



American Military Heritage Foundation
Dedicated to preserving, in flying
condition, a Vintage PV-2 Harpoon in memory of all who fought on
behalf of the United States of America

May 2017 Newsletter

May has entered the picture and so far has not been much nicer to us than April. However, it is Indiana and it is bound to change within the next minute or so at least in the next 24 hours.

So what did we accomplish during the month of April? If you would see the plane now it has both rudders back in place, freshly painted, balanced, and new hardware. Some members have been involved with trouble shooting a problem with the vacuum system. They believe they have it narrowed down to a couple of things and it will require an engine run to eliminate one or confirm they found the problem and it is fixed.

We also started preparation to build up a new wheel assembly so we could change one and then clean and paint the other before installing it back on the plane. We have one brake pack cleaned and ready for installation and found the fixture for cutting and gluing the brake seals together. We found that the glue had exceeded its limit and was hard, new glue ordered and is now here. I found out Loctite thinks quite highly of their product, \$21.00 for 0.33 OZ. Maybe this time we can remember to put it in the refrigerator in order to extend its life expectancy.

We then brought out what we thought was a good tube and fitted it to the wheel to make sure the valve stem lined up through the hole in the wheel. If you have never been involved with getting a tire and tube assembly all together on the wheel with the valve stem coming through at the correct angle it can be quite a feat. That all went ok so we inspected the tube and found it to have numerous cracks around the valve stem, not a good thing. New tube is on the way for a measly \$378.00. So if anyone has urge to help out it would be greatly appreciated.

I am currently reading a book entitled "Flying the Hump" by Jeff Ethell & Don Downie. (I was told Jeff Ethell has flown Hot Stuff). I have heard many stories about this particular part of the war and even met a person that flew The Hump. That is another story in itself but only makes for verbal telling. However, I had never really thought much about it until this book showed up. Again it does not particularly involve the Harpoon but I believe it is still relevant to our mission. What you may or may not know is the C-46 was one of the major aircraft used for this mission. There were a total of 3,184 built at factories or modification centers in St. Louis, Buffalo, and Louisville. It used two Pratt and Whitney R-2800 and four bladed Curtiss Electric propellers. The proto type originally had twin-tail configuration and was inadequate for low speed engine out operation so they went to a larger single tail. First flight was March 26, 1940 and two hundred were ordered. There were a total of 721 modifications issued on this airplane. Most were due to the fact it was rushed into production so fast and did not enjoy the luxury of a year or so in service to find all of the faults.

The C-46 is no small plane with a wingspan of 108'1", length 76'4", and height 21'9" bomb/cargo 12,000. This compares to 6,000 for B17-G, 8,000 for B-24J and 3,000 for B-25J.



If I understand the maps in the book the route was from Calcutta across Burma to Kunming, China, and Ledo. The altitude was usually 18,000 on oxygen. The service ceiling on the C-46 is 27,600.

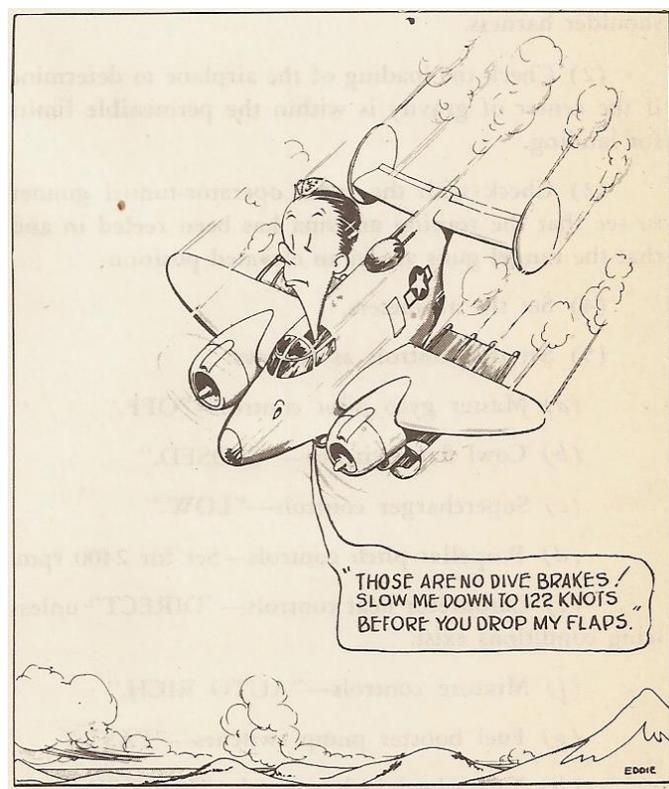
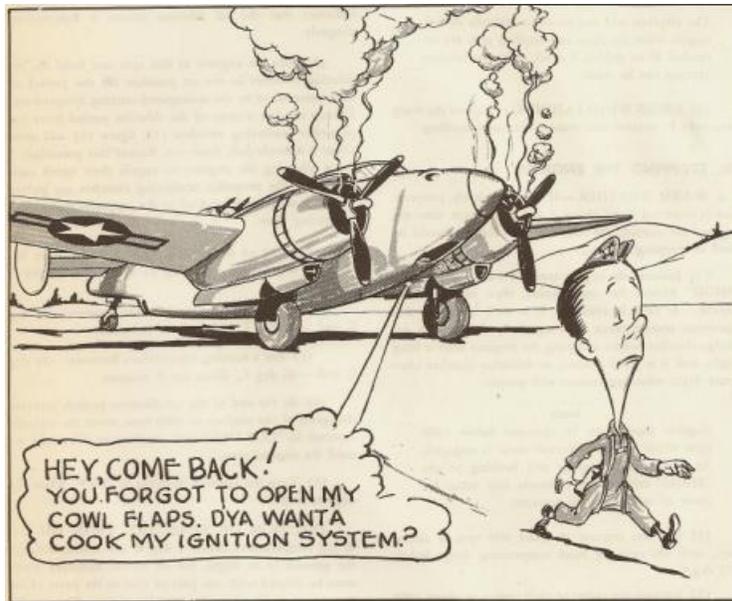
One of our members has been across this area several times cruising in comfort at altitudes 35,000 to 40,000 ft. The following is his description of a flight across that area today.

For what it's worth, when I traverse that area, there are several routes that run essentially parallel. We talk to Kolkata (Calcutta) eastbound out of India. A chunk of India east of Kolkata is now Bangladesh, and their one radio is in Dhaka. After a very brief passage across their airspace we speak with Kolkata again for a moment before handing off to Yangon, Myanmar (Rangoon, Burma). Crossing Myanmar we go right over Lashio and turn northeast into China. A ways in, we make a 90 degree right turn and head to Kunming. At Kunming, the headquarters of the AVG for a time, we make a left and head east on our way to Hong Kong. I've never been over Kunming in the daylight when it wasn't under-cast so I've never had a good look at the place, but at night the airfield and runways are dark, the terminal is brightly lit, there are no planes at the gates, and the roadway is empty. How time can change things since those servicemen fought with weather, navigation, and the rock as they called it.

When we think about the servicemen that took care of the Harpoons there was another group on the other side of the world with many of the same problems only a different plane. If you get the chance to read this book I highly recommend it. There are so many humorous antidotes I would never be able to include all of them.

On another note I am always looking for things to include in the newsletter that pertains to the time frame we try to work in and study or if you think it would be something our membership would be interested in hearing about that is ok. This month I had two members help me out. One was current day flying in the area of The Hump. The other included several excerpts from various books and documents. I will include a couple just to lighten things up a bit. I don't know if all of you are familiar with some of the cartoons that were used in training manuals of the time to illustrate and help crew members with the various things they needed to do.

Here are two:



Have a great month,
Gaylon