



Crew chief Conrad (Connie) Lachendro, retired P & W engineer, and John Winter, retired Hamilton Standard parts supervisor, struggle over a wing float cover.

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Whitney manager who died suddenly last January, was "a severe loss. He was a good friend, a spark plug on the project . . . sorely missed."

Present members of the team are: Don Bennison, Geoffrey Branch, Sherrill Collins, George Damato, Bob Davis, Jim Flanagan, Norm Gagne, Chet Janeczek, Stu Latsha, Jim Maher, Jim Olsen, Tom Palshaw, Bob Pease, Jack Perretti, Bill Taylor, Tom Tumicki, Ed Wochomurka and John Winter.

The crew splits into Tuesday and Thursday groups. You can believe that they are enthusiastic about the work. They bring lunches. At noon, around a table in the middle of the

tools and airplane parts, jokes and stories abound.

Somewhere in the future, when the "Big Bird," the VS-44A comes to the Museum, the neat, little S-39 may be nestled under its wing . . . but the S-39's reputation won't be overshadowed!

Let's look into the history of the S-39.

When it first took wing, the hull (or fuselage) was painted dark blue, the wings and tail were silver.

On August 1, 1930, the day after it came from the factory, C/N 904 was sold to Charles W. Deeds, Pratt & Whitney's Vice-President and Treasurer. He used it for pleasure trips and for hunting and fishing in

Canada and Maine.

It was then lifted aboard his father's yacht, "Lotosland," and it was given the same name as the yacht. His father, incidentally, was Col. Edward A. Deeds, Chairman of the Board of the National Cash Register Co.

"Connie" displayed the photo with the S-39 perched on top of the yacht.

He noted, "The story goes that No. 904 was really Deed's second plane. The first amphibian, being lifted on the boom to go aboard the yacht, was dropped, went under water and was flooded and wrecked. He bought 904 the next day."

According to a Sikorsky "Service Life" story, the original model was a S-39A, converted late in 1930 to a "B" model, refined to carry one more passenger and given a larger horizontal tail plane and rudder. A four-passenger ship, it was owned by Deeds for six years. It was stabled in a hangar at Rentschler Field, East Hartford, CT.

The list of eight other owners included the sixth, a Major Hugh R. Sharp, commander of a WWII Civil Air Patrol search-and-rescue unit at Rehoboth, Delaware. That was April 1942.

The ship was entirely rejuvenated and refitted for ocean rescue use. Repainted, it received more instruments and communications gear. Bomb racks were fitted to carry two 250-pound depth charges.

No. 904 was soon flying patrols, making rescues and making occasional bomb sorties. On one occasion, six depth charges were dropped on three shuttle runs on an oil slick believed to be a submarine. Other aircraft joined the fray, including B-17's, but the oil was found to be a spill from a sunken tanker.

The S-39's greatest day of glory came on July 21, 1942, when a

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CAP Fairchild 24 crashed in the ocean.

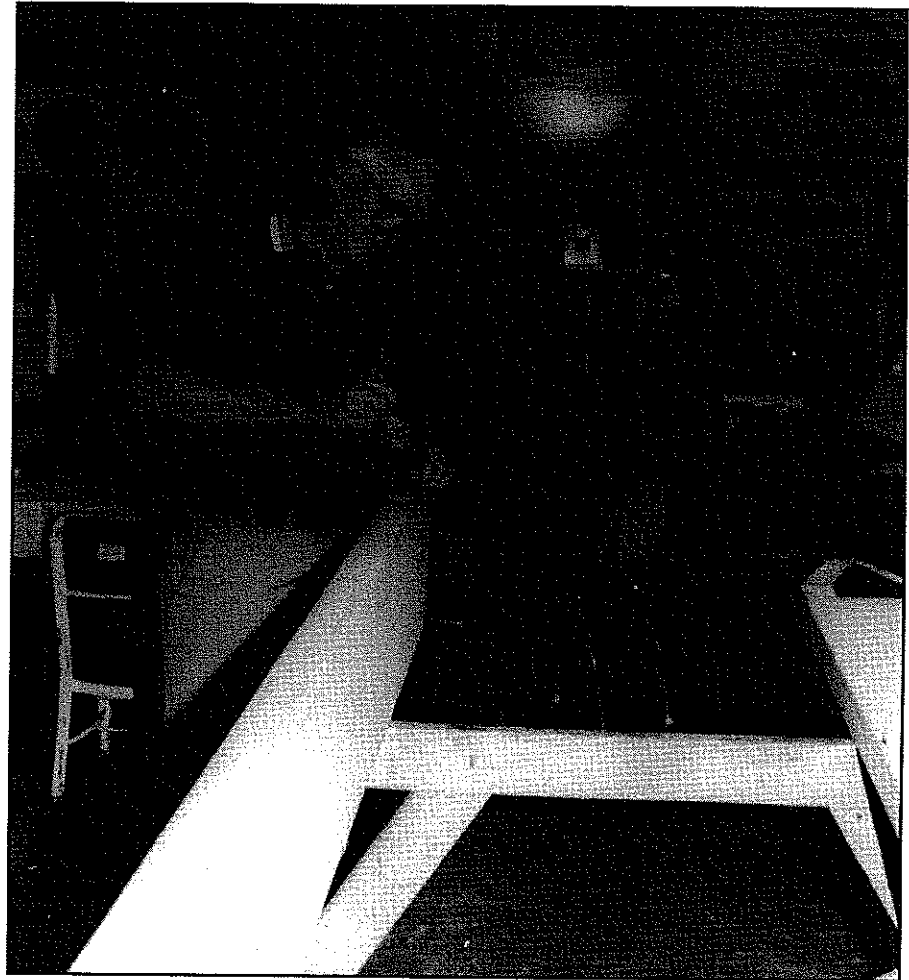
The site was some 100 miles out from the CAP base at Rehoboth. Major Sharp and his co-pilot, Lt. Eddie Edwards, flew to the site and landed in rough seas.

One of the S-39's struts was bent and one wing float damaged and flooded.

The pilot of the Fairchild was taken safely aboard, but his observer had disappeared under the waves and was lost.

It was impossible to make a takeoff in the tumult of the waves and the flooded wing float tilted the S-39 precariously. To balance the plane, Edwards climbed out on the high wing and clung to the slippery surface while Major Sharp taxied back towards shore. And he managed to hang on for nearly 100 miles, many hours until they reached land.

For this feat, both Sharp and Edwards became the first two civilians to be presented Air Medals by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House. The Sikorsky Company also earned the prestigious Collier Trophy for the



Bob Davis, retired from CL & P, works on the tail "beams" and pulley openings

event.

The final owner, who purchased the ship in 1953, took it to Yakutat, Alaska, where it served as a "bush plane" until 1957. Then, with a Naval officer aboard, owner Clemmond E. Simmons flew it on a search mission to find a beached boat. The engine quit and a hurried forced landing was made among stumps and a swale along a shore. The bow was split open by a stump and wing supports were twisted. Abandoned to heavy snows of six winters, the wing collapsed, spars were broken and the engine lay across the hull.

The S-39 suffered from the elements until July 1963. Philip Redden of Anchorage, Alaska, went to Yakutat on behalf of the Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association. The craft was retrieved

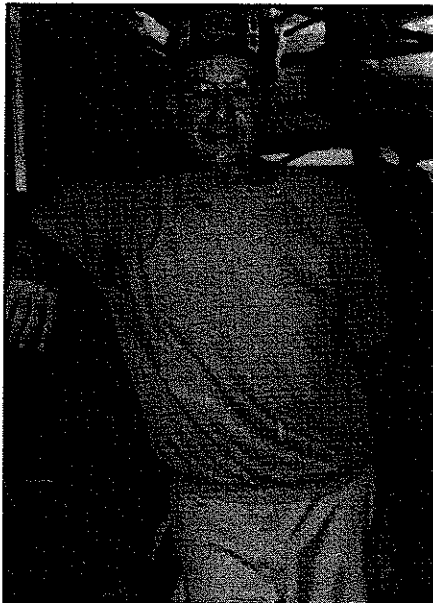
and arrived back in Connecticut on October 19, 1963.

Here's a rundown on the six other owners:

The second owner, Lt. George N. Moffett, U. S. N., purchased the ship from Deeds in 1936. Then, in turn;

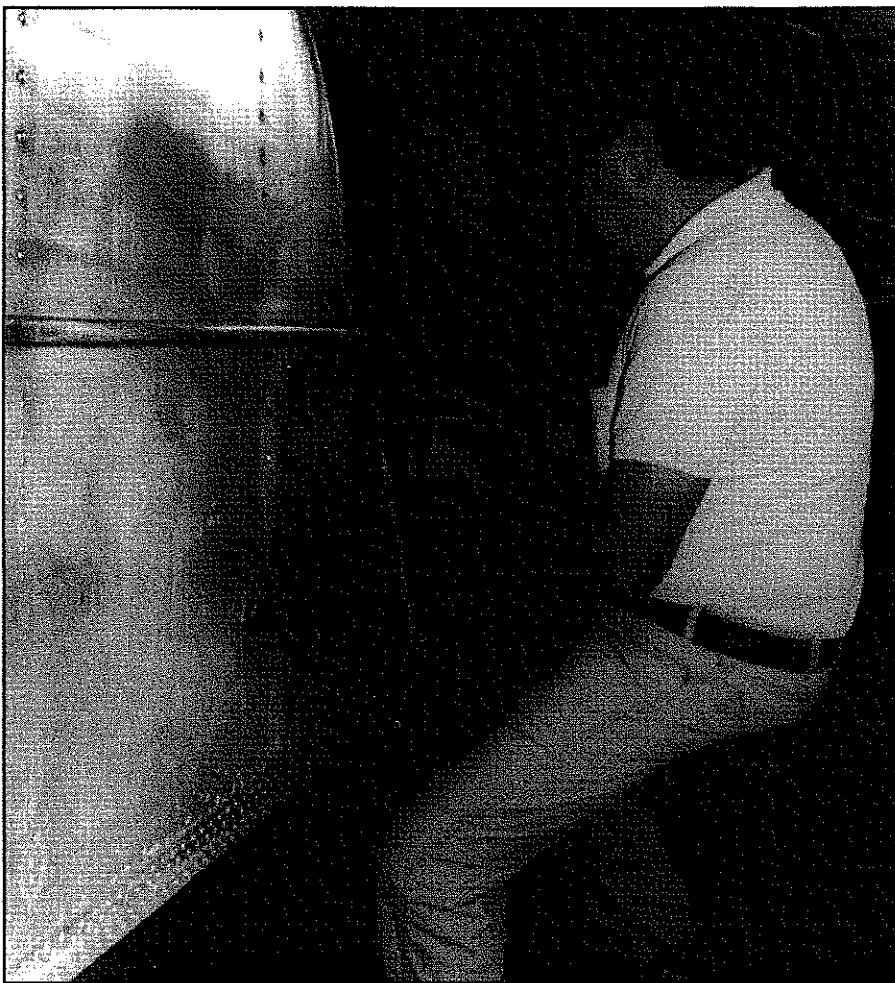
He sold it to the third owner, Carl Evers of New York City, who had the plane completely overhauled.

It did not get back to regular flying until sold to Jesse H. Knight, President of the American-Colombian Corp. Plans were to fly it to Central America. But they were cancelled. Then, at the end of March, 1941, No. 904 was sold to E. Paul DuPont, Jr. of Seaford, Delaware. Then, the coming of war grounded the craft.



Retired Col. George Damato, Air Force and Air National Guard, is handy at everything, takes a lot of kidding

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Chet Janeczek, retired aircraft/engine mechanic, handled corporate aircraft for the United Technologies Air Group. Here, he hooks up a cable at the S-39's tail wheel.

Over The Intercom

From the "Sunshine Boys" to Al Wright . . .

The private tour given to our group on July 14th was wonderful and we all enjoyed it. We were greatly impressed by the layout, cleanliness, service and courtesy shown by you, "our guide."

Signed: *Madelyn Kubrow, Social services; Cathy Cole, Recreation Director; Paul Jenson, Volunteer; And the boys (in wheelchairs): Howard Newton, Milsted Myers, Henry Trinkaus, Harold Jacob, Harry Maher, Charlie Bacher and John Reese. The Masonic Home & Hospital, Wallingford, CT.*

An Overbudget "Sinking" Airport?

Reported in September: Osaka, Japan, opened a \$15 billion airport and a glistening new terminal shaped like a wing of a giant airplane, on a man-made island in the harbor. It took many years to bring in fill for the island, building runways and all. The terminal is built on deep foundations that can be jacked up as the island sinks. SINKS? They say that is expected. And the landing fee for a 747 reportedly is \$2,000 a bounce.

Heard on TV news.

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At that point, DuPont's cousin, Maj. Sharp of the CAP took ownership on April 20, 1942. Weary after many CAP patrols, it went through a second overhaul, engine majored, fabric replaced, and repainted with the CAP insignia affixed. Its para-military days soon came to an end.

In 1946, the craft was purchased by its seventh owner, C. K. (Jerry) Halverson, of Iowa. Along with another S-39, C/N 920, it flew in his Iowa operations. While landing in a cross-wind, the port pontoon was crumpled when it hit a fence post. It remained in Milford, Iowa, was then flown to Spencer, Iowa where it was hangared, still with the crumpled pontoon. On November 16, 1946, 904 was sold again.

The eighth buyer was E. K. Nold, Jr. of Galveston, Texas. He paid \$1,000 for it, plus expenses, and flew it to Wichita, Kansas. It later had an accident requiring full hull and float repairs. Nold finally sold 904 to Clemmond Simmons of Alaska, where it flew until downed by fate.

According to a 1975 report, 904 was one of six remaining Sikorsky aircraft (excluding helicopters) at the time. The five others were listed as: Two S-43's (twin-engined, 16-passenger amphibians built in the mid-1930's and later), one belonging to Howard Hughes, and a Navy JRS1 believed to be at the NASM, Silver Hill, MD. Then there is the VS-44A now being restored at Stratford. Lastly, there were two S-39's (C/N 912 and C/N 920) still around somewhere.

Asked about the whereabouts of the S-39's today, Lachendro noted that a spare hull was being used for parts at the air museum. "Also Dick Jackson of Rochester, NH, has an S-39 which he is restoring."

However we look at it, New England Air Museum's "Jungle Jim" may have had the greatest adventures of all. ✈

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CAHA HAS EX-CAP AIRPLANE

Included in the CAHA collection of aircraft is an ex-Civil Air Patrol airplane that served with distinction during World War II -- a Sikorsky S-39B, NC-803W.

NC-803W was completed on July 31, 1930 at the Sikorsky factory in Stratford, CT, and sold to Charles W. Deeds, then a Vice President and Treasurer of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. Deeds used the airplane principally for personal pleasure, and on occasion for company business.

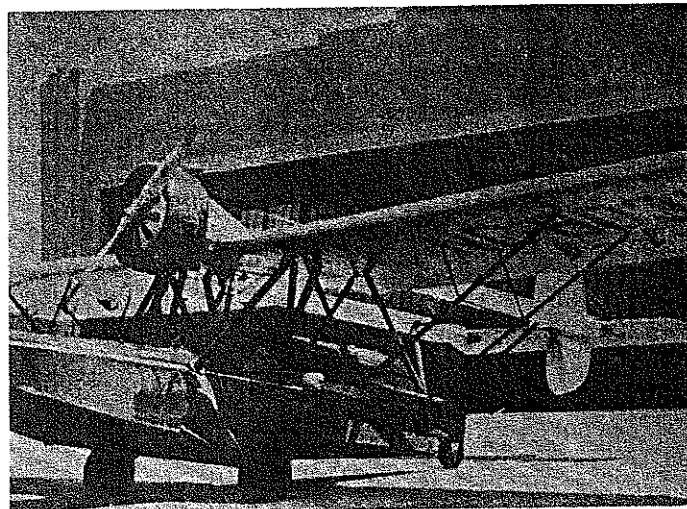
Subsequent to 1936, the airplane changed owners many times and when World War II started, it was owned by E. Paul DuPont, Jr., of Seaford, Delaware.

A cousin of DuPont, Hugh R. Sharp, Jr., was the base commander of the Civil Air Patrol, CCP #2, anti-submarine patrol base at Rehobeth, Delaware. An air-sea rescue aircraft was badly needed for rescue of downed CAP aircraft crews. Reluctantly, DuPont sold NC-803W to Major Sharp on April 20, 1942. The airplane was rejuvenated, repainted and extensive instrumentation and communications gear was installed. Bomb racks were installed to carry two 250-pound depth charges. A great morale booster for the CAP group at Rehobeth, the airplane became affectionately known as "Jungle Jim" because of the many braces and booms that resembled a child's playground apparatus.

The S-39 was soon in the thick of things, flying patrols, making rescues, and an occasional bombing. One bombing episode was notable; in Major Sharp's words:

"On one occasion she dropped six depth charges on three shuttle runs on an alleged submarine that was crippled and leaking oil. The depth charges apparently had no effect and eventually the Army and Navy were called in to take over. Several B-17s soon appeared and the Navy sent a bunch of OS2U's to join the fray. Everybody made a lot of noise and much to everybody's embarrassment, the following day it was discovered that we were all bombing an oil tanker that had been sunk there several months before and apparently one of her tanks was just starting to leak. The oil slick coming to the surface was being carried by the tide and looked exactly like a sub moving slowly under the surface."

NC-803W's great day of glory came on July 21, 1942. A CAP Fairchild 24 had crashed into the ocean. Major Sharp and Lt. Eddie Edwards as co-pilot departed Rehobeth for the crash site. Upon landing in the very rough seas, the S-39 sustained a crushed wing float and a number of bent struts. The downed pilot, whose back was broken, was pulled on



CAHA's Sikorsky S-39B, NC-803W, as it looked when it rolled out of the Sikorsky factory in 1930. (CAHA)

board, but the observer had disappeared. It was impossible to take off in the rough sea, especially with the wing float flooded. To balance out the airplane, Edwards climbed on to the opposite wing where he hung on for the many hours it took to taxi the hundred or so miles back to shore. For this heroic deed, Major Sharp and Lt. Edwards were awarded, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House, the first two Air Medals ever presented.

By the summer of 1942, NC-803W was retired from active CAP service and sold to a succession of different owners until, in 1957, the S-39 made a forced landing in a remote region of Alaska. The hull was split and the aircraft abandoned until 1963 when Mr. Phil Redden, a CAHA member from Anchorage Alaska, dismantled the aircraft and shipped it back to Connecticut. Today, the airplane sits in storage, awaiting its turn to be restored by the talented staff of the New England Air Museum.

HANGAR TALK

Back in the 1930s, an aircraft company was starting to assemble a large experimental biplane bomber for the Navy. The chief engineer wrote to the Navy suggesting that the top wing be lowered by four inches. He gave as reasons; improved visibility for the pilot, better interplane flow, and shorter and lighter struts. The REAL reason was that the top wing was hitting the overhead roof trusses of the hangar and wouldn't fit through the door.