

Marietta N/L for May 2017

Chapter Contacts

Please forward to your members!



As always, the boys in May-retta have been busy. (Don't laugh at the older residents' suthren drawl name for their suburban Atlanta town: the term still lives in the annual "May-retta Daze Arts and Crafts Festival".) The tables were full of models at the last meeting in the back room at the local at the local Hobbytown, which is actually in neighboring Kennesaw.



*For Civil War buffs, between Marietta and Kennesaw is **Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park**, the location of a bloody battle early in the Atlanta campaign. While a Confederate victory with Union forces repulsed with heavy losses (**5,350 lives lost, total**) the Union advance toward Atlanta, twenty miles away, continued.....*

***Meanwhile, back at the meeting*one of the models that caught my attention was Mark Grzenia's Accurate Miniatures 1/48th "Gulfhawk"a civilian version of Grumman's F3F fighter.**



Oldtimers will remember from a half-century ago, a larger, 1/32nd scale kit from Monogram, of Grumman's tubby biplane. That was back when old-timey kits had "realism" features like dropping bombs, control surfaces that moved, propellers that spun, and other golly-gee items then considered necessary in a model.



The kit has naturally been issued multiple times, including as the Gulfhawk II. While it didn't include any bombs to drop, Monogram cleverly devised their version of the Grumman-patent retractable landing gear, which by turning the prop in one direction would retract the wheels, while in the other they extended. (Really!) The image above is from the Large Scale Planes website; (<https://www.largescaleplanes.com/articles/article.php?aid=113>) ; below from Modeling Madness (<http://modelingmadness.com/review/civil/stangh.htm>)



The kit also dates back to a time when it originally had a MSRP retail price of \$1.49!



Above, finally seen on permanent display after many years mostly in storage, the Gulfhawk II is today suspended in the NASM's Udvar-Hazy "Annex" at Dulles Field. *"And to retract the wheels, all they had to do was pull the prop out a little and spin it!"* 🤔

But about that real airplaneback during the between-wars "Golden Age of Aviation", several oil companies used company airplanes for both product research and promotional purposes, intended to be seen by the public at air races and other aviation venues, with famous pilots hired as their flying spokesmen. One of these companies was Gulf Oil. (As late as WWII, this one, the Gulfhawk II biplane, was still being used by Gulf to test oils, fuels, and lubricants under extreme conditions.)

The best known pilot associated with the Gulfhawk IIreally, about the ONLY pilot you'll usually find named ...was Major Al Williams.

One of the "larger than life" pilots of that era of superhero pilots like Lindbergh and Doolittle; Williams had been a Navy pilot during The Great War, who went on to a sterling career postwar as a test pilot and air show aerobatic pilot.



However, his sometimes outspoken opinions sometimes got him in trouble with the entrenched bureaucracy, as had General Billy Mitchell's. When in 1930 he had resigned his Navy commission to go to industry, his public visibility was so great that his departure from the Navy prompted a Congressional investigation!



This *Congressional Record* photo has the following caption: *"Navy's crack speed pilot faces Senate Committee seeking reason for resignation of Lieutenant Al Williams, crack speed pilot who recently resigned rather than accept a transfer to sea, appeared before a special Senate Naval Affairs subcommittee today. The committee is investigating the reason for the resignation of the noted pilot. In the photograph, left to right: Senator Patrick J Sullivan, Wyoming; Lt Williams, Senator Millard E Tydings, Maryland, Chairman; and David S Ingalls, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Aviation"* Secretary Ingalls, at right, no doubt precipitated the investigation to help keep aviation in the public mind: he was a champion of aviation in general, and naval aviation in particular. In WWI, he had been the Navy's only flying "ace", and went on to a brilliant legal, government, military, and aviation industry career. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Sinton_Ingalls and <http://www.nationalaviation.org/our-enshrinees/ingalls-david/>

Williams' "dive bombing" displays at air shows are sometimes credited with helping inspire Germany into developing what became the Luftwaffe's close support of Army units of early WWII. In 1938 Williams had the Gulfhawk II shipped to Europe, where he performed in England, France, Holland, and Germany; in the latter where World War One ace Ernst Udet also flew the airplane. (In exchange, Williams was the first American to fly Germany's newest fighter, the Bf 109.)

When he left the Navy, Williams had taken a Marine Corps reserve commission as Major, hence the title usually associated with his name. But before America entered WWII, his outspoken advocacy for an air force independent and equal with the Army had caused great displeasure in the high command, this was followed by his resignation from the Marines. But as soon as war broke out he was soon serving againin the USAAF.

But before the Grumman G22 Gulfhawk II of these kits, there had been a CURTISS Gulfhawk Ia, a hybrid modified from a Curtiss F8C-4 fighter demonstrator. http://miramarrcflyers.com/MRCF_Docs/Articles/Al%20Williams%20and%20his%20Gulfhawks.pdf



Today, rather heavily modified after crash damage ...the fuselage replacedthe Gulfhawk Ia is also part of the Smithsonian's NASM Annex collection at Dulles. <https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/curtiss-1a-gulfhawk>

Grumman also built two more of civilian F3F biplanes. The first, designated the G-32 was built as a company demonstrator; while the second, the G-32A, built for Williams as the Gulfhawk III. Both were "impressed" (drafted) during WWII, Gulfhawk III was destroyed in a

Florida crash during the war, while the G-32 survived until 1971 when it crashed after being abandoned during an in-flight fire.

AFTER WWII there was also THIS

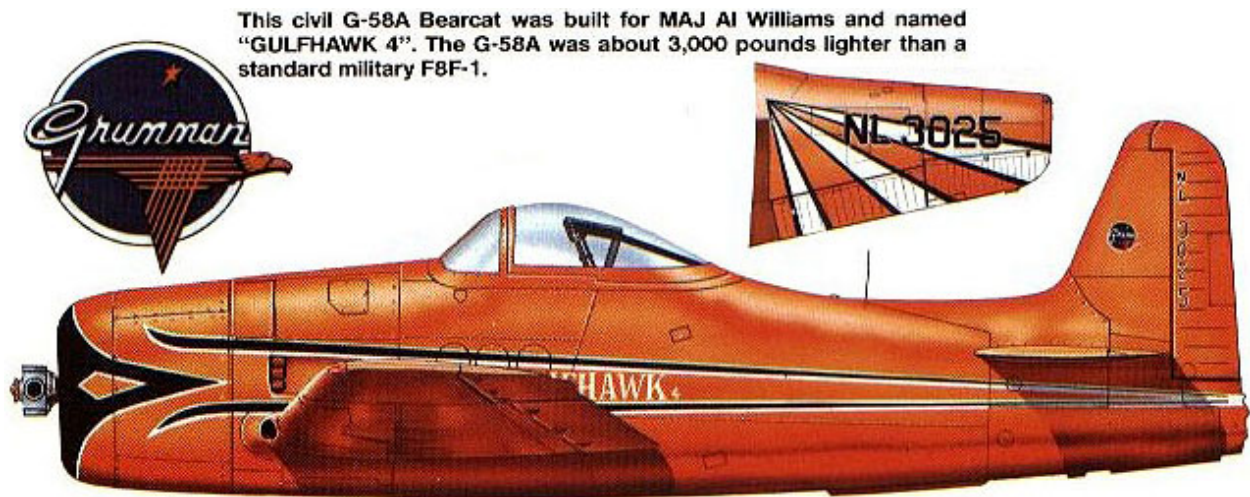
Gulfhawkobviously Grumman's model G58, which we know as the F8F Bearcat.



Grumman built two civil Bearcats, lightened by 3,000 lbs. of their military equipment, as model G58A and G58B: the first as Gulfhawk 4 for Gulf and Williams; the second a Grumman demonstrator.

Both were eventually lost in crashes, but at least one other Bearcat today flies in the same paint scheme. (Indeed, there are so many rebuilt Grummans of all marks around that it's difficult to keep them straight.)

Modelers have several Gulfhawk 4 modeling options available, including at least one issue of the venerable Hawk 1/48th Bearcat which had included Gulfhawk decals, and aftermarket decals like Red Pegasus in all three popular scales.



See also <http://majoralwilliams.weebly.com/>



IPMS/USA 6390

* Now, *“things you didn’t know about other famous pilots”* *

In the entire Golden Age of Aviation, one of the most flamboyant personalities who made a living as oil industry spokesman/pilots for the oil industry, was **Col Roscoe Turner**.



The plane is a Lockheed Air Express, a cousin of the Vega, with fuselage halves laid up in the same concrete mold as all the Vegas, the wooden Vega wing perched up on top, parasol-style. It was a sort of "in-between" airliner with strangely mixed characteristics: the passengers in an enclosed cabin forward, the open cockpit aft for pilots who still demanded having the wind in their face.....

The "Colonel" rank was honorary. His adopted home town was Indianapolis Indiana, with a flying service company there and as an official of the Indy 500 race; today among numerous other recognitions he is the namesake of the IPMS chapter in that city. Turner is perhaps best remembered for his famous lion mascot, publicity-related to his sponsor Gilmore Oil Company's "Red Lion" gasoline trademark. How much a "pet" Gilmore had really beenespecially after he grew upisn't reported One fact is sure: Gilmore himself remains a (stuffed) artifact of the Smithsonian ...although not on display.

<https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/gilmore-flying-lion>



His carefully cultivated persona famous for his famed mascot as copilot, a rapidly-growing lion; Turner was a showman as evidenced by his cavalry style self-designed uniform with “...brilliant blue tunic, fawn-colored riding breeches, knee-length boots, “Sam Browne” belt, the ever-present crimson flying helmet and goggles...”: and of course, the waxed mustache. The creator of the comic strip “Smiling Jack” even admitted to having based his newsprint hero on Turner. A circus-like aura surrounded everything Turner did; but his flying feats ...like being the three-time winner of the Thompson Trophy race ...were real enough.

<http://www.nationalaviation.org/our-enshrinees/turner-roscoe/>

http://www.nytimes.com/1970/06/24/archives/roscoe-turner-speed-flier-dies-flamboyant-racer-74-won-major.html?_r=0

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roscoe_Turner



But of all the between-the-wars pilots related to oil companies, perhaps the LEAST recognized for all his REAL accomplishments, strangely enough, was James “Jimmy” Doolittle.

Most of us immediately link “Doolittle” to a famous air raid which forever will bear his name. But in 1942, when the public first heard of the daring raid on Japan actually been successful, one common thought was “....well of COURSE it was Doolittle, who else could have pulled it off?” He had been that famous, and the citizenry still had fresh memories of all the things he had done, that are today out of the collective consciousness.

Beyond that raid, Doolittle’s accomplishments are so many it’s about impossible to list them all.



Of course, there are all the aviation speed records and air races won; flown in some of the most dangerous flying machines ever built.



With Turner, he was the only other man to win both the Thompson and Bendix air races, twice. Earlier, there had been the Schneider Cup, in the Army's Curtis R3C-2.



While some of his feats verge on seeming circus actsfor example, the first man to fly the “outside loop”previously thought of as so dangerous as to be impossible. (You might recall it as one of the main plot elements of “The Great Waldo Pepper” movie.)

That feat was done in an Army P-1B Hawk on May 25th, 1927 at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. Two years later he attempted a repeat at the Cleveland Air Races in a P-1C (S/N 29-227) but the wings came off, and he had to parachute to safety ...that Hawk, below, somewhat the worse for wear. (Did I say he did some dangerous stunts?)



Other feats, while no less dangerous, were much more important to the advancement of aviation.

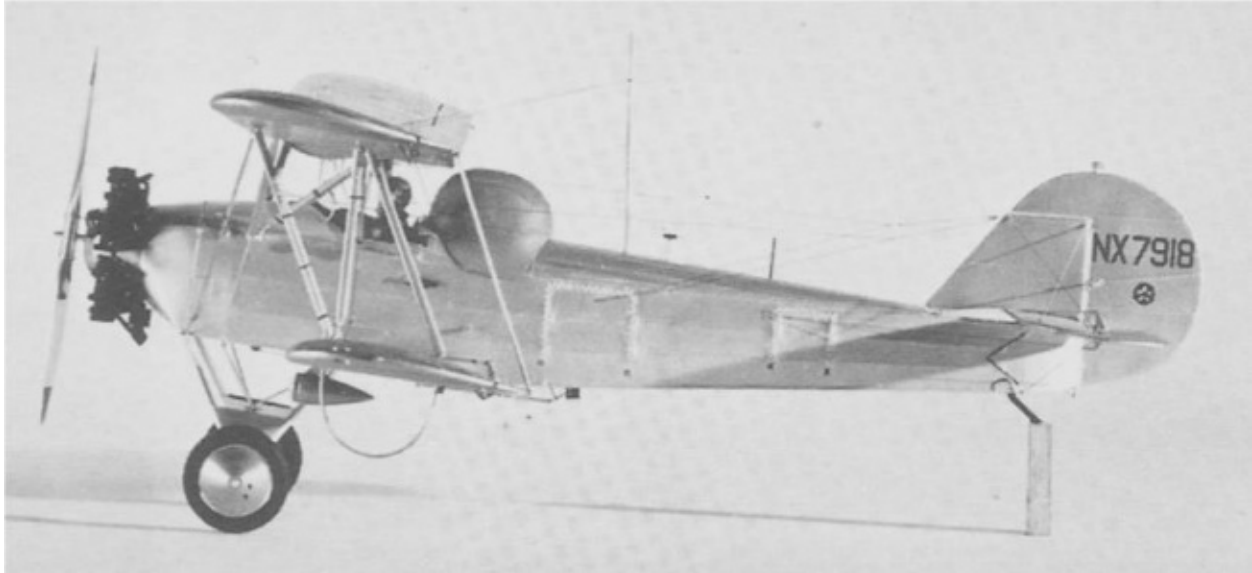


The third Travel-Air Model R, also known as the “Mystery Ships”, acquired by Shell for Doolittle’s testing.
<http://airportjournals.com/the-day-air-racings-golden-age-began/>

But the Doolittle of the twenties and thirties, was also a scientist and engineer in addition to what the public saw as a “daredevil pilot”! In received the **FIRST EVER doctorate in Aeronautical Engineering**, from a school you may have heard of: the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Perhaps most important of all his work was in developing and testing the new instruments and methods that would make blind flight in weather possible, and by extension transform aviation from a sort-of useful method of transportation instead of a circus-like stunt where even flying level in clouds had black magic qualities.

But AFTER that equipment was built, Doolittle was then the first person to actually take off, fly a prescribed course, and land *without ever seeing outside the airplane.*



That happened eighty-eight years ago, on September 24th, 1929. Doolittle, still a lieutenant since WWI, from the back seat of his specially-instrumented Consolidated NY-2 trainer took off, flew a prescribed course, and landed back at Mitchel Field, Long Island, New York. In the front seat, safety pilot Lt Ben Kelsey held his hands outside the cockpit throughout the flight, so the world would know Doolittle was accomplishing the impossible, alone! It is almost impossible to state the importance of that event.

But while his between-war years had thus far been exciting and fulfilling, as the Great Depression squeezed budgets to almost shut down Army Aviation, Doolittle found Army Air Corps pay meager and promotions non-existent. It was a little too lean for his needs, so he resigned his regular Army commission to take an aviation job with Shell Oil. Among his many important but little known contributions there, was convincing Shell to continue development of 100 octane aviation fuelsomething so important that some historians consider it to be one of the principle technological “edge” possessed by Allied military aviation over the Luftwaffe in WWII.



***And then we finally* ..get to the Doolittle that everybody knows, with Doolittle coaxing his overloaded B-25 off the flight deck of the Hornet, on his way to Tokyo....**

When war came Doolittle had soon been back on active duty as a reserve Lt Colonel ...and then accomplished the impossible by bombing Tokyo *one hundred and thirty two days after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor!* Having been successful in the raid but losing all sixteen bombers to circumstances beyond his control, he expected to be court-martialed, but was instead awarded the Medal of Honor and promoted from LtCol to Brigadier General, skipping the rank of full Colonel.

From the Doolittle raid, he went on to a distinguished career commanding the 12th Air Force in Africa, and the famed 8th Air Force in England.

And there is still more....I've just hit the high spots.....

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Doolittle

<http://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/107225/general-james-harold-doolittle/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/28/obituaries/james-doolittle-96-pioneer-aviator-who-led-first-raid-on-japan-dies.html?pagewanted=all>