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ZAMPERINI FIELD CEREMONY MARKS CITY'S ACCEPTANCE OF ARMY-DEVELOPED AIRPORT

(Continued from Page 1-A)

right to reclaim the property, first in line under regulations, was to be passed in favor of the City of Torrance.

Popular acclaim demanded that when Torrance acquired the port, it be named for Louis Zamperini, then a prisoner of the Japanese, but thought dead as a result of a crash of his plane early in the war.

Official Torrance agreed, and the city set about to secure the airport.

After months of negotiation by the City Council, Aviation Commission and officials, a perpetual permit to use the flight strip proper was obtained, and a deed to the entire airport is expected soon.

Presiding over the ceremony Saturday at the eastern end of the landing strip was Reed H. Parkin, secretary-treasurer of Deak Aircraft Co., president of the Chamber of Commerce, and chairman of the Torrance Aviation Commission.

Seated on a decorated trailer provided for the affair by the M. & M. Transfer Co. and city workers, were Zamperini, Parkin, Mayor J. Hugh Sherfey, Jr., who made the official dedication, and Mrs. Sherfey, Councilman G. V. Powell, Representative and Mrs. King, Col. Tom W. Scott, representing the commanding officer of the 12th Air Force, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Zamperini, parents of Louis, Miss Virginia Zamperini, sister, Pete Zamperini, Torrance High school head coach and brother of the hero, Capt. Vickers, Lt. Col. G. Roster, Lt. Henkel, Miss. Lute Fraser and Capt. R. L. Lewellen, close friends and advisors of Louis, Grover C. Whyte, publisher of the Torrance Herald and Aviation Commission members, and Mrs. Whyte, Mrs. Parkin, Miss Vickers, Ed Doak, president of Deak Aircraft Co., Col. Roger Q. Williams, Lt. H. G. Roster, 12th AAF public relations officer.

Following the ceremony, members of the official party were guests at an informal luncheon served at Falos Verdes country club.

Parkin, in introducing Mayor Sherfey for the dedicatory talk, outlined the effort to which the city, the Aviation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce and others have gone to bring to a head the actual assumption of control of that important portion of the gigantic airport which was involved in the proceedings Saturday.

He paid high tribute to Representative King and other federal officials who have worked unceasingly on behalf of the City of Torrance in its effort to acquire the port. Mentioned were the representatives of the War Assets Administration, the Civil Aeronautics, the U. S. Engineers, Public Roads department and others.

Likewise, he outlined the program for improvement of the airport when finally acquired in full, declaring that soon it will be operating with capacity daily takeoffs and landings of cargo planes, the Torrance airport being the only one available for

this type of traffic not already crowded with other activities.

"We will see within a year," Parkin declared, "20 cargo planes per day taking off and landing on this field." He pointed out that this is considered heavy airport traffic. He gave a verbal picture of forthcoming development of buildings, recreation facilities, hangars, motels, clubrooms and other features on the airport.

Parkin pointed out that Civil Air Patrol's aviation education program is a welcome adjunct to operation of the airport, under plans of the City of Torrance.

At the luncheon, Captain Zamperini replying to the tribute paid him by the City of Torrance in naming the airport in his honor, said that it was "really one of the greatest honors conferred upon anyone, anywhere," and expressed his thanks to Mayor Sherfey, the City of Torrance and others.

Representative King paid tribute to Captain Zamperini on the occasion, declaring that he was "mighty happy to see this airport named in his honor." He said the honor was "not only a credit to Captain Zamperini, but to his family and every sort of boy he represents." He described the athlete and war hero as "the sort of person the country is looking forward to," adding that it was "your day and I am sure that all feel as I do at this moment."

Colonel Scott congratulated the City of Torrance on its action and declared that the dedication was a very fine gesture of respect for Captain Zamperini. He appeared at the affair as representative of Gen. John E. Doyle, deputy commanding general of the Army Air Forces, who was grounded in New Mexico, and could not reach the ceremony.

Similar tributes were paid by Colonel Williams, Miss Vickers, Mr. Whyte, Captain Lewellen and others.

After several friends of Captain Zamperini had made frequent references to the Torrance Herald and its championship of Zamperini, Chairman Parkin called upon Whyte for remarks which brought the reply that he "considered Louis one of the family and he did not talk about members of the family." He recalled early days of Louis' track career when the Herald staff through Captain Lewellen and Miss Fraser provided his first pair of track shoes, when he

was a young athlete at Torrance High School.

Lewellen commented that it was the first affair he ever had attended in Louis' honor, and there have been many, "where it did not rain." This included his landing in Long Beach from Japan after having been declared officially dead for more than a year.

Captain Scholar's presence also was a distinct tribute, it was pointed out since he had heard in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on the radio that the ceremony was to take place. He drove all night, he said, to arrive in Torrance in time to participate in the affair. Captain Scholar went overseas with Louis Zamperini in the 11th Bombardment Group, and he is the only squadron pilot of the entire outfit to come home, except Captain Zamperini's pilot, Capt. R. A. Phillips. All others were killed.

Zamperini, Phillips and their radio operator were the only survivors of the plane in which they were making a bombing mission May 27, 1943, when the plane crashed at sea. The radio operator succumbed to the rigors of life on the open sea after 27 days on the raft, and Zamperini and Phillips were picked up by the Japs after 47 days. Then followed more than two years of cruel, inhuman and sadistic treatment at the hands of the Japanese. Zamperini was believed dead until after the official declaration when the Japanese

gave up on him. His recovery by the United States forces followed on September 5, 1945.

The Saturday dedication program was timed to coincide with the release in New York of an Army Air Forces book in which Zamperini's exploits and experiences are featured.

The record of official action naming the field for Zamperini and calling for dedication on or about Dec. 7 follows:

RESOLUTION

November 26, 1946

WHEREAS, the name of Louis Zamperini long has been identified with the City of Torrance, due to his athletic prowess in the City, State, Nation and throughout the World, and

WHEREAS, Louis Zamperini is considered by the Army Air Forces to be one of the outstanding heroes of World War II, due to his survival of 47 days on an open raft at sea, months of cruel punishment at the hands of the enemy, and intelligence provided to bring war criminals to justice; and

WHEREAS, Torrance has obtained control of a portion of Lomita Flight Strip and is about to obtain control of all of Lomita Flight Strip as a Municipal Airport, and,

WHEREAS, it is in keeping with the patriotic duty of the community to perpetuate the names of its heroes for posterity, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Directors of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce, its members including three members of the Torrance Aviation Commission, do recommend to the City Council of the City of Torrance that

such portions of Lomita Flight Strip are now under control of the City of Torrance or which will be placed under the control of said city be officially known as Zamperini Field, and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the directors of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce urge the dedication of this airport as "Zamperini Field" or or about December 7, 1946, in keeping with the program of the Seventh Air Force, of which Captain Louis Zamperini was a member, on that day.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of resolution of the Board of Directors of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce adopted at a special meeting of said Board held on November 26, 1946.

(Signed) Blaine Walker Secretary, Torrance Chamber of Commerce

Action of the City Council of the City of Torrance at a Regular Meeting held November 26, 1946, on the above Resolution:

Councilman Tolson moved that the above Resolution be endorsed by the City Council. Councilman Powell seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

I, A. H. Bartlett, City Clerk of the City of Torrance, California, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the above Resolution was read and endorsed on the 26th day of November, 1946, at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Torrance, by a unanimous vote.

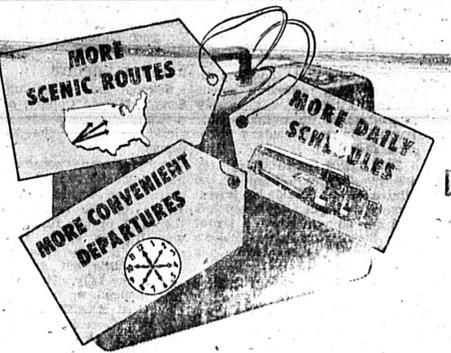
(SEAL) A. H. BARTLETT City Clerk of the City of Torrance

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