

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**

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

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© Photo by Frank Mormillo

## Capt. Charles Plumb, USNR (Ret.)



U.S. Naval Academy, class of 1964

Miramar NAS – Top Gun adversarial pilot

VF-114 “Aardvarks” – F-4 Phantom jets  
USS Kitty Hawk

Flew 74 successful missions – Viet Nam – F-4 Phantom jet – 100  
carrier landings – Code name: “Plumber.”

Shot down over Hanoi – taken prisoner, tortured, spent  
2,103 days as a POW.

Military aircraft flown: T-34 Mentor, T-2 Buckeye, F-9 Cougar, F-11  
Tiger, F-4 Phantom, A-4 Skyhawk, A-7 Corsair, FA-18 Hornet, F-16  
Falcon.

Aircraft Carrier Assignments: USS Constellation, USS Lexington, USS  
Oriskany, USS Kitty Hawk, USS Coral Sea, USS Abraham Lincoln.

Medals and Decorations: Silver Star, 2 Purple Hearts, Bronze Star,  
Legion of Merit, POW Medal, Air Medals, Combat Action, Unit Citation,  
Republic of Viet Nam Campaign, Service Medal

© Photo by Russ Drosendahl

**We are proud to have Capt. Plumb’s PT-19A Cornell in our fleet at our WWII Aviation Museum.  
It is now flown in our Warbird Ride Program. Yours Aye, Capt. Plumb!**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, August 9, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. at the  
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD’S GREATEST COMBAT AIRCRAFT

# August 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday &amp; Wednesday</b>					1	2 Work Day
3	4 Museum Closed	5 Work Day	6 Museum Closed	7 Work Day	8	9 Work Day Staff Meeting 9:30 General Meeting & BBQ 4:30
10	11 Museum Closed	12 Work Day	13 Museum Closed	14 Work Day	15 VJ Day	16 Work Day
17	18 Museum Closed	19 Work Day	20 Museum Closed	21 Work Day	22	23 Work Day
24	25 Museum Closed	26 Work Day	27 Museum Closed	28 Work Day	29	30 Work Day
31	<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday &amp; Wednesday</b>					

<b>STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS</b>				<b>IN THIS ISSUE</b>
Wing Leader	* Steve Barber	(805) 485-5405	f8f2cat@gmail.com	Wing Calendar . . . . . 2
Executive Officer	* Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	nbnh@aol.com	Staff and Appointed Positions. . . . . 2
Adjutant	* Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Wing Leader's report . . . . . 3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Greenhill-Straw Wedding . . . . . 3
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	Ringmasters – Part III . . . . . 4
Maintenance Officer	* (Vacant)			Hanna's Escape From East Germany . . . 5
Safety Officer	* Marc Russell	(805) 955-9404	captmarcr@aol.com	Wing Barbeque and General meeting . . . 5
Museum Director	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	B-25 ferry Flight . . . . . 6
Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Wing Photo Page I . . . . . 7
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	Warbird Ride Program . . . . . 7
Hangar Event Mgr	Dick Burrer	(805) 444-8285	gatjohnston@aol.com	Berlin Airlift Legacy Lives On . . . . . 8
Chief Docent	(Vacant)			Museum Update . . . . . 10
Air Show Officer	Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	nbnh@aol.com	Wing Photo Page II . . . . . 11
Air Show Coord.	Bill O'Neill	(805) 495-4915	scwairshow@aol.com	Sick Bay . . . . . 11
Facility Officer	Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Battle of Midway Special Event . . . . . 12
Personnel Officer	Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	
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HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064 HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal">www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal</a>				<b>Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month</b> Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing 455 Aviation Drive Camarillo, CA 93010-9501
* Denotes Staff Position				

## WING LEADER'S REPORT

by Steve Barber

To all of our valued members, I am here once again. These past months are a blur, so I will give you a brief outline of what has been going on in your Wing Leader's agenda. My wife and I moved into our new (old) home at the end of March and have been very busy kicking it into shape. During this same time period, the firm I worked for was bought out and I moved to a new employer. Getting up to speed with the new firm has taken a lot of time, and one of the main reasons you have not seen or heard from me as much in the recent past. Last, but certainly not least, visitors from the east. West Texas that is. My mother-in-law, and my wife's great niece were visiting, using up any spare time I had. So, there you have most of my excuses. I know, no excuse, sir!

The Wing has been very active in almost every area. Work is progressing and near complete on the C-46 "skin" replacement. On the Fairchild, Gil has one wing covered and is about ready to start on the second one. Work on the Spitfire has been coming along well. Les and Colin Bedding showed me some of the progress they have made and it is truly impressive. Another progress payment has been sent to Vintage V-12's and it won't be long before we will be able to pick up our "new" Griffin. What an exciting day that will be to see the mighty V-12 hanging on the aircraft again. Howard Ulm is going to be going through the wiring to update and replace what is necessary. This will be a magnificent, historical fighter back in the air once again.

Joe Peppito and his crew are getting ever closer to flying his SNJ. We will be most excited to have another SNJ in the air as we can really use it! Old Yellow, 290, has been very active in the Rides Program and pilot training for the Wing, not counting flybys, etc. The PBJ crew will be anxious to get back to work on their project after finishing the C-46. Speaking of the PBJ crew, Gunny, get back to work! No more malingering. Ulcer? I thought Marines gave them, not got them. Get well soon, my friend.

Ken Gottschall, Jason Somes, Yoshi Abe, Shari Heitkotter, Mike Perrenoud, Robert Blair, Matt Norklun, Eric Lange, and John Jones have been busting their buns on the PT-19 - repairing, fixing, upgrading and, of course, flying to get her in top shape for entry into our Rides Program. Not only that, they are thinking of new ideas for income for the Wing and the aircraft. It is wonderful to see these relative youngsters working hard for a common goal and attempting new fund-raising efforts. Way to go guys! Keep up the great work.

Life member of the CAF, Bill Rheinschild, serial #1483, has joined our Wing and will be flying our Wing's fighters. I am very excited, as Bill has many years of warbird experience and is willing to help us in any area he can. He has a beautiful Hawker Sea Fury, and a couple of Mustangs which he is willing to offer for display at our Wing. Thanks, Bill. I look forward to your participation!

## Mike Greenhill & Jackie Straw

### Wed

by Russell Drosendahl

Several months ago, Mike Greenhill, who had started with our Wing as a Cadet and eventually had become a full-fledged Colonel, and his fiancée, Jackie Straw, came to me and asked if I could perform their wedding ceremony.

They had seen me conduct some memorial services for our deceased CAF members, so they wanted to know if I could officiate at their nuptials. I thought about it for about a week, and then contacted them and said I would do it.

I had to go to the Government Center in Ventura to get sworn in and obtain a certificate to do the wedding – a one-timer only. This was to be my first...and my last!

Mike and Jackie's wedding was held on June 29, 2008 at 1500 hours at the Oak Park, CA Community Center. It was a beautiful setting for a beautiful wedding ceremony.



Photo courtesy of Russ Drosendahl

**Russ officiating at the marriage of Jackie and Mike Greenhill, with parents and attendants looking on.**



Photo courtesy of Russ Drosendahl

**Here's Russ sitting with Nancy Barber and Faye Long at the reception after Mike & Jackie's wedding. Also in attendance were Gary Barber and Dave Long. Our Wing was well represented! We all wish Mike and Jackie many years of married bliss!**

## Ringmasters – Part III

The concentrated attack on the bombers had lasted only 15 minutes, with some sporadic passes for an additional ten. The high squadron had been completely wiped out and the low squadron had lost seven out of ten. (Lanning managed to make it over Belgium where the crew bailed out.) Due in large part to the timely appearance of Whitlow and company, however, all nine Liberators of the lead squadron were, if not wholly intact, at least still airborne.

The first returning aircraft to land was Greer. His plane had two flat tires and came to a stop at the intersection of two runways, blocking both. One by one the others came in, nearly half of them with wounded or dead aboard. The reaction of the ground crews at the hardstands of the 853rd Squadron are described below -- hardly award-winning prose but nonetheless authentic.

"Today nine crews departed on ops. The ETR was 1600 hours. A few minutes after the ETR a squadron and a half of the 491st planes appeared over the field but, as none of our ships were among them, we waited for the second formation to appear. But the clock moved around from five, to ten, to fifteen minutes and then to half an hour... At first it never occurred to us that maybe our ships had gone down. But gradually, after we had checked and rechecked with the tower, gradually we began to realize that such a thing could happen -- that maybe it had happened. We fought the thought for a long time, tried to make ourselves believe that the ships had come down in France or Belgium, or at least some of them would come back... But after interrogation, there was no hope left at all. Reports vary as to the number of chutes seen. One gunner estimates 95% of the men got out. Others are not optimistic. A reasonable estimate would seem to be between 50-75% of our 84 men got out safely..."

Hope ran higher than reality. Of the 84 men of the 853rd, 50 were already dead and many of the rest badly injured.

Stevens had been flying his first mission since 20 June, when he crashed at Dover as previously described. Just after the first fighters hit, his engineer, F/Sgt. Joseph L. Boyer, yelled, "They're coming in again!" An instant later he was killed by a 20 mm shell, his body falling out of the open bomb bay doors. Moments later the plane exploded. Stevens, blown clear, again survived.

THE MOOSE (1st Lt. Warren Moore) was hard hit on the first pass, which left #2 burning, the bomb bay on fire and the intercom and hydraulics out. "Our engineer (T/ Sgt Francis S. Hawkins) went into the blazing bomb bay and opened the doors manually. He must have been burned badly." (Moore) Bombardier George K. Patten had been manning the nose turret and had tracked an enemy fighter too far, jamming the turret. Navigator Ross S. Houston worked frantically to try to crank the turret back so that Patten could get out but it was no use. Two explosions in the aft section sent the plane down out of control and Houston was forced to leave Patten trapped. Five survived.

Stewart's crew were on their 30th mission. Five managed to bail out before IDIOT'S DELIGHT blew up.

Butler's DORTY TREEK was shot to a shambles in the air. "There were two more fighter attacks between the time I ordered bailout and the time I left the aircraft. Yergey (B) and Fuller (RW) were dead, Callicrate (LW) had a bullet through his arm, Jones (E) and Ostrander (CP) were badly burned, and Trombly (TG) had been shot through the hand. The aircraft was covered by fire and all the engines shot out when I left the plane." Kamarainen (Radio) was beaten by civilians when he landed, but survived.

Bennett, in ARK ANGEL, succeeded in joining up with the Lead Squadron. "He slid underneath us. His whole Martin (upper) turret was missing and there was a large hole in the right wing. He couldn't keep up and was last seen at 1258 hours still losing altitude." (Fandell) Nobody knows what happened after that; nobody in ARK ANGEL lived.

Little is known also of the events aboard PROBLEM CHILD (Hite), FIREBIRD (Budd) or Cloughley's unnamed B-24. Of the 28 men manning these planes, 24 were KIA. German records do state that the wreckage of these aircraft, together with Warczak's from the low squadron, were so close together that it was impossible to determine what bodies belonged to what B-24. The remaining 853rd aircraft, Ecklund's, fared better; the entire crew bailed out and were taken prisoner.

Casualties in the other squadrons brought the total 491st bill for Misburg to 90 KIA and 52 POW. Verified claims were 7-11-3, which of course did not include any enemy fighters downed or damaged by aircraft which were shot down.



**"Ark Angel" – 44-40073 was lost with all men.**

*Note: thanks to Eric Van Gilder for sending this article to the editor. It exemplifies the courage of the young men who went to war and did extraordinary acts of bravery in the face of great odds. They will forever be in our minds and hearts.*

*Please remember those brave men and women who now fight for us in the forward lines of battle around the world. They also exemplify our best American spirit – the will to keep our country free of tyranny.*

# Hanna's Escape From East Germany

by Charlie Valentine

Several months ago I was visited by Edgar and Hanna Bramstedt, great friends from Meckenheim, Germany, who have been here several times before. I've known Edgar since 1967, when I was stationed at RAF Lakenheath, England, and he was a Captain in the German Army – temporarily assigned to my office to study USAF aircraft maintenance methods.

During their last visit we had been through our CAF Museum and then had proceeded up the stairway to enter *China Doll*. Suddenly, Hanna became very quiet and then said, "I have been here before, when I was a very little girl!" It was the sight of the canvas seats and the webbing backs that had triggered her memory of a time long ago. I asked her to tell me about it.

Hanna was born in Silesia, a part of Germany that was given to Poland at the end of WWII. In 1947, the Polish government forced all Germans to leave their country with only two hours notice, and with only what they could carry by hand. Hanna's family was relocated to a refugee camp in the Russian sector of East Berlin, where they waited to be reunited with her father, who was then in a forced-labor camp in Siberia. He was released in 1948, just before the deterioration of relations between Russia and the Western Allies, and the blockade of all ground and rail traffic between West and East Germany. The "Berlin Airlift," known as "Operation Vittles" by the British and the "Air Bridge" by the Germans, was immediately put into operation.

Some of the aircraft arriving with supplies were returning to the west with refugees. Hanna's father decided to take advantage of the airlift and to attempt to flee with his family to West Germany. All necessary measures for the escape had to be prepared secretly, and relatives contributed money to help them prepare for the journey. Hanna was only five years old and was considered too young to keep the secret, so she was kept unaware of the plans.

On the morning of April 21, 1949, the family left their flat in the East Berlin sector very early, without any baggage because that would have made the police suspicious, and took the metro through the only checkpoint left open from the eastern to the western sector that did not have a search patrol. If their plans had been discovered, it would have meant imprisonment for all family members.

Having reached the western sector, the seven-person family was met by a prearranged contact and rushed to Gatow Airport, in the British sector of Berlin – where they were immediately put onto an airplane.

Hanna remembers the rough canvas seats on both sides of the airplane, and the flight being very crowded and very cold. The destination airport was Lubeck in the British Zone of West Germany. From there they went by train to the little town of Tiengen in the Black Forest, near the Swiss border. They were met there by family friends who gave them temporary shelter. Hanna's father became a

teacher, which then qualified them for an official teacher's flat.

At that time there were twelve million homeless refugees in Germany, in addition to all the bombed-out personnel. Housing was shared, much of it without a roof or utilities – until rebuilding started with the help of the U. S. Marshall Plan. "Thank you, USA, it is not forgotten. You were the first to forgive and help us. Our family will always be thankful for the chance that we were given," said Hanna and Edgar.

Edgar and Hanna met while she was working as a bank clerk in the Black Forest city of Freiburg, when he was a Lieutenant in the German Army. They have been married for forty-four years. Edgar retired several years ago as a Brigadier General, after spending a good part of his career on the NATO Communication and Information Board. His last assignment was Chief of the Defense Agency for Communications and Information Systems. One of his retirement projects is developing the genealogy of family members who now live in the United States.



© Photo by Charles Valentine

**Hanna and Edgar in our *China Doll* – remembering!**

## Wing BBQ and General Meeting

When: Saturday, August 9, 2008  
4:30 p.m.

Where: Museum Hangar, CAF  
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo

What: BBQ first – with hot dogs, hamburgers, cole slaw, potato salad, soft drinks, socializing!  
Followed by a General Wing Meeting.  
Topped off by a "surprise speaker."

Cost: \$5.00 per person. Pay at the door.

How: Get in touch with Norm Swagler, F-24 Restoration Team, and let him know how many you are bringing. Another way to let him know: e-mail him at: [pswagler@hotmail.com](mailto:pswagler@hotmail.com) - prior to Aug. 1.

## B-25 Ferry Flight

by Paul Koskela, SW Reg. Editor  
*Warbirds*, July, 1994 – Vol. 17, No. 5

North American B-25 Mitchell “*BIG OLE BREW ‘n little ole you*” (N5865V) was donated to the Confederate Air Force in 1988. Early in 1993, CAF Headquarters assigned the bomber to their Southern California Wing for restoration to flying status.

This is the story of ten CAF colonels who took on the assignment of breathing fire back into the dormant B-25, getting it back into the air, and ferrying it from Midland, Texas to their home base at Camarillo, California for restoration.

CAF colonels participating in the B-25 ferry flight were: Joe Peppito, Russ Drosendahl, Bill Main, Merrill Wein, Ron Fleishman, Cliff Brown, Kelvin Rautiola, Dick Russell, Howard Ulm and Wil Lorenzini.

Inspection of the airplane revealed corrosion in the left wing. A decision was made to replace the wing and do other repair and maintenance work prior to the ferry flight.

A replacement B-25 wing was loaned by CAF member Carl Scholl (Aero Trader, Chino, CA). The Wing's C-46 *China Doll* was flown to Chino on May 6, and the B-25 wing was loaded on the Commando. The 900 lb. wing was a tight fit! They flew back to Camarillo, and, on May 8, they added more parts, about 5,000 lbs. of tools, ten CAF colonels and left for Midland. The 900-mile flight took 5 hours and 3 minutes.

Work started on Sunday, May 10, and it was ten hours a day from then on. New props and spark plugs were installed, and the engines were run up for compression checks. The #1 and #14 cylinders on the right engine needed changing. The #8 cylinder was found to have two broken leads at the cylinder end.

By Wednesday, after much work on removing the oil coolers and all the hard-to-get-at flange/mount bolts and nuts, the wing was off! Installation of the new wing was a daunting task – but finally, on Thursday, all the nuts and bolts had been fastened – and the B-25 had a new wing!

Friday, May 14 – TEST FLIGHT TIME ! After a good run-up and engine check – Merrill, Bill and Kelvin took off in the Mitchell. After a slight problem with the down light for the left main gear, the crew was ready for the flight back to Camarillo. They loaded their tools, gear and the old wing into the C-46. Both planes took off on Sunday, May 17, 1993 at 0930, made a pass over the field, and headed for a fuel stop at Mesa, AZ.

*Big Ole Brew* and *China Doll* were given a red-carpet welcome at the CAF's Arizona Wing in Mesa. They took off, after refueling, at 1330 on the last leg of the trip to Camarillo.

In anticipation of their arrival, a crowd had gathered at the CAF hangar in Camarillo. Four SNJ/T-6s were launched at 1500 to intercept the big birds.

Finally, the cry went up. “There they are !” High overhead were two big dots and four smaller ones. The Mother Bird was bringing her brood home! The C-46, B-25 and four SNJ/T-6s formed up for a group photo. What a sight!

The landing at Camarillo Airport was within ten minutes of the projected arrival time set two weeks earlier by Joe Peppito, the Wing's Maintenance Officer!

The recap showed that the ten colonels spent 754 hours on the B-25, and a total of 911 hours for the entire trip. Everyone shared a sense of accomplishment with the amount of work that was done in a week. The camaraderie generated by this operation was truly a delight.

Note: Fifteen years later, our B-25 (PBJ-1J) #N5865V is still under restoration, with possibly years to go before she flies again – this time with the new name... “Semper Fi !”

**To become a participating member of our PBJ-1J Restoration Team, please send your name, with a donation, payable to the Southern California Wing, to:**

**Cols. Marc Russell & Jeff Birdt, Crew Chiefs  
PBJ-1J Restoration  
CAF – Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Drive  
Camarillo, CA 93010**

**Thank you for helping her to fly again !**



© Photo courtesy Paul Koskela & *Warbirds*

***China Doll* shepherding *Big Ole Brew* to their home base at Camarillo Airport, Camarillo, CA on May 17, 1993. Since the B-25 had no altitude encoder, it flew in formation with the C-46. The B-25 had limited range until the auxiliary tanks could be worked on. The flight was smooth until they entered CA airspace, where they vectored around adverse weather, arriving early.**

## Wing Photo Page I : B-25 Ferry Flight



(Above) The ten So Cal Wing CAF Colonels who made it all happen. Volunteerism is alive and well with this group.

(Below) Did C-46's transport B-25 wings during the war? Perhaps, but it surely is not a common occurrence these days.



© Photos courtesy of Paul Koskela and *Warbirds*

In the top photo, from the left: Joe Peppito, Russ Drosendahl, Dick Russell, Howard Ulm, Bill Main, Ron Fleishman, Kelvin Rautiola, Merrill Wein, Cliff Brown. In rear: Wil Lorenzini. This team included four retired airline pilots.

In preparations for loading the B-25 wing on the C-46 at Chino, the crew had made a mock-up of the wing and practiced loading it onto the *China Doll*. The practice served them well, although it still was a very tight fit!

*China Doll* proved herself to be a real workhorse !



© Photo courtesy of Paul Koskela & *Warbirds*

**North American B-25 Mitchell #N5865V *Big Ole Brew* shortly before its departure from Midland to Camarillo.**



© Photo courtesy of Paul Koskela & *Warbirds*

**A look at the interior of *China Doll*, showing the B-25 wing inside the C-46. Note how tight it fit, and how difficult it must have been for the passengers during the flights to Midland and again back to Camarillo.**

### Warbird Ride Program

by Bill O'Neill

So far, our Warbird Ride Program has been a success, with 73 rides in the SNJ and 3 rides in the PT-19 sold!

Have your friends/relatives sign up for a memorable ride for an anniversary/birthday/special occasion. The price is still \$300 for the SNJ and \$225 for the PT-19 for a breathtaking flight over the seashore or mountains.

Call (805) 482-0064 to make the reservation. Thanks to Monica White, Director of Marketing, and Vicki Linares of the *Ventura County STAR*, for their extraordinary generosity in helping us advertise the rides!

# Friends Always – The Legacy of The Berlin Airlift Lives On

(March 2008)



Meet “Uncle Wiggly Wings”  
An Interview With Legendary “Candy Bomber” Gail  
Halvorsen

*Our family became Berliners. – Gail S. Halvorsen*



**The Candy Bomber:**  
Gail S. Halvorsen,  
Col. USAF (ret.), in  
1999.  
© picture-alliance/dpa

Colonel Gail S. Halvorsen was born in October 1920 in Salt Lake City, Utah, and grew up on small farms in Utah and Idaho. Fascinated by flight, he joined the Civil Air Patrol after earning a private pilot license in September 1941. He joined the United States Army Air Corps in June 1942 and served as a C-47/C-54 transport pilot during World War II in the South Atlantic from 1944-46. During his postwar volunteer assignment in the Berlin Airlift (Operation Vittles), he instituted Operation Little Vittles by dropping small parachutes laden with candy to the children of Berlin. He thus became known as “Uncle Wiggly Wings”, the “Chocolate Flyer” and the “Berlin Candy

Bomber”. He has graciously taken on a voluntary role as a positive diplomat to Germany and a tireless champion of the spirit of the Airlift ever since.

Colonel Halvorsen was the commander of Tempelhof Air Base in Berlin from 1970-1974, where one of his roles was to insure free movement from the Berlin air corridors and plan airlift contingencies in case the Soviets would attempt another blockade. He was also the United States Air Force Representative in Berlin. After his retirement from the military, he helped to establish, in 1980, the Airlift of Understanding, a high school student exchange program between the State of Utah and the City of Berlin, which continues to this day.

Gail was married for nearly 50 years to the former Alta Jolley of Zion National Park, Utah, who passed away in January 1999. They have five children, 24 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He later married his high school steady, Lorraine Pace. They divide their time between a farm in Utah and Arizona. Three of his grandchildren have attended the Gail S. Halvorsen Elementary School at Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt, Germany.



**In the air:** A view from a restored 62-year-old Douglas DC-3 “raisin bomber” aircraft based at Tempelhof Airport of the watery landscape west of Berlin in May 2006. © dpa

## 1.) Do you have a 'most memorable moment' in Berlin?

I think that my relationship with Berlin is different from any other airlift pilot because of factors other than being the originator of “Operation Little Vittles”. One was an assignment to Rhein-Main Air Base from 1962 to 1965. My duties were in relation to programs in space for the US and Europe. I had been assigned to the Air Force Space Program for the previous four years. During the 1960s I got to Berlin several times. The wall had just gone up and it brought back memories of the blockade. The trials of the

Berliners were never ending. Now they were separated more forcefully from loved ones in the East.

My strong feelings for Berlin were intensified. I felt as one with them. One trip was recorded by a photo on page 119 of my book "The Berlin Candy Bomber". A second and the main difference was my assignment back to Berlin from 1970 to 1974. This, and the Airlift, were events that would change my life forever.

## **2.) What did the legacy of the Berlin Airlift mean to you in the context of German-American friendship?**

As Commander of Tempelhof and as the Senior United States Air Force Representative to Berlin, my family and I were totally integrated with the Berliners. I spent more hours on the job per week for four years than any other job I had in 31 years of Air Force service.

My duties in support of the various Air Force organizations in Berlin, running the 7350th Air Base Group, including the matters associated with the airport, were demanding without regard to the clock. As the Air Force Representative to Berlin there was hardly an evening during the week and several times a night on Fridays and Saturdays that Alta and I were not involved in some function around the city. These functions were mostly social and very rewarding from a human, person-to-person relationship. A good number of these events were multinational.

But all of these requirements took a toll on our time with our children. Yet they made the most of it. Our eldest daughter, Denise, became immersed in the language and culture. She enrolled in the Goethe Institut and qualified before a board of eight examiners for entry to the Hochschule für Musik, a music academy where all the instruction was in German. Her language became so good that she was hired by Pan American Airways at the ticket counter. Few customers knew that she was an American. Other members of the family also benefited from their proactive approach towards living in Germany.



Because we had to spend more time than we liked away from our family we tried to spend quality time with them when we could. Whenever possible we kept Monday nights sacred for our family home evenings together. During the winter and summer we would leave the city with the family for camping trips in the summer throughout Europe and in the winter at ski resorts.

I was responsible for hosting some of the Four Power Talks at Tempelhof on improving access of West Berliners to their relatives in the East. I was often called at night about successful escapes and some not so successful by those who risked their lives for freedom - just like the Berliners in 1948-1949. Our family became Berliners. I met many who were children during the blockade. These contacts are documented in several books.

Mercedes Wild is the greatest example. I, or my family, have stayed at her and Peter's apartment in Berlin about 30 times since 1972. A high school exchange between Utah and West Berlin was established for years by Peter. In the spring of 2007 Peter and Mercedes were flown to a teachers conference in Kansas City. I joined them there. The 700 teachers bought 500 "Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot" books as a key story related to their theme. I spoke with Peter and Mercedes today, Dec. 15, 2007.

**Tempelhof:**  
Halvorsen signing autographs at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport in February 2008. © dpa



## **4.) How do you view this friendship today and how do you see it evolving?**

I, and hundreds of other Berlin Airlift Veterans, are forever grateful for the many times that Berlin has invited the British, French and American veterans back to their Berlin. One organization that has done so much for the veterans over many, many years has been the Stiftung Luftbrückendank under the capable leadership of Heinz-Gerd Reese. He has made the veterans' visits Berlin events that we will never forget. We are most grateful for his service.

## Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree



**Battle of Britain has new home**

In an effort to put the WWII displays in sequence, by date of occurrence, the Battle of Britain display moved to a new location and it looks even better. Shirley Murphy and Ron Fleishman worked very hard to do the relocation and update the exhibit.



**World War I extended exhibit**

Again the volunteers were busy working over the WWI exhibit to include a collection of period aircraft depicted beautifully in a set of Hubbell prints donated to the Museum. When you leave the gift shop you can walk right into the WWI story. Come by and see the changes, support the gift shop or, just to say hi!

A special thanks goes to Pat Brown for her efforts in putting together the information needed for the rough draft of the Hangar Facility Operating Procedure. When completed, this will provide the guidelines needed for what can, and cannot, be done within both hangers in accordance with those directions provided by the Ventura Fire Dept. Those still with questions on what is and is not allowed as regards the public and the members will have these guidelines as answers to their concerns.

Remember to mark your calendar for the following upcoming events:

August 9 at 4:30 is the Wing BBQ, followed by a membership meeting. Each person is asked to donate \$5.00 to cover the cost of the barbeque.

August 16 and 17 is the EAA Fly-in and we will have an impressive showing with the planned gift shop layout. Bring your kids, or grandkids by and support the Wing and buy, buy, buy!

September 6 is the Museum's Special Events Day and the theme of this event will be "The Battle of Midway." Jim Hinckley will be a guest speaker, so you know the talk will be informative and interesting. See you there.

We will be ordering a new C-46 T-Shirt with updated artwork. Because of the cost of doing the new layout by the supplier, we will be asking that shirts be pre-ordered and pre-paid. Let me know the quantity you want and the sizes. I want to get this order in soon so don't procrastinate, tell me now. Next, I will be ordering new SNJ T-shirts, also with new artwork. Stay tuned....

Until next time.....



© Photo by Dave Flood

Ken Barger made a recent visit to our Restoration Hangar, after his recent hospitalization. He just can't stay away from our place! It was real good to see him.

Ken is working on custom making a key part of the PBJ's tail section – called the complex fairing for the tail. Ken is saving our Wing mucho bucks by doing this himself – another example of what our volunteers do!

## Wing Photo Page II



### Sick Bay

At least three of our members are currently “under the weather” and recuperating at home from hospital stays.

**Bill Main** underwent surgery recently, but is now home and coming along well. You can give him a call at 805-482-3239. Hang in there, Bill, we hope to see you soon at the hangars! One of Bill’s “exercise buddies” showed up at the Museum asking for him. He missed seeing Bill at their usual 3:30 a.m. exercise sessions!

**Ken “Gunny” Barger**, a mainstay on the PBJ Restoration Team, was hospitalized, but is now home and getting his strength back. He has some further medical work scheduled as far as his heart is concerned. He actually made a visit to the hangars on Saturday, July 19, and everyone was very glad to see him. His number is: 818-998-5209, and he would love to hear from you.

**Gil Brice** continues to have health problems, but also continues to come in and work. Call him at 805-987-9843.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder [www.vg-photo.com](http://www.vg-photo.com)  
**Stu McAfee (on wing) and Chris Rushing** discussing their flight plans for the Moorpark Fly-Over on Independence Day weekend. They are two of the pilots in the Condor Squadron, all T-6s, based in Van Nuys.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder  
**Patricia Kennedy** in the rear seat, with **Stu McAfee** flying his T-6 Texan during the fly-over. Patricia is an actress who sponsors a non-profit organization that helps vets transition back to civilian life. Go to: <http://www.stepup4vets.org>



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder  
**Chris**, just back from Afghanistan, in his T-6 (top), flying formation with **Stu McAfee** over Moorpark.

# COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING

**SPECIAL EVENT COMMEMORATING**

## THE "BATTLE OF MIDWAY"

**World War II Aviation Museum**  
Corner Eubanks & Airport Drive, Camarillo Airport

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2008 Saturday**

**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**Adult Donation: \$7 ; Students: \$4; Children: \$3**  
**(805) 482-0064**

**1:00 Speaker about the Battle**  
**Airplanes on display**  
**Special exhibits**  
**Light refreshments**  
**SNJT-6 Ride opportunities**



**F4-F Wildcat**



**Zero A6M2**



**Aircraft Carrier USS Hornet**

**This naval battle (June 4 - 7, 1942) was a major turning point in the Pacific War**