



# STRAIGHT SCOOP

Volume XVII Number 2 February 2011

To promote the acquisition, restoration, safe operation and display of historic aircraft, preserve aviation history and provide an educational venue for the community



History was made right here in the North Bay 100 years ago...It's a history which has made an ever-lasting impression on the entire world! Pioneer aviator [Fred J. Wiseman](#), born 1875 in Santa Rosa, completed America's first official air mail flight from Petaluma to Santa Rosa in Sonoma County on February 18, 1911 (never mind that he took off on February 17...)

The Smithsonian recognizes his journey as the first motorized air mail flight in America--he carried three letters from the Petaluma postmaster to the Santa Rosa postmaster—along with 50 copies of *The Press Democrat* newspaper and some coffee! Today, Wiseman's hand-built canvas and wood biplane proudly hangs in the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum on the Mall in Washington D.C.

Pacific Coast Air Museum (PCAM) is honoring his achievement in several ways with:

- an exhibit with curator opening February 15, 2011 at the Pacific Coast Air Museum.
- a reception on Saturday, February 19, 2011 in Sonoma Jet Center's historic Redwood Hangar at Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport from noon to 3pm. The Reception features a biplane fly-in reenactment by pilot [Patrick Bell](#), a Color Guard, music, museum exhibits, centennial souvenirs, silent auction, refreshments with wine and 100th anniversary cake. The program features civic proclamations, introduction of honored guests and sponsors plus a keynote address by historian/PD columnist [Gaye LeBaron](#). The reception, chaired by [Bob Parker](#) and [Sharie Sbrazza](#), is a benefit for PCAM, a 501(c)3 nonprofit education programs. The Pacific Coast Air Museum established 20 years ago.

The entire community is invited to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of local aviator Wiseman's heroic milestone. Ticket prices are \$5 for youth ages 6-21, \$10 for PCAM members and \$15 for adults 21+. Children under the age of 5 and active military with ID are free, while tickets at the door are \$20. Tickets may be purchased in advance by check payable to PCAM via snail mail, or by credit card online at [www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org) or by contacting [Maggie Johnston](#), PCAM volunteer, Email: [wiseman1911@hotmail.com](mailto:wiseman1911@hotmail.com) or Mail: Parker PCAM, Box 1703, Santa Rosa CA 95402 Phone: 707-546-6764  
[www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org)

(707) 575-7900

## The Pacific Coast Air Museum

**Location:** At the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport, North of Santa Rosa, West of Highway 101, at 2230 Becker Blvd, off North Laughlin Road.

**Hours:** Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. 10:00am—4:00pm.

**“Climb Aboard”:** A selected aircraft is available to “Climb Aboard” the third weekend of each month (weather permitting). Please visit our web site at [www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org) or call 707-575-7900 for details or further information.

**Member Meetings:** Normally held on the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00pm at **Mesa Beverage Company, Inc. 3200 N. Laughlin Road. Santa Rosa, CA**. Interesting speakers are featured at each meeting.

### “Straight Scoop”

The museum newsletter, “Straight Scoop” is published monthly and is available on line on the museum’s web site. Members are highly encouraged to submit articles for possible publication. The deadline is the 26th of the month prior to publication. All articles in the newsletter are covered by copyright. If you wish to submit articles or use any of the content, please contact:

Chris Tart, Editor  
1064 Maple Drive  
Windsor, Ca 95492

707-836-9226

[sctartusaf@yahoo.com](mailto:sctartusaf@yahoo.com)

### Membership Renewals:

\$30 per year individual; \$45 per year for families. Send renewals to the museum at the address below.

### Address Corrections:

Please send to:

Pacific Coast Air Museum  
2230 Becker Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, Ca 95403

Please visit our web site at

[www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org](http://www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org) or call 707-575-7900 for details or further information.

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J

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Please Volunteer for the Pacific Coast Air Museum to honor pioneer aviator [Fred J. Wiseman](#) who flew America's First Airmail Flight Petaluma to Santa Rosa Feb. 17-18, 1911

PCAM's benefit reception is Saturday, February 19, 2011 at 12-3pm in the historic Redwood Hangar at Sonoma Jet Center.

Please indicate tasks you can volunteer for:

1. Suggest sponsors & silent auction donors now (we'll write the letters for you!)
2. Hang color posters at local businesses now
3. Pick up silent auction prizes the weeks of 2/7 or 2/14
4. Pick up donated food on morning of 2/19 (volunteers to gather at 11:30am at SJC)
5. Serve as boundary security with your AOA badge 12-3pm on 2/19
6. Serve as helper/security for silent auction bidding tables 12-3pm on 2/19
7. Be a food/beverage server 12-3pm on 2/19
8. Clean-up will be quick 3-3:30pm with help from Explorer Scouts and everyone!
9. Other: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Earn a free ticket to our 2/19 Reception if you volunteer 11:30am to 3:30pm.

Please volunteer by contacting Co-chairs [Bob Parker](#) at 546-6764 or [Sharie Sbrazza](#) at [andiamotravel@hotmail.com](mailto:andiamotravel@hotmail.com) or the Museum Admin Office at the museum - 575-7900.

We really need your volunteer help, especially folks with AOA badges, to help make this Pacific Coast Air Museum sponsored event a success.

### **Annual May Bus Trip**

Castle Air Museum, Atwater, CA  
Friday, May 6

Depart Pacific Coast Air Museum in large Airport Express bus at 7:30am

Return between 5:00 and 6:00pm

\$50 per person includes bus, box lunch and admission

Open to museum members only until April 1, only 55 seats available.

To sign up, bring check or cash of \$50 per member to Dave Pinsky or Duane Coppock  
in the Admin Office (no credit cards please)

You may also sign up at the Monthly Member Meetings while seats last

## HISTORY OF AVIATOR FRED WISEMAN HE FLEW THE FIRST AIR MAIL FLIGHT IN AMERICA

by Sharie Sbrazza

-Fred J. Wiseman was born November 10, 1875 in Santa Rosa to parents who came to Sonoma County from Missouri by wagon train in the 1850s. They operated a stagecoach inn and ranch at Melitta Station, still open as a bed & breakfast.

-In 1898, after fighting in the Spanish American War, Fred moved to Santa Rosa at age 23 to manage a bicycle garage, where early cars were also repaired. At this time, trains and horse & buggy were still the main means of transport.

-In 1906, the bicycle shop was destroyed. Closer to the quake epicenter, Santa Rosa had more damage per capita than San Francisco. The Santa Rosa Courthouse dome toppled. Fred moved to San Francisco to work for Leavitt & Son auto dealership and began to race Stoddard-Dayton cars.

-On August 21, 1908 this local postcard of a Petaluma chicken ranch was sent from Pasadena to Wisconsin. Note the way it was going to travel: "Marine Delivery." The Panama Canal was not completed until 1914...

-In 1908, after competing in the Vanderbilt-Indiana Race, Fred visited the Wright Brothers in Dayton, Ohio to admire their famous *Kitty Hawk* plane. Fred was hooked on flying!

-In 1909, Fred finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place at the first California Grand Prize Auto Race from Santa Rosa to Healdsburg roundtrip. Do you recognize him driving past Dry Creek Store, west of Healdsburg?

-Fred Wiseman's #21, a 1908 Stoddard-Dayton auto.

Fred is behind the wheel of an Overland Willys.

-In 1909, Fred continued to race cars and began soliciting funds from "birdmen" supporters including Santa Rosa butcher Ben Noonan, who gave \$10,000 "seed" money for the 1<sup>st</sup> plane.

-In 1910, Fred and his partner Gene Peters hand-built a 2<sup>nd</sup> wood and fabric bi-plane using Wright, Curtiss and Farman features on Laughlin Ranch, now part of Sonoma County Airport. The V-8 engine was built by Al Hall and modified to 10 horsepower enabling turns during flight. With a wingspan of 33 feet and length of 38 feet, Fred said his flying machine was the "fastest in the world" and capable of 70 mph.

-In May 1910, Fred flew his first public flight at Sonoma County racetrack. He piloted the first plane ever built in California ...built without blueprints!

-On January 18, 1911, Fred flew his plane in competition at Selfridge Field near Tanforan Park in San Francisco. He came in 2<sup>nd</sup> during this race but earned \$1283.33 and won the amateur endurance record. He claimed the longest sustained flight: 6 minutes! And he boasted the greatest accumulated time in the air: almost 50 minutes!

-In February 1911, Petaluma Postmaster John Olmsted wrote a letter to Santa Rosa Postmaster Hiram Tripp. It said, "Petaluma sends, via the air route, congratulations and felicitations upon the successful mastery of the air by a Sonoma County boy in an aeroplane..." Another letter was sent by Petaluma Mayor George McNear to Santa Rosa Mayor James Edward. A third letter joined 50 issues of the *Press Democrat* newspaper and coffee! These items flew 15 miles Petaluma to Santa Rosa.

-On February 17, 1911 Fred, at age 36, began his air mail flight from Petaluma's Kenilworth Park at 12:30 pm. Less than 5 miles north, at Denman Flats Dairy between Petaluma and Cotati, Fred was forced to land because of magneto problems. Repairs were made and the chase team covered the plane with a tarp overnight. The following day, February 18, the tarp was laid out like a runway and Fred ascended at 9:05 am. He flew to a Kawana Springs-Enz Dairy field, just south of Sonoma County Fairgrounds. This time a wire broke off to disable the prop

A car came to retrieve Fred, the 3 letters and newspapers. Postmaster Tripp received his letters at the Santa Rosa Post Office, which was designed in 1906 and built after the Great Quake.

-In late February 1911, Fred flew his first exhibition flights for money at the Citrus Fair in Cloverdale. He also performed in Pismo Beach, Washington and other West Coast venues.

-Fred was quite the inventor too. On January 18, 1911 he saw pilot [Eugene Ely](#) fly off the USS Pennsylvania's aircraft carrier deck in San Francisco Bay. Afterwards, Fred invented the plane tail-hook to grab the aircraft carrier cable. Fred was also the first person to laminate wooden propellers for added strength.

-In September 1911, people wrote postcards to be sent via "Aerial Special Dispatch." Sally's friend writes: "This card will go from Long Island to New York City by aeroplane. This is the first time this has ever been done." *Well, maybe in New York...*

-In 1911, publisher William Randolph Hearst offered \$50,000 to the first pilot to fly across the U.S. in 30 days. Pioneer aviator [Cal Perry Rodgers](#) took the challenge. He flew his *Vin Fiz* Wright plane from New York on Sept. 17, 1911 to California...but in 84 days. This postcard sent on Nov. 12 for the last leg from Pasadena to Long Beach is stamped "wrecked at Compton, aviator injured."

-On September 23, 1911 [Earle Ovington](#) was sworn in to fly the U.S. Mail. But there's 7 months between Fred's flight in February and Ovington's flight in September. From here on, postmasters across America established postal stations in parks and fields and mail bags were dropped from planes.

-In 1912, Fred gave up risky aviation and sold his plane to [Weldon Cooke](#) of Oakland. [Marilyn Guinnane](#) remembers her great uncle Fred saying, "there's no future in aviation for me because it was a deadly profession. Not that aviation was dying. Quite the contrary. What a spirit!"

-On May 15, 1947, Fred's flight from Petaluma to Santa Rosa in February 1911 was officially recognized by the Smithsonian as America's First Air Mail Flight. Smithsonian curator [Dr. Paul Garber](#) proved that Fred's flight was "the first airplane-carried mail flight officially sanctioned by any U.S. post office and made available to the public." Fred stands by his plane when the good news of 1947 is decided!

-Fred married Alice and they had a daughter Fredreika, who died young of a brain aneurysm. He retired from Standard Oil and died October 4, 1961, a month before his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday. [Fred Wiseman](#) will always remain a local hero and favorite son of Santa Rosa!

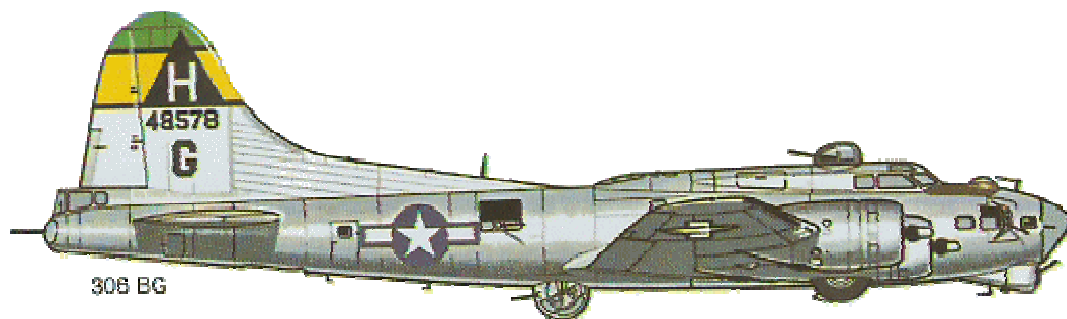
-In 1948, the Smithsonian acquired Fred's plane. In 1984, the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum restored it. Look for the Wiseman-Cooke bi-plane and Fred's photo album when you visit the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington D.C.

### **INVITATION to the Pacific Coast Air Museum's PARTY for PIONEER AVIATOR FRED WISEMAN**

You're invited to honor history-making pilot Fred Wiseman at a Centennial Celebration on Saturday, February 19, 2011 from 12:30pm to 3:30pm at Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport's historic Redwood Hangar. Enjoy a fly-in, exhibits, program, food & drink, music, silent auction & more!

A native of Santa Rosa, Fred flew the first officially recognized--by the Smithsonian--air mail flight in America in February 1911 from Petaluma to Santa Rosa...it happened here in Wine Country 100 years ago! Like to get REAL mail? Then thank Fred!

To receive ticket info for this Centennial Celebration, email [wiseman1911@hotmail.com](mailto:wiseman1911@hotmail.com) or contact co-chairs Bob Parker at 707.546-6764 / [robparker@att.net](mailto:robparker@att.net), or Sharie Sbrazza at [andiamotravel@hotmail.com](mailto:andiamotravel@hotmail.com)



### February Guest Speaker

Ray Allen

Ray Allen, will be our guest speaker at the February 16<sup>th</sup> Membership meeting that begins at 7 p.m. Ray is a WWII veteran who flew 35 combat missions as Navigator aboard B-17s with the 306<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The 306<sup>th</sup> was the source of the book and later the movie *Twelve O'clock High* starring Gregory Peck flying with the factious 918<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. We will hear about what went into flying day light missions and how the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force was able to coordinate the launch and bombing raids involving a 1000 bombers and 500 fighter escorts flying out of numerous airfields throughout England.

Constituted as 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 28 Jan 1942. Activated on 1 Mar 1942. Trained for combat with B-17's. Moved to England, Aug-Sep 1942, and assigned to Eighth AF. During combat, Oct 1942-Apr 1945, operated primarily against strategic targets, striking locomotive works at Lille, railroad yards at Rouen, submarine pens at Bordeaux, shipbuilding yards at Vegesack, ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt, oil plants at Merseburg, marshalling yards at Stuttgart, a foundry at Hannover, a chemical plant at Ludwigshafen, aircraft factories at Leipzig, and other objectives on the Continent. Took part in the first penetration into Germany by heavy bombers of Eighth AF on 27 Jan 1943 by attacking U-boat yards at Wilhelmshaven. Sgt Maynard H Smith received the Medal of Honor for his performance on 1 May 1943: when the aircraft on which he was a gunner was hit by the enemy and fires were ignited in the radio compartment and waist sections, the sergeant threw exploding ammunition overboard, manned a gun until the German fighters were driven off, administered first aid to the wounded tail gunner, and extinguished the fire. Without fighter escort and in the face of powerful opposition, the 306th completed an assault against aircraft factories in central Germany on 11 Jan 1944, being awarded a DUC for the mission. Received another DUC for action during Big Week, the intensive campaign against the German aircraft industry, 2~25 Feb 1944: although hazardous weather forced supporting elements to abandon the mission, the group effectively bombarded an aircraft assembly plant at Bernberg on 22 Feb. Often supported ground forces and attacked interdiction targets in addition to its strategic operations. Helped to prepare for the invasion of Normandy by striking airfields and marshalling yards in France, Belgium, and Germany; backed the assault on 6 Jun 1944 by raiding railroad bridges and coastal guns. Assisted ground forces during the St Lo breakthrough in Jul. Covered the airborne invasion of Holland in Sep. Helped stop the advance of German armies in the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944-Jan 1945, by attacking airfields and marshalling yards. Bombed enemy positions in support of the airborne assault across the Rhine in Mar 1945. Remained in the theater after V-E Day as part of United States Air Forces in Europe, and engaged in special photographic mapping duty in western Europe and North Africa. Inactivated in Germany on 25 Dec 1946.

## Help Make Our 9/11 First Responder F-15 Exhibit a Reality!

By now you all know we have the 9/11 First Responder F-15 aircraft at the Pacific Coast Air Museum (see story on page 8). We intend to build an exhibit that honors those who perished, those who responded and tell the untold story of Air Force pilot heroism in the skies and FAA controller heroism on the ground that fateful day. But we are going to need your help to build the first and only west coast exhibit that honors 9/11. In short, we need your financial contributions. \$1, \$100, \$1,000, \$5,000— whatever you can afford or choose to contribute— it will all help this very worthy cause. To contribute, send a check made out to PCAM F-15 Exhibit to 2230 Becker Blvd, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. For more information on how to contribute, contact Development Director Barbara Beedon at [bbeedon@sonic.net](mailto:bbeedon@sonic.net) or Dave Pinsky at the museum, 575-7900 or [director@pacificcoastairmuseum.org](mailto:director@pacificcoastairmuseum.org)

### NEW MEMBERS

Tom Bertero – Santa Rosa

Anna Perez Family – Windsor

Russell Gaughen – Monte Rio

Tim Swanson Family – Windsor

Bob Steel- Cloverdale

Josh & Jenane Kucker – Windsor

Mark Elo Family – Windsor

Buster Finch – Santa Rosa

William F. Campbell – Colorado Springs



Can you identify this aircraft?

Answer at bottom of page 9

## 9/11 First Responder Update

By Greg Thomas, Crew Chief



On December 14, 2010 after years of work and hope, our F-15 arrived on site and it was a sight to behold as it came around the Butler Hangar. We had a great turnout with dignitaries, press and museum members. The airplane was removed from the trailer with two cranes, the last flight of the airplane. Then it was supported on the tail with two jack stands, before the main landing gears were lowered. The left landing gear came down by itself unexpectedly, then right gear came down without any problems, then we lifted up the plane again to allow the main gear to be extended. After the airplane was stable we allowed the people to come out onto the hardstand to look it over. Many folks wanted to touch the First Responder F-15 and it was obviously an emotional moment for them.

We had to stop restoration efforts for two weeks because of the rain and holiday, but in early January work began in earnest to restore this historic aircraft to her rightful configuration.

The first project that we tackled was the removal of the right hand tail fairing that had some road rash from the trip up from Tucson, so that sheet metal can be repaired. The following week on Thursday, we attempted to install the left horizontal stabilators, with the help of the Tuesday-Thursday gang we got one of the pieces installed. On that Saturday the other stabilator was installed after 3.5 hours of frustration we got it into place and we then realized that we forgot to install the actuator adapter. So we had to pull out the horizontal stab and put the adapter in place. After 1.5 hours we had it installed.

The following week we started to clean the sheet metal and install the belly pans, main landing gear doors. Without the help from the crew of Ron Stout's A-26, we would still be fighting to install it. The F-15 is starting to look like an airplane again.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> Ron and I thought that we should try and install one of the wings (dry run) but as we were setting up it was going so well we decided to install the left wing. After working to install it we finally had the left wing installed with the six pins that secure it. Lynn Hunt came out after his meeting and said we still had daylight and that we should hang the other wing, so we did hang it.

Now it really looks like a fighter aircraft and it is beautiful. When you see it sitting there in all its majesty, you finally realize how big this airplane really is.

On January 25, the aircraft was moved to the Pacific Coast Air Museum hardstand where the A-26 used to sit, prior to the A-26 moving to the Butler Hanger.

Our F-15 looks beautiful with the gear doors closed and the wings attached. We still have a lot of work left to do - - sheet metal installed, a big job giving it a bath and rubbing down the paint, and making sure all the screws are installed. If you would like to assist on this big job, all volunteers will be welcomed, contact me Greg Thomas (AKA "Tumbleweed") at [glassart@pacbell.net](mailto:glassart@pacbell.net). I will be posting further status reports.





Pictured above, (courtesy of Aviation Week & Space Technology), are the Navy and Air Force versions of the F-35 JSF. The photo on the left is the F-35B BF2 Navy Model and the photo on the right is the F-35A AF4 Air Force model.



A-10 Warthog being serviced in Afghanistan

Answer from page #7 UH-72 Lakota U.S. Army Helicopter



**PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM**

**Climb Aboard  
DC-6  
February 19th & 20th**

**REMEMBER THESE DATES**

- February 2nd @ 8:30am Board of Directors Meeting at the Museum
- February 8th @ 12:00pm Executive Director's Staff Meeting at the Museum
- February 16th @ 6:00pm—Air Show Planning Meeting at Mesa Beverage
- February 16th @ 7:00pm—Monthly Member Meeting at Mesa Beverage
- February 19th @ 11:00am New Member Orientation at the museum

**PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM**

**2230 Becker Blvd.**

**Santa Rosa, Ca 95403**