

Straight Scoop



PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM

To promote the acquisition, restoration, safe operation, and display of historical aircraft.

Volume X Number 2

February 2005

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General Richard D. Hearney USMC (Ret.), a native of Petaluma, was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in 1962. Prior to retiring in 1996, he rose to the rank of a 4 star General and to be the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

General Heary will talk to us about **Marine aviation** at our general meeting on **February 16th** at S.C.O.E.

During Desert Shield and Desert Storm he served as Deputy Commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, and held numerous senior staff assignments, including Deputy Director for Operations, U. S. European Command and Deputy Chief of Staff for Requirements, Programs and Aviation, Headquarters Marine Corps.

He flew 680 missions during his two tours in Vietnam where his A-4 Skyhawk was hit on a low level bombing mission. He brought the A-4 back despite being wounded, "the airplane is aluminum and has no armor," he says. Rich was also a member of the first Harrier squadron in the Marines, which is reserved for only the best pilots.

His personal decorations and medals include: the Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit with a gold star; Distinguished Flying Cross; Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; Purple Heart; Air Medal with Combat "V" and bronze numeral "30" and Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V".

During his rise to second in command of the Marine Corps, he would personally visit the family when one of his Marines was killed. A rare person says one of his friends in the Corps. Never in the history of the Marines has an aviator risen to the rank of commandant.

Rich graduated from Stanford University, and earned his Masters at Pepperdine. He is also a graduate of the Naval War College in Newport



The Pacific Coast Air Museum

Located on the corner of North Laughlin and Becker Blvd. on Charles M. Schulz -

Sonoma County Airport,
just north of Santa Rosa, CA.

Museum hours:

Tues, Thurs, Sat. & Sunday
10:00-4:00

A selected aircraft is available to "**Climb Aboard**" on the third weekend of each month (weather permitting)

Call **707•575•7900**

for details and information, or fax us at [REDACTED]

Meetings are typically held at Sonoma County Office of Education, located near the airport on Skylane Blvd., on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M.

"Straight Scoop" the museum's newsletter is published monthly. Members are encouraged to submit articles for possible publication - due by the 20th of the month prior to publication.

All articles in this newsletter are copyrighted. If you wish to use any of the contents, please contact:

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barnstorming@comcast.net

Address corrections and

Membership Renewals

(\$24.00 per year/\$36.00 for a family) should be sent to:

**PCAM, 2330 Airport Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403**

Rhode Island. He is married to Margaret, Maggie, McCracken. They have 3 children: Brian, Brenden (1964-1994), and Meaghan. They currently live overlooking Lake Mendocino near Ukiah.

Join us for this Wednesday night gathering and hear how the Marines get the job done.

< < < < < < Note Expanded Hours

Members Respond ! > > > > > >

One little note in our last newsletter and the volunteers come running.

Website Volunteer Log

Your museum is grateful for and proud of the hours its volunteers put in to make it the attraction that it is. Remember that you can log your hours online at:

pacificcoastairmuseum.org/2002Site/Volunteers/volunteerLog.asp

Got Questions? Contact: webadmin@pacificcoastairmuseum.org

Please Welcome our Newest Members

Santa Rosa:

Cheri Bartow; Jan, Lisa Joey and Jake Cholko; Richard Dunlap III; Ian Roth (who has already spent full days working on the museum's new H-34 restoration); Brent Stromgren; Michael, Renee, Andrew and Joshua Valentino.

Cloverdale: Carol Russel

Forestville: Helen Miller, William Kelly and Michael Stanford

Rohnert Park: Susan Moreno, Dan and PJ George

Membership Renewals Due

This will be the last *Straight Scoop* sent to your home if you do not renew your membership this month. **Just a reminder** for those who have been enjoying the monthly newsletter, fascinating speakers, free entry to a constantly growing museum as well as a two-day annual airshow that has aviation enthusiasts from all over the west coast taking note. And don't forget how terrific it is to get to know the fine people that have made PCAM a chosen outlet for their love of aviation, and the opportunity to work and learn beside them.

Memo to Hattie Stone from Her Friends at PCAM.

Hattie, we're all very sorry to hear about your health challenge and are rooting for you to have a swift cure. The crew of the Albatross really misses you helping to wash the airplane!!!

Sikorsky H-34 Choctaw Helicopter Arrives

Hear those four blades whirling around and that round R1820 engine running at full power, vibrating, shaking and rattling? Well, not really . . . because our H-34 Choctaw was delivered Friday, January 7th, at 8 in the morning by truck and in pieces (with a few omissions that are difficult not to notice). The off-loading operation took place in the rain, and the cold.... Brrr!

Crew Chief Seth Dempsey along with Jim Cook, Bill Canavan, Larry Rengstorf, Barney Hagen, Don Doherty and Rich Stout were helping with the crane work and Al Cathcart recorded the arrival. Many thanks to Mo and the folks at **Precision Crane** for providing the lift. All of this made possible by **Lynn Hunt's generous donation** of the lion's share of the parts. **Still looking for a main rotor head and tail rotor pylon.** The fun has begun.

"Some assembly required."



The
"all wet"
bunch:
Larry,
Seth,
Jim,
Don
and Bill.

Alex Dempsey
scrapes gooey
oil off the
transmission deck.



Bob Stratos cleans out
the fuel bladder bays.

Flies without rotor!

New member, Ian Roth, pressure
washes the engine compartment.



Santa Rosa's "Hap" Arnold Air Scouts Ray Anderson

If this article sounds familiar it's because we shared it in the February 2004 Straight Scoop. What makes it 'scoop worthy' are the additional photos included as well as significant amplification. We just can't leave a good story alone.

In May 1947 the Santa Rosa Boy Scout Squadron applied for, and received permission to establish, an Air Scout Squadron with the sponsorship of the Santa Rosa Kiwanis Club, as part of a senior scout program. The membership consisted of boys 15-19 years old actively pursuing flight instruction or interested in aviation. Once organized and fitted out in snappy light blue trousers and shirt plus dark blue tie, they met in Sonoma with 5-star general of the Air

Force, Henry "Hap" Arnold, who lived in retirement on his nearby ranch outside the town of Sonoma.

The meeting resulted in the general approving the name "Hap" Arnold Air Scout Squadron (known generally as the "Hap Arnold Air Scouts") and set in

Scouts on field trip to Hamilton Field. L-R Don Nielson, William Reske, Robert Pierce, Ray Romani, Larry Smothers, Ray Haas, Tom Madigan, Wally Stephens, Irvin Kettelsen, John Spencer and Mike Doyle.

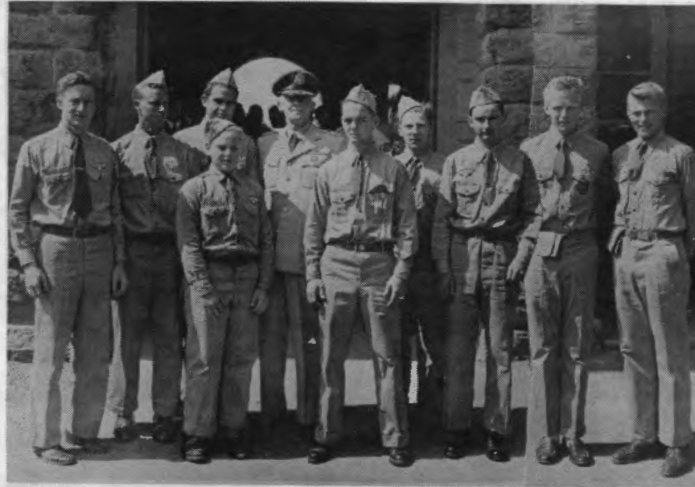
motion the general's influence in obtaining an "excess" air force airplane for the scouts' aviation ground school training. In consort with **Major General John**

Upston, commanding general of the Fourth Air Force at Hamilton Field, (where Hap had an office) they combed the air force inventories for a suitable airplane.¹ In the meantime the scouts spruced up their meeting rooms in one of the old Army Air Corps buildings on the newly renamed Sonoma County Airport and enjoyed several field trips to local air force bases, including Mather Air Force Base near Sacramento and a statewide assembly of air scouts at Castle Air Force Base near Merced. The photo, from an old newspaper² shows the scouts beneath the tail of a C-82

cargo plane at Hamilton Field where they were the guests of the commanding officer for a tour of the base facilities.

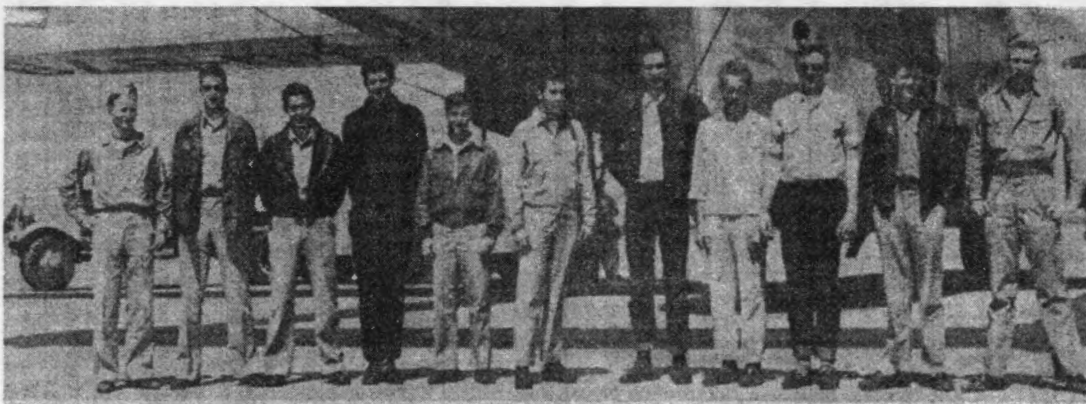
When arrangements were made for "excessing" an airplane for the squadron at Santa Rosa, preparations

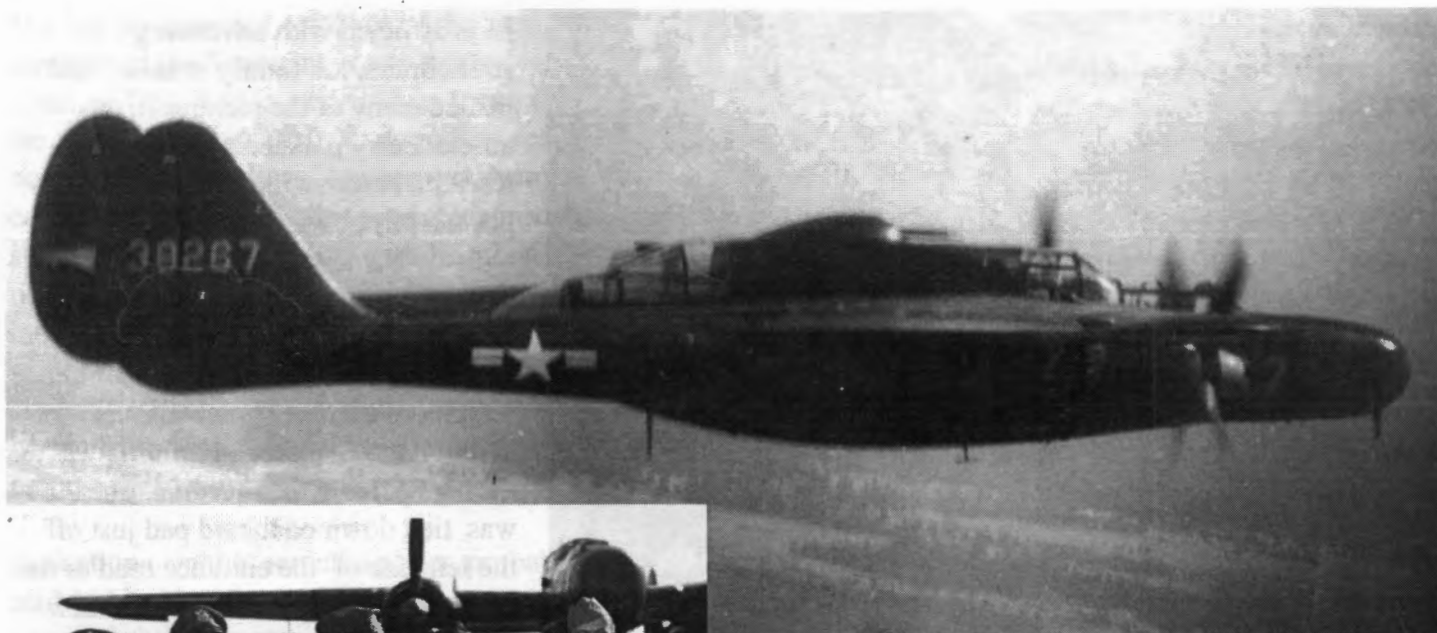
proceeded for a gala presentation. The airplane selected was a **Northrop P-61 Black Widow**. The P-61 was a huge, late entry in WWII - a \$400,000 twin-engine, radar-equipped night fighter, declared surplus after the war. According to a newspaper account, a suitable plane was found in the air force inventory at Mitchell Field near New York.¹



Members of the Air Scout squadron posed with the general in front of the Sonoma City Hall/Courthouse. in the city's central plaza. L-R : Don Nielson, Paul Jabin, Irv Bacon, Dennis Rehe, Gen. Arnold, unknown, Fred Lummis, Irwin & Allen Kettlesen.

photo courtesy of Dennis Rehe





Presentation dignitaries (L-R): Generals Arnold and Upston, unidentified aide, Santa Rosa Mayor J. W. Daw, Capt. Charles Ackley.
photo courtesy of Larry Smothers

It was apparently transferred to Hamilton Field, and in early February 1949 this, or another surplus Fourth Air Force airplane, model P-61B, serial no. 43-8300, was flown from Hamilton to the Sonoma County Airport. A photo of a similar model in flight is shown above.



General Upston presentation to Air Scout "Pilot" Smothers

Air Force photos via Larry Smothers

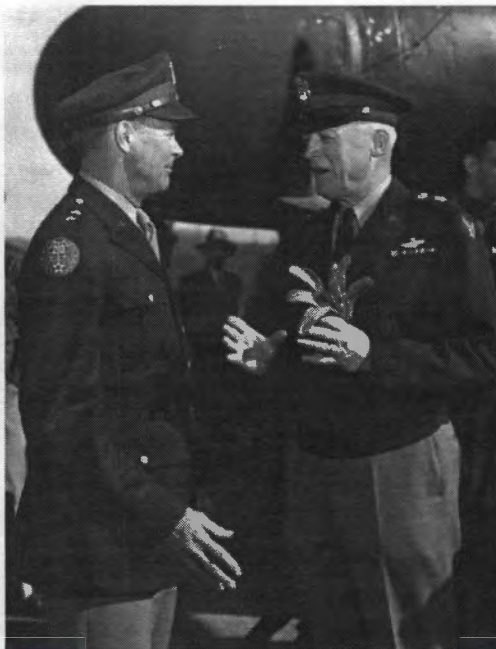
General Arnold with concluding remarks.

Air Force technicians disabled the plane by removing the control cables and drilling holes in some of the engine cylinders to ensure it wouldn't be used for more than just ground school training. Then on February 5th the well publicized day arrived. A group of dignitaries was seated in front of the P-61 as shown in the official Air Force photo -given to Air Scout "Pilot" Larry Smothers - the 18 year old high school senior, chosen as the squadron's leader.

Captain Ackley (ret), a Kiwanis member, was the liaison officer between the squadron and the Air Force, and one of several retired air force men that were specialized instructors for the squadron. Ray Emennegger, a Santa Rosa Junior College teacher, was the civilian leader of the squadron.



Mr. Ackley opened the presentation ceremonies and introduced the mayor who welcomed the guests. After brief remarks the mayor introduced the Air Force Generals. The photo shows General Upston as he spoke to the assembled guests and broadcast to the public over radio station KSRO. He then presented the airplane to the Air Scouts with Larry Smothers accepting for the squadron. The accompanying photo shows General Arnold in his concluding speech, in which, among other comments, he was quoted as saying ,



Generals Upston and Arnold standing aside the nose of the P-61. USAF photo

he is afflicted with advancing Alzheimers, his family scanned and e-mailed many of the pictures in this article. Larry pursued an academic/research career with a doctorate in plasma physics and worked 32 years with the Naval Ocean Systems Center in San Diego - after four years in the navy during the Korean War.

Receipt of their very own airplane for aviation orientation and training was the high point of the squadron. The P-61 was tied down on a hard pad just off the left side of the entrance road to the airport (now Airport Blvd) with their meeting room building nearby. However the old Army Air Corps building was later removed and interest in the airplane waned as members aged beyond the scout limits and new

***“We are preparing
so there will not be a World War Three.***

***There must not be
a World War Three.”***³

After the ceremonies the generals posed for more pictures. Several 8 x10 glossy prints were presented to the air scouts leader Larry Smothers. He has treasured them all his life and they are still in his possession. We traced him to his home near San Diego and, although

members were not so “eager.” The unsecured aircraft, open to the public and not properly maintained, did little to discourage vandalism and theft. Access to the inside of the airplane was simple via the unlocked rear hatch and there was no restriction to “helping yourself”, says PCAM member Frank Scott who had himself, ventured inside the aircraft with a friend.

General Arnold passed away at his Sonoma ranch on Jan. 15, 1950. The loss of their namesake probably contributed to the demise of the program.⁴



Final known photo of Hap Arnold Air Scouts Northrop P-61 Black Widow airplane.

Courtesy of Doug Olson

The last documented evidence of the air scouts' airplane on the Sonoma County Airport was the photo taken on Dec. 9, 1951 by PCAMer Doug Olson. Note the white "art work" "Hap Arnold Boy scouts" on the nose, and the remaining, but unused, Army Air Field control tower in the background. This inscription was significant when compared with Harrison Rued's photo taken two monthsearlier that show no message - indicating that the squadron was at least asserting its responsibility for the craft at this late date. A photo similar to Olson's was published in the Nov/Dec '03 issue of *Warbirds International* magazine with a request for identity of this special bird.

Indications are that sometime later, probably in the mid 1950s, the airplane was removed from it's exposed site to a remote location on the northeast corner of the airport - away from public access. Then one day it was simply GONE. We can not confirm it's demise, but it seems likely that it was scrapped out, as a piece of wartime "junk" by the Cohen Santa Rosa Junk business, which was located at that time at 125 Santa Rosa Avenue (bordering the creek across the street from what is now the Santa Rosa City Hall). Any further information on the disappearance of this airplane will be deeply appreciated.

Membership in the squadron dwindled with the last roster recorded in 1956 and it was apparently dissolved shortly thereafter. Contact, and interviews, were made with several surviving members of the teenage group: Allen Beer, Mike Doyle, Irvin (Chris) Kettleon, Don Nielson, Dennis Rehe, Harrison Rued and Larry Smothers. Interestingly, none of them, or others in their recollection, became "professional" pilots (military or air lines), although some did take flight training and obtained a private pilot rating. Larry Smothers, in his illustrious career, became a champion glider pilot in competitive glider events. This, in contrast to a later "Aviation Explorer" scout squadron in Healdsburg,



General Arnold talks to "his" Air Scouts: Pilot Smothers, with air scouts Myron Rehe and younger brother Dennis listening in.

which graduated members to the Air Force Academy and jets, the Naval Academy and flight duty, a helicopter pilot in the army, and a private flight instructor, and now a noted airplane "wreck chaser" ⁵

References:

1. "15-18 Year-old Boys Invited to Join Hap Arnold Air Scouts," Press Democrat Evening Press, Dec 9, 1948.
2. photo, Press Democrat, April 23, 1948.
3. "'There must never be WWII' says Gen. Arnold," Press Democrat, Dec 6, 1949.
4. HAP ARNOLD and the Evolution of American Airpower, Dik Alan Dasco, Smithsonian History of Aviation Series, 2000, p 223.
5. "Crash Junkie," The Smithsonian magazine, Nov. 2003, p 108.

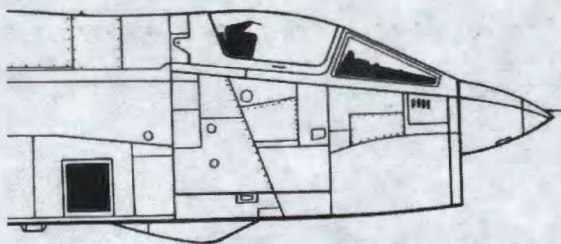


All manner of interesting aviation-themed paraphenalia is always available at the air museum's gift shop -

Shirts, hats, models and more!



PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM
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**Climb into our complete
RF-8 Recce Cockpit
February 19th & 20th**

34003+1376 03



Dick & Karma Detra



*If your address label is highlighted,
then we have not yet received your membership renewal.

PCAM still on F-106 Restoration "High"



and his delightful extended family. None of us will ever forget the awesome sense of pride and delight in historical aircraft both in front of the assembled crowd and in the air. Jim Cook has insured we will never forget by commemorating the dedication effort with a beautifully designed and executed coin which he has given to the many involved. PCAM can be this good!



The "high" that is still being experienced by many PCAM members has nothing to do with inhalation of fumes of unknown "restoration compounds." Rather, it seems to stem from a mild but pleasing sense of surprise that our little museum was equal to such a daunting task with not only a quick turn-around exterior restoration of a rather large aircraft, but the follow-on dedication ceremony and celebration fit for the Air Force Chief of Staff

Save These Dates ...

Feb 16th 6pm Airshow Planning Meeting
7pm General Meeting
Harrier Pilot

Gen. Richard Hearney USMC (Ret.)

Feb 19th 11am **Member Orientation**

*learn the ins and outs of your air museum's
operations and programs
(at the museum)*

PacificCoastAirMuseum.org