

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**

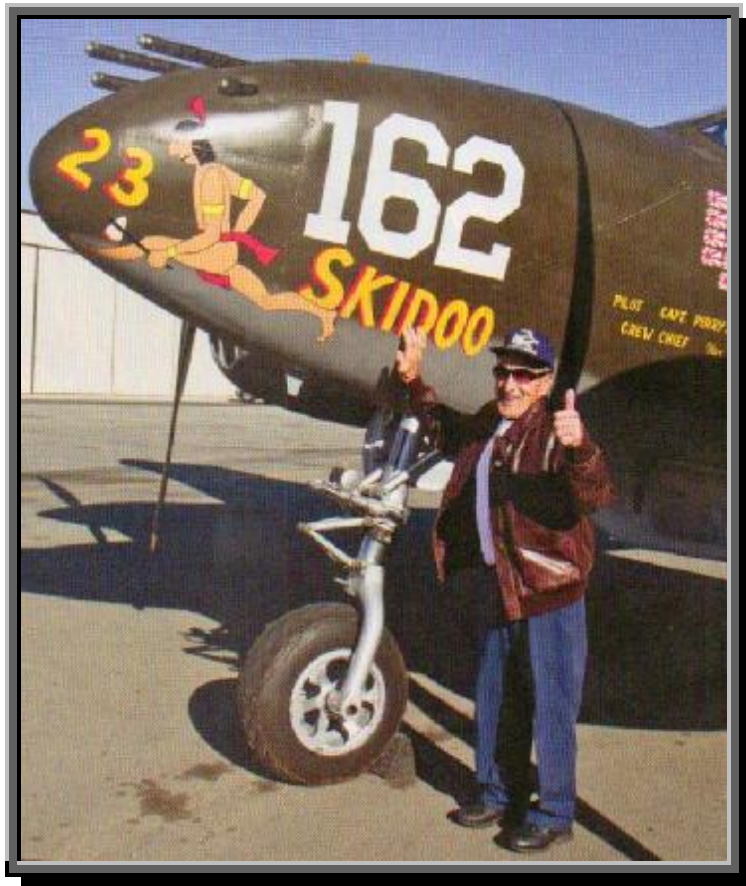
Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010  
(805) 482-0064

August, 2011  
Vol. XXXI No. 8



Paul Gnitke working on our Navion. He and Dan Cuvier are renovating it to become an educational static display.

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Joe Moser with his favorite airplane, the Lockheed P-38. Here he is beside the P-38 "23 Skidoo" at Planes of Fame in Chino, CA, where he flew his "45<sup>th</sup> mission" in the back seat with Steve Hinton at the controls. Joe is one of the members of the Army Air Corps' 474<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group that flew P-38s in Europe in WWII. They are holding their annual reunion in Camarillo, and will appear at the "Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show on Saturday, August 20, 2011. A Special Edition of *Flight Line* has been devoted to the 474<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Association, and will be distributed just prior to the air show.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, August 27, 2011 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.**

# August 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Museum Closed	2 Work Day	3	4 Work Day	5	6 Work Day
7	8 Museum Closed	9 Work Day	10	11 Work Day	12 Docent Meeting 3:30	13 Work Day
14	15 V-J Day Museum Closed	16 Work Day	17	18 Work Day	19	20 Camarillo Air Show Wartime Radio Review
21 Camarillo Air Show	22 Museum Closed	23 Work Day	24	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day Wing Staff 9:30
28	29 Museum Closed	30 Work Day	31	Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday and major holidays		

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS				IN THIS ISSUE
Wing Leader	* Steve Barber	(805) 302-8517	<a href="mailto:f8f2cat@gmail.com">f8f2cat@gmail.com</a>	Wing Calendar . . . . . 2
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Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	<a href="mailto:scdebree@aol.com">scdebree@aol.com</a>	Cdr. David McCampbell . . . . . 4
Operations Officer	* Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	<a href="mailto:nbnh@aol.com">nbnh@aol.com</a>	Museum Update . . . . . 6
Maintenance Officer	* Ken Gottschall	(818) 439-5885	<a href="mailto:kgts@netzero.com">kgts@netzero.com</a>	Wing Air Show Schedule. . . . . 7
Safety Officer	* Shari Heitkotter	(559) 285-0430	<a href="mailto:planejanex15@gmail.com">planejanex15@gmail.com</a>	That Old Man on 60 Minutes . . . . . 8
Museum Manager	John Woolley	(805) 407-4800	<a href="mailto:jwools@sbcglobal.net">jwools@sbcglobal.net</a>	Three Japanese Mistakes . . . . . 8
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Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	Mission Accomplished . . . . . 10
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Chief Docent	Walt Metcalf	(805) 482-8291	<a href="mailto:wmetcalf@yahoo.com">wmetcalf@yahoo.com</a>	Undaunted by Odds . . . . . 12
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HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064 HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348 WEBSITES <a href="http://www.cafsocial.com">www.cafsocial.com</a> <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 Potpourri** by Norm Swagler and Dave Flood *(from Norm's minutes of the Wing Staff Meeting, June 25)*

Our Wing Leader, Steve Barber, has announced a purchase, approved by the Wing Staff, of a set of four Skyraider propeller blades for use on our F8F-2 Bearcat. The Bearcat currently is using a set of borrowed A1 blades while its regular prop is receiving needed maintenance. The Skyraider blades are each 3 ½ inches longer than the regular F8F blades, so the pilot has to compensate for the difference in landing the aircraft.

Maintenance Officer Ken Gottschall reports that the Spitfire's voltage regulator problem was resolved with Howard Ulm's expert and diligent work. The problem of not being able to adjust the two VR potentiometers to provide enough voltage to charge the battery was solved on the ground using an external wiring harness to gain access to the potentiometers with the engine running. All that remains is a functional flight test to help verify the fix. Thanks, Howard!

Work on the PT-19 is slowed by a lack of volunteers. However, the new Ranger engine is on-site and repair of the wing rib is in progress. The landing gear has new paint, and work is progressing towards restoring/improving the aircraft to a more pristine condition – as time, cost and available personnel permits.

There was a problem with a rough engine on the SNJ-5 #290 during a busy Saturday, while it was flying several people who had purchased rides. This required the immediate attention of all available mechanics to enable the aircraft to be repaired in record time, and a functional test flight was performed in between Vintage Aircraft Ride flights. With all systems given a "go," it was possible to squeeze a flight into the busy schedule for a visitor from Poland whose wife bought him a surprise flight on-the-spot. A job very well done by our CAF mechanic volunteers.

Wing Leader Steve Barber pointed to John Syrdahl for his exemplary job of the recent repair/replacement of the landing gear door on the Yak 3. Thanks for a job well done, John!

Our Vintage Aircraft Ride program is doing well. Another plane, the North American SNJ-4 "Blue Bird" will soon be on the program when the FAA aircraft approval arrives. In addition, Wayne Brancato, the "Blue Bird" Crew Chief, is now qualified to fly the SNJ-4 and will soon be flying in the program.

The Zero and Mustang flew to the EAA's "AirVenture" in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, with a preliminary appearance at the "Thunder Over Michigan" air show. The planes, and also fifteen CAF-SoCAWing members, took off on July 20 & 23 for a 14-day stint to the two air shows. Rides were sold for the rear seat of the Mustang during the shows in both Michigan and Oshkosh – with an airport in Fond du Lac being used in Wisconsin for the rides.

Steve Barber, Jr. announced a need for volunteers to help with the CAF Air Show party on Saturday, August 20. We are having the same popular band and the same 1940s-style big-band sound, with dancing – and are expecting around 600 people in attendance. Tickets can be purchased through the website, and also at the Docent Desk. Another event scheduled for the future is the Red Cross's annual meeting in our Museum Hangar (date uncertain). Please get in touch with Steve to volunteer to help out at these special events, as they bring in much needed revenue for our Wing, and there are all kinds of great opportunities for you to lend your hand.

Museum Manager John Woolley stated that we are experiencing a storage problem. With the donations of books and other memorabilia coming in from WWII vets' families, etc., we need more storage units or some other kind of containers. We are getting to the point of not accepting donations for lack of storage. One example is a recent donation of about \$40K worth of video equipment which could not be accepted because of this problem. John, along with others, discussed the fact that we do not want it be known that we as an aviation museum will be turning down donations that are offered to us. We must explore various options to accommodate our museum artifacts. The website unification project is still ongoing. John announced with regret that Walt Metcalf had resigned as Docent Leader – due to health considerations. A volunteer for the position was asked for.

Dick Troy is now known as the "Cleanup Hitter," with his no-nonsense approach to getting rid of clutter in the Maintenance Hangar. A "Stand-Down" day was held on July 9 – with all hands expected to help clean up their respective areas. We got rid of 15 old dead batteries to a battery facility in Ventura recently. There have been incidences of people bringing in items to the hangar, without informing anyone of its purpose. Items have been showing up without anyone knowing who they belong to or to what purpose they are supposed to be used for. Please in the future – if you have something you think the Wing might be able to use – tell a Crew Chief or someone on the Wing Staff about it and get their approval.

Pat Brown received a call from a Navy/Marine PBJ reunion group in Florida that is planning a reunion in Mississippi this fall. They want to come to our Aviation Museum to see our PBJ Restoration Project and talk to the guys on the PBJ Restoration Team. They plan to take photos of the restoration to show at their reunion. Pat has informed the PBJ Crew Chief, Marc Russell.

Joe Peppito reported that he is planning a class on aircraft radial engines. He wants to open the class to both Cadets and CAF-SoCAWing members. There was a suggestion made that we might invite EAA members to join the class. Joe has extensive experience in maintaining radial engines, and the class promises to be very educational. The tentative time for the class will be sometime in September, and a notice in "Flight Line" will be made.

## U.S. Naval Aviation Centennial: 2011 CDR. David McCampbell - Top Navy Ace, World War II



© U.S. Navy Photo #NH 106328

**U.S. Navy Fighting Squadron Fifteen (VF-15) on board USS Essex (CV-9), December, 1944. Note F6F "Minsi III" in background.**

### October 24, 1944: Battle of Leyte Gulf

"All available fighter pilots! Man your planes!" boomed the squawk box in *Essex*' ready room. The ship's radar had detected three large groups of Japanese planes coming in. David McCampbell, the CAG and the Navy's most famous living aviator, considered this announcement. Earlier that morning, Admiral Sherman himself had forbidden McCampbell from joining a dawn sortie. Given his responsibilities as Commander of *Essex*' Air Group and his public prominence as a top ace, McCampbell was too valuable. He decided that he was indeed "available" and headed for his airplane, *Minsi III*. His plane crew hurried to fuel *Minsi III*, which had not been scheduled to fly that day. With the Hellcat only partially fueled, the Flight Officer ordered it off the flight deck - either into the air or below to the hangar deck. McCampbell went up, leading *Essex*'s last seven fighters toward the Jap strike force.

He and Ens. Roy Rushing got out in front of the other Hellcats, putting on all speed to intercept the Japs, then only 22 miles away. He directed the other F6F's to get the bombers, while he and Rushing tackled the fighters. Surprisingly, the enemy fighters turned, allowing McCampbell and Rushing to gain altitude and a position behind them.

Seeing over 40 Japanese fighters, McCampbell radioed back to the carrier for help. "Sorry, none available." The enemy planes spread out in a typical formation of three V's. McCampbell picked out a Zero on the extreme right and flamed it. Rushing also got one on this first pass. Incredibly, there was no reaction from the Japs as they climbed back up to regain altitude. The two Hellcat pilots dived back down on their quarry for another pass; McCampbell blew up a second Zero. Now the gaggle of

Zeros, Tonys, Hamps, and Oscars reacted - by going into a "Lufbery Circle!" McCampbell made a couple of head-on passes against the formation, but without results.

A strange interlude ensued as McCampbell and Rushing climbed back up and circled, while the Japanese fighters continued to circle below. McCampbell radioed again for help; one of the Hellcats that had been going after the bombers headed his way. The "Lufbery Circle" broke up and the planes headed toward Luzon in a wide Vee. The two American fliers closed in again on the formation. McCampbell opened up at 900 feet, and exploded his third plane of the morning. Rushing shot down his second one.

Apparently low on fuel, the Japanese planes doggedly flew on, maintaining formation. On his next firing pass, gunfire coming from behind forced McCampbell to break off his attack and pull up. It was another Hellcat shooting too close to him. A few choice words straightened things out. Still the enemy planes didn't turn and mix it up.

McCampbell realized he could relax and take his time. This was practically gunnery exercise. He could focus on identifying his targets carefully. The next one was an Oscar. Again his six fifties roared and blasted the Oscar's wing root. It flamed for number four. Rushing had scored his third by this time. This continued for several more passes until McCampbell had downed 7 and Rushing 6. Rushing radioed that he was out of ammo, but he would stay on McCampbell's wing while the CAG used up his remaining bullets.

Two more passes and two more kills. As the Jap planes approached the security of their bases on Luzon, the two Americans' low fuel finally ended the slaughter. The Hellcats broke off and headed for the *Essex*. **In one morning sortie, McCampbell had shot down nine enemy planes and Rushing six**, an unparalleled achievement in American fighter aviation.

+++++

Born on January 16, 1910, this Bessemer Alabama native's naval career began with dismissal. Graduating from the [U.S. Naval Academy](#) in depression-era 1933, he was rewarded with an honorable discharge from a Navy without funds. But in June 1934 McCampbell was called back and commissioned. In 1936 his first assignment involving aircraft was gunnery observer aboard *U.S.S. Portland*. In 1937, McCampbell's flying career finally got off the ground at Pensacola Naval Air Station where he reported for flight training. A year later, he was designated a Naval Aviator and received his first flying assignment with Fighting Squadron 4 aboard the *USS Ranger, CV-4* where he served two years.

After serving on the *USS Wasp* as a Landing Signal Officer, McCampbell returned to the States to fit out a new squadron, Air Group 15, aka "The Fabled Fifteen." In February 1943 through early 1944 the group was aboard *Essex* steaming into history. One of the first squadrons to

equip with Grumman's new F6F Hellcats, they saw action in attacks on Iwo Jima, Formosa, the Marianas, Palau, Philippines, Nansei, Shotos and climaxed with the Battle of the Philippine Sea (Marianas Turkey Shoot).



© Photo by Frank Mormillo

**Our CAF Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat *Minsi III* is still flying – and every time we fly it we do it in remembrance of CDR David McCampbell, a true Navy hero.**

In February 1944, he was promoted to CAG (Commander - Air Group) of Air Group Fifteen. That spring, they went to war aboard *USS Essex CV-9*. McCampbell commanded the entire *Essex* air group -- bombers, fighters, and torpedo planes. He was thirty-four years old. During their tour of approximately seven months and more than 20,000 hours of operations, this group destroyed more enemy planes (318 airborne and 348 on the ground) and sank more enemy ships (296,500 tons sunk, and more than a half million tons damaged and/or probably sunk) than any other air group in the Pacific war. Among the major combat ships sunk was the [Japanese battleship \*Musashi\*](#), three carriers and a heavy cruiser. The Fabled Fifteen became one of the most highly decorated air groups of the war.

McCampbell entered combat on May 19, 1944, leading a fighter sweep over Marcus Island. Three weeks later on June 11, flying near Saipan, he saw a lone Zero come out of the clouds. He turned towards the plane and fired three bursts. The Zero went down streaming smoke, the first in long series of successes for the CAG. He reacted coolly to his first aerial victory, "I knew I could shoot him down and I did. That's all there was to it."

#### *Marianas Turkey Shoot*

As the Americans prepared for the invasion of Guam and Saipan, the Carrier Task Force steamed west into the Philippine Sea. The desperate Japanese battle plan called for them to launch their strike planes at the U.S. ships, then refuel & re-arm on the Guam and Saipan airfields and hit the American carriers again in a 'shuttle' operation. It didn't turn out that way.

On June 19, the Japanese launched two large raids of Judys and Vals, escorted by fighters. Other carrier air groups took care of the first raid; *Essex'* Fabled Fifteen,

under McCampbell went after the second group of eighty planes. McCampbell started the slaughter at 11:39 by exploding the first Aichi D4Y2 "Judy" dive bomber he spotted. As he darted across to the other side of the enemy formation, evading a gantlet of return fire, McCampbell quickly splashed a second Judy, sped toward the front of the enemy formation to record a "probable" on a third, dispatched the formation leader's left wingman with a staccato burst, downed the leader with a steady stream of machine-gun bullets, then scored a final kill on a diving enemy craft. In minutes McCampbell had logged five kills and one probable.

There was a second air battle in the afternoon. After shooting down yet another Zero (his sixth for the day!), he became separated from his flight of eight and was returning alone to his carrier, the *USS Essex*. As his Hellcat cruised at 6,000 feet past Guam's Orote Peninsula, he spotted two Zeros attacking a Navy S0C seaplane picking up a downed pilot in the water. Diving to the attack, McCampbell shot down one of the two Zeros. Lt. Commander George Duncan, another VF-15 pilot, came upon the scene at that time and got the other. It was McCampbell's **seventh for the day** and his ninth in eight days of combat. By the end of September 1944, McCampbell had shot down nineteen Japanese planes.

In one combat tour, David McCampbell shot down 34 Japanese aircraft. If he had served a second tour, he may very well have exceeded Dick Bong's total of 40. In recognition of his spectacular accomplishments: leading "Fabled Fifteen," personally accounting for 34 planes, and for his mission on October 24, McCampbell received the Congressional Medal of Honor, presented to him by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

McCampbell also received the Navy Cross, the Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. McCampbell served in the Navy until 1964, reaching the rank of Captain. He died in 1996 at the age of 86. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



**CDR David McCampbell, USN**

## Museum Update

by John Woolley

### Museum and Docent Meeting - 7/10

The joint meeting of the Museum Committee and Docents was held on Wednesday, 7/13 at 3:30 p.m. in the "O"Club. Steve Barber was available to share with the gathering his vision for the Wing, Museum and an update on upcoming special events and happenings. John Woolley shared the continuing challenge the Museum is facing with the retirement of Russ Drosendahl and Bob Smith, the scaling back of the work schedule of Walt Metcalf and other docents. Steve directed docents and museum staff to enlist the assistance of hangar personnel when there is not a sufficient number of docents available on any given day or time period to open the museum and serve the public.

A training program for new docents was discussed. Ron Fleishman will be serving as a mentor for new docents John Knopp, Tom Harlan and Tom Roe. A Docent Handbook will be reviewed and updated. To familiarize docents with the use of the cash register and credit card machine Paul Kleinbaum is developing a step-by-step written procedures for the operation of these machines. Walt Metcalf will continue to handle the ride certificates and Don Sabol will be responsible for monitoring of admission area supplies.

John Woolley reviewed the status and planning for upcoming special events. Planning for the August air show and dance is beginning with tickets on sale at the admissions area and on-line at the Wing website. Woolley also discussed that a museum fund raising special event is being developed for Sunday, 12/4, featuring our Zero and Hellcat in a WW II Pacific presentation commemorating also the U.S. Naval Aviation Centennial by noted historian and author Bruce Gamble ("Fortress Rabaul", and "VMF 214 Black Sheep Squadron"). It was also noted that the PBJ crew is formulating a fund raising activity for their aircraft on Saturday, 9/3.

Brief reports were made on the progress being made by Jim Hinkelman on the Library Project and Shirley Murphy on progress being made in the Display/Artifacts area. Janet Rizzoli reported on the tee shirt purchases through Tom Ridderbush for the crews and public sale at Oshkosh and at our home PX. We will be working closely with Tom Ridderbush in providing merchandise that represents the Wing aircraft. Volunteers wishing to assist Jim Tierney and Janet are welcomed.

### Library Project Up-date

Under the leadership of Jim Hinkelman, the SoCal Wing Library is in the process of creating a data base of our library's collection that will ultimately be catalogued for public and membership access. This data base is being developed by Wing members, volunteers and college interns from this past year in the gradual and laborious process of data entering the various individual items of our

extensive library collection that includes book's, technical manual's, video's, photo's and periodical's.



© Photo by John Woolley

**Jim Hinkelman, our Library Manager, with Walter Johnson, an Intern who has been helping with our cataloguing process.**

The project has been under way for the past year. Dave Flood was able to secure a \$3,000 grant from the City of Camarillo to support the project and in obtaining assistance of student interns from the history and computer science departments at CSU, Channel Islands. Bill Main has developed a listing of periodicals and VHS videos that will be converted to DVDs when a dedicated computer for this purpose is purchased. Know anyone who would like to assist with data entry and cataloguing? If so, direct them to Jim Hinkelman or John Woolley.,



© Photo by John Woolley

**Here's Madison Palmer, who has been donating her time and expertise to our Library Project.**

### Display/ Up-date

A several-month B-29 restoration project was just completed with the hanging of "FIFI" on Sunday, 7/17, in the air space above the PX/gift shop area of the Museum entrance. Docent and Wing member Charlie Carr, Jr., artist/master model maker, has made his presence

felt by his unselfish volunteering efforts to make our Wing and Museum a better place. Interspersed with docenting and repairing the Museums collection of scale models Charlie has built a model of our P-51 "Man-O-War" for Jason Somes and a donated portrait of our Mk. XIV for the Spitfire crew. He as also helped prepare markings on a P-38 model for the 474th Fighter Group reunion that will be held at the 8/20 air show.



© Photo by John Woolley

**Here's Charlie Carr, Jr. with his fully-restored B-29 Super Fortress bomber model – in the colors of our CAF B-29 *FIFI*, the only flying B-29 in the world.**

The restoration of a large scale model B-29 located in our display area began with a discussion of whether or not it should be tossed out due to the severity of the damage to the model. Charlie stepped forward offering to repair the damaged model with the goal of having it restored as a representation of "FIFI", the CAF B-29. With encouragement from Shirley Murphy, Director of Displays; the markings - national insignia's and tail markings were done by hand; the CAF and "FIFI" markings were prepared by Walt Metcalf; member Vern Morsman, Ventura Hobbies, supplied the bulk of the paint; Jim Hinkelman was responsible for the development of a wing-jig used in the repair of the wing; Ron Fleishman and Jim Hinkelman were responsible for transporting the model to-and-from Charlie's home, the restoration site. Jim was also instrumental in hanging "FIFI". The wing span is an impressive 84 inches and the fuselage length is 58 inches. Kudos to all of you who worked on this project!



© Photo by John Woolley

**An "air-to-air" photo of the newly-restored B-29 model displayed in our Gift Shop area. Thanks to Charlie !**

Volunteers who have been coming In to our Aviation Museum Military Library to help in the cataloguing of books, magazines, manuals, photo, artifacts, etc. include:

- Zack Entz and Laura Randis
- Paul and Kefa Abbott
- Walter Johnson
- Madison Palmer
- Don & Cheryl Williamson
- Jaimie Cuvier
- Norma Monetti
- Tyler Crowley

Many thanks to these folks who have stepped up to help us complete this job of getting all our library material in order and on a computer database. Please call John Woolley if you too would like to help us. His number is (805) 407-4800.



© Photo by John Woolley

**Here are Cheryl and Don Williamson, obviously having fun while at the same time doing a very important job for us in our Military Library.**

## Wing Air Show Schedule: 2011



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

August 20, 21	"Wings Over Camarillo"	All aircraft
Sept. 28,29	Tucumcari, NM Air Show	F6F, F8F
October 1, 2	AIRSHO 2011, Midland, Tx	F6F, F8F

## That Old Man On *60 MINUTES*

by Clifford Brown

The TV Newsmagazine, *60 Minutes* is one of the most popular and watched programs. But, at the end of the program the speaker says "and now a few minutes with Andy Rooney." For the next five minutes a crotchety old gray-haired guy talks about what ever seems to interest him.

Uniquely, it also interests everyone else. But still why does the leading TV program on the air devote time to a crotchety old gray-haired guy talking about things that interest him?

It's probably out of respect. Andy Rooney, the name of the old gray-haired guy, is an award-winning writer having won three Emmys. One was for Lifetime Achievement.

In the 50s and 60s he wrote for the Arthur Godfrey and Gary Moore TV shows. These were major stars of the golden age of television. He also wrote for the *CBS Morning Show* and in his spare time wrote 10 books.

But, there is even more to it than that. Andy Rooney is the last of the war correspondents from WWII. He is from the ranks of Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, Bill Maulding, Ernie Pyle, and Ernest Hemingway. And he wrote over 300 feature articles for the official U.S. Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, and later the *CBI Roundup*.

When Andy was originally drafted he was in the 17th Field Artillery Regiment. He applied to become a war correspondent and was transferred out. A good thing, because his old unit eventually ended up in North Africa at the Kassarine Pass and was overrun and all were either killed or captured by the German Africa Corps.

As a correspondent, he covered the bombing of Europe from England. He actually flew two bombing missions over Germany in a B-17, three missions in a B-26 and was subsequently awarded the Bronze Star and the Air Medal.

He landed at Normandy on D-Day+3, covered the war in France, the liberation of Paris, the Battle of the Bulge, and the thrust into Germany across the Rhine. He was with the troops that liberated the first concentration camps at Buchenwald and Thekla.

As the war in Europe ended, Andy was sent to the CBI Theater, where he flew the Hump and covered the remaining part of the war in China. He was based at the eastern terminus of the Hump route at Kunming, China. Imagine, flying bombing missions over Germany and then flying over the Hump!

I think that those are enough accomplishments for the network to continue to respect and honor the man with whom we gladly spend "a few minutes with Andy Rooney."

## Three Japanese Mistakes

Sunday, December 7th, 1941--Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington D.C. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the phone. He told Admiral Nimitz that he would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet.

Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941. There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat--you would have thought the Japanese had already won the war. On Christmas Day, 1941, Adm. Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Big sunken battleships and navy vessels cluttered the waters every where you looked. As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, "Well, Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?" Admiral Nimitz's reply shocked everyone within the sound of his voice.

Admiral Nimitz said, "The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make... or God was taking care of America. Which do you think it was?"

Nimitz explained. Mistake number one: the Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of every ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk—we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two: when the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow everyone of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships.

Mistake number three: every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in the ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply. That's why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make... or God was taking care of America.

Admiral Nimitz was able to see a silver lining in a situation and circumstance where everyone else saw only despair and defeatism. President Roosevelt had chosen the right man for the right job. We desperately needed a leader that could see silver linings in the midst of the clouds of dejection, despair and defeat.



## Rare Zero and P-51D Among Warbirds Participating In Oshkosh's *AirVenture*

Including the world's only airworthy B-29 Super Fortress "FIFI," the Commemorative Air Force units (wings) from throughout the U.S. sent ten legendary aircraft that participated in the air shows and ground displays in the Warbird area of the huge EAA air show named *AirVenture* that is held annually at Wittman Field in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. This year's show was held between July 25 and 31, 2011.

Among the CAF warbirds appearing were one of the three flying Zeros in the world, courtesy of the Southern California Wing of the CAF. This Mitsubishi A6M3 – Model 22 Zero was recovered from Babo Island in New Guinea in 1991, and then partially restored from several A6M3s in Russia, before being brought to the United States for completion of the renovation.

Currently, the aircraft has a Pratt & Whitney R1830 engine (compared to the original Sakai engine in the Planes of Fame Museum's flyable A6M5 Zero). The Sakai was re-engineered from the Pratt & Whitney R1830 after the Japanese negotiated for purchase of a number of P&W engines prior to WWII.

The Southern California Wing also was represented at Oshkosh by its North American P-51D Mustang "Man O' War."

Here's a complete listing of the CAF warbirds that appeared at Oshkosh's *AirVenture 2011*:

**SB2C Helldiver** – West Texas Wing, Midland, Texas

**P-51 Red Nose** - Dixie Wing, Peachtree City, Georgia

**P-51 Gunfighter** - Great Plains Wing, Council Bluff, Iowa

**P-51 Tuskegee Airmen** - Minnesota Wing, So. St. Paul

**P-51 Man O' War** - So. California Wing, Camarillo, CA

**A6M3 Zero** - Southern California Wing, Camarillo, CA

**SBD Dauntless** - Dixie Wing, Peachtree City, Georgia

**PT-26** - Wisconsin Wing, West Bend, Wisconsin

**B-29 "FIFI"** - B-29/B-24 Squadron, Addison, Texas

**AT-6 Texan** - West Houston Squadron, Houston, Texas

The B-29 "FIFI" arrived at Wittman Field in style, escorted by four of the CAF's P-51 Mustangs. It was a sight to see, and a wonderful photo opportunity. They formed over Fond-du-Lac, Wisconsin, and flew formation the twenty or so remaining miles into Wittman Field in Oshkosh.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

**CAF-SoCAWing's Mitsubishi A6M3-22 Zero**



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

**CAF-SoCAWing's North American P-51D "Man O' War"**

### **A Dedicated Contingent of CAF-SoCAWing Members Travelled to Oshkosh**

On Saturday, July 23, 2011 twelve members of our Wing flew to Oshkosh, Wisconsin to participate in the air show activities at the 2011 edition of *AirVenture*, the Experimental Aviation Association's major air show held annually at Wittman Field, Oshkosh. On Wednesday, July 20, Jason Somes in the Zero and Ken Gottschall and Janet Rizzoli in the Mustang took off from CMA for a cross-country flight to Ypsilanti, Michigan to participate in the *Thunder Over Michigan* air show held on the weekend of July 23-24. After the Michigan show, they flew to Wittman Field, Oshkosh for the biggest air show in the country – held July 25 through 31, 2011.

Members, in addition to Somes, Gottschall and Rizzoli, who made the trip were: Steve Barber, Greg Bauman, Jennifer Bauman, Jessica Bauman, Craig Bennett, Roland Fogel, Alan Gaynor, Shari Heitkotter, Sheryl O'Neil, and Tom Ridderbush. A CAF-SoCAWing Cadet making the trip was Eric Fischler, and a good friend of our Wing, Rosie Maldonado, was a member of the contingent.

We will have a full report in the September "Flight Line."

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

by Walt Metcalf

One of the best things about being a CAF docent is the joy of meeting visitors that come to our museum from all over the world.

Just last month, Bob and Marion Wilton, from Norfolk, U.K., came in and were given the full tour, which includes all the airplanes and displays, ending at the Battle of Britain display case where a photo of Douglas Bader and the No. 242 Squadron pilots who were stationed at Coltishall airfield in Norfolk was shown to them. Docent Ken Wright pointed out that one of the pilots, Neil Campbell, was my father.

On their way out, they asked me if my father was still alive. "Sadly," I told them, "he had been killed on October 17, 1940." They asked if his body had been recovered. I told them it had been recovered, and that I knew the name of the cemetery and his grave number.

Bob told me they lived close to where Coltishall airfield had been, and probably not too far from the cemetery. If I could give him the name of the cemetery, they would find it and take some pictures of his grave, and send them to me.

I replied, "The cemetery is the Scottow Cemetery, and his grave number is 244." About two weeks ago, I received the following e-mail message, with photos attached:

"Well. today we took the trip out to Scottow, took a little while to find the cemetery as it is way out in the countryside. It is not even in the village and there is no church at the location. It is situated in the agricultural area surrounded by a reasonably high hedge, very peaceful and quiet. We found the grave straight away. The graves are laid out in typical military precision and your father's is on the front row, right hand end.

Our very best regards, Bob & Marion."

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED !

My wife and I were invited to stay at their home the next time we travel to the U.K.. Photos of my father, the Scottow Cemetery, and his gravestone are in the right column. The two bottom photos are by Bob Wilton.



A Hawker Hurricane in the colors of the 242 Squadron during the Battle of Britain, 1940. The 242 Squadron was headed by the legendary Douglas Bader.



From left to right: (on the wing) Sgt J.E. Saville; P/O Neil N. Campbell (my father); P/O W. L. McKnight; S/L Douglas Bader.



The entrance to Scottow Cemetery.



Neil's gravestone, No. 244, is in the first row, next to the building

## Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood

Wing member Eric Zine flies this beautiful Pitts Special. It really helps to brighten up our ramp!



This is not the real thing, but a scale model replica of our Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero.



This model is available as both an RC model, and a smaller sized model. Our Museum Gift Shop is looking into carrying it. Fred Fujimori has put an RC model together, and says that it flies very well. If you are interested, please contact John Woolley, the Aviation Museum Manager at 805-482-0064.



© Photo by Sheryl O'Neil

The PBJ Restoration Team decided to hang the engines to help make it look like a real airplane. Here Jeff Birdt works the crane, while Marc Russell (l.) and John Syrdahl position the right engine on the mount.



© Photo by Sheryl O'Neil

Marc and John using TLC in matching up the bolts with the engine mount to get it attached properly.



© Photo by Sheryl O'Neil

Judging by the wide smiles, they got it on right. One of PBJ engines, and perhaps the one just attached, has already been shipped out to the shop which will completely renovate it. The cost for each engine to be renovated is estimated at \$60,000.

## Undaunted By Odds

Robert Taylor Painting



© Painting by Robert Taylor

Hurricane Mk1s of 303 "Kościuszko" Polish Squadron RAF climb steadily out from Northolt to intercept yet another incoming Luftwaffe bomber formation heading for London in September 1940. Aably led by Canadian Flight Commander, Flt Lt Johnny Kent, the battle-hardened Polish pilots will soon be engaging the enemy over Southern England, their Hurricanes once again in the thick of the action.

Robert Taylor's evocative new painting, *Undaunted by Odds*, is a moving tribute to the Hurricane and the gallant pilots who flew it in combat.

## U.S. Naval Aviation Centennial: 2011 Wanted: TLC for Misunderstood Warbird

by Rebecca Maksel

Thanks to: *Air & Space*, June/July, 2011 Vol. 26, No. 2



CAF-West Texas Wing's Curtiss SB2C-5 Helldiver

"It was the last of a dying breed. When the Curtiss SB2C-1 Helldiver (dubbed "the Beast" by its pilots, and "Son of a Bitch 2<sup>nd</sup> Class" by its mechanics) eventually made its way to its intended squadrons in November, 1943, the dive-bomber, as a type, was nearly obsolete.

But that was only part of the airplane's problem.

"It was the misfortune of the Helldiver to have to replace the Douglas SBD Dauntless, a legendary aircraft that helped turn the tide at The Battle of Midway," says Hill Goodspeed, an historian at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida.

"Pilots were used to the airplane that they had been flying (the Dauntless)," says Robert Mikesh, former senior curator for aeronautics at the National Air and Space Museum. "It's just like an old shoe. You get comfortable with it, and you don't like change. And I think that's where the Helldiver got its bad reputation, because people liked the SBD Dauntless). It was an easy airplane to fly – very light and maneuverable. But the SB2C was an advance."

One of the many pilots who grew to admire the Helldiver's capabilities was Navy Lieutenant Donald Engen (later Vice Admiral), who would serve as Director of the Museum from 1996 to 1999. His son, D. Travis Engen, and daughter-in-law Anne, contributed \$15 million to build a restoration hangar at the Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in northern Virginia, where the Museum's Helldiver now awaits conservation.

Museum specialist John Shatz, who will be team chief on the project, estimates the restoration will take 10,250 hours, or approximately 18 months. "The aircraft will appear as it did when assigned to the *USS Lexington* with [squadron] VB-92 in September 1945," says Shatz.

Built in Port Columbus, Ohio, the Museum's SB2C-5 Helldiver was delivered to the Navy in May, 1945. After serving as a pool aircraft for a Carrier Aircraft Service Unit in Guam, it was assigned to VB-92 in late 1945 (it was not flown in combat). In 1948 it was stricken from the Navy's inventory at Norfolk, VA. It was sent to the Smithsonian, where it remained until 1975, when it was loaned to the National Naval Aviation Museum.

Of the more than 7,200 Helldivers produced, only a few remain. The one in the Museum's collection will eventually go on display in the Udvar-Hazy Center, where it will represent the state of the U.S. Naval technology in the Pacific Theater during World War II."

### Curtiss SB2C Helldiver Specifications:

**Crew:** Two - pilot & radio operator/gunner  
**Length:** 36', 8" **Wingspan:** 49', 9" **Height:** 13', 2"  
**Empty Weight:** 10,547 lb. **Max. Takeoff Wt.:** 16,616 lb.  
**Engine:** Wright R-2600-20 Cyclone radial / 1,900 hp.  
**Max. Speed:** 295 mph **Cruise Speed:** 158 mph  
**Range:** 1,165 mi. **Service Ceiling:** 29,100 ft.  
**Guns:** 2 x 20 mm cannon in wings;; 2 x 7.62 mm Browning machine guns in rear cockpit.  
**Bombs:** 2,000 lb.of bombs or 1 x Mark 13-2 torpedo in internal bay; 500 lb.of bombs on each underwing hardpoint.

## PBJ: A Busy Two Weeks

by Marc Russell

We have just recently reached the end of the busiest two weeks we have ever had on the PBJ, and it is probably the most productive two weeks we have ever had. The guys working on the project represent an incredible group of people and the dedication has been nothing short of amazing. Thanks to everyone who has been able to put time into the project.

So what had been accomplished in those two weeks? First of all, Jeff Nelson arrived, and has been one of the busiest people I have ever seen. He was hired to do the wiring of the PBJ, and he has been fulfilling our every expectation. Now that he has been here for two weeks, working nearly non-stop, we all needed a break to let our lives return to normal. All in all, we have had people working on the plane nearly every day over that two-week period. Jeff returned to Arizona, but will be back out here in a couple of weeks to complete more of the project.

As to what has been completed so far, there are numerous junction or J boxes throughout the plane. There is a left and right 199 J box that tends to be the heart of the system. From here, wires radiate to the nacelles, cockpit, tail, and to each other. This was the starting point for all of our work. So far, the tail is completely wired. From the 199 boxes to the nacelles are completely wired and terminated at the 199 boxes. There are a number of wires that go from one 199 box to the other and those wires are in and terminated. All of the wires from the left 199 box to the relay panel, the strobe light box and the cockpit are in and terminated at the left 199 box. All of these wires are also clamped in place and tied with wax string to keep them in place. Next step will be the wires from the right 199 to the cockpit, which need to be combed and then tied and clamped. We still have a number of wires to install between the cockpit and a circuit breaker panel, but we ran out of wire so we will finish it on Jeff's next visit. Other than that, the only wires we need to add are from the nacelle J box to the engine and to the items inside the wheel well. There are a lot of terminals yet to be made but that will go fairly quickly. After that, it's acid-test time.

Also, while we had the manpower, we decided it was time to make her look like an airplane again. To that, we spent a day lifting the right wing into place and have it nearly completely bolted. I have ordered the necessary hardware to complete the task and it should be done within the week. Also, to go another step, we decided to put both engines on the plane. We did this for two reasons. First, it puts weight on the nose so we no longer need a tail stand, and second, it just looks really good. We are hoping we can get a lot of interest going on the fund-raising side by showing people we are truly serious about getting the plane back in the air.

I talked to Steve Barber about getting one of the engines to an overhaul facility, and he called them right then and there. Next time they are in town to pick up an engine or drop one off, they will pick up our right engine and maybe

start to look inside to see what it needs. They tend to be down in our neck of the woods every six weeks or so.

Also, I got a call from a guy who can do soda blasting on the PBJ. I had a handful of wires and could not answer the phone, but called him back the next day. The plan is to have him get the paint and crud off of both wings and the outboard flaps. I also hope to have him do the spare nose gear that is out in one of the trailers so that we can get it painted and installed one day down the road.

*Editor's Note: Marc is the Crew Chief on our PBJ, and is the leader of a very dedicated team of members who have donated countless hours to the renovation of the airplane. We urge you to join his team by becoming a donor to the PBJ Renovation Fund. Any amount you give will bring our PBJ closer to being in the air – where she belongs. Send whatever you can to : Col. Marc Russell, PBJ Renovation Project, CAF, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010.*



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Jeff Nelson, President of Custom Connections of Arizona, working on wiring schematics for our PBJ in his portable office. Note the Kingsley Wire-Marking Machine in the background, which the PBJ Renovation Team, under Jeff's direction, has used to mark every wire going into the PBJ, from large #2 wires to much thinner #20 wires.**



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

**The PBJ's right wing going back on the plane. See page 11 for more PBJ photos.**

## B-17 Veteran Back in Air After 68 Years

By Mitch Stacy, *The Associated Press*, February 15, 2011

A day before his final mission aboard a B-17 bomber in World War II, Norbert Swierz sat down on his bunk and jotted down a poem for his mother back in Michigan.

*"I go so gladly to my fate, whatever it may be.  
That I would have you shed no tears for me.  
Some men must die, that others must be free,  
And only God can say whom these shall be."*

The 23-year-old gunner had already survived the ditching of his first B-17 in the North Sea that summer of 1943. The next day, September 6, 1943, "Skeets" Swierz and the rest of the crew of the B-17 nicknamed "Bomb Boogie" took off from their base in England, but didn't make it back. Shot down and taken prisoner, Swierz would spend the rest of his war days in a POW camp and not fly in another B-17 for close to 70 years.

The opportunity came again recently, and Swierz didn't hesitate. He strapped himself into a restored Flying Fortress and held on as the four droning engines lifted the vintage bomber off a central Florida airstrip into heavy cloud cover.

"Wonderful," the grinning 90-year-old man kept saying during the 45-minute flight. "Wonderful." Strapped into the radio operator's chair halfway back, Swierz looked around and reeled off the name of the man on his crew who had occupied the same seat on his old plane, and the name of the gunner who had squeezed into the ball turret underneath.

That's what he was thinking about most, the other guys. "They're all gone now, but I still have the memories," he said. "They were all kids then, just like myself."

A top-turret gunner in those days – which means he poked his head up into a plastic bubble above the cockpit and blazed away on twin .50-caliber machine guns – Swierz was one of the lucky ones. Participation in those daylight precision bombing raids on industrial targets in Germany and occupied France was dangerous and terrifying duty, dramatically recounted in movies such as "Twelve O'Clock High" and "Memphis Belle."

Two out of three young men – their average age was 20 – who flew on those missions did not survive the war. Swierz recalls returning from one especially bad mission and going to bed in an empty barracks. "Let me tell you, that was a spooky night," he said.

Swierz grew up in Chicago and Michigan and was 21 when he went to Canada to join the British Civilian Technical Corps, a mercenary outfit for those who wanted to help out the British before the United States was pulled into World War II. After Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and volunteered for B-17 duty.



**Norbert "Skeets" Swierz in front of the Collings Foundation's B-17G, on which he took his first flight in a B-17 after WWII in 68 years.**

He flew his first mission on March 18, 1943. His luck held out until June 22, when his plane – nicknamed "Old Ironsides" – was shot up so badly it had to be ditched in the North Sea after a bombing raid on a German factory. He was plucked from the sea by a British rescue boat and spent weeks in the hospital recovering from a shrapnel wound to his leg.

His 14<sup>th</sup> mission – the bombing of a ball-bearing factory in Stuttgart, Germany – would be his last. B-17 crews needed 25 successful missions to rotate home, and most didn't make it. The crew of the famous "Memphis Belle" – they shared a central England base with Swierz and his mates – was the first to do it in May, 1943.

"Somehow or another, the Germans always knew we were coming, and where we were going to bomb," Swierz said. "The German fighters were something else. They were fearless. They would come right down through the middle of our formation, scattering B-17s all over hell."

The attack on Stuttgart was a fiasco. German fighters and flak batteries battered the planes as they flew around looking for a break in the clouds so they could drop their bombs. Of the 338 B-17s on the mission, 45 were lost. Many ran out of gas.

"Bomb Boogie" was pounded by flak and enemy fighters soon after releasing its bombs, and the ten young men bailed out over Stuttgart, their parachutes blooming in the gray sky. Swierz was captured immediately, and spent the rest of the war in a prison camp in Austria.

Swierz and his fellow prisoners were liberated by General George Patton's Third Army in May, 1945. He made it home and has done a lot of living since then. Wife, kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, a long military career, a long retirement. But his recollections of wartime duty in the B-17 have survived in fairly sharp focus. Swierz's oldest son, Greg, a retired commercial pilot, said his father didn't start talking about those war experiences until about ten years ago. His family convinced him to write it down.

*Editor's Note: Thanks to Richard Witten for this story.*

## B-17 *Liberty Belle* Destroyed By Fire

Thanks to the [ChicagoTribune.com](#)

[June 13, 2011](#) | By Jon Hilkevitch, Gerry Smith and Serena Maria Daniels

They are hulking relics of aviation history, salvaged from scrap dealers and combat wreckage, painstakingly restored and — in rare cases — flown again.

Now there is one less of them.

In a dramatic scene that could have played out in Europe during World War II, a restored B-17 Flying Fortress bomber made an emergency landing Monday in a west suburban cornfield after an engine caught fire. Smelling smoke, the pilot skirted disaster by threading the plane between a 60-foot tower and a line of trees, witnesses said.

Seven crew members and volunteers escaped without serious [injury](#) as flames and a plume of thick black smoke soared into the clear blue sky from the wreckage of the *Liberty Belle*.

For aviation enthusiasts, the plane's loss was a blow because of its historical value and emotional impact, and also because it's so rare. Of the 12,731 B-17s manufactured, about 50 remain, including wrecked planes that have been pulled out of the water, according to the Experimental Aircraft Association, based in Oshkosh, Wis.

Only about 13 of the B-17s not in use are intact and could be overhauled to become airworthy. Fewer than 10 fly in U.S., and three of them carry passengers, the association said.

The workhorse planes that once dropped bombs over Germany hold a strong appeal for men like Mike Kellner, who has been restoring a B-17 in his barn near Marengo since 1995. The bomber was "a symbol of freedom and might when we really needed it," Kellner said.

"We might not have won the war without that airplane," said Kellner, who worked on the plane that went down Monday.

The *Liberty Belle* was at Aurora, Illinois Municipal Airport this weekend, with crews offering flights to World War II veterans and others looking for a thrill-seeking history [lesson](#).

On Monday, the plane took off from the Aurora airport at 9:30 a.m. on its way to Indianapolis Regional Airport but was forced to make an emergency landing in the field near Oswego, just a few miles away, shortly after takeoff. The pilot had reported an engine fire, authorities said.

Witnesses described seeing the bomber flying low before it landed. An engine on the left wing — the one farthest from the cockpit — was on fire, they said.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating. Federal officials said they did not know the cause but were looking into maintenance performed on the plane over the weekend. Several people scheduled to fly in the bomber

last week said their flights were canceled due to maintenance problems.

Getting these planes to fly again can be [labor](#)-intensive. Bombers can take more than a decade to restore. The engines are disassembled, heavily inspected and essentially rebuilt each year, said Dick Knapinski, spokesman for the Experimental Aircraft Association. "The people who built them in the 1940s never expected the B-17 to be flying today," Knapinski said. "But with proper care, they can be."

The bomber that went down Monday was manufactured in 1944 and registered to the Tulsa-based Liberty Foundation. The *Liberty Belle* was sold in June 1947 as scrap and sold again later that year to Pratt & Whitney for \$2,700, according to the foundation's website.

It was donated in the late 1960s to the Connecticut Aeronautical Historic Association in East Hartford, but was heavily damaged in 1979 when a tornado threw another aircraft against the B-17's midsection, breaking the fuselage, the foundation said.

The Liberty Foundation had been flying the *Liberty Belle* since it was restored in 2004, said Don Brooks, who established the foundation to honor his father, the tail gunner in the original *Liberty Belle*, who flew 36 missions in World War II with the U.S. Army Air Forces' 390th Bomb Group.

The plane traveled around the country, giving rides to the public at \$430 each. The plane had been maintained "meticulously" and had not missed more than "a couple days" due to mechanical problems, Brooks said.

The pilot, whom Brooks would not identify, did "a masterful [job](#)" getting the plane down quickly and safely, he said. "It's a sad day but a good one in that no one was hurt," Brooks said. "An airplane can be replaced."

*Tribune* reporters [Ted Gregory](#), [Cynthia Dizikes](#) and [Carlos Sadovi](#) contributed to this report.



**B-17G "Liberty Belle" – ravaged by fire**

**Check out the Chief Pilot's report:**

<http://libertyfoundation.blogspot.com/2011/06/statement-from-liberty-foundation-chief.html>

# Wartime Radio

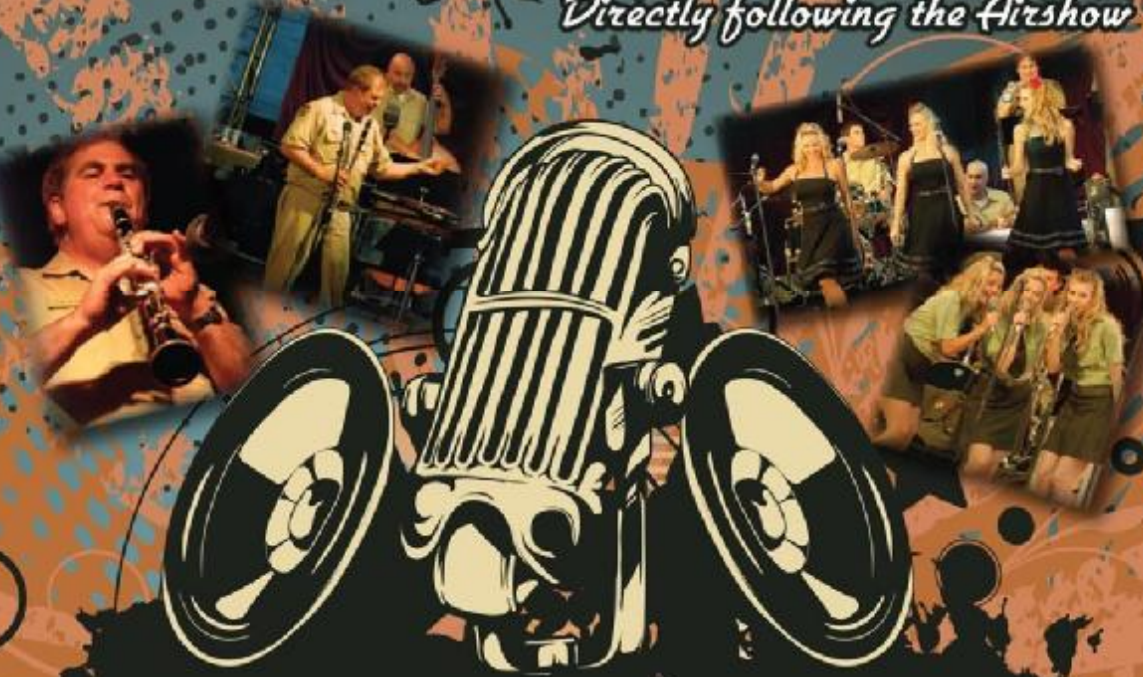


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