

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.

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Walter Cronkite's Rebuke of Gliders

Walter Cronkite, veteran news correspondent of WW II, who flew into Holland in a CG-4A glider later said "If you have to go to war, don't go in a glider!"

In spite of Cronkite's rebuke of gliders, Bob bought several Pratt-Reed and TG-3 (Training Glider), war-surplus gliders! They were brand new and cost \$300 each, in Americas, Georgia. He built a trailer that would hold two of them and drove them two at a time to Phoenix, AZ. Bob was about 26 years old at this time.

Bob believed the sale of these military surplus gliders helped to spread the popularity of soaring in the USA after the war. He said many pilots learned soaring in these surplus gliders.

After returning from the war, Bob was only able to dabble in gliding. He flew his surplus gliders for several years in Phoenix, flying with Archie Furgenson, a marine pilot.

He tried to sell excess surplus gliders for a profit, but was hard pressed to sell them. He said gliding was not too popular in those days. Other than that, up until the 1960's, Bob didn't fly much. He had to focus on finishing school and starting his career as an architect. His work was superb. One of his homes was featured in Sunset Magazine.

He went back to UC Berkeley from 1949-50. He recalled being an apprentice for \$5 per hour while he was attending college on the GI Bill. That wasn't enough to live on, so he had to depend on Dorothy to support him. She was working as a bookkeeper for a Cadillac dealer in Walnut Creek, CA.



Bob's son Ron (left) built this hang glider. He and dad (right) is carrying it to Mt. Diablo for it's maiden voyage. It took Ron 2 months to build it during a college break. Circa 1960's.



Ron Klemmedson flies off of Mt. Diablo on his maiden voyage. "It flew over 300 feet, longer than the Wright Bros. flight" according to his father.

Circa 1960's

In the 1950's, he continued to apprentice in other architect offices and would moonlight for construction contractors on weekends. Back in those days, getting caught "moonlighting" could get you fired.

Finally in 1955, Bob received his California Architect License. This allowed him to start his own business, putting in twelve hour days, six days a week. It wasn't until the 1960's that he had time to focus on soaring.

To round out this profile on Bob Klemmedson, we elicited the help of daughter Kim, close friend Barry Danieli and fellow glider pilot Mike Green:

Article by Daughter Kim

We were fortunate enough to receive three short stories from crew member and daughter Kim. Her recollections of Bob's flying will leave you in stitches.

Article by Barry Danieli

In early 1970's, Barry Danieli began crewing for Bob Klemmedson. Read this exciting article that talks about his experiences with Bob during this era.

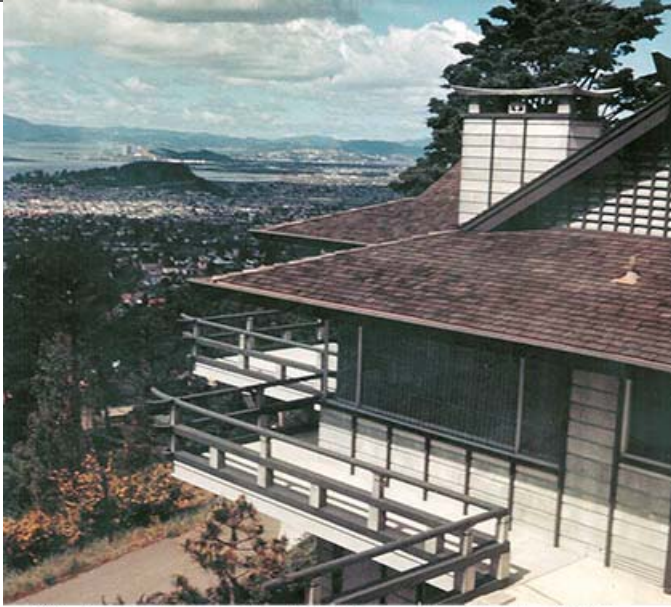
Article by Mike Green

To complete this tribute, Mike Green will write about the year 2002 when he and Bob Klemmedson were "team flying." This pair of "senior citizens" of soaring outpaced their young contenders and sauntered away with a first place trophy at Air Sailing!

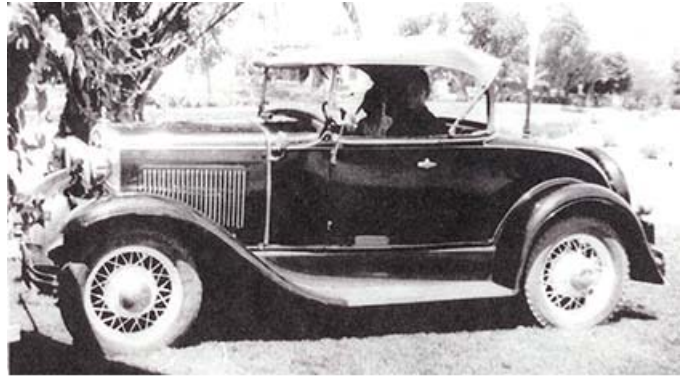
Special Thanks

Special thanks to JJ Sinclair for his technical advice on aerial dogfights.

BOB & DOROTHY SCRAPBOOK



This home designed by Bob Klemmedson in the 1970's is located in the Berkeley Hills.



1931 Ford Roadster Model A. Bob Klemmedson's first car with brother Don (age 4) in the left. Circa 1937



Bob in cockpit of his P-38L Lightning. Circa 1945



1961 Sky Sailing Regatta held in Redding, CA. Bob Klemmedson displays his 2nd Place Trophy. He rented this 1-26 Schweitzer from Les Arnold in Fremont, CA for \$75 for the weekend.



This home in Orinda design by Bob was published in Sunset Magazine. Bob received calls from all over the world after its publication. The swimming pool enters into the living room! Circa 1980

BOB & DOROTHY SCRAPBOOK



The 9th World Soaring Championships in 1963 held in Junin, Argentina. Alice (center) and Dick Johnson (right) in front of a Sisue glider. Bob Klemmedson was the Crew Chief.



Bob Klemmedson (left) in a RJH7 side-by-side seating, designed by Dick Schreder and built by Henry Pries in Canada. Circa 1982.



Jerry Robinson in El Mirage with his home made sailplane built with the infamous William Hawley Bowlus. Dick Johnson is on the wing tip. Circa 1956



Bob flying over Livermore, CA in a glider built in Austria. Only two were shipped to the USA. Circa 1965



Bob Klemmedson Flying over Livermore, CA in a side-by-side 2 seater, designed by Dick Schreder & built by Henry Pries in Canada. Circa 1969.



Bob Klemmedson in the cockpit of a glider with brother Don (left). This glider was built by William Hawley Bowlus, a famous designer and builder of gliders. Circa 1939.



Mother and Daughter

Dorothy (left) in a 1947 photo taken on the beach of the Salton Sea near Palm Springs.

Kim in a famous 1973 photo later published in WestWind Magazine. She is taking a shower outdoors at an Air Sailing event.

In a way, my father's style is very similar to Gary Kemp's. **They are completely nuts, very competitive, and most importantly eccentric.**

I too have many stories centered around "7A." I have always referred to my father as 7A. **I cried for two days, when he sold 7A** (the 33rd Standard Cirrus ever made) right out from under my nose. I was really pissed at him, because **he basically sold my childhood and didn't even consult me.** No, I do not fly, but I sure would have, if he had given me that bird.

I can thank soaring for teaching me how to drive, swim, survive in a desert, go LONG periods without showers **and basically be the low maintenance female I am today.** I know most of the brothels in Nevada, can name all 13 counties of Nevada and have conspired to play a few dirty tricks on crew members or pilots whom we thought were a little too pompous.

Where to begin? My earliest memory is of a glider field in Livermore, CA (doesn't exist anymore). It was in the early 60's and I think 7A was flying a Pratt-Reid at the time or maybe a Skylark (when your 5 or 6, you do not care about what type of glider it is).

The glider field was great, because they had this huge pool to play in while 7A was chasing thermals. We would go there on a Saturday morning. Dad would fly and I would get wet all day.

I remember having to help him put 7A back in the hanger and wash the wings (wasn't allowed to wash

the canopy). **I also remember buying an Orange Crush for a nickel** and it tasted like heaven. On the way home, we would stop at the A&W (the ONLY fast food my dad and mom would let us eat until I was at least 15 years old) and have a root beer float.

I have 3 stories that remind me why I loved being dragged around the country with 7A:

Story I – A Typical Day for a Glider Crew

1972, Marfa Texas. O.K., but in 1972, no one in their right mind knew where Marfa was. Now Mick Jagger has made it popular, go figure!

Well, back then there was this really cool WWII hanger where the contest was held on the tarmac of this abandoned airport. My dad took my mom, myself and Barry Danieli down for this contest.

Well, first and foremost, I hated Barry back in those days, because the only reason he was along was because I couldn't drive, so we needed another 16 year old to drive the pick up and trailer to relieve my mom from driving.

Well we were not there but one day, when **I got to see my first rattlesnake, first tarantula, and first vinegaroon** - now for a kid from Orinda, CA, that was way cool and really scary, but that is what made it fun. If you have ever heard my dad laugh, it was a treat. He was rolling when he showed us these critters. He even volunteered to kill the rattler and cook it up for dinner - that was nixed by Dorothy.

Well, in these days, prior to any gas restrictions, the contest director would liven things up and give you an "open day". Basically, you had to figure out in what direction you could fly the greatest distance, land off field and win the day.

Well, my dad took off that morning. All I remember was we had these great codes for where he might be headed. So we got the word from 7A that he was headed Northwest, sort of towards Hobbs. So off we go, driving like a mad banshee.

Dorothy was driving. **My dad could fly fast, but he drives really slow, while my mom goes like hell when she was chasing my dad.** So we are headed up 1-25, because by now he had long since past Hobbs and was headed for Truth or Consequences.

About this time, we lost radio contact and all we could do was keep driving north and checking in with headquarters to see where he possibly landed. This went on for a very long time, until about 9 or 10 at night. We had learned he landed in Espanola, NM (north of Santa Fe).

I think we were still south of Albuquerque at the time, so we had a long way to go. When, we all met up with Dad, all we could say was "Tomorrow better be a rest day, cuz we ain't getting you back in time, and you better have won the day for all the driving we did."

Well, Dad did not win that day, but he did win the next day. However, I think the best part of the story was he got to recant his version of the flight on his 25th wedding anniversary. **My mother was a Saint for going to Marfa, Texas for their silver anniversary.**

Addendum to Story I - The Vinegaroon

by Bob Klemmedson -

The contest manager was a judge Lattimore, a very famous guy. He was really tough. Someone caught one of these vinegaroons. **They were at least 2 inches long and very ugly.**

The judge smoked cigars and he had an ash tray in front of him while he was conducting a meeting for the contest. One of pilots or crew members flipped his ash tray over and stuck the vinegaroon under it. When he turned it over, the vinegaroon had crawled over the table, everyone scattered. Some pilots from Williams were at this event like Ray Gimney and may remember this little incident.

Angie Schreder, who is the wife of Dick Schreder, designer of the HP series of gliders, baked a cake and presented it to Dorothy and Bob the next morning which read, "Happy 25th Anniversary."

I know it was Minden - Std Class Nationals and want to say it was 1974, but not sure:

Story II – Don't Tell Mother How I got There

The Course: A triangle on not such a nice day. 7A is about 3rd place. More importantly **Tommy Beltz is ahead** of him in the standings. Everyone is struggling



VINEGAROOON - Uropygid is commonly known as a whip scorpion. It is also known as the vinegaroon because when agitated they can spray a secretion of acetic acid.

back to home base, knowing no one will make it, so it is just get as close to Minden as possible.

Well, according to 7A, he and Tommy were on the north shore of Washoe Lake, trying to egg each other on. Beltz figured he'd hang with the locals, but when he got too close to the ground, he put it down in an alfalfa field. **"Now, I have you Beltz,"** 7A was thinking and he started out across the sage brush toward the lake. . .

When, we finally got to meet dad later that evening. My first question was "Dad, how did you land here?" Dad said, "I will tell you, but you have to promise not to tell your mother. **"Now, go out in the sagebrush and try to find my tail skid."**

Story III - The Rest of Story II

Dad, once he left Tommy behind, he figured he could get to the shore of the lake and land it on the shore, so off he goes. Problem was, he was losing altitude much faster than he thought he would.

Oh well, time to drive it to the deck, hope for ground affect to carry me to the shore. **Oh crap, there is a fence up ahead (barbed wire)** and utility lines about 40 ft. above the fence.

No problem, 7A bounces over the fence, but under the wires (my dad is a very lucky person). **Now he knew he was in deep doo-doo**, so he has to put it down in the sagebrush. Only problem is, he's going pretty fast. Sooo, ole 7A proceeds to ground loop and he stops in a cloud of dirt and dust.

Now, comes the next problem, he ground looped so hard that he jammed the canopy shut and he can't get out. As luck is always with my Dad, he landed between some houses and the lake. Some of the neighbors heard the crash, so they came running over to see if my Dad was okay.

Here he sits in the cockpit and can't get out, but he still asks the bystanders **"Do I still have my tail?"** (Standard Cirrus's have a T tail which is infamous for snapping off in a landing such as described above).

They looked at him with a huge “?” on their faces, so my dad said “Is there a thing in a shape of a T at the end of the glider?” “Oooh, Yep, sure is.”

After that, they help get my dad out of 7A and to this day, he still does not know how the tail didn't snap off. I think it was because he is so damn lucky and that plane really liked us.

As I proceeded to scour the “landing site” for my dad's tail skid, I was amazed at the fact he was not killed, but then I also knew he had a little bit of pirate/flying ace in him. I knew then that once again, his lack of fear, great skills, and sneakiness had got him through. I just plain laughed out-loud. [Here's another great story to tell my kids about their crazy grandfather](#)



This was the sailplane that broke Kim's heart when her dad sold it. The infamous 7A was the 33rd Standard Cirrus ever made. Bob owned this for twenty years.

TIME FLYS WHEN YOUR HAVING FUN WITH BOB KLEMMEDSON

By Barry Danieli



2006 Oktoberfest at Williams Soaring, CA. Walt Cannon (front) is landing the Duo Discus with author Barry Danieli (rear).

My receptionist told me there was a Dr. Michael Green on the phone for me. That's one way to get through but she knows that anyone who mentions a key word like "soaring", or "sailing" won't have any problems. Mike stated that Tom Jue was writing an article on Bob Klemmedson and thought I might have some insight. After a couple of e-mail's he asked if I could write something on Bob. Well, after crewing for him as a kid, racing against him, and flying with him there might be a few stories to share over the years.

I think I was born with goggles, leather helmet, and a silk scarf around my neck. My grandfather had a Piper Super Cruiser and my father sold Ercoupes. My mom was flying with them while pregnant with me. We had our own private dirt strip in Sonoma with a T hanger for the plane. My father started me out with hand launched gliders and at the ripe old age of seven, I became the AMA West Coast Junior Hand Launched Glider Champ. Soaring and competing was in my blood.

Most kids think that if they solo an airplane at sixteen they have a jump on any aviation career. I learned that you could fly a glider when you are fourteen so my parents drove me to Calistoga at age thirteen so I could solo on my birthday. Jim Indrebo took me under his wing and made an enthusiastic glider pilot out of me. To build time, my father bought a 1-34 which he leased back to Jim. When I was fifteen I had a learners permit and would ride my 90cc Yamaha to Calistoga, sit on the ridge all afternoon and build time. A summer vacation to Marfa Texas to see the World Soaring Championships in 1970, and I came back with a whole different perspective on our sport.

I wanted to learn more about soaring contests so in 1972 I ran an "Available to Crew" ad in West Wind. **I said something about knowing where the laundromat was in Marfa and that I knew how to clean a canopy without scratching it.** I now had my driver's license and a strong desire to learn more about racing sailplanes. Call it luck, fate, or an act of God but I had the good fortune to have Bob answer my ad. A little tune up at the Region 11 contest that spring and we were off to the Standard Class Nationals in Marfa Texas. Bob made sure I could back up the trailer before we left.

Now it must have taken some courage for Bob and Dorothy to allow a sixteen-year-old kid to drive the truck with a big camper and new Std. Cirrus in tow, especially at the speeds we drove in those days. Dorothy would ask how fast I was going and I would have to back it down to only 70MPH. These were backcountry roads we're talking about here, not freeways. Bob didn't seem to care how fast I drove, guess I had it under control. Oh that's right, **Bob had crewed for the legendary AJ Smith at the worlds in Poland.** Rumor has it that after riding with AJ, anything I did was probably pretty tame. Maybe it was the nerves of steel he had from flying P-38's in the Pacific during WWII. One thing for sure, Bob didn't scare easily and I enjoyed zipping along.

Crews had a more active part in the contest back then. Radios weren't as good and you would try to stay in contact with the pilot by following him. If he had to land out, you could help assess a field, or stop traffic to get him down on a road.



The Barbara, a 1932 Alden schooner, rebuilt in the 1980's by Bob Klemmedson and friends, including Barry Danieli. This schooner placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in a number of Master Mariners races in the San Francisco Bay. In this photo, Barry Danieli is at the helm (standing up with blue shirt and red vest). Bob is sitting to the left (white hat).

More than one crew was known to flatten out road markers to protect those wings on landing. You could then quickly de-rig the plane, rush back to the airport, re-assemble it and send the pilot off on another try.

Bob's camper had a vapor lock problem. Dorothy, Kim and I would stop frequently in the hot Texas desert to wrap cool towels around the fuel lines to continue our chase and try keep up with Bob. Hopefully he would send us home early enough to watch him finish and catch the wingtip.

One day I came to a stop sign while following Bob and we felt a sharp jolt. Kim came flying out of the cab over bed and landed on the floor. Some girl had rear-ended us and punched a whole in Bob's clever homebuilt trailer. After dealing with the police, we really had to go. Fortunately Bob made it back that day and was able to make temporary repairs to get us through the contest. At the end of the contest I had to go to the police station and answer some questions about the accident. Never having to deal with the law before I was intimidated but Bob was there and helped guide me through the whole process.

The trailer Bob had built for the Cirrus was a piece of ingenious engineering. You could raise the top off, remove a couple of perfectly cut side panels, and slide the glider in with the tail off. With wing covers it was a clever way to store the glider assembled at the airport.

Bob and Dorothy celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary at that contest in Marfa. Fortunately, it was a booming day and Bob must have been in a hurry to get back to Dorothy because he burned up the 262mi track at nearly 77mph. I don't think anyone had ever flown a task that fast before.

Back in 1972, they still had a task called "Free Distance". The idea was you had to fly as far as you could from the starting point. Gasoline was cheap back then but it was hard on both crews and pilots. **Bob got on a storm front and rode it over 400 miles all the way to Espanola New Mexico.** He was second for the day to Ray Gimmey. Fortunately the next day was a rest day so we could drive back to Marfa. When Ray had to give his speech on his flight, he handed the gas receipts to the competition director and stated why he hated "Free Distance". That task was abolished by the rules and never flown again.

Dorothy and Kim decided to visit relatives after Marfa so that left me to drive the camper back while Bob flew. We stopped in Las Vegas which I had never seen before. **Bob had a system for playing craps and to this day I've yet to see him loose.** I guess he was defraying his soaring expenses because when he got home, he decided to fly the Open Class Nationals at Minden. We all know that is the contest that Ray Gimmey won with his Std. Libelle but Bob was up there with the rest of the small ships that beat the big birds that year. I'm now at the age Bob was when he flew

those two nationals back to back and I can really appreciate the energy it took to fly a second contest.

In 1973 I was asked to crew again in Liberal Kansas. **I'm sure it is the one contest that Bob would rather forget.** After a practice day, Dorothy's relatives had come to visit us from Oklahoma. We put the wing stands under the wings, I bolted in the tiedown rings, and went to town for a bite to eat. We were only going to be gone for a short while and everything was calm. While we were in town, a huge squall hit and it dawned on us the glider wasn't tied down. Bob jumped in the camper, raced through the streets of Liberal, and was doing a 60mph powerslide as he raced back to the airport. An HP-14 was flipped as well as three Kestrel trailers. Fortunately, the Newgard's noticed the Cirrus wasn't tied down. They took the tail off, hung on the glider, got it tied down, and saved 7A. It was an important lesson I learned that day that I have carried with me ever since. First, I developed a healthy respect for weather and second, **NEVER leave the airport with your ship or trailer unsecured!**

Eventually a Kestrel 19 came into our family. I now had a glider that made up for my lack of airmanship that would allow me to keep up with Bob in his Cirrus. He was gracious enough to fly along with me and help build my cross-country skills. Back in the day, I flew with him in his RHJ-7 and what impressed me most was how calm & cool he was even when things got a little hairy. In fact, the hairier they got, the more he seemed to enjoy himself. **What I perceived as a risk with my experience was still quite comfortable for Bob with his experience level.** He never held anything back and was always willing to share his vast knowledge. When we finally got the chance to compete against each other at the Open Nationals in 1979, we were right next to each other on the score sheet, only a few points apart. The same thing happened a few years later at the Sports Class Nationals. I'd like to think that I was making the same decisions Bob would make if he was flying my plane.

Bob was there for me during one of my more difficult times in a soaring contest. In 1984 I was flying a Nimbus 3 during the Open Class Nationals in Minden, competing against Bob and my father. **Gary Kemp called a 500mi task that was the longest task ever, called in a contest at that time.** I was one of the fortunate ones to finish the task and soon after I landed word came in that my father had crashed out near Silver Springs. After flying for over eight hours I went out to go retrieve him and the 604 he was flying. Fortunately he wasn't hurt but the 604 was another story.

I should mention that the 604 had a three-piece wing with a center section that weighed over 350 lbs. Two big jacks would raise and lower the wing on the fuselage and all the pieces fit on dollies that would be rolled into the trailer. Normally it wasn't a problem but if you couldn't get the trailer to the glider or if the

fuselage was busted, you had a lot of heavy pieces that you had to somehow pack in this box.

Bob had landed at Fallon and was on his way back to Minden when he saw us struggling with the busted 604 in the sagebrush off the side of the road. It was dark, cold and late. A thunderstorm had just dumped on the area. **Several crews went by but Bob was one to stop and help us pick up the pieces.** You had to be there to appreciate how big and heavy a 604 center section could be to fit on top of all the busted pieces of a pre-carbon open class glider. Bob was right there with us, muscling and wrestling the wounded beast back into its box. Thanks for the help Bob, I'll never forget it.

No matter what Bob was doing, he was always enjoying himself. He bought a 60' schooner in the early 80's. This boat was half-underwater and was missing the rudder. Paul Sasse dove down to the bottom of the berth and found the rudder in the mud. Bob had the boat hauled out to the boat yard and spent a couple of years lovingly restoring her. He then started to enter the Master Mariner regattas. I had spent some time sanding on "Barbara" and done some sailing so I was part of the crew. **Over the years we won the Master Mariners regatta a couple of times and placed in the top three many times.** We even won the fastest elapsed time for a Marconi Schooner. This is comparable to the trophies they award in our National Soaring Contest for the fastest task flown.

Bob really enjoys sharing his boat with his friends. I'm sure you don't have to look too far to find someone at the gliderport who has sailed with Bob on the "Barbara". He is happy to let anyone try their skills out on the helm and always has a bright smile when out on the water. One of our favorite events is to go out during fleet week and watch the Blue Angels from the water. One year we were invited to escort the fleet in as they passed under the Golden Gate Bridge. This was a special moment and definitely had to be a high point in the long history of the "Barbara". Whenever you are out on the "Barbara", you feel like a celebrity because people are always coming up along side of you and taking your picture. This is a real testament to Bob's wood working skills.

Anyone, who knows Bob, knows his affinity for wood. I've lost count of the number of glider trailers he has built. He still has a runabout he designed and built sitting in his back yard as well as an all wood Loehle Sport Parasol ultralite. He recently restored a MG-23SL, which was the sistership to the one he originally owned. He gets that gleam in his eye every time he talks about how nice that ship flew.

Bob has built several remote controlled models of the "Barbara" as well as a Star racing class sailboat. He still actively enjoys and races the boats.

He was also quite the golfer. **Bob lives on a golf course and plays with the same passion he had for soaring.** I was fortunate to team up with him for a fun

tournament during one of Jim Indrebo's New Years wave parties at Calistoga. We won the champagne but I wasn't old enough to drink it at the time.

Bob and I both enjoy flying two seat gliders. He bought the Duo Discus with Mike Green and I had bought a share in a Nimbus 3D. I flew with Bob in some contest and he flew with me in my Nimbus. One of my most memorable flights with Bob was during the regionals a couple of years ago. We were able to climb up the face of a cloud and get above them. Looking down at the halo around the shadow of our glider against the clouds was a very special moment for me with Bob.

Anyone who has been fortunate enough to fly with Bob soon realizes he is a wealth of soaring knowledge. I tried to be a sponge, absorbing what I could but he has probably already forgotten more than I've learned over all these years. One thing is for certain, I know I'm a better pilot having the good fortune to have flown with him all those years.

Knowing Bob has enriched my life more than words can convey. I'm grateful for the hours spent flying with him in the RHJ-7, Duo Discus, Nimbus, and even my Cessna. We have shared many hours on the water sailing the "Barbara", going to 49er games, and chasing the golfball around the course. He has even returned the favor and crewed for me in a national contest. Time really has flown knowing Bob and Dorothy for the past thirty-five years. They have had such a positive impact on my life but the soaring experiences with Bob have been the icing on the cake.

I have nothing but fond memories of Bob and Dorothy. They just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary together and even with soaring as his mistress, **Dorothy is still lovingly by his side as copilot.** A true inspiration to the rest of us!

About the author

Barry Danieli is a graduate of the University of the Pacific and Palmer College of Chiropractic. He describes himself as a Chiropractor/Gentleman farmer growing award winning Cabernet Sauvignon grapes for Sebastiani winery. He earned his Diamond badge as a teenager and has flown a bunch of Regionals and Nationals over the years in all classes. He was the Region 11 Open Class champion in 1983 and has placed in the top ten of two Nationals.

When Calistoga, Lagoon Valley, and Sonoma closed their soaring operations he found it more convenient to go sailing. He won the 1989 and 1990 season in his class (Olson 30) on San Francisco Bay then branched out racing offshore to such destinations as Cabo San Lucas and Hawaii. He placed 2nd or 3rd in three St. Francis Yacht Club Big Boat Series' in his J/35 and he has twice won the Farallon's race. Eventually he was racing in regattas throughout the world in Key West, Ft. Lauderdale, Hawaii, Mexico, and Thailand to name a few, racing on everything from Melges 24's to 80' maxi's.

Barry was the season Karting Champ at Infineon raceway in 2002, but decided that he would really rather be soaring. "Karting is everything soaring and sailing isn't. It's noisy, greasy, and really, really fast". He sold the kart, cut back on the sailing schedule, and recently added an ASH-26E to his stable of aircraft. "Now I can soar when and where I want to without having to depend on the availability of a towplane." His understanding wife, Diane, can usually be found on the boat or at the airport with him in the back seat of his Nimbus.



The Old Guys Win The Race

An Interview with Mike Green

By Tom Jue



Mike Green (rear) is in the Duo Discus. He and Bob Klemmedson won first place at Air Sailing in 2002. In this file photo, in the 2007 Oktoberfest, John Apps (the third partner) is in the front seat. Photo by Tom Jue



Mike Green took me along in the Duo Discus in May 2005. He was flying this sailplane, dancing in the skies like he was wearing high cap sneakers. Photo by Tom Jue



Bob Klemmedson (front) and Mike Green (rear) in the Duo Discus. Both are wearing oxygen annuals.

I recently spoke to Mike Green about the vintage year he had with Bob Klemmedson in 2002.

As the Ol' Blue Eyes Frank Sinatra sang, "it was a very good year" for Mike Green, Bob Klemmedson and Earl Smith.

Sure, Bob and Mike won first place at Air Sailing. Yes, the trio of Bob, Mike and Earl did place 15th at the Lubbock Sports Class Nationals. However, what made it especially memorable was **that these were the "old guys!"** The three of them proudly totaled 235 years of age.

At the time, Bob was 81. Earl Smith at age 82 was crew. Mike at age 72 was the youngster in this crowd.

2002 Air Sailing Annual Sports Class

Bob and Mike first took their Duo Discus to Air Sailing, located in Palomino Valley, just 25 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada. At the time, the Duo Discus was owned by Bob Klemmedson, Mike Green and John Apps. Bob and Mike were "team flying" this contest.

Bob and Mike felt good about this race. They were very experienced flying in the Sierras. They have been flying consistently here at Air Sailing and they knew they were the most experienced pilots by far. On the next to the last day of the contest, they were a comfortable 300 points ahead of second place. However, these thought became ironic as they were barely able to squeak past the youngster Tim Kurreck, who probably competed in only one other contest previous to this. Mike recalled that Tim did tremendously well.

Chad Moore was serving his first time as Contest Director at Air Sailing, wrote the following in the August 2002 issue of Air Sailing News:

Tim Kurreck absolutely smoked the field with a long flight south for the 2.5 PST task for the last day; the next fastest pilot was 15 mph slower. The fickle thermals gave the rest of the field grief. Even Rolf "Keep It Flying" Peterson landed away. **But the team of Mike and Bob in the Duo Discus flew solidly every day and won the contest.**



Bob Klemmedson at Air Sailing with Norma Burnette in 2002. Norma is an icon in the soaring community in Region 11.

She was responsible for designating the "MG" Call letters for the Duo Discus as "Mighty Gorilla." Mike Green told me that had no choice but to acquiesce, but that's another story for another newsletter!

2002 Lubbock Sports Class Nationals

With this great win under their belt, Bob and Mike headed for Lubbock, TX, where they were joined by Earl Smith, who was the "honorable ballast" and crewed for them during this race. Earl was an old buddy of Bob Klemmedson.

From a casual look, you wouldn't think a bunch of old farts stood a chance. Although Mike is a competitor, he said, his reasons for flying contests were not solely due to his competitive urge. Rather, the way he saw it, flying contests was a good way to fly cross-country more safely. He told me "the support was huge. The weather was good. The geography selected was usually excellent. You had crews to help around during land-outs."

Mike recalled that Bob Klemmedson was the more aggressive flyer of the pair. Bob had a lot more experience flying than Mike. Perhaps what was most significant was that **Bob was a serious competitor. He came to win.** Mike stated with tremendous passion in his voice, "Flying with Bob Klemmedson that year made me a better competition pilot today, period!"

Mike's motor home broke down on this trip, but fortunately, the transmission held until they reached Lubbock. It took three days over a weekend for a General Motor's dealer to fix the transmission.

Good sailplane pilots adapt and adapt they did. They stayed in the motor home in the dealer's lot while it

was being fixed! During the contest, they stayed at a KOA camp ground. Neither camping nor RV's were allowed at the Lubbock airport.

This little setback did not damper their enthusiasm.

They ran a great race and placed a very respectable 15th place out of 44 contestants. This wasn't too bad when you're up against some of the best in the country.

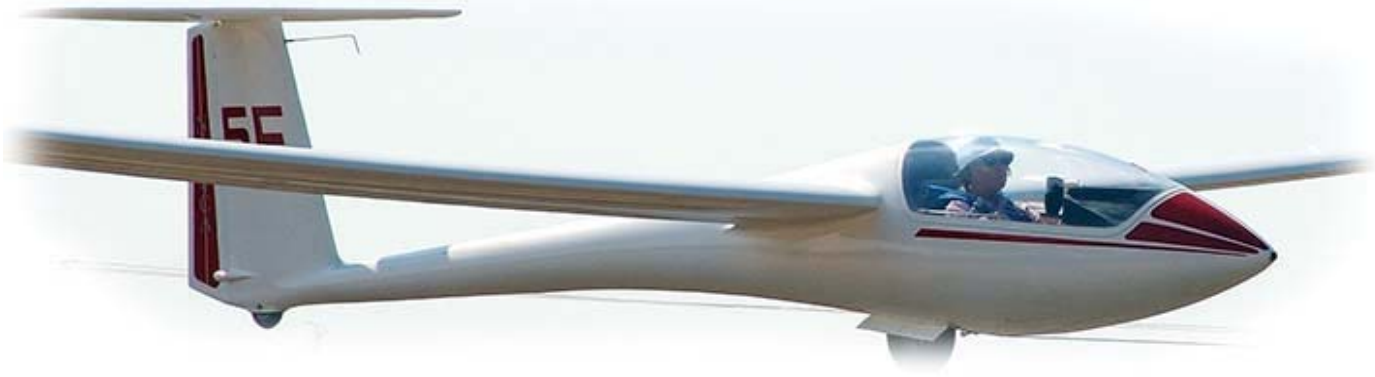
The Spoils of Victory

Getting back to the Air Sailing contest, the tradition was if you won the race, you had to run the next year. So in 2003, Bob Klemmedson was the Competition Director and Mike Green was the Contest Manager!



This photo was taken at Air Sailing in 2002 when Bob Klemmedson was Competition Director.

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

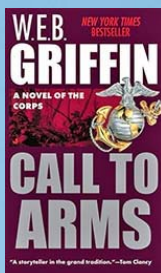


The Importance of the Instructor

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
MATT HERRON
ANDY HOGBEN
LARRY R. HOOD
THOMAS M. HUBBARD
ROBERT IRELAND
THOMAS JUE
PETER J. KELLY
ROBERT L. KLEMMEDSON
DAVID KLINGER
JAMES LOCKHART
WILLIS R. LUDLOW
RICHARD OGDEN

WAYNE OSTER
DOUGLAS E. PADRICK
RICH PARKER
FRANK PEALE
KURT A. PELTO
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

LUKE ASHCRAFT
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
ERNE FERREIRA
DOROTHY J. FRAUENS
GARY GAMMAL
RAY GIMMEY
RICHARD GRAHAM
MIKE GREEN
JACK HARKIN
MARTIN HELLMAN
JAMES L. HERD
MATT HERRON
ANDY HOGBEN
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THOMAS M. HUBBARD

ROBERT IRELAND
THOMAS JUE
PETER J. KELLY
GARY KEMP
ROBERT L. KLEMMEDSON
DAVID KLINGER
DOUGLAS LENT
BRETT R. MAYES
NOELLE C. MAYES
MARVIN MC CORMICK
MICHAEL MC CORMICK
MARK A. MILLER
RICHARD OGDEN
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LARRY OSTHEIMER
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JOHN S. SINCLAIR
GEOFFRY SNOW
CHARLES S. THAELER
CINDI TITZER
JOANNA WOODY

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Web Master



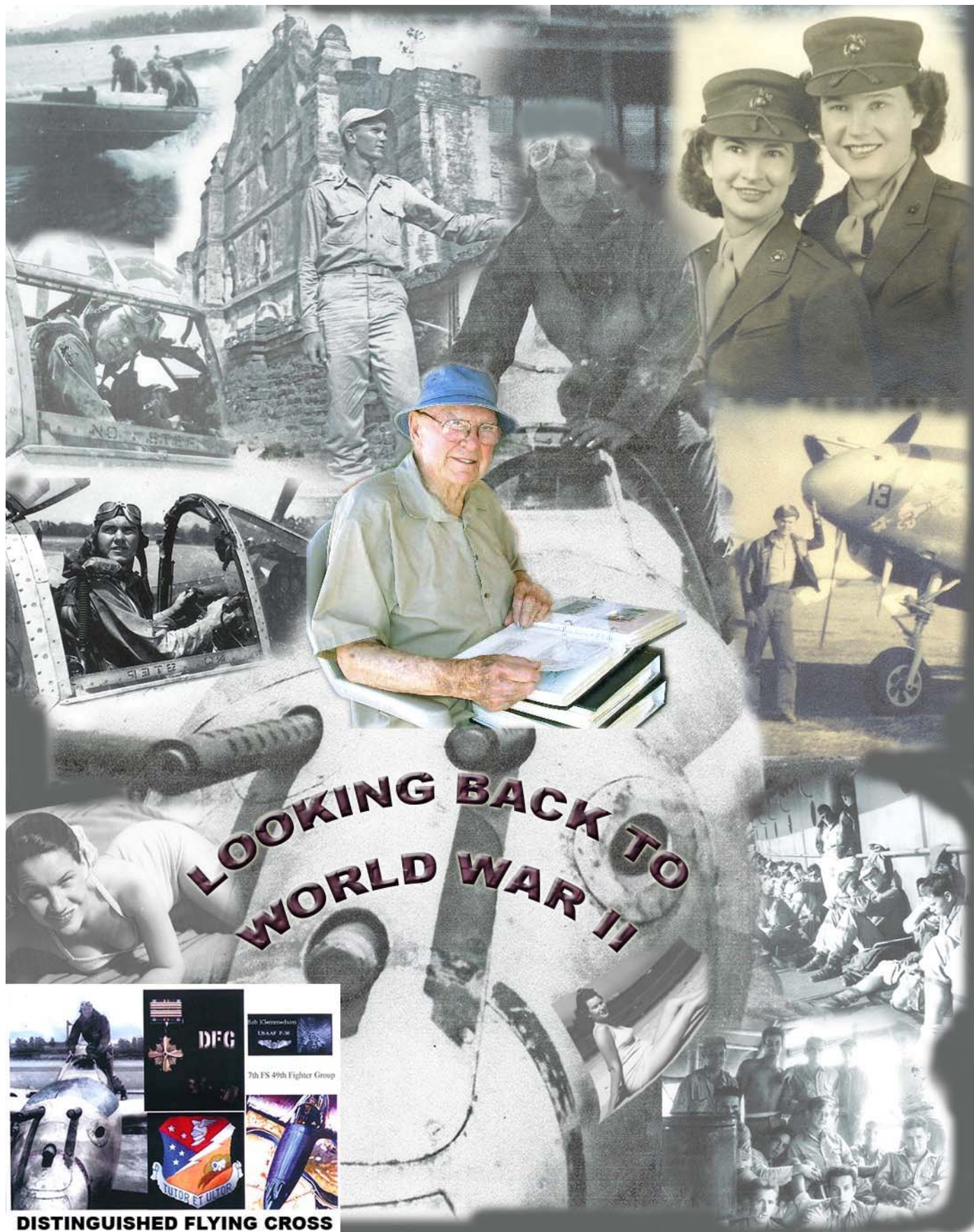
Peter Kelly

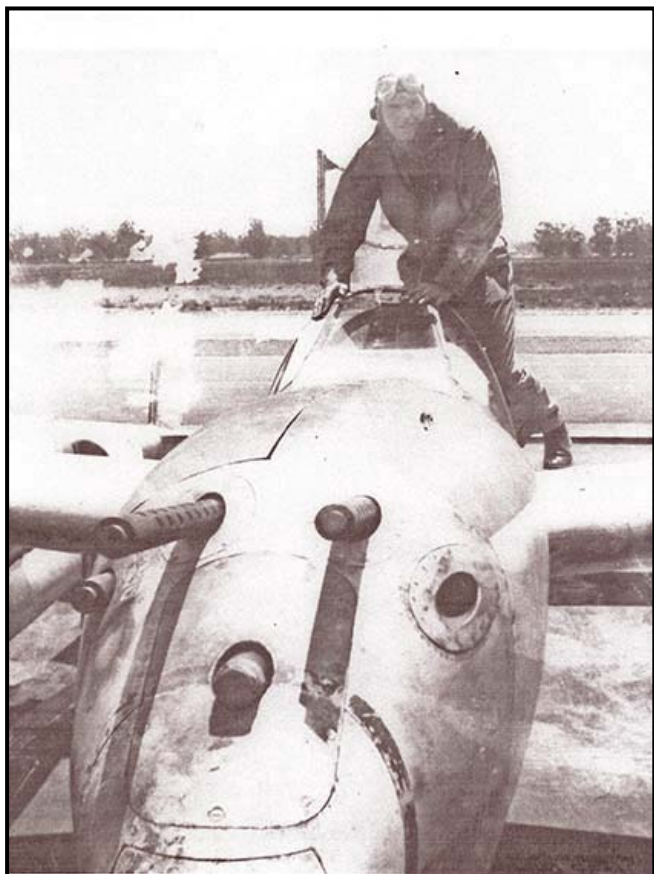
Administrator



Noelle & Rex Mayes

BOB KLEMMEDSON PROFILE





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.

Glider 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.

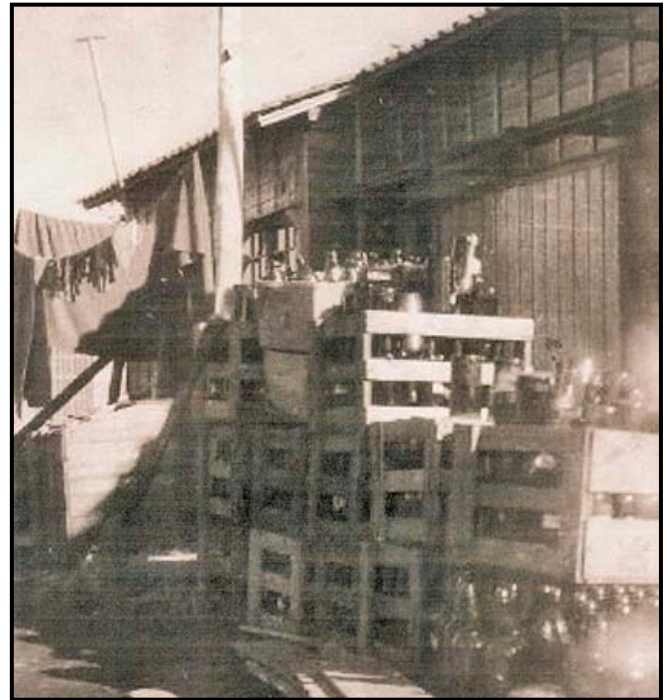
The bombs killed as many as 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki by the end of 1945, roughly half of these casualties occurred on the day of the bombings. Since then, thousands more have died from injuries or illness attributed to exposure to radiation released by the bombs. In both cities,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

Looking for Beer

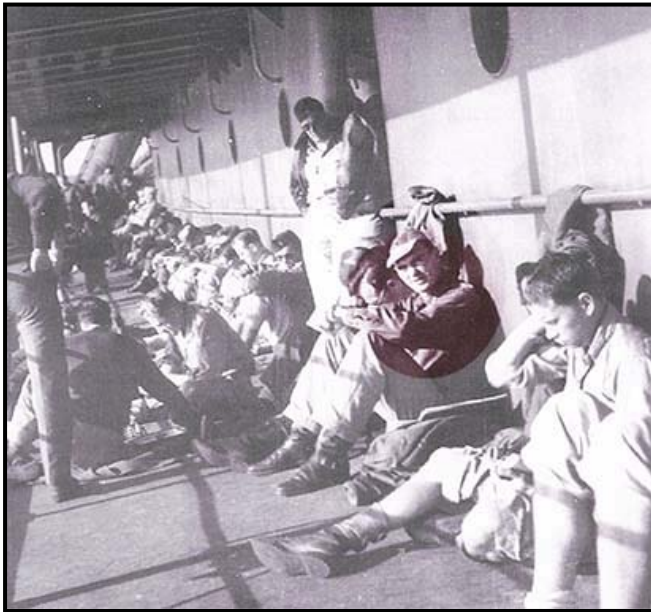
After Japan's surrender, the Army sent Bob to Japan to assist in the occupation. Bob flew reconnaissance missions while he was in Japan.

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