

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**  
Southern California Wing  
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(805) 482-0064



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© Photo by Eric Van Gilder  
CAF's B-29 "FIFI" arriving at CAF-SoCAWing 3/18

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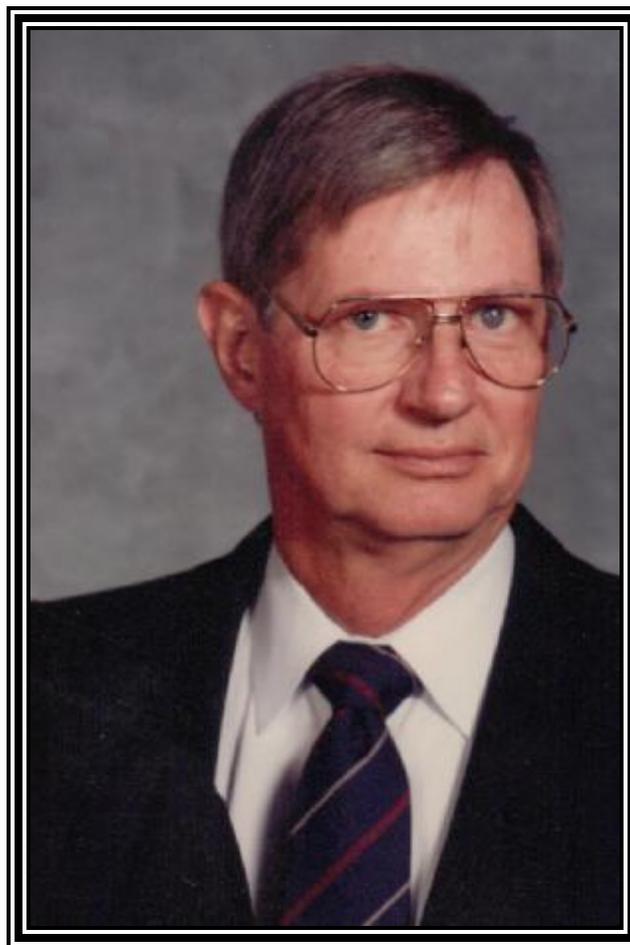


Photo Courtesy of Pat Brown

**Clifford Brown**

**February 10, 1932 - March 6, 2013**

**Our Wing has lost a great friend. Please see memories of Cliff  
on pages 4 – 7, including past "Flight Line" articles by Cliff.**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, April 20, 2013 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 2013

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

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## Wing Leader's Report

by Steve Barber, Sr.



March has been an unbelievable time for the Wing. With our Mustang and SNJ joining the B-29 for four stops in Mesa, AZ; Deer Valley, AZ; Yuma, AZ; San Diego, CA; Palm Springs, CA; Camarillo, CA; Burbank, CA; and Las Vegas, NV - it has been a very busy time for many hard working members of your Wing.

Jason Somes not only organized the tour with "FIFI," he also flew many of the rides we have done so far. Ken Gottschall has not only done rides along the way - he also has done his usual maintenance magic to keep our "birds" flying, bringing in the bacon. Thanks guys and girls for your efforts, they are really paying off in a big way!

Len Canter, Alan Gaynor, Shari Heitkotter, Ted, Ned, et al, and many more have helped make our participation in this tour very successful. Thank you all for all of your hard work!

When you walk into the museum you will notice that the Fokker Tri-Plane has taken wing again and is maybe looking for Snoopie? The Red Baron flies again! Thanks to Jim Hinkleman - this has been accomplished. I'll ask him to write a short story on how he did this so we'll save this for next time. The airplane looks great, and thank you to all who helped make this happen.

The Docents and all involved did a fantastic job while the B-29 "FIFI" was here. We had the biggest three days in our history for the museum in admissions and PX sales! Great job done by all! People were lined up at 9 a.m., and still they were coming in at 6 p.m. The tour members on the B-29 were finishing up using flashlights to make sure all of the folks that paid got through.

What a wonderful team effort - lead by our museum staff. Thanks, John Knopp, for organizing the crews. From an outside vantage point, all went smooth as glass. I know it didn't always work that way but from the outside, it felt like it did.

Our merchandise sales were at a record pace thanks to the hard work and preparation of Janet Rizzoli. The PX looked great and the displays very attractive.

Sheryl O'Neil put on one heck of a nice party on the B-29's arrival. A fun evening was had by all - and the crew of our touring aircraft thanked yours truly for our efforts. So Sheryl, thanks for the hard work and thanks to all those folks you recruited to help you with the work. It was fantastic!

Fundraising for the Museum build-out and new hangar is going slower than I would like, but we are making some progress. We need the room badly and the museum and the docents deserve better. We will do it. If you find you have any dollars lying around and not doing anything and would like to put them to good use, please write us a check. When you make donations to the museum/hangar fund, please note this on your check. Any and all donations would be much appreciated. And they are tax deductible.

On a sad note, we have lost two wonderful Wing members this month, and there will be more on this soon. Tailwinds to Cliff Brown and Jack Rogers.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

## Wing's Air Show Schedule: 2013

April 6	Riverside RAFB	F8F, Spitfire
April 6	Bullhead City	F8F, P-51, Zero
June 1	Gillespie, CA	F8F, F6F, Zero

## Wing Time Capsule

So far things suggested for the Time Capsule include: photo CD; CD with archives of "Flight Line;" Tee-Shirt; Cap; Wing Staff minutes; copy of *Ventura County Star*.

*If you have any other suggestions – see Ron Fleishman.*

# Memories of Cliff Brown

Never a man of many words –  
always a presence.

Your passing, our friend, will leave a void.

Jack 'n' Jo Brinckerhoff

+++++

We remember Cliff bringing his mother to the So.Cal Wing's monthly meetings being held at the ANG on Van Nuys Airport. He was very proud of her and his father who was a WW II Marine.

One time he told a story about his "House Boy" while in Korea - who in fact was a female. His mother was not amused. At another meeting he showed pictures of the ridges being occupied by the Chinese Army as taken from the US Army side. A few slides later the pictures were from the opposite side looking back.

Cliff certainly had a sense of humor we will not forget.

Cols Bob & Georgia Thompson

+++++

We are losing a lot of our good members – many of them old-timers and original members of the Wing.

One of these dedicated members was Cliff Brown, who served as our Finance Officer for over thirty years, and did an outstanding job. I know for a fact that when I was the Wing Leader I never had to worry about where the money was coming from and where it was going, and we had a lot of money moving about with the construction of our new hangars.

Old reliable Cliff Brown has left us and we will all miss him.

Joe Peppito

+++++

When I first joined the Wing more than 23 years ago, Cliff and Pat Brown were two members who impressed me as always working their butts off and welcoming any new member to our fold.

As a new member, Cliff helped me understand the workings of our budgets (we were always broke) and how he managed to move monies from one place to another to keep things afloat.

We received a bad load of AV gas once, and the company offered to rebuild both engines and replace any lost

revenue IF we could come up with paperwork showing how we were impacted. I approached Cliff and asked him what he thought? Well, suffice to say, we ended up with two new engines, overhauled propellers and all accessories and lost income from future air shows as Cliff had kept the records going back many years. What a job!

Many of you may not know - but Clifford was a Korean War Veteran and gave several talks on his time in the service. Cliff had many interesting photos and we always enjoyed hearing about his adventures.

So, we honor him not only as a wonderful and trusted member of our Wing, but for his service as a foreign war veteran. God speed Cliff, we'll do all we can to take care of your lovely wife Pat, and if you see us not doing a good job, please kick us in our rear ends.

I miss you my friend.

Steve Barber, Sr.

+++++

This is only one of the many reasons I will miss Cliff!

My memories of Cliff Brown are long and admirable, furthermore; they are full of smiles and insight into one of the most influential members/friends to me and my family that I'm so fortunate to have known for so many years.

My history with Cliff started in this unit when I was a Cadet at 13 years old in 1991. Cliff Brown and his wife Pat have been there since the inception of my involvement with this Wing, and before my time. My initial recollection of Cliff was when my father brought me out to the Wing on Saturdays. Along with many other current and past members, Cliff would always include me with the 'days task', whether it was updating the museum artifacts and PX merchandise for upcoming air shows, or evaluating pictures of 'local color' at air shows. He always had a job for me and wouldn't just assign it and leave, he would instruct me as to what, when, but most importantly to me, why.

Cliff explained many things to me as a youngster and I have always valued his input as a mentor and friend, from a kid to a man. Cliff always treated me with respect, and I can't thank him enough anymore in person, but I can always remember who he was to me, and the stories he told, along with the wisdom he passed on.

One specific memory I've always had stick with me was when I was 14 years old. The hangar/(lean-to 'shelter') had a second deck with many of the merchandise for PX and museum artifacts that were in storage. Cliff and I were arranging boxes and organizing them prior to loading them on to "China Doll." I was doing what I was told, and Cliff helped me sort out some photos of uniforms that we were to use for one of the manikins in the museum. It was a

## Memories of Cliff Brown, continued

picture of a soldier in uniform, weathering out horrible conditions of nature and war while standing post during the Korean War. I remember Cliff specifically telling me about the uniform and what was significant to its markings and how important it was to get it *right*, out of 'respect to the men who wore such uniforms' and where we needed to dress this manikin in the museum similarly to the one in the picture. While secretly thinking to myself, "how horrible is that situation in the environment of battle!?" I thought, "he's right, that is the *least* we could do was get only *that* right."

The magnitude of what that day did to me is indescribable from a 14 year old's stand point. After our day at the Wing, on our drive home to our **warm/safe/comfortable house** I told my dad what I did with Cliff that day and what he told me after that changed my life forever. After knowing and comparing to what I saw that day in a picture and imagined in my own insignificant ignorance of real life, and heard what my father had told me about who Cliff was as a man and *his experience*, the most known proclamation to me was that *he*, (Cliff Brown), the man whom I'd known for only a little over two years at this point, was the nicest and most humble person who was forever helpful and knowledgeable, and was an extraordinary individual, who also taught me so much about admiration and respect, by showing by example.

Cliff helped me grow up and understand the importance of service, not just to country and family, but to the everyday person, and sometimes to a 14-year-old boy. What hit home more than all is how I couldn't fathom what he and many of our members had gone through during their war years experiences, and yet could show up every week, with a smile and enthusiasm to act as a supporting member of a team without motive but with an enormous amount of service and dedication.

After everything he'd gone through in the Korean Conflict, like many of our other WWII, Vietnam and Gulf War veterans, he'd taught me that there's no need to prove anything to another if you haven't yet proved it to yourself, and thankfully for me, Cliff Brown has made me a better man by just having the opportunity to see him just as he was, a great patriot, a great man and a great friend whom we will always miss.

I will forever remember what he meant to me.

Steve Barber Jr.

Cliff was always very kind and ready to help with anything that needed to be done. When we took China Doll to air shows, Cliff was the 'watch dog' of the money. And if he did not make the trip, Cliff always met the Doll on the ramp to pick up the money bag.

Cliff was a great So Cal Wing finance officer for many years. From my observations, it will take two or three good men to fill Cliff's shoes.

I will really miss Cliff.

Gene O'Neal



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Here's Cliff with wife Pat, in a photo taken a few years ago. They had been married for 51 ½ years, and together had devoted countless hours to helping make our Wing so fine.**

Once, many years ago there were several folks who knew about the Confederate Air Force and decided that Southern California needed to be part of it. After all, why should Texas have all the fun? Cliff was one of the Wing founders and through the past 32 years was a big part of forming and shaping what we are today. Never loud or in the forefront, but quietly and in the background, he and Pat were there when you needed them.

Cliff never said he was a mechanic, but he was never afraid to get dirty on our aircraft, from cleaning the old yellow pesticide from the tail compartment and in the process getting completely coated in yellow "slime" himself; to leaning half way out the cockpit window of the C-46, manual in hand, reading the instructions to the novice crew pulling the propeller off. Cliff was there. Painting, woodwork, stripping paint and keeping our finances in line, Cliff was there.

In the tail wheel compartment of the C-46 there is a plastic plaque, it reads "Cliff's Office." It was the Wing's way of showing any interested parties that Cliff was there.

We will miss him.

Ron Fleishman

## “De-Ja Vu: All Over Again”

by Clifford Brown

Recently I was reading in the March issue of “Flight Line” about the efforts to hang the repaired left wing on the B-25/PBJ and the celebration that ensued. This had a familiar ring to it. Seems I’ve been there - done that. And I have.

About this same time of the year - in 1993 - the So Cal Wing was informed by CAF HQ that we had been awarded the assignment of a B-25 Mitchell bomber - “Big Ole Brew”. As you can imagine, this was met with much joy and adulation. Ron Fleishman, our historian, researched its history, and even then we knew it was a PBJ. That’s Navy talk for a patrol bomber built by North American Aviation - differing from the Army Air Corps B-25 bomber built by North American Aviation only in name and colors. This aircraft had condition issues, but, for the moment, in the euphoria, they were overlooked. We had a B-25!

“Big Ole Brew” had been bouncing around the CAF for a couple of years - as the ownership title needed to be cleared up. Those of us who attended the February, 1993 Winter Staff Conference had looked over the aircraft and were aware that it needed some work - i.e. a new windshield, both propellers needed overhaul to comply with an AD, a right engine that ran ragged and corrosion problems on the left wing. These all needed to be resolved before the aircraft could be flown. And - oh yes, the airplane was in Midland, Texas - and we, the So Cal Wing - were in Camarillo, California.

With the help of the B-25 guru, Carl Scholl, it was decided that rather than repair the wing in Midland, we could just replace it with a loaner that he could provide, ferry the aircraft to Camarillo, and then repair the wing later. The loaner wing was in Chino, California, we were in Camarillo, California and the B-25 was in Midland, Texas.

The plan was to have the loaner wing shipped to Midland by truck. Later a crew would fly to Midland in the C-46 and make the exchange. I knew a lot about the carrying capacity of the C-46 - flying over “The Hump” in the CBI during WWII. I wondered, “could the B-25 loaner wing fit inside the C-46 and be flown to Midland - instead of having it shipped by truck?” The C-46 was going to Midland anyway.

I built a plywood mockup - the size of the B-25 wing; opened both left side cargo doors of the C-46 - and, voila! - yes, a B-25 wing would fit into the C-46. Obstacles were being overcome. We asked Doug Jeanes, the CAF Director of Maintenance at Midland, to have the props removed from the B-25, and sent out for overhaul. He was also to purchase for us a new windshield. Those two items would be ready and waiting for us when the time came. All this wasn’t free - the So Cal Wing paid for it. Remember - I was the Finance Officer.

The C-46 was flown to Chino to Carl Scholl’s Aero Trader hangar, and the loaner wing was loaded on board the C-

46 and carefully strapped down. My mock-up worked. The C-46 then flew back to Camarillo to await the next chapter in this saga.

On Saturday morning May 8<sup>th</sup> 1993 the C-46 took off from Camarillo - destination Midland, Texas - with Merrill Wien as pilot-in-command (PIC) and Russ Drosendahl as co-pilot. A hearty crew of 7 others: Joe Peppito, Howard Ulm, myself, Dick Russell, Kelvin Rautiola, Bill Main and Wil Lorenzini were on board. Ron Fleishman would be traveling from his day job with the airlines and would meet up with us at Midland. The C-46 flight to Midland was bumpy, as usual, but was otherwise uneventful.

Bright and early the next day, after a Texas-size breakfast at Warfield’s Truck Stop, we started to work. And it was go, go, go - 10 hour-days from then on out. The two freshly overhauled props were hung. Dick Russell, Marc’s father, and I removed the old windshield and installed a new one. We must have done a good enough job, because Marc Russell and crew haven’t opted to replace it in the roughly nineteen years since that time. Two bad cylinders were removed and replaced with spares we had brought from California. A third cylinder had a wiring problem corrected. New sets of spark plugs were installed on both engines. The left wing with the corroded attach angle was removed, and the serviceable loaner wing from Carl Scholl was installed. Somebody counted that there were 120 bolts used to attach it.

As we intended to fly the airplane home - that meant we also had to swap out the oil cooler and its related plumbing, aileron control cables and flap hydraulic lines. There were a couple of attach bolts inside the wing that were almost impossible to get to. One bolt alone took three hours to remove and another three hours to reinstall. Merrill was the only one with first-hand knowledge of the airplane - so it was a hands-on learning experience for all of us. But we accomplished all of this work in six days. And we slipped in a landing gear swing, a test flight and loaded the corroded wing back into the C-46 - to boot.

On Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 1993. we were ready to fly back to California. I doubt if we could have hired a crew of A&P’s in Texas to do the work any better or faster. Each one of those tasks was a major job and required special tools, equipment, knowledge and experience. Most of which we did not have. But - we did the job, didn’t break anything, strip any bolt threads or hurt anybody. And we all paid our own way. Remember I was Finance Officer.

We flew home. Merrill flew the B-25 and Russ flew the C-46. We made a fuel and potty stop at Falcon Field, Arizona and had a wonderful lunch - courtesy of the CAF Arizona Wing. The last leg of the flight got us to Camarillo at about 3:00 pm. Over Fillmore, we were met by a gaggle of SNJ/AT-6’s which escorted us into CMA. Merrill played Jimmy Doolittle in the B-25 and flew formation with us most of the way. From my seat in the C-46 it was an impressive sight. Finally the B-25 was in Camarillo, the C-46 was in Camarillo and we were all in Camarillo.

Job well done!

## The Pilot-Maker and More by Clifford Brown

North American Aviation's public relations releases touted the AT-6 or SNJ as the "Pilot Maker." Every allied military pilot from the 40s and well into the 50s trained in this type aircraft. Thousands were built, and because they were used in training in the United States, a lot of them survived and are around today.

In 1950 the United States entered the United Nations Police Action in Korea. It had a lot of war surplus stuff left over from WWII. There were huge stocks of M1 carbines, jeeps and Iife jackets in some warehouse in Kansas.

The US Army went to war in Korea as an extension of the kind of war it had waged in WWII in rural Germany. Except the Army Air Corps., which had morphed into the U.S. Air Force, had gotten rid of its old-fashioned stuff in favor of the new and modern jets. Early jet fighter aircraft were not very fuel-efficient. The P-80, F-86 and the F9F gobbled kerosene like there was no tomorrow. You went very fast, but not very far.

In Korea, direct support fighters had to fly either from bases in Japan or from carriers off-shore. The aircraft had to fly to some mountain-top in Korea and hit a Volkswagen-size target nested among a whole bunch of Volkswagen-size non-targets. There was no GPS or laser-guided smart bombs. Korea was all mountain-tops, and they all looked alike.

The aircraft operated at the limits of their range, so they didn't have much time to dally around the target area looking for something to blow up. Existing radios did not allow for direct communication with the ground (forward observers) for help in finding their target. The solution was to use pathfinders as they did in Europe to lead attack aircraft to the target. Initially, Army liaison aircraft were used - but they were not much more than Piper Cubs in olive drab. L-birds were quickly replaced with AT-6s, which had been given to the Korean and Japanese post-WWII military. The 6147th Tactical Air Command was formed and they were called "Mosquitoes."



**North American AT-6 Texans – used as spotter planes in the Korean Conflict – known as "Mosquitoes."**

An Army forward observer sitting on a mountain top would call an artillery unit like mine to mark a target with a white

red or green colored smoke shell. The AT-6 that was orbiting overhead would see the colored smoke that ID'd the target. Just as the fighters arrived the AT-6 would lead them to the target and re-mark it by firing another colored smoke rocket. The fighters would then unload their more lethal ordinance. The fighters would then scurry back to base to a warm, dry bed.

Radio equipment in the AT-6s could communicate with the jet fighters, but not with the Army boots on the ground. The fix was to mount aircraft radios in jeeps and send them off to front-line Army units with Air Force radio operators and an Air Force officer. And what better than to use the glut of WWII pilots the new Air Force still had left over from WWII. But the aircraft radios in the jeeps could talk to airplanes but still could not talk to Army radios. So the Air Force lieutenant would verbally, person-to-person, face-to-face, talk to an Army radio operator who was using another radio to talk to an Army forward observer on the front line who was actually watching the air strike.

The Army forward observer would confirm to the Field Artillery contact that Army Field Artillery shells and the AT-6's smoke rocket had hit the target. Then the Field Artillery contact would face-to-face tell the Air Force lieutenant; who would, in turn, radio the AT-6; who, in turn, would radio the leader of the fighters.

On a couple of occasions, I was the forward observer. But most of the time I sat in a bunker with the Air Force guy on one side and my unit's radio operator on the other side. I was sort of a referee, and made sure that what the Air Force was saying made sense to the Army. To help - I had a full set of 8 1/2" x 11" photographs taken from every outpost across the battle front. While I was not often on the front line, I had pictures of what the guy on the front line was seeing. Sounds complicated, and it was, but we didn't know any better, so we just did it.



**An Air Force forward observer – Korea, early 1950s**

Just in case, if I ever have to go back to Korea, I liberated a complete set of those photographs from my unit when I rotated home and I still have them. It would be interesting to see if anything has changed in the almost 60 years that have transpired since then.

# Remembering Jack Rogers

*John Joseph Rogers, Sr.  
October 7, 1926 – March 12, 2013*

**Jack, as he was known to all, was born in Chicago, IL, and passed peacefully in West Hills, CA.**

**He served in World War II, founded R&B Aircraft, and was a member of the Los Angeles Tennis Club.**

**Beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend to many. He will be greatly missed.**

+++++

I was saddened by the sudden passing , on the 12th. of March, of Jack Rogers. Even though Jack was not a familiar face around the hangars, I think he was quite active with helping out our good friends Chuck Williams, Joe Peppito and Dick Troy with obscure parts, often at his own expense.

Jack is also remembered for his generosity at the Christmas auctions.... especially with help of a couple of Scotches!! Jack was my ex- brother in law , and I feel his faithful assistance to our Wing is worth recognizing.

I did go to Jack’s funeral at Glendale Forest Lawn - with a Navy Guard and the lump-in-the-throat "Taps" played ... very nice. Then we were given, to those who wanted , a shot of Jack's favorite Johnny Walker Green Label Scotch - and we all toasted him.... even the pastor was involved , at grave side!

Colin Bedding

+++++

The Southern California Wing lost one of its best supporting members with the passing of Jack Rogers. Jack was always there whenever we needed some urgent parts for our airplanes so we could get them back in the air.

I know that he was a great supporter and contributor to the restoration of the SNJ-04 "Bluebird," and I know that I enjoyed his companionship and he was always a lot of fun.

We will miss you Jack, and I will miss you the most.

Joe Peppito

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# In My Dreams

by Dave Flood

I fly along with Icarus, oblivious to the sun,  
And fly away with Orville & Wilbur- mainly just for fun.

I fly along with Lindbergh as he solos across the sea,  
And fly away with Amelia into aviation history.

I fly along with Doolittle off the Hornet toward the setting sun,  
And fly away with Gary Barber in P-51 *Cottonmouth* - "son of a gun!"

I fly along with Yeager in his Mustang *Glamorous Glen*,  
And fly away with Marc Russell, in his Boeing Triple Seven.

I fly along with David McCampbell in his Hellcat *Minsi III*,  
And fly away with Red Baron in his Fokker, with wings three.

I fly along with Richard Bong in his ace P-38,  
And fly away with Douglas Bader in his Hurricane, of Britain, Great.

I fly along with Don McMillan in his Navy Cross Avenger,  
And fly away with Ceci in her dependable little Piper.

I fly along with Rickenbacker in his Spad with "The Hat,"  
And fly away with Clay Lacy in his F7F Tigercat.

I fly along with Scott Drosos around the world on Atlas Air,  
And "slip the surly bonds of earth" in John Magee’s aerial prayer.



## Wing Photo Page I: B-29 "FIFI"



© Photos by Dave Flood

Two B-24/B-29 veterans of WWII: Russ Drosendahl, who piloted both types; and Ben Kuroki, who had 30 missions in ETO in B-24s, and 28 missions in PTO in B-29s as a gunner.



Special display in our Aviation Museum honoring "FIFI" – thanks to Charlie Carr and his crew.



Parked between the C-46 and the C-47, the B-29 "FIFI" took up most of our ramp during her 3-day stay.



© Photo by Dave Flood

"FIFI" arriving at our ramp, with her flag flying. Hundreds of visitors were waiting to take her tour.



© Photo by Jim Scheid

It didn't take long for a line to form of visitors anxious to see the insides of this famous bomber, the only B-29 flying in the world today.



© Photo by Jim Scheid

One of the visiting WWII B-29 tail-gunners, Bob Jones, remarked when he spotted "FIFI's" tail, "Hey, there's my old *Block A*" – logo of his plane that flew off of Saipan on bombing missions to Japan.

## A Heartfelt “Thank You”

To all the volunteers that made the “FIFI” visit a great success - a great big THANK YOU!

There are so many of you that I am not going to name everyone for fear of leaving someone off my list. (This would be sort of like the Oscar acceptance speech when the actor forgot to mention his wife.) The “FIFI” Event showed the CAF and our community what the SoCal Wing is all about - making history come alive and especially our aircraft abounded.

Our success is because of all of the great volunteers and the time they dedicated. I am sure that those who managed admissions felt like it was a 24/7 job. Security and crowd control staff kept our visitors safe - including keeping them off of the taxiway and away from moving aircraft. A most awesome display was assembled by our ramp staff and, of course, maintenance kept everything in good repair.

Our "O-Club Ladies" set a table fit for Queen “FIFI.” The side dishes and desserts that were so generously brought by our members were delicious. The PBJ chefs kept the burgers coming.

Of course, the tables could not be set without the wonderful crew of "furniture" handlers and aircraft movers. And, neither David Oliver's “thank you” on behalf of the “FIFI” Crew could have been heard nor the movie shown without the assistance of our a/v experts.

By 8:30 Monday morning, the Aviation Museum hangar was humming with activity. By 9:45 Monday evening, the museum was ready for the early Tuesday opening with our aircraft tucked-in for the night.

The “FIFI” Crew was awestruck with the welcoming they were given and the care we took of them. It was the first time that they had been so welcomed.

We Did It!

Sheryl O'Neil



© Photo by Sheryl O'Neil  
Two old past-enemies head-to-head on our ramp.



© Photos by Sheryl O'Neil  
Two of the hardest-working members of our Wing – Sheryl O'Neil and Gloria Troy – in the cockpit of B-29 “FIFI” – enjoying a personal tour.



Janet Rizzoli and Larry Kates boarding “FIFI” for a well-earned flight.



Members enjoying the buffet at the Wing Gathering in honor of “FIFI” and her appreciative crew.

## Wing Photo Page II: B-29 "FIFI"

© All Photos by Eric Van Gilder



The view through the cockpit windows of "FIFI" – looking toward our hangars.



Accompanying "FIFI," and selling rides, was the Beechcraft C-45 "Expeditor."



Coming across the Camarillo Airport runway were "FIFI" with her supporting retinue of five WWII warbirds, all from CAF-SoCAWing: F6F-5 Hellcat, F8F-2 Bearcat, P-51D Mustang, A6M3 Zero, and Spitfire Mk XIV. What a beautiful sight!!!



"FIFI" wowing the assembled crowd at CMA. Many WWII veterans who had flown in B-29s were present, and our Wing was honored to host them.



Here's the flight engineer's panel, located behind the co-pilot's seat. The flight engineer starts and controls the engine power settings and synchronizes the engines during takeoff and cruise. He also manages the various aircraft systems. Note the throttle, mixture, and propeller pitch control levers, which duplicate those available to the pilots.

## Wing Bio: John Knopp

by Avery Willis

John Knopp, along with Ron Fleishman, Janet Rizzoli, and Jim Hinkelman, stepped up to form an interim committee to manage our Aviation Museum after John Woolley resigned as Aviation Museum Manager.

You will find John on Docent duty at our Aviation Museum every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. During the period from March 18 to 20, John was on duty every day the CAF's B-29 "FIFI" was visiting our Aviation Museum. His bonus for all the "overtime" was being able to share the visitors' enthusiasm around our warbirds.

John's childhood home was in Lincoln, Nebraska. He became interested in airplanes early in life, hearing of his two uncles' flying exploits in WWII. Uncle Bob was a group navigator for a B-26 bomber group with the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Corps. He was killed over France on a mission. Uncle Dick flew back seat in a TBM Avenger in the Pacific. He participated in the Battle of Coral Sea. Dick is still living in the San Diego area.

John also gained a love of history as he learned more about America's coming of age during WWII and the years after the war. In his teenage years, John joined the Civil Air Patrol and the Ground Observers Corps. The adventure John remembers the most about his time in the CAP is flying in an L-16 into Offutt Air Force Base SAC Headquarters without a radio, and with a tool chest on his lap in the backseat; Landing and take-off were approved by the tower with the old biscuit light gun signals.

John graduated from both St. Louis University (BA) and Wayne State University (MA), both degrees being in mathematics. After graduation, he worked for two years as a high school teacher in Detroit, Michigan. He then went into computer sales, as the industry was just getting started.

John sold computers for Hewlett Packard for fourteen years, then for Apple Computer for eight years. He finished his business career working for Cisco Systems, taking their early-retirement buy-out package just two years ago.

In 1974, John married Karen and they added three children to their family, two girls, Shannon and Stephanie, and a boy, Tony. All three children are now busily following careers of their own.

In 2005 the family moved to Palm Springs, and two years later they moved to the L.A. area. John kept a place in the Palm Springs area and looked into being a Docent at the Palm Springs Air Museum, but it wasn't the right fit. John and Karen continue together as Docents at the Adamson House in Malibu. But John still wanted to be at an air museum.

John's wife Karen was talking with Robin Willis, wife of Avery Willis, one of our Wing's Docents, about John's

desire to find an air museum, and Robin recommended the CAF-SoCAWing's Aviation Museum, where her husband was a very satisfied Docent. John called John Woolley, then Aviation Museum Manager, who set up docent training right away with Ron Fleishman.

Ron's training insisted on two pieces of wisdom: learn by listening, and don't make up anything! Many of our guests have a lot of knowledge, and we learn from them – sometimes as much or more than we teach them about our museum and all the planes and artifacts which we display. Everyone coming through our doors wants to be with us and appreciates a Docent-led tour. John's observation is that a unique and distinguishing value of the CAF are the personalized docent tours that put visitors up-close and personal with our warbirds.

As John looks at ways we can improve our museum, he has found that our guests have a lot of interest in local military aviation, such as our three uniform exhibits of local veterans. In response to the frequent comment, "You have a great museum here, but I didn't know you were here!" - he thinks we should press harder for more media coverage before and during - not just after - our events.



© Photo by Avery Willis

### John Knopp in front of our three uniform exhibits.

We have a real opportunity to expand our school outreach program with classroom presentations and more student tours. We should also get creative with more "products" to enhance that personal contact with history.

John has found what he was looking for - a WWII flying museum with a lot of great people to work with, and the ability to talk with guests in his own personal style. Every day at the museum brings new experiences and new guests from all over the world.

We are most fortunate to have superb Docents such as John as members of our CAF-SoCAWing - representing our Aviation Museum to the public.

## Wing Photo Page III: B-29 "FIFI"

© All Photos by Frank Mormillo



The five fighters landed and formed on our ramp before "FIFI" rolled in. It was a tremendous gathering of warbirds - the like of which does not happen often.



Our A6M3 Zero facing "FIFI" – with supporting cast of planes (SNJ-4 "Bluebird," Navion and C-47) in background.



"FIFI" and her escorting cortege of fighters high over CMA – heading west before the turnaround to land. When they didn't come back over the field for about fifteen minutes, we began wondering if they had decided to head for Hawaii (just kidding).



On the second pass before landing, the fighters peeled off. Here's the Mustang coming out of the formation.



"FIFI" with gear down, just over the runway – which she used to its extent. What a thrill to have this unique aircraft visit our Aviation Museum!



Here's the view from the rear, emphasizing the great length of the bomber. We are so thankful to the B-29/B-24 Squadron, the B-29 crew and all its personnel and related staff. They were most attentive to our visitors, even providing flashlights on Monday night to make sure all the attendees got to go through the tour of the bomber. Our fighters had accompanied "FIFI" throughout Southern California. We at CAF-SoCAWing are certainly looking forward to their next visit!

## Safety Is Our Business

By Stephan Brown, President and CEO, Commemorative Air Force

Our Mission of restoring and flying combat aircraft is focused around education. We do this by displaying the airplanes and teaching about those who maintained and flew them in combat at great risk to preserve the freedom of America and her allies.

It is extremely fortunate that we are able to operate and maintain these airplanes, without the risk associated with war. However, the blessing carries with it a responsibility to eliminate and mitigate the lesser risk associated with peacetime operations, and there is no mission in the Commemorative Air Force that justifies deviation from technical data, operating manuals, rules and policies.

If it can't be done by the book, explain the problem to the person in charge. If that happens to be you, go to your counterpart at Headquarters and get their help or a waiver.

The General Staff and I are committed to the well-being and safety of every member of the CAF. Leadership at the local level must share our commitment and accept their responsibility. Elected and appointed officers must lead the way by putting our members and their safety at the forefront of everything you do. If this means telling them to delay a flight or stop operations until things are right, make the decision to delay it, or stop it.

The critical responsibility, however, rests on you the member. Your responsibility is even more important than that of your elected leaders. You should never start a job or take off on a flight if you know or fear that it isn't safe. Remember, only you know what's best for you, so raise a red flag and stop the operation/activity. If you can fix the problem – do so. If not, get someone who can.

If you see something going on that you think needs looking into, but are concerned about retribution, or feel that you can't report it directly, use the anonymous safety reporting form available on the "Members Only" page of our website. Click on the CAF Guides button and select "G-4 SAFETY REPORTING SYSTEM."

**Remember, nothing in the CAF comes before SAFETY.**

Sincerely,

Stephan C. Brown  
President / CEO  
Commemorative Air Force

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## Safety Seminar

by Alan Gaynor, Safety Officer

A Safety Seminar will be held for all Wing members on Saturday, April 27 – starting at 8:30 a.m. in the "O Club."

Aircraft marshaling and safe ramp procedures will be covered, and there will be proper procedures demonstrated on our ramp.

Please mark it on your calendar and plan to attend.

**Remember: Safety Is Our Business – and that includes all of us in the SoCAWing.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Sheryl O'Neil waves from the bombardier's seat of B-25 Mitchell "Executive Sweet" before enjoying a ride.**



© Photo by Don Williamson

**A new display in our Aviation Museum featuring President George H. W. Bush and his exploits in WWII**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**The venerable old warhorses, the C-46 Commando and the C-47 Dakota now are in their positions as gatekeepers to our CAF-SoCAWing ramp.**