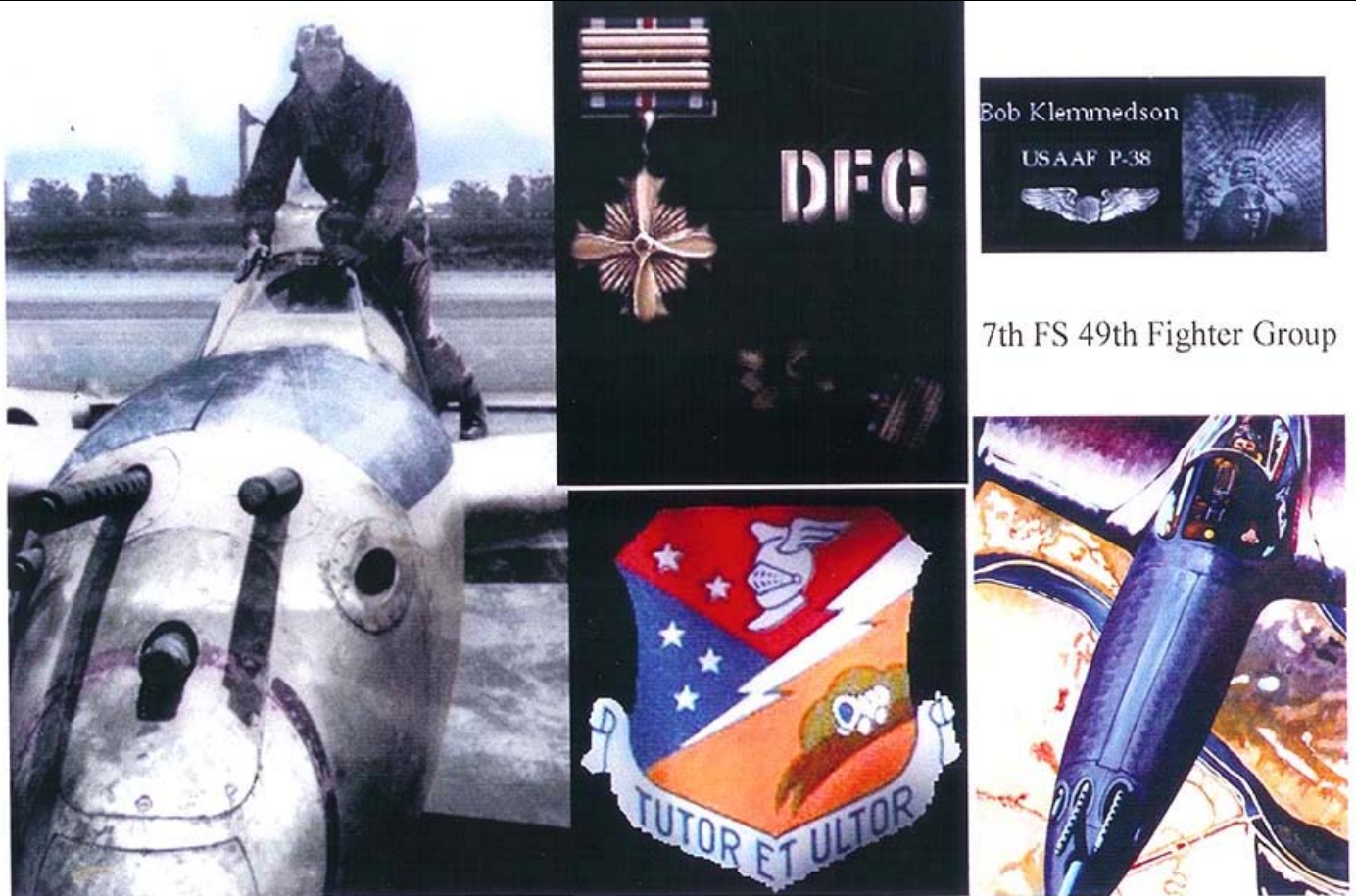


BOB KLEMMEDSON PROFILE



7th FS 49th Fighter Group

In this special issue of VSA Windsock, we are honoring long time glider pilot Bob Klemmedson. In World War II, Bob received the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.

FEATURES

President's Message	2	Bob Klemmedson Profile	8
Best Wishes to Kenny Price	4	The Eccentric Men	17
Calendar of Events	5	Time Flies When You're Having Fun	20
Membership & Officers	7	The Old Guys Win the Race	24

JOIN VSA! TWO WAYS TO PAY! PAYPAL or US MAIL

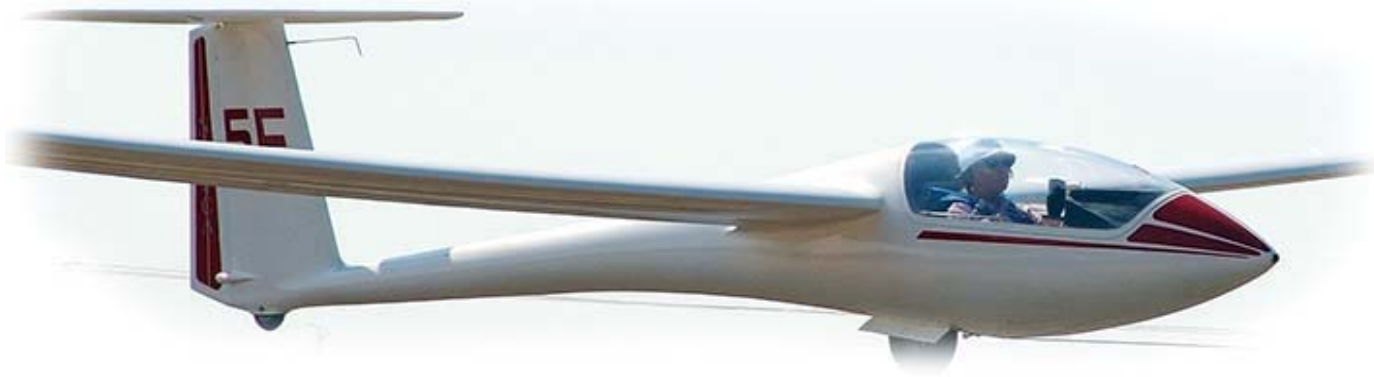
Either way, be sure to include your name, mailing address, phone number and email address.

PAYPAL eMail your \$20 to: tkjesq-VSA@yahoo.com

US MAIL Write a check for \$20 Check payable to **VSA**.

Mail to: **VSA, c/o Williams Soaring, 2668 Husted Rd, Williams, CA 95987**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



2008 Doc Mayes Memorial. Photo by Ginny Farnsworth

What a busy season this has turned into! Change is all around us, and while we celebrate accomplishments, new starts, new friends, plans for the summer's events, we simultaneously mourn our losses as we restructure our soaring community.

Sports Class Nationals and the Region 11 Contest

We are looking forward to the Sports Class Nationals and the Region 11 Contest, hosted by none other than our Rex and Noelle of WSC, in Montague this season. Already there are a lot of pilots signed up in anticipation of a well run contest.

See Kempton's Video

Kempton Izuno has been making some impressive flights in the FNX, ASH 25, which he is now a partner in. On April 14, a cold windy day, Kempton and Stefan Leutenegger took a tow from WSC to Susanville to catch the Sierra Wave. Reaching 14-17 k at Doyle, they turned and made it back to the WSC area (landing at Millers due to x-winds) after about 9 hours. Kempton's video of the flight is available at <http://hdsoaring.blogspot.com/> He is clearly sticking to his mission of making record flights from WSC this season. Thanks for sharing your flights through your talents in creating the video's, Kemp. For those of you that haven't viewed the video, we'll show it one of these nights after the BBQ (have to wait for it to get dark earlier, though).

19th Annual Doc Mayes Memorial Spring Contest



We gathered a few weeks ago to celebrate the Nineteenth Annual Doc Mayes Memorial Spring Contest, and what a weekend it was! The contest has grown into a festival, and you didn't have to be a sailplane pilot to have a glorious time at the glider port that weekend. There were beautiful ships flying in and out during the day, and biplane rides for all who wanted to partake in the flying! What a wonderful way to celebrate the life of Doc, who is remembered with love and respect by the "extended family" at WSC.

From Wing Runner to First Solo - Eric Knight

Eric Knight soloed a few weeks ago – you all know Eric, who runs your wing and hooks you up to the tow plane! Congratulations, Eric! Way to go!! Eric and Ben doused Kenny (a little role reversal) on May 17, Kenny's last day as Chief Instructor, and Noelle caught it on camera as Rex looked on – check out the photos on the Forum!

Back from Hiatus - Rudi Binnewies

Rudi Binnewies soloed again after a hiatus from soaring. Rudi was soaring at Vacaville, Calistoga, and now, most recently at WSC. Congratulations Rudi!

Modest about Silver Badge - Frank Peale

Frank Peale "9Q" earned his Silver Badge this Spring – and almost forgot to tell us! Talk about a low key guy! Congratulations Frank! Nice work!!



Richard Graham and Daughter Elsa as Copilot

I was recently honored to be ground crew for my friend Richard Graham, who has been taking his daughter Elsa flying this spring. Elsa, who is in the 6th grade, loves soaring, and has been to Sutter Buttes, Richvale, and beyond in the DG505 as copilot with her Dad!

New Tow Pilot - Scotty Veal with Wife Kacie and Daughter Angel

We have a new tow pilot on the field this season. Scotty Veal has been towing us to the skies these past few months, and lives on the field with his wife Kacie, and daughter, Angel. Welcome Scotty, Kacie, and Angel!

It is heartening to see the turnout of pilots at WSC each week. Whether it's the Doc Mayes Contest, a party for Kenny, a VSA Race day, a BBQ, a Winter Seminar, or just another great soaring day at WSC, we have a great group that is dedicated to excellence in soaring. As Walt Cannon says, WSC is becoming a "Soaring Destination". Thanks to all of you in the soaring community for all you do to make our community strong and fun to be a part of!

Bob Klemmedson Article

I would like to thank Tom Jue for the wonderful job he does with the Windsock. This issue is extra special, as it honors one of our senior pilots, Bob Klemmedson, and his aviation accomplishments.

The articles are contributed by those close to Bob, and give us amazing and sometimes humorous insights into the life of this aviator. Thanks for your work on this, Tom, and thanks, Bob and Dorothy, Kim, Barry, and Mike, for inspiring us by sharing your stories and photos. The Windsock chronicles our people and events, past, present, and future, bringing us together to celebrate our soaring community.

New VSA Newsletter Contributor - Sypko Andrae

We have a new contributor to the Windsock, Sypko Andrae, who has graciously contributed photos galore

that you will see in upcoming issues. Thanks, Sypko, for sharing your time and talent!

Taking Soaring Seriously - Ben Mayes

Another guy that's been doing some remarkable flying, soaring, and skill building is Ben Mayes! If you arrive on the field early Saturday mornings, you can witness Ben and EJ working hard on skill building and discussing flying theory. But that's not all!

In addition to his training flights with EJ, Ben has been out for some dual soaring in the Mendo's in the ASH 25, and is enthused about taking a dual flight mid-day to practice up on his thermalling skills. So "if you see the grin, and you ask where's he's been"... Well, you better take him out for dinner to hear the story, cause this guy is enthusiastic, and he has stories to tell! Way to go Ben!

Behind the Scenes - Larry Roberts

Behind the scenes, Larry Roberts has been both working on the pilot's computer, and training us how to use the new bells and whistles. From the pilots lounge, you can now use the card reader on the computer tower and upload your flight to OLC. You can access OLC from the shortcut icon on the desktop.

There is an option to view the flights using either Google Earth or See You, depending on your preference. A great learning tool - compare what tasks others have done with your own flying, compare techniques, speeds, flight paths, altitudes - unlimited learning potential. Nice work Larry - Thanks for your efforts and expertise on this!!

Until Next Time...

There is more to write about than we have space to print in this issue! I will close with a special thanks to Rex and Noelle, Ben, Nick, Pete King, Todd Robinson, Mark Haffer, Janett Torres, Scotty Veal, Eric Knight, and all the rest of the crew that keep us soaring at WSC. You're the Best!!



Rex, Rusty and Kathy Photo by G Farnsworth

BEST WISHES to KENNY PRICE

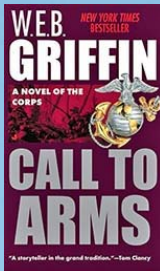


The Importance of the Instructor

by Tom Jue

How important is the instructor? I thought of Kenny Price, our departing instructor at Williams Soaring as I came across this passage in one of W.E.B. Griffin's war novels¹.

Best wishes to you Kenny Price, from the many of us whom you taught to fly.



One's first flight at the controls, aviators will all agree, is a traumatic experience. But over a period of time---long or short, **depending almost always on the skill of the instructor pilot**---those student pilots who ultimately make it (there are many who simply cannot learn) gradually pick up the finesse that permits them to smoothly control their aircraft. And [sic] their bodies. hey are no longer quite so dizzy, or disoriented, or nauseous.

Like riding a bicycle, aviators will affirm, piloting an aircraft is something you have to be *taught* to do---*always* under the watchful eyes of a skilled instructor pilot. The way you learn to do it well is with a great deal of practice, slowly growing a little better.

1 On flying, by W.E.B. Griffin in his novel "Call to Arms," Chapter X. The setting is Pensacola Navy Air Station, 18 January 1942:





2008 Sports Class Nationals

Montague, CA
Siskiyou County Airport

Hosted by Williams Soaring Center

Nationals Practice Dates June 29th & 30th
Competition Dates July 1st-10th

Regionals Practice Date June 29
Competition Dates June 30-July 5

ELT's are NOT required

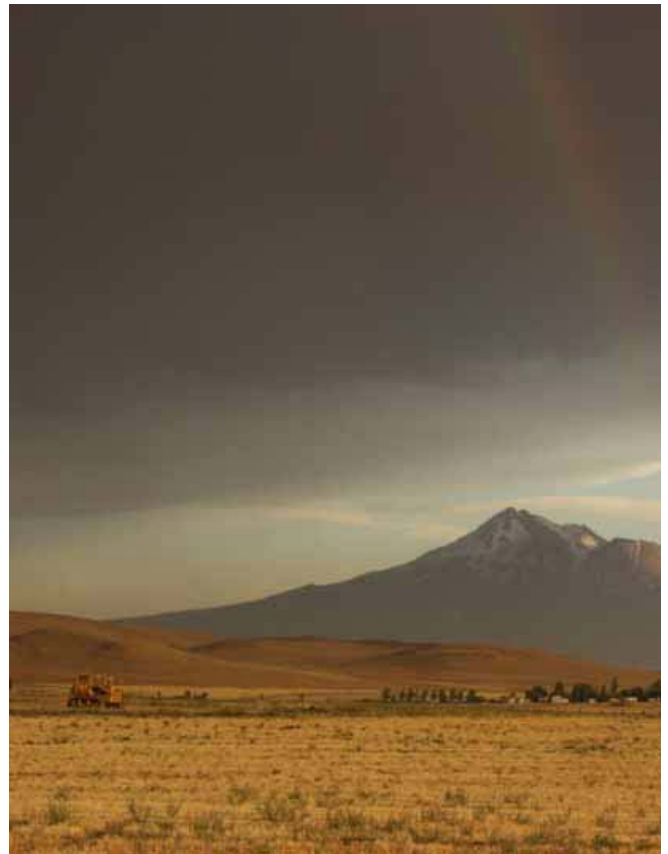
but strongly recommended.

Staff

Contest Director..... **Gary Kemp**
Contest Manager.....**Noelle Mayes**
..... (530) 473-5600
Scorer **Benjamin Mayes**
Scales **Erik Heintz**
Weather..... **Peter Kelly**
Task Committee **Gary Kemp**
Line/Operations **Bob Ireland**
Retrieve Phone/Radios..... **vacant**
Chief Tow Pilot – **Pete King**

Staff Towpilots

**Scott Veal, Rex Mayes, Jim Indrebo,
Bret Willat, Steve Mikinka, Lloyd Rugg
Randy Akana**



Hosted by

Williams Soaring Center
2668 Husted Road
Williams, CA 95987-5105

Phone (530) 473-5600
FAX (530) 473-5315

noelle@williamssoaring.com

For more details, please refer to
the WSC web page at

www.williamssoaring.com

For more information on prior
soaring trips to Montague
refer to the VSA web site at

www.valleysoaring.net

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

06/07/08	Race Day #07
06/21/08	Race Day #08
06/27/08	WSC Closed for Nationals/Regionals at Montague - 6/27/08 until 7/11/08
06/29/08	Regionals at Montague - Practice Day - June 29
06/29/08	Sports Class Nationals - Practice Day, June 29-30
06/30/08	Sports Class Nationals - Practice Day, June 29-30
06/30/08	Regionals at Montague - 6/30/08 to 7/05/08
07/01/08	Sports Class Nationals at Montague - 7/01/08 to 7/10/08
07/19/08	Race Day #09
08/02/08	Race Day #10
08/16/08	Race Day #11
08/30/08	Race Day #12
09/13/08	Race Day #13
09/27/08	Race Day #14
10/11/08	Race Day #15
10/11/08	Oktoberfest

Comments by Ginny Farnsworth, VSA President

For those of you who aren't familiar with the VSA Race series, the rules are available on the VSA web site at <http://www.valleysoaring.net/>. Click on Racing Series. Race days begin with a pilots meeting and weather briefing, and followed by a debriefing and flight review. There is a shared trophy, the VSA Debriefing Trophy. It is awarded to a pilot at the discretion of the CD or the master of debriefing, PK (**Peter Kelly**). The trophy is currently held by Ginny Farnsworth (G3) for a personal best flight of 200 K. The following is a brief description of the debriefing highlights taken from the WSC Forum, after the Doc Mayes contest, written by Bob Ireland, CD."

VSA RACE SERIES *updated thru Race 6*

Pilot	TOTAL POINTS	Total # of Tasks	100K Task Qualifier	200K Task Qualifier	300K Task Qualifier	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Sergio Colacevich	5,590	7	6R	13	24R	757		925	900	1,513	1,495
Peter Kelly	4,689	5	11	13R		1,000		915		1,025	1,749
Jim Darke	3,557	4	1	18						1,899	1,658
Rich Parker	3,362	4	6			1,763				717	882
Luke Ashcraft	2,886	3	9	18				1,004			1,882
Scott Dockter	2,841	4	8		20	626				1,616	599
Bob Ireland	2,482	3	9R					815			1,667
Ginny Farnsworth	2,198	3	2	18						790	1,408
Pete Alexander	1,764	2	9	18						842	922
JJ Sinclair	1,573	2		13						953	620
Hal Choinard	1,200	2	9	13							1,200
Graham/Sanford	339	1	12R								339

Comments by Bob Ireland Posted on WSC Forum on Friday, May 23, 2008 6:11 pm

Although I'm pretty confident of the results at this point, I'll continue to refer to them as preliminary until next Tuesday to give contestants a chance to review the attached excel files, Race Day #6 and Series to Date.

There have been a few developments since the initial results Saturday evening. C1 still turned in the fastest handicapped speed, but was edged out of the day's top point score by 1B due to an improper start. Gliders must remain below max start height for 2 minutes prior to exiting the start cylinder. Thermalling out the top of the start cylinder has been freely allowed up to the end of Race Day #6, but will be penalized in the future due to the additional workload it creates for the scorer.

C2 is the current point leader, but was leaving last Saturday for Truckee for the rest of the season and probably will no longer be much of a threat (unless of course no others manage to complete their 300k task!) C1 has the highest average score per flight, but at this point I'd have to say that PK is likely in the best position for the series at this time.

Anyway, Race Day #7 is coming June 7, making 9 more chances to improve your position. Highest season scores in prior contest years invariably went to those who showed up to race with the greatest regularity, so be there if you want to do well.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW for 2008!

2008 VSA MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

GUY ACHESON
PETE ALEXANDER
PAT ALFORD
PETER ANDERSEN
WALLACE ANDERSON
JOHN A APPS
KEVIN ASH
JOHN BARRELLA
PETER BEECHER
FREDERICK W. BICKFORD
RUDOLF BINNEWIES
DIANA BISHEY
ERNEST BROCK
WALTER CANNON
PAUL A. CARMEL
RICHARD W. CARTER

HAL CHOUINARD
WINFIELD CURTIS
JIM DARKE
BILL DAVIS
DAVID L. DAWSON
ROBERT K. DISMUKES
SCOTT DOCKTER
CYNTHIA DONOVAN
DANIEL J. DUNKEL
GINNY FARNSWORTH
WILLIAM FARNSWORTH
ERNE FERREIRA
DOROTHY J. FRAUENS
BILL GAWTHROP
THOMAS GILMAN
RAY GIMMEY

JACK GLENDENING
RICHARD GRAHAM
MIKE GREEN
MARTIN HELLMAN
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ERINIE PIEPER
MITCH POLINSKY
DARRYL RAMM
LARRY ROBERTS
TOM ROWE
RAY SANFORD
JOHN S. SINCLAIR
GEOFFRY SNOW
PAUL STARK
ANDREA SYPKO
CHARLES S. THAEL

2007 VSA MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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JOHN BARRELLA
FOREST BASKETT
DIANA BISHEY
RICHARD W. CARTER
HAL CHOUINARD
WINFIELD CURTIS
JIM DARKE
DAVID L. DAWSON
ROBERT K. DISMUKES
SCOTT DOCKTER
CYNTHIA DONOVAN
DANIEL J. DUNKEL
DAVID FAIRCHILD

GINNY FARNSWORTH
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BRETT R. MAYES
NOELLE C. MAYES
MARVIN MC CORMICK
MICHAEL MC CORMICK
MARK A. MILLER
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GEOFFRY SNOW
CHARLES S. THAELER
CINDI TITZER
JOANNA WOODY

YOUR VALLEY SOARING ASSOCIATION

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Treasurer
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tom.jue.usa@gmail.com

Web Master



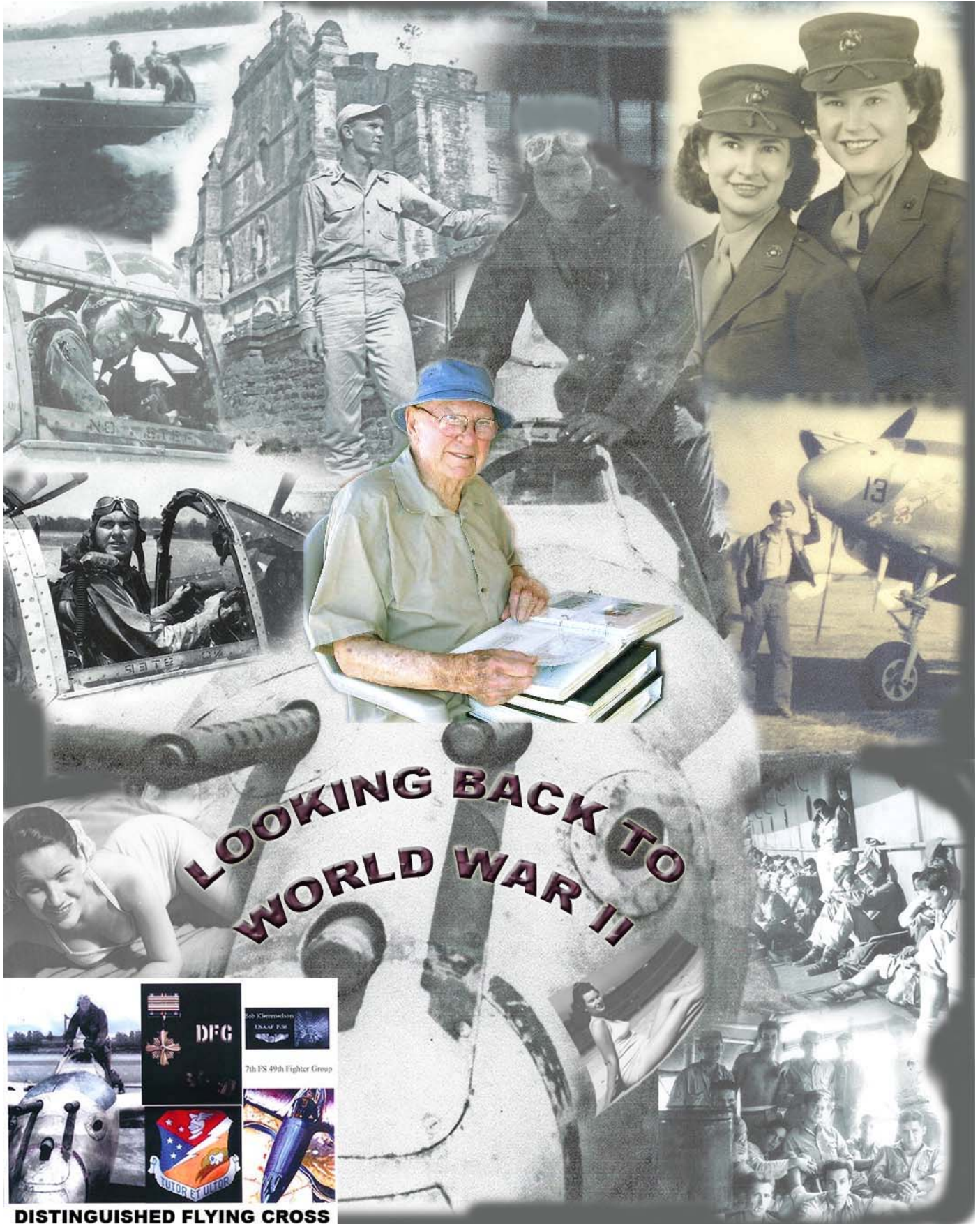
Peter Kelly

Administrator



Noelle & Rex Mayes

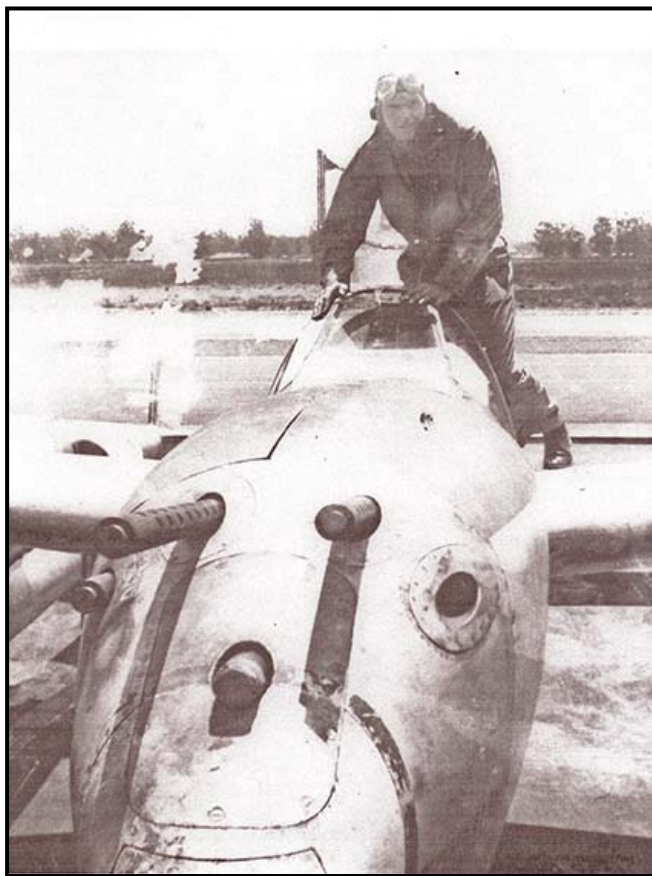
BOB KLEMMEDSON PROFILE



LOOKING BACK TO
WORLD WAR II



DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS



WWII photo. Lieutenant Bob Klemmedson entering the cockpit of his P-38L Lightning. Circa 1945

A Remarkable Man

Who is Bob Klemmedson, who in his youth served in World War II? If you ask his wife Dorothy, she'll tell you he's a remarkable man. After listening to Bob telling me how he survived World War II, I would agree.

A Veteran of World War II

During WWII, Bob survived landing on the beaches of the Philippines with the infantry as Japanese Kamikazes attacked from above. His streak of luck continued when he later survived being shot down twice, once by a Japanese Zero and then again by heavy anti-aircraft fire from two Japanese warships. After all of this, he married Dorothy and settled down as a father of Ron and Kim, an architect and of course as we know him, a very fine glider pilot.

Glidars Pre-WWII

Bob first got interested in gliders back in 1939, when he was attending CPT, a College Pilot Training course in Phoenix, AZ. He happened to hear the legendary Lewin B. Barringer (later head of the American Glider Program during World War II) lecture on gliders. From this, Bob started taking glider training before World War II began.



Bob next to his Travel Air during cadet training in CTP (Cadet Training Program) held at Phoenix, AZ. Circa 1939

The Love of his Life

Dorothy is the love of his life. Before Dorothy met Bob, she was attending college far away at Oklahoma A&M (known today as Oklahoma State). This was 1941-43. Even radar, which we take for granted today along with spy satellites, was not yet invented. She recalls hearing this strange word from several "brainy" Coast Guard students.

In June 1943, she joined the Marine Corp. She was stationed at Santa Barbara where she worked as a propeller specialist. She met Bob, who was stationed nearby at Santa Maria on a blind date.



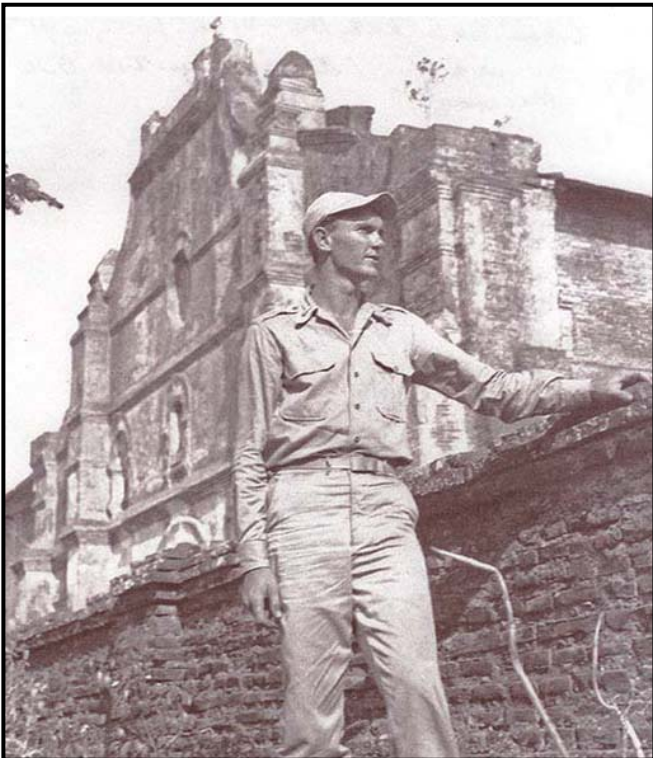
Bob and Dorothy shortly after marriage in Santa Barbara, CA. Circa 1947



Corporal Dorothy is on the right. Circa 1945

Two Tries to Graduate from College

Bob went to UC Berkeley, CA in 1940. His major was Architecture. He had signed up for the Army Air Corps before starting his Junior year. Unfortunately, just two weeks before graduation, he was called into the service. After the war, he went back to college, only to find that the program had been expanded from 4 to 5 years, so his 2 weeks remaining before the war, now took a full year to complete.



Bob in front of church in the Philippines. He was a scant 160 lbs. There was a shortage of food at the time. Circa 1945

Induction into the Service

While going through the aviation cadet training program, Bob was asked several times what type of ship he wanted to fly upon graduation. He always said the P-38. Still, if you know the military, you never got what you asked for. Also, he was 6'1" and at first they said he was too tall for the P-38. In spite of this, Bob was assigned to P-38's, anyway.

Landing on a Beach in the Philippines

World War II was fought on many continents throughout the world. The main focus by our country was against Germany in Europe and against Japan in Asia.

Bob's first fighting experience was in Asia, in the Island of Biak in New Guinea, sixty miles south of the equator. At the time, this was an intensely fought battleground that resulted in heavy casualties for all sides. Bob flew a number of combat missions there to protect US Bombers and to strafe enemy airfields. He was there for several months.

Bob said they had more pilots than airplanes at Biak, so they drew straws to see who would fly and who would fight with infantry. Bob drew the short straw and ended up with the infantry. Soon he found himself on a LST (Landing, Ship, Tank) bound for some beach in the Philippines. He recalls packing only a standard issue 45 caliber pistol, while Kamikaze's dove on his LST.

The Kamikaze's sank several aircraft carriers and liberty ships. Lucky for Bob, they missed his smaller LST.

Because several aircraft carriers were sunk, the Navy torpedo bombers and fighters were forced to land on the shore. Bob recalled that they all crashed one way or another.



WWII photo of Bob and his fellow pilots in a bamboo tent in the Philippines. Many of these pilots were later killed in action. Circa 1945

Six out of ten Pilots Perished

Several weeks later, Bob was back into flying. Assigned to the 7th Fighter Squadron of the 49th Fighter Group and flying the Lockheed P-38L with twin Allison engines. In 1945, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for valor in combat.

Back at home, Dorothy recalls one letter Bob wrote, where he sent her money to purchase a 16mm camera to send so he could mount it in his P-38.

Most of us have seen the videos about the glorious aerial dogfights up high, in contrast most of Bob's missions were much more risky. His squadron was flying low, seeking out enemy ground positions and drawing tremendous fire. Bob told me that **six out of ten pilots in his unit lost their lives**. Bob was tense with emotion as he was telling me this. This was a tough time in Bob's life. To this day, he is quite saddened when he reflects on his buddies who perished in combat. He said he will never forget them as long as he lives.

Lockheed P-38L Lightning Specifications

The P-38 was the fighter of choice for many pilots. It had amazing performance for its time, faster and higher than any other. Bob's P-38L had two Allison V-1710 engines rated at 1,400 horsepower.

Bob said the fastest he ever flew was 420 MPH. In a dive, they could not exceed 500 MPH or they would reach "compressibility" or "shock stall." The result of this would be an uncontrolled dive. Many pilots lost their lives as a result of this. "Compressibility" meant the airflow in certain places would reach the speed of sound and destroy the lift over that part of the wing. Not that the airplane itself was breaking the sound barrier, but rather the airflow in certain places was.

The Japanese pilots (as well as the German pilots) knew this and would attempt to lure the P-38 fighters into a dive by performing a "split-S" and turning upside down and diving, hoping the P-38 would follow. The Zero wasn't fast in a dive. Bob estimated their top speed in a dive was 350 to 375 MPH. Towards the end of the war though, this problem on the P-38 was fixed by adding dive recovery flaps under the wings.

During bombing missions, Bob's P-38 carried two 500 lb. bombs, one under each wing. For long range flights, the bombs were replaced with two external fuel tanks.

Dog Fight with Japanese Zeroes

Bob survived after being shot down twice. The first one was while his squadron was escorting bombers on a mission over Luzon, northwest of Manila. He was at 18,000 feet. All of a sudden, he saw flashes of lightning and heard explosions near by! Japanese Zero fighters were above them in the clouds and dropping phosphorous bombs on top of Bob's squadron. These bombs were exploding at their altitude. After dropping their phosphorous bombs, the

Zero's dove out of the clouds and headed for the bombers.

Bob saw a Zero dart past him in a dive. He gave chase, giving him several 2 second bursts from his four 50 caliber machine guns and pressing the little red button that fired the 20mm cannon when the tracers showed his guns were on target.

Bob's Zero start to smoke and then it blew up! The Zeroes were pretty flimsy. They didn't have bullet proof fuel tanks or armor to protect the pilot. Zeroes were built very light and therefore could out maneuver the P-38 and Bob knew it was not wise to engage them in a dogfight. Bob's tactic was to make one pass. If he missed, he would pull away. The P-38 was faster than the zero, but couldn't turn with it. This is the same tactic that General Chennault taught his Flying Tiger pilots in China.

While Bob was busy dispatching his Zero, another Zero was busy doing the same thing to Bob! Just after Bob's target blew up, he saw tracers sweep by his cockpit and then his right engine began smoking. The P-38 had armor behind, below and a little on the sides of the cockpit. It also had self-sealing fuel tanks. It was a heavily built machine, so even with one engine afire, Bob was able to fly his P-38 out to the ocean and bail out.

Bob was briefed to bail out over the ocean and a US naval submarine should be there to pick him up. Fortunately, a submarine did find Bob.

Unfortunately, the submarine did not take Bob ashore right away. He had to ride around in the submarine for several days before they were able to dock. Not knowing Bob had been rescued, the Army sent a "missing in action" report to Bob's mother, which was devastating.

The Purple Heart

The second time Bob was shot down he was on a mission with four P-38's to bomb and strafe a troop ship. Unfortunately, the ship was nestled in-between two destroyers for protection.

As they swooped down to bomb and strafe the troop ship, they were caught in a deadly cross-fire from the two destroyers. All four planes were shot up and had to crash land or ditch at sea. All pilots did survive, but one pilot was in the water until the evening and was finally rescued by Filipinos in a canoe. Another pilot, after crash landing, ran into the jungle and was later rescued by Filipinos.

Bob's plane was badly shot up and he had to land on one wheel as the right landing gear was damaged. Still, he managed to land on an airstrip, but ran into a palm tree and caught fire. Though injured, Bob quickly got out of his plane. Unable to walk, he was crawling away from the fire when an American soldier grabbed him and pulled him into his fox hole.



In his P-38L, Bob strafed these Japanese suicide boats in Luzon, Philippines. They later drove there by truck to repair them so they could fish with hand grenades. This wasn't for fun. Food was in short supply. Circa 1945

He didn't know it at the time, but the Japanese had control of the South side of the airstrip and the Americans had control of the North side. He was lucky to be crawling in the right direction! Bob's serious injuries during this episode earned him the Purple Heart.

They had to improvise just to survive. Bob recalled being very thin due to the inadequate food supply. He recalls resurrecting a Japanese suicide boat and using it to go fishing. Not having poles or hooks, they simply tossed a hand grenade in the water and waited for their dinner to come floating to the surface.

Best Combat Mission

Bob said one of his best missions was several weeks before the war ended. He flew a round trip of about 1,500 miles. This was a 7 hours and 40 minutes trip, averaging 200 MPH. They flew from Okinawa (an island 250 miles south of Japan) to the Korean coast to rescue American prisoners of war. They were flying air cover for a paratrooper drop on the POW camp.

It was a complete surprise and the paratroopers took the camp without firing a shot. They were then able to march the rescued POW's to the coast, where the Navy picked them up.

On Bob's last day in the Philippines, he was strafing a field in his P-38L. Bob recalled that he could see enemy bullets coming directly at him. He was amazed that he didn't get hit.

The Atomic Bombs

The atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nuclear attacks against the Empire of Japan by the United States at the order of U.S. President Harry S. Truman. After six months of intense firebombing of 67 other Japanese cities, the nuclear weapon "Little Boy" was dropped on the City of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, followed on August 9 by the detonation of the "Fat Man" nuclear weapon over Nagasaki. To date,

these are the only attacks with nuclear weapons in the history of warfare.

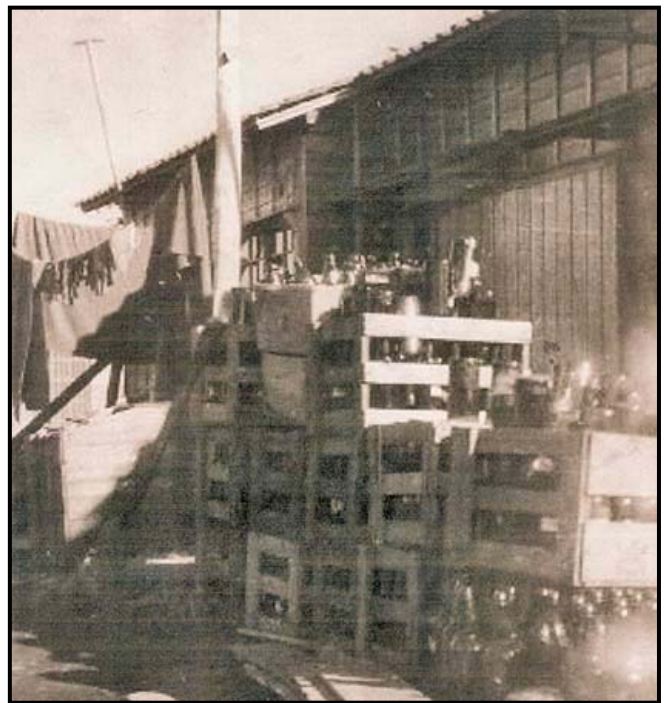
The bombs killed as many as 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki by the end of 1945, roughly half of these casualties occurred on the day of the bombings. Since then, thousands more have died from injuries or illness attributed to exposure to radiation released by the bombs. In both cities, the overwhelming majority of the dead were civilians.

Looking for Beer

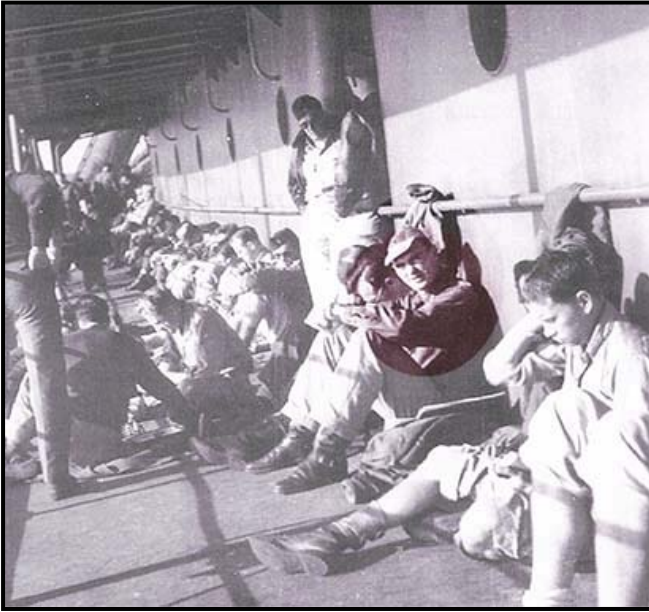
After Japan's surrender, the Army sent Bob to Japan to assist in the occupation. Bob flew reconnaissance missions while he was in Japan.

Amid all this devastation, there were also lighter moments shared by both sides. Several weeks after Bob landed in Japan, he became a transportation officer. He was enamored with a particular brand of Japanese beer. Pursuing this, he drove the streets of Tokyo in his truck, showing this beer bottle to the residents. They would acknowledge and point their fingers with a "that way" direction. Eventually Bob ended up at this beer warehouse! Bob and several of his buddies were able to load up the truck full of beer and brought it back to the barracks to share with his friends.

This is the story Bob told me. Here were people from warring nations who had bitter memories of fellow combatants, friends and families killed as a result of battle with one other. In contrast, shortly thereafter in peacetime, they treated each other with hospitality. It was a different era.



This is the beer Bob and his fellow pilots drove back from the warehouse. It was piled next to their barracks in Japan. Circa 1945



On the way home from Japan to Seattle, WA. Bob (to the right of center with the cap on) is sitting on the deck with the rest of the troops. Circa early 1946

The Journey Home – No Way to Treat a Soldier

The trip home for many American soldiers was neither a glorious nor comfortable one. Bob finally left Japan aboard a freighter. The trip took a week. He recalled the following:

The food was lousy. It was hot below. The bunk beds were hard, consisting of a board with a 2 inch pad and that was the officer’s quarters! Some guys slept on the deck with the pad off their bunk. The ship was overcrowded. We were packed like sardines. Some folks were lucky and got to fly home. I wasn’t that lucky.”



Dorothy, sitting atop a 1941 Lincoln Continental convertible designed by its founder Henry Ford. This was taken north of Stinson Beach, CA.

Circa 1947



Cutting the wedding cake

Circa 1947

Bob the Architect

Bob eventually got home and married Dorothy. He then started his career as an Architect designing many beautiful residential structures as close as Suisun, Livermore, and Orinda and as far away as Mexico.

Bob and Dorothy were married in 1947 in Santa Barbara where they had met. Their son Ron was born in Oakland in 1950. Their daughter Kim was born in Walnut Creek in 1957.

Bob went back to college in 1946. With Dorothy’s financial support, Bob finally completed his college shortly after they were married. From there, Bob enjoyed a very successful career as an Architect.



Bob designed this home located in Lafayette, CA. Note the Japanese style that influenced Bob when he was in Japan shortly after WW II. Circa 1970