

BOOK REVIEW

“Winners’ Viewpoints: the Great 1927 Trans-Pacific Dole Race”

By G.W. Hyatt

Foreword by William V. Davis, III

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Cover photograph shows Art Goebel (L) and William V. Davis, Jr. after their Dole Victory

This book, part of the Oldairfield.com[®] Books 21st Century Editions series, is derived from the author’s work over the past decade with the Register of the Davis-Monthan Aviation Field, Tucson, AZ. The Register is a folio-sized, leather-bound book that recorded, by hand, air traffic into and out of the Airfield between 1925 and 1936.

The author’s Web site, www.dmairfield.org, celebrates the Register, its people, aircraft, events and places of the Golden Age of Flight. One Register signer was Arthur C. “Art” Goebel who, with navigator William V. Davis, Jr., placed first in the Dole Race from Oakland, CA to Honolulu, T.H. during August 16-17, 1927. They flew a new Travel Air 5000 named *Woolaroc*.

Unlike two earlier books about the Dole by Forden (1986) and Scheppler (1988), this book focuses on the lives of Goebel and Davis. If you know about the Race, they, and second-place pilot Martin Jensen and navigator Paul Schluter, were the only ones of a dozen or so starters to make it across the Pacific. The others crashed on takeoff, returned, or were lost at sea.

Following an insightful Foreword written by Davis’s son, the first chapter offers three significant personal views of the Dole. There are two accounts drafted independently by Goebel and Davis immediately following the event. The third is a 15-page personal love letter penned by navigator Davis to his sweetheart during his return by sea to the U.S. from Hawaii. This heartfelt and moving letter is faithfully preserved and beautifully crafted into Hyatt’s book in Davis’s own handwriting, including the envelope!

The second chapter is a reprinting of Goebel's slim biographic volume entitled "Art Goebel's Own Story." Goebel's 36-page book, published in 1929, charms readers today with its honesty, simplicity and significant understatement. It also exhibits 47 black and white photographs that have not benefitted from the light of day for 80 years. Besides aircraft and people, we see images of motorcycles, automobiles, radio equipment and dress from the era. Goebel's story, like the love letter, is seamlessly integrated into "Winners' Viewpoints", preserving his original formats, fonts and pagination.

Chapter three focuses on the life of W.V. Davis, Jr. He was an accomplished naval aviator before the Dole who enjoyed a long and responsible career with the Navy through the 1930s, WWII and after. This chapter is enhanced with personal recollections, anecdotes and photographs provided by the Davis family.

The fourth chapter summarizes Goebel's flight activities as recorded in the Davis-Monahan Register. It provides an original look at the airplanes he flew and the landings he made at the Airfield between 1928 and 1931. These workaday activities and machines demonstrate in microcosm the airborne life of many Golden Age pilots. Chapter five describes the color scheme, fittings and fate of the *Woolaroc*, which today rests in a museum in Bartlesville, OK.

This book is unique, not only because of new information, but also because of creative presentation. Besides the 47 images in Goebel's book, it includes 29 additional vintage photographs provided by the Davis family and several other contributors. The Afterword by Carl Gregory of the Tulsa Air & Space Museum, and an annotated bibliography by the author, conclude this attractive, enrolling and concise exposition of these "Winners' Viewpoints."

References Cited

Forden, Lesley. 1986. "Glory Gamblers: The Story of the Dole Race." Nottingham Press. Alameda, CA. 194 pp. ISBN: 0-913958-03-04.

Scheppler, Robert H. 1988. "Pacific Air Race." Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington, DC. 148 pp. ISBN 0-87474-832-1.