



AvAr Bulletin: 016

Subject: Return to Jimmy Camp; Trinidad B-24; A Colorado Landmark is Gone; AvAr Member Makes Good

Date: August 26, 2007

Return to Jimmy Camp

As reported in *AvAr* Bulletin #015... there has been an unforeseen delay in our return to Jimmy Camp Creek. Although the crash site rests on city (Colorado Springs) land, we have to access it via the Banning-Lewis Ranch (BLR). Even though the city is excited to have us working this site, they too are limited in their access to this property at present.

In a recent development, BLR sent a proposed agreement that will require *AvAr* to have, among other things, \$2M worth of general liability insurance to cross its property. Although this request has been conveyed to the CAHS board of directors, it is doubtful they would approve such expenditure at this time.

AvAr's staff is presently exploring options with the City of Colorado Springs to get us back on the site as soon as possible. It is our belief that an amicable arrangement will be made and *AvAr* should be returning to Jimmy Camp in the not too distant future. You will be kept informed as the situation develops.

Trinidad (Monument Lake) B-24

Over the weekend of August 24/26, six members of the *AvAr* team, along with one guest, ascended nearly 1,300 feet in just 1.3 miles to reach the site of a 1943 B-24D crash. This arduous trek was accomplished not once, but twice; first on Friday, then again on Saturday.

Starting from an elevation of 9,232 feet MSL (mean sea level), and reaching a height of 10,505 feet, our team tackled some treacherous, rugged terrain in order to complete their mission: rock slides, fallen timbers, "tangle foot" underbrush, slopes in excess of 50°, not

Trinidad B-24 cont.

to mention the extreme elevations; all challenges were met and conquered by these truly intrepid adventurers. On top of this, there was an elevated threat of bear and mountain lion interaction due to the remote nature of this area, with fresh evidence of these creatures abundant during each day of the climb.

Having been to this site on several previous occasions over the past decade, **AvAr** instructor Len Wallace, led our team up to the site both days. According to Len, “the content of this site has been greatly disturbed by vandals in recent years”. Testimony to this fact was apparent in the that someone has savagely hacked the aircraft’s serial number – with an axe – from the left vertical stabilizer. Further indications of site desecration were obvious given the lack of cockpit instruments, engine and personal crew apparatus throughout the crash site. **AvAr** will forward a copy of its initial survey results to the appropriate authorities in short order.

AvAr is in contact with a number of museums that would like to have remnants from a B-24 crash site as the focal point for a memorial display. In keeping with our code of ethics, **AvAr** will attempt to negotiate an agreement between the USFS and one of these museums for a transfer of property.

Whereas last year’s Adobe Creek adventure was highlighted by its many rattlesnake encounters, the Trinidad B-24 experience will always be remembered for our team’s daily black bear visitations. Thursday and Friday nights were marked by solo raids after we had gone to bed. But on Saturday evening, while our team was in the middle of yet another fine dining experience, two very large bears brazenly stumbled into camp figuring to intimidate their way into a free meal. A warning shot, accompanied by the blast from an air horn, sent them packing.

There are several “**special mentions**” to be included in this report. First, Donley Watkins (Class of ’06) cut trail and ventured to the extreme limits of the debris field on Friday. Heavily armed and always ready to assist other members with carrying their load, Don was a welcome member to our team.

Philip Liebrecht, a **NASA** employee and brother of **AvAr** staff member Larry Liebrecht, decided to join this effort at the last minute. Although he hails from Maryland (you can’t get any closer to sea level than that), Philip was like a mountain goat – sure footed and always out in front. Discovering a number of previously unidentified elements of this crash site on exceptionally treacherous terrain, he proved an invaluable asset in the documentation of this site.

Len Wallace, at 71 years young, qualifies as an extremely rare **AvAr** asset. Not only was he resilient enough to take point on our expedition both days, he’s already planning to visit the Artesia B-29, Glenwood B-26 and Maybell B-29 crash sites this coming October, along with Mark and Sue Anderson (Class of ’06), over on the western slope .

A Colorado Landmark is Gone

For nearly forty years, patrons of the *Armory* (a popular college bar and favorite watering hole for many Weld County residents) have danced beneath the massive fuselage of a television and war movie icon, few of whom really ever knowing of its true identity. But, without warning, this Greeley landmark [literally] flew west recently, leaving many longtime admirers wondering what happened.

As one of a popular chain of “college town” drinking establishments started in the late ‘60s, Greeley’s *Armory* was decorated with an eclectic hodgepodge of movie props from Hollywood that could command a curious visitors attention for hours. The centerpiece of this particular establishment, however, was the fuselage section of a B-17 that hung over its dance floor. Acquired from a movie studio, then shipped to the *Armory* for display, this incredibly unique airplane was better known as *Piccadilly Lily*, featured weekly in the television show **12 O’clock High**. Also, unknown to many aficionados of the silver screen, this is the same B-17 that famed Hollywood stunt pilot, Paul Mantz, crash-landed in Dothan, Alabama for the original movie **12 O’clock High**, filmed in 1948.

Acquired a few months ago by the California Air Heritage Foundation, this historic property was secretly – and unceremoniously – whisked away to its new home on the left coast. Bruce Orriss, director of the abovementioned group, plans to restore and exhibit this aircraft as a mobile educational display item. He has asked *AvAr* to assist in locating much-needed components from various crash sites around Colorado in order to help complete the restoration. This request will be evaluated later in the year by *AvAr* staff only after much greater detail about the project and the California Air Heritage Foundation has been gathered.

Suffice it to say; *Piccadilly Lily* will be sorely missed!

AvAr Member Makes Good

Dionne Braxton (Class of ’06) was recently hired by Mesa Airlines as a first officer candidate. Following several weeks of intense jet-transition training into the Bombardier RJ-50, she hopes to land a domicile somewhere in the Great lakes region.

Intent on making one last *AvAr* expedition before she had to report for duty, Dionne traveled to our Monument Lake base camp, arriving late Thursday (8/23) evening, in order to make the Trinidad B-24 hike on Friday. After eight hours of arduous climbing, surveying then descent, she departed the area later that evening for Arizona, so as to begin classes on Monday morning.

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