

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**

Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Way, Camarillo, CA 93010  
(805) 482-0064

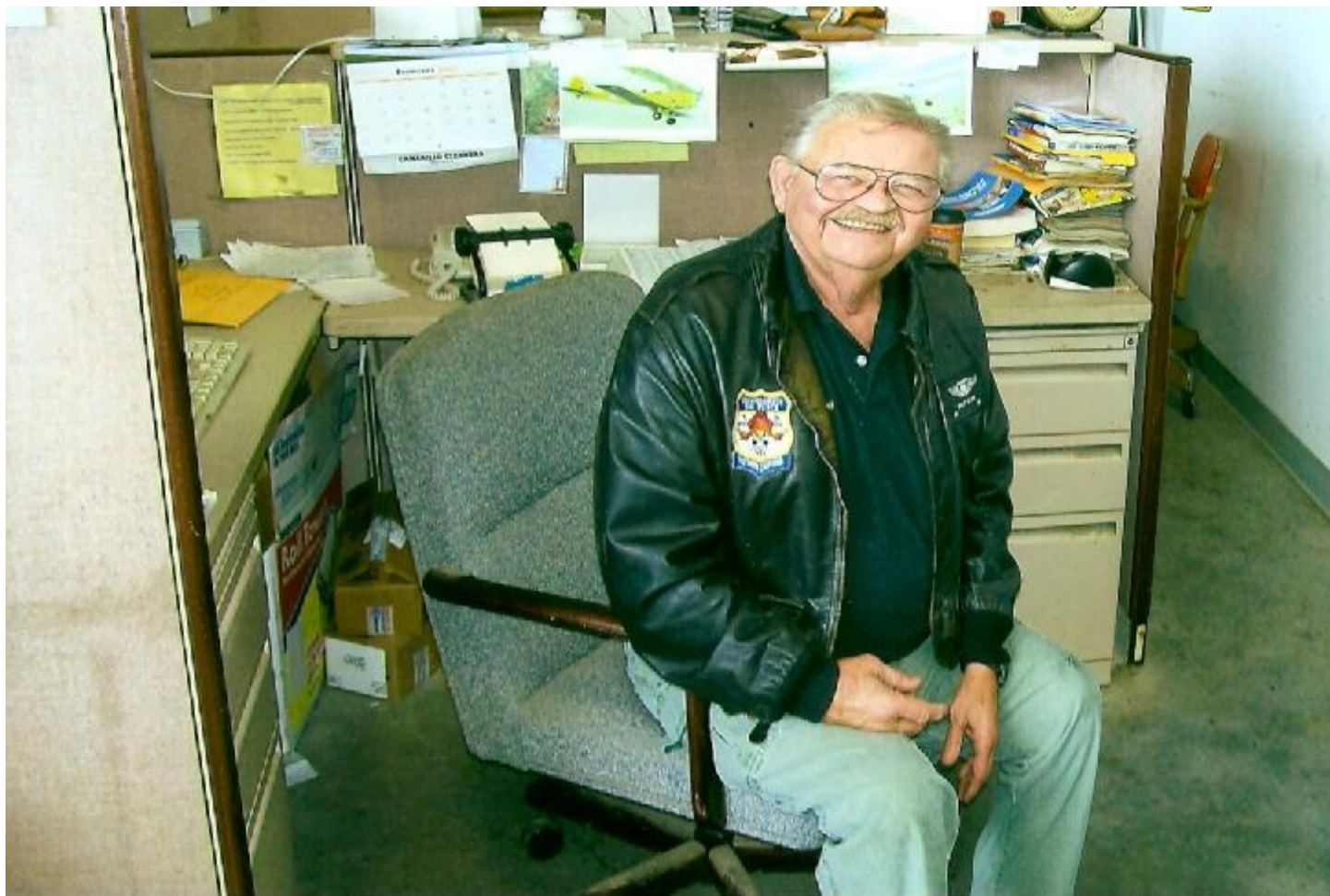
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© Photo by Dan Newcomb



© Photo by Jim Hinckley

**Heeeeere's Chuck! Charles "Chuck" Williams is our Purchasing Officer Extraordinaire. He is the guy who helps to keep our aircraft flying by getting the right parts at the best price to our Crew Chiefs so they can get their job done. Chuck is one of our key volunteers who work diligently behind the scenes to help our Wing run smoothly. Thanks, Chuck & all volunteers!**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, April 7, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at the  
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

# April 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Work Day	4	5 Work Day	6	7 Work Day  Staff Meeting 9:30 AM
8 Easter	9	10 Work Day	11	12 Work Day	13	14 Work Day
15	16	17 Work Day	18	19 Work Day	20	21 Work Day  Air Show Shafter, CA
22	23	24 Work Day	25	26 Work Day	27	28 Work Day  Air Show - Half Moon Bay, CA
29  Air Show - Half Moon Bay, CA	30					

<b>STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS</b>				<b>IN THIS ISSUE</b>
Wing Leader	* Steve Barber	(805) 484-9200	f8f2@aol.com	Wing Calendar . . . . . 2
Executive Officer	* Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	airboss@jasonairracing.com	Staff and Appointed Positions. . . . . 2
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Finance Officer	* Jason Vosburgh	(805) 766-3880	jason.vosburgh@att.net	Wing Leader's Report . . . . . 4
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	The Power of Prayer . . . . . 5
Maint Officer	* Joe Peppito	(805) 498-4187	jocafpeppo@msn.com	Thinking About You . . . . . 5
Safety Officer	* Marc Russell	(805) 388-8341	captmarcr@aol.com	VMB 611 – On Their Way to War . . . . . 6
Facility Officer	Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	The Final Inspection . . . . . 7
Training Officer	(vacant)			Special Event . . . . . 7
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	On Final to Santa Paula . . . . . 8
Personnel Officer	Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	Air Show Report . . . . . 8
Historian	Ron Fleishman	(805) 384-4426	oldplanec46@aol.com	The Lagos Experience . . . . . 9
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Museum Director	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	The Fight for China . . . . . 10
Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	A Visit to Kelly Johnson's Place . . . . . 11
Webmaster	Dave Flood	(805) 987-7231	macantuile@yahoo.com	Wing Photo Page II . . . . . 12
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<p style="text-align: center;">HANGAR PHONE HANGAR FAX WEBSITE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">(805) 482-0064 (805) 482-0348 <a href="http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal">www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing 455 Aviation Drive Camarillo, CA 93010-9501</p>		

\* Denotes Staff Position

## Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood

The Bearcat's engine being reinstalled after maintenance on the blower system. (LtoR) Ken Kramer (on wing), Gary Barber and Richard Witten.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Chris Rushing, Jason Somes, CAF Check Pilot Dave Morss, and Gary Barber. The F6F-5 is the check aircraft. Chris is now an F6F pilot, and Jason is to follow.



© Photo by Jim Hinckley

Howard Ulm is the electronics sub-contractor on the Fairchild F-24R restoration job. Luckily, Howard is a volunteer, just like all the rest of us at the Wing!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Pat Brown put together a great display for the CAF's 50<sup>th</sup> Day of its 50<sup>th</sup> Year – on February 19, 2007.



Photo courtesy of Larry Kates

On Feb. 12, 2007, ten of our members were guests of Carrier Early Warning Squadron VAW-117 ("Wall Bangers") at Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station. Lt. Cmdr. Tim "Flip" Wilson was the organizer of the event. The photo above shows our guys witnessing a simulated carrier landing by one of the 117's Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft. Members, from left, are: Larry Simmer, Bob Albee, Charlie Valentine, Gene O'Neal, Dan Cuvier, Dick Troy, Norm Swagler, Larry Kates, Bill O'Neill, and Al Kepler. It was a very informative and exciting day for those attending, and we hope to develop a continuing relationship with the VAW-117 Squadron. Bill O'Neill has sent a letter of thanks to the Squadron's commanding officer, Commander Jim Laingen – with emphasis on the hope that we can continue our ties. Several of their squadron personnel have been to our Aviation Museum, and would like to become more involved with our ongoing operations.

Look for more news on this "Wing to Squadron" get-together in future issues of *Flight Line*.

Also – we plan to highlight the Grumman E-2C Hawkeye aircraft that VAW-117 flies. It is a very unique airplane of great value to our ongoing operations in the Persian Gulf area, and throughout the world.

VAW-117 will be deploying soon on the USS Nimitz.

## Wing Leader's Report

by Steve Barber



Lots to cover this month, and since I didn't grace you with my thoughts last month, I hope I don't bore you to tears. So, here it goes.

There are many exciting things going on in your Wing for the start of this year. If you haven't been to the Wing lately, shame on you. The PBJ-1J (B-25J) crew is kicking some serious butt and

the assembly of the right wing stub is progressing very well. If you have any doubt, just come out during the week and listen to the rivet guns working. Bring ear plugs, as you will need them.

Gary Barber, Ken Kramer, Ken Gotschall, Kent Holiday and many others are working hard on the F8F Bearcat. The engine is back from the shop, and mounted on the airframe. They are waiting for the new exhaust system being built by Sam Davis in Chino, CA. We hope to have it flying within a month.

Les Bedding, his son Colin, Alan Gaynor, Dick Roberts, and many others are really making good progress on the Spitfire.

The SJN team (Old Yeller) of Sib Bosso and Alex Ferrasci and others are working on the annual inspection while the tail feathers are being recovered and the propeller is out for AD inspection.

Termite central (that is, the Fairchild 24-H) is really starting to take shape, lead by Bob Albee's team. Stop by the airplane; admire the work they are doing. But please, no loud noises, we don't want the termites to stop holding hands! Sign language is authorized.

Jason Somes, Ken Gotschall, and Chris Rushing worked very hard on the F6F-5 Hellcat to complete the annual. They did an in-depth look at the aircraft and repaired many small discrepancies along with some larger items. The hydraulic pump was leaking around the seal, so that was replaced. A cylinder needed replacing; they tightened up the engine oil leaks; wired the wings for navigation lights; and worked on many more items too numerous to mention.

While this was going on, HQ at Midland requested the Hellcat appear for a symposium on "Aces in a Day" featuring Hellcat Aces. Naturally they would like to have the a/c there to share in the event. The men worked very hard to accomplish their mission.

During this same time period, Chris Rushing was ready for his second fighter check-ride for upgrading to the Hellcat. Dave Morss flew down from Hollister, California,

administered the check ride (which Chris passed with flying colors) - then Dave gave both Chris and Jason their F6F Hellcat check-rides. Big congratulations to both of them for earning their type rating in this very rare and historic Navy aircraft. Speaking of rare, to my knowledge, there are only five flying Hellcats in the world - and three flyable Zeros.

After he had accumulated several hours in the Hellcat, I asked Jason Somes if he would mind flying the Hellcat to Midland? Mind? I had to get out of his way as he ran for the airplane. No flip flops either. Jason and Chris will be going to Texas to bring back the Hellcat and Zero scheduled to arrive March 24<sup>th</sup> at Camarillo, weather permitting. Next time you see them, please tell them both thanks for all of the hard work and congratulate them on their new ratings!

If this drama isn't enough for you readers... then because of dogging weather, scheduling problems and mechanical issues with a P-51 he was ferrying south, Dave Morss once again came to Camarillo to give Ken Gotschall his second fighter check-ride. Once again, one of your pilots made his teacher proud by doing a great job and impressing Dave enough to get his ride passed with a "well done!" As soon as the Hellcat returns to Camarillo, your next fighter pilot will be born. I can't wait to get Ken Gotschall in the Hellcat, as I always enjoy the smile on a new fighter pilot's face. Want to see what one looks like? Ask Chris Rushing how he likes flying the F6F-5! You'll know what I'm talking about.

Winter Staff Meeting in Texas went well. Many items on the agenda, only sour note from yours' truly was that very few members of the So Ca Wing were there to represent one of the largest and most active Wings in the CAF. I know, it's expensive, time consuming and you've done it before, but folks, this is your CAF and you need to participate. Speaking of participating, the Wing needs you. (I know, you've heard it before so let me speak LOUDER!) Your spouse/significant other wants you out of the house sometimes and gosh darn it, being involved is good for your mind and body. I hate seeing the 80/20 rule I learned in the Marine Corps always being true. That rule is 20% of the people do 80% of the work. That same rule applies to participation. Make a difference, change the rule! Only you can make things happen. Large on the Agenda at the Winter Conference was the lack of communications with the members from HQ. Many thought that they, HQ, are not doing a good enough job. Opinions were quite uniform, that this is true. HQ promised to do a better job; however, we the members must do a better job of reading Contrail, newsletters and going to the Member's Web site. So do it! Questions? Call me, call HQ, and call someone that can answer questions, not another person as mystified as you. You know what I mean, go to the source with the expertise in the areas you are addressing.

One of the items that came out of the Finance Committee's meeting was an offer to forgive the debt of \$114,000.00 owed by the So Ca Wing on the Zero, if we

pay off the Spitfire balance of \$184,000.00 by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Now folks, that's a lot of money, but \$184,000 is much better than \$300,000, don't you agree? We'll make it happen; we always do, so there, I'm giving you another chance to participate! Speaking of participation in Wing activities, I hear some people wonder why things happen, who chooses who to fly the Wing's aircraft, why can't we build another hangar, why do we do what we do, etc. Well, I'll answer all your questions, come out get involved, and you my dear friends, will be involved with all of the solutions!

We, The Southern California Wing of the CAF, are blessed with a core group of hard working volunteers. We need that core group to grow! YOU are the answer to all of our problems, excitement, and history. As people in Alaska know, if you aren't the lead dog in a sled team, the view never changes. Don't spend your time viewing the world as a proctologist, be a leader. If you choose to whine instead, please call me with your address so I know where to deliver the cheese. Remember, the sum total of our lives is really the difference we make while we are here. Make that mark, I promise you will know you've done the right thing.

I hope all of you take advantage of your Wing web site. Dave Flood does a fantastic job and it is a credit to your Wing. You will notice that previous Wing newsletters are now on there and can be downloaded and printed with the touch of a button. If you would like to start receiving your monthly Wing Newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail Dave at the web site and let him know. This would serve two purposes: 1. You will receive your newsletter much earlier in the cycle; 2. You will save your Wing many dollars in printing costs and postage; 3. You will be able to print out your newsletter in color! Please go to the site if you have a computer and let Dave know you'd like to begin receiving it via e-mail. If you don't have a computer, WAKE-UP. Get one. There is a world of information out there available to you. Website: [www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal](http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal).

Your Wing Staff is working with the Department of Airports, the Fire Department, and an Architect in finishing your hangars and museum. Anyone with experience in building and or planning is greatly needed. Please give me a call. Until next month, remember: nothing happens until somebody sells something! Sell the CAF, meet me in Las Vegas and I'll buy you a drink.

## The Power of Prayer

In WWII, there was an advisor to Churchill who organized a group of people who dropped what they were doing every night at a prescribed hour for one minute to collectively pray for the safety of England, its people and peace.

There is now a group of people organizing the same thing here in America. If you would like to participate: Each evening at 9:00 PM Eastern Time (8:00 PM Central) (6:00 PM Pacific), stop whatever you are doing and spend one

minute praying for the safety of the United States, our troops, our citizens, and for a Godly nation.

If you know anyone who would like to participate, please pass this along.

Someone said if people really understood the full extent of the power we have available through prayer, we might be speechless. Our prayers are the most powerful asset we have.

Thank You, and God Bless America !



Thanks to Russ Drosendahl for sharing this with us!

## Thinking About You...

Keep in your thoughts and prayers these members who are ailing:

Jim Basso	Dave Long
Charles Miller	Al Smith
Iran Ausley	Jerri Fleishman

If you know of any others, please contact Dave Flood.



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Some future CAF members visited our hangars recently. Jenipher, with her three boys – Caleb, Gavin and Garrett pose in front of our Fairchild F-24 restoration project. They plan to come back and see us.**

# VMB 611 – On Their Way To War

By David L. Fish, son of a VMB 611 pilot

VMB 611 (under the command of Lt. Col. George A. Sarles, USMC) was deployed to the Pacific Theater in two stages. One-half of the Flight Echelon and their fourteen PBJ-1s from San Diego shipped aboard the *USS Manila Bay* on August 24, 1944; and the Ground Echelon (including my father, Capt. Doit L. Fish, USMC, and the other half of the flight crews) shipped from the Port Hueneme Naval Base aboard the *SS Zoella Lykes*, a freighter converted to a troopship.

During WWII, Port Hueneme was a small, but busy, Naval Base. It was also home to the Navy's Pacific Construction Battalions (Seabees) and ACORN Units. The ACORN was an Advanced Base Unit consisting of a Combat Aircraft Service Unit and an attachment of Seabees. Their responsibility was the administration, operations and maintenance of U.S. existing airfields or recaptured Japanese airfields, such as Clark Airfield (Philippines).

On September 26, 1944, thirty-six officers and 416 enlisted men of VMB 611 and 240 sailors of ACORN 34 boarded the *Zoella Lykes* and headed to Hawaii. The saga of the ship, a floating rust-bucket, was bizarre, with many "snafus," including the fact that the captain sailed without proper up-to-date orders, and the ship ran very short of food supplies. The *Zoella Lykes* sailed for five months, becoming a living hell to its human cargo. For all that time, it was unable to deliver its passengers to the correct destination.



Men from VMB 611 and ACORN 34 board the *SS Zoella Lykes* at Port Hueneme Naval Base, CA on Sept. 26, 1944 (Photo courtesy of LeGrande Poor).

Per Leyte Operation Plan 13-44, both VMB 611 and ACORN 34 were to participate in the Leyte invasion. However, neither did. Due to a change of orders, which the *Zoella Lykes* captain did not receive, the ship sailed from Hawaii on October 10, 1944. The corrected destination was supposed to be Emirau Island – to rejoin the Flight Echelon. The original destination, for which the ship

incorrectly headed, was Lingayen Harbor, Luzon. The voyage should have lasted two months or less.

In the meantime, on October 22, 1944, VMB 611's Flight Echelon left Hawaii with their PBJs for the island-hopping flight to Emirau, arriving and joining MAG 61 on October 27. The Ground Echelon never made it to Emirau. Lt. Col. Sarles, with only half of his complement of flight crews, which also performed maintenance on their PBJs, determined that VMB 611 was ready for combat. The squadron made its combat debut, led by Lt. Col. Sarles, on the evening of November 18, 1944, with a night mission to attack Kavieng.

I recently had the honor and privilege of making contact with LeGrande Poor, one of the last surviving veterans of ACORN 34. He related the following:

"I ran across your inquiry on the internet. I sailed from Port Hueneme on the *Zoella Lykes*. VMB 611, as you are aware, also was on board. My unit was ACORN 34. I was in the U.S. Navy and was an enlisted man.

When the *Zoella Lykes* left Pearl Harbor, through an administrative error...we got lost. We were at anchor in Ulithi, where much of the Pacific Fleet was located at that time. There were aircraft carriers, battleships, destroyers and cruisers there. I remember this incident when a Japanese submarine got into the anchorage at Ulithi and sank one of the ships there. I do not know if your father was still on the ship at that time.

I believe you are already aware of the ship leaving Pearl Harbor and becoming lost from the Port Director until we showed up in Leyte – the Navy wanting to know why we were so late. We were scheduled for the invasion of Leyte Gulf, and got to the Philippines for the tail end of the invasion of Lingayen Gulf."



Ulithi Atoll - Fall of 1944  
Painted by someone in VMB611 aboard the *Zoella Lykes*. The *Zoella Lykes* is at the lower left.

The above watercolor illustration depicts the torpedoing of the Fleet Oiler *USS Mississinewa* (AO-59) on November 20, 1944 by one of five Kaitens, manned suicide miniature "torpedo" subs launched from two Japanese mother subs outside the anchorage of Ulithi Atoll in the Central Pacific.

## VMB 611 On Their Way To War, continued:

AO-59 was attached to the Third Fleet and loaded with aviation gasoline, diesel oil, and Navy special fuel oil. The initial explosion had been port side forward at 0545, and was followed by a series of explosions as the fire quickly traveled through magazines and bunker tanks. The ship burned fiercely for about three hours and then rolled over and sank. Out of a total complement of 298, there were three officers and 57 enlisted personnel lost. The painting and description is from Cpl. Charles F. White, USMC, a VMB 611 flight crew member aboard the *Zoella Lykes*. It is in my personal art collection.

While the above incident was VMB 611 Ground Echelon's and ACORN 34's "welcome" to the Pacific combat zone, Ulithi is also where Lt. Col. Sarles retrieved the other half of his flight crews. Because of concerns about his missing flight crews, he started looking for his men. In mid-December he received information that they were at Ulithi. He flew an echelon of PBJs to Ulithi to at least retrieve his flight crews, flying them back to Emirau.

Meanwhile, the *Zoella Lykes* continued its bizarre voyage, arriving at Lingayen Harbor on February 7, 1945, when shortly afterward ACORN 34 disembarked for their assignment at Clark Airfield. Because of the lack of orders, VMB 611 ground personnel did not disembark until February 24. They boarded two LSTs and made their way to Mindoro, then sailing to Zamboanga, Mindanao, disembarking on March 17, 1945.

With new orders, VMB 611 left Emirau and MAG 61 on March 29, arriving at Moret Airfield, Zamboanga on March 30. They joined MAG 32 as part of MAGSZAM.

Finally, VMB 611's Flight Echelon was reunited with their long-lost Ground Echelon, and they finished the war there in Zamboanga.

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Note: David L. Fish, a member of our Wing, is the son of Capt. Doit L. Fish, VMB 611 pilot who sailed aboard the *SS Zoella Lykes* and went MIA with the crew of his PBJ-1J on May 30, 1945. In November, 1956, the aircraft wreckage and crew skeletal remains were discovered near Davao, Mindanao. The eight Marines were given a group burial, with full military honors, at Fort Logan National Cemetery, Denver, CO on July 15, 1957. David continues his research on his father and VMB 611 in honoring their sacrifice and memory.

The membership of the *Marine Bombing Squadron VMB-611* has donated a sizable amount to our PBJ-J *Semper Fi* Fund. They did this after their final reunion, and after dissolving their Reunion Committee. You may join them in helping David honor their memory by donating to the CAF, So. CA Wing's PBJ-1J "Semper Fi" Fund.

Send your donation to:

**CAF – SoCAWing, "Semper Fi" Fund, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010.**

## USS New York



It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the World Trade Center .

It is the fifth in a new class of warship - designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft.

Steel from the World Trade Center was melted down in a foundry in Amite , LA to cast the ship's bow section. When it was poured into the molds on Sept. 9, 2003, "those big rough steelworkers treated it with total reverence," recalled Navy Capt. Kevin Wensing, who was there. "It was a spiritual moment for everybody there."

Junior Chavers, foundry operations manager, said that when the trade center steel first arrived, he touched it with his hand and the "hair on my neck stood up." "It had a big meaning to it for all of us," he said. "They knocked us down. They can't keep us down. We're going to be back."

The ship's motto? "**Never Forget**"

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## Special Events in Our Museum

By Dick Burrer

On March 10 we had over 200 people from the St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Camarillo attending a charity event for their school. Their committee did a marvelous job in decorating, setting up tables & chairs, providing numerous baskets of goodies which were raffled off.

On March 24, the American Red Cross honored seven of Ventura County's most remarkable women at the fourth annual Clara Barton Awards Gala, held in our WWII Aviation Museum Hangar. Tim Gallagher, President of the *Ventura County Star*, was the Master of Ceremonies.

## On Final To Santa Paula

by Ron Fleishman

When I retired from the airlines and returned to Camarillo from Kansas City, I set upon a task that had been put on hold for almost four years... that of unpacking my books and other items of a lifetime of aviation collecting and putting my den/library in order. This project is both a joy and a giant pain.

It's a great delight to find a photo or book you had forgotten about. A sense of bewilderment arises when you come across something in a box that, for the life of you, you can't remember why you saved it in the first place.

One photo that falls into the delight department is the one below of our C-46 still painted in its white and blue pseudo Chinese paint scheme on final approach for the Santa Paula Airport. No, the landing wasn't to a full stop... it was more of a bouncing of the tires on the runway. But it was enough for the pilot to say that he had "touched down" there and cause the locals to run for cover and talk about what might have happened if that "big ole thing" had really landed there.

Here is the story as it was told to me. I don't vouch for the total truthfulness of it, but it was the first of the stories that introduced the C-46 *Humpty Dumpty* (later to be named *China Doll*) to the area and into the local aviation legends.

Back in the "eighties," when we first brought the plane to California, Bob Van Ausdell was one of the few pilots who flew the plane for the newly-formed Southern California Squadron of the CAF (we were not yet a Wing). Bob was a retired TWA pilot, and had a hangar at the Santa Paula Airport.

Santa Paula is a great airport, with some of the finest aircraft of the "Golden Age" all in one spot. It, however, is not a field where you can land a plane the size of a C-46, and, if you could, you might have to leave it there, unless you wanted to disassemble it to get it out. There was no way you were going to fly it out. There was also talk of how many hangars the wing span might relocate.

Now those who remember Bob will remember that he had both a fine sense of humor and a penchant for liking a challenge, especially when airplanes were involved. During some "hangar flying" with his buddies at his hangar, the topic of the C-46 landing at Santa Paula came up.

When told that it would never happen, Bob was said to reply that he would, while flying the C-46, sometime touch down at Santa Paula. That time came when Bob was flying the airplane back from one of our early air shows. He told the crew he was going to make a little side trip before landing at Camarillo.

A few people on the ground, so the story goes, knew beforehand what was going to happen. An unsuspecting

line boy was told to get ready to flag in a twin-engine plane and "take care of it." Well, out he went, looked up, and saw this big roaring twin-engine behemoth heading straight in for the tiny Santa Paula airstrip.

Now I wasn't on the ground, but the popular legend is that the startled boy took one look at the approaching C-46, and took off in the opposite direction, not wanting any part of the disaster he was sure was about to take place.

Van Ausdell continued to fly the C-46 on final, dropped the gear, and flared out. True to what he had told his buddies, he bounced the tires on the runway, then gunned the engines. The plane regained altitude, he retracted the landing gear, and continued on to the Camarillo Airport.

Bob had lived up to his promise of "touching down" at Santa Paula. A few months later I was given this photo.

Bob is gone now, and no one seems to know where the surprised line boy ran to...or even if that part of the story is real. However, I still have the photo – proof that once, many years ago, a Curtiss C-46 Commando named *Humpty Dumpty* did indeed "touch down" at the Santa Paula Airport.



Photo Courtesy of Ron Fleishman

**The CAF – SoCAWing's C-46 *Humpty Dumpty* on final approach to the Santa Paula Airport. Luckily, someone on the ground had the presence of mind to record this momentous occasion for posterity – just before he ran for his life.**

*Note: Ron Fleishman is our Wing Historian, and we are mighty glad he is back to sharing our Wing's history with the rest of us. Good to have you back, Ron !*

### Air Show Report

by Jason Somes

March 31	Riverside Air Show	C-46, F6F, Zero
April 21	Shafter Air Show	C-46, Zero, F8F, F6F
April 28/29,	Half Moon Bay	Zero, F6F
May 19/20	Chino Air Show	Zero, F6F, F8F, C-46

Since changes may occur in the final scheduling of the above air shows, please call (805) 482-0064 to confirm before you go.



## The Lagos Experience

by Scott Drosos

“Our assignment was to fly a roundtrip from Dubai to Lagos, Nigeria. Since we were coming back the same day, I decided not to check out of the hotel. By doing so, I was taking a chance that we might break down in Lagos, or, for some other reason, not make it back to Dubai, but Lagos is not the place you want to get stuck, and I knew that we’d all agree to find a way to get the airplane back out of there, almost regardless of what went wrong.

Due to headwinds of over 100 knots, the flight down to Nigeria took over eight hours, while the same winds lowered our flight time on the way back to about seven hours. Since we had four pilots, two of whom were captains, we decided to split it in half.

I hate to stereotype Africa, but it really is a backward continent. Radio communications are spotty, radar is non-existent in most areas, airways come to abrupt dead-ends on our charts, which apparently don’t get updated properly, and clearances are ambiguous and often hard to understand. It’s almost a free-for-all, and ATC cannot always be counted on to adequately separate you from other airplanes or terrain. Thus, you really have to be vigilant, and a special air-to-air frequency is used for pilots to announce their routes and altitudes to other pilots, so that we can monitor our own traffic separation.

Things are just as screwed up at the airports, and, while Lagos does have a nice long runway, the facilities and equipment there are very lacking. We squeezed into a spot on the cargo ramp that was just big enough to accommodate an aircraft of our size, and the ground crew began unloading our freight with broken-down loaders and fork lifts, often doing much of the work manually. As a result, just off-loading our freight took over four hours, a job that should have only taken an hour, or two at the most. And that’s without putting any freight back on, as we were to depart empty going back to Dubai.

It was almost a sin to bring an airplane as clean and beautiful as ours into a place like that. Just to our right was a large dirt field where a number of derelict airplanes had been towed, and now sat neglected and dying, much like abandoned boats that sink in their own slips in a harbor. Included in this lot was one of the sorriest looking 747s I’ve ever seen, which, besides being filthy dirty, was missing a big chunk of its left flap, along with numerous engine parts. I doubt we’ll ever see that one back in the air!

On flights to third-world places such as Lagos, we carry our own mechanic and loadmaster, who ride along with us in the airplane to supervise operations on the ground when we get there. The loadmaster ensures proper loading and unloading of the aircraft, and is responsible for providing us with weight and balance data. He was almost pulling his hair out, trying to teach the local crews how to operate the power cargo-handling equipment built into our airplane. Most of them spoke no English, which didn’t help either.

Meanwhile, our mechanic was busy keeping an eye on the airplane and supervising refueling operations. He personally took numerous samples to check for water or contaminants in the fuel, and, since he would be riding the airplane back with us, I knew he would take the job seriously. We also carry our own spare parts, including numerous commonly-replaced items such as: tires, brakes, hydraulic pumps, etc. that he could have replaced in a pinch.

When the offloading was finally complete, we ran into another little snag. None of the ground crew had a headset with which to communicate with us during the pushback, nor did they have a steering bypass pin, which is used to disable the aircraft’s hydraulic steering temporarily so that the nose wheel will turn as the tug is pushing us back. Again our mechanic came to the rescue, as he had brought along his own headset and bypass pin. The only complication was that he would have to be outside during the pushback, creating the problem of how to get him back on the airplane so he could ride back to Dubai with us.

So... we came up with a creative solution. After we pushed back and started the engines, he would climb up on the nose wheel and enter the airplane through a hatch into what’s known as the E & E (Electronics and Equipment) Compartment. From there he could open another hatch and climb into the main cargo compartment, then simply walk up the stairs to the upper deck where we were.

It was my turn to fly on the leg back, and I made sure to coordinate with the mechanic, telling him that I would not move the airplane under its own power until I physically saw his face on the flight deck.

Once airborne, we were all thankful to be on our way “home” to Dubai.

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*Note: Scott Drosos is a member of our Wing, and works with our PBJ-1J Restoration Team in between flights.*



© Photo by Scott Drosos

**Here is Scott’s Atlas Air cargo Boeing 747-400, in Emirates Sky Cargo colors, on the ground at Lagos, Nigeria. The crew was happy to fly back to Dubai.**

## Maintenance Officer's Report by Joe Peppito

Well, I am into my third month as your new, or should I say "re-NEW-ed", Maintenance Officer. I have had some medical problems in this past month that have taken me away from my duties, but I am now getting back with it.

We are presently in the process of getting all of our flying aircraft ready for the upcoming 2007 air show season. We now have the F6F-5 Hellcat flying again, after Crew Chief Chris Rushing and crew replaced a cylinder on the engine and rebuilt the badly-worn tail wheel assembly. They also completed the 100-hour inspection of the airplane. Jason Somes then flew it down to Midland, Texas for a special Navy presentation. Jason then flew the Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero from Midland to the Arizona Wing in Mesa, AZ, where it stayed until he flew it back home to Camarillo on March 24.

The F8F-2 crew, under Crew Chief Ken Kramer, has re-installed the engine in that airplane after it was repaired by Ray Anderson, who did a great job of turning the engine around in a short period of time. They are also working on the 100-hour inspection of this airplane.

The C-46 crew, under Crew Chief Charlie Valentine, has done a great job of getting this airplane back in flying condition and ready for the air show season. They are also well into the inspection of this airplane. Gene O'Neal and crew also deserve a big hand for the excellent work they did in getting the fire warning system back on line and working.

The C-131 has been in the Museum Hangar going through its annual inspection. Crew Chief Dick Troy and crew got the job done before a large special event was held in the Museum Hangar on March 10. Hopefully, we will be able to get the C-46 into the Museum Hangar for some corrosion control work.

Crew Chief Sib Bosso has started the annual inspection on SNJ-5 #290. The propeller has been removed and shipped out for overhaul and inspection. Also, the tail surfaces (rudder and elevators) have been removed and are in the process of being recovered with new fabric by Gil Brice and George Sands. The old 15-year-old fabric was showing some age cracking.

The restoration work on the PBJ-1J (B-25J), SNJ-4, Fairchild F-24 and Spitfire Mark XIV is progressing well, with all hands hard at work.

I am planning on redoing the back end of the Restoration Hangar, with the goal of storing all the individual aircraft spare parts. We will need some help in moving all the equipment stored back there and installing some new storage racks. Check with me if you are interested in helping.

Until next time...hang in there and "Keep 'Em Flying!"

## "The Fight For China" ..... by Pat Brown

Our WWII Aviation Museum will present a special event on Saturday, May 5, 2007 to celebrate the homecoming of our Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero, which has been in Arizona for over a year. The Zero is one of only three in the world currently flying. In addition to the Zero, we will have as a visiting aircraft a Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, from the "Planes of Fame Museum" in Chino, CA. We expect to see flyovers by the two planes during the day, and unlimited opportunities for the visiting public to take photos of the planes, both flying and close-up. The pilots of both planes will also be available to talk with visitors. Handout information on the planes will be available.



### CAF-SoCAWing's Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero.comin' home!

Also featured that day will be the unveiling of a new painting by Thomas Van Stein, a wing member. Thomas has generously loaned us his beautiful depiction of a dogfight between Flying Tiger P-40s and a Japanese Zero, over the Mountains of the Moon in central China.

This newest of his paintings is much larger than his other paintings in our WWII Museum's collection. Thomas will be exhibiting other examples of his art for public viewing during the day. Van Stein lives in Carpinteria, and exhibits his art in museums and galleries throughout the United States and abroad.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder [www.vgphoto.com](http://www.vgphoto.com)  
"Planes of Fame Museum's" Curtiss P-40 Warhawk.  
Special Event – May 5, 2007 – "The Fight For China",  
WWII Aviation Museum, Camarillo Airport –10am-4pm.

## A VISIT TO KELLY JOHNSON'S PLACE

By Ceci Stratford

As a graduate of Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, I, along with Chuck, frequent alumnae functions. At one fabulous dinner the College President's sister asked about Chuck's P-38 lapel pin. Of course he was excited to talk about his father's connection with the airplane. Our wonderful surprise was that she, Nancy Johnson, was Kelly Johnson's widow! (Kelly Johnson designed the P-38). Thus began a warm friendship with that delightful lady.

Nancy invited us to her house in Encino last October 6 to see Kelly's office. The home, situated high on a hill overlooking the San Fernando Valley, was designed and built by Kelly in 1941. Strategically located along the ridge, it pleasantly flows from a room-with-a-view to a room-with-a-view to a room-with-a-view! An outdoor patio also stretches across the back of the house overlooking the Valley. Gardens surround the house and a path goes down the hill to a small workroom building where Kelly did much of his designing and tool making. Paintings and photographs of Kelly and various airplanes adorn the walls of the house.

The outstanding part of our visit was seeing Kelly's office. A small room off the living room, it is paneled in warm wood and is surrounded by books, photos, trophies, and medals. Kelly, who started at Lockheed in 1933 as a tool designer, made his way up the corporate ladder to become senior vice president. As the head of Lockheed's Advanced Development Projects (Skunk Works) for 30 years, he played a significant role in designing more than 40 of the world's most advanced aircraft, including such famous airplanes as the XP-80, P-38, Constellation, P2V, U-2, F-104, and SR-71.

For these significant contributions to aviation he was given numerous honors, awards, medals, and honorary degrees, most of which are displayed in his office. How exciting it was to view and actually touch his trophies and medals, which include the 1964 Medal of Freedom, 1941 Wright Brothers Medal, two Collier trophies, two Theodore von Karman Awards, 1966 National Medal of Science, among others too numerous to list here. Kelly was a friend of other significant people in aviation, including Jimmy Doolittle, Amelia Earhart, Wiley Post, Roscoe Turner. We noticed several original photographs of them laying around, as we took everything in with our mouths open in awe.

Kelly was widowed twice and after the death of his second wife, he asked his long time friend, Nancy, to marry him. (She and her first husband used to double date with Kelly and his second wife). Nancy says he was a sweet, delightful, loving husband. She truly enjoyed their years together. Kelly had no children, but loved Nancy's children and grandchildren as if they were his. Nancy is starting to plan what to do with Kelly's marvelous collection, possibly

donating some items to his alma mater, the University of Michigan.

How privileged we feel to have seen first hand a little bit of Kelly's world. He is a man we both admire and have always been in awe of, and now actually have our own link to through his lovely widow.



**Kelly Johnson, with illustrations of his two most famous airplanes, the U-2 and the SR-71, which were designed & built at Lockheed's "Skunk Works."**

### **Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson, 1910-1990**

Highlights of Kelly Johnson's career with Lockheed:

- 1932 – turned down due to "insufficient experience"
- 1933 – earned Masters of Aeronautical Engineering  
hired by Lockheed as a tool designer (\$83/mo.)
- 1952 – Lockheed's Chief Engineer
- 1956 – Corporate V.P. – Research & Development  
Head of "Skunk Works"
- 1964 – Member of Board of Directors
- 1975 – Retired

Kelly helped design the following renowned airplanes:

P-38, PV-1, PV-2, Constellation, C-130, F-80, F-104, C-140, F-90, F-94, T-33, U-2, SR-71.

Part of the memo from Lockheed President Carl Kotchian announcing Kelly's retirement in 1974:

"He has performed Herculean tasks many, many times...always living up to his motto: **'Be quick, be quiet, and be on time.'** It is Kelly as a person I think we will miss most...his absolute honesty, his dedicated patriotism (he may be the most honored engineer in history, but many of the things he has done for his country will never be told), and his unswerving support for the people who worked for him.

It is not probable that we will see Kelly's like again."

Kelly died December 21, 1990.

## Wing Photo Page II



The March "Mystery Aircraft" was a British Navy Fairey *Firefly*. There were eleven members who came up with the correct answer. Les Bedding was the first to respond. Other "winners" were: Casey & Sarah de Bree; Walt Metcalf; Jim Tierney, Ken Nishimura, Steve Barber, Bob Boyer, Dave Wood, Rudi Wallasch, and Alan Gaynor.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
Here's Marc Russell with his new baby, Katelyn. She doesn't seem very impressed with our hangar activity. Obviously, the guys were not riveting at the time.



Photo Courtesy of Ceci Stratford  
Ceci Stratford and Chuck Kamphausen on Chuck's new toy that he bought himself for Christmas. How's that for "riding in style?"



© Photo by Dave Flood  
Horst Wallasch high on the ladder installing some much-needed upgrades to our electrical system in the Museum Hangar. Son Rudi was his able assistant.



© Photo by Larry Kates  
Larry Simmer inspecting the 8-bladed scimitar-shaped prop on the turbo engine on the Grumman E-2C "Hawkeye" of VAW-117 "Wall Bangers" at Pt. Mugu.



Gil Brice (L) is saying to George Sands, "Are you sure this is the way Orville and Wilbur started?" They are two of our crack fabric application engineering crew.