
After the last unwrapped gift has been selected and revealed, there will be one last round, to be started by Player #1. Since Player #1 was relegated to only selecting the first unwrapped

gift and never had a chance to start a stealing round, this will be his or her chance to do so.

If Player #1 decides to stand pat, then the gift exchange is over.

If Player #1 decides to steal, a new, final round of stealing ensues. Player #1 puts his gift on the table and steals from another player. That player can take the gift on the table OR steal a gift that hasn't been stolen in that round. This round continues until ALL of the gifts have been stolen once and there is no gift on the table.

***Once the smoke clears, you may swap among yourselves 'til your heart's content.***



## **Mr. Embry, Mr. Riddle, and their Flying Schools**

In 1925, Cincinnati businessman and livestock farmer Talton Higbee Embry and Army pilot/mechanic John Paul Riddle went into business together. The two had no idea what would follow...

Riddle, who learned to fly as an Army reservist, met Embry in 1923 when Embry asked for an airplane ride. He paid Riddle the princely sum of Twenty American dollars for the ride, and the two became friends. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Wright Brothers' flight, they opened a flying school and airplane sales company. The school continued until 1928, when the Aviation Corporation of Delaware (AVCO) merged with the Embry-Riddle Aviation Corporation. In 1930, the Embry-Riddle name was dropped, and the two gentlemen parted ways.

In 1939, Riddle wanted to get back into the aviation game. He contacted Embry, and while Embry allowed Riddle to continue using his name, Embry wasn't interested in being involved with the day-to-day operations of the company (he had since moved on from aviation and livestock to yachts). Undeterred, Riddle found an attorney in Miami, John Graham McKay, and the two partnered in the establishment of the new Embry-Riddle School of Aviation. They made their headquarters in Miami, flying out of Miami's Municipal Airport, Chapman Field, and the Venetian Causeway Seaplane base. They partnered with the University of Miami for a while, offering flight training under the Civilian Pilot Training program.

As the clouds of war gathered, The Embry-Riddle Companies (including the Riddle Aeronautical Company, Embry-Riddle Corporation, and the Riddle-McKay Institute) became involved with pilot training for the Army. They would re-open former World War I flight school locations at Carlstrom Field and Dorr Field outside Arcadia, Florida. Later, they would open a third flying field in Clewiston, Florida (Riddle Field, now the Airglades Airport) and later, a fourth location at Union City, Tennessee.

Carlstrom and Dorr fell under the auspices of the 29<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Wing, headquartered at Moody Field, Georgia. The Carlstrom unit was the 53<sup>rd</sup> Flying Training Detachment, and the unit at Dorr was the 54<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Detachment. When they opened, both operated PT-17 Stearmans. Dorr would also use the Fairchild PT-19. Other transient aircraft would visit, including B-23's and B-17's from nearby Hendricks Field (the site of the Sebring Regional Airport and the IMSA Mobil 1 12 Hours of Sebring sports car race).

Below: Carlstrom Field, 1941 and as it appears today. You can just make out the remnants of the six hangars in the circular area. (Photos: Top--Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Bottom—Google Maps)



Below: Dorr Field in 1942 and as it appears today. (Photos: Top—USAAF; Bottom—Google Maps)



Riddle Field in Clewiston was constructed to be used under the Arnold Program to be the home for the 5<sup>th</sup> British Flying Training School in 1942. The airplanes at Riddle included PT-17's, Vultee BT-13's, and North American AT-6 airplanes. In 1943, some of the British flyers would move to Carlstrom and Dorr as well, in order to train more men to fly for the RAF.

Below: Riddle Field in 1943 and as Airglades Airport today. (Photos: Top—USAAF, Bottom—USGS)



The Union City location, operated as the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute and managed by the Riddle-McKay Company of Tennessee and Riddle Aeronautical Institute, housed the 67<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Detachment flying (at various times) PT-17, PT-19, Fairchild PT-23, and Boeing PT-27 airplanes. It was only opened for a short time—operations began in August 1943, and they ceased in April 1944, the airplanes and students distributed to other locations. The airport is now the Everett-Stewart Regional Airport.

Images of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute, Union City Tennessee, then and now (as Everett-Stewart Regional Airport). (Photos: Top—Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Bottom—Google Maps)



Riddle and McKay would split in the mid-1940's when Riddle opened flying schools in Brazil. McKay did not trust anyone in Brazil, but Riddle saw an untapped and vast market.

McKay would re-organize the company and the Miami schools would continue to teach pilots and technicians even after the war ended. They performed flight training for the French Navy, flying out of Homestead. In 1951, McKay died and his widow Isabel assumed leadership of the company. A few years later, she and the Board of Directors appointed a U.S. Navy blimp pilot, Jack Reed Hunt, as President of the school. He would remain President of the University until his death in 1984. The school consolidated at Opa-Locka for a time, and when the Navy reclaimed the airfield to base Marine fighter squadrons there, the school moved to the old Tamiami airport. In 1965, faced with the closure of the airport, the school took a gamble and moved to Daytona Beach, Florida—a move that was supposed to be temporary until proper buildings could be constructed at nearby Ormond Beach Municipal Airport. That never happened, and the school still thrives, as Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, this day. A western campus in Prescott, Arizona was opened in 1978, and there are International and Worldwide Campus locations around the globe.

An Embry-Riddle alumnus, I have long been interested in the company's early flight training efforts, especially their wartime training schools. What appears below is a quick run-through of the common types flown by the Florida bases, many of them from Riddle Field. The airplanes at Carlstrom, Dorr, and Riddle Fields were nearly identical, being standard issue USAAF trainers. There are some interesting variations, some due to time and others due to the nature of the schools.

As far as models go, in 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale, Revell makes an excellent Stearman. Don't discount Lindberg's ancient offering, either, as it still builds into a good looking model of a Stearman.

Speaking of ancient, in 1/72<sup>nd</sup> scale, many of you will probably go with the 1965-vintage Revell kit. Pavla also made a limited run kit in the early 2000's...

The BT-13 is available in 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale only in limited run kits. Classic Castings, Ltd. (1989), Lone Star Models (2006), Planet Models (2008), all produced kits, and all are cast resin kits. Sanger was supposed to have released a vacuum-formed kit, but I've never seen one advertised.

In 1/72 scale, you're looking for kits from Execuform, Beechnut Models, Nostalgia Wings, Pavla, LF Models, and Admiral Models, and yes, they too are all limited run in nature.

The AT-6 is either a vast desert or a teeming oasis, depending on your viewpoint. In 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale, the old, trusty Monogram kit is joined by the Ocidental/Italeri kit. Between the two, you ought to be covered. Mike Belcher also offers some of the SNJ's as well.

In 1/72 scale, the pickings are between Heller and Academy, unless you want to wrestle with the vintage Aurora, Hawk, or Airfix kits.

Most of the standard markings are easily obtained, but the fuselage codes will be something you will either have to mask and paint or draw on your own.

Let's take a look at the airplanes used at the flying schools.

**Stearman/Boeing PT-17:** Photos of Riddle Stearmans show an even split between silver dope and the USAAC Blue 23/Orange Yellow scheme. Note the airplane numbers on the silver airplanes—they use a unique font/stroke.

Below: A rare color photo of a silver-doped PT-17 of the 5<sup>th</sup> British Flying Training School at Riddle Field, Clewiston, Florida. Note the insignia on the upper left wing and the canted serial number application on the tail. (Photo: Flight Lieutenant Roy Mather collection via <http://www.vickersvaliant.com/home.html>)



Another silver-doped Stearman is shown here in flight over Southwest Florida. (Photo: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



Below: Major George Ola and a PT-17 circles Carlstrom Field, Florida circa 1942. (Photo: U.S. Army Air Forces)



A lineup of Stearmans at Riddle Field, resplendent in their blue and yellow colors. (Photo: Robert Monk via <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



Another blue and yellow Stearman at Riddle Field. (Photo: Robert Monk via <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



The **Vultee BT-13** replaced the collection of Piper Cubs and Ryan and Fairchild trainers. They were usually seen in the same USAAC blue/yellow paint scheme as the Stearmans. They, in turn, were quickly eliminated and the syllabus took the cadets from the PT-17 straight to the AT-6A. (Photos: Robert Monk via <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



The **North American Aircraft AT-6A's** were seen in numerous color scheme variations. Well, maybe not colors—they all were in a natural metal finish—but some carried the peculiar font of the Stearmans with the early U.S. insignia on the wings and the later star and bars in 6 places, while others were seen in the standardized fuselage codes developed by the USAAF.

Here is a close shot of the fuselage numbers. This aircraft most likely carried the early roundel insignia on the upper and lower wings, with "U.S. ARMY" titles beneath the wing and the striped rudder.

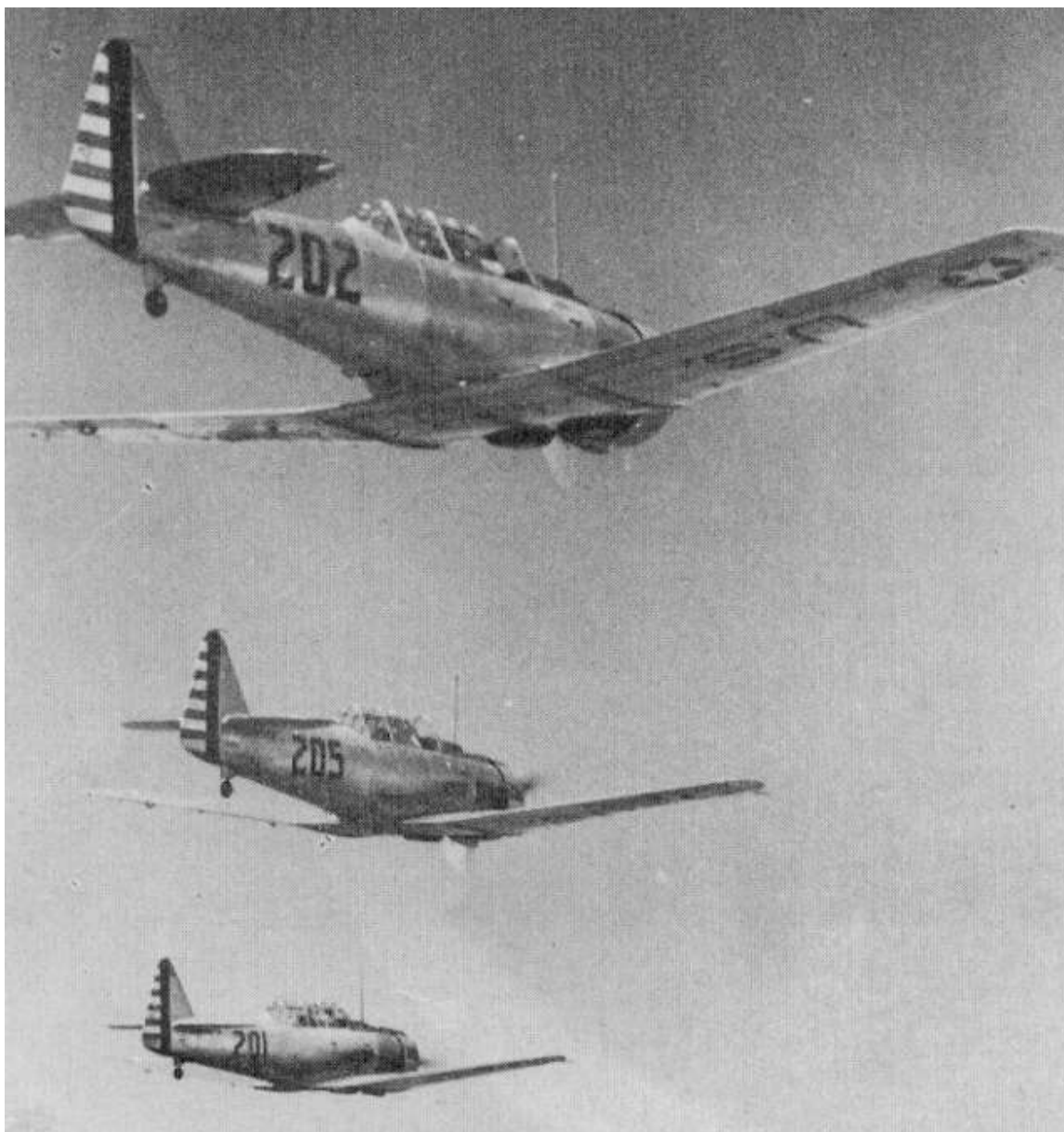
(Photo: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



This photo shows the upper wing insignia and rudder stripes. (Photo: Robert Monk via <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



A nice three-ship formation stacked up. Note the title below the wing. (Photo: <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



A later photo showing the updated “star-and-bar” insignia applied to the fuselage. The codes retain their original font/stroke. (Photo: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



Here is an example of a Riddle Field AT-6A with the assigned fuselage code application and standard USAAF paint. Riddle Field's codes were A(X), B(X), and C(X), where (X) is the individual aircraft letter. (Photo: Brian Hastings via <http://www.5bfts.org.uk>)



Here's a nice two-ship formation of Riddle Field Texans. The cowlings appear to be yellow. (Photo: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



Miscellaneous types—here's a **Ryan PT-22**. Note the lack of spinner. Colors are anyone's guess—it might even be a civilian airplane. (Photo: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



A few later (1946/1947) photos of the French Navy training program AT-6's in Homestead. The Homestead airplanes appeared to be a mix of civil-registered AT-6's and SNJ's. (Photos: Frederick J. Brittain via Victoria Brittain and her website <http://www.frederickjbrittain.com>)



Ralph Nardone



## WWII Veteran Aviator Bill Overstreet and His P-51 Mustang, “Berlin Express”



Hailing from Clifton Forge, Virginia, Bill Overstreet was born on April 10, 1921. On the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Bill was working as a statistical engineer for Columbia Engineering and attending Morris Harvey College (now the University of Charleston) in Charleston, WV. Wanting to get in the Air Corps as a fighter pilot, Bill enlisted and did a lot of fast talking to get accepted into the program, and by February 1942 he was a private, waiting for an opening as an Aviation Cadet. After several months, he was sent to Santa Anna, California, for preflight training, and after several months at preflight, he was sent to Rankin Aeronautical Academy in Tulare, California, for primary flight training flying Stearmans



WWII Aviator, Bill Overstreet

Tex Rankin, the Rankin school's founder and chief instructor was a champion aerobatic pilot and often took the opportunity to demonstrate his skills. In keeping with Rankin's vision, the school employed some unusual methods to produce skilled aviators, including surprising students mid-flight. One story Bill relates is how his instructor, Carl Aarslef, while on the downwind leg of a landing pattern, at 500 feet, would suddenly turn the Stearman upside down, cut the engine, and say, "OK, you land it." Of course, for Bill it was easy, as he puts it: *"just quarter roll it into a left turn, line up with the runway and set it down."* Bill theorizes that the real test was for his reaction to the unexpected, and learning to keep one's head in an unanticipated situation, where one second can mean the difference between life and death, is a useful skill for a pilot, and was certainly put to use over the course of Bill's flying career.

The next phase in Overstreet's training was basic flight training at Lemoore, California, where he flew the Vultee BT-13 Valiant, a faster and heavier plane than the biplanes utilized in the initial phase of training and introduced aspiring pilots to two-way radio communications with the ground, operating landing flaps and adjustable propeller pitch. The third phase of training took place at Luke Field, in Arizona. Piloting North American T-6 Texans and later on Curtiss P-40 Warhawks was a revelation to Bill, and while the commanding officer had picked Bill for additional training for multi-engined aircraft, Bill was able to convince the CO to instead assign him as a fighter pilot rather than going on to become a bomber pilot.

Upon graduation, Overstreet was initially assigned to Hamilton Field, California. Later he went on to the 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron. The squadron was being moved from Nevada to Santa Rosa, California, and Bill got to fly with experienced pilots from whom he learned a great deal. Bill thoroughly enjoyed flying out of Santa Rosa, saying *"Flying at Santa Rosa was great. There was enough moisture in the air to leave streamers from the wing tips in a tight turn. Our goal was to get a flight of four, come to the end of the runway, peel up in a tight turn and land before the first plane's streamers had faded. I flew with several flight leaders, but mostly with Lloyd Hubbard. He was good. We all thought we could buzz pretty closely, but while we may be able to "mow the fairway" on a golf course, only Hubbard could "mow the greens."*



Bill and his cherished 1938 Buick in California in 1943

*“Hub” also liked to take a flight of four to the Golden Gate Bridge and do loops around it. You know we were having fun! Complaints came in and charges were placed. Jack Meyers, our legal officer, told me years later that he was able to hold up action on bushels of charges, and took most home with him after the war. We liked to buzz farmers, sunbathers or anything. Years later, I asked Don Graham why we got by with so much. He replied, “If you were picking pilots for combat, who would you pick? The fellows who flew straight and level or the ones who pushed the envelope and tested the limits of their planes?”.*

Bill was in combat training in June 28th, 1943 when he had his first crash, at the controls of an Bell P-39 Airacobra, which went into a dreaded flat spin, a condition uniquely devastating for the model and which claimed many a pilot's life. Bill and his squadron-mates were practicing aerobatic maneuvers when his plane started tumbling and he couldn't control it. Bill went to release the Airacobra's doors but the air pressure prevented them from opening. He finally managed to get a knee against one door with his shoulder against the other, trying to overcome the pressure, and the moment he got out, he pulled the ripcord on his parachute. The moment the chute snapped open Bill found himself standing amidst the wreckage of his plane right by the propeller. He was so close to the ground when he escaped his doomed plane that none of his flight-mates even saw his chute deploy, Bill believes he was perhaps the first pilot to survive the crash of a tumbling P-39, and he made a point on tracking down the man who packed his chute to personally thank him for a job well done.



**Overstreet's Airacobra after his “one second parachute jump.”**

After additional training, flying P-39s in Oroville, California and Casper, Wyoming, Bill was declared “combat ready” and was sent to Camp Shanks in New Jersey before being loaded on the Queen Elizabeth to cross the Atlantic for deployment at Raydon Airfield as part of the Ninth Air Force. There were no planes available at that point, so Bill felt fairly useless there, but as luck would have it, North American P-51 Mustangs were becoming available, and the Ninth Air Force traded Bill's plane-less squadron for a squadron of pilots and Republic P-47 Thunderbolts with the Eighth Air Force, so Bill

found himself stationed at RAF Leiston. Bill got to fly a p-51 for the first time on January 30, 1944, and as the inventory of the planes increased, the opportunity to fly them increased as well.



The sprawling USAAF Station 373, AKA RAF Leiston

Bill named his first P-51, which he received in February, 1944 "Southern Belle," but it was lost along with its pilot on a combat mission a couple of weeks later. Re-thinking the name, given that by that time they were regularly flying sorties to Germany, he named all of his subsequent planes "Berlin Express." On March 6, 1944 just after their first Berlin raid, the 357th received their first Citation, which stated: *"On 6 March, 1944, the newly operational 357th Fighter Group provided target and withdrawal support to heavy bombardment aircraft bombing Berlin, which was the deepest penetration of single-engine fighters to that date. The 33 P-51 aircraft went directly to Berlin and picked up the first formations of B-17s just before their arrival over the city. They found the bombers being viciously attacked by one of the largest concentrations of twin-engine and single-engine fighters in the history of aerial warfare. From 100 to 150 single-engine and twin-engine fighters, some firing rockets, were operating in the immediate target area in groups of 30 to 40 as well as singly. Each combat wing of bombers was being hit as it arrived over Berlin and although they were sometimes outnumbered as much as 6 to 1, flights and sections of the 357th Group went to aid each combat wing as it arrived over the target, providing support in the air for over 30 minutes. Upwards of 30 enemy aircraft at a time were attacked by these separate flights and sections, and driven away from above and below the bombers. Some of the P-51s left their formations to engage enemy fighters below the bomber level in order to prevent them from reforming for further attacks. Though fighting under the most difficult conditions and subjected to constant anti-aircraft and enemy aircraft fire, so skillfully and aggressively were their attacks on the enemy fighters carried out that not a single aircraft of the 357th Group was lost. In driving enemy fighters away from the bombers, 20 Nazi fighters were destroyed, one probably destroyed and seven others damaged. On withdrawal, one flight of five P-51s strafed a large enemy airfield in central Germany, damaging three twin-engine and single-engine*

aircraft on the ground and killing 15-20 armed personnel before regaining altitude and returning to the bombers.”



Bill and his P-51, “Berlin Express”

Bill relates, “Not long after (the March 6th Mission), I had a freak accident. I think it was a mission to southern France. While over enemy territory, a burst of flak cut my oxygen line. Since I was at about 25,000 feet, I soon passed out. The next thing I knew, I was in a spin, engine dead since the fuel tank it was set on was dry. Somehow, I recovered from the spin, changed fuel setting, got the engine started, and dodged the trees that were in front of me. Then, I looked at my watch. Ninety minutes were not in my memory. I had no idea where I was, but remembered where I had been headed so I reversed it. I was able to find the coast of France and headed for Leiston. By this time, I was low on fuel, so I landed at the Fourth Group base. The officer I talked with was Captain Mead, who had lived a couple of blocks from my home in Clifton Forge, Virginia. To top it off, the mechanic who repaired my plane was “Hot Cha” Tucker, a former schoolmate, also from Clifton Forge. I still have a picture of Tucker and me with a P-47. Many weeks later, this story got a lot of publicity – Lowell Thomas on radio, newspapers and TIME magazine.”

### **Oxygen Out, Pilot Flies 90 Minutes With Mind a Blank**

AN EIGHTH MUSTANG BASE, May 23—For an hour and a half, 1/Lt. William B. Overstreet Jr., a P51 pilot from Clifton Forge, Va., flew his Mustang fighter over enemy territory and didn't know a thing about it, his mind a perfect blank.

Flying into France, Overstreet's oxygen system failed at 22,000 feet. His plane dropped out of formation and his squadron leader couldn't reach him over the radio. For 90 minutes the Virginian, subconscious from lack of oxygen, apparently flew his plane by reflex action alone and only regained his senses when the ship slipped into a spin, the denser air at 7,000 feet reviving him in time to recover and fly home.

At the hospital where flight surgeons said he was all right for combat again, it was explained that Overstreet must have dropped from 22,000 feet for his 90 minutes of blank flying, because he probably would have died in the rarified atmosphere of that altitude without oxygen.

From Stars and Stripes, 5/24/1944

Another mission that didn't turn out as expected occurred when Bill flew with a sinus infection. He and his group were escorting a sortie of bombers, and in chasing German fighters away from the flight, he engaged in a power dive from 30,000 feet, chasing after a Messerschmitt Bf 109. The extreme change in pressure caused his eyes to swell shut, blinding him. Bill was able to keep his plane in the air by control feel, but had no way to determine his heading or carry out a landing. Calling on his radio for help, one of Bill's mates, indicated that he could see Bill's plane and gave him instructions to get the plane pointed in the right direction, then got on his wing and together the two made their way back to the base in England. Bill was talked through a straight-in approach and landing. It took several days under the care of the Base's doctors before the swelling had gone down enough for Bill to see again.

In the spring of 1944 Bill and his P-51C "Berlin Express" were near Paris when the scene that is immortalized in the artwork by Len Krenzler of Action Art that leads this article took place. Bill had followed this Bf 109 from the bombers he was escorting when most of the German fighters left. The two planes had been in a running dogfight. The German pilot flew over Paris hoping that the heavy German anti-aircraft artillery would solve his problem and eliminate Overstreet and the "Berlin Express," though Bill managed to get some hits in at about 1500 feet. The German's engine was hit, and Bill stayed on his tail braving the intense enemy flak. His desperation undoubtedly growing, the German pilot aimed his plane at the Eiffel Tower and in a surprising maneuver, flew beneath it. Undeterred, Bill followed right behind him, scoring several more hits in the process. The German plane crashed and Bill escaped the heavy flak around Paris by flying low and full throttle over the river until he had cleared the city's heavy anti-aircraft batteries.

On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Overstreet and his group took off at around 2AM in terrible weather, climbing to about 20,000 feet to get out of the overcast. He recalls it as beautiful when they had finally cleared the clouds, with a bright moon and the sight of all of the aircraft rising from the clouds after their long climb to get above the weather. With all the planes in the air, his wing never did find their assigned flights, so they just formed up in flights of four, knowing that their mission was to get to France and make sure no German fighter planes could interfere with the invasion as well as preventing German reinforcements from being brought up. Their first mission was six hours, then they had to return to base for fuel. His group flew eight missions on the day of the invasion.

June 7th brought a sortie that saw Bill and his mates strafing trains, trucks and military vehicles. On the 10th, more hits on German supply lines were carried out, with attacks on trains, trucks and barges. On the 29th the group's success continued with Bill knocking out an Fw 190 and with Allied air superiority well established, Bill only used 40 rounds that entire day. General Kepner issued another commendation for the 357th and the 361st Groups, who destroyed 48 enemy aircraft without losing a single bomber.

On August 6, 1944, Overstreet flew his first long distance shuttle mission along with the 357th Fighter Group, which was selected to escort B-17s from the 8th Air Force's 3rd Bomb Division on a shuttle mission to the Soviet Union. The group rendezvoused with the bombers seventy-five miles northwest of Gdynia, Poland. The group engaged several Me 109s near Gdynia, shooting down two of the German fighters. They regrouped after driving off the rest of the Me 109s and continued to escort the bombers until reaching Kiev. Seven and a half hours after taking off from Leiston, all of the 357th's P-51s landed at Piryatyn.

The group then escorted B-17s to Cracow, Poland, on the 7th and to Foggia, Italy, on the 8th. One thing that wasn't in short supply in Russia was beet vodka, and not expecting resistance from the Luftwaffe on the group's one-way mission to Foggia, Overstreet volunteered to trade the .50 caliber ammunition in his Mustang for bottles of vodka and loaded them into his now-empty ammunition bays. During the flight from Russia to Italy, the eminently predictable happened, and Bill's group ran into some Me 109s on the way. The Mustangs gave chase, scaring one of the 109's Pilots enough for him to bail out of his plane, and while Bill's plane was the closest and therefore he could have claimed the kill, but wasn't comfortable with the idea of bringing down an enemy fighter armed only with vodka. They managed to make it to Italy with both the formation and the vodka intact.



USAAF B-17 Flying Fortresses and Soviet Air Force Yakovlev Yak-9 fighters share an airfield as aircrews swap stories in 1944.

A memorable mission flown from Italy was escorting some C-47s to Yugoslavia to pick up downed airmen that had been collected by the Serbian Chetniks, many of whom had been hiding the airmen in their homes for months. When the Allied plane reached the appointed airfield to pick up the airmen, and the C-47s took turns landing loading and taking off, the Allied airmen would throw their shoes, clothes and anything else they had on them out of the plane for their rescuers, who were in desperate need of such supplies, helping those brave resistance fighters who had helped them survive for this Allied pick-up.

On September 3, 1944 Overstreet flew a top secret escort mission, escorting a radio-controlled Consolidated B-24 Liberator. The B-24 had been stripped down and converted into essentially a flying bomb. After take-off it's pilot bailed out via parachute, and the plane was controlled by a remote operator within the formation which guided the plane to some German U-Boat pens that were built under a large rock formation and had proved too difficult a target to damage with typical bombing from above. The B-24 was flown in low, entering the facility nearly at water level, with the resultant explosion destroying the otherwise impenetrable facility from the inside out.

Overstreet's performance on the top secret Mission saw him assigned for OSS missions, flying supplies to the Free French and picking up downed airmen and intelligence dispatches from behind enemy lines. His tour of duty ended in October, 1944 and Bill returned to the states. His next assignment was to teach at the gunnery school in Pinellas, Florida. Overstreet was released from active duty, but kept in Reserves. So, he returned to Charleston, West Virginia where he worked as General Manager of Charleston Aviation. Overstreet eventually moved to Roanoke, Virginia in 1950 and worked for a CPA firm, before striking out on his own, retiring in 1984. Bill has been active and enjoying air shows and gatherings of WWII veterans through his long retirement,

*\*research would indicate that the plane was likely a B-17, employed under Operation Aphrodite, that though intended for Germany's Heligoland U-boat pens, instead the remote control operator flew the aircraft into Dune Island by mistake. It's possible that at the time of the mission, the pilots believed it to be a success, or the fog of many years having passed since then has caused the details to get muddled.*



Drone B-17 used as a guided missile during World War II



This article was adapted from an interview that Bill Overstreet gave to Warbird Digest on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2013, They were honored that he took the time to sit down and talk to them about his experiences.

A link to help detail the *BERLIN EXPRESS* <https://www.cebudanderson.com/357profileberlinexpress.htm>

There is a 1/32 scale kit of Bill Overstreet's P-51B from Revell

John Currie

Pics from last months meeting



Jim Hamilton – SMER – 1/48 scale MC-200.



Ralph Nardone – Wingman Models – 1/48 scale IAI Nesher (Work in progress).



Ralph Nardone – Academy – 135 scale T-34/85 Egypt.



Mike Martucci – Tamiya – 1/20 scale Ligier JS11 Ford Formula 1.



Kevin Cook – Wargames Min – 28mm US Infantry WWII.



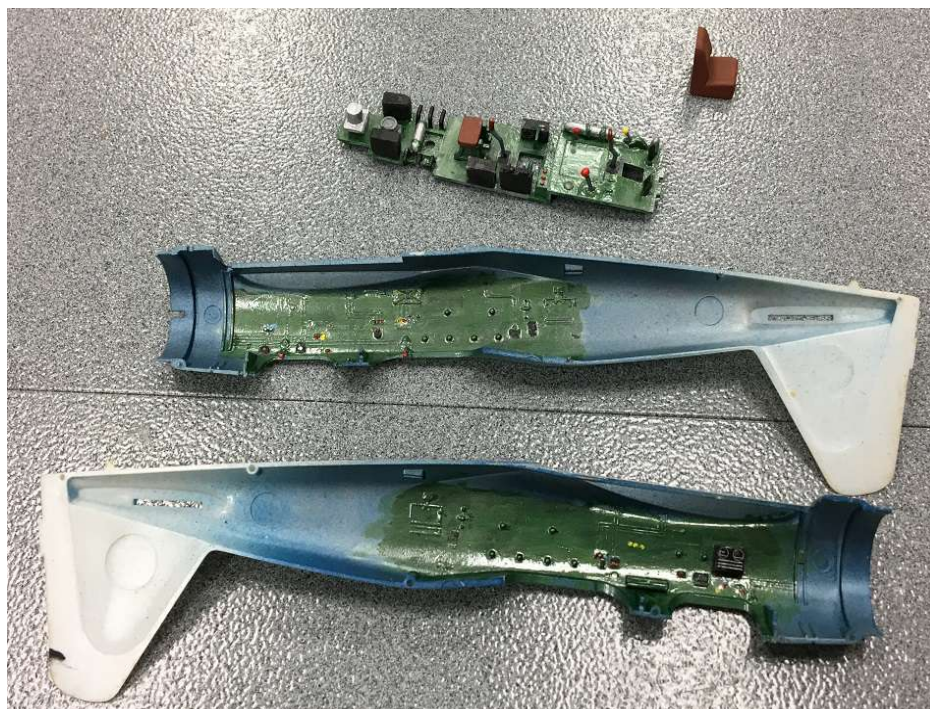
Kevin Cook – 3D Printed – 1/72 scale US Artillery crew figures Vietnam.



Rick Broome – Lindberg – American Eagle.



Michael Carra – Renwall – 1/32 scale M42 Duster.



DC Locke – Nichmo – 1/48 scale Ki-51 Sonia (In progress).



DC Locke – Revell – 1/48 scale PV-1 Ventura (In progress).



Donnie Greenway – MPC – 1/25 scale 32 Ford Coca Cola.



Donnie Greenway – AMT – 1923 Ford Coca Cola Delivery.



Mike Roof – 3D Print/Original – 1/35 scale MH50 Chassis/Suspension.



Mike Roof – 3D Printed/Re-mix – 1/24 scale Fallout IV Nuka Cola Machine.



Bob Fisher – Monogram - 1/48 scale YB-40 Conversion many scratch built additions.



David Koopman – Trumpeter – 1/700 scale DKM Admiral Hipper (In progress).



John Helms – Monogram – 1/48 scale P-51D “Big Beautiful Doll”.



John Helms – Revell – 1/48 scale P-51B “Beesons Bee”.



John Helms – Monogram – P-38J “Marge”.



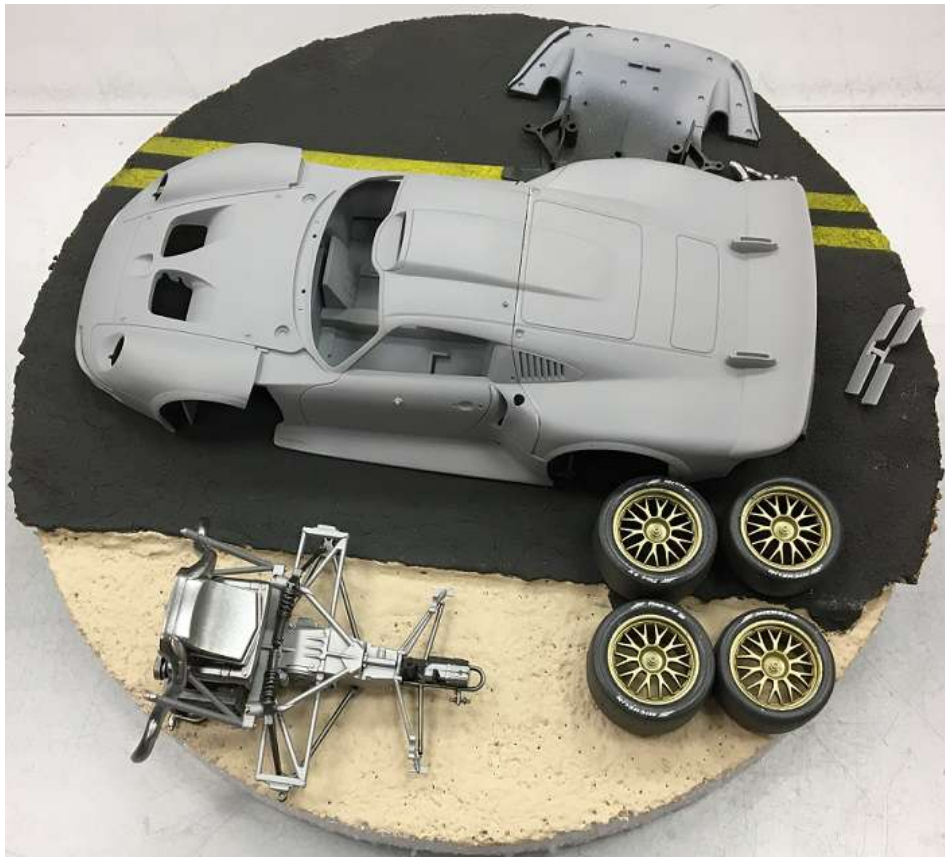
Tom Wingate – Tamiya – 1/35 scale T-72m1.



Tom Wingate – Tamiya – 1/35 scale Kubelwagen Type 82.



Tom Wingate – Trumpeter – 1/32 scale P-40B.



Trevor Edwards – Tamiya – 1/24 scale Porsche 911 GT1.



## Pics from the SIDNA Sale





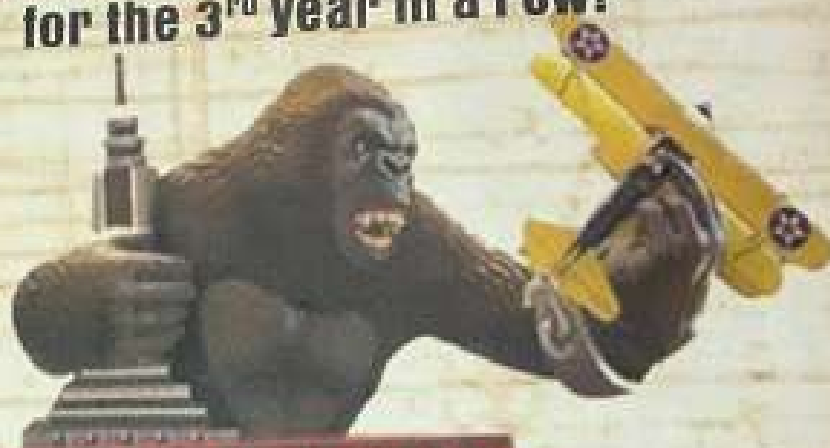






***Thank you to all our readers***

Thanks from the Flight Deck Team for voting us  
**BEST FAMILY DINING WITH KIDS**  
for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row!



**FLIGHT DECK**  
RESTAURANT

**FLIGHT DECK RESTAURANT**

109-A OLD CHAPIN ROAD, LEXINGTON SC 29072

**(803) 957-5990**

[www.flightdeckrestaurant.net](http://www.flightdeckrestaurant.net)

***Well thats all folks***

*See you at the next meeting Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December*

*John*