

miss scarlett

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BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE HEROIC EXPLOITS OF COLONEL BEAUREGARD P. BUTLER, C.S.A.F., WHO ACTUALLY INVENTED THE AEROPLANE, DESTROYING ONCE AND FOR ALL THE CHERISHED YANKEE MYTH OF KITTYHAWK.

A little known fact of history is that Colonel Beauregard P. Butler, inventor of the Mint Julep, also was the inventor of the world's first heavier-than-air flying machine. This will no doubt come as a shock to those steeped in the myth of Kittyhawk, but it is axiomatic of modern life that yesterday's cherished beliefs are today's jellybeans.

Beauregard P. Butler was a true Renaissance man. His far-ranging interests included not only drinking and flying, but also Mah Jong (at which he was a world-class competitor), skittles, and girls. Considered a nefarious miscreant by Atlanta society, his amorous exploits were the talk of the town and he is known to have pinched Scarlett O'Hara's empennage assembly at the Debutante Ball in 1860. Asked why he would do such a thing, he replied simply, "Because it was there . . ."

But I digress. Here we must concern ourselves with Butler's aerodynamic genius and the factors which led him to the invention of the aeroplane.

The War Between The States interfered with Beauregard P. Butler's life to a considerable degree. Conscripted into a Georgia regiment of the Army of Tennessee, Beau soon found himself cold, wet, and hungry, in a muddy trench near Chickamauga. Not only was there not a drink of likker to be had, but the cussed Yankees were doing their best to kill him. All in all, it was not a proper place for a roué to be, glorious cause or no glorious cause. So Beauregard P. Butler, like many a dog-face soldier before and after him, began to figure ways to get out of the infantry. And, like many another, he decided to apply for the air corps. "Better," he reasoned, "to live in fame

or go down in flame than to be in this C.S. outfit." Besides, he rather fancied the idea of wearing scarf and goggles, with maybe riding boots and a Sam Browne belt. It was the air corps for old Beau.

Imagine, then, his surprise and alarm when he found out there wasn't any air corp! "Great God Amighty!" thought Beau. "There ain't no way for Gen. Bobby Lee to win this thing without air support!" And right away he began sketching out a flying machine. Beau had been a modeler before the War made balsa hard to get, and it didn't take him long to come up with a pretty good design which he showed to Gen. Braxton Bragg, Commander of the Army of Tennessee.

Now Gen. Bragg, whatever faults as a military strategist the historians have laid at his feet, was no dummy. Naturally, his first reaction was that young Butler had gone daft; but the more he thought about it, the more he could see that a flying machine might just give him the advantage he needed to blow the Yankees right out of Chattanooga, right on up to Ohio, or wherever it was they came from.

He knew that U.S. Grant had taken over command of the Federal Army that occupied Chattanooga. He also knew that Grant had a penchant for strong drink and he figured if he could send some kind of flying contraption swooping down from Lookout Mountain, it just MIGHT get the Yankee general so shook up that he'd take to drinking. And if he could get Grant drunk, ANYTHING might happen. Sober Yanks were crazy enough but a drunk Yank . . . ? The possibilities were endless.

So he put a fatherly arm around Beauregard's shoulder and said, "Soldier, I am going to give you \$100 Confederate. I want you to go on back down to Atlanta and invent us this flying machine you're talking about.

And if you invent us a good one, I'll transfer you out of the infantry and give you a promotion to boot. But hurry. Them damn Yanks are not going to hold still forever." The world little noted nor long remembered what transpired at this meeting, but at this precise point in time, the aeroplane was born.

Beau took the night train to Atlanta. His folks were right glad to see him and let him set up a shop in the garage behind the plantation. "I reckon," said his pa, "if old Beau can invent us something that will help run them cussed Yanks off, it won't hurt the Ford none to stand out in the weather."

Beau's modeling experience and his innate genius set him in good stead. Using back copies of RCM for reference, he soon came up with what appeared to be a practical design. Very much like a model it was, but big enough to haul a man inside, provided he had toted up his Reynolds numbers correctly. Construction was mainly of light but strong Magnolia. The wing spars were cut from grit trees, because of the grits' straightness and high tensile strength. It wasn't long before he had the framing complete, and sitting there in the garage, on Honda wheels with a big one-lung Briggs and Stratton up front, it looked for all the world like an overgrown model.

Beau covered the flying surfaces with muslin, installed a barrel seat (the forerunner of the bucket seat) and painted the whole thing red and gray. He named her *Miss Scarlett*, even though that faithless tart had taken up with his cousin Rhett. By the time October rolled around, he was ready for testing.

The morning of October 2, 1863, dawned bright and clear, and the big moment was at hand. Beau pulled the one-lunger through a couple of times and it sputtered to life, setting up such

'Miss Scarlett' flies the stars & bars. Yankee beware, that 24 pounder is not loaded with sofa pillows . . . !



Save yore Confederate money, boys . . . the South's gonna' rise (like fly) agin! Beau's 'Miss Scarlett' proves that yesterdays cherished beliefs are today's jellybeans

a ruckus you would have thought a fox had got at the chickens. Beau had to scramble to get back in the cockpit and *Miss Scarlett* bumped off across the field with old Beau fighting torque. Pretty soon, though, the tail came up and at about 40 mph, she broke ground.

Old Beauregard was pretty busy there for a while . . . first one wing would dip, then the other and he like to have stalled her out right off the bat. But it wasn't long before he got the hang of it, and by God, there he was FLYING, just like a big S bird. He tooted her around a bit, then took her up high to see if he could spot his house in town but he couldn't.

Satisfied, he cut the engine and let her come down. His landing was rough and it was a good thing he had the nose skid, because the contraption tried to nose over. But nothing was hurt, including him, and Beau calculated it was a dang sight safer than getting shot at by Yanks or even

driving for that matter.

He hauled *Miss Scarlett* back to the shop for final touches, not the least of which was a 24 pounder naval cannon which he bolted to the wing, right where he could take a good sight down the barrel. That would give the Yanks a start! Then he wired Gen. Bragg that he was on his way and took off right down the middle of Peachtree Street, headed for Chattanooga. About an hour later he spotted Lookout Mountain, majestic in the autumn mists. He took a bearing on the summit figuring he would come in just over the top of the mountain, swoop down the side and let the Yanks have a volley of grape shot right in the GHQ.

Old Beau pulled her up some to clear the peak, and in an instant *Miss Scarlett* came hurtling over the top. There was some kind of a terrible fight going on below, with the Yanks trying to storm up the side of the mountain and the Rebs mowing them down as fast as they came. But the thin gray

line was having its troubles.

Well sir, when Beau and *Miss Scarlett* came roaring over the mountain, a weird thing happened. Withing two shakes the battlefield was clear, not a soldier to be seen. Yank and Reb alike had dived into their holes, sometimes into the same hole, out of fear of the Thing In The Sky. Beau circled low over the entire Tennessee Valley and there wasn't a creature stirring. The whole battle had come to a screeching halt and a deathly stillness had settled over all. Where the dusky tumult of war had raged there was now only an eerie silence

Suddenly, in one of those rare flashes that sometimes come to men, Beauregard P. Butler had the stunning realization that he was tampering with the sweep of history, that he was **warping time itself**. He sensed that if he persisted, everything would change. There would be no Gettysburg Address, no Lincoln Memorial, no carpet-baggers, no "Fergit, Hell!" bumper

stickers, no "Impeach Earl Warren" signs, and probably not even any Klu Klux Klan.

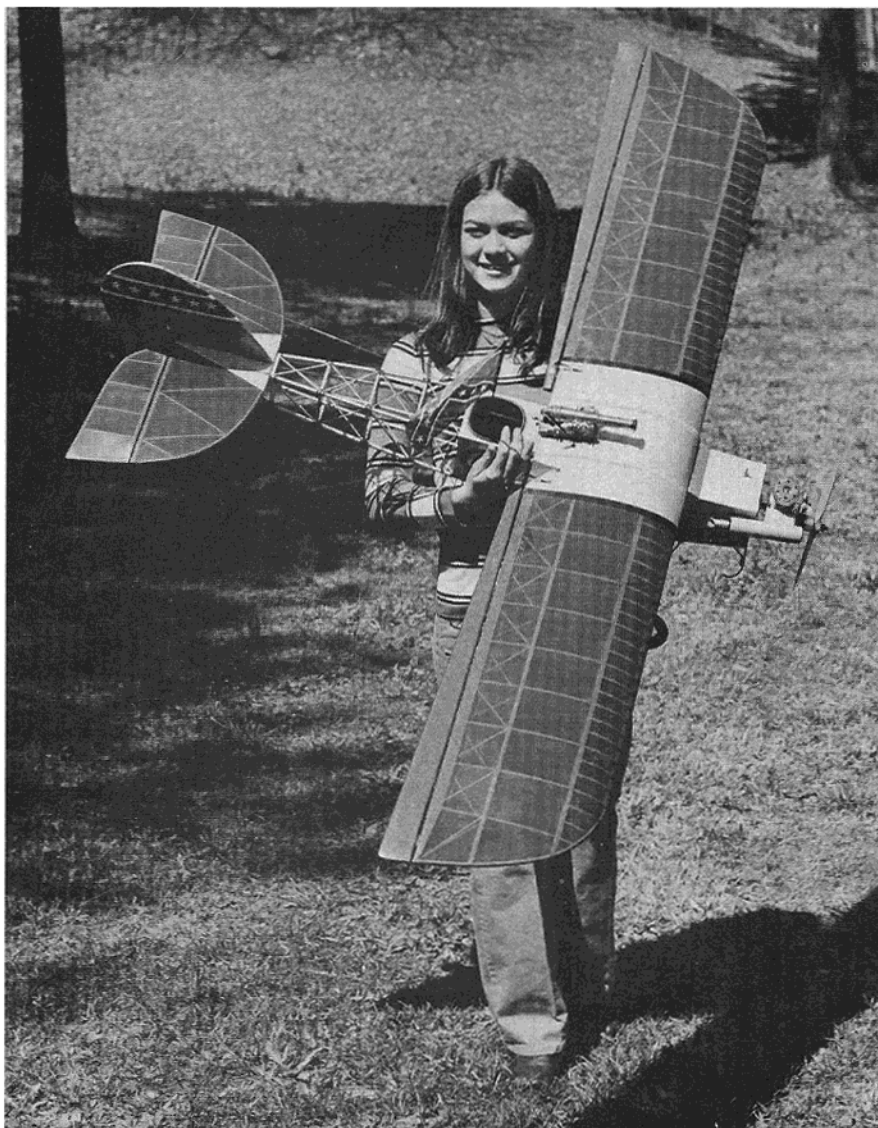
Shaken, Beau hauled *Miss Scarlett* around South and took her on back down to Atlanta, where he quietly stored her away forever, determined to take the awful secret of flight to the grave with him.

Gen. Joe Johnston, who had replaced Bragg, understood also that without his brilliant retreat to Kenesaw, he would not go down in history as one of the Confederacy's top military strategists. So he had Beauregard made a Colonel and asked him to stay home until the War was over, which was not a bad deal, except that Beau drew his retirement in Confederate money.

I have attempted to reproduce *Miss Scarlett* faithfully, working from the original drawings and remnants of the plane which were found in 1967 during some demolition work. By a stroke of luck, I happened to be playing nearby when workmen unearthed the precious find. I instantly recognized it for its true historic value, having read Aunt Margaret's other book, "Gone With The Wing," which described Beau's labors and his departure for Chattanooga on that fateful day. Otherwise, the world's first flying machine might have been lost forever. This book has naturally been suppressed to avoid hurting the feelings of Wilbur and Orville Wright and because the spiteful Yankee press did not want the South to have credit for the invention.

As with any strictly scale effort, this is not a project for beginners. But its construction is simple and straightforward and can be handled by the serious scale buff. The only deviations from the true scale are the ailerons (Butler's ship was rudder and elevator only) and the wheels which are not exactly like the Honda wheels used on the real plane. The model has (or rather had) excellent flight characteristics. I say "had" because it suffered a mid-air collision during a dog fight with an H-Ray flown by a certain one-eyed pilot by the name of Dalton C. May, and was destroyed.

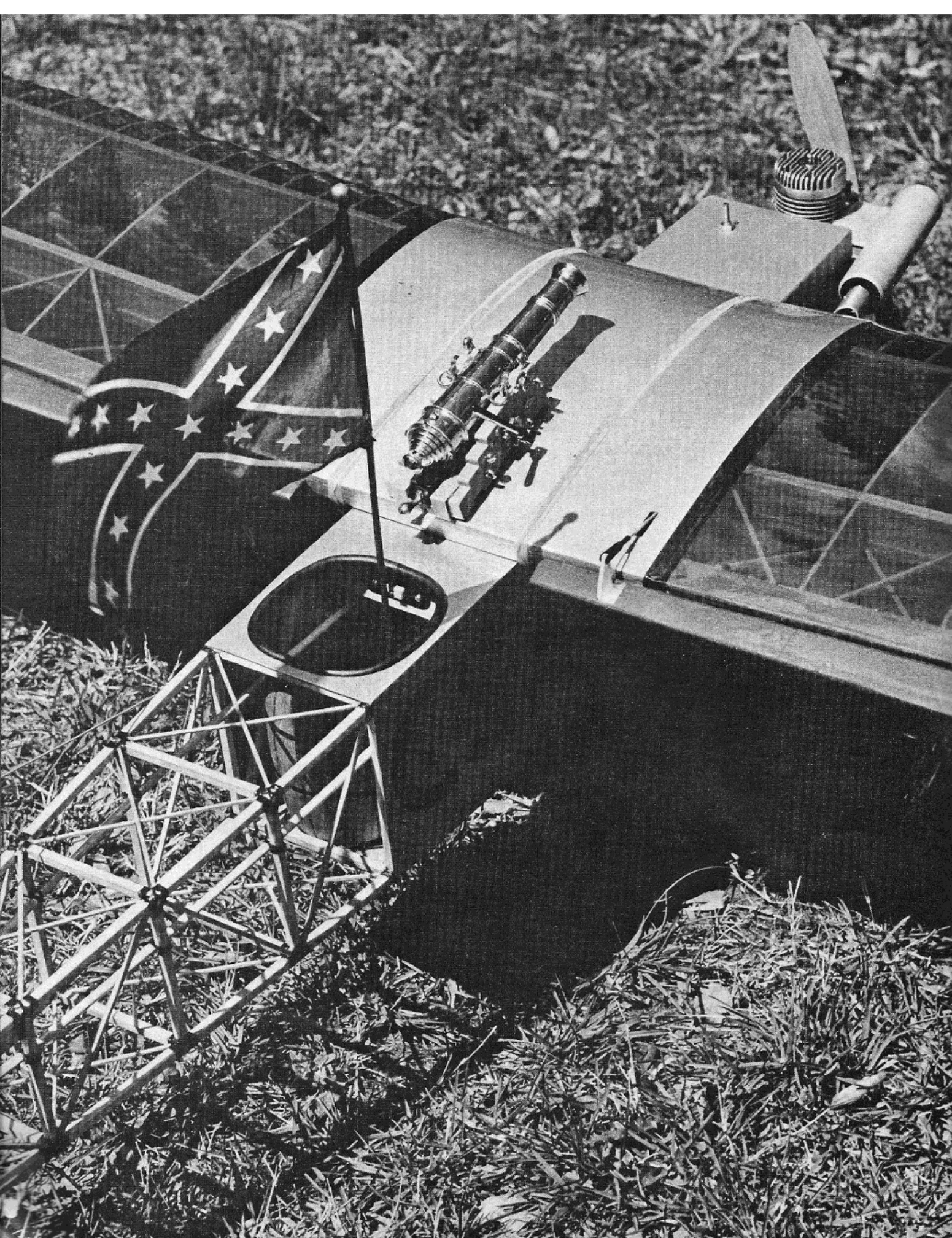
May is currently under investigation by the Atlanta Radio Control Club on the charge that he is a Yankee sympathizer. He has stated publicly that some of his best friends are Yankees, but contends that he would not want his daughter to marry one. It is damned liberals like this that cause all the trouble. □



A real Southern Belle, Lavonne Phillips . . . we don't have no ugly girls Down South, Clyde.

Author, a practicing dirty old man, about to fondle 'Miss Scarlett's' empennage assembly.





From RCModeler Sep. 1971