

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 2, 2013

**William G. Carr (1920–1957):** During World War II, Bill Carr of the Los Angeles area was a Captain in the Air Transport Command and, with his crew, flew four-engine C-54 transport planes to far corners of the globe (now properly called the planet). Although very few of these planes had been delivered for domestic use prior to the war, they were actually Douglas DC-4s, and thousands were built during and after World War II. The New Castle Air Base in Delaware was headquarters for many C-54s flying from here to European and Near Eastern destinations. Early in 1944, Carr was assigned to New Castle.

Bill Carr and his young wife, Peggy, were the second couple to occupy the wartime apartment on the third floor of Auburn Heights. They “hit it off” with my parents, who treated them like family. Bill’s schedule would require him to be gone for 5 to 7 days at a time and then be home for about five days. Being very mechanical, he enjoyed what my father was doing in the shop and spent many happy hours (for them both) working on steam-related projects. When he was away, my mother enjoyed Peggy like a daughter she never had. They accompanied my parents in the Stanley Models 76 or 740 to some of the early AACA meets around Philadelphia. I was home on leave twice during their 16-month stay at Auburn Heights, so I got to know them, too, and kept in touch after World War II.

In August 1945, everything changed rapidly. The war ended, and Bill Carr’s squadron or group was transferred from New Castle or closed down altogether, and Peggy hurriedly arranged for their move back to California. Eight months pregnant with their first child, she drove alone from Auburn Heights to Pasadena, where her parents lived. Dick Carr was born shortly after her arrival. Bill got out of the service and obtained a job in the New York area flying private planes. They lived on Long Island for several years, during which time he accompanied me in the Model 607 on the 1949 Glidden Tour through Virginia. A daughter, Pam, was born about 1947.

Returning to California, Bill got a job as a test pilot for Douglas. He was happy in his job, and he and Peggy bought a nice home in Pacific Palisades. Early in February 1957, I flew to California for a 10-day vacation from the mid-winter blues. About the second day in Los Angeles, I called their home, and Peggy answered. She gave me directions and invited me to come for a visit. As she opened the door and invited me in, she said Bill had been killed the day before as his test plane crashed in the San Fernando Valley. Wow! I had read in the morning paper about the accident, but names were withheld. What was I to say or do?

She said the nicest thing I could do for her would be to take their son Dick, then 11 years old, and spend the day with him. I had a pass to go on one of the new Matson Line ships built for the California-Australia run that was tied up in Los Angeles Harbor, so that’s what we did. When we returned in late afternoon, she insisted I have dinner and spend the night. I didn’t know what to do, but I stayed and said good-bye the next morning.

I visited several times over the years at her Pacific Palisades home, and Ruth was with me in 1994. She had a wonderful friend, a doctor originally from Montana named John Goff, but they never got married, and he died about 15 years ago. Peggy finally sold her home and moved closer to her daughter, Pam, near Lake Meade in Nevada. Dick, like his father, has been a flyer all his life. All are doing well according to Peggy’s lengthy Christmas messages. I think she is 92.