



AvAr Bulletin: 004

Subject: Project Updates

Date: 07.17.06

Sterling RB-24

AvAr field agents Larry Liebrecht, Brian Richardson, Duke Sumonia, and Len Wallace arrived at the business offices of the Sterling Advocate newspaper around 8:20 am on Saturday morning, July 8, 2006, where they were met by four local residents, one being Mr. John Mangalonzo, a staff writer for the local newspaper. Joining this group later were Mr. Vern "Slim" Koester, actual witness to the 1944 event; Ms. Janet R. Mathewson, current owner of the property searched; and Mr. Robert Sanchez, staff writer for the Denver Post newspaper.

Following a later than expected start from Sterling, our procession arrived at the reported crash site around 9:40 am. Accessing the property was not difficult, but the approximate 1 ½ mile drive across open grazing land was slow going.

Although the original Army Air Force crash report identified the site as being approximately ½ mile southwest of the Flat Top Butte our guide, Mr. Koester, remembered it differently and had us positioned to search some 1 ½ (plus) miles to the West/Southwest. The area Mr. Koester identified offered nothing that would suggest a possible crash site existed: no fragmentary (glass, formed or molten metal) debris; no irregular flora growth patterns; and no recognizable terrain disturbances consistent with the crash reported.

Having traveled to this location under the impression that we would be led directly to the crash site by an actual witness, our AvAr field agents had not planned on conducting a regulated search pattern. With limited time available on site, an ad-hoc search plan was executed, several small groups moving off in different directions. Whereas everyone found some sort of debris, nothing could be positively identified as aircraft (or on-board personal effects) remains.

AvAr Bulletin: 004

Sterling RB-24 cont.

After 2 ½ hours of uncoordinated probing, covering a couple hundred acres or so, the party had to withdraw in order to attend a presentation given by Len Wallace and Duke Sumonia at the Masonic Temple in Sterling. Other than a rattle-snake skin measuring 18 inches, we found nothing of importance during this search.

The Sterling Advocate newspaper article was released in their Saturday, July 15, 2006 edition. Simply type Sterling Advocate into your favorite search engine and you should find the web address without any problem. The article is entitled “Tracking Down a Warbird,” and is authored by John Mangalonzo. Go to the toolbar on the left and check the *Search Archives* file.

The Denver Post article appeared in Sunday’s (July, 16, 2006) edition in *Denver and the West* section, under the heading of **Plane-wreck finders search for “needles” in history’s haystack**, the author being Mr. Robert Sanchez.

We are planning a return to search for the Flat Top Butte B-24, sometime later this year. You’ll be informed well in advance of the next search date. Besides the two and a half hour drive each way from Denver, this is an easy hump across relatively flat terrain. Rattle-snake threat is high, but with a large group making lots of noise it’s hard to imagine anyone having an actual encounter.

Adobe Creek Reservoir

Society members Matthew Hensarling, Larry Liebrecht and Brian Richardson will be traveling southbound to Adobe Creek Reservoir this coming Saturday (07/22/06) in order to evaluate and prepare for the AvAr search effort slated for **August 25/26/27**.

This three day event (planned for the final weekend in August) will see volunteer AvAr team members searching not only for a lost Jacobs radial engine (c.1942) from a crashed AT-17 in the lake, but also for remains of a P-38 that crashed somewhere on the shores of Blue Lake (later renamed Adobe Creek Reservoir) in 1943.

AvAr Bulletin: 004

Adobe Creek Reservoir cont.



(Left to right: Lockheed's unique P-38 'Lightning' design was able to fulfill many special USAAF requirements during WWII such as fighter, bomber and reconnaissance platform. Cessna's popular T-50 'Bobcat'/UC-78/AT-8/AT-17 trained a multitude of pilots for their multi-engine transition throughout the war years.)

If you would like to volunteer for the Adobe Creek Reservoir AT-17 and P-38 weekend search effort, please respond and state:

- Which days (Friday/ Saturday/ Sunday) you plan to attend?
- Which project you are most interested in: AT-17 (water) or P-38 (land)?
- What equipment, if any, you might have to offer: metal detector, boat, gas grill, awning, generator, mask with snorkel, volley ball and net, ice chests, ATV, etc.?

Our planning will be greatly enhanced if you let us know by August 5, 2006. As this is a "no fee" site, we'll need to grab any sites free well in advance of the weekend planned, so your earliest commitment would be most appreciated.

Future Projects

Swamped with the burden of training thousands of airmen, important Army Air Force (AAF) bases in Colorado Springs, Denver, La Junta, and Pueblo established satellite fields to handle the incredible levels of overflow activity during World War II. Created in short order, these remotely situated fields, spread across the eastern plains of Colorado, now present only a ghostly image of their wartime activities.

Japan's angry response to the 1942 "Doolittle Raid," was to launch thousands of Fugo bombs upon the United States. Censored by the press to defeat enemy intelligence, hundreds of these weapons of mass destruction reached the continent, yet only killed a handful. One that landed near Timnath, Colorado, managed to make the front page.

AvAr Bulletin: 004

Future Projects cont.

Join other members of the Colorado Aviation Historical Society Aviation Archaeology (AvAr) team as they comb through the remains of these long forgotten bases and distant fields, searching out stories for our archives. Watch for important updates in upcoming bulletins.

Send comments, corrections or submissions to aviator_b@msn.com.