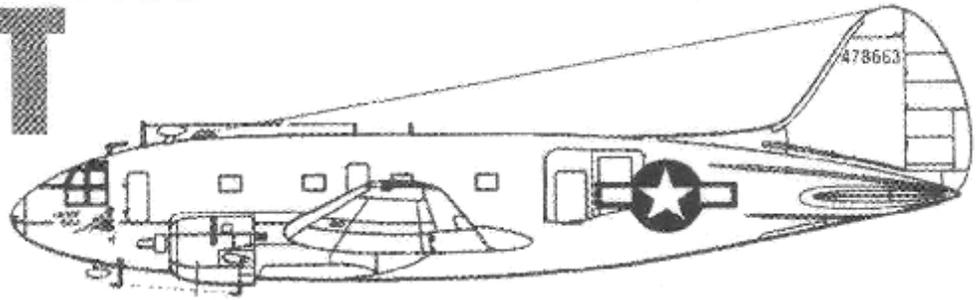


FLIGHT LINE



THE OFFICAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING OF THE CAF

Vol. XXVI No. 8

Visit us on the web at www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal

August 2006

UNEARTHING THE PAST



Photo by Walt Metcalf

On May 4, 1944, Second Lieutenants Howard H. Dale and Andrew Kmonk, bailed out of their P-38s after a mid air collision over Camarillo. 64 years later parts from one of the planes turn up in a Camarillo couples garden. Story on page 8.

**WING STAFF MEETING, SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2006 AT 9:30 AM AT
THE CAF HANGAR, 455 AVIATION DRIVE, CAMARILLO AIRPORT**

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMBAT AIRCRAFT - 1939-1945

August 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Work Day	2	3 Work Day	4	5 Work Day
6	7	8 Work Day	9	10 Work Day	11	12 Work Day Staff Mtg 9:30AM
13	14	15 Work Day	16	17 Work Day	18	19 Camarillo Air Show
20 Camarillo Air Show	21	22 Work Day	23	24 Work Day	25	26 Work Day Santa Maria Air Show
27 Santa Maria Air Show	28	29 Work Day	30	31 Work Day		

<u>STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS</u>	<u>IN THIS ISSUE</u>
Wing Leader * Casey de Bree (805) 389-9185 scdebree@aol.com	Wing Calendar 2
Executive Officer * Dave Long (805) 497-8306 toropoo@adelphia.net	Staff and Appointed Positions. 2
Adjutant * Bob Albee (805) 583-4872 loll@earthlink.net	Wing Leader's Report 3
Finance Officer * Jason Vosburgh (805) 766-3880 jason.vosburgh@att.net	Museum Update 4
Operations Officer * Gary Barber (805) 659-4319 bearcat69@pacbell.net	Description and Duties 5
Maint Officer * Dick Troy (805) 522-5061 konvair@aol.com	Maintenance Officers Report. 5
Safety Officer * Bob Goubitz (805) 388-8341rgoubitz.cafsocal@zoemail.net	Maintenance Officers Report. 6
Facility Officer Bob Albee (805) 583-4872 loll@earthlink.net	History Channel Shoot 6
Training Officer Jason Somes (818) 292-4646 airboss@jasonairracing.com	Hemet-Ryan Air Show Story 7
Public Info Officer Pat Brown (805) 479-2221	Unearthing the Past 8
Personnel Officer Sharon Wilson (818) 991-8705 tmandskw@prodigy.net	Training Mission 9
Historian Ron Fleishman (805) 384-4426 oldplanec46@aol.com	PBJ Progress 9
Collections Manager Jim Tierney (805) 522-7067 jimemiet@aol.com	Letter to Updegraff 10
Museum Director Sarah de Bree (805) 389-9185 scdebree@aol.com	
Gift Shop Manager Tom Kinne (805) 495-8004 rtkinne@dslextre.me.com	
Webmaster Dave Flood (805) 987-7231 macantuile@yahoo.com	
Air Show Officer Al Kepler (818) 352-4318 kepler53@yahoo.com	
Air Show Coord. Bill O'Neill (805) 495-4915 scwairshow@aol.com	
Chief Docent Charles Miller (805) 383-6998 camamiller@att.net	
Newsletter Editor Walt Metcalf (805) 482-8291 wtmetcalf@yahoo.com	
Hangar Event Mgr Dick Burrer (805) 484-0704 burrerd@aol.com	
HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064	Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month
HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348	Commemorative Air Force
WEBSITE www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal	Southern California Wing
	455 Aviation Drive
	Camarillo, CA 93010-9501
* Denotes Staff Position	

This issue of Flight Line is copyrighted 2006 by the CAF, Southern California Wing. All rights reserved

Wing Leader's Report

by Casey de Bree



There is more news on the debt on the Convair C-131. The Wing Staff met in executive session on July 8 and after considerable discussion and a careful review of the fundraising efforts to date, the staff decided that the full \$135,000 would likely be raised and the Wells Fargo note paid off before it comes due early next year.

We are not out of the woods on raising the \$135,000. Dick Troy, who is spearheading the fundraising effort, has received pledges totaling \$40,000 from 35 Wing members plus another \$30,000 from another Wing member that is conditional upon being able to raise the entire amount (see article on page 6). There is additionally a soft offer of matching money, which we are not counting in the total raised at this point in time. So, we need to raise an additional \$65,000 (\$105,000 in all) to collect that \$30,000 with conditions attached. We have about 6 months to do that. I want to thank all those who pledged money to the C-131, and I encourage the rest of you to consider doing the same. Contact Dick Troy at (805) 404-3311 to help.

Our revenues for the first six months of 2006 are down about 25% from the same period last year. Our A6M3 *Zero* must remain outside of California for one year and it brought in considerable revenue in the first six months of last year, and almost none this year. We were unable to capitalize on a movie gig this year because the *Zero* could not come into California. Our C-46 *China Doll* has also been out of service and has not produced any revenue this year. We have seen air show revenues decline. Air shows remain popular, but the high cost of fuel has caused air show organizers to invite fewer aircraft as their fuel budgets buy fewer gallons of fuel. We are seeing a two-month period right now where none of our aircraft are attending a single air show. Our next air show is the Camarillo show on August 19-20. The Santa Maria air show is the following weekend, but only the F6F and FM2 will be attending. In past years the C-46 has attended that and we realized income from aircraft tours and PX sales.

Clearly, the business model of our Wing is changing and the Wing Staff is considering ways to bring in additional revenue. One of these is to sell rides in our SNJ, and possibly the C-131. I have researched the experiences of other CAF wings who sell rides in their aircraft, and their SNJ experiences have been positive. There are also a number of non-CAF outfits that sell SNJ rides for big bucks. On the surface, it appears doable, but we have so far not been able to find pilots who can both qualify under the stringent CAF requirements for pilots flying paying passengers and can spare the time to give rides. Stay tuned.

As a corollary to a changing business model, we will need to ask many of our members to become involved in ways they have not been previously involved. There will be new jobs that need to be done and several jobs that we are no longer doing well and need to do better. The reason we are not doing these things well is that too few people are involved and the work falls to fewer Wing members, with the inevitable result that the "must do" tasks receive priority and the "nice to do" things fall by the wayside. So, I hope that if you are asked to help, that you will do so.

Speaking of helping, I am sometimes asked why we don't have more social events or meetings of the membership. If these are to happen, you, the members, will need to help make them happen. Each meeting or social event requires someone to take charge and make it happen. I speak from experience in being in charge of the Christmas party last year. Fortunately, I had some help, but it still took more than 40 hours of my time when collecting and accounting for the money and attending to the myriad of details that needed attending to are included. So please, volunteer to manage one of these events on a one-time basis. We cannot do it without your help, and it can be a very satisfying experience.

I came to realize the other day that a lot of work is done to keep the Wing running and it is largely invisible to the membership. The typical member does not give much thought to how much time and effort it takes behind the scenes to make that happen, and how many things must be done on a strict schedule, meaning there is considerable commitment on the part of a few of us who do these many things, even when we have other conflicting commitments.

When we work on an airplane restoration we can hear a lot of riveting and see a new piece take shape and get installed on the airplane; we see progress and activity. By contrast, no one sees all those checks being written every month, no one gives a thought to how the money gets from our gift shop cash register to the bank every day, no one realizes that the property tax exemptions on our facilities and aircraft were filed on time, there are always restroom supplies, the reports to CAF headquarters always get filed on time. Our waste oil always seems to get picked up and there is just about always a barrel of new oil in the oil shed. And the Wing's newsletter always appears in our mail boxes every month.

How does this happen? It happens because a few dedicated and committed Wing members work hard behind the scenes to make it happen, and make it happen day in and day out. It's like the pig and the chicken's contribution to a breakfast of bacon and eggs. The chicken was only involved when she laid the eggs, but the pig was committed when he provided the bacon. We are indebted the many involved Wing members who do so much, but we need to ask more of you. It's your Wing; are you merely involved, or are you committed?

Until next month. . . .

Museum Update: Museum Busy Bees

By Sarah de Bree



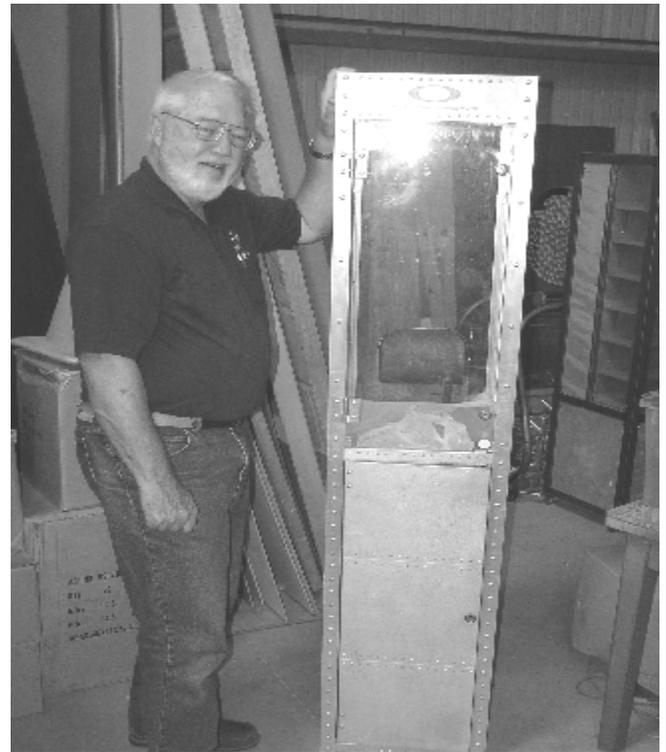
Shirley Murphy is resurrecting a long forgotten cabinet out of storage to use in some creative way in the museum refurbishment.

It is not unusual to find Shirley under, around or in something with a hammer, saw or drill since she is a lady of many talents. No task is too big and her 'can do' attitude has made a big difference in our big plans for changing the face of our museum. Shirley has been very successful in getting a few local merchants to discount their products thus helping our meager budget. She has just completed a three screen display of military badges that will soon be ready for show. Look for it!



Ceci Stratford is shown working on the Accessions tasks.

For those of you who do not know about this Library tool, this provides the capability to record every item donated; the location of each item within the museum and identifies the person donating the item thus providing the information necessary to generate a thank you letter. Ceci is also very busy putting together an instructional tool for young students, ages 8 to 14, that will include a pamphlet listing questions about the items in the museum that can be answered by looking on the information materials accompanying the displays and aircraft identification cards.



Jim Tierney also perused the old storage area and found a useful item that will offset a display that uses some of the B-25 metal skins.

Jim is in charge of the WWII and the Doolittle Raid displays as well as being a wizard with frames and wire. He has the responsibility, as well, for generating the museum's letters of appreciation and, for that, he has all of our thanks. Next time we will review Cliff and Pat Brown's valuable contributions and well as the Docents and their many tasks. Remember, we need more Docents so check your schedules and volunteer a day.

Don't forget to visit the gift shop for some really good deals and take a look at the Roaring Glory DVD's.

Descriptions and Duties

By Russ Drosendhal

These are the description and duties of Unit Staff Officers positions that are up for election this year. All Officers will be elected to a 2 year term.

Unit Leader

Minimum requirements, per General Staff policy, include at least two (2) years as a CAF member in good standing, background in military or business management, ability for good public appearance, adept at public speaking and preferably have a background in aviation. He shall be responsible for providing overall leadership and direction for the Unit. Among his specific duties are; current knowledge of CAF rules and regulations, preparation of Unit meeting agenda, serving as chairman at meetings, appointing various committee members, etc.

Executive Officer

Assistant to the Unit Leader and will act in his place during his absence. Specific duties include current knowledge of CAF rules and regulations, meeting facilities, Unit socials, and other duties as may be assigned by the Unit Leader. This officer may be appointed on an annual basis by the Unit Leader and serves as a voting member of the Unit Staff. However, if the Unit Leader chooses to appoint the Executive Officer, the Unit Leader sacrifices his regular voting privilege and can vote only in the case of a tie. If the Executive Officer is duly elected, the Unit Leader retains his usual voting privileges.

Maintenance Officer

Should be a FAA licensed A&P or IA. He is responsible for proper care and maintenance of all aircraft assigned to the Unit and for ground equipment. He shall schedule and direct restoration of all CAF aircraft assigned to the Unit. He shall oversee activities of Unit aircraft project officers and disseminate status reports of all Unit restoration projects to HQ and the Unit membership on a current and timely basis. He shall clear all restoration work with the CAF Director of Maintenance prior to implementation. He shall clear all planned expenditures through the Unit Staff. Specific duties include ensuring that all aircraft are in airworthy condition prior to flight, maintaining proper records and log books, ordering parts and supplies and training aircraft crew chiefs and ground equipment personnel. He shall submit a monthly maintenance and/or restoration report to Headquarters. Communications with CAF Headquarters will be initiated through the office of CAF Director of Maintenance.

Safety Officer

The Safety Officer works directly with the Maintenance Officer. He is responsible for all ground control during flight activities. Specific duties include placing fire extinguisher on aircraft and ground equipment (both hand and engine) and implementation of escape procedures from aircraft emergency exits, He should be well versed in all aircraft ground operations, including start-up, taxi and shutdown. Hand signals utilized in aircraft ground operation shall be well known by this officer and taught to those who will perform that duty. Headquarters contact concerning specific questions may be initiated with the Director of Operation or Director of Maintenance at headquarters.

If you are interested in any of these positions, submit your name to one of the nominating committee members. They are Sib Bosso, Bill O'Neill and Russ Drosendhal. Please remember that it is not only the qualification for the position that is important but also to have the time to spend to do the job the way it needs to be done.



Maintenance Officers Report

By Dick Troy

July is here and I suspect all of us had a safe and happy 4th with our families and loved ones. July is also a pretty dull month for the wing as there is not a lot going on. This time can be put to very good use by paying a little more attention to our aircraft and getting things in shape as we begin to enter into our busiest portion of the year. Now would be a good time to review the log books for any signs of repeat items and looking for long term solutions. Case-in-point. The Bearcat has had a long standing problem with excessive RPM drop on I believe it is the left hand magneto. Engine ran fine no backfiring but just this continual and annoying 100 RPM drop. The ignition harness and all of the engines ignition system components had gone through a complete overhaul about a year ago. The problem was there before the components were overhauled and was still there after the aircraft went back into service. We had pilot complaints on just about every flight since that time. Ken Kramer, Gary Barber and the crew went to work on the issue. They swapped the leads around on the mags and sure enough the problem followed indicating something was wrong with the mag even though it had been overhauled recently. Additional troubleshooting revealed that there were two bad plugs in number 8 jug. What's the chance of that happening? About the same as me winning the lottery. The mag has been removed and it was decided not to overhaul it again but to trade it in on another overhauled mag. It is a

basic principle in aviation that bad parts follow bad airplanes. I believe this is one of those instances. Great work guys I think this should take care of the problem.

Until next month be safe and fly safe.



A Special Maintenance Officers Report

By Dick Troy

I wanted to bring all of our members and readers of our newsletter up to date on the fate of the wings Convair 340 otherwise known as the VC 131. For the past several years this aircraft has put a strain on our wings financial resources. As most of you know we took a bank loan of \$150,000 to remove and overhaul the number two engine after it failed on our return from the Santa Rosa air-show. Since that time your board members have been working diligently trying to find ways to keep the aircraft and pay off this debt. We tried the Valentines Day flight which was moderately successful but did not raise anywhere near the amount needed to satisfy the debt. We tried various other ways of fund raising but again we failed to make any significant inroads to debt reduction. At each and every air-show the aircraft has attended it has been a crowd-pleaser and a money maker. Unfortunately the monies that the aircraft generated were needed just to keep the doors open and the lights on. Very little if any of the revenue generated by the aircraft ended up in the aircrafts account to pay off the debt. As I said these monies were needed for immediate pressing financial needs and that was a prudent course of action. Some time ago in board executive meetings we had to make a very painful choice. Sink the Wing or sell the aircraft. As painful as that decision was the financial health and survival of the wing was far more important than the retention of this aircraft. Reluctantly, your board members voted to sell the aircraft

I for one was not happy with this decision. I knew it was the right thing to do but still I, and many others, had put our hearts and souls into this project and I felt it was worth another effort to see what could be done to pay off the debt and keep the aircraft. I decided on my own to launch a phone campaign to raise funds for this purpose. The response was immediate and almost overwhelming. Donors came out of everywhere indicating to me that this project could be successful and that our members are the greatest of any wing anywhere. I want to give our readers a brief overview of this project. No money will be collected until I am positive that the entire balance of the outstanding note which is at \$135,000 can be raised. What I decided was the right thing to do was to ask for people's commitment for whatever amount they felt comfortable with to be collected at the time we reached our goal. This was necessary for two reasons.

Number one if I was not successful in raising the full amount all money would be returned to the donor. This avoided that pitfall. Number two and I believe the more important issue here is the donors know full well exactly where their money is going, who else contributed and a complete and full disclosure in writing about the distribution of the proceeds. If you donated your hard earned money for this project then that is exactly where it would go. if I failed to meet the target then no one donates a dime. I thought this was the fair and right way to conduct this project. Due-diligence, full disclosure, timely updates to each donor and a summary of all transactions to each donor upon the conclusion of the project. Of course each donor receives a letter for Federal tax purposes.

Now, as to where we stand in the fund raising project. To date as I write this article I have collected pledges for \$40,000 from approx 35 members. I have a conditional commitment from one of our members for an additional \$30,000 provided I can demonstrate to their satisfaction I can fully retire this debt. I have another conditional commitment for some matching fund once again showing that the entire amount can be raised. Put together these two commitments alone total \$70,000 which is more than 1/2 the amount needed. It is true I still have a long way to go but with results such as this I am encouraged and more committed than ever to see this project through to its successful conclusion.

As a result of this demonstration of our members overwhelming support, in our monthly board meeting this past Saturday, in executive session the decision was made not to divest ourselves of this asset. We believe this goal is within our grasp and I fully intend to redouble my efforts to get the job done.

For those of you whom I have not contacted yet please consider this newsletter update as a formal request to solicit your participation in this project. Any amount that you feel comfortable with will be gladly accepted and greatly appreciated. Simply contact myself at konvair@aol.com see any of our board members or give me a call at (805) 404-3311. Remember we don't want your money at this time simply a pledge in any amount you can make. I will send you a letter of acknowledgement and you will automatically receive an update on the situation as they occur.

If you have donated I thank you from the bottom of my heart. If not would you please consider assisting us in the completion of this project! We are half way there. I fully intend to get us all the way there but I sure need your help.

With the members with us who can be against us. God bless all of you and once again I am proud to be associated with the best of the best.

Regards, Dick Troy

History Channel Shoot

By John Lage, Sr.

John Lage here, I'm the Director of Marketing and Communications for the CAF. I felt it necessary to include you all in this short brief regarding the History Channel shoot.

For those of you who know me, I have extensive background in the entertainment industry having spent nearly 15 years working in Hollywood as Director of Development for New World Pictures, Universal and Fine Line. My job essentially was to evaluate, review and "green light" projects for production.

The History Channel has contacted me again for additional footage for the segment they shot on your restoration. This is understandable. What I want all of you to realize is that this additional footage is not free. We will attempt to accommodate them and make a deal. For the record, I negotiated a "good faith" fee of \$500 for the right to shoot your wing and its "protected assets". However, this was far below the industry norms for a shoot of this kind. The going rate for such a shoot would have been \$5,000-\$15,000 at the very least. However again, time was against us as I got involved in the process too late and did not want to lose the shoot for you. So, let's just say that fee was a "token gesture" for your time and effort. All that money went to your unit with no participation from HQ.

What they are seeking now is what we call in the industry "clips" or pieces of media on additional CAF restorations or finished and flyable aircraft. The going rate on "clip agreements" of this nature is \$100.00 a second of actual footage used. Therefore, if I supply them with 10 minutes of DV footage and they use 4 minutes of it, the fee would be \$6000 a minute or \$24,000 total. So, you can see that we were completely underpaid for the segment. That notwithstanding, before my tenure began here at CAF HQ the trend had been, for years, to essentially "give it away" for free. The reasoning was..."its good publicity and exposure". Sure, I agree with this but...you can have your cake and eat it too.

Case in point: Just about 10 years ago, a documentary company came to the CAF and asked permission to shoot AIRSHO MIDLAND. They said "you can have a copy for your organization". Not only did we not get a copy of the piece but it ended getting sold to ABC and a distributor from Los Angeles. It made its way to the airwaves. Although not an award winning documentary, it has aired dozens of times, most recently in March 2005. We didn't get a penny and it is still airing. But those who produced and sold it made money and continued residuals. I estimate that piece has cost the CAF over \$200,000 in lost revenue alone.

So, I am going to try to accommodate History Channel at a severely discounted rate in an effort to make this happen by their deadline. But I wanted you to know that CAF media assets are not free. If you watch any of their shows or the Discovery Channel shows everything you see has been negotiated and paid for. We should be too. All the CAF media assets have been copyrighted, trademarked and registered in an attempt to create additional revenue streams to the organization. This is a costly procedure. However, ultimately this investment will pay off and will subsidize membership and annual reducing costs across the board.

This may have been more than you wanted to hear but I felt it necessary to clue you in on the complex process of granting permissions for media rights and clearances. As great Universal producer Sid Stein once said to me; "John, they call it show-business...let's get the business part down and then we'll worry about the show later".

I always welcome any comments and questions.

μ

Hemet-Ryan Air Show Story

By Col. Dick Updegraff

While we were flying a group of "VIPs" in our VC-131D, a gentleman came up to us and said he and a friend had flown in this aircraft in July, 1956

These two men were Marines on leave in Dayton, Ohio and went out to Wright-Patterson to see if they could get a hop back to the west coast.

They asked General, Thomas White's aide if they had room for them on the C-131. He said they could come on board. They sat in the back of the aircraft.

The General had a meeting in Virginia but after taking off they were diverted to Robins AFS, in Georgia, because the General's wife had become sick. After leaving Georgia they headed for Kelley AFB, in Texas.

By this time the Marines were AWOL. After telling the General's Aide of their plight the Aide explained their problem to General White.

The General, the General's Aide, and four other Officers on board the C-131 wrote letters for them explaining why they were late.

From Kelley AFB, they flew to March AFB, in California in a B-25. They finally reached their home station, where they were told by a 2nd Lt. that they were both AWOL. He asked them to explain why they were late. They handed the Lt. all six letters. After reading them the Lt. looked at them and said, dismissed.

The ex-Marines are Pvt. James "Mac" McCune and Sgt. Jay Ross.

Mac is now a retired Hwy Patrol Officer. His two children are also with the CHP.

Unearthing the Past

By Ventura County Star Reporter, John Mitchell
Photo by Dana R. Bowler/Star staff



Pleasant Valley Historical Society board member Roger Putnam, left; Walt Metcalf, center with the CAF So Cal Wing in Camarillo; and Pat Macha, aviation archaeologist, look through their notes next to an old Allison engine from the P-38.

On May 4, 1944, an 8-year old boy, standing with his firefighter father and a couple of volunteers in front of a Ventura County fire station, noticed something happening in the skies to the north above Camarillo Heights.

“We saw two planes just moments before they crashed,” said Roger Putnam, now 69 and a board member of the Pleasant Valley Historical Society. “Later, I found it was two fighter planes. We saw the pilots push their canopies and parachute to the ground. I can picture it in my mind to this day; it really made an impression on a young kid.”

The next day, the weekly Camarillo News’ front page said the pilots “miraculously escaped death” in the midair collision by parachuting to safety.

One plane crashed and burned near the corner of Las Posas and Arneill roads on Thomas Ranch. The article said exploding ammunition kept sightseers away.

The second plane fell in a canyon in the hills of Camarillo Heights. It exploded and set fire to the brush, burning several acres before the blaze was extinguished by the Camarillo Fire Department. The newspaper said the plane was destroyed.

But not quite.

For years, Dave and Paige Hibbits paid little attention to a chunk of metal that jugged about eight inches above the ground down a hill from their Camarillo Heights home in the 600 block of West Highland Drive.

“My family bought the property in 1952,” said Dave Hibbits, 59. “I had heard about the plane engine from the kids next door. The story had been handed down about planes colliding, the pilots bailing out.”

It wasn’t until the Hibbits began putting in a walkway down the hill last year that the chunk of metal got closet scrutiny.

“We made a decision that we had to do something about,” said Paige Hibbits, 63, who is board president of the Pleasant Valley Historical Society.

“So in December, after torrential rains, we went down there on a beautiful day with garden tools and started playing with it. The ground was soft and over the weeks, we dug quite a bit. In early February, it was uncovered.”

What the digging revealed was a large old airplane engine. Because Paige sensed historical significance, their find triggered a series of events.

Paige Hibbits contacted Dave Flood with the Commemorative Air Force at Camarillo Airport. Vern Olson, a CAF mechanic, went to the site and identified the chunk of metal as an Allison V-1720 aircraft engine, probably from a Lockheed P-38 fighter plane.

Flood contacted G. Pat Macha, 60, a Huntington Beach-based aviation archaeologist, who has investigated more than 1,000 crash sites in California.

Macha and his sister, Cynthia Macha-Skjonsby, visited the site Feb. 16. They took photographs and found a number of pieces of debris from the crashed plane. One of the pieces had Lockheed Aircraft identification number with the prefix “22,” which identified the plane as a P-38 Lightning fighter.

The P-38 was a twin engine fighter. Macha said the engine that Hibbits found was the plane’s right engine.

Paige Hibbits visited the vault in the historical society’s museum and pored through the yellowing copies of the Camarillo News until she found the edition describing the crash.

Four days after the 1944 accident, the Army had filed a formal report on its investigation. It included the statement from the two pilots and another pilot in their four-plane formation.

Macha got a copy of the accident report. On March 16, Macha, accompanied by Tom Maloney, an Orange

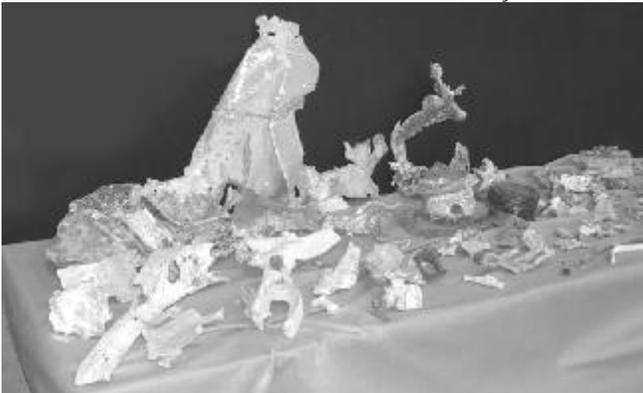
County Park Ranger, returned to the Camarillo Heights crash area. Also on site was Walt Metcalf, of the Commemorative Air Force.

“While we were there, we found what might be the left engine a short distance away from the first one,” Metcalf said.

If they can figure out how to haul the engines and parts to the airport, they hope to put the wreckage on permanent display in the CAF museum, he said.

“This was just one crash of many, but it had a happy ending because both pilots survived,” Putnam said. “My understanding right now is that the board of the historical society would be tickled to have the artifacts at the Commemorative Air Force Museum. That would be the most logical place for them.”

Photo by Walt Metcalf



Here are some of the hundreds of P-38 parts taken from the crash site that are displayed in the museum.

μ Training Mission was Almost Deadly

By Ventura County Star Reporter, John Mitchell

Howard H. Dale and Andrew Kmonk got a royal chewing-out from their commanding officer after they escaped certain death on May 4, 1944, in the skies over Camarillo.

The young second lieutenants had walked away from their midair collision. As their crumpled P-38s hurtled earth toward earth, they were strong enough to pull open their cockpit canopies, lift themselves out of their planes, pull their ripcords and parachute safely to the ground.

“When they found Kmonk, he was terrified,” aviation archeologist G. Pat Macha said. “He had his D-ring, which you pull to open your parachute, locked in his hand. He was pretty shook up. They had to pull it from his hands.”

Macha said it was a miracle that both pilots were able to escape.

The men were flying a training mission --- practicing dog fights --- out of the Army airbase at Metropolitan Airport in Van Nuys, now Van Nuys Airport.

Kmonk’s widow, Mary Jean Kmonk, said her husband and Dale were in deep trouble when they got back to Van Nuys because their actions had ruined their units perfect record.

Four days after the midair collision, Army investigators filed their report and concluded that the accident was primarily due to pilot error on the part of Dale, with mistakes by Kmonk also contributing.

Nonetheless the two went on to distinguish themselves in Europe, providing fighter escort protection for bombers over German targets, said Mary Jean Kmonk, a resident of Lebanon Ore.

At the end of the war, Kmonk went back to civilian life. He graduated from Pasadena City College and worked for Giannini Corp., an aircraft parts manufacturer in Pasadena, before taking a longtime position as a counselor with the California Youth Authority.

For most of his life, Kmonk held a private pilot’s license and loved to fly his Piper aircraft. About 24 years ago, the couple moved to Oregon, where Kmonk died in 1995 at the age of 70.

Dale tested civilian life after World War II, but didn’t much care for it and joined the Air Force. The Kmonks remained in touch with Dale and his wife kept in touch with the Kmonks for many years, but have since lost contact.

μ PBJ Progress

Photos and article by Dan Newcome

I don’t know how many of you realize what a special day it was yesterday. Sixteen months ago Jeff, Tim and I started disassembling the right wing. Yesterday after working for months removing and cleaning and fabricating we actually INSTALLED a part, *permanently*. Now the build up begins. All of those parts on the workbench will slowly be installed on the wing. Unfortunately for some of our members the next few months will be noisy. Noisy, but productive my friends.

These photos show that long gray part of a custom made T channel. This part joins the upper and aft top wing surfaces together. The 12 foot

long piece had to be milled from a solid billet of aluminum. The angle is non-standard and no longer made. The other two shots are of a bulkhead that will attach to the new T channel.



μ
A Letter to Updegraff

Dear "Dick"

It is with great pleasure that I send you a print that you took of us at the Van Nuys Air Show (2005) and the C-46.

You brought us twin Crew Chiefs much satisfaction listening (and also you talking!) about our days flying the "Hump" in the CBI.

You did it in a quiet professional way and you make people understand much about the CV-46 and your work as a volunteer coordinator at McCellan. Should be more people like you.

It was a different world back in the 1940s alright.

Thanks again for your interest.

Sincerely,

Elmer & Delmer Nielson



The Nielson Brothers.

μ
What happened here?



Answer next month.

Save Our History Showing Date

They say August 5th. Any change and I will let you all know.