

# The Aero Historian



Volume 43 Number 4

Website: <http://www.aerohistorians.org>

April 2009



**The Revell "Memphis Belle" Box Art**  
*Original Painting by Jack Leynwood*

## **Check Six Reference Relativism** *by Ken Hornby*

A few months ago Johann Allert was perusing Axel's table of wonderment, aka latest book releases, when he came across one entitled Remembering Revell® Model Kits. Looking over his

shoulder, what we discovered inside the pages of this book led to a series of discussions culminating in a conversation in which Johann encouraged me to contribute my story to his idea for this column. So let's talk about references.

I began modeling in the era after "whittle away whatever isn't a

P-38" and before the "add glue and shake the box" period. When I was about seven years old a neighbor named Gary who was about 13 or 14 took me under his wing and became my surrogate big brother. Among his interests that I emulated was model building. One day my father needed a radio tube or Bay

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**Vice-President**, Larry Donovan

**Secretary**, Merrill Anderson

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## TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held Saturday April 11, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 1:30 pm. Vendor baiting will begin about 12:30, and the food will arrive by noon, so come early.

Picture your model here! Send me a photo of your model, and it'll be used to fill these little white spaces at the ends of the columns.

## From the Vice President

*by Larry Donovan*

I'll first start off this month's epistle with some of the events coming up in our club's near future, along with some in the area and further. First don't forget April is the Annual Awards meeting in which we take time to honor those who have contributed to the success of the club in 2008. As in the past, we will have quite the spread, this year from Jimmy John's. Jeff Fries will present "Gone West" also. Food will be at Fleming by noon, so come early to socialize; eat; buy from Greg, John, and Winston; and view the models on the show table... please don't dribble the mayo on the models though! AMPS 2009 Convention is the following week-end in Le Havre Grace, Md; if you are staying closer to home you can go up to the State Fairgrounds in Falcon Heights for the Military Collectors Fair (great place to find someone selling books on aircraft, ships, armor, or figures!!).

At our May meeting we will be featuring Bernie Kugel's **Brush-paint Challenge**-models to be finished with brushes only. Our May meeting will also feature Bob Friskney's presentation on "Ditching Airlines", a topic that has been in the news lately. May 16-17 sees Blaine Aviation Weekend at the Blaine airport; with a hanger dance on Saturday May 16th. Tentatively scheduled for June, Mark Krumrey will do a presentation on his experience in Vietnam at the end of the war. The first of the club's "theme show-tables" will occur in August, **Flops and Disasters**---maybe I'll do a Fairy Battle instead of a Defiant???

I'll be frank...I have not been able to do much modeling this last three weeks; due to my injury at work I have a lovely severely strained MCL and a meniscus tear, the latter requiring surgery next month (the week after the meeting....I am not missing the meeting for anything!). I have kind of done a "throw-back" to my younger model-

ing days when I had a tray to set up on the kitchen table to do my modeling. As long as I did not spill glue or paint, AND cleaned up by the time Mom came home from school to get dinner ready, AND helped get aforesaid dinner ready, I was ok. It was way better light than the basement, and definitely not as musty and humid. So the last three weeks I have been working at a couple of kits at a time, on a tray that actually is a top of a "crafting table" I found on sale at Michael's (or it could have been Hobby Lobby). I can take it into the living room, put a "Daylight"-type lamp on it and work on my models. It is really back to basics: a bottle of Testor's or Tamiya cement; a Swann and Morton 10A scalpel; a 11 blade in the Exacto; some Squadron sanding sticks. I've had to relearn my brush painting techniques---I am, after all, not just "dotting" white drops on instrument panels, I am painting interiors, engines, tracks, wheels, wings, and what-have you.

I am relearning which acrylics DO NOT brush paint well (for me at least it is Tamiya) and which do (Vallejo). I have learned where to position myself, the tray, and the fan to blow the noxious fumes out the patio door and still not freeze in the process. It has been very educational in many ways: do I answer the phone or finish painting this horizontal stabilizer before the previous brush strokes dry (that's what answering machines are for!). And as long as I do not spill glue or paint and have all my stuff cleaned up for dinner, and help make dinner, my loving bride is fine with all this.

All in all it has been a fun experience to get back to these basics---just don't do what I did and fall off a ladder to start your "basics" journey! See you at the April meeting!!!





## Airline Chatter

by Terry Love

Almost 1200 airliners have been parked in 2008 alone as airlines cut back on their capacity. Now there are almost 2300 parked. Most of the Boeing 727s, Boeing 737s and MD-80s parked will never fly again.

Korean Air ordered 6 Airbus A-330s for \$1.06 Billion.

It's true! It finally came to this! RyanAir, the Southwest Airlines of Europe, might start charging passengers for using the toilet on flights!

Garuda Airlines of Indonesia, will lease 8 Boeing 737-800s.

Air France is considering delaying deliveries of some of the 12 Airbus A-380s on order from Airbus. They have already deferred some Boeing orders.

Delta Airlines will probably cancel the ex-Northwest Airlines order for 18 Boeing 787 Dreamliners, and replace them with Boeing 777s.

Boeing has had 31 orders for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner cancelled so far in 2009.

Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, the country's state-owned airplane maker, says it plans to begin delivering its COMAC 919 airliner before the long-awaited replacements to the Boeing 737 and the Airbus A-320. Presently its design is a DC-9 look-alike. COMAC produced components for the DC-9 and MD-80 series of airliners years ago.

Boeing has a total number of orders to date of 22, down from 190 orders that they had a year ago at the same time, and this is 10 less than the number of orders cancelled so far in 2009. SO, 32 cancellations, 22 orders – total is a minus 10 for the year. Boeing delivered 36 airliners in February.

Delta Airlines says passenger loads are dropping due to the economy. Thus, Delta Airlines is cutting its international capacity by another 10% starting in September. That means more layoffs.

United Airlines is planning to cut its international capacity by 15% in September.

Boeing says that its first delivery of the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner will be in the first quarter of 2010.

CSA, the Czech airline, posted a \$23.6 million pre-tax profit for the year 2008.

Lufthansa bought 30 Bombardier CS100 airliners with an option for 30 more. Cost is \$1.53 Billion. The CS100 is a smaller 100 seat airliner. They will enter service in 2013.

Sun Country Airlines will begin service on May 11 from Minneapolis to Branson, Missouri. This is the second airline to service Branson, Missouri. Air Tran is the other airline. Branson's airport is the country's only large privately owned commercial airport.

U S airline workers numbers dropped 6.9% since one year ago. This is the lowest number of airline workers since 1993.



***MiGs Over North Vietnam, The Vietnamese People's Air Force in Combat 1965-1975***, by Roger Boniface, Hikoki Publications, Manchester 2008 (54.95).

*Reviewed by George Mellinger*

This is a very pretty book, produced with all the talent for which this publisher is known. Within the 176 pages, I count 169 photos. Many of them are color photos taken postwar in North Vietnamese museums. Many more are portrait photos of individual Vietnamese pi-

lots, the sort of photos that might be sent to families or used in official profiles. Two photos are full page photos of official monuments to the Communist heroes. There are 25 color side views of various MiGs, most of which are accompanied by color photos of the actual aircraft. While Hikoki publishes airplane books, and this volume pretends to be such, in fact it is blatant agit-prop to memorialize the Party heroes. Thankfully, we are spared the crude "Yankee Air Pirate" abuse, but the official DRVN line has shifted and toned that down in favor of a more subtle line which will not chase off potential investors or tourists.

Sometimes such books can contain significant information interspersed with propaganda, as did the two Osprey books by Istvan Topeczer. However, very early I began to catalogue some of the most blatant blunders of this book. He reports an attack of April 4, 1965 by 46 F-105s armed with 750-bound bombs and **ground-to-air** missiles. Nikes or HAWKs? In another passage, he describes four MiG-17s attacking firing all 16 cannon at once; mighty clever for a MiG-17 which had only three cannon. At various points in his story the author mentions the 919 Transport Regiment. But then in the appendix he carelessly lists it as the 918 Regiment. Even in captioning his artwork he is utterly slipshod. In three instances he gives us perfectly nice drawings of MiG-17Fs, but calls them as MiG-21F. On another occasion he identifies it as a Chinese J-6. And sometimes he even gets his MiG-17s correct. Shortly before, he gives us three MiG-21Fs, one of which he identifies as a MiG-21PF. Alert readers will note that the artist also failed to include the AA-2 rocket rails on two of these aircraft. Later he shows he cannot distinguish between MiG-21PF, -PFM, and -MF variants. Or just doesn't care. He also seems unaware in the text, and cannot re-

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Meeting Minutes February 2009 by Merrill Anderson

The March 2009 meeting of the Twin City Aero Historians was called to order by President Dave Nelson at 1:35 PM March 14th.

### Visitors/New Members

The club welcomed back Ken Jensen, a long time member, who builds balsa and plastic aircraft. Also attending was John Henry who scratchbuilds ships. Pat Butler is forming a team for the MS Bike Ride and would deeply appreciate sponsors.

### Vendor Report

Axel briefed the club on two new books from Schiffer: Rolecall: F117 Nighthawk and Woodburners which covers the use of wood to provide power during the Second World War. From Roll Models John reported that the new tool 1/32 CzechModel P-80 Shooting Star is now available; Hasegawa has released a "Japan '46" jet-powered Shinden; and Tamiya has reissued a slightly retooled version of the Avro Lancaster. From Draw Decals Greg featured his new set covering the Ford Tri-Motor in Jefferson Air Line livery, informing the club about his research at the Minnesota Historical Society.

### IPMS/AAHS News

John Roll received from Ron Bell (Second Vice-President of IPMS-USA) a letter that contained the financial summaries of the National Conventions from 1998-2008. Additionally John has received fliers for the Butch O'Hare Chapter of IPMS (in Chicago) for that clubs show and contest in November. Axel informed the club that Noel Allard's article, "The Mohawk Aviation Co", appeared in the American Aviation Historical Society's latest quarterly.

### Showtable

The showtable was conducted by Steve Jantscher this month.

### Treasurer's Report

Dave reported that the roster is almost ready; additionally he also still has membership cards to distribute. Out-of-state members will be receiving their cards via the good ole USPS. Dave would also like members who prefer to have the newsletter mailed to them to let him or Rick Schmierer know so they can get this done ASAP.

### Old Business

1. Axel reminded the group that the Military Collectors Fair will be the third weekend of April at the State Fairgrounds in Falcon Heights.

2. Bernie gave us a Nordicon update. Bob Maderich has graciously volunteered to Chair the event. A rental agreement with the Knight's Hall, where Nordicon 2008 was held, will be signed for the date of September 19th, 2009. Additionally John Roll, our IPMS chapter contact will follow up with the Region to make sure there are no conflicts. Our theme this year will be "Moments in Time". Bernie will coordinate the judging and has planned a judges meeting the last week of July.

### New Business

1. The April meeting will feature Jimmy John's, chips and pop. This will be the annual award meeting. Jeff Fries has kindly volunteered to do the "Gone West" part of this tradition. Food will be available at noon.

2. Bernie gave an update on the TV/Projector for Fleming Terminal...as yet nothing has been purchased.



## 2009 NordicCon Update by Bernie Kugel

NordicCon is planned for Saturday, September 19th at the North Aire Banquet Hall in Fridley. The same place NordicCon was last year. It will be a judged contest, and I am getting my judging crew assembled at this time. The contest will have IPMS style categories, but depending on how many models are entered in the category, more awards will be handed out.

The theme is: "Moments in Time". It's idea is models that represent something at a certain point in time. Examples include the USS Arizona, Dec. 7th, 1941, or a Star Wars Tie Fighter, May 24, 1977.

If you are planning on sponsoring a Special Award, please let me know. The awards cost is \$40. You can sponsor them individually, or you can get a few people together and pool for the award. And if you want to sponsor an award but do not want to pick the winner, just let me know and I will take care of making sure a winner is picked. Either by me or one of my judging staff.

Vicky is planning on doing the catering again, but will not let me know what she's planning. (She likes to surprise me)

More news to follow.



A friend of a friend has a cache of old Aurora models he built as a kid in the 50's-60's. If anyone knows a collector of out-of-production memorabilia, email Bob Arko at boba@arkokraft.com.



(Continued from page 1)

Rum aftershave and I accompanied him to Snyder's Drug store where I discovered the model aisle. There I found what would be the first model I ever built, the 1/72 Revell Spitfire Mk II. On this particular box there was an error in the printing process, resulting in some very strange colors on the artwork (it was the sixties, after all). Consulting with my dad we decided what type of glue and paint I needed, settling upon

watched too many black & white reruns of "12 O'clock High", determined that B-17's should be painted: Testors Hot Rod Primer. Black and white TV show = black and white airplane. Never mind what the instructions or box art show. So I dutifully painted the Memphis Belle dark gray on top and light gray on the undersides. A tradition that would continue, (at my insistence on its correctness) even until Johann built his first B-17 in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Even after we realized we'd

even by today's standards. There are some that still inspire admiration and a desire to build a model with that paint scheme, even if its not 100% correct. My favorite artwork was, and still is, the 1/32 P-40E Aleutian Tiger - even with the now debunked purple Rufe. I still have the instructions for that kit with the black and white picture of the box art. How I wish I still had the color box top!

While box art fueled my initial enthusiasm for building, eventually I found books. Our local library had a single bound copy of Aircraft in Profile and my friends and I later found a couple of the Aircam Aviation Series books, both of which today are considered hopelessly passé. I still have sets of both series that I enjoy re-reading. By the time we were about twelve, someone got their hands on a quarterly magazine/catalog called The Squadron. We discovered a world beyond Revell, Aurora, Hawk and Monogram. These companies had exotic sounding names like Airfix, Hasegawa, and the uniquely named Frog. Inside the pages were ads for models accompanied by color(!) profiles and histories of the models.



copper and dark blue (based on the box art), both from the vast array on the only game in town, the Testors rack. It wasn't until we got home and opened the box that we realized it was supposed to be green and brown, but it didn't really matter to a 7 year old. My dad helped me build it but I painted in all by myself. It was so cool it almost didn't even need the decals, but mom insisted. I showed Gary the next day and his enthusiasm inspired me to build more.

I slowly began to get interested in the history of what I was building, relying solely on the information supplied with the models. And what information! - Whole histories of the aircraft, sometimes with full page stories of the model represented in the box. Today you're lucky if the instructions have an English translation, let alone a history of the airplane. I later got Revell's B-17 Flying Fortress "Memphis Belle" for Christmas. By now my source of references had broadened. My friend Gary, having

made a glaring error, it still looked "right." Gary eventually moved on, but I continued to build models.



At this time I didn't know what a reference was. My only source was box art. Revell was the standout in the field of glorious box art! They had some of the best

I think each of us built the colorful Matilda tank shown on the cover painting. But still, our main references came from the box art and instruction sheets. If ignorance is

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bliss, we were in model building heaven.

I don't recall how or when it happened, but our source of references took a great leap forward when we found Custom Model Hobby. They carried all these new kits from Europe and Asia and a new line of "military" paints from Testors and Humbrol, all sold to us by some goofy kid behind the counter named Mark. I can still see the irritated look on our fathers' faces as we bugged them once a month to drive us all the way over to Minneapolis so we could squander our allowance. Now we had several greens and grays to choose from when painting our Me109s and Zeroes, although we still relied heavily on the instructions for our paint references. It would be almost two decades before I found out there was such a thing as the International Plastic Modelers Society, or magazines like *Fine Scale Modeler*.

My group of friends slowly drifted away from the hobby; some returned, some didn't. I don't think it was homework, cars, or girls that drained their exuberance. I think it was when the model companies changed over from awe inspiring artwork on the boxes to laughingly poor photographs of ineptly constructed models. We've since seen the resurgence of artwork on boxes, but it's still a little stale in comparison.

Many other things have changed over the years as well. The number of manufacturers and the staggering range of subject matter they produce is amazing. Molding processes and the level of detail have improved dramatically. Ease of assembly varies by manufacturer, but still is better than in the past. Accuracy of shape is still questionable in some instances, but that is because of the increased availability of reference material - which brings me to the point of this meandering essay.

Sure, models kits today are generally more accurate and easier to assemble, but the most radical change we've been witness to over the years is in the volume of reference material now available. I've gone from a kid who had nothing but what came in the kit, to a library with dozens if not hundreds of books related to model building. Besides the internet, with its innumerable sites dedicated to the modeling community, we have multiple publishing houses catering directly to the modeler. There are magazines covering almost every niche of modeling. There are numerous series of books aimed at the modeler. You can easily find a varied assortment of books on paint schemes and some books specifically on just paint itself. Because of this plethora of material and ongoing research constantly bringing new information to light, there are bound to be controversies on any subject you choose. Until the time machine is perfected we can never be 100% certain, but it sure is fun researching it. A purple Rufe; a yellow Val at Pearl Harbor; Luftwaffe fighters with natural metal undersides? Check your references! We are truly in the Golden Age of modeling.



#### Theme Build for October 2009 Meeting – "SNAKES ON THE PLANE!!"

by Johan Allert

In keeping with the traditions of the club, I'm proposing a theme build for the month of October involving snakes. Any aircraft named after a snake (example - Sea Venom, P-39 Air cobra), markings of snakes, or carrying a weapon named after a snake (example – Sidewinder missile) will be included.

Where's Samuel L. Jackson when you need him?



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member whether his pilot is scoring a kill with a missile or his cannon, or even how many, and what kind of, cannon there are on his MiG-21. For some reason, he insists on transforming the town of Vinh into *Vhin*. For these errors I can think of no possible political explanation, and can only explain them as sheer jackass incompetence.

He does make reference to some incidents that are little known in the west. He tells us about the brief use of four Antonov An-2s as bombers to attack an American TA-CAN site in Laos, and admit the loss of two aircraft shot down. But he also mentions the use of Il-14 transport aircraft to support forward NVA troops near Khe Sanh in February, and even the use of Il-14 transports as bombers against small patrol craft. On February 12, 1968 supposedly 6 Il-14s bombed US warships and 3 were shot down, though they caused some damage. If you believe it. Several pages later, Boniface relates that in 1968, after the end of Rolling Thunder, the 919 Transport Regiment began more actively training for ground attack missions in preparation for coming offensives against the South. Doesn't he realize how inconsistent that is with the Northern denials of any hostile action against the South? He mentions the establishment of the DRVN Il-28 bomber squadron, but tells that most of its aircraft were put in storage so the pilots could fly MiGs. But then they were restored to service and an attack on an America base in Laos was flown on October 9, 1972. He also tells of the attack on American ships by MiG-17s in April 1972, of course giving a Vietnamese version of events. Another provocative tale is that the MiG-17 pilot Nguyen Bay was shot down by an A-6 while attacking those American warships! Much of this information has never appeared in American sources – or even in Toperczer's books.

There are some interesting

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hints given in his discussion of the training of Vietnamese pilots. He tacitly admits that ideological factors were most important in pilot selection. He also says that the crop of pilots who flew against the Linebacker raids of 1972 were entirely different people from those who flew against Rolling Thunder, but he refuses to attribute that to losses. In fact, on the question of Vietnamese losses, he argues out of both sides of his mouth, while also talking out his ass. He insists that the Vietnamese did not overclaim, while the Americans did. The Vietnamese won the fights but still held up under heavy losses. He takes special care to ridicule the legend of Colonel Toon, without bothering to consider whether there could be any grain of truth beneath the legend; even though he is aware of Dinh Ton. Boniface does acknowledge the role of pilots from other communist countries, particularly Cuba. However he insists they were only advisors and did not fly any combat missions. So much for other testimony I have heard of Soviet advisors, and even an ace named Vadim Petrovich Shcherbakov.

By and large, his treatment of the Americans is derisive. Though our authors are quick to admit our mistakes, many imposed by higher commanders, and to recognize en-

emy skills, Boniface does not reciprocate. He has not bothered to read either of Marshall L. Michel's two books *Clashes* and *The Eleven Days of Christmas*, both of which would have given him better insight into American mistakes and Vietnamese Victories. Nor has he consulted Toperczer's Osprey books either, though he did consult the earlier and much more polemic Squadron Signal book. But he did find Sakai's *Samurai*, and Murray's *The Luftwaffe 1933-1944, Strategy for Defeat*, somehow more relevant than can I. Nor is a book on Armor of the Viet Nam war particularly relevant, nor a number of other superficial books on aircraft by Squadron Signal, useful, at best, only for stock photos. In general his print bibliography is what I would expect of a talented high school senior, with much filler. The core of his source was his interviews with DRVN pilots and officials, and it seems that he received specially expedited access there. He is obviously "a special friend" of the North Vietnamese Communist Party. Checking at Amazon.com, I find he is credited with only three books, all on the North Vietnamese Air Force. Some other reviewer identifies him as a French Leftist journalist. The flyleaf of this book says he was born in 1958 and educated at Saint Joseph's Institution in Singapore", with further education in law in England. Whether he is French or Brit-

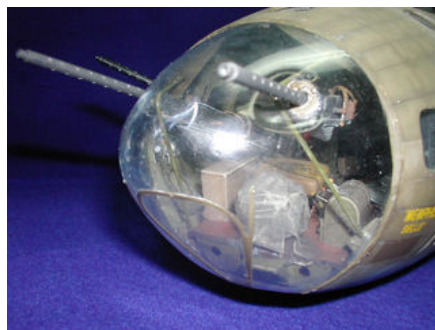
ish is unclear, but his political bias is clear. From the first pages, when he includes extraneous mythology about Ho Chi Minh's beginning to the end when he repeats accusations of Americans targeting the dikes and levees of the North, his treatment is tendentious. Inevitably, he chooses to obscure important details. He claims that peace was signed in October 1972, but the Americans continued the fight. He completely ignores the fact that America was seeking a return and accounting by the North for POWs which has still not been adequately provided. Likewise, he gives a dishonest account of the last two years of the war, after America left. No mention that Congress had terminated all aid, including ammunition and fuel. Instead we hear of large number of US troops still present, and barely escaping ahead of the Northern forces. For anyone seeking an honest story of the air war from the North Vietnamese perspective, this book does not even come close. Most of it is tendentious, and what is objectively verifiable is most often marred by errors of ignorance or indifference. This must be one of the worst aviation books of the year. The people at Hikoki who produced it owe us all a major apology. The two Osprey Toperczer books, despite some problems, are infinitely superior, and not so over-priced.



## Modeler Needs Help

I am a professional model builder in the North of England. Last year I built a commission for a client in Minnesota - the nose segment of the B-17 in 1/18 scale. It's a long story, but when it arrived at the client's house there was some relatively superficial damage to the model. It's not something the client feels he can comfortably repair, and asked me to find him someone closer to home who might take on the repairs and thus avoid another trans-Atlantic voyage. Is it possible

that one of your members might be able to take a look at it for him? I've attached a couple of photos of the piece, so you have an idea of what's needed. The client will be happy to pay a reasonable fee in



line with the original cost of the build. If you can offer a name, I'll pass on the details to my customer.

Philip Goodier

## Directions to the Club Meeting Location

**Where: South St. Paul Municipal Airport, a.k.a. Fleming Field,** located on the southern extremity of South St. Paul, south of I-494, west of Concord Street and East of Highway 52.

**If coming from the western Twin Cities going east on 494:**

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn right (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left there will be a McDonald's; to your right front there will be a Walgreen's.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .6 miles. Along the way you will encounter three more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2

miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

**If coming from east Twin Cities on westbound 494:**

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn left (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left front there will be a small strip mall; to your right there will be an Amoco station.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .4 miles. Along the way you will encounter two more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2 miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

The terminal is on the right with parking available.

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Return address requested

The Aero Historian is published monthly by the Twin City Aero Historians, Inc., a joint chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society and International Plastic Modelers Society/USA, for members and readers as part of their annual dues or fees.

The group is open to aviation enthusiasts from teenagers on up who are interested in aviation modeling, photography, collecting, art and writing. For more information contact Dave Nelson at 651-765-1914.

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:30pm.

See above for the new meeting locations and directions.

Mail Newsletter material and address changes to the treasurer.

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