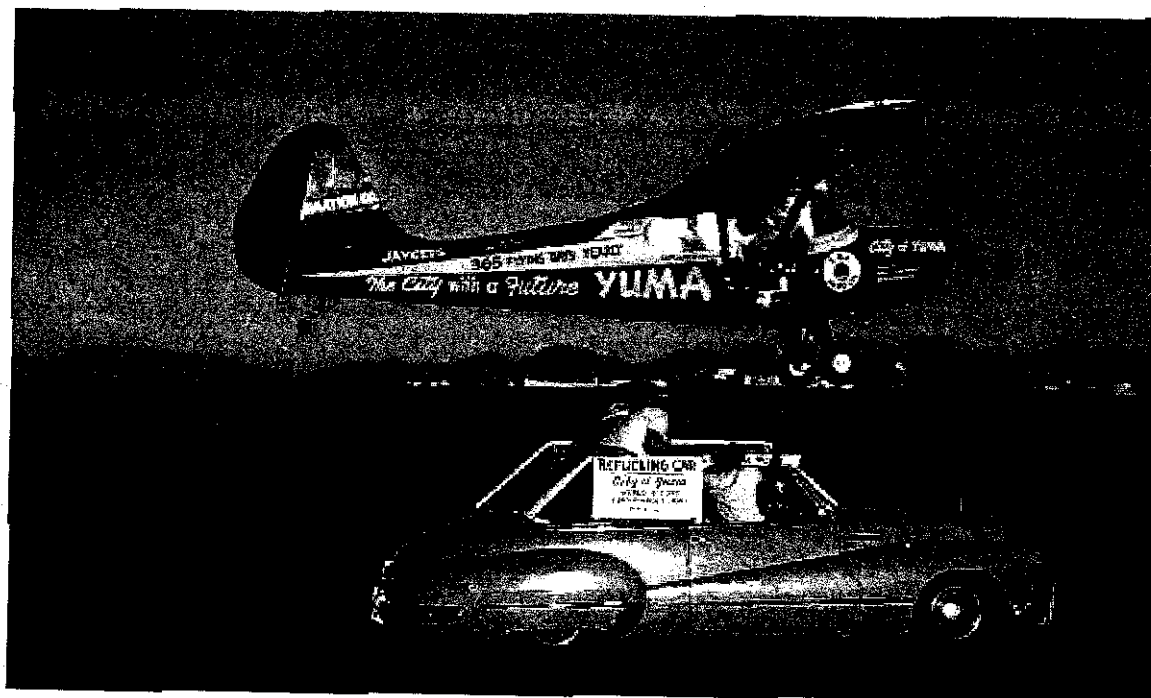
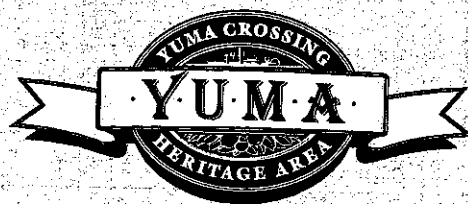


THE LEGACY OF THE
"City of Yuma"
ENDURANCE FLIGHT



City of Yuma 1949 Endurance Flight
August 24th - October 10th, World Record of 1,124 Hours (47 days)



THE LITTLE TOWN THAT COULD

On October 10th, 1949 at 3:23:05 PM, Woody Jongeward, Bob Woodhouse and the "CITY OF YUMA" Aeronca airplane landed after setting a new world endurance record by staying aloft 1,124 hours and 17 minutes (almost 47 days). They had flown non-stop a total distance of 89,920 miles, equivalent to 3-1/2 times around the equator.

At the end of their record flight, a crowd of 15,000 spectators and "Yumans" came to witness the occasion. Both pilots were found to be in good physical condition although each had lost a few pounds. They had been on a special diet and exercise program prescribed by Dr. Ralph Irwin. Their diet consisted largely of milk, fruit juices, lean meats and cooked vegetables.

Ray Smucker, a local radio personality and Arizona Junior Chamber of Commerce President, had conceived the idea of the flight to promote the excellent flying weather in the Yuma area, thereby facilitating the return of the military installations in Yuma. Claude Sharpsteen II offered to lend his new Aeronca airplane. Marsh Aviation and Paul Burch equipped the airplane for its long flight. Penn Sign painted the airplane. The Valley Café provided free meals for the fliers and the meals were delivered by the police department. Union Oil provided the gasoline and oil. Horace Griffen, the local Buick Dealer, donated the Buick convertible to use as a refueling car. The airplane crew consisted of the pilot, Bob Woodhouse, and volunteers Ray Smucker, Dr. Ralph Irwin, and Paul Burch.

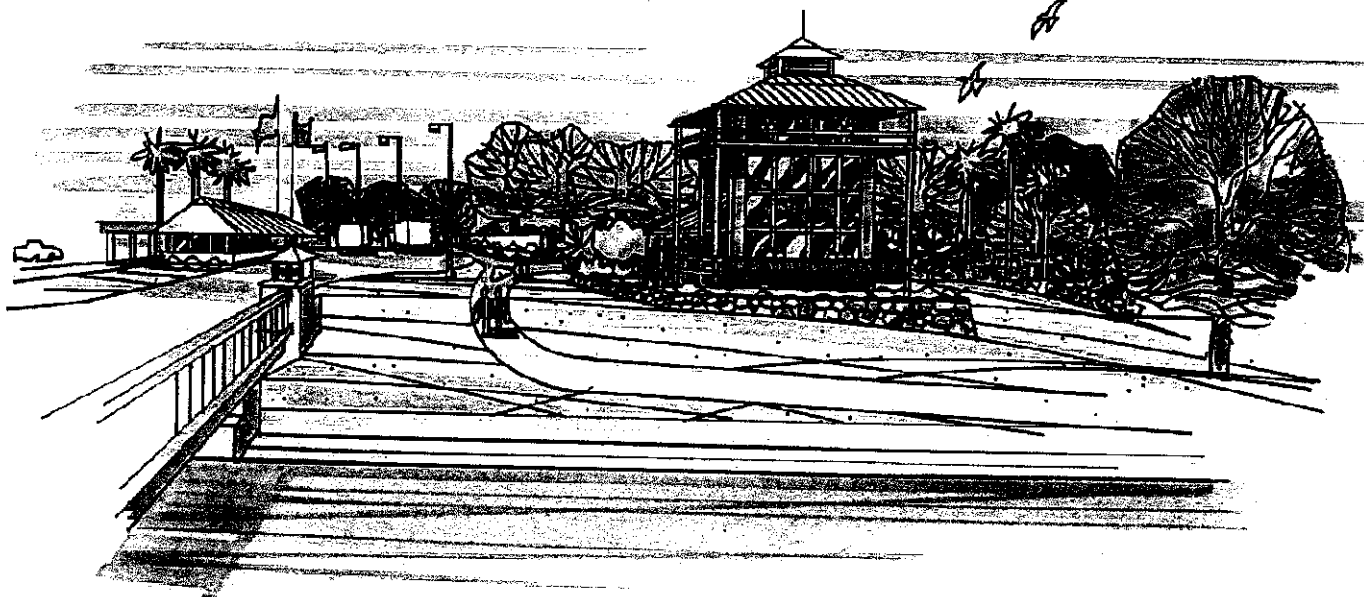
At that time, Yuma was a city of only 9,000 people. It, therefore, had to be a genuine community-wide effort. Altogether, there were approximately 600 volunteers. Everyone else in the Yuma community and southern Arizona either helped in some great or small way by showing their encouragement and hailing the fliers on.

Minutes before old record of 1,008 hours was to be broken, a similar airplane painted the same red color landed giving the onlookers a harrowing moment until they saw that the airplane had no lettering on it. Ten minutes later the old record was broken.

On October 10th, the "CITY OF YUMA" did land because of magneto failure. Airplanes have two magnetos for safety reasons. Soon after the flight, the technical experts responsible for the engineering modifications flew the "CITY OF YUMA" and tore down the engine for inspection. The engine, after 145 million revolutions, was found to be in excellent condition. The oil consumption had been between 3/8 and 7/16 of a pint per hour, which is quite normal. The engine had, in fact, run two times past the manufacturer's recommended overhaul period without even a change of spark plugs, however regular maintenance was done on the airplane in-flight, including oil changes and cleaning of the spark plugs.

As a result of these efforts, the military returned to Yuma, and today Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma and the Yuma Proving Grounds are important foundations of the Yuma economy.





BRINGING THE AIRPLANE HOME TO YUMA FOR ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

As time passed, people lost track of the Aeronca. With the impending 50th anniversary of the original flight, many Yumans wanted to find the airplane and bring it back to Yuma. The Yuma Jaycee Foundation, thanks to the efforts of Elmer Kettunen, Jim Gillaspie, Horace Griffen, and Orville McVey, was able to find the original "CITY OF YUMA" in Minnesota. They purchased the airplane in July 1997 and brought it home to Yuma.

The airplane was dismantled and fully restored to the appearance and specifications that it was in during the 1949 flight. In the spirit of the original flight, all the restoration work were completed by volunteers, as was the planning for the commemorative flight. Members of the original 1949 crew, including the pilots, were active participants in the commemorative flight. Huge crowds attended the re-dedication ceremonies at Yuma International Airport for the 50th Commemorative Flight held on October 8th through 10th, 1999 and watched the Aeronca once again fly over Yuma. A community now ten times the size still had a special place in its heart for the airplane that helped shape Yuma's destiny.

A NEW HOME FOR THE "CITY OF YUMA" ENDURANCE FLIGHT AIRPLANE

In 2000, The Jaycee Foundation began a search for a permanent home for the "City of Yuma". As it turned out, a new generation of Yuma volunteers were able to get the Yuma Crossing designated as a "National Heritage Area" and were working to improve the historic downtown and riverfront. During the planning for the Heritage Area, there was strong public sentiment that the "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight airplane be featured in the proposed Yuma Welcome Center on the west side of 4th Avenue as the gateway to Yuma from California.

This plan was approved in 2002, and many groups enthusiastically pledged their help. The city government agreed to purchase the land for the new Welcome Center and help with the development of the museum. The Yuma Visitors Bureau agreed to operate the Welcome Center once it was constructed. It is anticipated that the State of Arizona will play an important role in the construction of the Yuma Welcome Center. The Yuma Welcome Center is intended to showcase the rich and diverse heritage of our community.

Meanwhile, as part of the Welcome Center partnership, in 2005 the Yuma Jaycee Foundation agreed to donate the "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight airplane to the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation. A joint committee is working to showcase the airplane until the Welcome Center is built, and will be working to tell this story in a lively and exciting manner.



HELP CONTINUE THE SPIRIT OF THE "CITY OF YUMA" ENDURANCE FLIGHT!

The story of the Endurance Flight lives on. Our generation of Yumans can now make sure that the story of the "City of Yuma" Endurance Flight airplane will never be lost and will be re-told from generation to generation in the Yuma Welcome Center. If you wish to volunteer or donate toward the development of the museum of the "City of Yuma", please contact the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible.



Published by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area - Produced by Ingram Design & Associates, inc. Photos courtesy of the Yuma Jaycees • www.aztecfreenet.org/enduro49/
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