

# 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](http://www.cafsocal.com) and [www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal](http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal)



One of Les Bedding's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday cakes, made by Cadet Jennifer Bauman, "Spitfires over the White Cliffs of Dover"



© Photo by Thomas Van Stein

**Les Bedding, our latest nonagenarian, holding his favorite beverage, Spitfire Beer, brewed in England, of course.**

*See Page 9 for details on Les's birthday party.*

"That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England."

Rupert Brooke

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, February 13, 2010 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.**

# February 2010

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	13 Work Day Wing Staff Meeting 9:30
14 Valentine's Day	15 President's Day Museum Closed	16 Work Day	17	18 Work Day	19	20
21	22 Museum Closed	23 Work Day	24	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day
28	<b>Museum Open</b> <b>10am to 4pm Every Day</b> <b>Except Monday</b> <b>and major holidays</b>					

	<b>STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS</b>	<b>IN THIS ISSUE</b>
Wing Leader	* Shirley Murphy (805) 482-6406 sdmurphy07@verizon.net	Wing Calendar . . . . . 2
Executive Officer	* Dick Troy (805) 624-6971 Konvair@aol.com	Staff and Appointed Positions. . . . . 2
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Operations Officer	* Gary Barber (805) 659-4319 bearcat69@pacbell.net	The Saga of Doolittle #13 . . . . . 4
Maintenance Officer	* Joe Peppito (805) 498-4187 jocafpeppo@msn.com	Aaron Tippin, CAF Spokesman . . . . . 8
Safety Officer	* Norm Swagler (805) 482-6994 pswagler@hotmail.com	Wing Photo Page I, Les Bedding's 90 <sup>th</sup> . . 9
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* Denotes Staff Position		

## **From CAF President Steve Brown...**

As many of you have read, the General Staff took action to remove two members from its ranks this past Saturday. Several of you have written, wanting more details. Because the action to remove these two members from the General Staff occurred in Executive Session and I was not in attendance, I am unable disclose the specifics to the meeting. But, I can say that the long and short of it comes down to protecting the CAF and Museum's assets for the CAF members and the general public.

If you are not aware, until the late 80's all of the CAF assets, including the Museum assets, were entirely owned by one non-profit entity, the Commemorative Air Force, Inc. In the late 80's, the then General Staff of the CAF sought to form three 501(c)(3) affiliated entities for business reasons, including liability protection of the CAF assets (the Airplanes, the Foundation Funds and the Museum.) Despite forming the three additional affiliated entities, it was always intended that the CAF General Staff, your elected representatives, would maintain control over all of these new affiliated entities. In fact, both the CAF membership and the Internal Revenue Service approved this new corporate structure and authorized the transfer of assets to the Museum on the specific condition that control of the Museum would remain with the CAF General Staff, which meant ultimately with you, the voting CAF members. This control was expressly intended to be maintained by requiring in the Museum bylaws that a majority of each affiliate entity's board, including the Museum Board, must be comprised of currently sitting members of the CAF General Staff. The thinking was that these General Staff members on each board would carry out the will of the General Staff and thus maintain ultimate control with you, the CAF membership, as was originally intended when the affiliated entities were created. Unfortunately, regarding the Museum Board, this proved not to be the case.

According to very recent Museum Board meeting minutes, the two members removed by Saturday's vote along with other non-General Staff directors of the museum attempted (for the 2nd time and without the quorum required in the Museum bylaws to legally conduct business) to remove the long-standing requirement in the Museum bylaws which require that the majority of its Board consist of General Staff members. The change they tried to implement was to reduce the required number of the General Staff members on the Museum Board, below the majority level; thereby taking control of this museum away from your duly elected representatives and ultimately the CAF membership.

You may have heard that this issue is nothing more than one of control. But, nothing could be farther from the truth. As I said above, this issue is about protecting both the CAF and the Museum assets for you and the general public. If successful, the actions of the Museum Board could have put at risk the 501(c) (3) status of BOTH the Museum AND the CAF and potentially exposed the

CAF to legal liability. As important, if the General Staff no longer held the majority seats of the Museum Board, then the Museum Board, the majority of which would have been non-CAF General Staff members, would have been free to take whatever actions it pleased--even if those actions were inconsistent with the purposes of the CAF as expressed in the CAF Constitution and Bylaws. For example, if the Museum Board were to decide to move the Museum from the Midland, Texas CAF Headquarters, the CAF would be powerless to stop such action. Likewise, if the Museum Board were to determine that it wanted to change the mission of the Museum, the CAF would be powerless to prevent such action.

Please know that more than a year of conversations were conducted in an effort to keep the Museum Board from taking such actions and to reach a reasonable solution. Unfortunately, when all of these measures failed and, after giving all the notice that is required under both Texas law and the CAF Bylaws, the General Staff acted to preserve the original terms of the Museum Bylaws and to protect the CAF and Museum Assets--not only for members of the CAF but also all the public at large that the CAF and its affiliates serve. No one, including me, wanted to look you in the eye and try to explain how "we let the Museum go." It was a tough decision, but I applaud the General Staff's fortitude.

If you have questions or comments, please e-mail Steve Brown directly: [sbrown@cafhq.org](mailto:sbrown@cafhq.org).

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## **Membership Meeting: CAF-SoCAWing**

by Dick Troy, Executive Officer

We are planning a membership meeting for the 6th of March (Sat) after the Museum closes. The meeting will be in the Museum and commence at 16:30.

The agenda will include a report to the members by the Board of Directors. We want to keep you informed about the things that are going on, the things that have been accomplished, and those that are on the horizon.

We would also encourage you to ask questions about anything that you have a concern with. We will do our very best to answer questions to the best of our ability.

It is our desire to make these meetings informative and well worth your time to attend. Effective March 1 we will schedule membership meetings on a quarterly basis. As most of you know there have been some significant changes in the staff and we realize that in order to grow we are going to need a more informed and a more proactive membership.

After the meeting we plan on having some great food and something to drink. We may even have some entertainment as well. A \$5 donation will be collected.

Won't you please come and join us for an informative and enjoyable meeting? Hope to see you there!

## The Saga of Doolittle #13

by Edgar McElroy

"My name is Edgar McElroy. My friends call me "Mac". I was born and raised in Ennis, Texas, the youngest of five children, son of Harry and Jennie McElroy. Folks say that I was the quiet one. We lived at 609 North Dallas Street and attended the Presbyterian Church.

My dad had an auto mechanic's shop downtown close to the main fire station. My family was a hard working bunch, and I was expected to work at dad's garage after school and on Saturdays, so I grew up in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. Occasionally I would hear a lone plane fly over, and would run out in the street and strain my eyes against the sun to watch it. Someday, that would be me up there!

I really like cars, and I was always busy on some project, and it wasn't long before I decided to build my very own Model-T out of spare parts. I got an engine from over here, a frame from over there, and wheels from someplace else, using only the good parts from old cars that were otherwise shot. It wasn't very pretty, but it was all mine. I enjoyed driving on the dirt roads around town and the feeling of freedom and speed. That car of mine could really go fast, 40 miles per hour!

In high school I played football and tennis, and was good enough at football to receive an athletic scholarship from Trinity University in Waxahachie. I have to admit that sometimes I daydreamed in class, and often times I thought about flying my very own airplane and being up there in the clouds. That is when I even decided to take a correspondence course in aircraft engines. Whenever I got the chance, I would take my girl on a date up to Love Field in Dallas. We would watch the airplanes and listen to those mighty piston engines roar. I just loved it and if she didn't, well that was just too bad.

After my schooling, I operated a filling station with my brother, then drove a bus, and later had a job as a machinist in Longview, but I never lost my love of airplanes and my dream of flying. With what was going on in Europe and in Asia, I figured that our country would be drawn into war someday, so I decided to join the Army Air Corps in November of 1940. This way I could finally follow my dream.

I reported for primary training in California. The training was rigorous and frustrating at times. We trained at airfields all over California. It was tough going, and many of the guys washed out. When I finally saw that I was going to make it, I wrote to my girl back in Longview, Texas. Her name is Agnes Gill. I asked her to come out to California for my graduation. and oh yeah, also to marry me.

I graduated on July 11, 1941. I was now a real, honest-to-goodness Army Air Corps pilot. Two days later, I married "Aggie" in Reno, Nevada. We were starting a new life together and were very happy. I received my orders to report to Pendleton, Oregon and join the 17th Bomb Group. Neither of us had traveled much before, and the

drive north through the Cascade Range of the Sierra Nevada's was interesting and beautiful.

It was an exciting time for us. My unit was the first to receive the new B-25 medium bomber. When I saw it for the first time I was in awe. It looked so huge. It was so sleek and powerful. The guys started calling it the "rocket plane", and I could hardly wait to get my hands on it. I told Aggie that it was really something! Reminded me of a big old scorpion, just ready to sting! Man, I could barely wait!



**An early B-25 on a training mission somewhere over U.S. farm country.**

We were on our way back to California on December 7th when we got word of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We listened with mixed emotions to the announcements on the radio, and the next day to the declaration of war. What the President said, it just rang over and over in my head, ".With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God." By gosh, I felt as though he was talking straight to me! I didn't know what would happen to us, but we all knew that we would be going somewhere now.

The first weeks of the war, we were back in Oregon flying patrols at sea looking for possible Japanese submarines. We had to be up at 0330 hours to warm up the engines of our planes. There was 18 inches of snow on the ground, and it was so cold that our engine oil congealed overnight. We placed big tarps over the engines that reached down to the ground. Inside this tent we used plumbers blow torches to thaw out the engines. I figured that my dad would be proud of me, if he could see me inside this tent with all this machinery, oil and grease. After about an hour of this, the engines were warm enough to start.

We flew patrols over the coasts of Oregon and Washington from dawn until dusk. Once I thought I spotted a sub, and started my bomb run, even had my bomb doors open, but I pulled out of it when I realized that it was just a big whale. Lucky for me, I would have never heard the end of that!"

"Actually, it was lucky for us that the Japanese didn't attack the west coast, because we just didn't have a strong enough force to beat them off. Our country was in a real fix now, and overall things looked pretty bleak to most folks. In early February, we were ordered to report to Columbus, South Carolina. Man, this Air Corps sure moves a fellow around a lot! Little did I know what was coming next!

After we got settled in Columbus, my squadron commander called us all together. He told us that an awfully hazardous mission was being planned, and then he asked for volunteers. There were some of the guys that did not step forward, but I was one of the ones that did. My co-pilot was shocked. He said "You can't volunteer, Mac! You're married, and you and Aggie are expecting a baby soon. Don't do it!" I told him that "I got into the Air Force to do what I can, and Aggie understands how I feel. The war won't be easy for any of us."

We that volunteered were transferred to Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida in late February. When we all got together, there were about 140 of us volunteers, and we were told that we were now part of the "Special B-25 Project."

We set about our training, but none of us knew what it was all about. We were ordered not to talk about it, not even to our wives.

In early March, we were all called in for a briefing, and gathered together in a big building there on the base. Somebody said that the fellow who head of this thing is coming to talk to us, and in walks Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle. He was already an aviation legend, and there he stood right in front of us. I was truly amazed just to meet him.

Colonel Doolittle explained that this mission would be extremely dangerous, and that only volunteers could take part. He said that he could not tell us where we were going, but he could say that some of us would not be coming back.

There was a silent pause; you could have heard a pin drop. Then Doolittle said that anyone of us could withdraw now, and that no one would criticize us for this decision. No one backed out! From the outset, all volunteers worked from the early morning hours until well after sunset. All excess weight was stripped from the planes and extra gas tanks were added. The lower gun turret was removed, the heavy liaison radio was removed, and then the tail guns were taken out and more gas tanks were put aboard. We extended the range of that plane from 1000 miles out to 2500 miles.

Then I was assigned my crew. There was Richard Knobloch the co-pilot, Clayton Campbell the navigator, Robert Bourgeois the bombardier, Adam Williams the flight engineer and gunner, and me, Mac McElroy the pilot. Over the coming days, I came to respect them. They were a swell bunch of guys, just regular All-American boys.

We got a few ideas from the training as to what type of mission that we had signed on for. A Navy pilot had joined

our group to coach us at short takeoffs and also in shipboard etiquette. We began our short takeoff practice. Taking off with first a light load, then a normal load, and finally overloaded up to 31,000 lbs. The shortest possible take-off was obtained with flaps full down, stabilizer set three-fourths, tail heavy, full power against the brakes and releasing the brakes simultaneously as the engine revved up to max power. We pulled back gradually on the stick and the airplane left the ground with the tail skid about one foot from the runway. It was a very unnatural and scary way to get airborne! I could hardly believe it myself, the first time as I took off with a full gas load and dummy bombs within just 700 feet of runway in a near stall condition. We were, for all practical purposes, a slow flying gasoline bomb!



Pilots assigned to the "Special B-25 Project" monitored the short field take-off practice of their flying mates at Eglin. Shown here checking stop watch times are, left to right, Lts. Knobloch, McElroy, Joyce, and Farrow.

### **Pilots monitoring the short field takeoff practice at Eglin Field. Second from left is Lt. Mac McElroy.**

In addition to take-off practice, we refined our skills in day and night navigation, gunnery, bombing, and low level flying. We made cross country flights at tree-top level, night flights and navigational flights over the Gulf of Mexico without the use of a radio. After we started that short-field takeoff routine, we had some pretty fancy competition between the crews. I think that one crew got it down to about 300 feet on a hot day. We were told that only the best crews would actually go on the mission, and the rest would be held in reserve.

Doolittle emphasized again and again the extreme danger of this operation, and made it clear that anyone of us who so desired could drop out with no questions asked. No one did.

On one of our cross country flights, we landed at Barksdale Field in Shreveport, and I was able to catch a bus over to Longview to see Aggie. We had a few hours together, and then we had to say our goodbyes. I told her I hoped to be back in time for the baby's birth, but I couldn't tell her where I was going. As I walked away, I turned and walked backwards for a ways, taking one last look at my beautiful pregnant Aggie."



Within a few days of returning to our base in Florida we were abruptly told to pack our things. After just three weeks of practice, we were on our way. This was it. It was time to go. It was the middle of March 1942, and I was 30 years old. Our orders were to fly to McClelland Air Base in Sacramento, California on our own, at the lowest possible level. So here we went on our way west, scraping the tree tops at 160 miles per hour, and skimming along just 50 feet above plowed fields. We crossed North Texas and then the panhandle, scaring the dickens out of livestock, buzzing farm houses and a many a barn along the way. Over the Rocky Mountains and across the Mojave Desert dodging thunderstorms, we enjoyed the flight immensely and although tempted, I didn't do too much dare-devil stuff. We didn't know it at the time, but it was good practice for what lay ahead of us. It proved to be our last fling. Once we arrived in Sacramento, the mechanics went over our plane with a fine-toothed comb. Of the twenty-two planes that made it, only those whose pilots reported no mechanical problems were allowed to go on. The others were shunted aside.

After having our plane serviced, we flew on to Alameda Naval Air Station in Oakland. As I came in for final approach, we saw it! I excitedly called the rest of the crew to take a look. There below us was a huge aircraft carrier. It was the USS Hornet, and it looked so gigantic! Man, I had never even seen a carrier until this moment. There were already two B-25s parked on the flight deck. Now we knew! My heart was racing, and I thought about how puny my plane would look on board this mighty ship. As soon as we landed and taxied off the runway, a jeep pulled in front of me with a big "Follow Me" sign on the back. We followed it straight up to the wharf, alongside the towering Hornet. All five of us were looking up and just in awe, scarcely believing the size of this thing. As we left the plane, there was already a Navy work crew swarming around attaching cables to the lifting rings on top of the wings and the fuselage. As we walked towards our quarters, I looked back and saw them lifting my plane up into the air and swing it over the ship's deck. It looked so small and lonely.

Later that afternoon, all crews met with Colonel Doolittle and he gave last minute assignments. He told me to go to the Presidio and pick up two hundred extra "C" rations. I saluted, turned, and left, not having any idea where the Presidio was, and not exactly sure what a "C" ration was. I commandeered a Navy staff car and told the driver to take me to the Presidio, and he did. On the way over, I realized that I had no written signed orders and that this might get a little sticky. So in I walked into the Army supply depot and made my request, trying to look poised and confident. The supply officer asked "What is your authorization for this request, sir?" I told him that I could not give him one. "And what is the destination?" he asked. I answered, "The aircraft carrier, Hornet, docked at Alameda." He said, "Can you tell me who ordered the rations, sir?" And I replied with a smile, "No, I cannot." The supply officers huddled together, talking and glanced back over towards me. Then he walked back over and assured me that the rations would be delivered that afternoon. Guess they

figured that something big was up. They were right. The next morning we all boarded the ship.

Trying to remember my naval etiquette, I saluted the Officer of the Deck and said "Lt. McElroy, requesting permission to come aboard." The officer returned the salute and said "Permission granted." Then I turned aft and saluted the flag. I made it, without messing up. It was April 2, and in full sunlight, we left San Francisco Bay. The whole task force of ships, two cruises, four destroyers, and a fleet oiler, moved slowly with us under the Golden Gate Bridge. Thousands of people looked on. Many stopped their cars on the bridge, and waved to us as we passed underneath. I thought to myself, I hope there aren't any spies up there waving.

Once at sea, Doolittle called us together. "Only a few of you know our destination, and you others have guessed about various targets. Gentlemen, your target is Japan!" A sudden cheer exploded among the men. "Specifically, Yokohama, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Nagasaki and Osaka.

The Navy task force will get us as close as possible and we'll launch our planes. We will hit our targets and proceed to airfields in China." After the cheering stopped, he asked again, if any of us desired to back out, no questions asked. Not on did, not one. Then the ship's Captain then went over the intercom to the whole ship's company. The loudspeaker blared, "The destination is Tokyo!" A tremendous cheer broke out from everyone on board. I could hear metal banging together and wild screams from down below decks. It was quite a rush! I felt relieved actually. We finally knew where we were going.

Photo # NH 64472 Lt. Col. Doolittle & Capt. Mitscher with USAAF crews aboard USS Hornet, April 1942



**Lt. Col. Doolittle with Capt. Mitscher on the USS Hornet, with the B-25 air crewmen behind.**

I set up quarters with two Navy pilots, putting my cot between their two bunks. They couldn't get out of bed without stepping on me. Those guys were part of the Torpedo Squadron Eight. The rest of the guys bedded down in similar fashion to me, some had to sleep on bedrolls in the Admiral's chartroom. As big as this ship was, there wasn't any extra room anywhere."

"There were sixteen B-25s tied down on the flight deck, and I was flying number 13. All the carrier's fighter planes were stored away helplessly in the hangar deck. They couldn't move until we were gone. Our Army mechanics were all on board, as well as our munitions loaders and several back up crews, in case any of us got sick or backed out. We settled into a daily routine of checking our planes. The aircraft were grouped so closely together on deck that it wouldn't take much for them to get damaged. Knowing that my life depended on this plane, I kept a close eye on her.

Photo # NH 53289 USAAF B-25B bombers on board USS Hornet for the Doolittle Raid, April 1942



**The closely-packed sixteen Army Air Corps B-25s on the deck of the USS Hornet enroute to history.**

Day after day, we met with the intelligence officer and studied our mission plan. Our targets were assigned, and maps and objective folders were furnished for study. We went over approach routes and our escape route towards China. I never studied this hard back at Trinity. Every day at dawn and at dusk the ship was called to general quarters and we practiced finding the quickest way to our planes. If at any point along the way, we were discovered by the enemy fleet, we were to launch our bombers immediately so the Hornet could bring up its fighter planes. We would then be on our own, and try to make it to the nearest land, either Hawaii or Midway Island.

Dr. Thomas White, a volunteer member of plane number 15, went over our medical records and gave us inoculations for a whole bunch of diseases that hopefully I wouldn't catch. He gave us training sessions in emergency first aid, and lectured us at length about water purification and such. We put some new tail guns in place of the ones that had been taken out to save weight. They were two broom handles, painted black. The thinking was they might fool the Jap fighters.

On Sunday, April 14, we met up with Admiral Bull Halsey's task force just out of Hawaii and joined into one big force. The carrier Enterprise was now with us, another two heavy cruisers, four more destroyers and another oiler. We were designated as Task Force 16. It was quite an impressive sight to see, and represented the bulk of what was left of the U.S. Navy after the devastation of Pearl Harbor. There

were over 10,000 Navy personnel sailing into harm's way, just to deliver us sixteen Army planes to the Japs, orders of the President.

As we steamed further west, tension was rising as we drew nearer and nearer to Japan. Someone thought of arming us with some old ...45 pistols that they had on board. I went through that box of 1911 pistols, they were in such bad condition that I took several of them apart, using the good parts from several useless guns until I built a serviceable weapon.

Colonel Doolittle called us together on the flight deck. We all gathered round, as well as many Navy personnel. He pulled out some medals and told us how these friendship medals from the Japanese government had been given to some of our Navy officers several years back. And now the Secretary of the Navy had requested us to return them. Doolittle wired them to a bomb while we all posed for pictures. Something to cheer up the folks back home!



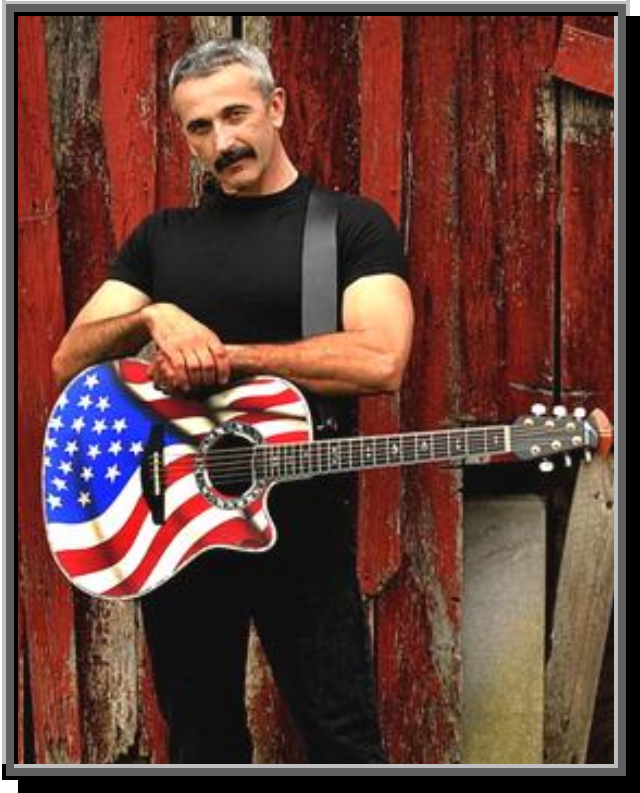
**The AAC flight crews observing the wiring of Japanese medals to a bomb that would be dropped on the mainland of Japan.**

I began to pack my things for the flight, scheduled for the 19th. I packed some extra clothes and a little brown bag that Aggie had given me, inside were some toilet items and a few candy bars. No letters or identity cards were allowed, only our dog-tags. By now, my Navy pilot roommates were about ready to get rid of me, but I enjoyed my time with them. They were alright. Later on, I learned that both of them were killed at the Battle of Midway. They were good men. Yes, very good men.

Colonel Doolittle let each crew pick our own target. We chose the Yokosuka Naval Base about twenty miles from Tokyo. We loaded 1450 rounds of ammo and four 500-pound bombs... A little payback, direct from Ellis County, Texas! Everything was now ready. I felt relaxed, yet tense at the same time. Day after tomorrow, we will launch when we are 400 miles out. I lay in my cot that night, and rehearsed the mission over and over in my head. It was hard to sleep as I listened to the sounds of the ship."

*To be continued next month...*

## Aaron Tippin Aboard As Commemorative Air Force Spokesman



NASHVILLE, Tenn./Midland, Texas (January 12, 2010)—Country music superstar Aaron Tippin and the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) are joining forces to Honor American Military Aviation and to remind Americans of the men and women of the armed services who have sacrificed for our freedoms.

Tippin will dedicate his time and talents as the 2010 CAF celebrity spokesperson; his involvement will include special appearances at various Commemorative Air Force events across the country, filming and recording a number of public service announcements and a potential cross-country tour in conjunction with CAF exhibitions is in the works.

The Commemorative Air Force (headquartered in Midland, Texas) is an all member-volunteer, 501c3 nonprofit organization established with a multi-purpose objective: to acquire, restore and preserve in flying condition a complete collection of combat aircraft flown by all United States military services; to honor the service of those who fought in flight, and educate the American public so that generations of Americans will continue to value and support the contributions of military aviation in assuring our nation's freedom. The CAF is the largest flying museum in the world, operating 156 vintage military aircraft, and displaying them at air shows around the country, often reenacting historic air battles featuring the actual period aircraft in flight.

"I am very excited about working with the CAF," Tippin states. "As a son of a pilot, a pilot myself and patriot, the

mission of the organization is especially important to me: acknowledging the history of this great nation and the service men and women who make our freedoms possible is stellar and I'm happy to champion the organization's efforts."

An airman himself, Aaron soloed his first flight on his 16th birthday. He became a commercial multi-engine instrument-rated pilot by the age of 18 and is also helicopter-qualified. A certified aircraft and power plant mechanic, he owns a 1941 Stearman, a 1946 J3 Cub and 1959 Helio Curior--all in flying condition.

As a supporter and frequent traveler to visit and perform for our American brothers and sisters in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan each year during the Thanksgiving Holiday, Tippin understands and has experienced firsthand the importance of supporting our troops. He's made annual trips to spend time and visit with our forces in Iraq for the past six consecutive years.

"Over the past two years I have gotten to know Aaron personally and have seen his commitment to our Armed Forces and his passion for aviation", said Stephan Brown, President of the CAF. "We are honored that he has agreed to help us promote the Educational Mission of the CAF. Like our CAF members, Aaron recognizes that we must remind Americans of the sacrifices our Armed Forces' have made and continue to make, to ensure our freedoms. One of the more unique aspects of Aaron's role, will be his actual participation as a pilot in select CAF vintage military aircraft. As a skilled aviator, he can walk the walk."

Over the past two decades, platinum recording artist Aaron Tippin has become one of the most recognizable and influential voices in country music. With 13 recorded CD's to his name and more than 30 charted singles, he performs nearly 200 dates each year.

For more information about Aaron Tippin please visit <http://www.aarontippin.com>.



**UP, UP, AND AWAY** - RCA recording artist, Aaron Tippin, recently had a dream come true when he flew with The Blue Angels in El Centro, California. Tippin, a former commercial pilot, was right at home in the cockpit, but he did take a few last minute tips from Pete Amendolare, a Blue Angel's crew chief.



# Wing Photo Page I: Les Bedding Is 90 Years Young

© Photos by Dave Flood



Les Bedding, our Spitfire Crew Chief, at his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party with friends and family. Note the Union Jack hung in honor of Les's special day.



Les accepting the best wishes of a large number of members and friends who joined him in the "O Club" for his birthday festivities on January 9, 2010.



Les's daughters Evelyn Mackin (left) and Sally Giebler (in background), along with son Colin's wife Bonnie (in corner, barely visible, with white shirt) did all the cooking and serving of the wonderful British food.



Here's daughter Sally serving Les's long-time neighbors, the Logues. The feast included bangers and onions with baked beans, sausage sandwiches, shepherd's pie and English beer. "To Die For!"



Not only all of Les's Spitfire crew and spouses, but also most of the members who work regularly in our hangars and have become Les's friends were there.



Les's son-in-law Everett Giebler (left) talking with Chris Rushing at the birthday bash. Everett and Colin, along with Evelyn, Sally, Bonnie, and members of the Spitfire crew made the event very memorable for Les and also for the Wing members who joined Les in wishing him long life. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> – Les!

## Report From The Road



by Scott Drosos

I would like to describe a wonderful experience I had on December 15<sup>th</sup>, a few days before I left on a trip to places like Santiago, Chile; Frankfurt and Morbach, Germany; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Lagos, Nigeria; Nairobi, Kenya; and Huntsville, Alabama.

As most of you know, I have been a volunteer at the Commemorative Air Force in Camarillo, CA for the last six years or so. My main project has been helping with the restoration of a PBJ "Mitchell" bomber, but the CAF also owns and maintains many flyable World War II era "warbirds." Over the years, I have grown accustomed to seeing these rare airplanes fly and hearing the sounds of their big radial engines spitting fire and belching smoke as they come and go from the ramp in front of our hangars. I have always been envious of those privileged enough to fly them, as it is a very elite club. I would love to do it myself, except that it requires a completely different set of skills than we modern jet airliner pilots have. To develop those skills is both time consuming and very expensive, so I have been content for the time being to volunteer my time working on them instead.

Of all the warbirds from that era though, my favorite has to be the North American P-51 Mustang, arguably the best piston-engine fighter aircraft ever built, and often said to be the airplane that won WWII for us. While our wing doesn't currently own one, one was on loan from David Price to our museum in December, and those qualified to fly it were authorized to take it up occasionally and even offer rides in it. Even though the airplane was designed as a single-seat fighter, some P-51s have been restored over the years with rear seats to allow room for one passenger. This plane was one of them.

On that particular Tuesday, I happened to be at the CAF working on our bomber, when Gary Barber, one of the wing's pilots, decided to take the Mustang up for a few flights and offer rides. Of course, when an airplane like that starts up on our ramp, we are usually compelled to stop whatever we are doing and wander out to watch. It's just too good to miss! Gary made several flights, with different people in the back seat, and, of course, each time it came and went several of us were out on the ramp to watch and "assist" (mostly watch). Imagine my thrill then, when ,

towards the end of the day, my friend Dan Newcomb told me that he had arranged for me to be taken up on a ride also! I can only say that words can't describe my elation. Ever since I first learned about airplanes I've admired the P-51 Mustang, and to actually be offered a ride in one is virtually every pilot's dream. This was quite possibly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I wasn't going to miss it.

When the time came, I climbed up onto the wing and into the tiny back seat. It was a bit of a squeeze getting in, but quite comfortable once I was settled. Gary and I strapped in and donned our headsets. Then he cranked the big V-12 Rolls Royce Merlin engine to life. There is no sound in the world like that of a Merlin engine! As we taxied out, I knew we were the envy of every other pilot on the field. We had to wait at the end of the runway for a long time to let other small aircraft clear the traffic pattern before we were cleared for takeoff, which only heightened my anticipation.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

### **Scott barely visible in the rear seat of the P-51D**

Then Gary pushed the power up, and the 2,000 horsepower engine sent us roaring down the runway. What a feeling of power! The sun was sinking low in the sky, which only enhanced the beauty of the scenery below and mountains in the background. We flew up over the small airport of Santa Paula, and then found a valley to play in, where Gary took me through some rolls, both left and then right. My thoughts were of the young men who flew Mustangs during World War II. For them aerobatic maneuvers such as we went through weren't just for fun. They were likely engaged in dogfights with enemy aircraft with real bullets flying, or trying to avoid anti-aircraft fire from the ground, where piloting skills and high-speed maneuvering meant the difference between life and death. In contrast, we could simply enjoy this marvelous machine without having to face such dire threats.

We then flew over Simi Valley, then circled near the area of Thousand Oaks for quite a while, waiting for other airplanes to clear the traffic pattern so that we could make the almost-obligatory high-speed pass over the Camarillo Airport runway. Finally we were cleared in for "the option," which meant that we could do anything we wanted.



Gary pushed the nose down and cranked the power up, and down we went, as though on a strafing run over an enemy airfield. We flew down the runway at probably 100 feet, putting on quite a show for our friends standing outside the hangar to watch. My biggest regret was that I couldn't see the airspeed or altimeter from the back seat, but let's just say we were low and fast!

Then we pulled up into a high-G climb, and cranked into a hard bank to the left to enter the traffic pattern for landing. By this point, the sun had gone below the horizon, lighting



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

**Gary pulling up after their low high-speed flyby – banking left to enter the landing pattern.**

the sky and clouds in beautiful hues of brilliant orange. The view and the experience were both spectacular!

It was a moment to be captured in my memory forever. As we taxied back in, the orange sunset reflecting off the side of the airplane looked like flames, making for an incredible, surreal scene.

It was the perfect ending to a perfect flight, and one that I had dreamed about my entire flying career. Thank you, Gary – that was one hell of a Christmas present!



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

**“As we taxied back in, the orange sunset reflecting off the side of the airplane looked like flames...”**

*Editor's Note: Scott Drosos works on our PBJ Restoration Team, and is here at our hangars whenever he is not piloting his Atlas Air Boeing 747-400 all over the world. Even though we had a piece in the January issue concerning the P-51 rides, and had Dan Newcomb's*

*account of Scott's flight, I thought that Scott's description of the flight was worthy of publication. I hope you agree.*

## So CA Wing Awards Clayton Rutkowski for Landscaping

by Dave Flood



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Wing Leader Shirley Murphy reads award to Clayton Rutkowski for his outstanding work, along with his family and Scout Troop #225, in providing landscaping for the south side of our hangars.**

The citation reads:

*CAF-SoCAWing hereby recognizes Clayton Rutkowski for his outstanding contribution to our Wing. He has, with the assistance of his mother Lorrie, and members of his Boy Scout Troop #225, in his project to earn his Eagle Scout Award, provided our Wing with a beautiful landscaping arrangement of shrubs, plants and trees along the south side of our hangars.*

*He is hereby welcomed as a Friend of the Museum and is granted all privileges in perpetuity.*

*Awarded this 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2010*

*Signed: Shirley D. Murphy, Wing Leader*



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Clayton, with his award, flanked by (left) Kent Allen, Troop #225 Leader, mom Lorrie, sister Carlie, and Doug Morris and his son Brady.**

## Museum Update....

by Sarah de Bree

The Museum staff wants to send all of our Wing members our best wishes for a wonderful 2010.

We accept this New Year as yet another opportunity for bigger goals and new challenges to pursue. The Gift Shop has long been in need of expansion and 'sprucing up!' As you may remember, at the end of 2009 we expanded the area by an additional 8 ft. With this new area we now are adding new bookcases that will be used for expanding the merchandise and to alleviate the existing clutter.

Our ability to improve the Museum/Gift Shop areas depends on the kindness and generosity of our members and friends. One project we have on the back burner awaiting appropriate funds is enclosing the Gift Shop initially and then enclosing the Artifact and Production rooms, the Library and offices. This would include a new Museum entry and a new layout for the Docents' workspace. These areas would be environmentally controlled and protected from the dirt, heat and cold weather we have had to accept over the years. This environment has done much damage to the artifacts and collections and involves everyone in the unending war against dirt. For those of us experiencing the 40+ degree temperatures during the frosty days of winter and the terrible summer heat within the hangar, an environmentally controlled work area would be a dream come true. We probably wouldn't be as grumpy!



© Photo by Sarah de Bree

**Model of the USS Enterprise (CVN-65), the first nuclear-powered carrier in the U.S. Navy fleet.**

The Museum was very fortunate in receiving, as a gift, the model of the USS Enterprise (CVN-65), pictured above, named after the Navy's USS Enterprise (CV-6), used during WWII and engaged in all but two of the twenty major actions of the Pacific War. CVN-65 is the second oldest ship still in commission and the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. She's also distinguished as the longest naval vessel in the world. She is scheduled for retirement in 2013 after 51 years of continuous service, the longest for any carrier in the history of the US. Navy.

The model is not in its final display location but is temporarily sitting on a table in the Museum. Come over and see the beautiful workmanship done on this model. Received also is a model of the Lexington (CV-2) that, to date, has not been given a display location but hopefully we will be able to show this item very soon. The aircraft carrier USS Lexington was lost during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The Museum also received a complete set of Aircraft Recognition models that were used to train on how to identify friend and/or foe aircraft. Because of the volume of models, this presents a challenge on how these will be displayed. But we're pretty good at the difficult tasks so look for them to go on display fairly soon.

The New Year looks exciting with new items for the Gift Shop and the Museum so come see what we are doing and bring a friend.

## Discovery Flights

by Dave Flood

Jason Vosburgh has been taking his students from UCSB and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for discovery flights for three years now.



© Photo Courtesy of Jason Vosburgh

**To date Jason has taken forty-seven students out to Santa Paula and Inyokern Airports for their first pilot experience. The class above is a UCSB Global Economics Class of last fall.**



© Photo Courtesy of Jason Vosburgh

**A marketing class from Embry-Riddle in the summer.**

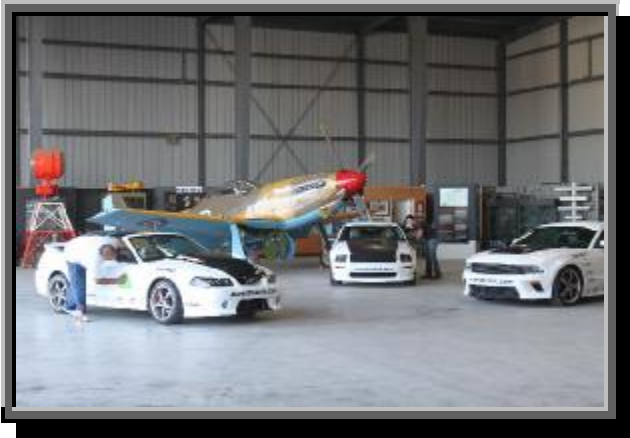
Jason says, "It doesn't matter what discipline I'm teaching, I give every class the opportunity to go. It gives me great satisfaction to be able to do it. They enjoy it so much!"



## Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
Our F6F-5 Hellcat flying formation with David Price's P-51 Mustang over Camarillo Airport.



© Photo by Ron Fleishman  
A Ford dealer doing a promotional "shoot" of Ford Mustangs with a P-51 Mustang in the background in our WWII Aviation Museum recently.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
Dan Newcomb took this shot of So Cal Wing member Captain Marc Russell's United Air Lines Boeing 777 flying over his house in Bakersfield – on his way to SFC in the "friendly skies." Marc and Dan work on the PBJ Restoration Project.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
Kevin Birdt, son of Jeff, another PBJ Restoration worker, exiting the F6F cockpit after helping to work the levers that enabled the wings to extend.



© Photo by Dave Flood  
It's never too early to start them learning about military aviation history ! Here's a group of pre-schoolers with their parents visiting our WWII Aviation Museum on a recent rainy day.



© Photo courtesy Russ Drosendahl  
Some of our Wing members posing for a portrait in Harlingen, Texas at a CAF Airshow in 1988. Check with Joe Peppito, Ron Fleishman or Russ Drosendahl to get the names of the C-46 crew members. A couple of "ringers" are also in the photo.

# CAF's Zero Traveling to New Zealand

by Dave Flood



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

## The CAF's Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero Fighter

On February 18, 2010, the CAF – Southern California Wing's Zero fighter will fly to Long Beach, CA Airport and then will be transported via flatbed truck to the Port of Long Beach in preparation for its long journey by ship to New Zealand.

Our Zero will be a major participant in the "Warbirds Over Wanaka" air show to be held in Wanaka on New Zealand's South Island on April 2, 3, and 4, 2010. It is one of the premier warbirds air shows in the world, and our Zero will play a major part in the show.

Our pilots – Jason Somes and Steve Barber, Sr. are expected to join the Zero sometime in late March in New Zealand in order to fly her from the New Zealand port of entry to Wanaka, and then during the air show.

We expect the Zero to be away from Camarillo for about two months – and we look forward to having her back in April for participation in a number of air shows to be held throughout the western United States during the summer and fall.

The Zero will definitely be flying at the Camarillo Air Show on the weekend of August 21 and 22, 2010, and will probably team up with our Grumman F6F Hellcat for some heart-stopping dogfights in the sky during that show. We hope that you will join us for the festivities that weekend at the Camarillo Airport.

.....

Crew Chief: Yoshi Abe.

Zero Crew: Ken Gottschall, Eric Lange, Robert Blair, Jason Somes, Shari Heitkotter Steve Barber, Sr.

### Zero Specifications:

Specifications (A6M3 Type 0 Model 22)

General characteristics

Crew: 1

Length: 29 ft., 9 in.

Wingspan: 39 ft., 4 in.

Height: 9 ft., 8 in.

Empty weight: 3,984 lbs.

Loaded weight: 5,609 lbs.

Powerplant: 1x Nakajima NKIF Sakae 14 cylinder, air-cooled radial engine, 1,130 hp

Note: Our aircraft has a Pratt & Whitney R1830 engine with 14 cylinders and 1,200 hp.

### Performance

Maximum speed: 388 mph at 19,690 ft.

Range: 1,929 mi.

Service ceiling: 36,250 ft.

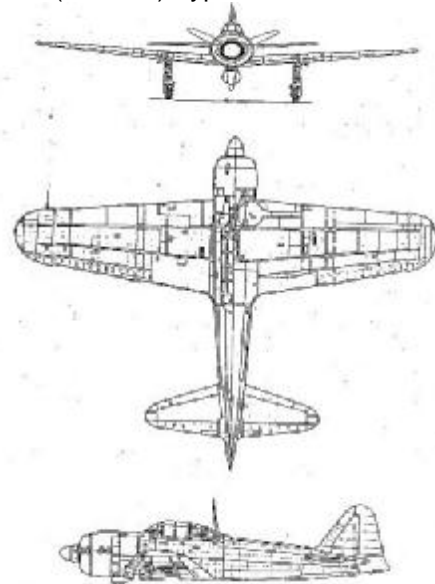
Rate of climb: 3,100 ft/min.

### Armament

#### Guns:

2x 7.7 mm (0.303 in) Type 97 machine guns in the engine cowling

2x 20 mm (0.787 in) Type 99 cannons in the wings



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

**Our Zero teaming up with our Hellcat in a breathtaking show during one of the many air shows they participate in during the spring-to-fall air show season.**