



Chuck Yeager & Bob Hoover

Long Island Early Fliers Education Foundation

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Happy New Year!

Editor's Note:

There was a time when sonic booms were a common event heard in the sky over Long Island. At times it seemed like distant thunder; more frequently, the boom was accompanied by the rattle of windows and shaking glassware in the kitchen cabinet. Though startling at times, I found comfort in that sudden burst of power that seemed to envelop everything around me. It was cool. Somebody up in the sky was riding the cutting edge of technology and announcing it to the world.

Unfortunately, not everyone had the same appreciation of what was going on thousands of feet overhead. They were becoming impatient with the broken windows and shattered glassware. I used to cringe when Newsday and The Long Island Press ran negative stories about military aircraft damaging people's property. The handwriting was on the wall and soon that childhood remembrance was doomed to become a fond memory.

There were two men, who were friends, involved in the creation of those sonic booms and both were destined to become aviation legends. While Chuck Yeager piloted the Bell X-1, Bob Hoover flew chase for him during that history making flight.

It all started on October 14th, 1947 when a little-known test pilot created the first sonic boom at Edwards Air Force base in California. Some of his friends were gathered at "Pancho's Guest

Ranch Hotel and Happy Bottom Riding Club” a pilot hangout just outside the Base when they heard the sound and thought sure they would soon be adding the picture of Chuck Yeager to the wall of honor.



No one knew what to expect and the boom sounded like a crash, or perhaps an inflight breakup. After all, it was considered the sound *barrier*.



Pancho Barnes & Chuck Yeager

In the days leading up to his flight, Chuck and his wife Glennis had ridden their horses to Pancho's for a drink. When it was time to leave, Glennis challenged Chuck to

a race back to the barn. A move that added to Yeager's legend as he was thrown from his horse and broke several ribs. Chuck wanted to be the one to break that barrier and managed to get a doctor friend to tape him up and keep the riding accident quiet.



The gang from Edwards with Pancho Barnes

The morning of the test flight, he realized that he wouldn't be able to close the door latch on the Bell X-1 because he didn't have the leverage due to his injury. The problem was solved when he borrowed the broom of a custodian at the hangar and cut about two feet off the broom stick. Had the flight surgeon known about his medical condition, it is believed that Bob Hoover would have flown the record setting flight.

Yeager had named the X-1 Glamorous Glennis, but it was not the only airplane named after his wife. He named all of the planes he flew after her because he believed that she was his good luck charm and a plane named after Glennis would always bring him home.

The Bell X-1 achieved 700 miles per hour (Mach 1.06) at 43,000 feet above the southern California desert. The X-1 program contributed greatly to the understanding of the challenges of transonic and supersonic flight. The lessons learned were directly applied to the next generation of military and commercial aircraft, keeping America in the forefront of aeronautical research.



General Yeager received the Collier and MacKay Trophies in 1948 and the Harmon International Trophy in 1954. He was a pilot with over 10,000 hours in 155 types of aircraft.



Born in 1923, Yeager grew up in rural West Virginia. Enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Corps two months prior to the Japanese

attack on Pearl Harbor, he moved up from mechanic to flight training partially on account of his unusually good 20/10 eyesight.

Overcoming an initial bout of air sickness, Yeager soon demonstrated a natural aptitude for flying. He started his fighter pilot career in the sleek P-39 Airacobra, one of which tried to kill him in November 1943 when its rear-mounted engine caught fire. Yeager bailed out, injuring his back.



P-39 Airacobra – note engine intake aft of the cockpit

He finally saw combat early in 1944 flying a P-51 Mustang with the 363rd Fighter Squadron based in Leiston, England. Yeager's first "Glamorous Glennis" was a P-51B. On his seventh combat mission, and a day after Yeager shot down his first enemy fighter over Berlin, cannon fire from a German Fw-190 fighter severed the P-51's elevator cables over Bordeaux, France.

Yeager parachuted into a pine forest to evade capture, managed to contact French Resistance fighters and joined their ranks, helping them for several weeks. Once the

weather had improved, he teamed up with a bomber navigator who had also bailed out, for the lengthy trek across the Pyrenees mountains toward neutral Spain.

At one point he escaped a German patrol by sliding down a mountain on an improvised log slide. He carried the injured navigator up a mountain and performed surgery with a pen-knife, amputating the navigator's leg. Though Yeager later had to leave his comrade near a road, the injured man was rescued and survived the war.

Yeager named at least four different airplanes after his wartime sweetheart. Normally, escaped pilots weren't allowed to return to combat duty. However, Yeager successfully petitioned General Eisenhower to return to duty and promptly named his new P-51C fighter Glamorous Glen II.

But Glen II was soon replaced by an improved P-51D named Glamorous Glen III. This featured a bubble canopy for better visibility, and beefed-up armament from four to six .50 caliber machine guns.



Glamorous Glen III

On October 12, 1944, while flying Glen III as escort for a bomber squadron attacking Bremen, he spotted 22 German Me-109 fighters at a distance. Yeager maneuvered his squadron into a chase position behind the unsuspecting German planes.



The Messerschmitt 109

Yeager's squadron had closed within 1,000 yards when the German pilots realized their predicament and panicked. One of the startled Germans rolled over and collided with his wingman, forcing both pilots to parachute out before anyone had even opened fire!

Yeager describes what happened next:

I dropped my tanks and then closed up to the last Jerry and opened fire from 600 yards, using the new K-14 sight. I observed strikes all over the ship, particularly heavy in the cockpit. He skidded off to the left. I was closing up on another Me. 109 so I did not follow him down. Lt. Stern, flying in Blue Flight, reports this enemy aircraft on fire as it passed him and went into a spin.

I closed up on the next Me. 109 to 100 yards, skidded to the right and took a deflection shot of about 10°. I gave about a

2 second burst and the whole fuselage split open and blew up after we passed.

Another Me. 109 to the right had cut his throttle and was trying to get behind me. I broke to the right and quickly rolled to the left on his tail...I got a lead from around 300 yards and gave him a short burst. There were hits on wings and tail section. He snapped to the right 3 times and bailed out at around 18,000 feet...

I claim five Me. 109s destroyed.

Ammunition Expended: 587 rounds .50 cal.
(That was less than one third of the typical ammunition loadout on a P-51D.)

Yeager nearly repeated his ace-in-a-day feat in a November air battle in which he downed four more FW-190 fighters.



The Focke Wulf 190

His final kill was scored against a superior Me-262 jet fighter. After narrowly dodging its powerful cannons, he swooped down

on the much faster jet as it was attempting to land.



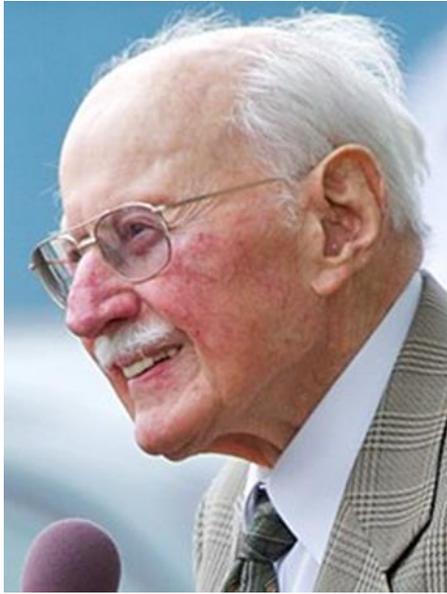
The Me 262 was the first jet fighter

Yeager's flying career went on to include bombers during the Vietnam War and commanding an F-4 Phantom unit in South Korea. On October 14, 2012, the 65th anniversary of his famous supersonic flight, Yeager flew to supersonic speeds a final time in the backseat of an F-15D fighter over the Mojave Desert. He was 89 years old at the time.



Chuck Yeager

February 13, 1923 – December 7, 2020



Bob Hoover

R. A. Bob Hoover learned to fly at Berry Field in Nashville, Tennessee while working at a local grocery store to pay for the flight training. He enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard and was sent for pilot training with the United States Army.

During World War II, Hoover was sent to Casablanca, where his first major assignment was flight testing the assembled aircraft ready for service. He was later assigned to the Supermarine Spitfire-equipped 52nd Fighter Group in Sicily.



The Supermarine Spitfire

On February 9, 1944, on his 59th mission, his malfunctioning Mark V Spitfire was shot down by Siegfried Lemke, a pilot of Jagdgeschwader 2 in a Focke-Wulf 190 off the coast of Southern France. Hoover was taken prisoner.

He spent 16 months at Stalag Luft 1, a German prisoner-of-war camp in Barth, Germany. Hoover spent much of the time in solitary confinement as punishment for two dozen escape attempts. Finally, he succeeded just before the end of the war by stealing a German Focke Wulf fighter.



Hoover said he hugged a cloud ceiling at about 4,000 feet, figuring he would duck up into it if he was spotted by any Allied aircraft. He planned on flying west until he saw signs of Allied territory. "I wanted to see windmills to be sure," he explained. That would signal friendly Holland.

By the time he reached Holland, Hoover said, "My gas tank was registering close to zero." He chose to land while he still had full control of the fighter, and selected an open field. Hoover dropped the fighter's landing gear and settled in. A ditch suddenly loomed ahead, and Hoover said he did not want to end up trapped in a

German fighter on its back, where the Allies might not realize an American was inside. He said he “just reached down and sucked up the gear” to get the fighter to stop before tipping into the ditch.

Hoover said he wondered, “What the heck are you going to do now?” He didn’t have to wait long. “All of a sudden, pitchforks came at me from every direction,” Hoover said. Dutch farmers who spoke no English were understandably angry with the man who emerged from the German fighter.

Providence intervened in the form of a British Army supply truck approaching. Hoover got their attention; “I hope you can help me. I’m a Yank; they think I’m a Kraut!” With perfect British aplomb, the soldiers whisked Hoover to safety.

After the war, he was assigned to flight-test duty at Wilbur Wright Field near Dayton, Ohio. There he impressed and befriended Chuck Yeager. When Yeager was later asked whom he wanted for flight crew for the supersonic Bell X-1 flight, he said “Hoover.” Hoover became Yeager's backup pilot in the Bell X-1 program and flew chase for Yeager in a Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star during the Mach 1 flight.



Hoover left the air force for civilian jobs in 1948. After a brief time with the Allison Engine Company, he worked as a test/demonstration pilot with North American Aviation, in which capacity he went to Korea to teach pilots flying combat missions in the Korean War how to dive-bomb with the North American F-86 Sabre. During his six weeks in Korea, Hoover flew many combat bombing missions over enemy territory, but was denied permission to engage in air-to-air combat flights.



North American F-86 Sabre

During the 1950s, Hoover visited many active-duty, reserve, and Air National Guard units to demonstrate the capabilities of various aircraft to their pilots. Hoover flew flight tests on the North American FJ-2 Fury, F-86 Sabre, and the North American F-100 Super Sabre.

During the early 1990’s, the FAA tried to ground Hoover saying he was too old to be flying, let alone performing air shows. “Possibly in the entire history of the conduct of the airman medical certification program, no one decision has created

more controversy,” federal air surgeon Jon L. Jordan wrote later.

Aviators throughout the world shrieked with outrage until the FAA relented. Many of them had seen his famous air show act, which he performed with both engines on his plane turned off. Shortly before his revocation, Hoover experienced serious engine problems in a North American T-28 Trojan off the coast of California. During his return to Torrance, California, he was able to keep the engine running intermittently by constantly manipulating the throttle, mixture and propeller controls. The engine seized at the moment of touchdown. Hoover believed his successful management of this difficult emergency should have convinced the FAA that he hadn't lost any ability.



Meanwhile, Hoover was granted a pilot's license and medical certificate by Australia's aviation authority. Hoover's United States medical certificate was restored shortly afterward and he returned to the American air show circuit for several years before retiring in 1999. At 77 years old Hoover still felt capable of performing and passed a rigorous FAA physical post-retirement, but he was unable to obtain insurance for air shows. Although he had had free insurance for several years as part of air show sponsorship deals, he was forced in 1999 to pay for it out of his own pocket and could not get coverage under \$2 million. His final air show was on November 13, 1999 at Luke Air Force Base. His last flight in his famous Shrike Commander was on October 10, 2003 from Lakeland, Florida, to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum's Hazy Center at Dulles Airport.

In 2012, a pilot in a P-51 ran out of options when his landing gear malfunctioned. He'd tried everything to deploy it but nothing worked. Officials tracked down Hoover by telephone, then patched him in to the pilot of the stricken plane.

“Boot enough rudder there at landing gear down speeds, get a side load on it, it would force it out and into the locked position,” Hoover said. “I’ve been there, I’ve done that a couple of times.” “Just slip it, skid it, yaw it, whatever you have to do to get some air under the door.”

It worked. The landing gear deployed and the pilot landed the P-51 safely.

In a 2010 tribute in Smithsonian's Air & Space Magazine, air show pilot Debbie Gary provided an accurate description of what she had witnessed about Bob Hoover's flying:

The first time I saw Bob Hoover fly I was a new show pilot standing next to the great Curtis Pitts and hoping for words of wisdom. It was March 1972, and Pitts and I were watching the airplane he created perform at Miami's Tamiami Airport. The sky was a frenzy of tiny Pitts Specials panting through snap rolls and outside loops. It was noisy, and Pitts said nothing during the performance. Even after the airplanes landed and Hoover taxied out, Pitts was quiet—until Hoover, on takeoff, rolled the twin-engine Shrike Commander. It was as graceful and fluid as a cat stretching its back. The show tempo shifted from salsa to whipped cream. Pitts turned and grinned at me. "Have you ever seen anything so smooth?" he asked.

For the next 20 minutes, we watched North American Rockwell's big, beautiful cross-country transport flow through giant loops and vertical climbs, four-point rolls and half Cuban eights. Two engines roared, then only one, but the airplane kept dancing. When the second engine stopped, the roar became a glider's whoosh. The airplane swept past in a dead stick loop,

followed by an eight-point roll, then waltzed down to the landing: LEFT two-three, RIGHT two-three, LEFT two-three—the wings banked steeply as one tire kissed the runway, skated, rolled, then lifted as the wings banked the other way, and that wheel skated, rolled.... "Now that's flying," Pitts said to me as Hoover, still without power, maneuvered up the runway and onto the taxiway, stopped precisely at show center, then climbed out in his business suit and waved his straw hat at the cheering crowd.



Hoover once demonstrated how to pour ice tea while he rolled his airplane, spilling not a drop and inspiring other aviators to try the same thing with varying results.

Click this link to watch this feat demonstrating coordinated flight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2-9BL7sllk>

“Bob Hoover brought great richness to the aviation experience, and he leaves behind a legacy of heroic caring and sharing with the general aviation community,” Mark Baker, the president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, said. “The first time I met Bob, I was seated next to him at an aviation event, my 8-year-old son by my side. Bob both spoke and listened to his aviation dreams. He offered encouragement and some great stories. And though my son is long since grown, neither he nor I have ever forgotten that an aviation legend gave a child who dreamed of flying his full attention and encouraged him to dream even bigger. Bob Hoover was so much more than a great pilot. He was a great man and a model for what our community can and should be.”



Bob Hoover

January 24, 1922 -- October 25/2016

**Our next meeting is Sunday, April 18, 2021
(COVID permitting, of course!)
We look forward to seeing you again!**

*******LIEFEF News*******

Our new website is up and running! After many long hours of hard work spread over several months, the new site offers visitors an extensive look at our organization and its activities while offering an historical aviation background.

In addition to introducing our Board of Trustees, visitors can learn about our activities and projects by clicking on photographs on the events page and viewing a gallery of all the educational trips we have taken.

Also, new members can join, while existing members can pay their dues through the website. There is also the ability to make tax deductible donations of cash and aviation artifacts.

A reference library of past newsletters is also at the readers fingertips.

Future additions to the site will include more information on current projects, as well as a store for proprietary items of interest.

Please take the time to visit us today at:

www.liefef.org

And tell us what you think!



Volunteers still needed:

The Trustees are looking to establish a few new committees. They are:

1). Membership Development – the committee would be charged with developing promotional material, as well as a target audience for membership.

2). Programs - this committee would be responsible for: a). presentations and featured topics for monthly meetings. b). activities for visiting school children.

3). Fundraising – as the name implies, this committee would develop ongoing ideas for raising money.

Link Trainer Restoration –

The Wednesday workers are making great progress after having received the shipment of plywood from Denmark and a vacuum bottle from Pennsylvania. The first vacuum bottle was destroyed in shipping and had been the last of its kind. The replacement bottle was modified to be just like the one that was destroyed by our very talented President, Mark Loiacono.

After stripping the cockpit door, it was also discovered that restoration was necessary.



Link Trainer: A plumber's nightmare



Vacuum Bottle placement



Vacuum bottle in place, at last!

Time to smile.....

**AND JUST LIKE THAT
HAVING A MASK,
RUBBER GLOVES,
DUCT TAPE,
PLASTIC SHEETING
AND ROPE IN YOUR
TRUNK IS OKAY**

**Stepped on my scale
this morning and it
said: Please use social
distancing, one person
at a time. 🤔🤔**

**MY MOM ALWAYS TOLD
ME I WOULDN'T
AMOUNT TO ANYTHING
LYING ON THE
SOFA...AND YET HERE I
AM, SAVING THE
WORLD.**

**A NEW STUDY FOUND
THAT PEOPLE WHO TAKE THEIR
COFFEE BLACK ARE MORE LIKELY
TO EXHIBIT PSYCHOPATHIC
TRAITS.**

**AND PEOPLE WHO ORDER A QUAD
SHOT, NON-FAT, VANILLA SOY,
EXTRA FOAM, LIGHT WHIP WITH
CARAMEL DRIZZLE ARE MORE
LIKELY TO BE THEIR VICTIMS.**

Hunting dog for sale



Me: (sobbing my heart out, eyes swollen, nose red)...I can't see you anymore... I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!

Trainer: It was a sit up. You did one sit up.

There is a spike in Covid cases because there's a spike in testing.

If we had more IQ tests, there would be a spike in morons, too.

When we're young, we sneak out of our house to go to parties. When we're old, we sneak out of parties to go home.

This election reminds me of that time security cameras stopped working the night Jeffrey Epstein killed himself.



This was GO FUND ME when I was growing up.

Looking for a married woman, recently cheated on, mad and scorned, who is willing to sell her husbands tools for cheap.

I think the real reason this generation is so angry is because their music sucks.

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The **LONG ISLAND**
Early Fliers Club

Long Island Early Fliers Education Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 1956 and Chartered by the New York State Education Department. We are dedicated to aviation education and preserving Long Island's aviation heritage. Volunteers who want to help educate and preserve our history are always welcome. Annual Membership in our organization is \$35.00 for individuals; \$50.00 for families.

Donations of aviation memorabilia, aircraft and aircraft parts, aviation clothing, display quality models and items of historic significance are always welcome and greatly appreciated.

Cash donations, as well as artifact donations are tax deductible. You may visit our facility at Bayport Aerodrome, Vitamin Drive, Bayport New York most Wednesdays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Appointments are necessary as airports are secure locations and can also be arranged at other times for your convenience. Contact us at: L.I.E.F.E.F., P.O. Box 43, Holbrook, NY, 11741 or call (631)-523-5407 (Fred Coste) or fax: 631-588-2147

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