



AIRSHOW

Volume 15 - N° 3 - March 2010

EDITORIAL

If the winter season is usually known as a quiet one, winter 2009/2010 will be remembered as an exception in the history of the CAF and the French Wing!

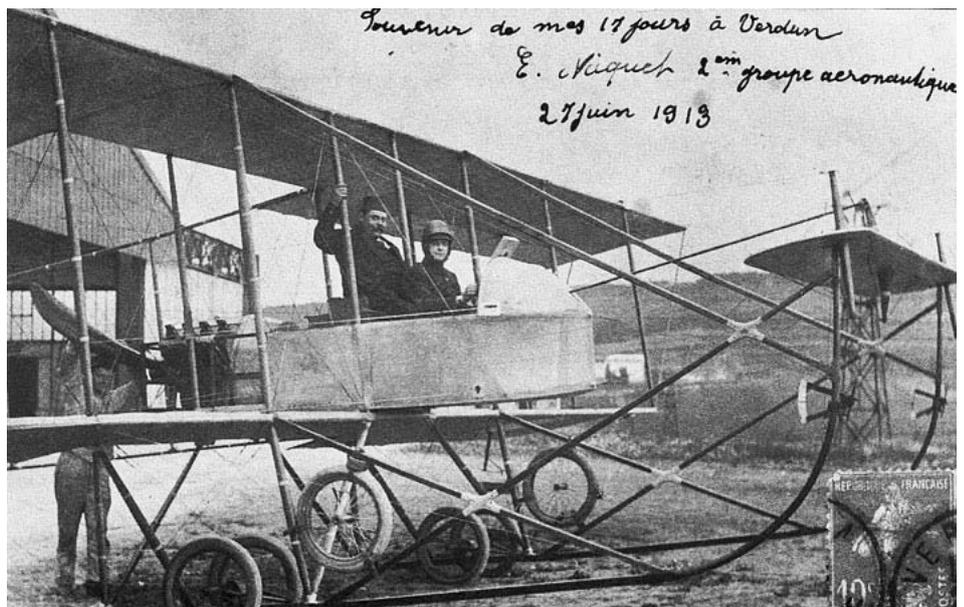
We, members of the French Wing are now facing several problems of which the most important one is the lack of Sponsors to get our Piper Cub airborne during the oncoming season. I admit that I don't understand our members who were Sponsors these past years, and don't seem to give this project the necessary priority in 2010. The economic crisis does not explain everything since 50 euros is not an extraordinary sum of money. It's less than 14 centimes per day! A small financial sacrifice that won't make anyone poorer, and will be a great help to reach the goals of our Wing and the CAF, whose importance is worth a lot more than this. As for those who have never been Sponsors, I invite them to be part of this permanent project. The great satisfaction they will get from it is an incomparable feeling!

As for the CAF, the best I can say is that the past months mess hasn't vanished! The tribunal's decision to make sure that the current Bylaws are fulfilled is only a hasty re-plastering which does not solve any problem, quite to the contrary! It is only a temporary measure which will be followed by an inevitable court case with the aim of correcting the injustice that the removal of two honorable members of the General Staff represents. This will be a slow and costly process, and the CAF can only come out of it weaker, both financially and morally.

Today, the only way to save the CAF is to carry out a profound Spring cleaning by eliminating everything that has been done (or undone) during the past two years. This will allow us to find some sound basis, similar to what they were in 1957 when Lloyd Nolen and his friends created the Confederate Air Force. If we can find again the freshness, the love, and the necessary enthusiasm, as well as a reasonable management, clear of any personal interest, the current gangrene will be stopped and the CAF will be safe.

Bernard

THE AIRFIELDS OF VERDUN DURING HISTORY (Pages 5 to 7)



THE RP-63 "PINBALL": A TRUE FLYING PINBALL MACHINE! (Pages 8 to 11)



THE CAF INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS PENALIZED ONCE MORE! (P. 3)

THE "SPIRIT OF LEWIS" IN GREAT DANGER OF BEING GROUNDED IF NEW SPONSORS ARE NOT FOUND SOON! (P. 2)

ANOTHER 1000 € TO GET OUR PIPER CUB “SPIRIT OF LEWIS” FLYING

**TOP
URGENT!**



© Gaëtan Marie

We warmly thank all our members who reacted positively since last month to this imperative need for collection of funds. Thanks to them, of the required 5400 € for year 2010, we only need to collect 1000 €.

This sum of 1000 € represents the renewal or adoption of a few members to this system, depending on the level they will select, going, for example, from 4 Flying Sponsors to 20 Supporting Sponsors, or any possible combination between these two limits.

The sponsoring system for the French Wing Piper Cub “*Spirit of Lewis*” is, as far as we know, the very best to cover the fixed costs of this airplane, without being too heavy on everyone’s budget.

This system avoids us, indeed, imposing an increase in the annual dues for all our members and, therefore, gives the latter the choice of increasing their contribution to the life of our Association, according to their financial possibilities.

For as much, it is necessary that a minimum number members adopt this system, so that the money collected at the beginning of each year reaches the indispensable 5400 € to cover the annual fixed costs: Hangar, insurance, and maintenance. Here are the three available Sponsorships:

FLYING SPONSOR: Premium of 250€ & 25€ per flight hour

RESTORATION SPONSOR Premium of 125€ & 40€ per flight hour

SUPPORTING SPONSOR: Premium of 50€ & 55€ per flight hour

We must collect the missing 1000 euros before the end of March if we don’t want to see this splendid airplane grounded definitely!

Therefore, we ask all French Wing members who are not yet Sponsors of the *Spirit of Lewis* to adopt this scheme. We thank them in advance for that. Here is the list of members who are already sponsors for 2010:

FLYING SPONSOR: Gilles Avenel, Rémi Bellet, Jean-Yves Cercy, Gaël Darquet, DASSAULT FALCON SERVICE, Bernard Delfino, Marcel Francisci / AVIATION CLUB DE FRANCE, Claude Gascon, Roger Gouzon, Irene Grinnell, Roy Grinnell, Georges Marcelin, Patrick Pierre-Pierre, Sandy Sansing.

RESTORATION SPONSOR: Bunty Bateman, Michel Fleury, Camille Montaignu, John Roeder.

SUPPORTING SPONSOR: Henri Bourrassier, Fumiko Delfino, Louis-Jean Gioux, Barbara Hair, Aubrey Hair, Jean-Claude Miniggio, Regis Urschler, Ron Wright.

COMMUNICATION THE CAF WAY: "THE DISPATCH" MAGAZINE

Those of our members who have a computer and a link with the Internet know that since February 2010, the CAF Headquarters publish the magazine THE DISPATCH electronically and arbitrarily either via email or by downloading it from the CAF members web site.

Since no announcement has been done about members who do not have a link with the Internet, our Unit Leader asked Director Steve Brown on January 27 for some information. He is still waiting for an answer from him today!... Therefore, he asked the same question to the person responsible for public relations, Autumn Esparza. It was only after insisting on the need to know what would be the publishing system for this magazine, that she gave him a few explanations:

"In response to your question: NO, international members without e-mail are not receiving the paper version..."

...The \$200 membership dues include the cost of producing the magazine and domestic mail. I am working to devise a cost for international members that will cover the difference between the domestic mail and the international mail fees. Once we have determined this cost, I will notify international members of the opportunity to once again receive the printed copy.

If a member chooses to pay the additional fee to receive the printed version, I will offer a "pro-rated" amount that will cover their subscription until his/her dues are up for renewal. S/he will have the opportunity to pay for the full year of Dispatch with membership renewal."

Before making any more comments on this subject, our members must realize that it was already mentioned when Steve Brown had announced the \$40.00 rise of the CAF annual dues, about two years ago. **He then justified this enormous rise with the cost of publishing and mailing THE DISPATCH magazine!**

Equipped with a very volatile memory, the Headquarters have, therefore, decided to penalise, once again, the International members with yet another increase if they want to obtain their monthly paper copy of this magazine. **That is quite simply inadmissible!**

As a matter of curiosity, and for comparing associations, we have found that most of other equivalent American associations are a lot cheaper than the CAF.

For example, a membership with the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association, which has 160,000 members, and organizes the air show in Oshkosh each year) + a membership with their WARBIRDS association, cost, for international members, a total of \$108.00. Each member of these two entities receives, each year, 12 paper issues of the excellent EAA magazine (144 pages each issue) + 8 issues of the Warbirds magazine (50 pages each issue)! All this with free access to the Oshkosh air show, free access to the EAA museum, a weekly email newsletter, and many other benefits...

It is therefore about time that the CAF Headquarters realize that this decision is wrong and unfair, and correct it immediately and while there is still time for that. If not, they must be prepared to support the reaction of our members, whom we invite to react as soon as possible!

SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL STAFF AND THE AAHM MUSEUM PROBLEM

As you know, two honorable members of the AAHM Museum Board and of the General Staff have been violently and arbitrarily expelled from the latter for "having attempted to modify the Bylaws which specify that the museum board must include a majority of General Staff members" (6 out of 11 to be precise). Within minutes, they were replaced by two members who were, by chance, hanging around the meeting room...

Hearings of all concerned people were recently carried out by the court, and the President decided to name a receiver who will make sure that this clause is respected. Future will tell what the legal follow up of this conflict will be.

We won't comment these legal aspects and will simply note:

- 1) That this problem has been going on since November 2008.
- 2) That no information was given to the CAF members before this violent exclusion took place on January 16, 2010!
- 3) That the CAF General Assembly in October 2009 was an ideal occasion to discuss this problem between the CAF membership and the General Staff, to come to an amiable conclusion (Unfortunately this was not the case).
- 4) That we all expected from the members of the General Staff a much worthier and responsible attitude, and in the only interest of the CAF.
- 5) That finding the exact reason for this attempt to avoid this clause of 6 members of the General Staff majority, would give the true key of this problem and its final solution, which would allow the CAF to revert to the noble and admirable association that we all used to love so much!

CAF WINTER STAFF CONFERENCE ON MARCH 19 & 20

Like every year, the French Wing official Representative will be col **Barbara Hair** whom we warmly thank in advance. Effectively, despite the rise in the cost of living (Hotel, airline tickets, etc), Barbara decided to take part in this conference and pay for all her expenses from her own pocket.

Merci Barbara !

Due to the numerous problems which prevail in the CAF at the moment, and to the ocean of perfidy that we are swimming in, this annual conference has now an importance that it never got before for the future of our Association.

Barbara's task will not be easy, but knowing her professionalism, the report that she will produce will be, as usual, complete and very instructive.

This report will be published next month...

LATEST FROM ROY GRINNELL



DEATH AT DAYBREAK

On November 26, 1944, during an early morning raid which was taking **Jack Stafford** and his friends from their base of Volkfel, in Holland, to Münster, Rheine, and Osnabrück, the hero of this painting, as the group was flying at 11,000 feet, noticed a lonely night fighter JU88 whose pilot was lowering and retracting the undercarriage. He was probably checking its operation after a night spent hunting the Lancaster's, and probably got shot by some skillful gunner?... Two of Jack's team mates chased him, hit it straight away, and the plane soon got engulfed in flames. Jack, who was immediately behind them was about to finish it off, but he did not shoot because the JU88 was completely on fire. From this airplane, only one crew member bailed out.

NEW PRINT OF THE "SPIRIT OF LEWIS"

The Piper Cub profile brilliantly produced by Bertrand Brown is now available as a print on Fine Art paper of very high quality, size 30 x 40cm (12" x 16") easily framed for a reduced cost.

The ink used is guaranteed for more than one century, which is exceptional.

The normal price is 18€ + P & P. The members of the French Wing can get it at a reduced price of more than 20% of the normal price: 14€ + P & P.



THE AIRFIELDS OF VERDUN

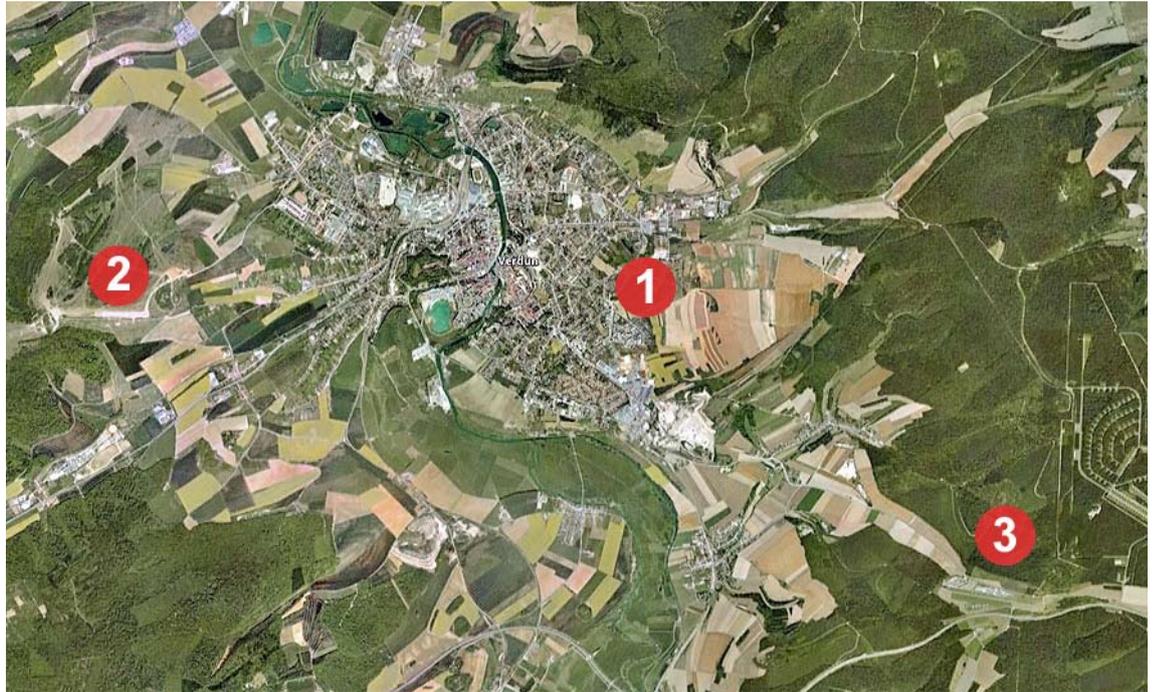
Article: Claude Gascon

Once upon a time, at the beginning of the XXth century, was the Verdun aerodrome which was named Charmois or Arodrome du Faubourg Pavé, or, also de la Carafiole, depending on the year and the authors (*Item n° 1 on the area photography on the right*).

Fortunately, at this time, no troublesome administration existed. It was a time when anyone could do anything, at least in aviation which was in its early stages.

This is why our aerodrome, or rather airfield was crossed by an "aerial railway", or cable car (*Vertical line on the map below*) Whose highest point was at about 30 feet altitude (QFE) before the hangars, themselves located about 30 feet from the take-off and landing area.

This was no real problem at the time since the airplanes' performances were close to what our today's ul-



tra-light are. This did not stop our valorous Guynemer, Navarre and De Rose, to name a few of them, to operate from this field which was both aeronautical and industrial.

However, in 1916, because of the continuous bombardments and the proximity of the German lines, the army decided to

was over, it became necessary to reorganize this field, which was done, and a modest aeronautical activity started again in the thirties. Alas,

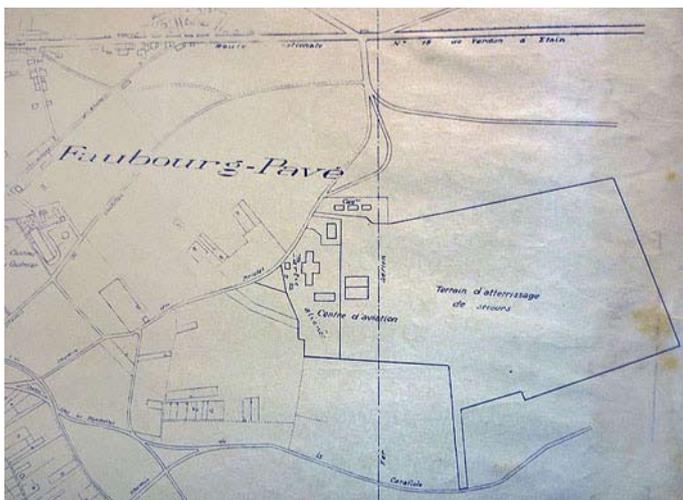


evacuate this aerodrome and relocate its activity on the airfields of Lemmes, Souilly, Osches, Vadelaincourt, and others...

When the war

everything stopped for the second time in 1939, and it was not before 1947 that a semi-aeronautical activity could be started again on this airfield of Charmois.

Unfortunately, the cable-car was still there and indefatigably carried on transporting its lime containers between the lime kilns in Haudainville and the railroad running between Verdun and Metz (*Photo above*).





Farman F20 in Verdun overflowed by the lime containers, and, below, an aerial view of the unused airfield of Verdun in 1916 because it was too close to the enemy lines and constantly bombed.

Quite opportunely, the air authorities at the time, noticed this incongruity, and decided that only the instructor, Colonel **Peignat**, was allowed, thanks to his experience, to use the airfield of Charmois to take off and land, and the Stampe of the aero-club would then do its practice flying in the valley of Charny, located about 3 miles from there.

This situation could not last very long, and the President, madame **Suzanne Janin** was able to obtain, from the army and the civil aviation ministry, to temporarily rent 37 acres of land at a place called "Les Sartelles" on the community of Fromeréville les Vallons (*Item n° 2 on the area general view*).

For twenty years, it was the best time for aviation and gliding in Verdun.

In the fifties, the American army came back to Verdun. It built the Desandrouins hospital on the site of Charmois, and an aerodrome on the site of Rozelier (*Item n° 3 on the area general view*).

The American army which was most welcome at Verdun in 1917,

1944, and 1952, was asked by General "you-know-who" to go away, which was detrimental for the local employment.

Fortunately, the French army's 4th division, decided that its tanks needed more space and put an end to the temporary lease signed in 1970. Surprisingly, this temporary lease had lasted 27 years.

Mother nature, like airplanes, hate an empty space. Therefore, it became very urgent to cross the river Meuse once again and move to the eastern part of Verdun, to the aerodrome of Le Rozelier.



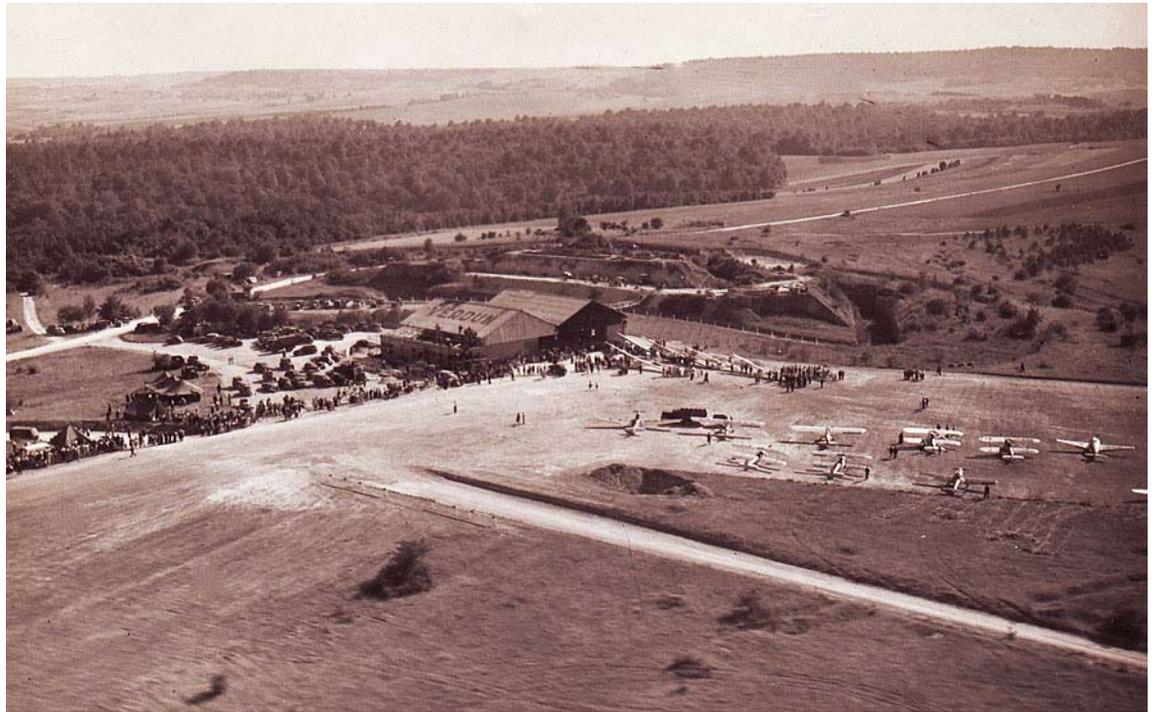
Below, this photo taken by col Claude Gascon, from an almost identical point of view, shows that the airfield has disappeared, but that the two hangars on the right are still there. Replacing the others, is the Désandrouins hospital which was built by the Americans in the Fifties (See the article on next page).



Since the latter was not crossed by any cable car, activities like flight training, local flying, and aerobatics could start again and suffered no restriction at all.

To end this aeronautical story of airplanes and lime transportation via a cable car, one should know that the latter, which had the very bad habit of losing its contents on the way to the rail works, showed and extraordinary longevity but was finally dismantled in the seventies!...

Fortunately, we can still fly our airplanes in Verdun!



The photo above, taken in the summer of 1949, shows the intense activity of the airfield of Verdun-Fromeréville thanks to its president, madame Suzanne Janin. On the right of the hangars is the Fort des Sartes transformed into an inn for the pilots on training.



Left, today's airport of Verdun Le Rozelier (LFGW) which should normally be permanent.

Located near highway A4, it has a 3700 feet long hard runway, and a 2000 feet long grass runway.

WHY DID THE AMERICAN ARMY NAME THIS HOSPITAL "DÉSANDROUINS" ?

1729 - 1792



In tribute to a gallant French officer who materially aided the cause of the struggling young United States in achieving its independence, this installation is dedicated to Marshal : Jean-Nicolas DÉSANDROUINS.

General Désandrouins born in Verdun in 1729 had already accomplished a remarkable career as an engineer of the French army when he joined the army of Rochambeau fighting for the cause of the American independence.

General Désandrouins served as a chief engineer during the siege of Yorktown which surrendered after a siege of nearly three weeks, ending with the American independence.

In recognition to General Désandrouins, the American army engineers have adopted the symbol of the "Tour chaussée", the former fortified gate of Verdun, the native town of Désandrouins.

INTO FRIENDLY FIRE: RP-63 "PINBALL"

Article: Bertrand Brown



RP-63 #42-69654 featuring the clamshell air scoop. (Photo: USAF).

To man the turrets and guns of the thousands of American medium and heavy bombers in World War II, unprecedented numbers of gunners had to be recruited and trained. Gunnery schools were hastily set up all over the United States but teaching students to master the complex art of aerial gunnery proved problematic. With time, techniques improved, culminating in 1945 with the introduction of the Bell RP-63 in what has become known as "Operation Pinball".

The first flexible gunnery school was created in June 1941 near Las Vegas, Nevada. The location was ideal: good flying weather and vast uninhabited expanses allowed for intensive gunnery training. However, early training techniques were more or less improvised and not particularly effective. Among various training devices to be found were guns and turrets mounted on the back

of moving trucks, skeet shooting ranges, projection screens and towed "sleeve" targets.

Shooting at towed targets was the most realistic training gunnery students were to get during their 5-week training course. Each student was given 2,000 rounds of color-tipped ammunition. A target-tow aircraft would get into formation with the aircraft carrying the students, who would take turns at firing at the target. Back on the ground, the target would be examined. Each impact left a color mark that showed who was responsible for the hit.

Although this was the best training available, it was far from perfect. As



At the end of the five weeks training gunnery students were awarded the Aerial Gunner badge. (Drawing by G. Marie)

the tow aircraft flew a rather predictable course, it made for an easy target, considerably easier to hit than a manoeuvring enemy fighter. Accidents were rare but did happen from time to time. Several tow aircraft were shot down during training, and crews were wounded or killed.

In 1942 and 1943, additional gunnery schools were opened in Arizona, at Kingman and Yuma, in Texas, at Harlingen and Laredo, and in Florida at Tyndall Field.

A new technique was also introduced, which yielded good results. Instead of firing guns at towed targets, students aimed cameras at real fighters. This allowed fighters to simulate realistic attacks on the bomber from different angles. After the mission, the camera film was developed. Instructors would then analyze it to calculate scores and help students improve their skills. This was far more realistic and gave better results but also required more time.

Obviously, the best possible training would have been to fire real rounds at real fighter aircraft. To do this, the only possible solution was to develop a type of ammunition which would not cause damage. A proposal for research on “frangible bullets” was submitted to the National Defence Research Committee in late 1942.

The Army’s Ordnance Department (A.O.D.) was quick to point out that a frangible bullet would not have the same ballistics as normal ones, and that they could not be fired from normal guns. The A.O.D. also pointed out that even a frangible bullet could cause damage, and that the target would need additional armor plating. Research on the frangible bullets was authorized but only received a limited budget and low priority.

Professors Gross and Hobbs began working on the program, with the support of Duke University and the

Two other views of 42-69654, showing the red light which was fitted in the propeller hub. The name “Pin Ball” is painted on the plane, with the mention “Do Not Tilt”. (Photos: USAF).



Bakelite foundation. They developed a .30 calibre round with a compound lead and bakelite shell, which would disintegrate upon impact. The round could be fired from slightly modified Browning M2 guns, and was given the designation T-44.

Testing began with firing at heavy aluminium sheets. It was found that no major damage was inflicted down to ranges of 30 feet. The A.O.D. was proven right about its earlier assumptions concerning the whole program. While the bullets did have ballistics similar to those of live rounds, they were not quite identical. At 1,360 ft per second, the muzzle velocity of the “Duke” rounds, as they were sometimes called, was lower than that of the standard .50. Gunsights also had to be re-calibrated.

These modifications gave the .30 machine gun the same behavior and “feel” as the .50 Browning M2, which was the standard defensive gun at the time. Gun jams were also more frequent with frangible rounds.

Further testing went on by adding aluminium armor to the nose and vulnerable parts of an A-20 twin-engine bomber. The tests showed the frangible bullets were a success. However, a single-engine fighter was required to realistically simulate attacks by German or Japanese interceptors.

The Bell P-63 Kingcobra was chosen as a test-bed. Its performance was adequate and it was not being used by American forces in combat. This meant diverting a few airframes for testing would be less of a problem. Five P-63A-9 were taken off the production lines: serial numbers 24-69647, 42-69654, 42-69769, 42-69771 and 42-69801. They were re-designated RP-63A-11, “R” standing for Restricted (from combat use).

Extensive modifications were carried out. All armament was removed, as well as all internal armor. All forward surfaces were re-skinned with heavy sheet metal. The rear part of the canopy glazing was covered with metal sheeting and heavy armored glass was used for the rest of the glazing. All summed up, the added armor weighed 1,487.7 lbs.

As it could not be covered with armor plating, it was thought the air scoop would be the most vulnerable part of the aircraft. Various designs were tested. The first prototype had a much smaller “clamshell” scoop, as well as the third and fifth prototypes. The second one had a flush scoop, while the fourth had a standard scoop.

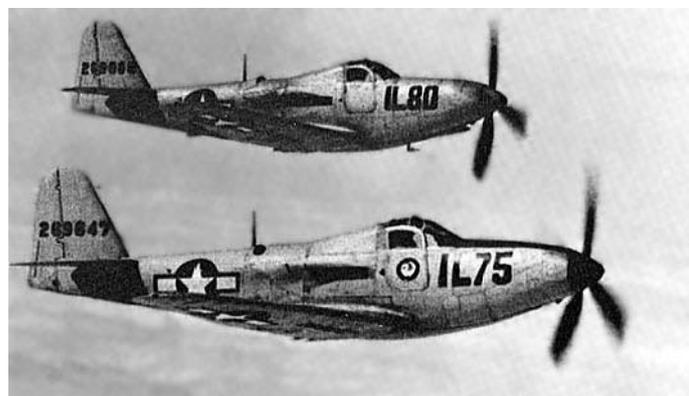
In spite of the increased weight, performance of the RP-63 was similar to that of the P-63.

The RP-63A-11 carried the same V-1710-93 engine as the P-63A-9, but was equipped with water injection. No external fuel could be carried as external fuel tanks would have been too vulnerable. Internal fuel capacity was raised to 126 gallons.

Among other important modifications was the addition of 109 pressure-sensitive sensors which would record hits on the airframe. To tell students when they scored a hit, every recorded impact would flash a red light located in the propeller hub, where the 37 mm gun had been. As a result, the aircraft were quickly nicknamed “Pinballs”. A counter located in the cockpit would record the total number of hits.

Initial testing of the “Pinball” prototypes proved satisfactory. The handling of the airplane had been modified by the extra weight and its distribution, but these problems were easily ironed out. Nevertheless, future “jump” pilots were understandably uneasy with the idea of being shot at, even with frangible bullets.

Hank Rodrique was one of the pilots assigned to assist gunnery training at Harlingen. He recalls that Bell Aircraft Corporation sent one of its test pilots to demonstrate the Pinball in March 1945. During a staged demonstration, hundreds of frangible rounds were shot at the aircraft. Not a single round penetrated the armor. Instructions on how to handle the heavier aircraft were also given. To avoid “dropping like a rock”, Rodrique



An in-flight shot of two RP-63A Pinballs. In the foreground is 42-69647, the first prototype, featuring the flush air scoop. The aircraft in the background is probably 42-69880, the first production RP-63A, which featured the clamshell intake. (Photo: USAF).

remembers that plenty of power had to be used at all times, right



A formation of RP-63 Pinballs in flight. (Photo: USAF)

until the moment the airplane touched down. During the landing run, brakes had to be used judiciously, and aerodynamic braking was to be used as much as possible to slow the aircraft down.

With the frangible bullet and RP-63 Pinball concept developed and proven, gunnery schools could now improve their training programs and put students in highly realistic combat conditions. An order for 95 RP-63A was placed. These aircraft

bore the designation RP-63A-12, and carried serial numbers 42-69880 to 42-69974. They were similar to production P-63A-10 aircraft and used the clamshell type of air scoop. By April 1945, training

with the Pinballs had begun in all gunnery schools.

During a typical mission, twelve students would take turns at firing at the Pinball aircraft, each firing 2,000 frangible rounds. The bright orange aircraft was typically hit by only a dozen or so bullets per mission. Rodrique remembers he never was hit more than 30 times in one mission. On a single day, Pinball pilots would fly up to three training missions.

Heavily armored as they were, the Pinballs were not invulnerable. On occasions, the air scoop would ingest bullet fragments, or even entire bullets. This would damage the oil and coolant radiators and the engine would rapidly overheat. The pilot would then have to make an emergency landing as soon as possible.

William Wilsterman flew the RP-63 as an instructor at the Las Vegas flexible gunnery school. During one mission, a frangible round hit his aircraft at the base of his windscreen, right at the spot where the armored glass met the aluminium armor. The bullet found its way inside the cockpit and hit his oxygen mask.

Fortunately, most of its energy had already dissipated and Wilsterman was unhurt.

Most accidents were due to “trigger-happy” students. As only the forward surfaces of the RP-63 were armored, students were instructed to cease fire when the RP-63 broke off its attack. As he banked away to avoid collision with the target bomber, the RP-63 pilot would expose his aircraft’s unarmored surfaces. If the student kept firing beyond this point, the frangible bullets could cause damage. Wilsterman recalls that on one such occasion, bullets hit his left aileron and yanked the control stick out of his hands. He landed with several bullet holes in the unarmored sections of the aircraft.

Some accident were more serious. Live and frangible rounds were similar-looking, and according to some reports live rounds were fired at RP-63s. One Pinball pilot returned with his 38 mm thick armored windscreen cracked, which should not have been caused by frangible bullets.

A new RP-63 version was introduced, the RP-63C. This was similar to the RP-63A but carried a V-1710-117 engine and had other minor refinements incorporated. The most notable difference was the air scoop, which was that of the standard-production P-63C. A total of two hundred RP-63C were built. Their designation was RP-63C-2 and their serial numbers were 43-10933 to 43-1132.

The Pinballs made for good training, but their introduction was too late

to make a real difference in the air war. By 1945, German and Japanese interceptors were becoming increasingly rare, and the fighter escorts were usually strong enough to cope with these. Nonetheless, the program went on and a new variant of the RP-63 was even developed. While the RP-63A and C had been standard



production fighters modified on the production line. The new variant, the RP-63G, was to be put into production as a target plane from the start.

Two P-63C (serials 43-11723 and 43-11724) had previously been taken off the production lines and modified as RP-63G prototypes. Additional lights had been added to the fuselage sides and back, and on the outer wing upper surfaces. These indicated hits more precisely to gunnery students. A flush air scoop was fitted and the 1,200 hp V-1710-135 was selected as power plant. Armor plating was extended towards the



A T-6 post-card of the Tyndall Field training school. (Photo: USAF)

rear of the fuselage, bringing the total weight of the armor to 2,164.9 lbs. Following successful testing of the two prototypes, an order for 450 RP-63G was placed. The designation of this new version was RP-63G-1.

As World War II ended, gunnery training was brought to a halt. RP-63G production did continue until 1946, but only 30 were delivered, in addition to the two prototypes. The remaining 420 aircraft were cancelled. The serials of the RP-63G that were built were 45-57283 to 45-57312.

There was no longer a need for aerial gunners, and it was expected that aerial gunnery would evolve quickly with the introduction of high-performance jet aircraft. Already, the new

B-29 Superfortress was using remote-controlled turrets which used complex electro-optical sights for aiming.

All Army Air Force Training Command RP-63 were transferred to the new Strategic Air Command, to help train B-29 gunners. They served until 1948, when training stopped. The surviving airframes were re-designated QF-63A,C or G. The “Q” prefix indicates a unmanned aircraft, but no RP-63 was ever used as such. Most airframes were subsequently scrapped, although a few have been preserved in museums.

Proponents of “Operation Pinball” regretted that higher priority was not given to the program. Had such training been available earlier, they reasoned, gunners would have protected the bombers more effectively during that critical period of the air war when the American bombing campaign was being heavily challenged by enemy air opposition.

WING PROJECTS

PATRON COMPANIES SUPPORTING THE FRENCH WING

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FRENCH WING PX



Print of the **Spirit of Lewis** flying over Le Plessis-Belleville, from the painting made by Roy Grinnell.

300 grammes, non-acid, high quality paper, size 30 x 40 cm.

The price for this lithograph is 10 euros for Wing members (+ 6€ P & P), and 15euros for the public (+ 6€ de port).

Our members residing in the USA may order from Irene & Roy Grinnell in order to avoid excessive P & P (buywrbonds@aol.com).

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SPRIT OF LEWIS SPONSORS 2010



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As one can see on the above list, the reactions to our last month call for Sponsors of our Piper Cub have been numerous and very positive. However, we need more sponsors to fill in the required amount of 1000€ to close that budget for 2010. We thank you in advance for sending your participation at the level of your choice, and as soon as you can. A big thank you to you all!

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