



201 TOURIST CENTER DRIVE, PO BOX 368, HAVELOCK, NC 28532



AVIATION CONNECTIONS: NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025

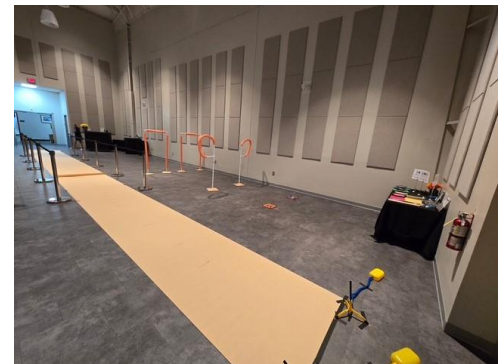
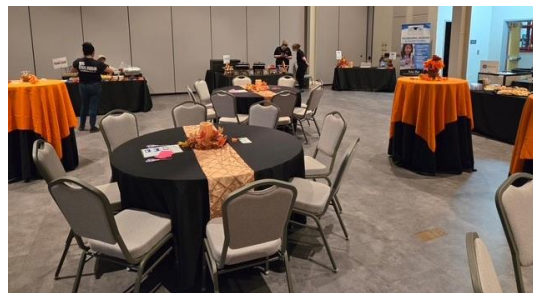
WWW.ECAVIATIONHERITAGE.COM

Eastern Carolina Aviation Heritage Foundation

OCTOBER 2025

Thanks for Joining Us at the 11th Annual Partnership Event

"Mission Liftoff: Defying Gravity"



Thank you to following caterers for providing delicious food for all to enjoy.

MISSION BBQ
The American Way.



MOORE'S
OLDE TYME
BARBEQUE
CHICKEN & SEAFOOD

SAGEBRUSH
STEAKHOUSE.

MUCHO BUENO
STREET FOOD & TEQUILA

the
FLAME

14th Annual Fly-In STEM Night

Approximately 300 people attended the ECAHF Fly-In STEM Night held on July 15, making it a successful community event. Guests enjoyed a wide variety of engaging and educational activities, including an alpaca display, AV-8 airplane simulator, robotics demonstrations, an EOD bomb disposal suite, physiology experiences, and a fire and rescue demonstration featuring the Jaws of Life, along with several other interactive stations. The evening also included door prizes and free giveaways, with the Havelock Police Department providing school supplies to families in attendance. The event not only brought the community together but also sparked interest in science, technology, engineering, and math through engaging, hands-on experiences.



STEM

EASTERN CAROLINA AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION

FREE FAMILY EVENT

14TH ANNUAL FLY-IN

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 2025
5 P.M. - 7 P.M.

Interactive STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Activities, Door Prizes, Giveaways, FREE School Supplies Provided by the Havelock Police Department

201 Tourist Center Dr., Havelock, N.C.
www.ecaviationheritage.com
252-444-4348

SPONSORED BY:
EASTERN CAROLINA AVIATION HERITAGE FOUNDATION



Board of Directors

MajGen Thomas A. Braaten, USMC (Ret)

Chair

Mary Beth Fennell

Vice-Chair

Raymond E. Dunn, Jr.

Partner, Dunn, Pittman, Skinner & Cushman, PLLC

William L. Lewis

Havelock Mayor

Brenda K. Wilson

Havelock Commissioner

Col Jimmie Green, USMC (Ret)

Marine Corps Pilot

Guy Nelson

At-Large Member

Rhonda Murray

MCAS Cherry Point
(Ex-Officio)

Adam Persky

Business Representative

LtCol Barry Fetzer, USMC (Ret)

Historian

David Rose

Fleet Readiness Center East
(Ex-Officio)

MGySgt Richard Hazlett, USMC (Ret)

Aviation Curator

Dr. Bill Fortney

NC State University

Col Ben Hancock, USMC (Ret)

Retired US Marine/Navy Seat

LtCol Edmund Hughes, USA (Ret)

At-Large Seat



Spotlight an Exhibit

AV-8B Harrier Simulator



At the Havelock Tourist & Event Center, visitors have the chance to climb into the cockpit of an AV-8B Harrier—without ever leaving the ground. The center's AV-8B Simulator, a custom-built attraction designed by engineer Greg Sabin, has become a favorite among families, students, and aviation enthusiasts alike.

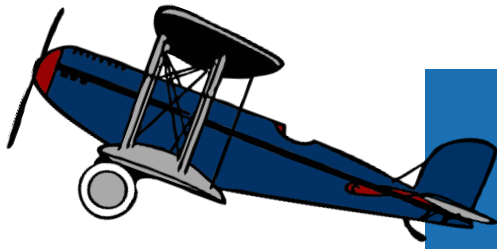
Sabin, drawing on his engineering expertise and a lifelong passion for aviation, was contracted to create the simulator to capture the excitement of flying while making the experience accessible to all ages. Carefully constructed to resemble the controls and layout of a real AV-8B Harrier, the simulator blends authentic detail with user-friendly design.

Unlike training simulators built exclusively for pilots, this one is intended to be fun, engaging, and educational. Younger participants enjoy the thrill of “taking off” and maneuvering the aircraft, while older visitors often find themselves impressed by the precision and responsiveness built into the system. For Sabin, the project was about more than just technology—it was about sparking curiosity.

“The goal was to create something that could inspire,” Sabin has explained. “A simulator gives people a hands-on way to learn, and it connects them to aviation in a way that books or displays can’t always do.”

Teachers and group leaders frequently use the simulator as an educational tool, showing students how engineering, math, and science all come together in aviation. At the same time, families and tourists see it as a unique adventure, something they can only experience in Havelock.

By combining engineering skill with creativity, Greg Sabin has given the Havelock Tourist & Event Center a signature attraction—one that celebrates the city's strong aviation heritage while providing fun and inspiration for visitors of every age.



2026 ECAHF Gala

February 20, 2026

ECAHF

Mission and Vision Statement

ECAHF Mission Statement: The Eastern Carolina Aviation Heritage Foundation honors aviation history and inspires and cultivates the next generation of leaders in aerospace.

ECAHF Vision Statement: An aviation heritage center that educates, inspires, and connects the community through the preservation of history and interactive STEM programs.



2025
National
Night Out
October 7th





Gotta Keep 'Em Separated

2026 ECAHF GALA

Friday, February 20, 2026 @ 5:30 p.m.

Havelock Tourist & Event Center
201 Tourist Center Dr.

Join us for an evening of fun, fine food, and fellowship while promoting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in our community.

Proceeds from the event benefits the Eastern Carolina Aviation Heritage Foundation (ECAHF) in our efforts to inspire youth to pursue new and exciting career pathways through STEM education.

Individual Tickets : \$60.00
tax included

Sponsorships Available

Doors Open at 5:30 p.m.

Dress: Business Casual

Visit www.ecaviationheritage.com for more information
Email: events@havelocknc.us or call 252-444-4348

Does Charles Lindbergh visit Fort Bragg, NC on his Guggenheim Tour-1927?

Fall 2025

ECAHF Newsletter Update

By Barry R. Fetzer
ECAHF Historian

Two years ago, in the Winter 2024 ECAHF Newsletter, I wrote about Lindbergh visiting NC (possibly flying into Pope Field in Fayetteville).

I mentioned in that 2024 newsletter (available for your review here: <https://ecaviationheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Final-Winter-2024-February-ECAHF-Newsletter.pdf>) that I was presently in possession of a cut-off wooden prop that had been in possession of my brother-in-law. But its provenance could not be determined.

Why would my brother-in-law's father, a veteran of both WWI and WWII, Army artillery and infantry officer have a cut-off wooden prop displayed in a position of honor in his home, a prop that was inherited by my brother-in-law from his dad (and then also displayed prominently in HIS home), and a prop my brother-in-law ultimately gave to me?



Fetzer Family photo.

A little about this prop. An engraving of a four bladed symbol on the left of the hub of this prop with the letters USAAS, is likely the abbreviation for the US Army Air Service.

According to Wikipedia, "The United States Army Air Service (USAAS) (also known as the 'Air Service', 'US Air Service' and before its legislative establishment in 1920, the 'Air Service, United States Army') was the aerial warfare service component of the United States Army between 1918 and 1926.

"It was established as an independent but temporary branch of the US War Department during World War I by two executive orders of President Woodrow Wilson: on May 24, 1918, replacing the Aviation Section, Signal Corps as the nation's air force; and March 19, 1919, establishing a military Director of Air Service to control all aviation activities. Its life was extended for another year in July 1919, during which time Congress passed the legislation necessary to make it a permanent establishment. The National Defense Act of 1920 assigned the Air Service the status of 'combatant arm of the line' of the United States Army with a major general in command."

So, based on the stamped engraving "USAAS" on Colonel Wishart, Sr.'s prop, its age can likely be bracketed between 1918 and 1926.



Was the prop a gift from Charles Lindbergh to my brother-in-law's father during a Lindbergh visit to Fort Bragg? What other reason could there be for an infantry officer to display a cut-off wooden prop from the early days of army aviation?

There were many questions yet to be answered about this visit that had photographic evidence of Lindbergh meeting with my brother-in-law's father, Francis Eli Wishart, US Army.

Photographic evidence, yes, but no official records of Lindbergh visiting Fort Bragg during his Guggenheim Tour, celebrating his iconic first solo flight across the Atlantic.

So far, I can find no evidence that Lindbergh presented old wooden props as gifts to dignitaries like my brother-in-law's father who was a representative of the governor of NC at the time the below photo was taken.

Those who have been in the military know that gifts to dignitaries are commonplace, and perhaps even more so in the past before regulations were enacted by Congress to restrict the monetary value of such gifts that may be accepted by government officials.

ROBESONIAN

County Since 1870

Monday, August 8, 1993

Vol. CXXIV — No. 138

50 cents



Contributed photo
Col. Eli Wishart of Lumberton at Fort Bragg with famous aviator Charles Lindburg. It is believed that Horace Barnes took this photograph.

Lumberton man contributed to rise of air travel in state

Photograph of a front-page article from the August 8, 1993 edition of the Lumberton, NC paper, The Robesonian. Photo is titled "Colonel Eli Wishart of Lumberton at Fort Bragg with famous aviator Charles Lindberg." Note crowd behind this photo of the Spirit of St. Louis, circa 1927. Also note that Lindbergh's name is misspelled, leaving the "h" off his last name. Apparently, he was not famous enough to have his name spelled correctly! Photo attributed to photographer Horace Barnes.

How about artificial intelligence (AI)? Could AI confirm that Lindbergh presented wooden prop gifts? AI did provide an answer when I asked it the question. Here was its response:

“Yes, Charles Lindbergh did present wooden propellers as gifts during his Guggenheim Tour. The tour was sponsored by the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics, and Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis to promote aviation and stimulate interest in commercial air travel. While the specific mention of wooden propellers is not explicitly stated in the sources, the tour aimed to enhance public perception of aviation and Lindbergh as a pioneer in the field.”

All that is pretty *general* information and certainly not the concise and complete information (with sources) for which I was looking.

As I mentioned in that original 2024 column I wrote for the ECAHF Newsletter about this mystery, “One thing, of many things, enjoyable about being an amateur historian (in my case, there is a strong emphasis on the word “amateur”), is the thrill of the hunt, the searching for facts, the sleuthing for evidence, and finally, if I’m persistent and lucky enough, the discovery of truth and reality.”

I may never find the truth and reality about this prop. The mystery of its provenance highlights why we need to ask questions about what our parents and grandparents experiences were before they pass on to the Great Beyond. My brother-in-law, to his own admission, was too busy with his own life to ask his father about the provenance of this prop. Then his father died and it was too late.

There are clues, though. AI says Lindbergh did gift wooden props although it can cite no sources that confirm this “fact”. Colonel (at the time) Francis Eli Wishart, Sr., my brother-in-law’s father (and his wife), held on to this prop through many years away from home at war and ensured his son inherited the prop, providing some evidence of its, at least, emotional value. When the above photo was taken, my brother-in-law’s father was the military aide to the Governor of NC, most likely representing the governor at his meeting with Lindbergh. Lindbergh was probably more likely to gift a prop to the highest elected official in the land—the Governor—to help promote the growth of aviation, the primary goal of his Guggenheim Tour around the United States following his solo flight across the Atlantic.

Dr. Richard Feynman, one of the inventors of the atomic bomb and the winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, wrote, “[We {scientists} have to learn] how not to fool ourselves—of having utter scientific integrity.” He meant that in proposing theories, scientists must show and report the good points of their theories as well as the bad points. He continued in his writing, “I’m talking about a specific, extra type of integrity that is not lying, but bending over backwards to show how you’re maybe wrong [about your theory].”

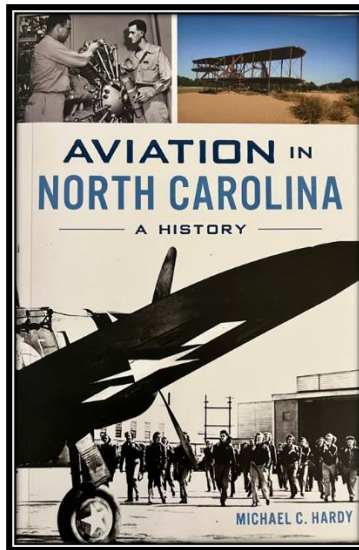
Likewise, historians have to be careful to not fool themselves and “wish” something into being, hence the above clues being nothing but subjective, even speculative, especially because neither can I find any legitimate sources indicating that Lindbergh did, in fact, give cut-off wooden props as gift, nor can find references to Lindbergh flying into Fayetteville, NC during his Guggenheim Tour. The official itinerary of Lindbergh’s flight into NC during the Guggenheim Tour does not include a landing at Pope Field or Fort Bragg.

Of course, it must be taken into account that above photo of Lindbergh and Wishart together could have been mislabeled and the photo was actually taken in some other NC

location other than at Fort Bragg or Pope Field. On the other hand, Lindbergh, being an Army officer himself, could very likely have made an unscheduled flight into Pope Field during his Guggenheim Tour flights across NC.

In pursuing this mystery further, I wrote a NC writer who has authored and recently released a fine history of aviation in NC, entitled, appropriately, Aviation in North Carolina—A History (The History Press/Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, SC, 2025), by Michael C. Hardy.

By the way, as of this writing, I'm a third-way through reading Mr. Hardy's book and find it an easy read for anyone interested in aviation history and a book well-documented and sourced with an excellent bibliography. I highly recommend it.



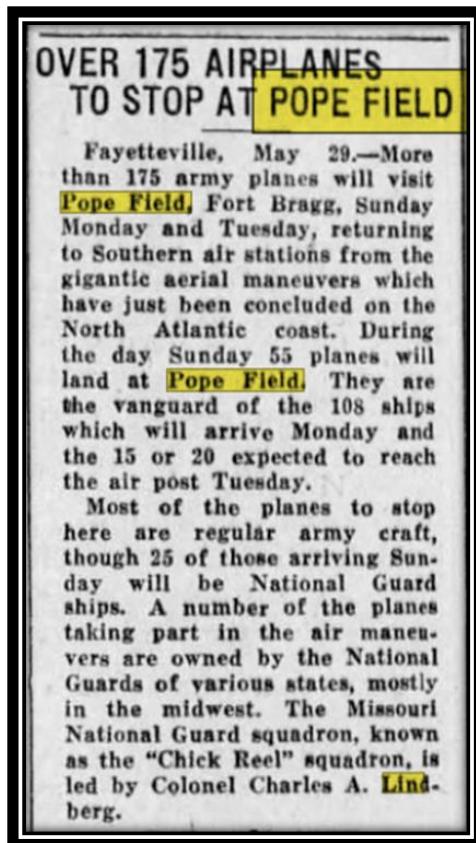
Cover of Hardy's book on NC aviation history. Mr. Hardy was the 2010 NC Historian of the Year.

I sent Mr. Hardy a copy of that 2024 ECAHF Newsletter column on the subject of the cut-off wooden prop and Lindbergh's alleged visit to Fayetteville. Here is what Mr. Hardy wrote in response to my initial communication with him.

"Barry – thanks for the note and the article.

"I find three references to Lindbergh visiting North Carolina. The first was the big stop in October 1927, when he visited Greensboro and Winston-Salem (writer's note: this was during the Guggenheim Tour). The second came in December 1928, when he and Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd flew to Rockingham County to bird hunt. The third came in April 1929. Lindbergh was on his way to a funeral in New York and spent the night in Greensboro. None of those place him that close to Pope Field or Camp Bragg, or but it is possible. Lindbergh is sometimes hard to track in newspapers due to his popularity. With his record-breaking flights and the kidnapping of his child, he appears quite frequently.

"Now, there is an article in *The News and Observer*, dated May 30, 1931, that talks about 175 planes visiting Pope Field on maneuvers. The article does not say that Lindbergh visited, but it does end with this sentence: 'The Missouri National Guard squadron, known as the 'Chicken Reel' squadron, is led by Col. Charles A. Lindberg.' I have attached the article.



News and Observer article about Lindbergh, courtesy of Michael C. Hardy. Note that Lindbergh's name, again, was misspelled in this article, leaving off the "h" at the end of his name.

"As you probably already know, just about every major flier in that golden age of aviation visited North Carolina. That was a real treat uncovering all of those events. I think I have in my notes someplace other pieces of props being given to Tar Heels. Have you checked with the NC Museum of History in Raleigh to see if they have a piece? I will need to dig a little deeper into my notes.

"Thanks again for the note and I look forward to hearing from you."

So, there's much more "sleuthing" to try to find the real answers about Lindbergh's possible visit to Fort Bragg/Pope Field and whether the old, cut-off, wooden prop has his "fingerprints" on it. I think the answers are out there somewhere, at least I hope they are, and I will keep trying to find them and report back to the ECAHF membership with new discoveries.



Help us save aviation history and encourage kids to pursue STEM education.

<https://ecaviationheritage.com/aviation-history/>



Please Join ECAHF Each Year

ECAHF needs your support to share the story of the advancement of military aircraft and those who have made it possible in eastern North Carolina. Your membership helps to provide resources to encourage students to acquire science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills through interactive exhibits and programs.

Together, by joining forces as members of ECAHF, we will help honor Marines' vital mission in advancing military aviation, a mission they've accomplished since 1942 when MCAS Cherry Point was commissioned as a USMC airfield. In addition, your membership will help influence a new generation of aviation enthusiasts and skilled workers for the future. Be a part of this challenging and exciting mission.

Annual Membership

- Co-Pilot (Student) \$25.00
- Pilot (Single) \$35.00
- Squadron (Family Membership) \$50.00
- Wing (Business/Group Membership) \$250.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Payment Method: Cash Check Credit Card

Please call with credit card payment.

Visa or MasterCard Only

252-444-4348



Havelock Tourist & Event Center

201 Tourist Center Drive

PO Box 368

Havelock, NC 28532

Visit us online:

<https://ecaviationheritage.com/>

Email us at:

events@havelocknc.us

