Doolittle Raiders Celebrate 70th Anniversary in Style

Seventy years after the famous Doolittle Raid on Japan, four of the five remaining airmen from the crew of 80, gathered for their annual reunion April 17-20, 2012 at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. The event featured a spectacular and rare display of 20 flying B-25 bombers similar to those flown by Doolittle’s Raiders on April 18, 1942. It was the largest gathering of B-25 Mitchells since World War II. (See page 2 for a list of the B-25s and their home bases).

Raiders on hand were Lt. Col. Richard E. Cole, co-pilot on Crew No. 1 with Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle as the pilot; Major Thomas C. Griffin, navigator on Crew No. 9; Staff Sergeant David J. Thatcher, an engineer/gunner on Crew No. 7; and Lt. Col. Edward J. Saylor, engineer on Crew No. 15. Lt. Col. Robert L. Hite, co-pilot on Crew No. 16 and a native of Odell, Tex., was a late cancellation and did not attend.

The Raiders are planning their 71st reunion at Fort Walton Beach, Fla. where they practiced for the raid in secret at Eglin Field. They previously met at Fort Walton Beach in 1968.
SR-71 Blackbird Expert to Appear in Jalonick event

world’s fastest jet, the Lockheed SR-71 spy plane known as the “Blackbird.” One of the leading experts on the Blackbird – Col. (Ret.) Richard H. Graham – will deliver the 2012 George W. Jalonick III and Dorothy Cockrell Jalonick Distinguished Memorial Lecture July 14 at 4 p.m. in the Eugene McDermott Library Auditorium (MC 2.410).

The annual Jalonick Lecture is organized by the library’s Special Collections and is free to the public. The series enlightens the public about the history of flight by bringing aviation notables to the Dallas community.

Graham began his flying career as a teenager, soloing at 17. He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1964 and flew 210 combat missions in Vietnam flying the F-4 Phantom. He logged more than 4,600 military flying hours.

Graham entered the SR-71 strategic reconnaissance program in 1974 and served as a crew member and instructor pilot. In 1980 he was named SR-71 Squadron Commander of the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron that included the U-2 and T-38 aircraft. Six years later he became Vice Wing Commander, 9th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing in California where he was able to fly all of the wing’s aircraft – the U-2, T-38, KC-135Q, and SR-71. Later as wing commander, he was responsible for 10,000 personnel and their dependents at Beale Air Force Base. He retired from the military on Sept. 30, 1989 and spent the next 13 years as a pilot for American Airlines in North Texas.

He is now an author, speaker, aviation consultant, flight instructor and Civil Air Patrol pilot. Col. Graham has written three books about the famous airplane – SR-71 Blackbird: Stories, Tales and Legends (2002); SR-71 Revealed: SR-71 Blackbird: Design, Development and Mach 3+ Flying.; and Flying the SR-71 Blackbird: In the Cockpit on a Secret Operational Mission (2008). The books describe how Air Force pilots and navigators had to adapt to become Blackbird crews. His latest SR-71 book is technical and includes a considerable amount about the physics of flight, engine parameters and navigation challenges. The UT Dallas Bookstore will have copies of the books available for the purchase and signing at the lecture.

Graham received the University of Nebraska’s William F. Shea Award for his distinguished contribution to aviation. In 2005 he received the Kelly Johnson Award for his lifetime achievement in the Blackbird program. Graham graduated from the University of Akron in Ohio in 1962, received a master’s degree in sociology in 1977 and in public administration in 1979 from Pepperdine University.
On April 12, 2012, Willie Jones, long-time volunteer at the History of Aviation Collection (HAC) and friend, peacefully passed away. Willie, also known as Ken, was born in St. Louis, on Feb. 17, 1923 to William James Jones and Ethel Alberta Breig. At the age of nine Willie developed a passion for airplanes and flying that would have a lasting effect on his life.

During 1940-41, Willie joined the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force (USAF) in June of 1942. He received his training at the Aircraft Mechanics School in Lincoln, Neb., in 1942 and at the Factory School for the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk and Douglas C-47 Skytrain in 1943. During World War II he served in British West Africa and in the China/Burma/India Theater. After the war he toured in the Philippines and Guam before participating in the Berlin Airlift from 1948-49 with the 48th Troop Carrier Squadron as a flight engineer. In 134 trips, he flew from Rhein-Main Air Force Base in Frankfurt am Main to Tempelhof and from Faßberg to Gatow Airport in Berlin in a Douglas C-54 Skymaster. His last duty station was Korea.

Staying in the USAF in peacetime, Willie served as a classroom instructor teaching performance problems to flight engineer students. After serving for little more than 30 years, he retired as a maintenance analysis superintendent with the rank of chief master sergeant. In January 1950, he married St. Louis native Frances Adelaide née Baumgartner, his wife of 59 years. They had six sons and three daughters, 10 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

In 1988, Willie started working as a volunteer first at the Frontiers of Flight at Love Field, then from 1990 on at the HAC until he passed away. His focus was collecting materials and being a historian for the Berlin Airlift Veterans Association (BAVA). He was the driving force behind the association’s decision to donate their records to HAC.

Willie will be greatly missed among the Special Collection’s staff and volunteers. His knowledge in aviation was extensive. He was not only a volunteer, more importantly, he was a friend and it was always a joy to listen to his stories from Germany and the Berlin Airlift. Willie signed off his correspondence with “Keep ’em turning” and we will, here at Special Collections.

Processing and arrangement work on the Robert A. Kammeyer Papers has been completed. Kammeyer had a long career in aviation, starting with the U.S. Army Air Force in World War II. He was posted to 39th Fighter Group and flew in support of military operations in New Guinea, the Philippines, and over Japan. At the end of the war he was transferred to the 159th Liaison Squadron and stood occupation duty in Japan. He remained in the Air Force Reserve, but took a job as a pilot with Mid-Continent Airlines, and transferred to Braniff Airways when it acquired Mid-Continent in 1952.

The collection contains a number of unique documents and artifacts that chronicle Kammeyer’s career. It includes a Braniff Halston uniform hat, jacket, and pants, as well as the appropriate buttons and accoutrement. It also contains Kammeyer’s World War II flight jacket worn when he was with the 39th Fighter Group. Perhaps the most unique items are a matched pair of Japanese Katana swords as well as a Nambu Type 12 pistol and holster, taken from the Japanese. The Kammeyer collection offers an intriguing look at both World War II fighter pilots and commercial air travel in the mid to late 1950s.