

TIGHAR TRACKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOR HISTORIC AIRCRAFT RECOVERY





... that they might escape the teeth of time and the hands of mistaken zeal.

—JOHN AUBREY

1660

TIGHAR (pronounced “tiger”) is the acronym for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation. TIGHAR was incorporated in January 1985 and recognized as a 501(c)(3) public charity by the IRS in November of that year. Offices are maintained in Middletown, Delaware on the Summit Airport, and staffed by the foundation’s Executive Committee, Richard E. Gillespie, Executive Director, and Patricia R. Thrasher, President. A board of directors oversees the Executive Committee and provides general policy guidelines, while a broad international membership of volunteers provides a wide variety of professional skills with which to carry out the foundation’s work. Funding for TIGHAR is solicited from individuals and corporations which are sympathetic to the foundation’s goals. TIGHAR does not seek direct funding from the government, preferring to stay within the private sector.

TIGHAR’s activities include:

- Compiling and verifying reports of rare and historic aircraft surviving in remote areas.
- Conducting investigations and recovery expeditions in cooperation with museums and collections worldwide.
- Serving as a voice for integrity, responsibility, and professionalism in the field of aviation historic preservation.

TIGHAR maintains no collection of its own; neither does it engage in the restoration or buying and selling of artifacts. Instead, the foundation devotes its energies to the saving of endangered historic aircraft wherever they may be found, and to the education of the international public in the need to responsibly preserve the relics of the history of flight.

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COVER: Le Grand Raid de L’Oiseau Blanc (“The Great Attempt of the White Bird”). TIGHAR member Mike Roderick’s breathtaking tribute to the Nungesser/Coli transatlantic flight of 1927 depicts the lost heroes over the wilderness of Maine. The signatures shown are their last before they vanished, in Lindbergh’s words, “like midnight ghosts.” The painting is available from TIGHAR as a full color poster. See page 15.

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TIGHAR Tracks is published quarterly as the official publication of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. A subscription to *TIGHAR Tracks* is included as part of membership in the Foundation (minimum donation, \$25 a year). The Editors welcome contributions of written material and artwork. Materials should be addressed to: Editors, *TIGHAR Tracks*, P. O. Box 424, Middletown, DE 19709, U.S.A. Photographs and artwork will be returned upon request.

Overview

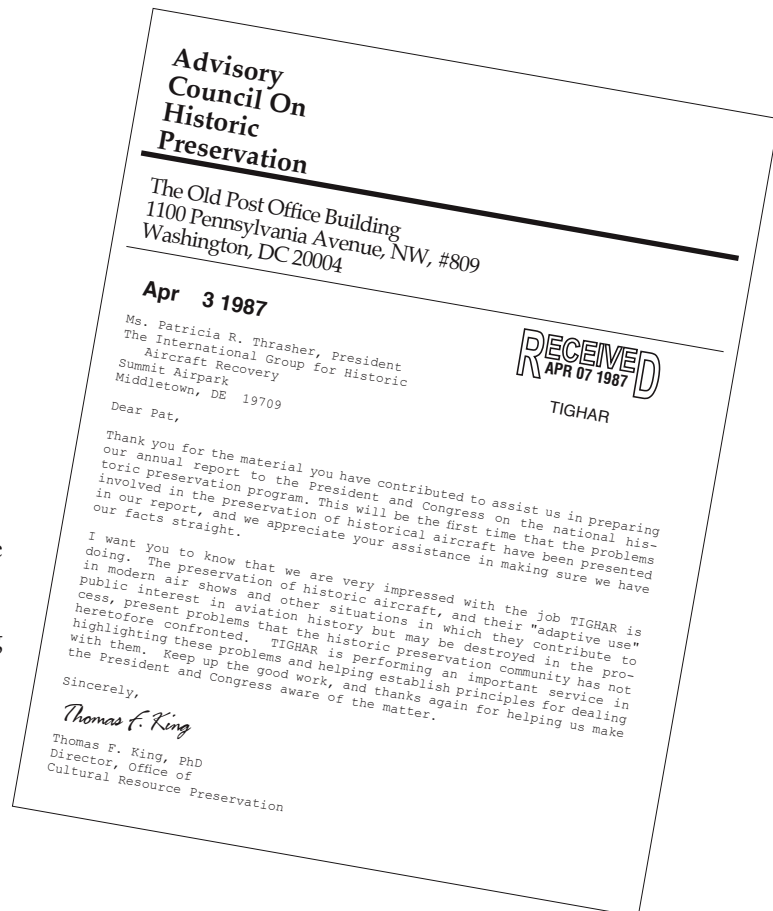
THE WARBIRD DILEMMA

Empty your pockets, clear the cockpit of any loose debris, and tighten down your harness, because we're about to launch into one of the most violent topics in aviation historic preservation—the question of how and whether to fly rare and historic aircraft. Earlier this year the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation asked TIGHAR to help in preparing its annual report to the President and Congress, specifically with regard to what is termed the “adaptive use” of historic aircraft (see below). ACHP is charged with making sure all agencies of the federal government fulfill their responsibilities under the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In the past that has mostly involved questions concerning renovations of historic buildings and interstate highways that pass through Indian burial mounds. As is evident from the letter, that is no longer the case. The situation, friends, is this:

- Too many historic aircraft are being destroyed in flying accidents.
- The FAA, a federal agency with responsibilities under the 1966 Act, presently does not recognize the historic significance of an individual aircraft as a factor in setting regulations.
- That could change.

The unacceptable loss of historic aircraft will stop one way or another. It is clear from ACHP's letter that if the aviation historic preservation community honestly confronts the problem there should be no need for the laying on of government hands. At TIGHAR we have the contacts, the credibility and the desire to act as a forum for discussions aimed at establishing reasonable guidelines. As a first step we invite anyone with an opinion to write in and tell us how you feel and what you think. There are some tough questions which need attention and we need your help. For example:

- What factors should be taken into account when deciding whether or not a particular aircraft should fly (airworthiness aside)?
- What types of flight operations give the best return in public benefit with the minimum risk to the artifact?



- What factors motivate the operators of historic aircraft and which of those factors cause problems?

TIGHAR will provide space in these pages to air the views of the owners, the pilots, the associations and museums, and the concerned public. Let's hear from you.

Historic aircraft are no different from other non-replenishable national resources. If we in the private sector fail to manage them responsibly, the government will step in. What policies would Washington be likely to set? Just look at the historic aircraft already under direct federal control at the Smithsonian and the armed forces museums. When is the last time you saw one fly?

Patricia Thrasher
Richard Gillespie
Editors

built and spent their lives designing, constructing and flying those birds... I ask you to please let me know if is there anything I can do..."

Yan Souza de Abreu
Campinas, Brazil

"I read Len Morgan's article in FLYING's March issue with great interest. I am an airline pilot flying 747's out of Bangkok. This gives me an opportunity to travel around the Far East, but especially around Thailand. Please let me know more about your organization and how I can be of assistance."

Capt. Aneese Makdisi
Bangkok, Thailand

"...I am presently living in SE Asia and working to recover and return to the United States any historic aircraft still in this area. I have made some good contacts within the Indonesian government and, through this association, hope to locate several rare WWII airframes. Would you please send information about your organization and the requirements to join? . . ."

C. L. Griggs
Singapore, Republic of Singapore

I really enjoyed being a part in the search for the 'White Bird.' I know it must be frustrating for you folks not finding it this time around, but for people like me that live for an occasional adventure, the mystery lives on. We will eventually find it, and then there will be an emptiness in the adventurous spirit until the next challenging search or mystery . . .

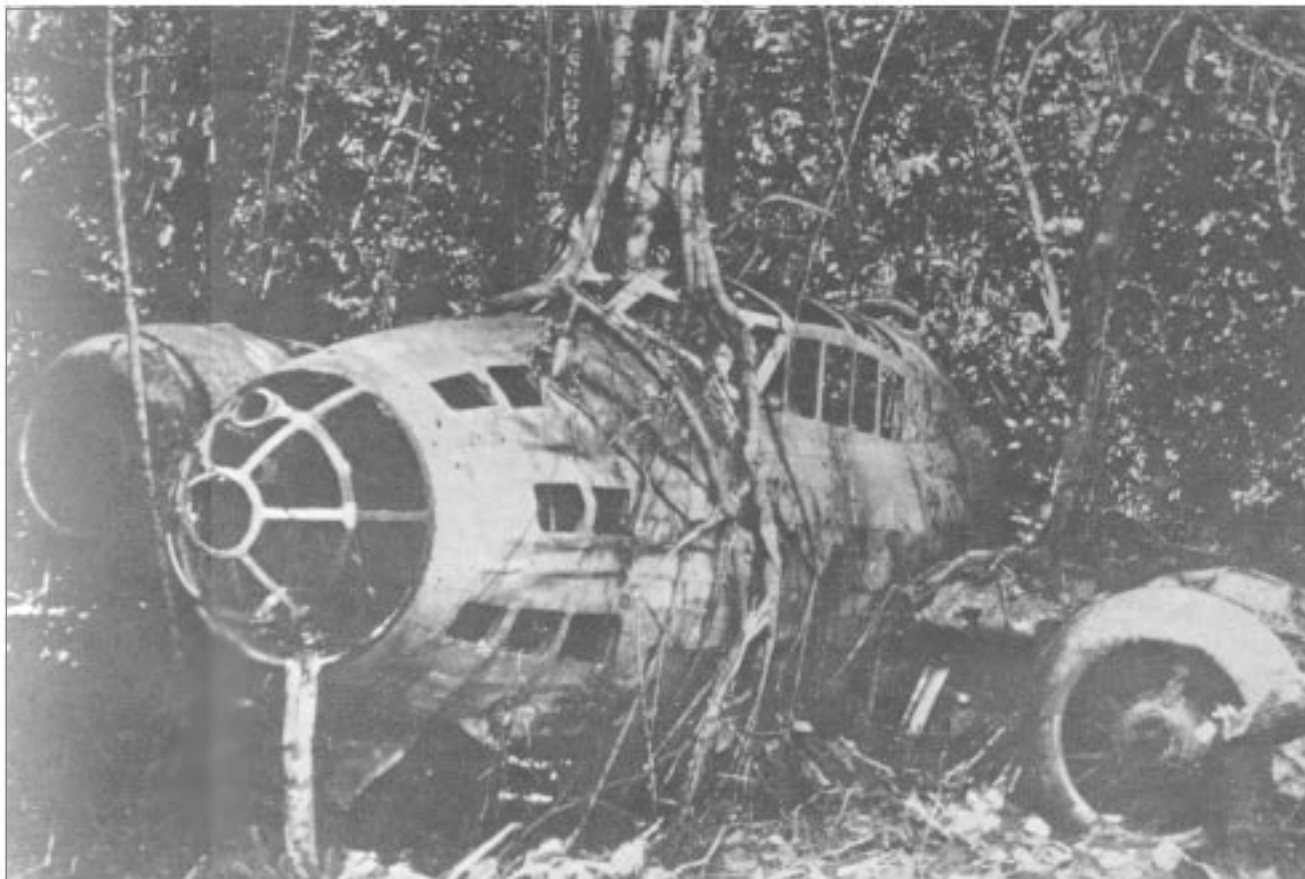
Robert B. Sedgwick
IE

Dear TIGHAR

Letters from abroad make us realize how close Maine is. This is a small sampling of letters we have received this spring—just a quick glance through the inquiries file, really. If you have something to say, a point to make, a nit to pick, please write in—we'll be happy to publish anything of general interest to our readers. We welcome your input.

* * *

"...Unfortunately my English is not good enough to express what I feel about recovering old airplanes, and also unfortunately I live in a far country, a poor country which has several social problems and therefore several other priorities than recovering airplanes, but even being that way is there a small number of persons that can work in favour of the memory of the ones who



NEW EVIDENCE

Expedition #11: April 25-May 10, 1987

It was exhilarating and it was exasperating. It was by far the most successful expedition ever. And yet, ultimately we failed once more to achieve our final goal. We have not yet found the White Bird.

It's difficult for some people to understand how and why we keep going back, as we will in July, to once more press the search and perhaps once more come back empty-handed. Some find it difficult to fathom how we can be convinced that we're getting closer, like a child playing cold/hot, when we still don't have the first piece of confirmed physical evidence that what we're looking for is there at all. We've been called obsessed (and worse) by some, while others have urged us to abandon our step-by-logical-step methodology in favor of pursuing the revelations of psychics and dowzers. It is tempting, in the light of such criticism, to comment upon the popular demand for instant gratification and say a few things about scientific method versus magic—but we won't. We'll talk instead about the new clues we found in Maine.

As we all remember this whole thing started with a story about a woodsman named Anson Berry who claimed to have heard a plane crash near Round Lake north of Machias, Maine. Local speculation has always been that the crash Berry heard could have been the missing French airplane so much in the news at that time. While many coincidences make the possibility worth investigating, we must remember that the story is now 60 years old and Anson Berry has been dead for 51 of them. Sifting truth from legend has been a difficult process, and only very recently have some puzzling aspects of the story begun to make sense:

- Any aircraft, not to mention a crashing one, would have been remarkable in Maine at any time in the late 1920's and early 30's. There has never been a documented connection between the incident and the specific date of

“The mark of any good theory is that it makes coordinated sense of a string of observations otherwise independent and inexplicable.”

—STEPHEN JAY GOULD
Hens' Teeth and Horses' Toes

May 9, 1927-until now.

- Because an airplane's passing would have been so remarkable it is inconceivable that Berry was the only local person to hear it. We now know that he wasn't.
- The legend always held that Anson Berry didn't go to look for the plane because that's just the way he was. New facts and some new questions about Anson Berry provide much more insight into a character far more complex than was previously supposed.

In 1984 the Round Lake Legend received some measure of corroboration when we learned that Everett and Abigail Scott had reported hearing an aircraft pass low overhead as they drove along the Township 19 Road northeast of Round Lake. They later assumed they had heard the same airplane Berry reported. But the Scotts were long dead when we heard of their experience and there was no firm date for the incident.

It wasn't until our most recent trip to Maine that we were able to find not only other witnesses to an aircraft's passing but document the connection between that incident and May 1927. Harold Vining is 78 years old, active and sharp, a man of impeccable reputation in the community. Harold Vining may also be the last living witness to the end of the White Bird. He remembers clearly stepping outside the back door of the family farm house, as a boy of 18, and being amazed at the sound of an airplane as it passed over the house. He had been following news reports of the impending transatlantic flights about to take off from New York, but he dismissed the possibility that this was one of those aircraft. It was going the wrong way-towards New York. The Vining home stood, and still stands, on a hilltop about 2 miles northeast of the Township 19 Road and about 4 miles northeast of Anson Berry's

PROJECT MIDNIGHT GHOST

camp. This spring Harold Vining stood in that same dooryard and traced a line across the sky for us, referenced to landmarks unchanged in 60 years. He told of how the sound of the motor receded in the direction of what he knew back then to be Anson Berry's domain until, very suddenly, it stopped "...like you'd cut it off with a switch."

Lola Downing, now 56, remembers another afternoon a few years later, when as a young girl she stood in the dining room of her family's house as her mother told her, "I know it's true because I heard it myself. That airplane from Europe came over before Lindbergh." She remembers especially that her mother, Mary Gould, was upset that local people had not done more to find the plane. We don't know where Mary Gould was when she heard the plane but the house where she lived in 1927 is just a few miles northeast of the Vining farm.

It seems incredible that after 60 years of silence we should be able to reconstruct with some degree of certainty the last nine minutes of the flight of the White Bird. Yet Harold Vining has given us a line of flight, referenced to fixed points, which agrees with the testimony of Berry, the Scotts, and Mary Gould. Being able to track those last nine minutes gives us the encouragement to persevere in the search, but it's tracking the last nine seconds that will give us the wreckage of the airplane. The secret of those final moments seems to have gone with Anson Berry to his grave—so we've done some digging.

The Man Behind the Legend

"He'd have said, 'I was just trying to make my living fishing. If somebody wants to make a fool of himself in an aeroplane, it's nothing to me.'" So Iva Berry, Anson's daughter, explains why her father didn't go to look for the airplane he heard crash nearby on a foggy afternoon. To the people of Washington County, it's an explanation with a familiar ring. In many ways Anson Berry has himself become a legend. Tough, competent, feared by many, trusted by his friends, he kept to himself and made his own rules, a sort of Clint Down-Eastwood.

But a closer look at the real Anson Berry reveals much more. Following the death of his wife in childbirth, he gave the infant Iva to his sister and in 1909 went West to Montana. He worked there as a cowboy and a logger until 1916, when he returned briefly to Maine to ask his brother Carl to come back out West with him. Anson returned to Montana and Carl followed soon after, but the next year, 1917, Anson came back to Maine and went up river to



Anson Berry

IVA BERRY COLLECTION

five by himself in the woods. Carl Berry was never heard from again. No one seems to be able to explain Anson's second and permanent return from Montana, but rumors of trouble with the law are consistent with his subsequent behavior. If indeed he was "laying low" the Round Lake Legend starts to make much more sense.

At the same time, upon closer examination the tough-guy image doesn't hold up. The same man who sported an antiquated .45 revolver and a brace of ugly hunting dogs when he came to town prized nothing more than the flower gardens which surrounded his woodland camp. The man who hurled a gift grind-stone into the river upon discovering that it was second-hand would travel miles to take a friend a loaf of his famous sourdough bread. Not at all the misanthropic hermit of the legend, Anson Berry was a complex and, ultimately, a tragic character whose true role in the tragedy of the White Bird we may yet discover.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Expedition #11: April 25—May 10, 1987

“Now,” said Rabbit, “this is a Search, and I’ve Organized it—”
“Done what to it?” said Pooh.
“Organized it. Which means—well, it’s what you do to a
Search, when you don’t all look in the same place at once. ...”
“Is Piglet Organized too?”
“We all are,” said Rabbit, and off he went.
 —A. A. MILNE *The House at Pooh Corner*



The TIGHAR advance team arrived in Machias to Organize the Search on April 19, and immediately discovered that all previously accessible access into the search area was inaccessible.

“Look, we’re just going to have to leave it here, walk back out to the main road and worry about towing it out later.”

When the searchers arrived on the 25th they were briefed on an ingenious solution to the problem.

“Okay, we’ll be driving in as far as this point on the map, then we’ll walk these last couple inches. Questions?”

“Yeah. What’s the scale of that map?”

Search operations got underway and were rewarded on April 20 with the discovery of a bone which was identified by an orthopedic surgeon and the county medical examiner as a human tibia—a shin bone. Despite media pressure for a dramatic announcement the decision was made to have the bone evaluated by a forensic anthropologist. The answer came back: right tibia of a young moose. It was a welcome verdict because a human bone would have raised far more questions that it would have answered. The find did, however, demonstrate the thoroughness with which the team was searching.

“Terrific. We comb the woods for the White Bird and come up with Bullwinkle.”

On the 29th the Aerospatiale Twinstar helicopter arrived equipped with FLIR Systems’ forward looking infrared. Over the next three days aerial sweeps were flown over the search area guided by helium filled marker balloons. Both the FLIR and the helicopter performed spectacularly despite less than ideal weather conditions. Pilot Ron Manning held a steady search platform in very gusty conditions as Dave Likes Manned the FLIR. An eyeball team scanned the ground visually and struggled with the inevitable consequences of the turbulence.

“Abhh ... TIGHAR Leader this is Alpha Hotel. We’re going to set down at the LZ for a minute to let some stomachs settle.”

In the end the insulating properties of the very dense moss in the area prevented an adequate thermal return just as everyone had expected, but that in no way lessened the significance of the Aerospatiale/FLIR contribution to the search effort.

Another boost to the operation came with the arrival on May 3 of Marilyn Greene, an internationally known professional investigator with an enviable record of success in search

and rescue. With her help the search team was able to at last locate an area which fit the description given by Jim Reed, the hunter who in 1970 found an engine in the woods which fits the description of the White Bird’s 450hp Lorraine-Dietrich.

On May 9, through the generosity of two TIGHAR members and searchers (you know who you are and we know who you are and we thank you) Jim Reed was brought back to the search area and was able to confirm that the area identified did indeed match his recollections.

Notice: The following will make sense only to veterans of Project Midnight Ghost search operations. We apologize for the frustration to other members and encourage you to come along next time.

It is now quite certain that Jim came through the “neck” between the foot of the big heath and the heath beside the river, and moved northward into what is a surprisingly open area relatively untouched by the budworm and never logged. There is a whole series of clearings up through there which look just like his sketch of where he saw the engine. The area has not yet been gridded and searched and that is one of July’s target areas.



Search leader Ric Gillespie and the Aerospatiale Twinstar. The forward looking infra-red turret is visible under the nose.

ONE LESS LOOSE END?

By Geoffrey Hurlbut

Geoff Hurlbut is a TIGHAR member from Randolph, NJ with an extensive background in art and photography, as well as history and aviation.

The Nungesser and Coli flight has its share of mysteries, and some of them may never be solved, even if the remains of L'Oiseau Blanc are found. One of those loose ends, and an admittedly minor one, concerns the color of the flight suits Nungesser and Coli wore for their transatlantic attempt. References indicate that the suits were yellow, but photographs of the duo in their flight gear show the suits to be a dark color. The common assumption, based on the look of leather oilskin, or rubber protective gear, is that the suits are brown or black.

I have not seen the written references regarding yellow suits, but if they are reliable, then I believe that the suits in the photographs are actually yellow. This is because the black and white film in common use then had the effect of making yellow appear a much darker color.

The most widely used film during the first quarter of the 20th century was orthochromatic. An improvement over ordinary, or monochromatic, film, which is sensitive only to blue light, orthochromatic film is sensitive to blue and green light. Used without filters, orthochromatic film reproduces yellow with grey-tone values equal to blue, and red is reproduced as black. Panchromatic film, which is sensitive to blue, green and red light and reproduces colors in tones approximating their visual brightness, only became commonly available in the 1930's.¹

Reference to this coloring effect is mentioned in Profile #51 of *Aircraft in Profile*, Vol. 3.² This reference concerns the Gee Bee racers, circa 1931, but the effect can also be seen in photos of the aircraft "L'Oiseau Canari," which made its first transatlantic attempt in the fall of 1928.³ As apparent from the name (Yellow Bird), this plane was painted a bright yellow. In the photos, however, the aircraft appears to be as dark as the natty, and probably business-blue, suits its crewmembers are wearing.

This does not prove that the suits Nungesser and Coli are wearing in the photos are yellow, but it is a probable explanation. Proof could be found in the form of the original negatives, which might either indicate, or be tested to identify, the film type.

¹Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1964), p. 92.

²Peter Bowers, "The Gee Bee Racers," in *Aircraft in Profile*, Vol. 3, ed. Martin C. Windrow (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc.), p. 5.

³Edward Jablonski, *Atlantic Fever* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 274.

In an historical investigation riddled with mystery and what can only be described as an undercurrent of surrealism, one of the most intriguing details is the famous Coeur Noir—Black Heart—insignia emblazoned on the sides of the White Bird. It was the personal trademark of Charles Nungesser, featured, with variations, on all of his aircraft throughout World War I and his



PHOTO OF MUSEE DE L'AIR

Nungesser and Coli in the cockpit of L'Oiseau Blanc, dressed for the traverse of the Atlantic. Note flying suits which appear to be brown.

Note to Loose End

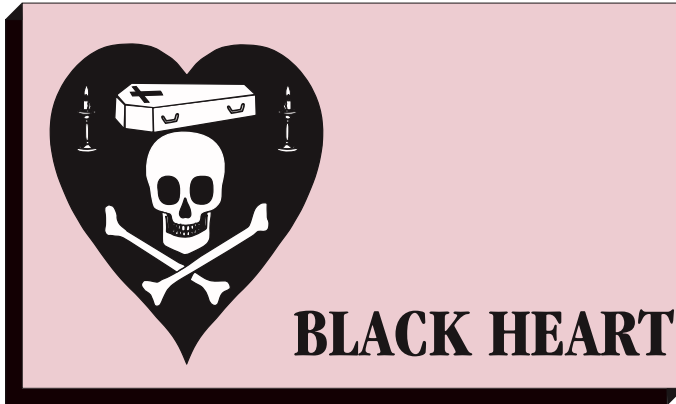
The references to yellow flight suits occur in at least two books:

Dale M. Titler, *Wings of Mystery* (New York), p. 126: "The two men, dressed in yellow flying coveralls, climbed into the cockpits..."

Jack Huttig, *1927 Summer of Eagles* (Chicago, 1980), p. 24: "At 4:50 a.m. Nungesser and Coli appeared beside their airplane in yellow leather flying suits that had wires for electrical heating."

These are not original sources, nor is either book footnoted. Both books contain other details known to be incorrect, but inaccuracies and contradictions are, unfortunately, the rule rather than the exception in the folklore of the White Bird. On the other hand, the problem of flight suit color is one of scant rather than conflicting information. They are seldom mentioned, but when they are they are described as yellow.

Editor



postwar career. On one level it is pure Hollywood—a stroke of marketing genius from a man who built his fame around contempt for death. But there’s much more to it than that—a lot of stuff going on that provides insight into his character.

The central feature of the device—a death’s head—was the traditional insignia of the Totenkopf Hussars, a well-known German cavalry unit. In the first days of World War I, Private Nungesser of the French cavalry distinguished himself in a bizarre incident involving a frantic chase in a captured German staff car—a Mors. In decorating the young hero and granting his transfer to the air service a General quipped that he was a Hussar de Mors, a pun on hussar de mort (death). It was apparently this incident which prompted Nungesser’s adoption of the death’s head, and the simple skull and bones appear on the nose of his first operational aircraft. As the war, his fame, and his injuries grew, the insignia evolved into a complex piece of individual heraldry. The significance of its separate components is unexplained and somewhat puzzling. The candles and coffin with a cross have strong religious overtones. The candles are lit; the coffin is closed and presumably occupied—but by whom? Is the emblem an illustration of what awaits the enemy or is it something else? And why the heart?

The only explanation recorded is Nungesser’s cryptic response to a reporter’s question regarding the emblem’s presence on the White Bird. He said, “The strong heart does not fear death even in its most terrible aspect.” The enemy in 1927, the North Atlantic, could not be intimidated with a painted symbol. Is the coffin Nungesser’s? The prior acceptance of death is a potent psychological potion for bravery. When l’Oiseau Blanc rolled down the runway at Le Bourget, was François Coli riding with a pilot who was, in his own mind, a dead man?

GROUP EFFORT

Expedition #11: April 25–May 10, 1987

The contributions made by the corporations and individuals listed here made the success of Expedition 11 possible. The only reward they will get is your recognition of the fact that they cared.

Aerospatiale Helicopter Corporation, Grand Prairie, TX
Three days’ unlimited use of an Aerospatiale AH355 Twin-turbine helicopter with crew. The machine was ferried from California to Maine especially for TIGHAR.

Berkely Industries/Narco Avionics, Laguna Beach, CA
Two HT830 hand-held transceivers for TIGHAR’s use in the spring and summer expeditions.

Champion International, Bucksport, ME
Unlimited access to the paper company land, and the donated expertise of their forest inventory department.

FLIR Systems, Inc., Portland, OR
Forward-looking infra-red unit with technician for use with Aerospatiale helicopter.

Graham’s Restaurant, Machias, ME
Use of Banquet Room as TIGHAR headquarters throughout the search and hospitality for the TIGHAR team bordering on formal adoption.

James W. Sewall Company, Old Town, ME
Aerial photo/maps of the highest quality whenever needed. The Sewall Company has been absolutely invaluable to Project Midnight Ghost from the very beginning.

James Sparaga, DMD, Machias, ME
Boundless generosity in permitting TIGHAR’s use of vehicles, equipment, office facilities, etc., etc. May we have a moment of silence for the Rover, please?

Kaysam Corporation of America, Paterson, NJ
Twelve four-foot diameter promotional balloons for aerial search sector demarcation.

Littlebrook Airpark, Eliot, ME
Unlimited use of a Cessna 150 aircraft for aerial coordination, reconnaissance and photography throughout the search.

Michael Rodericks, Trumbull, CT
Artwork for the production of the Nungesser/Coli commemorative poster.

Penobscot Air Service, Ltd., Owl’s Head, ME
Transportation for Jim Reed to and from the island of Vinalhaven.

Robert Dabrowski, Marlborough, NH
Use of a truly awesome off-road vehicle affectionately known to the TIGHAR team as The Beast.

Ed Stead/Stead Aviation, Manchester, NH
Custom photo/map overlays for search area navigation and management.

Wearguard, Inc., Hingham, MA
Fifteen hard hats for search team use.



The hardest part is the waiting, but then B-17E 41-2446 has been waiting for 45 years. TIGHAR's efforts to recover the world's oldest complete and original Flying Fortress from the Agaiambo Swamp of Papua New Guinea have been repeatedly frustrated not by the complexities of the physical task, the hostility of the natural environment, or even the traditional obstacle of inadequate funding. The problem has been the well-meaning but short sighted policies of PNG's current administration which holds all World War II relics to be national monuments which may not be removed. The principle is admirable enough, but the reality is that irreplaceable artifacts are being irrevocably lost. The government has neither the budget nor the expertise to effect recovery and restoration, and by slamming the door on international cooperative agreements a measure of national pride is purchased at the cost of losing forever the very monuments it seeks to retain.

The problem is a direct result of the unprincipled treasure hunting forays of American collectors in the 1970's which provided some very negative conditioning for a newly independent nation. World War II literally blasted

New Guinea out of the Stone Age, and for the people of PNG, whose children still occasionally lose a hand or a foot to the odd .50 caliber round found in the jungle, the war and its relics have a very different meaning than to American veterans at a Bomb Group Reunion.

TIGHAR has approached the whole problem not as a confrontation between U.S. and Melanesian interests but as an educational challenge. If Papua New Guinea can learn to save and preserve its cultural resources through cooperation with foreign museums and collectors; and if those museums and collectors and the public which supports them can learn to appreciate that theirs is not the only perspective on history, then the B-17 of the Agaiambo Swamp and many more aircraft will be saved for future generations.

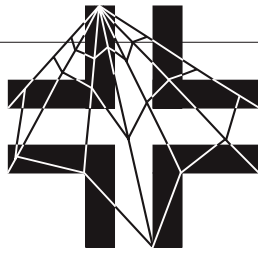
This summer will see national elections in Papua New Guinea. Changes in government ministries are inevitable and may be very helpful in advancing the B-17 Recovery Project. But until the elections are over and new officials have settled in office the hardest part is the waiting.



TIGHAR PHOTO

B-17E 41-2446 in the Agaiambo Swamp, April 1986

OPERATION SEPULCHRE



TIGHAR's investigation of the possibility that World War II German aircraft still survive in underground facilities sealed since 1945 has made significant strides in replacing rumor with documented fact. United States European Command in Stuttgart as well as Headquarters Royal Air Force—Germany have directed military installations under their commands to communicate directly with TIGHAR concerning "any area of a suspicious nature such as sealed bunker entrances, unexplained ventilation shafts, flooded or covered over tunnel entrances." Correspondence from various installations arrives at TIGHAR on a regular basis and the long process of sifting truth from rumor is under way. Close coordination with West German authorities, including the Luftwaffe, the Bundesarchiv (National Archives) and the Deutsches Museum (National Museum), as well as with the Kew Records Center near London, the Keele University Photo Archives, and the Imperial War Museum (in addition to various American sources) is making it possible to piece together an amazing picture of a deadly game of hide and seek as the crumbling Reich tried desperately to put its last

resources underground, protected from the onslaught of Allied bombers.

Often the research involves tracking a specific topic, such as Goering's decision to build a series of large underground hangars for the protection of fighters, through the Nazi high command. Original notes taken at staff meetings must be dug from the Archives and translated. Most often the result is the need to find the notes of the next staff meeting which, if they exist at all, are sure to be in a different archive in a different city, if not a different country.

Tedious and expensive as the process is, it is less difficult and frustrating than another research task—that of tracking rumors of recent sightings to their sources: "There were at least 20 FW190's packed in there. I talked to the guy who crawled down the shaft and saw them. He was an Air Force Captain stationed someplace near Frankfurt. I forget his name."

As with all archaeology the only shortcut is luck, and the best way to court luck is to keep working hard. Operation Sepulchre is sponsored by a group of TIGHAR members each of whom has made a substantial contribution to the project. The group is limited to 10 members, and only one slot remains open as this issue of TIGHAR Tracks goes to press. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor of Operation Sepulchre please contact TIGHAR headquarters.

Quick—how many P-38s are left in the world? How many are airworthy? Where are they? Who has the oldest surviving P-38? Is the last surviving combat veteran currently being used in low level acrobatic demonstrations? To find out buy several hundred dollars' worth of out-of-date books, then make a few more hundred dollars' worth of phone calls, and perhaps a trip to various archives and libraries, and when you're through you might have a pretty good handle on the status of this one endangered species—until next month.

There is an urgent need for a centralized source of up-to-date information concerning existing historic aircraft, their status and their location. The lack of such a source means duplication of effort by museums and collectors all over the world, a waste of hard-won dollars, pounds and deutschmarks, and, most tragically, the loss of irreplaceable artifacts through simple ignorance of their significance.

The situation and the need were taken up by TIGHAR's Board of Directors at a meeting April 4, 1987. Because TIGHAR's charter charges the foundation "to document the existence of antique and historic aircraft around the world" and because TIGHAR occupies a unique position in the interna-



tional aviation historic preservation community, the decision was made to accept the challenge of providing this much needed service. What we have in mind is a system which would provide accurate, useful information through a constantly

updated computerized data base. Access would be tailored to individual needs ranging from direct modem links to one-time requests for specific information. Every attempt would be made to minimize user costs since the objective is maximum availability of information. Once in place the system should be self-supporting, but we will be seeking grant money to fund its initial development and setup. TIGHAR members with computer programming experience will be invaluable at the initial stages, and when the time comes to gather and enter accurate data there will be lots of work for everyone.

This is, without a doubt, the most ambitious project TIGHAR has ever undertaken. It's going to take time, money and a lot of commitment to put such a system in place, but when we do it will revolutionize aviation historic preservation and research.



TIGHAR's greatest asset is you, the interested member. The research projects and possibilities described in Rumor Mill need attention. If you can help, please contact TIGHAR headquarters.

What happened in Montana?

Among Project Midnight Ghost's many mysteries is the question of why Anson Berry returned from Montana to Maine in 1917. (See "The Man Behind the Legend" on page 6 of this issue of TIGHAR Tracks.) Trouble with the law has been rumored but never documented. It is reported that while in Montana he worked in or near the town of Kalispell, or at any rate got his mail there, in the extreme northwest corner of the state. Does the newspaper in Kalispell have files that go back that far? Might they shed some light on Anson's past and help explain his later behavior? This is good old-fashioned detective work that needs doing in a place that is pretty hard for most people to get to. Anybody up for a trip to scenic Kalispell?

The strange case of the strange case.

During Expedition 11, and as a result of the very high level of media attention it received, TIGHAR was contacted by a man in Massachusetts who told a strange tale which has raised yet another mystery in the saga of the White Bird. It seems that sometime during the 1930's a fishing guide found a very unusual cigarette case in the woods near the lakes north of Machias, Maine. Relatively small (roughly 2.5 x 3.5 inches), the case was of very fine construction, with a concave/convex shape and rounded corners to fit a pocket. It appeared to be fashioned from silver and gold and carried an elegant design on its cover. The fishing guide decided it would make a dandy case for trout flies. He later sold it to a client for 50 cents who subsequently gave it to a fishing buddy from whose hands it finally passed into the possession of the current owner. He took it to an antique dealer in Boston who told him it was French or German, of the World War I period, and of a style popular with military aviators because it would fit into a tunic's breast pocket without causing

an unsightly bulge. Newspaper accounts of TIGHAR's efforts in the area where tradition held that the case was found prompted him to call.

TIGHAR presently has custody of the case and attempts are being made to identify it. Anyone with expertise in this very narrow field is urged to contact TIGHAR headquarters.

Ryans and TIGHAR and Mayer (Oh my!)

Earth-shaking historic significance is not the only reason to undertake an aviation archaeological project. Sometimes an opportunity comes along which is just too much fun to pass up.

Back in the summer of 1927 at the height of the Lindbergh hysteria, Louis B. Mayer of MGM Pictures asked his public relations department to come up with a publicity stunt that would promote the company's mascot and logo—Leo the lion. PR Director Peter Smith came up with the idea of modifying a Ryan just like Lindy's to fly Leo nonstop from L.A. to New York. Barnstormer Marty Jensen was chosen to pilot the B-1 Brougham fitted with a cage and 400 pounds of plate glass, plus one disgruntled African lion, on the epic cross-country flight. The SPCA shared Leo's opinion of the whole idea, but despite objections the flight departed at 10:20 a.m., September 16, 1927. It ended just 5 hours later when, unable to clear an escarpment north of Phoenix AZ, Marty crash landed the overloaded Ryan in a remote depression charmingly named Hell Canyon. Pilot and passenger were shaken but unhurt. A rescue was effected but the Ryan was a write-off. According to Ruth M. Reinhold's book *Sky Pioneering—Arizona in Aviation History* (Tucson, AZ, 1982), the wreck is still in Hell Canyon. If it's really still there, and if sponsorship and a home could be found for its recovery and restoration, the airplane would be a unique reminder of a special and somewhat crazy time in aviation history. Any takers?

The Aviation Archaeologist

Witness Interviews

This is the first offering in a new *TIGHAR Tracks* department designed to help TIGHAR members become more proficient in historical investigation and research.

Somebody supposedly has information that you need. He's agreed to talk to you about what he knows. What do you do now? You don't have to be Barbara Walters to conduct a good interview. All it takes is a little planning and common sense.

1. Whenever possible conduct an interview in person in a place where the person interviewed feels comfortable. Keep the atmosphere friendly, casual and low key.
2. A small tape recorder is essential, but ask the person's permission before you turn it on. Usually a simple explanation that it saves having to take a lot of notes is helpful.
3. When you turn on the tape do a short test to make sure it's working, then make a verbal label by saying, "Today is Saturday, May 9, 1987, I'm Jim Jones and I'm here with Bob Smith at his home in Centerville, Ohio." Put the recorder down where you're sure it will pick up the person's voice well. Mentally note the approximate time you'll need to change the tape.
4. The job of the interviewer is to steer the conversation by asking questions. It's usually best to start by finding out how much the person already knows about what you're looking for. The less he knows, the better. For example, if he already knows the P-51 you're looking for had a yellow tail, it's much less useful when he later tells you that the P-51 he saw fly over had a yellow tail. **People will tend to tell you what they think you want to hear.**
5. Don't lead the witness. Say as little as possible and ask general questions. Don't ask "Did it have a yellow tail?" but "Do you recall any colors on the airplane?"
6. If you want him to identify a specific location have a good map with you and ask him to mark the location. For descriptions of wreckage ask him to make a sketch. For identifying a particular type of aircraft use the old police line-up technique with pictures of several different aircraft. If you are looking for a P-51, show pictures of several different kinds of fighters.
7. Before you leave snap a photo of your victim—with his permission, of course.

In the next issue of *TIGHAR Tracks* we'll discuss how some little-known quirks of human memory affect the evaluation of witness testimony.

Taking It Personally

We have a fund-raising fantasy ...

There is a TIGHAR display at an Airshow (pick an airshow, any airshow) at which 50,000 people are in attendance (not a terribly big airshow) and at some time during the day each one of those people wanders by the TIGHAR display and donates one dollar—not a penny more—toward TIGHAR's operating expenses. Like magic, without anyone spending more than they would on an airshow soda, the foundation's accumulated deficit and all old debts are paid off, member services and programs can go forward, regional and overseas chapters can be established, and TIGHAR can begin to realize its full potential.

It's a fantasy only because no airshow crowd ever acts that way, but the rest of it is very real. The debts are real, and so is the need to build upon the excellent name the foundation has earned. To meet those debts and continue its work, TIGHAR needs you. Not to make large financial contributions, but to accept the distinction of being one of the first 400 people to recognize the importance of an international voice for aviation historic preservation. We need you to take TIGHAR personally, to spread the word and recruit new members. The publication you hold in your hands is unique in the world. The information it contains, the research and field work upon which it reports, and the principles it represents are here because of you.

TIGHAR's charter, by-laws, IRS exemption letter, and complete financial statement are available to any member or sponsor for the asking. The Executive Committee and the Board of Directors encourage members to become familiar with the foundation's structure, policies and needs. If you would like to represent TIGHAR at a local function or event, just contact headquarters and we'll see that you have the materials and information you need. If a group you know of needs a program or speaker, TIGHAR Management can and does travel for speaking engagements. If you have contacts at a corporation which may be interested in making a donation, the Executive Committee will be happy to help make the request—but please talk to us before submitting a proposal.

This is your foundation. We want you to take it personally.

STRICTLY BUSINESS

TIGHAR Board Members

Thomas Clements III
Old Greenwich, CT

Mr. Clements is a retired Exxon executive with extensive experience in corporate fund raising.

Air Vice Marshall Ronald Dick
Washington, DC

AVM Dick is the highest ranking British military officer in North America, and an avid supporter of aviation historic preservation.

Alexis I. duPont
Toughkenamon, PA

Mr. duPont is an aviation preservationist known and respected throughout the historic aviation community.

Edward J. Meell
Yardley, PA

Mr. Meell is CEO of Media Management Services, Inc. which, among other programs, manages the TIME/LIFE educational services.

Gerald F. Schwam
Elkins Park, PA

One of the Delaware Valley's leading architects, Mr. Schwam is also president of a major antique aircraft association.

James E. Sparaga, DMD
Machias, ME

Dr. Sparaga is president of Machias Valley Aviation Services and handles on-site expedition coordination in Maine for TIGHAR's best known project, Project Midnight Ghost.

Richard J. Yersak
Washington Crossing, PA

Captain Yersak is a Pilot for Eastern Airlines and a leading safety authority and check pilot for World War II fighter aircraft.

Richard E. Gillespie
Patricia R. Thrasher
Middletown, DE

Ric and Pat are the full-time management of TIGHAR and its founders. As Executive Director and President, respectively, they manage the day-to-day affairs of the foundation, and carry out the policies of the Board as a whole.

Above and Beyond

You will notice that *TIGHAR Tracks* has acquired a new look and a new label. Both are due to the generosity of Board Member Ed Meell and his company, Media Management Services of Yardley, PA. He has taken on the job (and the expense, we might add) of producing and printing *TIGHAR Tracks*, complete with a computerized mailing list. We cannot begin to express our gratitude to Ed, and hope you, our readers, will enjoy the new format.

Another nifty addition to TIGHAR's public face has been the professional graphics done for us by member Geoffrey Hurlbut of Randolph, NJ. Nungesser's black heart, so perfectly executed in this issue of *TIGHAR Tracks*, was researched and drawn by Geoff. He was also responsible for the beautifully-rendered TIGHAR logos sported at our booth at Sun 'n' Fun. Thanks, Geoff.

Speaking of Sun 'n' Fun, our display there this year would not have been possible without the heroic efforts of charter member Don Gillespie of Palm Harbor, FL. Through Don we were able to borrow some great display materials from Honeywell—but that's only a small part of what he did. Don must have used up most of the tread on a set of tires running around St. Petersburg and Clearwater for us, making sure the poster and T-shirts were printed correctly and rounding up graphics for our display. Thanks, bro.

Transitioning from Sun 'n' Fun through Delaware and back to Maine, we'd like to thank Dutch Kluge, currently of Stuart, FL, for making the drive the entire length of the East Coast on our behalf. Cracks about "real vans" aside, there's no way all that stuff would have fit in the TIGHAR van. Dutch's ability to just do stuff has helped us more than we care to admit—but we appreciate it anyway.

In the hallowed halls of our nation's capital we have found technical help for Project Midnight Ghost in the persons of two of our members, Jeff Wynn of USGS and Jim Morrison of NASA. Jeff, we'll expect bimonthly reports on airplanes in the jungles of Venezuela. Bon voyage! Jim, see you in Maine. Thanks, fellas.

Beads and Trinkets

Promotional items available:

Project Midnight Ghost	
T-Shirt	\$10.00
Poster (see cover)	10.00
 B-17	
T-shirt, sizes S & M <i>only</i> *	\$5.00
Patches—still a few left	5.00
Videotape filmed on location in Papua New Guinea	30.00

*Clearance

To order: Send check for amount of item made payable to TIGHAR. Please indicate size where appropriate. If an item is out of stock, your check will be returned.

We have *sold* the engines we were offering for sale. Thanks for donating them, Jose.

Proceeds of all sales go to support the projects TIGHAR is working on. Thanks for your support. How many of you would buy a dark-blue ball cap with the TIGHAR logo on it? How about a dark blue polo shirt with an orange TIGHAR embroidered on it? The hats would probably cost in the neighborhood of \$6.00, the shirts in the neighborhood of \$12.00. Let us know.

Members and Ex-Members

If your membership expired in March, April, May, June or July, this is the last newsletter you will get unless you renew your membership NOW! Just send in the membership form below with the Renewal box marked, or send in the renewal form we sent you. Don't forget to tell us if your address has changed.

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to join TIGHAR. Enclosed is my donation of _____ for a one-year membership (\$25.00 minimum).

New

Renewal

As a member of TIGHAR, I will receive the following benefits:

- Annual subscription to *TIGHAR Tracks* (published quarterly)
- Membership decals and patch
- Expedition opportunities

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Special Interests or Skills:

ALL DONATIONS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE IN THE U.S.A.

Please return this form with your membership dues to TIGHAR, P.O. Box 424, Middletown, DE, 19709, USA

Inside *TIGHAR Tracks*

Overview: The Warbird Dilemma

Flying historic aircraft in the U.S. could become history unless we act now.

Project Midnight Ghost

As the search continues—new evidence and new insight into the fate of the White Bird.

Historic Aircraft Directory

TIGHAR launches its most ambitious project—a computerized data base of the world's historic aircraft.

Rumor Mill: Ryans & TIGHAR & Mayer (Oh My!)

The Arizona desert may still hold the wreckage of one of the most bizarre flights of the roaring '20s.



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