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**New *Pacific Aviation Pioneers* Exhibit to Open
At Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor July 13
With Chinese American Tom Gunn Honored**

Honolulu, HI— Aviation daredevil stunt pilot Tom Gunn will be the first person inducted into the newly created *Pacific Aviation Pioneers* exhibit at Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor opening Saturday, July 13. The exhibit opening, dedication and reception is 3:00pm to 4:30pm in Hangar 37 and is free with Museum admission. Guests are invited to take the Ford Island shuttle from the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center to the Museum for the event. The Gunn family will be in attendance at the Museum exhibit dedication.

The Exhibit

Tom Gunn is being honored as the first inductee in the ongoing *Pacific Aviation Pioneers* exhibit, a rotating series of exhibits which will highlight the personalities who created aviation history in the Pacific region. The schedule calls for at least four Pioneers or teams of Pioneers to be spotlighted every year.

The Venue

The Tom Gunn exhibit is also the debut of the remodeled Doolittle Gallery in Hangar 37, redesigned to host ongoing exhibits with flexibility and modern display technology. It is the first major change in Hangar 37 since the museum opened its doors in late 2006.

Gunn, the aviation pioneer best known for introducing passenger flight to the people of Hawaii, was born in California in 1890, grew up in the Bay Area, and attended flight school in New York and the Los Angeles area. In June 1913, he was in Honolulu, giving Hawaii exhibits of aviation daring, flying a 75 horsepower biplane at about 70 miles an hour.

“Tom Gunn was the first Chinese American to hold a U.S. flying license, particularly significant to the people of Hawaii. We are proud to honor him and his family at our new exhibit opening,” said Museum Executive Director Kenneth DeHoff.

A century ago, Hawaii and the Pacific islands entered the world of commercial aviation. Previously, flying had been the province of daredevils and barnstormers. These included San-Francisco-born Chinese-American pilot Tom Gunn, who designed his own airplanes and took aloft hundreds of passengers on the West Coast.

In the summer of 1913, bringing his act to Hawaii, Gunn billed himself as “the nerviest Chinaman in the world,” performing a vaudeville show that included a mail-service demonstration, gliding with the engine switched off and a maneuver called the “Dip of Death.” He was also known for his “hydroaeroplane smile.”

The first airplane passenger in Hawaii was Lillian Gee, a young woman who sold tickets for the Empire Theatre, taken aloft by Gunn on July 13, 1913, at a demonstration near Schofield Barracks. Later that day, Gunn charged \$25 to carry Hawaii's first paying passenger, a Mrs. Newman of Honolulu. Both flights were carried out slowly and low to the ground so as not to frighten the ladies —

but as Hawaii's first aerial passengers, Miss Gee and Mrs. Newman made commercial aviation history.

More about The Aviator

Born in San Francisco, Tom Gunn represented China in the 1910 International Aviation Meet in Los Angeles and was dubbed the "Wright of China." When revolution erupted, Gunn was contacted by Sun Yat-Sen to popularize aviation. In two years, Gunn made more than 800 flights and carried more than 300 passengers in the Pacific region, including the Hawaiian Islands, where he also demonstrated the first flying boat seen here.

Sponsored by the Nippu Jiji, a Japanese-language newspaper, Gunn went on to the neighbor islands and the Philippines to inaugurate air-mail services before settling in China to fly for Sun Yat-Sen. From Hawaii, Gunn went on to the Philippines and China, making more demonstration flights. His expertise so impressed Sun Yat-Sen that the revolutionary leader placed him in charge of China's fledgling air force.

Gunn died in a mysterious "rickshaw accident" in 1925 in China, possibly the target of assassination.

For more information phone 808-441-1007, email SpecialEvents@PacificAviationMuseum.org, or visit www.PacificAviationMuseum.org for tickets and more information. **Tickets and a free Flight Simulator coupon are available online.**

Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that depends on memberships and donations for its Restoration and Education projects. Located at 319 Lexington Boulevard, Historic Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Honolulu, Hawaii 96818, it has been named "one of the top 10 aviation attractions" nationally by TripAdvisor. It is a Smithsonian affiliate museum.

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