

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

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

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Visit us on line at www.cafsocal.com



© Photo by Ken Gottschall



© Photo by Dave Flood

New CAF Director of Maintenance James C. "Woody" Woodford visited us on Saturday, July 25, 2009 to make the final inspection of our SNJ-4 #N6411D "Blue Bird." All smiles in the photo are (from left) Crew Chief Joe Peppito, Woody, Alex Ferrasci, and Wayne Brancato.

Do the smiles mean we passed with "flying colors?" We hope so. Time will tell, but we hope the "Blue Bird" is in the air soon! See Page 9 for another photo of crew members.

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

Our CAF Mission: To Honor American Military Aviation Through Flight, Exhibition and Remembrance.

August 2009

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

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS				IN THIS ISSUE
Wing Leader	* Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Wing Calendar 2
Executive Officer	* Shirley Murphy	(805) 482-6406	sdmurphy07@verizon.net	Staff and Appointed Positions. 2
Adjutant	* Terry Cedar	(805) 570-8048	tac1966@msn.com	Wing Leader's Report 3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Maintenance Officer's Report. 3
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	The Old Man. 4
Maintenance Officer	* Joe Peppito	(805) 498-4187	jocafpeppo@msn.com	Wing Photo Page I 5
Safety Officer	* Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	Wing Election Notice 6
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Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Friends of the Museum Successes 7
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	CAF P-51C Flies Again 8
Hangar Event Mgr	Stephen E Barber	(805) 223-1077	barber.stephen@gmail.com	Debbie Henderson – CAF Intern 8
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Facility Officer	Al Kepler	(818) 352-4318	kepler53@yahoo.com	Nebraska Bomber Crash Remembered. . 11
Personnel Officer	Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	Monopoly Game Escape 11
Historian	Ron Fleishman	(805) 384-4426	oldplanec46@aol.com	Wing Christmas Party 12
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* Denotes Staff Position				

Wing Leader's Report

by Robert E. Albee

Hi, everyone. We have good news for you!

Just as a little reminder, we lost the Bearcat engine (complete failure) a couple of months ago – with little money in the bank for repairs and no place to store the aircraft. Talk about being down in the dumps! They had to pump sunlight to us so we could see the outside world during the day!

Then arrived our members and others with time, effort and money to our rescue. Through their generosity, a new engine has been prepared, along with other components, and has been installed on the airframe. Although it's far from being able to fly, nevertheless I have been told by a reliable source that our Bearcat should be back in the air within a month and back home.

Once she returns, I will let everyone know who our generous members were, and they will be given proper recognition for all of their hard effort and sacrifices. It has been a big, BIG job!

I can not tell you now, but there is one well-known actor who should be given special recognition for his contribution. We owe him a large debt of gratitude.

Why am I keeping their names a secret? Because we are going to have a big party to thank them all, and you are all invited!

Now...for another bit of good news. Our Museum continues to improve in customer visitations and sales. They are expanding inventory, while improving display cases. It is amazing how many individuals go through our facility on a daily basis! Where do they all come from?

I think I have a partial answer: from the efforts of Pat Brown, our guru of "get out and get the business" fame. I caught her last week talking to the guys from EAA...hmmm. Wait until you see what she has cooked up for us now!

O.k., the Tarmac Crew has completed the famous "Red Line" for the "no engine run area." Please, turn off the "whirly" machine when you get close to the red line. We do not want any one being injured – please, please, PLEASE.

O.k., now for a quick look around. We are attempting to improve Cadet participation in our organization. If you know of any young people with an aviation interest, please have them contact Norm Swagler or Joe Peppito for assistance.

Ventura County is installing some new water lines near our property. The installation will have a temporary impact on access to our hangars. This work should last for a few more weeks, so please be careful when driving into our parking lot.

As you know, we have put up "plastic chain" across the front of the Maintenance Hangar in order to prevent non-members from entering this area, due to Fire Department regulations. Please help us enforce this policy. We could get into a whole pack of trouble if non-members (visitors) are found inside the Maintenance Hangar.

We are working on a plan to improve the south (front) side of the hangars. We need plants and lots of water – and lots of attention!

Now, a couple of weeks ago, due to the generosity of Brian Hartill, we had a bang-up barbeque (tri-tip) at the Hangars. What delicious food and a wonderful time we all had! For those of you who missed it, don't make that mistake again!

That's it from the Greatest Show on Earth.

Until next time...fly safe and God Bless.

Maintenance Officer's Report

by Joe Peppito

Well here we go again. Everyone is working hard trying to keep our Wing's airplanes in the air. We keep looking for the F8f Bearcat, and hoping that it will be back home in Camarillo soon. The engine change crew is working hard and overtime trying to get that new Pratt & Whitney CB-3 engine installed. It is now on the airplane and it's a matter of getting all the lines and accessories in place. Hopefully, we will see the Bearcat landing at Camarillo Airport in a week or two. O.K., Steve - here is your chance to really be a hero by bringing the old bird back home.

The PBJ (B-25) crew has been really busy trying to get all the "tail feathers" installed on the airplane. Both the right and left elevators are installed, but the control links have not yet been connected. Both rudders are next - once all the trim tabs and control links are installed. Keep up the good work, men, you may find a little extra in your paycheck next week.

As I'm writing this report, the Headquarters Maintenance Director, James "Woody" Woodford, is scheduled to visit us Saturday, July 25th, to perform the final inspection of the SNJ-4, #N-6411D "Bluebird". Hopefully, we will get a passing grade so that we can then fly the airplane. While he was here on a prior visit, we had a very enjoyable time with him and he also had an opportunity to review all of our aircraft and meet the Wing staff and members.

The Spitfire crew is still working hard to get the newly overhauled engine installed. We had to have our crane overhauled and new cables installed before we can lift the Griffon engine into place on the aircraft.

All in all, I would like to thank all of our members who have worked so hard and diligently to repair these airplanes and keep them flying.

The Old Man...

As I came out of the supermarket that sunny day, pushing my cart of groceries towards my car, I saw an old man with the hood of his car up and a lady sitting inside the car, with the door open.

The old man was looking at the engine. I put my groceries away in my car and continued to watch the old gentleman from about twenty five feet away.

I saw a young man in his early twenties with a grocery bag in his arm, walking towards the old man. The old gentleman saw him coming too, and took a few steps towards him. I saw the old gentleman point to his open hood and say something..

The young man put his grocery bag into what looked like a brand new Cadillac Escalade and then turned back to the old man and I heard him yell at the old gentleman saying, 'You shouldn't even be allowed to drive a car at your age.' And then, with a wave of his hand, he got in his car and peeled rubber out of the parking lot.

I saw the old gentleman pull out his handkerchief and mop his brow as he went back to his car and again looked at the engine. He then went to his wife and spoke with her and appeared to tell her it would be okay.

I had seen enough, and I approached the old man. He saw me coming and stood straight, and as I got near him I said, 'Looks like you're having a problem.'

He smiled sheepishly and quietly nodded his head. I looked under the hood myself and knew that whatever the problem was, it was beyond me.

Looking around, I saw a gas station up the road and told the old man that I would be right back. I drove to the station and went inside and saw three attendants working on cars. I approached one of them and related the problem the old man had with his car, and offered to pay them if they could follow me back down and help him.

The old man had pushed the heavy car under the shade of a tree and appeared to be comforting his wife. When he saw us, he straightened up and thanked me for my help. As the mechanics diagnosed the problem (overheated engine) I spoke with the old gentleman.

When I shook hands with him earlier, he had noticed my Marine Corps ring and had commented about it, telling me that he had been a Marine too. I nodded and asked the usual question, 'What outfit did you serve with?'

He mentioned that he served with the first Marine Division at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal. He had hit all the big ones and retired from the Corps after the war was over.

As we talked we heard the car engine come on and saw the mechanics lower the hood. They came over to us as the old man reached for his wallet, but was stopped by me. I told him I would just put the bill on my AAA card.

He still reached for the wallet and handed me a card that I assumed had his name and address on it, and I stuck it in my pocket.. We all shook hands all around again and I said my goodbyes to his wife.

I then told the two mechanics that I would follow them back up to the station. Once at the station I told them that they had interrupted their own jobs to come along with me and help the old man. I said I wanted to pay for the help, but they refused to charge me.

One of them pulled out a card from his pocket looking exactly like the card the old man had given to me. Both of the men told me then that they were Marine Corps Reserves. Once again, we shook hands all around and, as I was leaving, one of them told me I should look at the card the old man had given to me. I said I would and drove off.

For some reason, I had gone about two blocks when I pulled over and took the card out of my pocket and looked at it for a long, long time.

The name of the old gentleman was on the card in golden leaf, and under his name..... 'Congressional Medal of Honor Society.'

I sat there motionless looking at the card and reading it over and over. I looked up from the card and smiled to no one but myself and marveled that, on this day, four Marines had all come together, because one of us needed help.

He was an old man all right, but it felt good to have stood next to greatness and courage and an honor to have been in his presence.

Remember, OLD men like him gave you FREEDOM for America .

Thanks to those who served...& those who supported them.

Semper Fi !

(Thanks to Dave Long for passing this on to us!)



The Congressional Medal of Honor

Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Terry Swann

Our F6F-5 Hellcat arriving at Geneseo, NY airport on July 10, after a 2,700 mile flight. Jason Somes is in the cockpit, and Gino Dellanina is the Ground Crew.



© Photo by Gino Dellanina

Jason & Gino after spiffing up the airplane. Note the grass ramp – the runway was also grass. This flight to Geneseo, NY is the farthest we have flown from CMA.



© Photo by Gino Dellanina

“Navy pilots” posing with the Hellcat. They were part of a WWII reenactment group at the Geneseo Air Show. They later donned German uniforms.



© Photo by Ken Gottschall

Here’s the new Bearcat engine (left) ready to replace the old engine, which has been removed .



© Photo Courtesy Ken Gottschall

Ken Gottschall guiding the new engine toward its final resting place on the Bearcat.



© Photo by Ken Gottschall

The new R-2800-CB3 engine finally in place on the Bearcat, thanks to the amazing teamwork of our members along with others at Burbank Airport! We are still \$11,000 short of our fund raising goal for the engine. You can still join the many donors who have contributed to helping us pay for the new engine. Please send your check to: CAF, 455 Aviation Dr., Camarillo, CA 93010 – Attn: Casey de Bree – Bearcat Engine.

Wing Election Notice

by Dave Flood

Wing Leader Robert E. Albee has appointed Bill O'Neill, Russell Drosendahl and Dave Flood to be the nominating committee for the 2010/2011 election term. They will be putting together a slate of candidates to run for the three positions that will be opening as of January 1, 2010.

The three posts on the Wing Staff for which members will be voting are: Operations Officer, Finance Officer and Adjutant. The terms will be for two years – 2010/2011.

Incumbents in these positions currently are: Gary Barber – Operations Officer; Casey de Bree – Finance Officer; and Terry Cedar – Adjutant. Terry was appointed to his position by Wing Leader Robert E. Albee when Robert moved up to the Wing Leader position from Adjutant.

The Time Line for the Wing Elections is:

- (1) August Issue of *Flight Line* – Wing Elections Notice;
- (2) September issue of *Flight Line* – Wing Election Notice;
- (3) October issue of *Flight Line* – List of candidates announced, with procedures outlined for the election. Election Committee announced.
- (4) November issue of *Flight Line* – Ballot included in newsletter for members to cast their votes. Procedures for voting outlined. Notice of Nov. 15 deadline for ballots to be received.
- (5) January issue of *Flight Line* – Announcement of new Staff Officers for the 2010/2011 year term. Actual announcement of winners to be made at the 2009 Christmas Party (see party announcement on Page 12).

If you are considering running for one of the Wing Staff positions, please get in touch with: Bill O'Neill (805-495-4915); Russ Drosendahl (818-333-6757) or Dave Flood (805-204-7660). Before contacting a member of the Nominating Committee, please read over the requirements of the positions as outlined below to make sure you can qualify.

Wing Staff Position Requirements and Duties:
(As outlined in the *CAF Unit Manual*, Section 2, January, 2009)

Adjutant

Shall record and maintain the permanent minutes of all Unit Staff meetings. He/she shall maintain suitable correspondence files concerning the business and activities of the Unit, and assure that all required unit reports are sub-

mitted to HQ in a timely fashion. Further, he/she shall assist the Unit in the timely preparation and dissemination of such correspondence of a general nature. In coordination with the Finance Officer, he/she shall maintain the Unit personnel records. He/she shall advise the Headquarter's Membership Department of any changes of the Unit membership, and, on a semi-annual basis, provide a roster of Unit members for verification and updating.

Finance Officer

Shall have charge of all Unit funds collected; keep accurate records of such funds; and shall be responsible for Unit compliance with all CAF regulations, policies and directives that relate to financial matters. He/she shall submit to CAF Headquarters, in a timely manner, all required reports. This officer insures that all monies and property donated shall become the property of the Commemorative Air Force, Inc., and used in accordance with General Staff policies.

Specific duties include: coordination of membership files with collection of dues, and payment of approved Unit debts. He/she shall determine voting eligibility of members prior to unit elections. He/she oversees finances of all Unit projects and submits Unit records for audit on an annual basis and communicates with CAF Headquarters through the Secretary Treasurer. His signature, plus that of one more authorized unit staff officer, will appear on all Unit checks. [See the Unit Finance Guide for detailed information.]

Operations Officer

Minimum requirements, per CAF policy, include all those listed for Unit Leader (at least two (2) years as a CAF member in good standing; background in military or business management; ability for good public appearance; adeptness at public speaking; a positive demeanor and, preferably, a background in aviation).

If the Unit has a CAF-assigned aircraft, it is recommended that he/she be a Commemorative Air Force-rated pilot, with a basic knowledge of CAF flight operations, including air shows and static displays, and of safety requirements and special considerations of each. He/she should also be well versed in the Aircraft Sponsorship Program.

Specific duties include: authorizing all flights of Unit assigned aircraft; operation of ground equipment; verification of pilot and crew member currency in FAA and CAF ratings and status; serving as Chairman of the Unit Flight Evaluation Board; and assignment of pilot and crew members for Unit aircraft missions. He shall maintain communications with Headquarters through the Vice President of Safety/Maintenance/Operations.



NOW AVAILABLE--IN THE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

by Jim Tierney

The Museum Gift Shop now has a supply of the 25th edition of the definitive book on Aircraft Museums in the USA and Canada – titled, **"Guide to over 900 Aircraft Museums--USA and Canada"** and published by a knowledgeable aviation publisher in Fort Wayne , IN. The catalogs are available to CAF members and visitors.

The book of 240 pages lists all aircraft in all museums--both large and small - important and obscure - in the US and Canada. It also lists naval ship museums, and armored and artillery museums.

The last 100 pages contain a complete sequential list of aircraft and locations--from A-1 Skyraider to the Zoegling Glider (whatever that is), including manufacturer's number, serial number and N number - when known.

This is the BEST listing I have ever seen. I have bought the last four issues for my own use, and we use it in the Museum to answer visitors' questions on where they can see a particular aircraft they have an interest in seeing.

The books are available now. Retail price is \$19.95, with a 10% discount to CAF members (bringing the price down to an astounding bargain price of \$17.95 !). An offer you can't refuse !

There is a beautiful color photo of our Museum Hangar and planes on the back cover.

Come and take a look at one, and then buy it! Aloha!

Wing Sick Bay

Eric Lange is recovering well after surgery on his jaw (807-4176) and Shirley Murphy will be going into therapy for her back soon (504-6744). Call them and let them know you are thinking about them.

"FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM" A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM! By Ceci Stratford

Our Wing's donation program "Friends of the Museum" started in 2007 and we have gained many friends (75) in the past two years! These friends are interested in our Mission and wish to support it, but choose to not become members. There are a few who are members, and also want to be Friends.

Donations from the Friends program have totaled more than \$7500! Some have been very generous--we have 1 Patron (\$1000), 1 Sustaining Friend (\$500) and 2 Supporters (\$250). The remaining are Individual Friends (\$50) or Family Friends (\$75).

Friends Of The Museum get a special 10% discount in our Gift Shop; they can go inside the Restoration Hangar (off-limits to regular visitors); they attend our WWII Aviation Museum free of charge; and they receive a quarterly newsletter. Each level of "Friendship" receives additional privileges (see the Friends Donor Form for specifics).

Most renew every year and we're always gaining new Friends. If you know anyone (such as a neighbor, family member or acquaintance) who is interested in the CAF, but cannot join right now, invite him or her to show support for us by becoming a Friend of the Museum. On the last page of this Flight Line is a Friends Donor Form. Have them complete it and bring (or mail) their check and Friends Donor Form to:

CAF – Southern California Wing
455 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010
Attn: Casey de Bree

Thanks so much for being so....."Friend-ly."



© Photo by Dave Flood
Cynthia Rosenacker, with her sons (from France) and her dad (Oxnard) on their recent visit to our WWII Aviation Museum. She translated for the boys.

CAF P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* is Airborne Again

[To Watch Tuskegee Airmen Fly Click Here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM9D5OdcIpo)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM9D5OdcIpo>

The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) is proud to announce the Red Tail Projects P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen's* return to the skies. The first flight, after a complete restoration, was at 6:51 p.m. CDT on 22 July, 2009 at Wahpeton, N.D.

A culmination of five years hard work under the CAF's Red Tail Project has resurrected the P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* to flying condition. When the aircraft suffered a catastrophic engine failure near Red Wing, Minnesota in May of 2004, the resulting accident claimed the life of one of the Red Tail Project's leader and pilot Don Hinz. Hinz had the "...objective to carry the lessons and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen into every classroom in America."

Red Tail Project volunteers have dedicated themselves to honoring Hinz's memory by restoring the P 51C *Tuskegee Airmen*. Marine Captain Ben Hinz, son of Don and a Marine F-18 pilot flew in to witness the first flight. Many CAF Red Tail Project volunteers were on hand as well to cheer on the return of the P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* to the skies. The first flight is a dedication to the cumulative endeavors of many CAF members, supporters and worldwide financial supporters.

"This day represents the culmination of thousands of individual's time, effort, money and passion. It has been an incredible team effort and I am humbled by the experience", Project Leader and Lead pilot Doug Rozendaal said. "From a pilot's perspective, the flight exceeded my expectations in every way."

The P-51C *Tuskegee Airmen* is dedicated to telling the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, the World War II fighter group composed of African-American pilots and support personnel who fought discrimination and prejudice in order to serve their country. This aircraft will be used once again to spread that message and expose people to the extraordinary gentlemen who set such an inspirational example.

Announcements will be forthcoming at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh during an official press conference in Oshkosh, Wis. next week regarding the future of CAF's *Tuskegee Airmen* and the CAF's Red Tail Project's new educational program, Rise Above. "It will be exciting to bring the airplane to AirVenture Oshkosh, where it will be once again a tool to tell the powerful story of the Tuskegee Airmen", said Rozendaal. Fundraising will soon begin on behalf of the Rise Above program to create a travelling exhibition that will precede the P-51 at different venues across America , to further tell the incredible story of the great American heroes known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

Debbie Henderson - CAF Intern

By Debbie Henderson

After twenty-three years as an appraiser, I decided to retire and finish my Bachelor's Degree in History – which is how I came to the CAF WWII Aviation Museum. I am now a senior at California State University – Channel Islands, and one of the requirements to graduate is to complete an internship that applies to my area of study. The history of World War II has always fascinated me – so I decided that the CAF WWII Aviation Museum was a perfect fit.

My first encounter at the museum was the special event – *Women In War* – which was absolutely fantastic. Meeting the women who had participated and sacrificed during the World War II years was fabulous. The speeches, programs and speakers produced an historic event that everyone enjoyed and will long remember.

Since the *Women In War* event, I have worked with Ceci Stratford, Sarah de Bree, Shirley Murphy, Larry Kates, Ron Fleishman, Dave Flood, Joe Peppito and Pat Brown – learning all the different aspects of the Museum and the Wing. My experiences at the WWII Aviation Museum have been so unforgettable and rewarding that I convinced my son Eric to join as a Cadet.

At the museum, I have been working on archiving; conducting oral history interviews; and filling in as a Docent. Eric and I have also been putting together a special scrapbook filled with all the memorabilia of the *Women In War* event. This scrapbook will be available for display purposes when it is finished.

My future goals are to continue my education and earn a Masters Degree in History. After the Masters Degree, I would like to be an archivist or a history teacher at a community college. As I attend my classes at the University, I learn about many different opportunities from my professors and classmates. At this time, I am open to any opportunities in the history field.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Debbie with her son Eric working on the scrapbook.

Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Jim Hinkelman

Brad Lang, soon-to-be pilot of the rejuvenated CAF red-tailed P-51C Mustang *Tuskegee Airmen*. He was checked out by Steve Barber in our SNJ-5. Brad is the son of a former Tuskegee Airman. See story pg. 8.



©Photo by Juan Benitez

Juan Benitez's Grumman G164A RC Model. Juan, who lives in Spain, has been a special friend of two Daves in our Wing for years – Long and Flood.



© Photo by Jim Hinkelman

The water pipe construction project at Camarillo Airport crosses our ramp. The construction boss is a pilot, so has taken pains to accommodate our planes.

Wing's Air Show Schedule – 2009

Aug. 22,23	Camarillo EAA Show	All Aircraft *
Aug. 28-30	Chico, CA	SNJ-5, PT-19, C-46, F6F, Zero
Sep. 25-27	Redding,CA	SNJ-5, PT-19, C-46, F6F, Zero
Oct. 6,7	Tucumcari, NM	F6F, Zero
Oct. 8-11	Midland, TX Airsho 2009	F6F, Zero
Oct. 16-18	Edwards AFB, CA	SNJ-5, PT-19, F6F, C-46, Zero

* Now hear this: a special party co-hosted by CAF & EAA will be held in our Museum Hangar right after the Wings Over Camarillo Air Show on Saturday, Aug. 22.

We need CAF members to help with set-up & wrap-up.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Recent visitors to our WWII Aviation Museum were Jiu-Dih Shih and Nai-Binh Wang, both from Taiwan. Mr. Shih's father had been an Air Force general, and Mr. Wang is a retired China Airlines 747-400 pilot.



© Photo by Jim Hinckley

The successful SNJ-4 #N6411D "Blue Bird" crew. From left: Alan Nicholson, Keith Bailey, Wayne Brancato, Sib Bosso, and Alex Ferrasci. Missing when the photo was taken was John Jones. At publication date, we had not heard the results of the final inspection, but we are very hopeful the "Blue Bird" passed.

Corsair "Prop Chop"

A unique WW II fighter interception took place over Okinawa during WW II. Marine Division Leader Ken Reusser [Ruby 6] was on patrol with Bob Klingman and a couple other 'Checkerboarders.'

On a routine patrol, Ruby 6 foursome of Corsairs was climbing to altitude, when HANDY MAN radar gave them a call : " Ruby 6 . . this is Handyman. Over." "Go ahead, Ruby 6"

" We have a ' bogey ' approaching on course 180 at Angels 25 . " Climb to Angels 25 and steer 270 . . . BUSTER [maximum speed] . . OVER ! "

" Roger, Handyman. Steering 270.. Angels 25. Out."

The flight dropped their belly tanks, test-fired their machine guns, put their props in full low pitch, then firewalled their throttles. Klingman recalls: "We could see the vapor trails as the ' bogey ' made two complete circles over our harbor."

The Marine pilots had a good idea about the mission of the aircraft. Over the past few days, their squadron and others were taking turns trying to intercept radar targets following a similar radar track. Intelligence believed it was a Japanese photo reconnaissance effort, perhaps assisting in plans for Kamikaze attacks on the Navy ships anchored below.

Already at 25,000 feet, the intruder had always been able to ' run for it.' But using its initial altitude advantage, it had been thus far been successful in outrunning any of our fighter interceptors. But this time, the pursuing Marine pilots would attempt to intercept over a longer distance, with throttles firewalled at their optimum climb speed.

Ken Reusser recalls : " We were turning inside his turn to try and gain on him, but we were so far below that we had little chance of reaching him. So, I just pulled the nose up and held my trigger down . . with no real aim . . . just trying to ' loop it up there. ' I saw a couple of 'glints' before the ' bogie' then rolled its wings level and headed back to Japan."

The four Corsairs kept grinding away at maximum climb, staying on the bogey's tail, although it didn't appear possible to overhaul him.

Checkerboarder Jim Cox's Corsair kept dropping back until he was a thousand feet below and behind. He wasn't able to coax one more knot out of his battle-weary plane. Reusser told Cox and the other pilot to return, while he and Klingman continued their pursuit.

At 38,000 feet, he and Klingman reached their struggling Corsairs' service ceiling. But, the Kawasaki Ki-45 Toryu "Nick ' was still one mile ahead.

In the thin air, they were making only small and gentle movements of their controls. Any rough-handedness . .

resulting in a high-speed ' burble ' stall . . would allow the enemy to zoom away. Bob Klingman recalls : " As we got closer, Ken was firing, while the " bogey's " rear gunner was firing back at us. I was taking a few small bullet holes. My plane had no gun heaters and my guns were frozen and inoperative. So I had no bullets. But I was still pretty eager to get me a Jap plane. My Corsair was a bit faster than the other ones. So I crept ahead." And I closed until I was 20 or 30 feet behind him. I couldn't get any closer due to his prop wash. Held me back. But it also kept me from running straight into his tail.

I slowly climbed above, then nosed over and sliced into his tail with my prop. I only had enough extra speed to chew off some of his rudder and elevator before being blown away by the Nick's prop wash.

He was still flying, so I climbed above him for a second run. I nosed down toward him again, but pulled out too soon. I only got some of his rudder - and part of the top of the rear canopy as the gunner frantically tried to use his machine gun [on me.]

" I climbed slightly above for a third run, then chopped off his right elevator. That hit did most of the damage to my plane. And we both spun down out of control. After losing only about 1,000 feet I recovered. But the enemy plane continued its spin until. at about 15,000 feet, both its wings came off." Klingman didn't have a 'shoot down.' But . . he definitely had a ' knock-down.'

Later, as they worked their way home, descending through 10,000 feet, Klingman radioed that his engine just quit. No gas. Others radioed Bob to : " Go over the side. "

In his own judgment, Klingman thought he had a fair chance to glide as far as the airstrip's closest end, then land it ' dead stick' out of a straight-in approach. There would be no forgiveness for his slightest misjudgment

Alerted by radio, all the pilots and crew members near the airstrip were transfixed as Bob Klingman finessed his wounded Corsair. With propeller silently windmilling . . he approached the airstrip in a 'no-go-around ' landing. At the last second, Klingman raised the Corsair's nose. His plane pounded down on the dirt overrun - bounced a handful of yards to the airstrip's hard surface - rolled to a stop.

As the pilots and crew members ran over to examine the aircraft and applaud the pilot, they were astonished by the plane's front end damage. All three blades of Klingman's propellers were bullet-pierced - and juttied outward - with six inches missing from each tip. Its wings showed numerous large bullet holes. And chunks of the Japanese airplane were found, deep inside the cowling.

Both Klingman and Reusser were awarded the Navy Cross for their exemplary perseverance in preventing the photos of the ships' locations from reaching the enemy.

(Thanks to Dan Cuvier for this unusual archive).

Nebraska Bomber Crash Remembered

From *The Superior Express*, Superior, Nebraska

Although one witness recalled it happening in early spring of 1944, and another resident remembered it was in the fall of 1944, nevertheless both Nebraskans agreed that the B-24 Liberator 4-engine bomber went down in a wheat field where no crops were growing.

The place in south-central Nebraska was near Guide Rock and Eckley (the latter town no longer on any maps). A

B-24, flying out of Pueblo, CO and heading for Harvard Army Air Field, NB, made a belly landing (gear up). Carol (Tyler) Fenimore was in the eighth grade and was home sick that fateful day. She and her family ran to the field after the bomber crashed, and, luckily, did not have to rescue any of the crew, since they all emerged from the plane unscathed.

Carol's cousin, Owen Konzack, who was 20 years old at the time, visited the crash site after the plane was down. He estimated that "it slid about ten rods on the ground (165 feet) before it came to a stop...and two engines were knocked off when it hit the ground."

The crew were thankful for the hospitality of the Tylers, who let the pilots call their base from the Tyler home. After about two weeks, a crew came from the Harvard Army Air Field and dismantled the plane, hauling it away on a flat-bed truck.

Mrs. Fenimore remembers hearing the crewmen talk about not bailing out because one of them had forgotten his parachute. She remarked, "Since then, I've often wondered about the crew – whether or not they made it through the war. They were all nice boys, I recall."

The original story in *The Superior Express* newspaper of Superior, Nebraska generated much interest in its local readers, who wrote in with their recollections about the crash. One man, Ron Schutte, of Guide Rock, still has a small piece of the plane collected by his brother. The actual date of the crash was determined by a reader who came up with a copy of the paper from February 2, 1944, which had the story of the crash as happening on February 1, 1944 at about 3:30 p.m. An excerpt from the article: "The bomber was on a routine flight from its base at Pueblo, CO. The pilot was Lt. Hargrove and the co-pilot was Lt. Lauterbach. They were unable to explain the cause of the plane's loss of altitude which made the landing necessary."

"A large crowd quickly gathered at the scene, and the Guide Rock American Legion served coffee and sandwiches to the crew members while they were waiting for trucks to take them to the Harvard Air Base."

"Edgar Buescher, 86, called this week to share his memories of the bomber crash north of Guide Rock. He remembers it was a clear day (*others had recalled a foggy day*) when he heard a plane approaching from the north. He said the bomber was only about 300 feet above the ground when it crossed his parents' farmstead and the motors were laboring to keep it in the air. He expected the

plane would go down on the Buescher farm, but it continued straight south another three miles before crashing (on the Oscar "Mose" and Veda Tyler farm).

Many thanks to Lois Watts, our Docent, a native of this area of Nebraska. Lois provided articles from the paper for this story. Special note: a local WWII hero, Ben Kuroki, of Camarillo, trained for his B-29 experiences in the bombing of Japan at the Harvard, Nebraska Army Air Field.



The Monopoly Game Plan: Escape

"In September, 1944, a hungry, cold, terrified airman hunched over what remained of a recently arrived Red Cross package. He had been a POW since his Lancaster was shot down over the Ruhr Valley in 1943. His excitement grew as he saw the tiny red spot. He had been briefed about it just before his first mission. To identify a "special" Monopoly set, a tiny red dot, designed to look like a simple printing glitch, was in the corner of the "Free Parking" space.

His hands trembled as he split the box cardboard in the dim light from the tiny barred windows above his head. He would now find the strength to consider another escape attempt. A previous attempt had led to failure and severe punishment. Getting through the barbed wire had been relatively easy, but finding his way through the snow and forests of Eastern Germany was not. He simply got lost until the patrols and dogs ran him down.

As he gently spread the layers of cardboard of the package, he found two slivers of metal which screwed together to form a file. He broke the little wooden red hotel to find a tiny silk map of his region folded very tightly. Under the packaged Monopoly money was real German Reich marks ready to spend and, finally, inside the Scotty dog was a tiny compass. The contraband in the Monopoly games distributed by the Red Cross to British POWs was credited with saving about 12,000 escapees from German and Italian prison camps."

Thanks to Patrick Tillery, the author, for this interesting WWII story, and to Ceci Stratford for bringing it to us.

Wing Christmas Party by Casey de Bree

Our Christmas Party is set for Thursday, December 3, 2009 at the Wedgewood Banquet Center, 5880 Olivas Park Ave., Ventura, CA 93003. The banquet center is located at the Buenaventura Golf Course. The social hour will start at 6:30, with dinner served at 7:30. We will wrap up by 10:00. Our annual auction will follow the dinner. Cost is \$35 per person.

The dinner will be a buffet featuring barbecue chicken, tri-tips of beef, salads galore, garlic bread, roasted red potatoes, and beverage. There will be a no-host bar.

Mail or drop off your reservation with a check made out to "Southern California Wing" to Casey de Bree at the hangar, 455 Aviation Dr., Camarillo, CA 93010. The map at right provides driving directions to the

Wedgewood Banquet Center. The Buenaventura Golf Course is at the lower center of the map.



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