

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

Southern California Wing
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Col. Ceci Stratford

Ceci is our Coordinator of The Friends of The Museum, and is very active in many areas of our Wing, including our Special Events Programs. See the article on Ceci on Page 9.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

[Our CAF Mission: To Honor American Military Aviation Through Flight, Exhibition and Remembrance.](#)

April 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday and major holidays			1 April Fool's Day	2	3	4 Work Day
5	6 Museum Closed	7 Work Day	8	9 Work Day	10	11 Work Day Staff Meeting 9:30
12 Easter Museum Closed	13 Museum Closed	14 Work Day	15	16 Work Day	17	18 Work Day
19	20 Museum Closed	21 Work Day	22 Earth Day	23 Work Day	24	25 Work Day
26	27 Museum Closed	28 Work Day	29	30 Work Day		

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS				IN THIS ISSUE
Wing Leader	*	Bob Albee (805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Wing Calendar 2
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Maintenance Officer	*	Joe Peppito (805) 498-4187	jocafpeppo@msn.com	Help Needed for May 9 Event. 8
Safety Officer	*	Norm Swagler (805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	CAF Loses F82 Appeal 8
Museum Director		Sarah de Bree (805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	PBJ Receives Restoration Grant 8
Gift Shop Manager		Sarah de Bree (805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Ceci Stratford: Flying Role Model 9
Public Info Officer		Pat Brown (805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	Museum Update 10
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Personnel Officer		Norm Swagler (805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	So Cal Wing Golf Tournament 13
Historian		Ron Fleishman (805) 384-4426	oldplanec46@aol.com	Special Event: Women in War 14
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* Denotes Staff Position				

Wing Leader's Report

by Robert Albee

Part Two:

After lunch at the "old watering hole," as we used to say in the West, I decided to check our Wing's accomplishments that have taken place over the last few months. When members say they are going to do something (without needing my leadership) they do it!

I walked into the new and improved "O" Club room – which is a real "knock-out." All electrical wiring and switches replaced; new drywall installed and painted; new heat and air conditioning unit in place; two large refrigerators that "make ice;" and magnificent cabinets. Next on the list: new sink and flooring; and even more cabinets. Talk about the "cat's meow," this is it! If I were to name all the individuals who participated in this remodel, we would run out of paper, so here are just a few who were involved: Robert Blair, Lloyd McAfee, Steve Barber, Casey de Bree, and many more unnamed. That shows what we can do when we work as a team. By the way, if someone wonders where the fresh coffee went, I will give them one guess, plus the price is still the same.

Let's now go to another area of our facilities – the tarmac-ramp. Due to the efforts of a few hard-working members and self-starters, such as Joe Peppito, Brian Hartill, Lloyd McAfee, and Jim Hinkelman – our tarmac for the most part is now clear of junk and available for its original purpose: aircraft taxi, engine run-up, and tie-downs. Hopefully, this also will prevent unwanted dumping that has taken place in this area.

Since our new canopy has been installed between the hangars, all ground equipment has been placed under one roof – allowing protection from the elements and providing improved working conditions and space in the Maintenance Hangar when required.

If you take a look at the flight line side of the Maintenance Hangar now – you will see that Lloyd McAfee has placed a yellow plastic chain-link barrier across the hangar doors – preventing public access to the hangar when the doors are open. This was to comply with fire department codes.

In addition, the famous "no engine run" red line will be applied shortly. Our facility is now much safer for all parties involved, which is our number one goal: safety, safety and more safety. This place is looking real good! I wish I could take credit for all this – but I can't. I just stand around and watch the magic take place while more "broken washing machines" (T-28s) go by, if you know what I mean!

Well, I have just about given up waiting for someone to ask me for advice – when a brilliant idea struck me. Over to the Museum I go – and knock on my Exec's (Shirley Murphy) door. I know she will listen and, in all probability, think my ideas are great. I suggest that we expand the display area and give her some suggestions on how to do so. She likes the concept, and states she will get right on it. You see,

great minds do think alike! Next, off we go to the entrance of the Museum, where I explain that we need a "half-moon" entrance canopy (blue or green) to improve our professional appearance. She likes that idea also, and will provide drawings for me. By the way, this was not solely my idea. A member with the initials S.B. had suggested it to me while we were telling war stories one evening.

O.k., it's close to fun time (airplane watching) – so I make one more lap around our facility to make sure I have not missed anyone. Say "Hi" to Gino, Sib Bosso, Alex, Howard Ulm, Dick Troy, Dave Sica and Jim Price. I know I have missed someone, and I am going to hear about it. Please forgive me – my recall is not what it used to be.

Now, what lessons have I learned in order to become a better Wing Leader? Well, it's really straightforward, like anything else in life when dealing with individuals.

First of all: leave your ego at home.

Secondly: communicate whenever possible with your fellow members and give them praise for a job well done – no matter how unimportant it may seem to you. It may be very important to them. At all times – respect their needs and listen very carefully when they are communicating with you. It's amazing what I have learned when practicing the art of "hearing" my fellow members.

Finally (the big one): have patience, more patience and even more patience.

The CAF SoCAWing is a group of well-educated, hard-working, dedicated individuals who are desirous of taking and giving suggestions to improve this wonderful organization. After all, it's the "Greatest Show On Earth" – because of you.

Until next month, God Bless...and fly safe!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Sib Bosso (at controls), Alex Ferrasci (with fire ext.) and Joe Peppito conducting a successful run-up of the engine on SNJ-4 #N6411D on March 26. Nice going guys – the SNJ-4 crew can be proud of their work!

Missing In Action: Down Behind Enemy Lines In Italy by Capt. Stewart B. Gilbert (Part Two of a Four-Part Series)

They (B-25s) were on course for Perugia and in beautiful stagger formation. It was a thrill to see them pass so close to us. As they approached their bomb run, they disappeared in the distance and all we could hear was the roar of engines, the bursting of flak and then intermittent rumble of the bombs as they fell, flight by flight.



A North American B-25 releasing bombs over Italy.

When we told the people that the bombers were American, they all crowded into the streets with excitement and gave Paul and me all the praise that they had for the entire American Army.

As the planes turned off the target, we still couldn't see them, but heard the shrill whine of a B-25 going down, and then the explosion as it burst into flames somewhere near Perugia. I prayed that the crew would be as fortunate as ours, but found out months later that only one had survived, and he was then in prison.

As they returned over our heads, the formation was widely scattered and several ships were trailing smoke from their engines. One ship had only about half the altitude of the others, and both engines were smoking. In the distance we saw three parachutes blossom out and, as the ship came closer, it rolled over, went into a whining spin and crashed into a mountain only a few miles from Piagia. We knew that some of the crew were in the ship, but decided it best not to investigate. When an airplane dives into a mountain, as this one did, there are never any survivors, and if German troops saw it hit, they would soon be up there.

After getting what directions the people were able to give us, we started off on the trail for Rio Freta, and it was, in general, a steep climb all the way. Up higher in the mountains we passed some sizable herds of sheep with their shepherds and barking dogs. Everyone we met would shake our hands and then nod their heads in discouragement at the thought of our trying to return to allied territory.

In Rio Freta, we met some of our Partisan friends again, and were introduced to all the houses and people of the

village, and in each we had to accept their vino. Rio Freta was perched at the peak of a small hill – very steep on all sides, probably built there originally for protection against the enemies. It was high enough for the slopes to be covered with melting snow, and the trails were all like mud troughs. We ate some boloney, bread and drank wine with the people and started out again in hopes of reaching L'Aschio by dusk, where we were told we could find a stall for the night.

The trail from Rio Freta climbed higher and higher into some really rough country, and the snow drifts were deeper and deeper across the trail. By the middle of the afternoon a blinding snow began to fall, and the snow became so deep that we lost our trail. We were above timber line and there were no villages or even shepherds. We were soaked to the skin and my feet both had large blisters from my misfit shoes. My shoelaces had rotted away and, as the shoes became thoroughly soaked, I had trouble keeping them on and in the waist-deep snow had to continually stop, turn around, and dig for one or both. Finally, in desperation, I left both of them in the snow and continued on in only my socks. Plodding through the snow was enough exercise to keep my feet from freezing, but they were so numb I could hardly feel the rocks and ice. I had a picture in my mind of the general terrain and, although we must have gone considerably out of our way, I felt that at least we were going in the right direction...

It was just getting light out and the sky was broken, with no snow falling. If I had been in a position to appreciate the view of the snow-covered valley it would have been beautiful. Dead tired, and in my bare feet, I started making my way down the snowy mountain slope toward L'Aschio...Our way was slow and painful, but I tried not to think of it. I thought about how I had my last Easter at home, going to church with Mother. It was certainly a far cry from this Easter.

Down below the snow line we passed through villages again, and the people were all going to and from church. Most of them just looked at us with tears in their eyes, and I could see prayers on their lips. We were too tired and exhausted to speak to them and try to use what little Italian we knew. In one village, an old man led us into a church where we spent a pleasant few minutes...

By mid-afternoon, my feet were so sore and bleeding that I was unable to walk at all, so I just sat on the bank of a stream, dangling them in cold water. We struggled into L'Aschio late that evening and had trouble there convincing the people that we were not enemy agents. When we had won their confidence, I began looking for a pair of shoes. Finally, in an old bar, we made a deal with a drunk Italian for the pair of shoes he was wearing. They were too large for me, and must have been twenty years old. The leather was well rotted and they were covered with patches crudely sewed into place. The soles were covered with hob nails and cleats...We traded Paul's wrist watch for them, and the Italian walked happily out of the pub with no shoes but with a new watch.

Missing In Action, cont'd.

We contacted a Partisan here and told him of our mission. He was part of the same band, and I explained as best I could that I might return and would try to recruit new members along our route so that we could do some effective work if I did come back.

We slept well in a stall, but only because we were dead tired and exhausted. My feet were painful, and I had begun to get lice and fleas in my clothes. I had not washed for almost two weeks, and had not even had my clothes off.

We were awakened early Monday because troops were coming. All day we stayed just a jump ahead of the Fascists and could hear their machine gun fire and grenades in the village we had just passed. Fortunately, they spent some time in each village getting grogged.

I was delighted with my new shoes, and could walk almost normally, but blisters soon came in spots and I had no socks.

...The valley was so steep that when a car or truck passed, we could just keep walking and hope we wouldn't be recognized. I came face to face with two German soldiers in one place, and tried to pass them as nonchalantly as I knew how. I said, "buon giorno" as I passed and they seemed a little surprised but pleased that I spoke.

In Cassaveccia, we arrived just several hours after the Germans and Fascists had left, and saw a good example of their handiwork. Failing to capture any of the forced labor dodgers, they set fire to two houses and burned all the bedding in town in the center of the street. Six people had protested, and five of them lay dead in the street, full of bullet holes. The other had been taken away to be exhibited in other villages after being thoroughly beaten. The people here were all frightened and excited, so we didn't stay long. One old woman gave me a very nice pair of wool socks though, that she had just finished for her husband, one of those killed in the street. I promised her that revenge on the Nazis and the soldiers of Mussolini would be taken soon.

As time went on I became more and more aggravated and angered at the actions of these men who were calling themselves soldiers.

In another village I saw bodies of two British escaped prisoners who had been shot by the roadside. From this time on I carried a gun and grenades, and forgot about all we had been told since entering the Army about Geneva Convention rulings. It was obvious that the Germans had never even considered such agreements. In Pieve Torina we stopped at the house of a Catholic Padre, and he and his housekeeper fixed us the nicest lunch we had had – wine, bread, sausage and even some marmalade!

The Padre offered us money, and we accepted just enough to get a shave and a haircut in the village's small barber shop. We were told that troops often passed through on the main street but seldom stopped. While in the barber's chair, several German cars, trucks and motorcycles passed but none stopped. A friendly Italian stood outside and offered to warn us if any of the troops were stopping. If they had, we'd have escaped through the back door. Always, we had to anticipate capture and have a rear entrance or some other method of escape in mind. The barber didn't want to accept our money, but we paid him two lire for the shave and haircut. Our shaves were with cold water and some poor imitation of shaving soap. The barber readily apologized for not having any American soap and wanted to know if we had sharper razors in America. I told him, in English, that we had sharper axes in America, and, not being able to understand, he laughed heartily.

We left Pieve Torina in the middle of the afternoon, and began looking for a place to spend the night. Everyone we turned to was frightened and not willing to help, and I felt that we were in no position to be persistent, so on we pushed. By evening, my feet had become so painful that it was impossible to go farther. And Paul had a fever from his malaria. We were exhausted and hungry when we stopped at a small farm house. The old woman there burst into tears at the sight of us and offered us bread and wine. Her husband soon came in from his field and we spent several hours trying to make conversation with them, but to spend the night would have been too much to risk. He walked down to the road with us and pointed out the grave of an English Colonel whom he told us had walked through the snowy mountains all winter bare-footed and had been shot by the Germans on this road only about three weeks before. We left our friends and walked on a few hundred yards.

We climbed into a thicket here to hide for the night. As usual, it began to rain and became very cold. We were well concealed, but, in doing so, had picked a very uncomfortable spot. By putting branches and leaves over the top of the thicket, we had a little shelter, but nevertheless the rain came through and drenched us. We got very little sleep that night and several times heard troops marching by in rote step, singing their German songs.

In the morning, the sun came out and we were able to dry our clothes. While we were waiting, P-40s dive bombed a convoy in the next valley, destroying four trucks, we were told. It sounded good to hear the bombs whistle and explode, and these things always helped to bolster our morale.

At times I felt so low and discouraged that our situation seemed totally helpless, and, had it not been for my resigned faith and prayers, I'd certainly have turned myself in to the Germans. At least we might have had shelter at night from the continual rains. But at all cost, I was going to continue on as long as humanly possible. (*Cont'd.*)

Missing In Action: Down Behind Enemy Lines In Italy by Capt. Stewart B. Gilbert

From here to the coast daily happenings were much the same as they had been, so I won't describe it day by day. We passed near Tolentino, Corridonia, Montegranaro, Fermo, and did not go all the way to the coast, but were within sight of Porto Civittonova, which is a fishing port on the Adriatic. At Fermo, we learned that all fishing in the coastal waters had been cancelled many months ago, and that only military boats were in these waters. This, of course, was a great disappointment, and immediately squelched all the plans and hopes that we had been living for for weeks – or since we had last talked to Franco and Fosta in Resina.

Anyway, in spite of our not being able to get a boat, the trip was not entirely futile. I learned much about the country, the people, customs, and language, and how to best get along with them. Had talked with some of the much-hunted youths along the way, and sent them back to Resina where I told them they could be armed and fight with our band. I greatly exaggerated the advantages of going with us, but it was the only way of convincing them. Besides, the Italians always exaggerate, and, while I was in Italy, I wanted to make myself one of them.

In general, we followed the same route in returning from the coast because it was easier to get help from people with whom we had already made acquaintances and, of course, we had invitations to return.

In one village, the people had been robbed of almost everything – personal belongings, coats, and even cattle had been taken. It was impossible for them to work their farms and produce at all without the help of their ox teams. It was not a very pleasant situation, and none of them were in a position to do anything about it.

On the road that night, Paul and I came across a big German transport stranded with a flat tire. None of the German vehicles carry a spare tire, so the crew had gone for help and left one guard to watch it. He sat on a stone by the roadside and looked half asleep. In all probability, this truck contained food and supplies of the kind much needed by the villagers who had been badly treated by the Germans. Perhaps here was a chance for us to help.

Paul covered the turn in the road, while I crept along the side of the road toward him. There was a grassy meadow where I walked, so being very quiet was not too difficult. He had his helmet off, and, as he lit a cigarette, I came down on his head with a sharp rock. A very effective blow, because he hardly struggled. I threw his rifle into the ditch. My blow may have killed him, but I never found out. Paul came down, and we unloaded all the small boxes we could from the truck and carried them to our friends in the village, where they hid everything in the woods. They came down the road with us to see what else they could

salvage, but Paul and I were anxious to leave and didn't stay...

By now, my clothes were full of lice and fleas and a heat rash had broken out all over my body. I still had some bad looking infections and infected blisters on my feet, and no way at all to keep clean or really wash. Soap was non-existent and the weather was too cold to jump into a creek. My beard had grown several inches long, and even it had lice. It seemed like I scratched myself all day and night, and, unless I was terribly tired, it was impossible to sleep. If it was not the rain, it was the lice – and usually both. Because food was hard to get, Paul and I split up and planned to meet in Resina.

Paul and I arrived in Resina the same day, and all our Italian and Yugoslav friends were out to meet us. As everywhere, they had sad news for us. The Germans had been through several times, and stolen sheep, bedding, burros and anything that appealed to them. The people were much more aroused than when we left them.

Franco and Fosta were in the next valley, and one of the village boys led me over the hill to their camp. Most of the band was there, along with some of the recruits that I had sent back from villages I had passed through. They were camped on a steep hill in a thickly wooded area, and, although there were about sixty of them, I could never have found it alone. All the trails leading in were well camouflaged, and the men were well dispersed throughout the brush and trees. They had built lean-to-like shelters, and had them well covered with green leaves so they couldn't be seen from the air.

Fosta and Franco were glad to see us, but were sorry for us because we had not been able to get back to allied territory. They complimented me on the Italian I had learned on my three week trip (18 days, to be exact).

They went over, with me, some plans on a raid of a material factory near Colfiorita (I believe) which was run by an old Fascist who sent all his material to the Germans. Most of it was wool in large rolls. The raid was to take place that night..

We took them by surprise about five in the afternoon – or, almost by surprise. I think some of the workers were warned as we came down the hillside, because the doors were all bolted when we arrived. A few potato masher grenades opened all bolted doors easily enough. The men rushed in through doors and windows and there were only a few shots fired before they began carrying rolls of wool material out and hiding them in the woods.

I was standing guard in a ditch by the side of the main road with a 9 mm German Bren stand machine gun, grenades and my Mauser pistol. I had a good view of the road, and held my stand gun trained on a sharp curve in the road where it detoured a big rock. This particular machine gun was one that I had fired several times...

Missing In Action, cont'd.

It was in very poor condition and somewhat temperamental. Sometimes it would fire and sometimes it would not. I fervently hoped it was now in a firing mood.

Special warning whistle signals had been prearranged for the various guard positions. Soon my whistle signal was sounded by one of our lookouts, high on the hill. It was to warn me that troops were coming up the road. I waited what seemed like a long time for them to come into sight. Finally, they appeared from around the rock – marching in a patrol fashion on each side of the road. I waited until over a dozen were within sight and the closest were less than 15 yards from me. I didn't want to wait until they saw me first, so I fired a long burst – the gun worked perfectly – and all the Germans in sight went down. With the hatred I had developed for these Jerries, it didn't seem any worse to be killing them than to be killing jack rabbits in west Texas. More were on the road that had not yet come around the curve, and more were climbing the hill behind the mill and behind me. I could hear the other guards firing upon them. Those on my section were well equipped and a few seconds after I had fired, they began lobbing trench mortar shells over the rock and rifle fire was kicking up dust in the road a few feet from me. I couldn't see anything to fire at because they were concealed behind the rock, so I made myself as small as possible in the bottom of the ditch, thinking it would be just a matter of time until they got me. Mortar shells were falling on all sides of me. They must have assumed that they had me, because the patrol started around the corner again. I opened up as soon as I saw them, and heaved a grenade over the top of the big rock. This stopped them for a few seconds, and I took advantage of the delay to make a break for the woods. This time machine gun fire followed me, but the brush wasn't far away, and I dived in headlong. As I climbed the hill, shells and machine gun fire practically encircled me, but they were firing at random and couldn't see me. If they had tried to follow, they would have met an ambush and all been killed, but I imagine they suspected this, as they didn't follow. We lost several boys on the raid, but that night (they) were able to go back and get the wool out of the bushes. This had been a really close one, but at least it gave me a lot of prestige with the band, and I was no longer a newcomer.

The material was distributed among several villages that were feeding us. This communism seemed to work pretty smoothly on a small scale... The loss of our boys was mourned the next day, but nevertheless we celebrated it as a successful mission with a lot of vino...

The German S.S. scoured the hills for any trace of us for days, but we were too securely hidden and they were too stupid to find us. During the search, I saw their patrols many times at a distance from a hilltop, and, several times, I was just leaving town as they were coming in. Although I still carried my cane most of the time, I could travel at a terrific speed when there was danger near...

The days began to get warmer, the fields greener, and we were having more sunshine than ever before. Often it was warm enough so that we could bathe in a secluded stream and wash some of our clothes. Of course, we had no soap and the water was ice-cold, but at least it helped. I even had a rag that we used as a towel.

One small village that was deserted except for one old couple was Rocco Franco, directly across the valley from Resina. It was high on one of the steepest slopes, and had a church larger than usual and only several small houses. We were told that before the war this church had been used only for special festivities and that the village had been deserted for many years because of its inaccessible location. I explored some of the passageways in the church with candles, and found an inscription with the date 1160 on it.

One underground passageway led to a fort, or a sort of defense tower, about twenty yards from the church. The walls of the tower must have been at least five feet thick, and the whole tower was about thirty feet high. On top had once been mounted a catapult used to heave boulders at an enemy. Many of these boulders were still there. They had been rounded into balls about six inches in diameter. This tower was the only one of this kind that I saw in Italy.

The days dragged and I wandered aimlessly down one hill and up the next, either alone or with Paul...or some member of the band. The patrols continued to make their rounds, but I had become so accustomed to their ways that I think I could have dodged them indefinitely, had they not become more numerous.

Almost every day I saw or heard Allied airplanes overhead, and frequently German aircraft, but only in small numbers. I talked to the farmers in the fields, helped them a little and slept in the bushes at night. The nights were still bitterly cold, and through the cold air the sound of artillery barrages carried well all the way from the beachheads near Anzio – some two hundred miles distant.

Concurrent News From Anzio (Editor's Note)

During March, April, and the first part of May 1944 static warfare reminiscent of WW I ruled Anzio. Air and artillery barrages rained down on the Allies, including fire from "Anzio Annie," a 280-mm. German railway gun fired from the Alban Hills. Random death or injury from the constant shelling became the way of life in the beachhead zone. Most Allied casualties were from shrapnel as the Anzio beachhead became a maze of muddy trenches, foxholes, and bunkers.

On the night of 11-12 May, the Fifth and Eighth Armies launched their long-awaited spring offensive against the Gustav Line, finally capturing Cassino and breaking the Gustav Line by 15 May. Terracina fell to II Corps on 23-24 May, as they raced toward the Anzio beachhead against rapidly crumbling resistance from German units withdrawing northwest toward Rome. (to be continued)

Speechless In Iran

In addition to communicating with the local Air Traffic Control facility, all aircraft in the Persian Gulf AOR are required to give the Iranian Air Defense Radar (military) a ten minute 'heads up' if they will be transiting Iranian airspace. This is a common procedure for commercial aircraft and involves giving them your call sign, transponder code, type aircraft, and points of origin and destination.

I just flew with a guy who overheard this conversation on the VHF Guard (emergency) frequency 121.5 MHz while flying from Europe to Dubai . It's too good not to pass along...



The conversation went something like this:

Iranian Air Defense Radar: 'Unknown aircraft you are in Iranian airspace. Identify yourself.'

Aircraft: 'This is a United States aircraft. I am in Iraqi airspace'

Air Defense Radar: 'You are in Iranian airspace. If you do not depart our airspace we will launch interceptor aircraft!'

Aircraft: 'This is a United States Marine Corps FA-18 fighter. Send 'em up, I'll wait!'

Air Defense Radar: (no response ... total silence).

End of discussion ! Ooooooraaahhh !!!

Help Needed for May 9 Spec. Event

About 15 women who participated in WWII will be at our May 9 special event **Women In War** – maybe more! They range from a WASP to a nurse, and also there are several "Rosie The Riveters," including three from England.

We plan to host an invitation-only light reception for them and their guests between noon and 1:00 p.m. on the day of the event. I need help with food preparation and serving, maybe even some donations of cookies & sandwiches. Please call Ceci at (805) 630-3696 if you can help Friday and/or Saturday, May 8 or 9, 2009. Many thanks !

CAF Loses F-82 To Air Force, But Will Pursue Appeal

By Paul Bertorelli

A rare F-82 Twin Mustang that has long been operated by the [Commemorative Air Force](#) (CAF) is now being dismantled in Midland, Texas, for shipping to the National Museum of the Air Force (USAFM) in Dayton, Ohio.



CAF has operated the airplane since the 1960s, but its right to do so has been [in dispute](#) since 2002, when the CAF said it was going to trade the airplane and the Air Force said it couldn't. A judge ruled in September that the Air Force owns the airplane, but the CAF has been pursuing an appeal. This week, the CAF said it had offered to drop the appeal if the Air Force would allow the F-82 to remain on static display in Midland, but that proposal was rejected, leaving the CAF no choice but to hand over the airplane. "I had great hopes that this would be an amicable way to agree to disagree, yet still concede to the USAFM's policy to not fly the F-82, which has supposedly been their concern," said Stephan Brown, president and CEO of the CAF. "This decision to reject our proposal is confusing and disappointing."

The response to the CAF proposal by the director of Air Force History and Museum Policies and Programs states: "After a robust and thorough discussion, the voting members of the Heritage Board unanimously decided that, based on the history of this matter and the precedential import of the judicial determination concerning the ownership of the F-82 to the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the other Armed Services, the offer of settlement could not be accepted."

Brown said the CAF will now move forward with the appeal process. "The appeal is a de novo review, in which the appellate court is not bound by the trial court, but reviews the entire case," said Brown. "We are hopeful that the appellate authority will see things differently."

Avweb, "Airplanes and the Law, Part II," March 12, 2009
<http://www.avweb.com> With Permission.

So. CA Wing Receives CAF Grant

Our PBJ Restoration Team has received a real "shot in the arm" – a matching grant of up to \$33,500 from the CAF's Headquarters.

Instrumental in the grant application process were Bill O'Neill, Casey de Bree, Marc Russell and Steve Barber, who made the convincing appeal to the CAF General Staff.

There is a total of \$8,000 in the PBJ account which can be counted as a matching amount toward the total grant.

Kudos to all who made this grant possible

Ceci Stratford: Flying Role Model

by Dave Flood



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Ceci in the cockpit of her Piper Cherokee.

It's hard to keep up with Col. Ceci Stratford these days. She works hard at a number of aviation-related volunteer "jobs," and does them all very well.

Ceci was born in Los Angeles, and earned her Bachelor of Science from Mr. St. Mary's College in L.A. She spent some time after graduation in the Peace Corps in Guatemala, serving mentally retarded people there. Based on her experience in Guatemala, she enrolled in the University of Wisconsin, Madison – and earned a Master of Science Degree in Rehabilitation Administration.

As a switch, she went to work at Union Oil in L.A. and met a technician there who also was a pilot. Through him, she became interested in flying, and, even though they split up, she maintained her love of flying.

She did her student flying at Whiteman Airport, and there met a gentleman who worked at the airport – Mal Stratford. Mal had been a B-17 pilot in WWII, and also became her first passenger after she received her PPL.

One thing led to another, and Mal and Ceci were married in 1977. They bought a Piper Cherokee in 1978, and did lots of traveling together around the country.

Mal had found the CAF at its SoCAWing beginnings in Van Nuys, and eventually became a member and worked on the crew of the C-46. Although not a member, Ceci worked alongside Mal on the C-46, and was nicknamed "Cowl Girl" by Paul Koskela. She also helped take the wing off the PBJ after its arrival at Camarillo Airport.

Mal passed away in 1994, and the next year Ceci became a Colonel in the Southern California Wing of CAF. Since then she has immersed herself in many of the activities of our Wing.

Foremost of her accomplishments has been her organizing of the Friends of the Museum, which has participants of all

ages and walks of life from all over the country who are interested in financially supporting our Wing's efforts.

She coordinated a program for our Wing in which two seniors majoring in history at California State University, Channel Islands became interns in our WWII Aviation Museum, and worked as Docents, Archivists and Exhibit Display Artists.

Ceci has also participated in our Special Event Program, being very instrumental in the successful events such as the ones commemorating the Doolittle Raid, the Battle of Midway, and the Attack on Pearl Harbor. She organized the 60th birthday party of our Curtiss C-46 Commando *China Doll* – the official plane of the City of Camarillo.

In addition to her participation in our Wing, she also is a very active member of the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the 99s, the famous women's aviator organization established in 1929 by pioneer women pilots, including Amelia Earhart. She joined the 99s in 1976, shortly after receiving her Private Pilots License. In 1985, Ceci received the Amelia Earhart Scholarship which enabled her to earn her Flight Instructor Certificate. She has been on the 99s' Board of Directors, focusing on educational programs. She also has been the Amelia Earhart Scholarship Chairman – helping 99 members pursue their aviation careers. She was awarded the Pilot of the Year Award by the San Fernando Chapter of the 99s in 1985, and in 2005 both the Chapter and the Southwest Section of the 99s awarded her the Pilot of the Year Award.

Ceci has been involved with the Aviation Explorers as a mentor. Two of her explorers have earned their pilots license, and one is at UC Davis majoring in aeronautical engineering.

Her dedication to develop an interest in our youth in a career in aviation is also exemplified by her active participation in the EAA's *Young Eagles Program*. Since 1997, she has given almost 500 young people rides in her Piper Cherokee, and has worked with young people at Whiteman Airport to encourage them to attend air academies. Ceci is a wonderful role model for all of us, young and old! Thank you, Ceci, for all you do!



© Photo Courtesy Ceci Stratford

Ceci giving "Young Eagles" rides in her Cherokee.

Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree



© Photo by Dave Flood

New items on display in the Gift Shop.

The Museum Gift Shop has added new items into inventory, some of which are shown above as the Space Explorer selection of toy products. There are play sets, rockets, Space Explorer play stations and Back Packs, to name a few. Stop by and see them as well as new items added to our usual WWII collection of airplanes and fighting vehicles. For instance, there are the simple 'Snap Together' airplanes that will give your kids, or grandkids, a sense of accomplishment. Remember, shopping in the Gift Shop directly supports the Wing.

It is important to note that the Museum is a Museum 'every day' and as such please reconsider when you are about to put something outside of the Museum doors like sheds, trailers, ratty carts, boxes, etc., that the next person walking out that door may be someone looking to rent our facility for a good size party. Looking at 'junk' can be a turnoff and 'everyone' coming into our Museum should see a place that we are proud of and therefore show it off at its best. We owe it to our Wing to keep it clean, every day, and looking professional. Please help!

Again, a reminder of our **Women in War Special Event**, on May 9, 2009. We are covering the special contributions by women during WWII and on. We are again asking that if any one of our readers know of a WWII Women veteran who would be willing to talk for a few minutes, or just come and be introduced, please talk to them and send me a note at scdebree@aol.com. Any veteran guest of the Korean or Vietnam wars will be introduced also.

The CAF Gift Shop will have 'Women in War' specialty items so please stop by.

As is shown in the photo below, the front of our Museum will be getting some help in 'looking the best we can'. We are receiving much needed assistance from a special Boy Scout who is working on his Eagle Scout Project and has asked if he could be of help to our Wing. His name is

Clayton Rutkowski from Troop No. 225 in Camarillo. Clayton has had help in this endeavor from his mother, sister and grandmother. We have asked that all plants used be 'zeroscape' and Clayton has planned accordingly. This is a monumental task and has the capacity to cost a good deal of money. I am therefore asking that if any of you reading this wish to help fund this beautification task, the Wing and Clayton would very much appreciate it. Make checks payable to the CAF with the note 'beautification project'. We will get a very nice, clean, new parkway and Clayton will earn his Eagle Scout award. Sounds great!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Sarah de Bree is listening to Clayton Rutkowski's plans for a newly planted parkway

Our Museum will do even more toward that 'professional look' by asking each Docent and Museum Associate to wear the Wing's blue polo shirt and khaki slacks every day of service unless given a specific exception by the Museum Director. For those of you who go to air shows or attend meetings at CAF headquarters, you will be asked to purchase a blue button-up shirt with the headquarter's silver wing logo. The gift shop will begin stocking this shirt as soon as possible.

Until next time...



© Photo by Dave Flood

Camarillo High School students paying rapt attention to Docent Walt Metcalf on their recent field trip to our WWII Aviation Museum as part of their history class.

Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood

Terry Cedar with his grandson, Michael Agnoli, after Terry had flown the Hellcat so his family could see and hear how a WWII warbird could still fly.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Cub Scouts from Troop 3248 of Pt. Mugu with their families on a recent visit to our WWII Aviation Museum



© Photo by Dave Flood

Clyde East, a benefactor of our Museum, was an Ace WWII pilot, flying P-51s in the European Theater. Clyde had 13 confirmed Jerry planes shot down.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Michael Hohls, one of the newer members of the PBJ Restoration Team – working on one of the wings.



© Photo by Larry Kates

Our new mid-hangars canopy, shown during construction with the roof not yet attached. The canopy will allow us to do some restoration work outside the hangar, but protected from the elements.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Six lovely ladies of the Red Hat Society – visiting our Aviation Museum. Several of the women may be our guests at our *Women In War* event on May 9, 2009.

Maintenance Report

by Joe Peppito

Well, we are still forging ahead and trying to organize the aircraft maintenance program so that we can have most of our airplanes flying in air shows this season. We have been quite successful with our first air show at El Centro, California. The F6f-5 Hellcat and the A6M3 Zero did their shoot-down show, with the Zero being the loser.

The C-46 Crew was very successful in getting the landing gear system back working. They had to replace the landing gear control valve linkage, which had a lot of play in it causing the valve to malfunction. Keep up the good work, Dick and crew, and we will have the airplane flying in air shows again this year.

The PBJ/B-25 crew are hard at work getting the outer wing panels repaired. This is going to take a lot of sheet metal work and riveting. So be prepared for a lot of banging noise. They have also installed both nacelles and most of the hydraulic system tubing and valves.

Les Bedding is expecting the Spitfire engine back in April after its major overhaul. He has done a lot of work on the engine fuel system supply lines and the firewall installations. Work is progressing very well on this airplane and Les has a good crew to work with.

We are trying to get some organization back in the maintenance system. The red line on the ramp is being repainted and a sign painted on the line, "NO TAXI PAST RED LIINE." This is a safety issue, as we usually have visitors on the ramp viewing the airplanes. Also, on the southwest side of the Maintenance Hangar is a FIRE LANE THAT MUST BE KEPT OPEN FOR THE FIRE TRUCKS. Therefore, please do not park in this area. If you must park on the ramp, park on the EAST SIDE OF THE RAMP BY THE PERSONNEL CARRIER.

The Safety Officer, Norm Swagler, and I would like to sponsor a SAFETY SEMINAR for those personnel that are marshalling and starting up aircraft on the ramp. This seminar will be open to anyone that is interested, including Museum personnel. The starting date of the seminar will be announced later.

In the mean time, let's all work together to keep our airplanes flying and our Wing in the forefront of the Commemorative Air Force.

Keep 'Em Flying !

"APB" For Mannequins

If you happen to know where our Museum can acquire some free mannequins (male or female) please get in touch with Ron Fleishman at (805) 482-0064 (or 805-794-1145). We have some donated uniforms that we would like to put on display. Thanks for your help!

Wing Air Show Schedule: 2009

April 24,25	Half Moon Bay, CA	F6F, Zero
May 15-17	Chino, CA	F6F-5, Zero, SNJ-5; PT-19A, F8F-2
May 23,24	Watsonville, CA	F6F-5, Zero
June 4-6	Hill AFB, UT	F6F-5, Zero, C-46
July 10-12	Geneseo, NY	F6F-5, Zero
July 17-19	Thunder Over MI	F6F-5, Zero (tent.)
July 27-Aug 2	Oshkosh, WI	F6F-5, Zero
Aug 22,23	Camarillo, CA	All Aircraft
Aug 27-29	Chico, CA	All Aircraft
Sept 10,11	Fallon NAS, NV	TBD (tent.)
Sept 25-27	Redding, CA	All Aircraft (tent.)
Oct. 7	Tucumcari, NM	TBD
Oct 8-11	Midland, TX	TBD

Note: The above information is subject to change. If you are planning to attend any of these air shows, please be sure to check with us before you go – at (805) 482-0064.

The Albee Challenge

Our venerable Wing Leader, Col. Robert Albee, has posed a challenge to the Wing's members. The first member to submit the correct answer to the following question will receive a ride in the SNJ-5.

The question: ***What made the most recognizable sound during the Korean War ?***

Send your answer to: macantuile@yahoo.com

If you do not have a computer, call 482-0064 and give your answer to the Docent. Be sure to give your name and ask the Docent to log you in, with the time of your call noted.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Steve Barber, Jr. taking some of the Camarillo High School students on a tour of our Curtiss C-46 Commando, *China Doll*. They are able to "live" history by seeing, touching, getting inside of a plane like the many that flew over the Himalayas in WWII, supplying needed materiel to China in its fight against Japan.



First annual CAF So. CA Wing golf tournament

Monday, May 4, 2009

Las Posas Country Club

955 Fairway Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010

Time: 10:00 a.m. – Golf
3:00 p.m. – Cocktails & Silent Auction
5:00 – Dinner

Cost: \$175 per player – including dinner & raffle ticket,
Limited to 120 players

Banquet dinner open to additional 120 guests at \$50 each

For more information, call (805) 987-4CAF (4223)
Vern Olson (805) 200-8627 / Robert Blair (805) 407-3366
Steve Barber (805) 223-1077 or E-Mail: barber.stephen@gmail.com

Sponsorships

Silver Sponsorship - \$2,500
Gold Sponsorship - \$5,000

Platinum Sponsorship - \$8,000

The CAF is a non-profit 501(c)3 educational and historical preservation organization.
All proceeds go to the restoring and flying and displaying for educational purposes
vintage military aircraft.



The Commemorative Air Force – So CA Wing
Presents

“Women In War”

Saturday, May 9, 2009

Honoring the women who contributed to the war effort in World War II – pilots, nurses, “Rosie the riveters,” and others.



Elizabeth Gardner – B-26 Pilot

Women from our community who served will be honored guests

CDR Valerie Overstreet, USN, new Commander of VAW-117 Hawkeye Squadron, Pt. Mugu NAS, will be our featured guest.

Come visit us and bring the family!

1:00 Presentation
Excerpts from Movie “Fly Girls”
Vintage Airplane Display
Antique Auto Display
Commemorative Fly-Over !

World War II Aviation Museum

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 9, 2009

455 Aviation Drive
Camarillo Airport

Donations accepted

(805) 482-0064

www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal



“Rosie The Riveter”