

F.A.H.P. News, September 2, 2013

William G. Carr (1920-1957): During World War II, Bill Carr of the Los Angeles area was a Captain in the Air Transport Command and, with his crew, flew four-engine C-54 transport planes to far corners of the globe (now properly called the planet). Although very few of these planes had been delivered for domestic use prior to the war, they were actually Douglas DC-4s, and thousands were built during and after World War II. The New Castle Air Base in Delaware was headquarters for many C-54s flying from here to European and Near Eastern destinations. Early in 1944, Carr was assigned to New Castle.

Bill Carr and his young wife, Peggy, were the second couple to occupy the wartime apartment on the third floor of Auburn Heights. They “hit it off” with my parents, who treated them like family. Bill’s schedule would require him to be gone for 5 to 7 days at a time and then be home for about five days. Being very mechanical, he enjoyed what my father was doing in the shop and spent many happy hours (for them both) working on steam-related projects. When he was away, my mother enjoyed Peggy like a daughter she never had. They accompanied my parents in the Stanley Models 76 or 740 to some of the early AACA meets around Philadelphia. I was home on leave twice during their 16-month stay at Auburn Heights, so I got to know them, too, and kept in touch after World War II.

In August 1945, everything changed rapidly. The war ended, and Bill Carr’s squadron or group was transferred from New Castle or closed down altogether, and Peggy hurriedly arranged for their move back to California. Eight months pregnant with their first child, she drove alone from Auburn Heights to Pasadena, where her parents lived. Dick Carr was born shortly after her arrival. Bill got out of the service and obtained a job in the New York area flying private planes. They lived on Long Island for several years, during which time he accompanied me in the Model 607 on the 1949 Glidden Tour through Virginia. A daughter, Pam, was born about 1947.

Returning to California, Bill got a job as a test pilot for Douglas. He was happy in his job, and he and Peggy bought a nice home in Pacific Palisades. Early in February 1957, I flew to California for a 10-day vacation from the mid-winter blues. About the second day in Los Angeles, I called their home, and Peggy answered. She gave me directions and invited me to come for a visit. As she opened the door and invited me in, she said Bill had been killed the day before as his test plane crashed in the San Fernando Valley. Wow! I had read in the morning paper about the accident, but names were withheld. What was I to say or do?

She said the nicest thing I could do for her would be to take their son Dick, then 11 years old, and spend the day with him. I had a pass to go on one of the new Matson Line ships built for the California-Australia run that was tied up in Los Angeles Harbor, so that’s what we did. When we returned in late afternoon, she insisted I have dinner and spend the night. I didn’t know what to do, but I stayed and said good-bye the next morning.

I visited several times over the years at her Pacific Palisades home, and Ruth was with me in 1994. She had a wonderful friend, a doctor originally from Montana named John Goff, but they

never got married, and he died about 15 years ago. Peggy finally sold her home and moved closer to her daughter, Pam, near Lake Meade in Nevada. Dick, like his father, has been a flyer all his life. All are doing well according to Peggy's lengthy Christmas messages. I think she is 92.

Work Report: On Tuesday, August 27, the following 14 volunteers were on hand: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Ken Ricketts, Mac Taylor, Dave Leon, Anne Cleary, Tim Nolan, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Brent McDougall, Linda Herman, Gary Green, Richard Bernard, Emil Christofano, and Jerry Lucas.

The rail of the Lionel layout was cleaned, and the A.V.R.R. track on the lower side of the tunnel was checked for proper elevation and the ballast tamped. The damaged captain's chair seat was cleaned, glued, and clamped. Shingles and hardwood were prepared for starting the fire in #401 on our upcoming Steamin' Day, and this locomotive was checked over. The brass was polished on the Mountain Wagon. The top was installed on the Model 607, and a minor repair was made. The myriad of Murphy fasteners were sorted out and made ready for installation.

On Thursday, August 29, 17 volunteers answered the call: Dave Leon (in charge), Anne Cleary, Bill Schwoebel, Gary Green, Linda Herman, Ed Paschall, Richard Bernard, Jerry Novak, Steve Bryce, Tim Ward, Ted Kamen, Dennis Dragon, Gene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Jim Personti, Mark Russell, and Tom Marshall.

Our new "Diesel" locomotive, yet unnumbered, was tested, pulling a full train around the A.V.R.R. loop. About five volunteers became familiar with its operation, no problems were incurred, and it was certified to operate with passengers behind on Sunday, September 1. It appears the extensive track work that had been done since the August 4 operation paid off, as no derailments took place. The passenger car seat was screwed together and finished for upcoming service. On the Model 607, the whistle was installed. Pictures were hung in the FAHP office. The faithful 30-day Seth Thomas clock in the shop was removed in order to replace a hot water line, so while it was down, it was cleaned and oiled before being re-hung. The popcorn machine was brought to the Carriage House for its use on Sept. 1. The R.R. crossing "cross-buck" was removed for replacement, as the old one was badly rotted. The flange-ways were cleaned, and work continued in the FAHP Library. More time was spent on the pilot for the Model EX, but a persistent leak at the seat of the pilot screw is still not corrected.

The trains, one steam-powered and one "Diesel"-powered, stayed on the track on Sunday. There were no derailments with passengers aboard. Several trainees had a chance to practice on both the "Diesel" and the steam locomotive, before and after the public was carried.