

## New Commercial Flight Test

On September 1st the new *Commercial Pilot Practical Test Standards* went into effect (*Balloon Life*, February '86). The new checklist for FAA Designated Examiners spells out each maneuver a commercial pilot applicant must successfully complete. The new standards test the applicant's ability to instruct and includes requirements such as a lesson plan and library of material.

The new standards are available from the Superintendent of Documents and includes all categories of ratings for \$21. Copies of the balloon pilot requirements are available from a number of private sources for a modest fee (about \$4.50) from such organizations as the Balloon Federation of America.

Since the new requirements are more stringent than the old Commercial Pilot Flight Test Guide, *Balloon Life* conducted a random survey of Designated examiners in August and found them booked solid until September 1st. Many aeronauts have recently taken the written test and are taking their flight test under the old guidelines. Some examiners reported prospective applicants calling from more than 1,000 miles away trying to schedule a flight test prior to September 1st.

## 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation

One thousand pieces of souvenir mail were scheduled, weather permitting, to be flown aboard a record-breaking 43-year old U.S. Navy surplus gas balloon in a special tribute to lighter-than-air Naval Aviation.

The flight, a joint venture of the Rubber City Stamp Club and the Balloon Flyers of Akron, will salute the 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation, being commemorated during 1986.

"This flight enables stamp collectors to participate in the 75th anniversary of naval aviation and to recognize the contributions LTA naval aviators have made to our nation's

defense and the Navy has made to buoyant flight," said Naval Reserve Lieutenant William G. Armstrong Jr., pilot for the flight.

Coordinator of the flight for the Rubber City Stamp Club is Thomas G. Hirschinger. "Each of these limited edition, serially numbered covers will be signed by the pilots, and will have several markings applied to them," he said. "In addition to the flown covers, there will be 75 sets of 'dropped mail'."

"Twice during the flight," Hirschinger explained, "mail will be parachuted to the ground, recovered and post-marked at the drop site. Each dropped cover will carry a separate

inscription with details of the drop."

The U.S. Postal Service will apply a special cancellation to mail carried on the flight, which will originate in Akron, Ohio.

Collectors may reserve individual covers on a first-come, first-served basis by sending a #10-size self-addressed stamped envelope and payment to Tom Hirschinger of the Rubber City Stamp Club at P.O. Box 508, Barberton, Ohio 44203. Cost is \$3 each.

A set of three covers, including two dropped covers and one flight cover, will cost \$13. An insert in every flown piece will describe Naval LTA contributions and details of this memorial flight.

## National Balloon Museum

On August 2 the National Balloon Museum broke ground at the new site for the museum in Indianola, Iowa. The land for the museum was donated by First Central Bank of Indianola and is located on the north side of town along highway 65/69. Site development, estimated at \$65,000, has been donated by the City of Indianola.

The museum will be completed in stages and will occupy some 9-10,000 square feet of floor space when complete. To date the Building Program

funding drive has raised \$500,000. The museum needs to raise approximately \$200,000 more to build the facility. The major portion of this is expected to be raised in the Indianola/Des Moines area.

The National Balloon Museum, Inc. is a private, non-profit (501C3) organization. Present plans call for the museum to house the Balloon Federation of America's balloon collection and other artifacts related to the sport of ballooning.

For more information or to make a tax deductible donation contact: National Balloon Museum, 707 North C Street, P.O. Box 149, Indianola, Iowa 50125, or call (515) 961-8415.

Thom Roberts



Ground breaking ceremonies for the National Balloon Museum. (L. to R.) Chuck Laverty, Peter Stamats, Leo Eisenberg, Sid Cutter, Don Kersten, Architect (in background), Indianola Mayor Irene Richardson, Iowas Governor Terry E. Branstad.