

# Wright "B" Flyer, Inc.

## WRIGHT LANDINGS



Issue 3, 2013

Dayton, Ohio

Summer 2013

### AIR SHOW 2013



Preparing to fly Saturday. L to R: John Callendar, Danny, Rich, Syl Kerstanski, Joe Tyler, Bill Jamison

drove Danny from the announcer's stand to the aircraft. The Flyer was the first aircraft to pass before the crowd, just after the flag drop, with Danny announcing the opening from his position in the air.

Unfortunately, the crash of a later performer curtailed the show on Saturday. Sunday, though, the opening performance was repeated, with Tom Walters taking over as pilot, and afterwards the Flyer was on ground display until the show closed. The flight back to home base was made on Monday morning by Rich and Craig Wolfenbarger.

It was a "clean form" performance all the way, thanks to the long, hard work put in by volunteers over the winter. Good season coming up!

Keeping with recent tradition, the Wright B Flyer's Brown Bird was the opening flight for the 2013 Vectren Air Show at Dayton. And, as expected, the weekend was a complete success for our performers.

The aircraft was flown to Dayton Airport on Thursday by Rich Stepler and Tom Bell, and hangared at Wright Aero. The following day was practice with "Skytalker" Danny Clisham in the right seat beside Rich.

On Saturday, the first public day, the Brown Bird was moved out early for static display. As show time neared, the Model T



John Callendar standing, Danny right seat, Rich left seat

### SPRING ACTIVITIES FOR THE FLYER LOOK-ALIKE

The Wright Flyer look-alike was no sooner home from the Air Show than it was welcoming 53 members of the International Thunderbird Club [the car, not the team] on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of June. The club has been meeting annually since 1994, and this was their first gathering in Dayton. Twenty-two of the classic cars lined the parking apron as seven members became Honorary Aviator members and "flew the Flyer."



T-Birders going for another bird. (Photos, Gaffney)



Earlier, in May, two other groups visited the museum. The Cardinal Winnies of Ohio RV Club was there from 10-12 May. Four days later, the Mid-Central Region of the National Model Railroad Association included the Wright Flyer Museum in their Regional Meeting, with twenty of their members coming out.

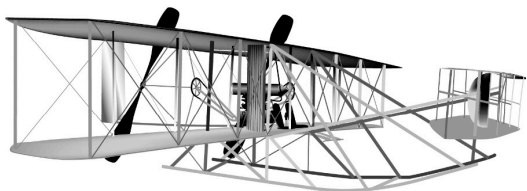
On 20 June, The Wright B Museum participated in the first of this year's three sessions of Dayton's Air Camp, a week-long experience to expose middle school students to flying and the field of aviation.

## Wright "B" Flyer, Inc.

Wright Landings is published quarterly for the information of members and volunteers of the Wright B Flyer, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 4 July  | Centerville Americana Parade, with Flyover                            |
| 4 July  | Beavercreek Parade, Half-Scale  |
| 11 July | Air Camp  |
| 13 July | Wings & Wheels at Wright Brothers Airport                             |
| 13 July | Pontiac Convention at the Nutter Center, Flyover at noon              |
| 23 July | Air Camp  |
| 9 Aug   | Runway Fest, Wright Bros. Airport, Fly-By, Static Display and Model T |
| 2 Sept  | Kettering Holiday @ Home Parade, Flyover & Half-Scale                 |
| 15 Sept | Dayton Concour's d' Elegance at Carillon Park, Fly-over (Tentative)   |
| 21 Sept | Air Force Marathon, Two Fly-overs                                     |
| 21 Sept | Richmond Airport Fly-In (Tentative)                                   |

## WRIGHT B's STAFF CAR

Almost as familiar around the Miami Valley as the Wright "B" Flyer is the Museum's staff car, an original 1916 Ford Model T.

Henry Ford introduced his Model T in 1908 with the intent of bringing the automobile to the mass market. He succeeded—more than 15 million were sold over the next 19 years. It has been said that the Wright brothers put the world in the air and Henry Ford put it on the road.

The Wright B staff car was built on January 31, 1916. This was the last year when brass radiators were installed and it would not originally have had a starter. Ours had an original radiator, but that has been replaced.



Original restoration, with Erma Maine

and a starter has been added. It was restored by Cameron and Erma Maine of Wilmington, Ohio, in the '70s, and sold to Col. Claire Potter in 1992 who in turn donated it to the Wright "B" Flyer Inc. in March of that year. It is maintained and displayed by volunteer Frank Goepferich.

The principal role of the "Lizzie" is to transport visitors to the runway center to take photos. It is also used in parades and on display at such local events as Springboro Christmas Parade, the Concours d'Elegance Car Show at Carillon Historical Park, the Aero Carnival at Huffman Prairie, and the Fly In at Hagerstown, Indiana.



Waiting on the taxiway



Concours d'Elegance, Carillon Park



Dayton Air Show



## FROM THE WRIGHT SEAT

Rich Stepler, WBF Chief Pilot

Everyone enjoys a celebration on their birthday. So what would you do if you were the U.S. Air Force and were approaching your 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2008? Wright Patterson chose to combine the annual Independence Day Tattoo with the birthday celebration by having an event with music, fireworks, and a fly-over of a lot of current and historically notable aircraft (emphasis on a lot of current and historical aircraft).

While the party was beginning in the fields by the Museum of the USAF, the fly-over birds were gathering on the other side of the base. With typical military precision each aircraft was positioned on the ramp in its order of appearance, beginning with the earliest aircraft at the west end of the ramp and ending with the current first line fleet aircraft at the east end, and because there were so many airplanes there were two rows. Due to the logistics of getting all the aircraft there and ready for the celebration, many of the birds from distant bases had arrived earlier in the week and were sitting awaiting the rest of the aircraft, mostly from local commands.

The Wright B Flyer was included and as you know was the first airplane bought by the government and first to fly in service of the country. Since we are local we flew over to WPAFB just before the show time, landed on runway 23R, stopped by

the WPAFB Aero Club to refuel, and taxied to the ramp to take our place in, what was by then, a most impressive line of historic and contemporary Air Force airplanes. Since it was just about show time, all of the flight and ground crew personnel were standing by their aircraft. We were directed to taxi between the rows (east to west) and take our place at the beginning since we were to be the first off. The Wright B Flyer with its large

propellers and chain drive makes an unusual noise when it flies or taxis; we were an unusual sight taxiing toward the lines of modern aircraft and we were noticed! The crews, standing near their aircraft, began to migrate to a line along both sides of our route of taxi between the two rows of aircraft. For me it was already a spectacular moment, one I will remember forever. I was awed to be in the presence of that much aviation technology and history. Modern and legendary aircraft all lined up, each representing the promise of the future or the achievements of the past. And just when I thought "it could not get any better than this," it did.



Freedom's Call Tattoo fly-over in 2009

As we taxied by the first aircraft the crew came to attention and rendered a brisk hand salute, which was repeated by each of the crews as we passed their aircraft. Wow! Talk about an emotional high. I do not know how to describe it, a sense of overwhelming pride, the honor of being recognized by the people that I hold in the highest esteem, the feeling of belonging and acceptance, the honor of being recognized by this elite group. All of that and

more! Yes, I know, they were saluting the aircraft and what it represents and not me, but I proudly returned their salutes, recognizing and honoring their place in military history, past and future.

It has been said that everyone gets to be famous for about 15 minutes in their life but, through my association with the Wright B Flyer I have been given the unique opportunity to share the fame of the Wright Brothers and the dedicated people that built, support, and maintain our Wright B Flyer look-alike. For that, I thank you and hope that by telling this story I have made you part of the moment.

Don't forget, sporting the Leader In Flight license on your car proclaims your pride in Dayton's heritage as the true birthplace of flight! And it means \$15 more to the Wright B Flyer Museum to help preserve that heritage.



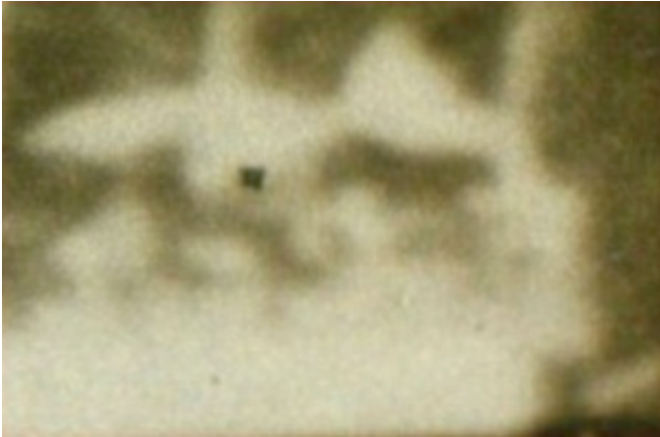
### ***FIRST FLIGHT WANNABE***

Well, it's resurfaced—the seventy-year-old claim that the Wright Brothers were not the first to fly, but rather a Connecticut resident: Gustave Whitehead. In brief, he's said to have flown a half mile at an altitude of fifty feet on 14 August 1901. It was reported in a local newspaper, picked up by the newly established wire services, and widely reprinted (and embellished). News stories of the day were, of course, often grossly inaccurate—see, for example, some of the contemporary reports on the actual flights of the Wright brothers.

At the time, the newswriter claimed there were three eye witnesses, including himself. One of the two independent witnesses later emphatically denied having seen Whitehead in flight. “I was not present and did not witness any airplane flight on August 14, 1901, I do not remember or recall ever hearing of a flight with this particular plane or any other that Whitehead ever built.” No trace that the other witness ever existed could be

found by a researcher thirty years later. In the decade following the claimed flights, Whitehead established a company and built several airplanes, some of which were displayed at fairs. None of these aircraft ever left the ground.

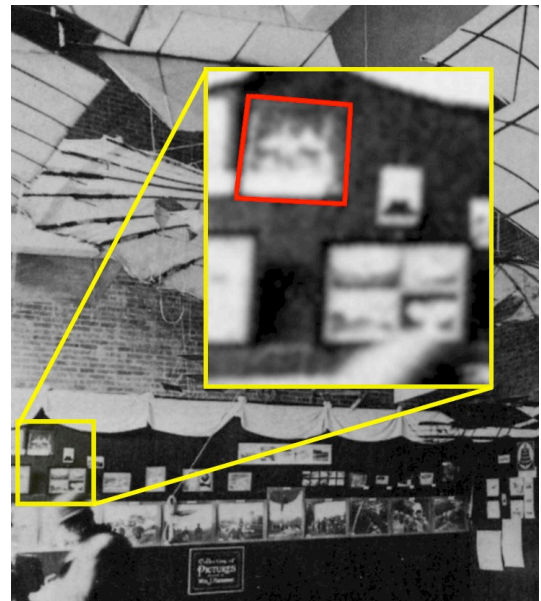
Now a new, amateur researcher claims to have enhanced an old photograph—one that had been studied and dismissed by the professionals of the Smithsonian



The “lost photograph” that is said to show Whitehead's machine in flight.

some years ago—and asserts that it shows the Whitehead machine in the air. It does not, at least not to the level of credibility to support a claim of prior first flight.

For an extended discussion of the hoax, see <http://newsdesk.si.edu/sites/default/files/2013-Whitehead-Statement.pdf>



Source of the photograph, an exhibit in the 1906 World's Fair



**Steve Sturm.** Steve was born in Cincinnati and, with the exception of his military service, has remained a resident of Southwest Ohio. His four years in the Air Force, though, allowed him to explore the world. As an air cargo specialist stationed at McChord AFB, Wash., and Frankfurt, Germany, he worked with and

in many types of aircraft (C-54, B.707, DC-8, L.188, C-130, C-141, C-5), traveling to Alaska, Africa, Europe, and Central America. He worked for several companies before joining in 2000 the Paxar Corp., later bought out by Avery Dennison, for whom he still works. He was transferred to Dayton from Cincinnati in 2007 and began volunteering with the Flyer five years later. His associates degree in computer programming and his manual skills make him a valuable member of the flight operations team. He has three step-children and five grandchildren.

