

Strategic Air Command Reminder!

Coming to **Blu-Ray** and **DVD** October 18. Preorder at Amazon!



September 4th, 2016 | Tags: [James Stewart](#), [Strategic Air Command](#) | Category: [Movies](#) | **Comments are closed**

Visiting the Stratobowl

Mt. Rushmore, Needles Highway, Custer State Park, the Stratobowl. The what?

Yep, the Stratobowl. A trip to South Dakota's Black Hills is not complete without a trip to the Stratobowl – at least for me. This is where my husband's eyes roll and he goes, "oh, that place again." Located right off of US-16 as you enter Black Hills National Forest, most tourists drive right by, not knowing the historic spot they've just missed (just past Putz & Glow Indoor Mini Golf – I had to add that...).

The Stratobowl was home to a dozen manned research balloon launches from 1934 through 1959. The large depression was selected to help with the launches, shielding the balloon from wind gusts as it was prepared for lift-off. If you look at a **Google Map** of the area, you'll know when you're near: Strato Bowl Drive, Stratosphere Lane, Gondola Road. The bowl itself is private property, but there is a gravel public road that will take you to the bottom.



The best view of the Stratobowl isn't in the bowl itself, but from the ridge above. There is a national forest gravel trail that will take you to the same overlook constructed in the 1930s for balloon launch viewers. If you go, there isn't a parking lot. Look for a gate and possibly some vehicles parked off of the side of the road (we had 2-3 dog walkers and other hikers when we visited). It's a beautiful view and you'll also see a National Geographic plaque and granite stones for each of the launches from the bowl. From the lookout, you'll also see the trout stream that pilot Maj. William Kepner noted would be ideal for a launch site.

On your way there, visit the **South Dakota Air & Space Museum** at Ellsworth AFB in Rapid City. In addition to having a great museum, check out their Stratobowl exhibit.



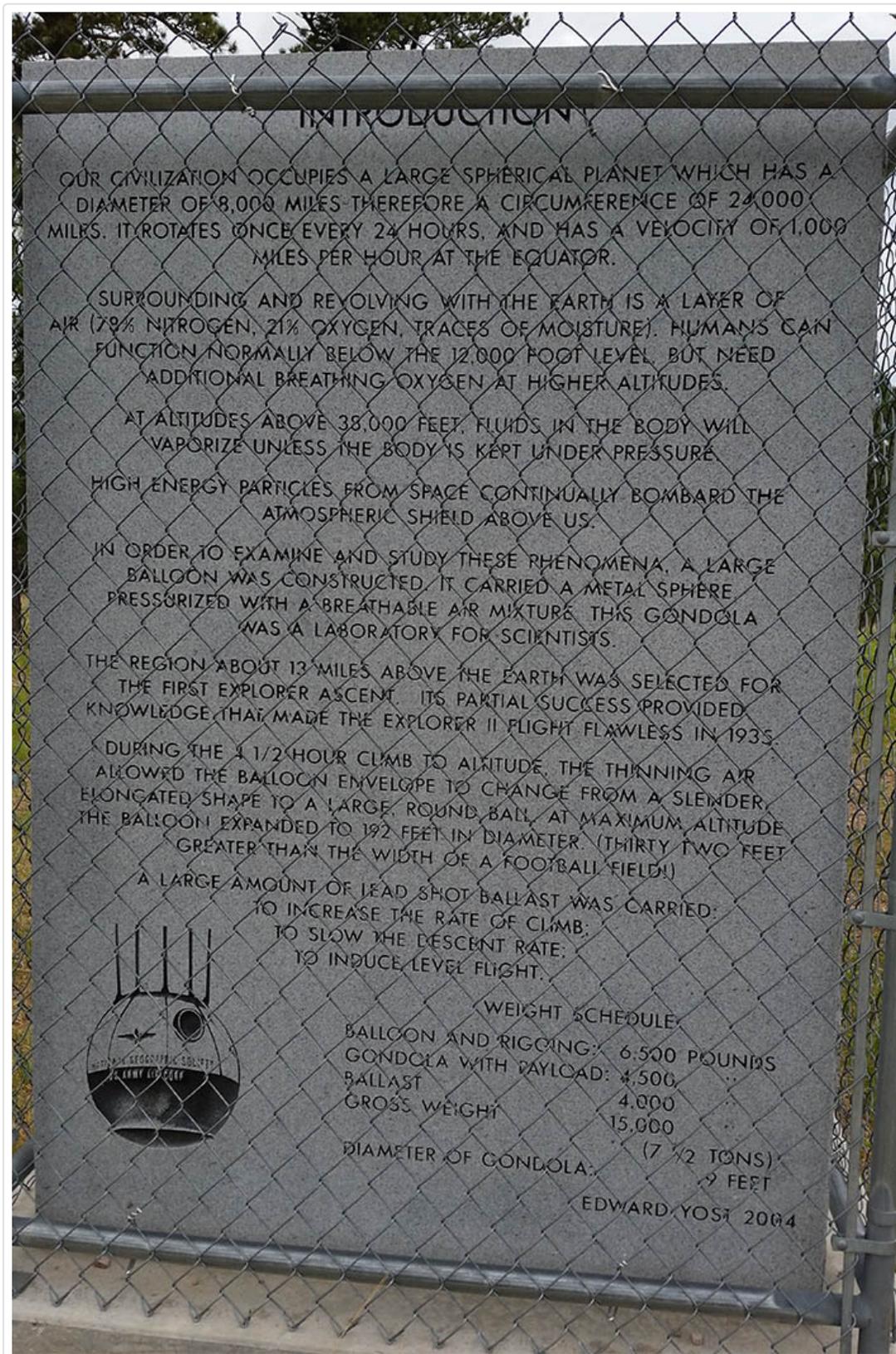
View from the trail



A view of the Black Hills



View of the bowl



There is a series of granite slabs, each with the story behind each launch at the Stratobowl. Sadly, they're all behind a fence, making them hard to read.



National Geographic Society Plack for 1935 Explorer II launch

August 7th, 2016 | Tags: [South Dakota](#), [Stratobowl](#) | Category: [Museums](#) | [Comments are closed](#)

Iven Kincheloe Mackay Trophy – Airman Magazine

Airman Magazine has an extensive collection of photography on [Flickr.com](#) for download. Recently, they posted an issue from **August 1957**, including a blurb on Iven Kincheloe being awarded the Mackay Trophy. Kinch earned the trophy for his altitude breaking flight in the X-2 in September 1956 :

AIRMEN IN THE NEWS

MOST MERITORIOUS →

For his flying skill and mastery of the exacting climb technique needed to coax the most out of the extremely short fuel supply of the Bell X-2 research aircraft, jet ace Capt. Ivan C. Kincheloe, Jr. was awarded the 1956 Mackay Trophy. Now an Experimental Flight Test Officer at ARDC's Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB, Calif., Captain Kincheloe last September "pressed well beyond the highest altitude ever before achieved in a piloted airplane," the citation said. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, former Air Force Chief of Staff, made the presentation.



FAMILY PLAN

T/Sgt. Clyde Burgess and his wife, Phyllis, are "sending" patients at the 7373rd USAF Hospital, Chateauroux AB, France.

Complete equipment for broadcasting radio shows within the confines of the hospital was recently installed, and then collected dust for lack of an announcer. The Burgesses, both of whom had previous radio experience, decided that both the patients' morale and their unused talents needed a shot in the arm.

They volunteered to devote three hours daily off-duty time to the radio project. Result: three professionally presented record shows daily with scripts and patter by the Burgess team.

The station library boasts 2800 records, supplemented by dozens from Burgess' personal collection, and a professional cataloging job by the distaff member of the team which allows filling a request within 30 seconds.

It's duty above and beyond the call and in the words of Lt. Col. G. L. Hekhuis, Hospital Commander, "They've proven to be one of the greatest morale factors this hospital has ever had."

INVENTION, ANYONE?

Webb AFB, Tex., jet engine change team presently holds the world's record time, slightly over six minutes, for accomplishing the feat.

And it seems reasonable to assume that a good portion of the credit for their speed may well rest with S/Sgt. Weldon M. Barton, even though he isn't a member of the team.

Barton, a member of the 3560th Field Maintenance Sq. at Webb, has devised 11 inventions and improvisations which assist in speeding engine changes and repairs. All are being utilized in the Webb engine shop.

August 1957



IN A HUMANITARIAN INTEREST

The 1956 Cheney Award for an act of valor, extreme fortitude or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest performed during the preceding year, has been presented to M/Sgt. Leonard J. Bachetti.

The citation read, "For his valor and extreme fortitude in rescuing survivors from the flaming wreckage of a C-124 aircraft which crashed at Charleston AFB, S. C., on October 3, 1956. Being the first to reach the scene of the accident, M/Sgt. Bachetti unhesitatingly climbed into the burning aircraft and guided two dazed airmen to safety. Despite intense heat and danger of explosion, he twice reentered the aircraft and rescued two other airmen who were helplessly trapped in the flaming wreckage. The heroism and selfless humanitarianism displayed by M/Sgt. Bachetti reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

Additionally Bachetti recently received the Soldier's Medal in recognition of his heroic act.

BUDDY, TAKE A BOW

Here's a new twist. In a recent ceremony at Landstuhl AB, Germany, T/Sgt. Blaze Lazzara stopped a presentation ceremony cold with his generosity.

Lazzara was presented the Commendation Ribbon for his work in locating nearly three miles of buried communications cable at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, late last fall.

After Col. Joseph C. Dillow, 2nd Comm. Gp. Commander, had pinned the ribbon on Sergeant Lazzara, the non-com startled the assemblage by calling forward A/2C Robert Gridder and A/2C David Batts and explaining to the awarding officer that they were the two men most responsible for his obtaining the honor.

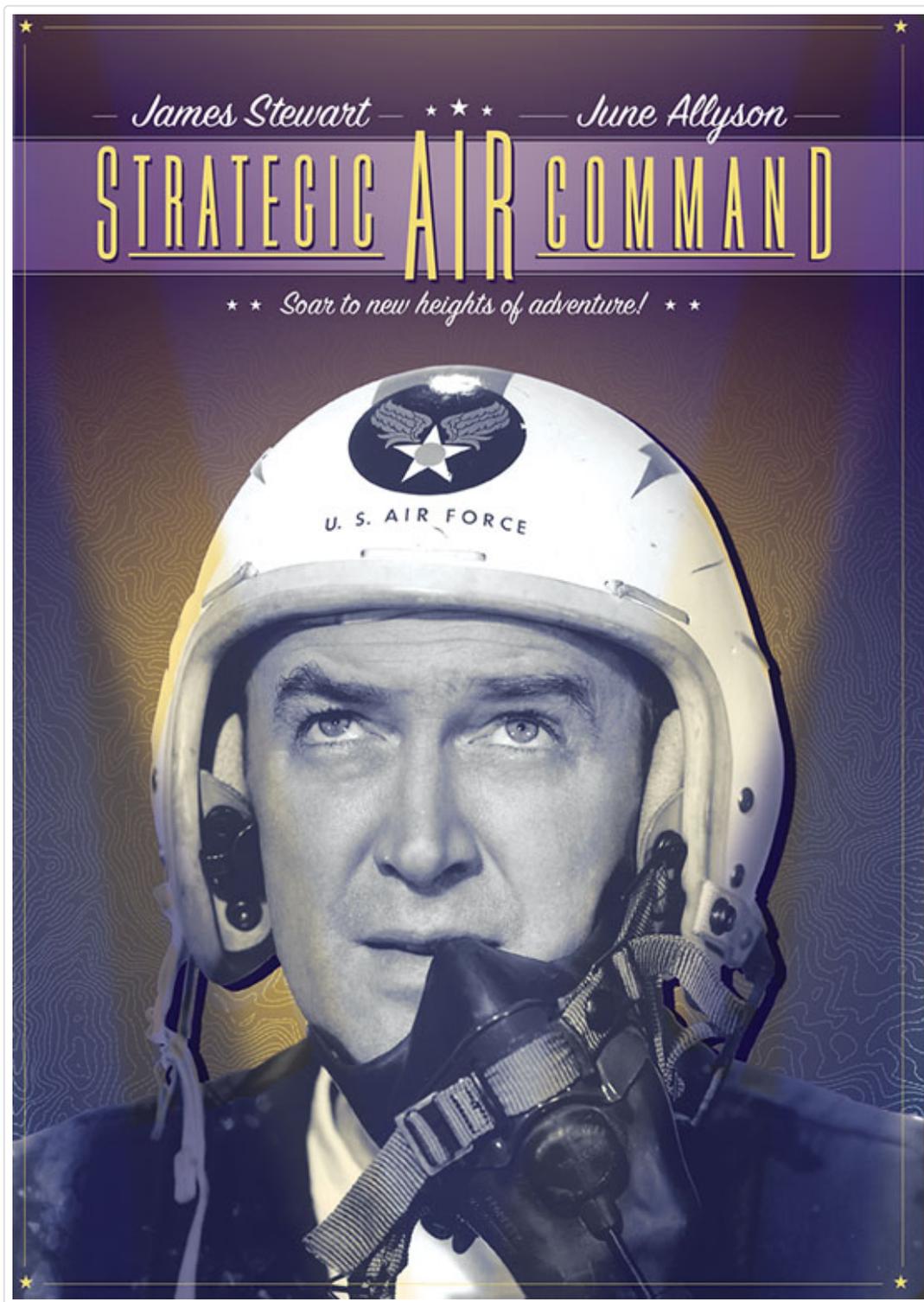
33

Full Page/Issue – Airman Magazine

August 5th, 2016 | Tags: [iven kincheloe](#), [Mackay Trophy](#), [X-2](#) | Category: [Edwards AFB](#), [Iven Kincheloe](#), [Test Pilots](#), [X-2](#) | [Comments are closed](#)

Strategic Air Command Coming to BluRay and DVD

Finally, Jimmy Stewart's "Strategic Air Command" is coming to BluRay and DVD on October 18. More information on [Olive Films' website](#). It's been a pretty good year for aviation movie releases to DVD!

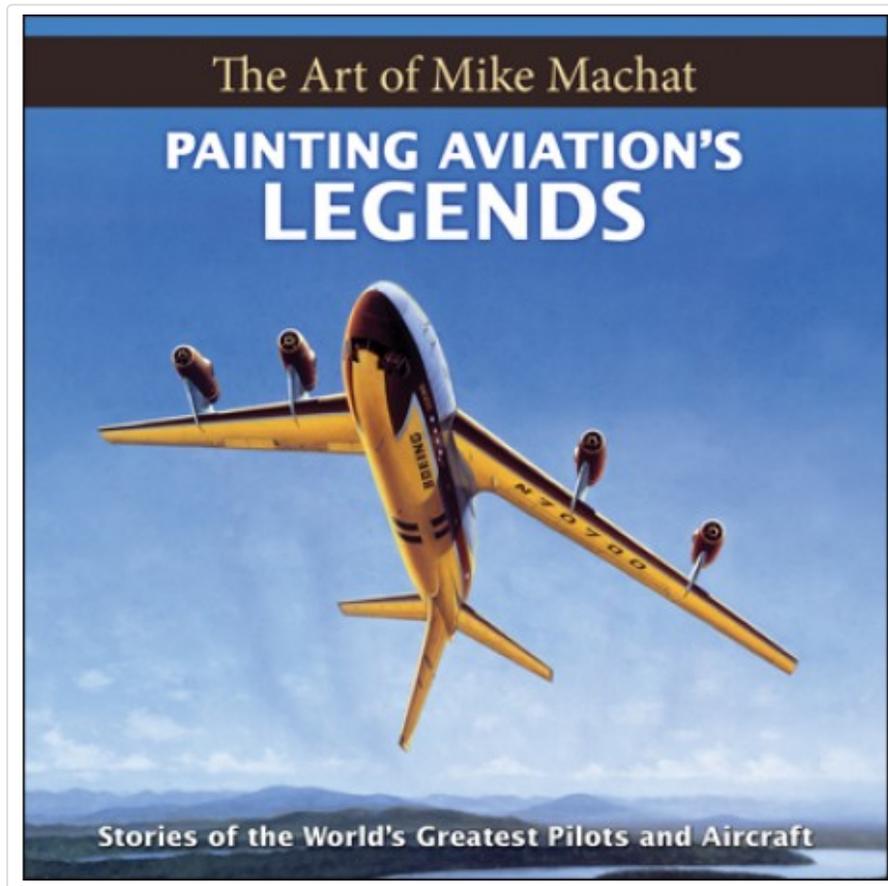


August 4th, 2016 | Tags: [James Stewart](#), [movies](#), [Strategic Air Command](#) | Category: [Uncategorized](#) | [Comments are closed](#)

Painting Aviation's Legends: The Art of Mike Machat

My favorite artist (and interior decorator, lol) is Mike Machat. He recently released a book with stories behind his paintings – including many of his X Plane/Edwards AFB pieces...and more. I just finished reading the book and highly recommend you pick up a copy (available at [SpecialtyPress.com](#)).

For the *Toward The Unknown* fans out there, Mike talks about all of the hidden TTU scenes in the “The Golden Age of Flight Test” mural at the AFFTC Museum.



July 4th, 2016 | Tags: [mike machat](#), [Toward The Unknown](#) | Category: [Edwards AFB](#), [Flight Test Book Club](#), [Toward The Unknown](#) | **Comments are closed**

X-2 “Flight To The Future” Movie

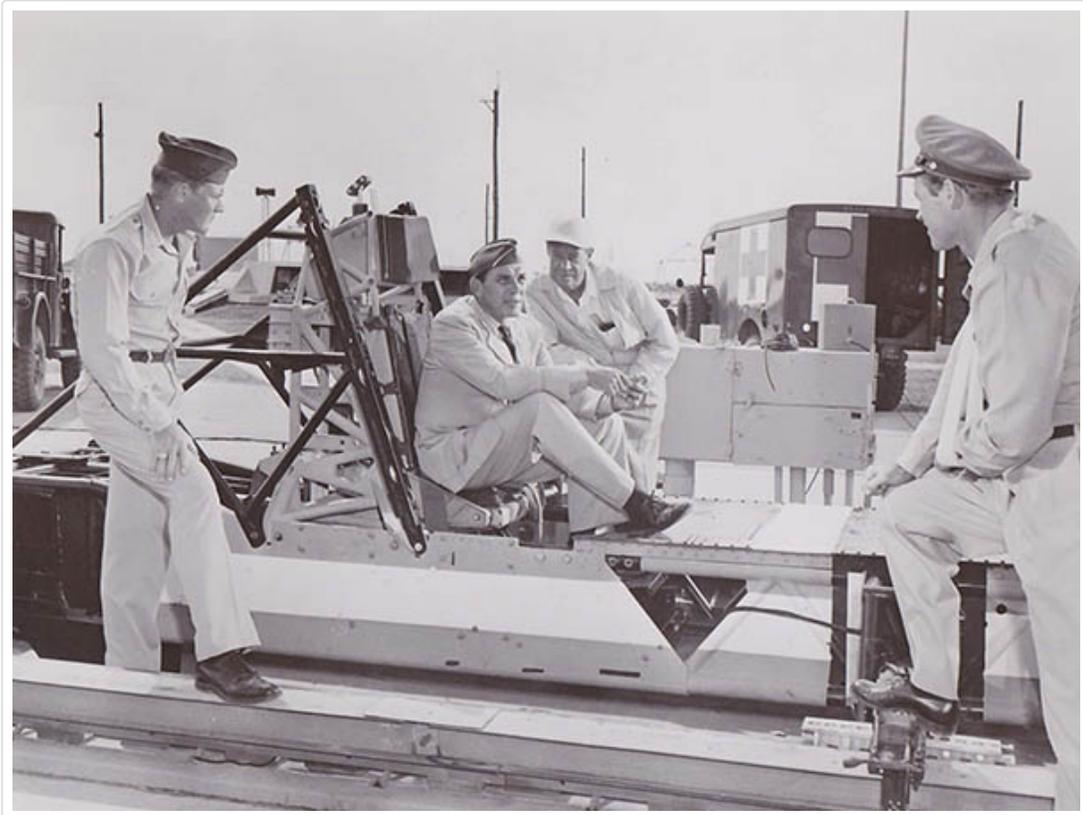
“Flight to the Future” was just posted to YouTube from the San Diego Air & Space Museum archives. 21 minutes of vintage X-2. Thanks to Chris for letting me know about this!



July 2nd, 2016 | Tags: [edwards afb](#), [pete everest](#), [X-2](#) | Category: [Edwards AFB](#), [Pete Everest](#), [X-2](#) | **Comments are closed**

On The Threshold of Space Coming to DVD

An often forgotten flight test movie is finally coming to DVD May 10 – *On the Threshold of Space*. Released in 1956, it's essentially a story based on John Paul Stapp & all the fun stuff he was involved with at Holloman AFB: rocket sleds & high altitude balloons. Rumor has it it will be pan & scan vs. the original widescreen – hope not. Learn more at ClassicFlix.com.





April 20th, 2016 | Tags: [holloman afb](#), [John Paul Stapp](#), [On The Threshold of Space](#), [sonic wind](#) | Category: [Movies](#) | [Comments are closed](#)

You Bet Your Life, Col. Stapp

I love the old television game shows – Groucho Marx’s *You Bet Your Life*, *What’s My Line*, and *The Name’s the Same*. While they sometime make the rounds on DVD or late night on the Game Show Network, YouTube is a great source for these shows. I was happy to run into a YouTube channel last night full of *You Bet Your Life* shows. What’s even cooler about these shows is that they were on TV during the golden age of flight test. It’s not uncommon to find episodes with record breaking test pilots of the time.

This particular clip is not of a test pilot, but someone just as famous and important, Lt. Col. (and later Col.) John Paul Stapp. In this episode is from March 29, 1956. Lt. Col. Stapp gets grilled by Groucho about his “big run” at Holloman in 1954.

You Bet Your Life #55-27 Colonel Stapp, fastest sled rider in the worl...



April 9th, 2016 | Tags: [holloman afb](#), [John Paul Stapp](#), [sonic wind](#) | Category: [Edwards AFB](#), [Movies](#) | **Comments are closed**

A Gathering of Eagles now on DVD

For the aviation movie buffs out there, *A Gathering of Eagles* is finally on **DVD**. I've seen the movie a number of times off of VH and I think half the time scenes were cut or there was a million commercials. Odd to finally watch a movie that's complete and looks great. Widescreen as well. I'm half way through the movie and aside from Mary Peach coming off whiny, it's a good watch & authentic – real B-52s, real missiles.





March 30th, 2016 | Tags: [A Gathering of Eagles](#), [movies](#) | Category: [Uncategorized](#) | [Comments are closed](#)

60 Years of Going Toward The Unknown

Toward The Unknown is my favorite movie. Yeah, you probably know that already. It's always interesting at work when you have a meeting icebreaker and you go around the room and say your favorite movie. While most folks mention some movie that came out last year that you never heard of, I mention my fav and have to append an elevator speech to it: "A 1956 movie about a rocket plane and test pilots at Edwards Air Force Base. William Holden's in it." The millennials go "oh" and the other folks go "ah" when they hear William Holden.

60 years ago this Fall, Toward The Unknown was released in theaters. 60 years later, I think it's safe to say that folks haven't forgotten about the movie. I can base that on all of the emails I've received over the years. Many remember watching it on the Late Late show, others looking for a copy.

For years, many folks tried to get TTU on DVD. Finally, around 5 years ago, WB released it. Soon after that, **TCM** started showing it, and in HD. To this day, I record it each time it's on – and even have a locked, saved copy on our DVR at all times. Watching it in HD, I'm always watching the background for little details like names on lockers and models on desks.

Edwards AFB has been having fun with the anniversary too, showing behind-the-scenes photos on **social media** – even stuff I haven't seen. Yep, leave it to Carrie to get all excited over a 60 year old picture she's seeing for the first time.

Anyhow, watch the website & blog for more info this year!



March 10th, 2016 | Tags: [edwards afb](#), [Toward The Unknown](#), [TTU 60 Years](#), [william holden](#), [X-2 60 Years](#) | Category: [Edwards AFB](#), [Movies](#), [Toward The Unknown](#), [X-2 60 Years](#) | **Comments are closed**

[« Newer Entries](#)

[Older Entries »](#)

