

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

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

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HAPPY NEW YEAR



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Our new Wing Leader is Robert Albee, elected to serve during the 2009/2010 term. See his introductory Wing Leader's Report on Page 3. Other new Wing Staff Officers include: Shirley Murphy, Exec. Officer; Terry Cedar, Adjutant; Joe Peppito, Maintenance Officer; and Norm Swagler, Safety Officer. You may read all of their reports on Pages 5 & 6. Our outgoing Wing Leader, Steve Barber, has a final report to the Wing on Page 4.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, January 10, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

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

January 2009

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

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	sdmurphy@verizon.net	Staff and Appointed Positions. 2
Adjutant	* Terry Cedar	(805) 570-8048	tac1966@msn.com	New Wing Leader – Robert Albee 3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Lefty Gardner Goes West 3
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	Outgoing Wing Leader – Steve Barber . . 4
Maintenance Officer	* Joe Peppito	(805) 498-4187	jocafpeppo@msn.com	New Maintenance Officer – Joe Peppito . .5
Safety Officer	* Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	New Safety Officer – Norm Swagler 5
Museum Director	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	New Executive Officer – Shirley Murphy . .6
Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	New Adjutant – Terry Cedar 6
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	Charlie Valentine Home 6
Hangar Event Mgr	Dick Burrer	(805) 444-8285	gatjohnston@aol.com	Wing Photo Page I 7
Chief Docent	(Vacant)			Churchill Was His Co-Pilot 8
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Air Show Coord.	Bill O'Neill	(805) 495-4915	scwairshow@aol.com	Wing Photo Page II 11
Facility Officer	Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Follow That Fjord! 12
Personnel Officer	Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	"O" Club Now A Reality 13
Historian	Ron Fleishman	(805) 384-4426	oldplanec46@aol.com	Spitfire Gets Restoration Grant 13
Training Officer	(Vacant)			In Memoriam: Karl P. Eichner 13
Collections Manager	Jim Tierney	(805) 522-7067	jimerniet@aol.com	2009 Wing Membership Renewal Form . 14
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HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064 HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348 WEBSITE www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal				Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing 455 Aviation Drive Camarillo, CA 93010-9501

* Denotes Staff Position

New Wing Leader: Robert Albee



© Photo by Jim Hinckley

Here's Robert in the cockpit of his pride and joy...the Fairchild F-24 that he and his crew are restoring.

"My fellow members: When I joined the CAF several years ago, my purpose was to have fun socializing with individuals who shared the same desires and needs I had. Simply stated, to be around, fly, and work on, old airplanes. This desire has certainly been fulfilled, and then some! As I became involved in the day-to-day activities of having so much fun, I soon discovered pleasure has its costs, like everything else – mainly, hard work, commitment, and responsibility. So much for the phrase, "kick back and enjoy life." How did this all occur? Look around – so many dedicated friends, past members, and guests created this wonderful thing called the CAF. Somehow all of you have pulled together over the past twenty years or more, and will continue to do so for the next twenty – even as another generation joins us in our love for old aircraft. Let's stick together, and we will do even better things in the coming years.

New Wing Staff members, including yours truly, were elected for the coming two years. We will be facing difficult challenges that we did not even consider until recently. To name just a few: (1) the slow-down in our economy, resulting in less Museum activities; (2) increased fuel, oil and ANUAC costs; (3) increased burden expenses; (4) increased maintenance costs; and (5) less air show activity for our touring birds. Bottom line is simple: less income.

Can we overcome these challenges? Absolutely yes! We will be creating a simple, but effective Business Plan with specific solutions to these challenges. Case in point: the starting of our Warbird Ride Program, using the SNJ-5 and the PT-19A this year. That program has been very successful, and is adding to our bottom line. Thanks to everyone who was, and is now involved in this program, it sure took a lot of hard work to get it off the ground.

We will have more Museum Special Event programs next year, adding to this year's Battle of Midway Day and Pearl Harbor Day, both of which contributed to our improved cash flow. On the other side of the coin, we have been

considering reducing our number of aircraft (Curtiss C-46 *China Doll* specifically) due to their high operating costs and inactivity. For those of you who do not know, the Wing must still pay to CAF HQ ANUAC fees and insurance yearly, even on aircraft that are not airworthy and sit on the tarmac. Multiply that cost by the several aircraft without offsetting income, and it gets real expensive real quick, costing several thousands of dollars for each aircraft. In other words, there is no free rent. A decision on *China Doll* will be made by Wing Staff in the middle of January.

In looking back on 2008, it has been, to say the least, a real education and mixed bag for our Wing. We overcame several challenges. Just to name a few: (1) our Museum being closed for several months in order to comply with local Fire Department regulations, which severely impacted our cash flow situation; (2) work on the completion of our Officers Club room; and (3) *China Doll* being down all year for repairs, making it impossible for her to go to any air shows. On the plus side, we are told that the Spitfire engine overhaul will be completed shortly, since the monies needed are now available via a CAF Grant and funds from other contributors. Joe Peppito's SNJ-4 engine has been run, and the aircraft will be flying within a few months. The Zero is in great shape, as are the F6F Hellcat and F8F Bearcat. The PBJ (B-25) and the Fairchild F-24 are still under restoration, and significant progress is being made. The PT-19 is now giving rides in the Warbird Ride Program. Good show – everyone! – and thanks! By the way, progress has also started on (1) cleaning up the Restoration Hangar; (2) installing shelving; and (3) painting safety lines on the floor to guide visitors around the Restoration Hangar.

In closing, I hope we have touched on a few of the important items we are all interested in, as well as giving you my opinion on a few different issues that effect each of us. Next month I will cover specific issues we must address head on, and their possible solutions. By the way, you are always welcome to come by the hangar for a chat, or just to say "hello." I am usually there three or four days a week working on the Fairchild F-24 (plug) or doing some fabric work. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays are the best days to visit.

You are also invited to attend our Staff Meetings – held on the second Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the "O" Club, and our General Membership Meetings, when announced. I understand that we are going back to the good old days of having hot dogs and hamburgers cooked by the King Of Cooks, Norm Swagler and crew.

Until next time...fly safe and stay warm."

Happy Holidays!

Lefty Gardner "Goes West"

Col. Marvin L. (Lefty) Gardner passed away on Dec. 24 at the age of 87. He was born on Sept. 10, 1921. He was a founder of the CAF. More information in our Feb. issue.

Outgoing Wing Leader: Steve Barber



"Fellow Wing members, it has been an honor and a privilege serving you for the past two years. Time flies when you are having fun. It seems like a short time ago when I joined the Wing in 1990. The Wing had an SNJ, C-46 and a member-owned Navion that it used for transportation. Joe Peppito was the Maintenance Officer, and encouraged me to join the Wing - which I did. Operating out of a WWII three-sided shed was an enthusiastic group of people who worked hard to educate the public about our nation's history. This is what I wanted to become an active participant in, and spent much time with the group.

In 1991, the CAF itself was in serious financial trouble, and I was fortunate in knowing David Price, who really stepped up to the plate, purchasing the "Old Zero" and, in turn, donating it back to the CAF. This selfless act by a wonderful member saved the CAF, and in doing so allowed your Wing to continue to grow.

I worked for six years and through three different airport administrations to come up with a long term lease we could live with in order for us to build our new hangars. We were out of space. Once an approved lease was obtained, we went to work raising the money necessary to build our new facilities. Many members stepped up to the plate. The leading force in this effort was Russ Drosendahl, followed shortly thereafter by Clay Lacy. Many of you donated what you could and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Ending that fundraising effort was done by Robert and Claire Reis. Their generous donation enabled your Wing to retire the debt on our new hangars!

Soon we acquired the F8f Bearcat and rebuilt it in record time. David Price soon took over the rebuilding of the F6F Hellcat from Midland, TX, and, after getting it flying, based

it at our Wing. Our fleet was growing! The Wing bought a bucket of parts that is soon to become a Fairchild 24R. David Price, closing his Museum in Santa Monica, wanted to know if we would like to house his artifacts. Yes! He also wanted to know if the CAF would like to buy some of his aircraft? Yes! We were able to acquire the A6M3 Zero with a sale of our old un-airworthy Zero to the Museum in Hawaii, and help from another wonderful friend, Gen. Reg Urschler. Soon we had the opportunity to purchase the Spitfire MKXIV. Once again, Gen. Urschler really stepped up to the plate and allowed us to payoff the balance for this rare WWII fighter.

None of our accomplishments would have been done without your staff and other members. Casey de Bree, Dave Long, Bill Main, Joe Peppito, Cliff Brown, Pat Brown, Gary Barber, Phil Most, Gene O'Neal, etc. All of you who have contributed so much know who you are. I thank you, one and all, from the bottom of my heart. I'm sorry I can't list all of you by name, but believe me your efforts will live on in our hearts and in the edifice we have created - your Wing.

Please give your support to your new Wing Staff as our Wing continues to grow and prosper.

Next goal, our NEW MUSEUM!"

Steve Barber



Here's Steve presiding at a Wing General Meeting.



Steve doing what he loves – flying! This time with a veteran Hellcat pilot who flew in our Warbird Ride Program.

New Maintenance Officer: Joe Peppito

"As your newly elected Maintenance Officer, I would like to thank all of the Wing members who put their faith in me and voted me into this position. As you all probably know, I have been the Maintenance Officer for the Southern California Wing in previous years, and have experienced many major changes: from working out of the back of our pickup trucks; then in the old open nose-hangar; and finally in our present facilities. There has been a lot of change, and there will continue to be more changes in the future.

We have two of the best hangars in the CAF, but they need to be better utilized and arranged. We have one of the best restoration records in the CAF, and we hope to continue and improve upon this record. We have one of the largest number of CAF aircraft assigned to this Wing, and we have been able to keep them in excellent operating and flying condition.

With the cooperation and support of the members of this Wing, I hope to be able to keep up this excellent record and also, if possible, to improve upon it. I know that I can count on you for your support during my tenure as your Wing Maintenance Officer. Let's all work together and make this the best aircraft operating and maintenance Wing in the CAF.

We must improve the condition and arrangement of the Restoration Hangar and also the ramp area. We will have more maintenance meeting to discuss some of our maintenance activities, problems and accomplishments. We will all have some fun and social gatherings so that we can all get together and enjoy ourselves.

These are just some of the improvements and changes we have planned for the future. Thank you for your support and cooperation!"



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

New Safety Officer: Norm Swagler



© Photo by Dave Flood

Norm checking the controls in the Fairchild F-24.

"As the So. Cal. Wing Safety Officer for 2009/2010, I hope to continue the good safety record of this Wing, and perhaps improve communication of safety issues to all members. I reluctantly took on this task at the request of other members, who knew the position was opening up and needed filling. I decided to run in order to give back to the Wing some of the benefits that have been given to me.

I expect to work with the newly-elected staff members and the existing staff to promote the safety issues that all members of this Wing face at one time or another. I obtained a copy of the CAF official publication *Safety Guide 4*, dated January, 2008 from Joe Peppito, and found that it deals mostly with reporting accidents rather than outlining safety issues like: training of vehicle operators, directing taxiing aircraft, or similar issues.

Without a doubt, there will be many safety issues to address in the coming years, from flight line operations to hangar maintenance; from museum operations to fire and earthquake drills; and to instructions to new members, and so on it goes.

I hope and expect that the So. CA Wing Staff and members will support and promote the resolution of safety issues that may arise throughout the year."

Editors Note: Norm has been a CAF member for about five years. He has devoted many hours to the restoration of our Fairchild F-24R Argus. He has also been our Personnel Officer for two years.

Norm worked as an electrical engineer for General Dynamics; Servo Corp. of America; and Grumman – serving with the latter for thirty-five years, six years in Bethpage, LI, NY and the remaining twenty-nine years at Pt. Mugu. Norm worked on the F-14 Tomcat program.

Norm and his wife Patience have been married over 50 years, and have three sons.

Executive Officer: Shirley D. Murphy



© Photo by Dave Flood

Shirley is a widow, and has been a member of our Wing for two + years. Her father was a 30-year veteran of Naval Aviation, and her brother was a pilot in the USAF for 25 years. She grew up as a "Navy Brat" and is very proud of that.

She has been a Code Enforcement Officer – handling investigations, case preparation and testifying. She has handled citizen disputes. Shirley served as President of the California Code Enforcement Association, and has completed studies in arrest, search and seizure, and is trained in the use of firearms.

Her volunteer and hobby experience includes: video/movie projects for Sheriffs Dept. Training and construction of City Hall; American Red Cross instructor & trainer; Ventura County Emergency Services Board; member of first aid team at Fire Base Camps; instructor for the Heart Assoc.

Shirley is also active as an artist: commercial graphics/ stained glass windows/ murals. She has done much work in designing and putting together displays in our Aviation Museum – Women in War; Vietnam; Korea; and WWI.

Her primary goal as our Wing Executive Officer will be to improve the communication within our Wing. She believes very much in the future of our Wing and our crew. She wants to dedicate her efforts towards our success of preserving history.

Charlie Valentine Home

Charlie is still recuperating, but is now at home, and would like to have you call: 805-482-2964, His address is: 124 Gardenia Ave., Camarillo, CA 93010.

New Adjutant: Terry Cedar



"Robert Albee, Wing Leader-Elect, asked me to take his position of SoCAWing Adjutant. He thought my aviation and business background and management experience would be helpful to the Wing.

My aviation background includes: being involved in taking over a small air ambulance company, Apollo Airways, based in Santa Barbara as an owner and its president. The company grew to a \$25 million operation, with more than 240 personnel. Apollo was also a partner in a large Piper dealership. We fell victim to a difficult economy in 1981, and consequently sold the FBO and the airline. I semi-retired, but then became president of Pacific Coast Airlines in 1983. After flying Convairs until the age of 60, I became president of Renown Aviation, a company flying Convairs and Lockheed Electras.

Ann and I have also had a construction company, and have been involved in real estate projects. The last one, which has been six years in the making, is now complete.

I was first recruited by John Deakin as a pilot for the CAF's C-131, and assisted in that capacity until the aircraft was sold. When the Financial Review Committee was formed, I became involved in the financial arena of the Wing, and have helped Casey from "behind the scenes," assisting in setting up the accounting system, and doing the accounts receivable along with collection efforts. I am also a pilot in the Warbird Ride Program, and coordinate all pilots' logs in preparing the monthly MCRP reports to CAF HQ.

The Wing has made tremendous strides over the past two years under the present leadership. It would be my desire to continue this forward movement by helping to establish the disciplines of clear channels of communication and understandable policies. They must be practical, efficient and effective.

It will be exciting working with Robert and Staff. I am certain a lot of positives will come from the talent and the make-up of the 2009 Staff !"

Wing Photo Page I: Pearl Harbor Day



© Photo by Dave Flood
Col. Jim Hinckley giving his well-researched presentation on the history of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Our WWII Aviation Museum staged the Special Event on Saturday, December 6.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Over 125 people attended Jim's presentation, and listened raptly as he took them back to 1941.



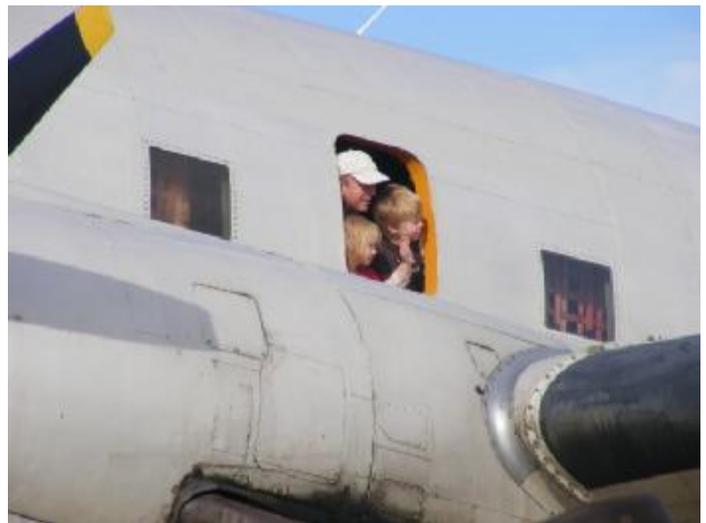
© Photo by Dave Flood
Malynnda Seeger, wife of Robert, helping sell warbird rides during our Special Event on December 6.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Our PT-19A and SNJ-5 poised to take riders aloft during Pearl Harbor Day – watched over by our “Mother Bird” C-46 *China Doll*, just out of restoration.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Stephanie Tagliaferri sitting pretty in our Hellcat. She was participating in our Cockpit Portrait Program, whereby visitors got their photos taken in the F6F. Chuck Williams did the photography, and Richard Witten made up the distinctive portrait frames.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Some of the excited young visitors who took delight in visiting *China Doll*, and waving to their parents . They could pretend to be flying “Over The Hump” in WWII.

Churchill Was His Copilot by Verna Gates MOAA, "Today's Officer," October, 2004 © Copyright MOAA

Bill Vanderkloot, an unassuming, studious American pilot, caught the attention of the Royal Air Force – and became pilot to England's most cherished leader in World War II.

When he first attracted the personal attention of the Royal Air Force (RAF) top brass in 1942, American William J. "Bill" Vanderkloot could think of no other reason than he was about to be called on the carpet. When he was driven to a backstreet in an RAF car and told to walk down a dark street to a dimly lighted door and knock, he was sure his days as an RAF ferry pilot were numbered.

However, when a man with a familiar round face, wearing a brightly colored dressing gown and blue velvet slippers initialed "P.M.," smiled and offered him a Scotch and soda, he very much needed a drink. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill simply smiled at his befuddled guest and said, "I understand we are going to Cairo."

"It took about two minutes to pick up my jaw when it dropped to the floor," recalled Vanderkloot. "Here was the greatest man in the world, and I was going to be associating with him as his pilot. It's enough to scare you to death."

For the next three years, Vanderkloot would become the person Churchill called "my young American pilot." He captained a big, matte-black, converted Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber, called *Commando*. In it, he flew across dangerous German-held territory to carry the English leader of the Allied powers to secret meetings in faraway places such as Cairo, Moscow, Casablanca, and Algiers.

Skilled and Steady

A native of Lake Bluff, Ill., Vanderkloot was a graduate of the best flight school of its day, the Parks Air College in East St. Louis, Ill. By the time World War II broke out in 1939, he was working as a commercial pilot, flying DC-2s and DC-3s.

In the early days of the war, England needed American-built planes. These were shipped across the Atlantic, a three-month journey, because it was considered suicidal to fly them across the North Atlantic. The tempestuous ocean was equaled by its temperamental weather. Few dared to forecast aviation meteorology for the North Atlantic; the techniques of the time were regarded as only slightly more reliable than fortunetelling.

Regardless, the British government in 1940 set up the RAF Ferry Command in Montreal to deliver the big planes via the air. In January 1941, civilian pilot Bill Vanderkloot was recruited at the incredible salary of \$1,000 a month – in tax-free dollars.

"You've got to remember, at that time, everyone thought Europe was going to fall. Almost all of it had, except England. That's the reason my father volunteered for Ferry

Command," explained William Vanderkloot, Jr. "It was a great risk. If you got shot down, there was no protection for you. That was it. Nothing coming to the family, unlike the military, with pensions and death benefits. It was a big chance for civilian pilots to take."

Vanderkloot considered himself a pilot patriot, not a warrior. Studious and reserved, he decided that to survive flying over great bodies of water, he had to become an expert celestial navigator. His navigation skills were so renowned that he was tapped to map out several routes to England. He also taught navigation in the training school and later wrote a textbook. It was this skill, coupled with superior piloting, that brought Vanderkloot to the attention of the RAF.

"He was an excellent pilot, an excellent navigator, and a gentleman. I believe that was the combination that made him the choice to fly Churchill," Vanderkloot Jr. said. To those who questioned Churchill about his choice of an American, the great statesman simply replied, "He was the best man for the job."

Ready – and Responsible (or...The Go-Ahead)

By July 1942, when Vanderkloot met with Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Portal, head of the RAF, he already had logged more than a million miles and flown a number of VIPs safely to such far-flung locations as Accra, Asmara, and Fiji.

Vanderkloot answered Portal's questions on how to fly to Cairo. A main concern for the RAF was dragging the aging Churchill through a number of airfields in Africa where no one dared travel without inoculations. Vanderkloot detailed a trip with one stop-off in Gibraltar. Portal was convinced: Vanderkloot and his crew of one American copilot and three Canadian engineers would fly Churchill.

"The plane and crew were my selection. That was some airplane, the Liberator. A fine airplane, built nicely. And the crew was the best; they knew that airplane inside and out," Vanderkloot said.



A Consolidated B-24 Liberator much like the one Bill Vanderkloot flew with Winston Churchill as his copilot.

According to *The Man Who Flew Churchill* (Bruce West, McGraw-Hill, 1975), Churchill often sat in the copilot's seat, a platform from which he could offer all of the direction and advice of a novice pilot. Once, while puffing away on an enormous cigar, the great man turned to the 26-year-old American and said, "You know what Hitler would do to me if ever he got his hands on me, don't you, Vanderkloot?" Vanderkloot nodded.

"But you're not going to let him do that, are you, Captain?" Churchill said, with a twinkle in his eye.

Vanderkloot's nerves were hardly steadied later when his copilot, Jack Ruggles, said, "The fellow is England, and if we ever dunk him in the drink... "

"It was a horrible feeling, the thought of losing Churchill," Vanderkloot recalled. "I would think, here I am, a civilian, and an American civilian at that, with the safety and the very life of the prime minister of Great Britain in my sweaty hands."

The Liberator flew alone in the skies with silence and darkness its only protection. "It was a mighty peculiar feeling. There was the prime minister getting into the plane after being escorted every foot of the way from 10 Downing Street to the airport. But when the door slammed shut, all those guards got back in their cars and left! It was now our responsibility," Vanderkloot said. "You could go crazy thinking about it, so I decided not to think about it, any more than I had to."

Vanderkloot safely guided the *Commando* into its first stop, Gibraltar. Churchill later described landing there. "It looked very dangerous... One could not see a hundred yards ahead, and we were not flying more than 30 feet above the sea. I asked Vanderkloot if all was all right, and I said I hoped he would not hit the Rock of Gibraltar. His answers were not particularly reassuring...."

"Then suddenly we flew into clear air, and up towered the great precipice of Gibraltar...and the mountain called Queen of Spain's Chair. After three hours of flying in the mist, Vanderkloot had been exact. We passed the grim rock face a few hundred yards away, without having to alter course, and made a perfect landing."

"Bringing Churchill into Gibraltar was like landing on an aircraft carrier," Vanderkloot said. "The runway was only 5,000 feet, and it wasn't ours."

In The Quiet Hours

It became customary for Churchill to take over the copilot's seat before dawn. Vanderkloot recalled listening to the great man "talk about things that had happened and things that were going to happen. He spoke fluently about what he would do if such and such might happen, but it never did. He had a great deal of concern about the reaction people would have to his actions and how the war was going. He only talked about himself in [one] respect: in that he liked flying. I let him fly some."

On the morning of August 4, 1942, Vanderkloot and his celebrity copilot flew into Egypt. Churchill wrote, "There in the pale glimmering dawn, the endless winding silver ribbon of the Nile stretched joyously before us. Often had I seen the day break on the Nile. Never had the glint of daylight on its waters been so welcome to me." One man must have felt an even greater relief: Churchill's bodyguard, who supposedly had orders to shoot the prime minister should the plane go down in enemy territory.

Churchill had traveled to Cairo to decide on a new commander for the African campaign, and he appointed Gen. Bernard Montgomery. Next stop: Russia, for the first face-to-face meeting with Soviet Premier Josef Stalin.

Destination Moscow

"They waited until we got to Cairo to tell me we were going to Moscow. I had mixed feelings. I didn't know if the airplane could go that far and into such a foreign country," said Vanderkloot. There was little aeronautical information about Russia.

On the first stop, in Tehran, Vanderkloot's early-hours copilot found that a little knowledge can reveal greater ignorance. Churchill told the story on himself in his memoirs:

"By dawn we were approaching the mountains of Kurdistan. The weather was good and Vanderkloot in high spirits...As we descended about 8:30 a.m. on the Tehran airfield and we were already close to the ground, I noticed the altimeter registered 4,500 feet, and ignorantly remarked, "You had better get that adjusted before we take off again." But Vanderkloot said, "The Tehran airfield is over 4,000 feet above sea level."

After a three-week trip, Vanderkloot returned his passengers safely to London. It had been a journey of 15,000 miles – with the entire Luftwaffe on alert for Churchill, a treasured trophy. In November, Vanderkloot was awarded the Order of the British Empire, a ribbon he was later to use to secure curtains to keep the sun out of Churchill's eyes, much to the prime minister's amusement.

Vanderkloot safely carried Churchill for three years. By 1945, the crew had flown more than 200,000 miles and more high-ranking officials than any other aircraft in the British service. However, the limits of luck were beginning to be tested. Every plane in the Luftwaffe was gunning for

Commando.

"Flying Churchill was a wonderful feeling and a wonderful position. I hated to give it up," Vanderkloot said. Churchill. What a man! He had everything! I was his friend and his greatest admirer, still am and always will be," Vanderkloot said.

(Bill Vanderkloot passed away April 8, 2000, in Ocala, FL at age 85.)

Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree



© Photo by Dave Flood

The museum's 2008 Christmas tree and holiday gift table.

As shown above, Holiday decorations show off the Museum Hangar's Gift Shop in all the season's colors. Thanks to Shirley Murphy, this area, as well as the rest of the Museum, is brightly and wonderfully decorated. A second tree greets our visitors as they make the turn over by the Women at War Display and the Home Front display looks just like a page out of yesteryear. Remember, for those unique stocking stuffers and last minute gifts, the Museum Gift Shop is the place to shop. Shop early, shop often!

Kicking off the Holiday Season was the Wing Christmas party. Over 100 members and their guest attended the event - and that sets an all-time record. Many thanks to Pat Brown for doing 'phone duty to remind the members of this season's get together. The party celebrated good food, good people and a common wish for 'Peace and Goodwill to all people'.

The Museum's Staff hosted a Special Event for Pearl Harbor Day. This event was perhaps our most successful to date. Many accolades from our visitors and members were offered for this unique presentation. Thanks to Ceci Stratford, Shirley Murphy, Jim Tierney, Jim Hinkelman, Dick Burrer, Ron Fleishman, and especially Jim Hinckley, our informed and very interesting moderator for the event, for bringing the information and materials together that made this such an outstanding day. Also we thank our Docents for keeping things running smoothly.

Some of our visitors included survivors of the Battle at Pearl Harbor as well as a civilian who was 12 years old that day and told us interesting stories about the unfolding of events.

Thanks also to our pilots - who provided interesting formations in their 'fly-overs' in the Zero, flown by Jason Somes, the Bearcat and Steve Barber and the Hellcat with

Gary Barber. The visitors love to see our Warbirds take to the sky and 'strut their stuff' as only this team of So. Cal. CAF members can do.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those members who have been very supportive of the Museum during this year. Whether it was moving display cases, cleaning the floor or writing a check, your support has been much appreciated. Each one of you has shown what can be accomplished when we all pitch in together for an even greater result.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season; a great finish to the year 2008; and new surprises and challenges for the new year 2009.

Until next time...



© Photo by Dave Flood

Some of the fabulous display pieces set up for the Pearl Harbor Special Event Day on December 6, 2008. Many unusual photos of the destruction wreaked on the U.S. Navy ships at Pearl by the Japanese were provided by our own Col. Richard Witten.



© Photo by Dave Flood

More of the outstanding Pearl Harbor Day display.

Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Marc Russell, our Safety Officer, conducting a special class on ramp safety techniques. Col. Al Kepler also helped in the safety presentation.



© 2008 *Eric Van Gilder*

© Photo by Eric Van Gilder www.vg-photo.com

Our three fighters stacked up over the CMA runway during the aerial segment of our Remember Pearl Harbor Day. From the top: Jason Somes in the Zero; Gary Barber in the Hellcat; and Steve Barber in the Bearcat. That's what we're all about – the visual demonstration of warbirds of WWII in actual flight! Our Special Event was planned and executed by members of the WWII Aviation Museum staff. Kudos!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Mike Perrenoud, pilot, and Col. Shirley Murphy, passenger, after their flight in the Fairchild PT-19A. Shirley was just ecstatic after her memorable ride.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Gil Brice showing his TLC treatment of the sewing of the Fairchild F-24R's right wing fabric. Right on, Gil!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Some of the members and spouses enjoying a night of fellowship and fun – plus wonderful food at our annual Christmas party on December 4. Our special speaker was Col. Charlie Plumb, who gave a marvelous talk on the spirit of survival during six years in a Viet Cong prison, and how we can use the same spirit of survival in our attempt to cope with our current problems.

Follow That Fjord!

by Dave Flood



© Photo courtesy of Charles Valentine

Bluie West One – situated at the end of Eriksfjord, with a glacier at its east end. Col. Charlie Valentine provided several photos of his approach to BW-1.

Bluie West One (BW-1) airfield was built on a glacial moraine at what is now the village of Narsarsuaq, near the southern tip of Greenland. Construction by the U.S. Army began in June, 1941, and the first plane landed there in January, 1942. As a link in the North Atlantic Ferry Route during World War II, it had a peak population of about 4,000 American servicemen, and it is estimated that some 10,000 aircraft landed there en route to the war in Europe and North Africa. Other important bases in Greenland were Bluie West Eight near the present-day town of Kangerlussuaq, and Bluie East One on the almost-uninhabited east coast.

Bad weather is frequent in southern Greenland, and Narsarsuaq is virtually surrounded by high mountains, making the approach to the steel-mat runway exceedingly difficult. The usual approach was a low-level flight up Eriksfjord. Landings were (and still are) made to the east, with takeoffs to the west, regardless of the wind direction.



© Photo Courtesy of Charles Valentine

Here's the entrance to Eriksfjord. Three fjords looked exactly alike, and the pilot had to choose the right one.

Bluie West One's importance declined postwar, but the U.S. Air Force maintained it as Narsarsuaq Air Base during the early Cold War years, when it served as a re-fueling station for jet fighters and for helicopters crossing the North Atlantic. The runway, by this time, had been paved with concrete. Jets require a longer take-off run than do propeller-driven aircraft, and the air base used a small tugboat to move icebergs out of the way of planes taking off over the basin west of the runway.

The advent of aerial refueling, and the opening of the larger Thule Air Base in northern Greenland, made BW-1 redundant, and it was turned over to the Danish government of Greenland in 1958. Today it is Narsarsuaq Airport, and is served by twice-weekly passenger jets from Reykjavik, Iceland, as well as by commuter aircraft from Kangerlussuaq and other Greenland airfields. The airport is designated UAK, and the runway headings are 07 for landing and 25 for takeoff (070 and 250 degrees magnetic). There is no control tower, and a 4,000-foot ceiling is advised for an approach on instruments.



© Photo by Jacky Simoud)

Narsarsuaq Airport today. Note the glacier to the east.

An important navigation aid for BW-1 occurred on July 6, 1942 when the supply ship *Montrose* hit a cliff and sank 16 nautical miles southwest of the airfield. Its rusting hulk became a checkpoint for pilots hoping to reach BW-1.

Eric Gann, in his famous book *Fate Is The Hunter*, tells about his flight to BW-1 in an overloaded DC-3 in 1942.

It is about thirty miles up the correct fjord on the north side. If you do not see that freighter you are in the wrong fjord... You will not actually see the field until you have made the last turn around that cliff; then it will appear all of a sudden so you'd better have your wheels down a little early. It's a single runway with quite an incline... You have to land whether you like it or not.

After approaching the fjord at 50 feet above the waves, Gann entered the fjord, and, when he finally spotted the *Montrose*, knew that he was on the right approach.

Thanks to Charles Valentine and to www.warbirdforum.com

“O” Club Now A Reality!

by Dick Burrer

Weaving his managerial magic, Col. Robert Blair has, through Herculean efforts, and with the help of his crew, met yet another pending deadline. Without the assistance of the following colonels, it would not have been possible:

John Jones, Vern Olson, Brian Hartill, Lloyd McAfee, Dick Roberts, Dick Troy, Robert Seeger, Dan Cuvier, Jim Price, Steve Barber, Sr., Steve Barber, Jr. and several others.

Another feat accomplished was arriving at the completed project at the CAF budget. Installation of the fire sprinklers, air conditioning/heating unit, and the dropped ceiling has been completed. The drywalls are completed and painted, now waiting for the second coat. We are now ready for the final inspection by the various government agencies.

All that remains is for the beautiful tile floor to be installed. Robert has negotiated a below-cost agreement for commercial-grade quarry tile – in 6” X 6” squares, 1/2” thick – plus ancillary materials. The estimated cost is \$3,000. The vendor states that the tile should last “in perpetuity” (or forever, whichever comes sooner).

So...to complete our “O” Club room, which will be used for Wing Staff Meetings; various committee meetings; Wing member lunches; special events; small Wing seminars; and for a place for caterers to set up for large hangar events, we are asking for donations.

If each member donated \$25, our goal would be met. However, ANY amount that fits your budget would be appreciated. As an additional incentive, members donating \$100 to \$300 will receive a raffle ticket for a good chance to ride in our SNJ-5. You could use it yourself or opt to give it to someone of your choice. Donations of \$300 or more will entitle you to have your name inscribed in one of the 6X6” tiles, or to have a name of someone you want memorialized in our “Gone West Walk of Memory.” In addition, the donors of \$300 and above will receive three raffle tickets for the SNJ-5 ride!

Some of our members have already contributed. Stephanie Tagliaferri has donated seed money of \$300, and Dan Eizak, a new member, has sent us \$100. We hope that you will join them in completing our project!

The time is now ! We have endured enough with the “O” Club as it has been for some time. Stop by and see how good it looks already.

Please make your check to: CAF – So CA Wing

(and mark on it “For ‘O’ Club Floor”)

and send to:

CAF – “O” Club Floor Fund

1746-F S. Victoria Avenue #421

Ventura, CA 93003-6538

We’re “floored” by your generosity ! Thank you !

SoCAWing’s Spitfire Receives Restoration Grant From CAF

by Dave Flood

Our Supermarine Mk XIV Spitfire has received a Restoration Grant from the CAF. This is a “matching-fund” grant of \$50,000, and Steve Barber has announced that we already have \$25,000 donated in Wing matching funds. This money will be used to pay for the completion of the Spitfire’s Rolls Royce Griffon engine, currently under rebuild in Tehachapi.

Our Wing was the sixth recipient of Restoration Grant matching funds authorized by the CAF’s Restoration Grant Committee. So far, \$160,000 has been awarded to six CAF aircraft. CAF President Steve Brown has said that “we look forward to the matching-fund grants putting more aircraft back in the air.”

Those Wing members responsible for us receiving this important grant include: Steve Barber, Casey de Bree, Bill O’Neill, Terry Cedar and Les Bedding.

We are indebted to these hard-working members who put their minds and expertise together and came up with this important source of funds to get our Spitfire flying again.

In Memoriam: Karl P. Eichner



Karl P. Eichner – May 14, 1928 – November 2, 2008

As a young man in his native Bavaria, Karl served as a student-soldier in the Luftwaffenoberhelfer – in the same battalion as the present Pope Benedict XVI. After the war, he attended Cornell and Columbia as a Fulbright Fellow, and fell in love with America. He returned to the U.S. in 1953, and filed his “Intent To Become A Citizen” papers. Karl loved being an American, but always kept connected to his beloved Bavaria.

Karl was a longtime member of the CAF – Southern CA Wing, and was a founding member of the Palm Springs Air Museum. All of us send our condolences to his family.



Southern California Wing
 455 Aviation Drive
 Camarillo, CA 93010

2009 WING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

January 1, 2009

Dear Wing Member,

It's time again to renew your annual membership in the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force. We sincerely hope you will retain your affiliation with our wing since we expect exciting things to happen in 2009.

We are one of the leading wings in the CAF with more than 225 Wing members and 10 assigned aircraft. Our museum has become a major attraction in Ventura County and both attendance and museum income have risen steadily. Our plans are to continue this growth and we want you to be a part of these exciting happenings.

To renew your membership, just remove this page from the newsletter (or make a copy of it), complete the information requested, enclose your check payable to the Southern California Wing, and return by March 1, 2009 to:

CAF Southern California Wing
 455 Aviation Drive
 Camarillo, CA 93010
 Attn: Personnel Officer

Any contribution in addition to your \$50.⁰⁰ annual dues will be greatly appreciated. Contributions are welcome to help us complete the many projects we are undertaking, such as building the new museum facility, the B-25/PBJ restoration, the SNJ-4 restoration, the Fairchild F-24 restoration, the Spitfire restoration and any other project you may wish to support.

If you joined the Southern California Wing in October, November, or December 2008 your dues are considered paid for 2009, but any contribution to any of our projects that you wish to make will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert Albee, Wing Leader

2009 Wing Dues	\$50. ⁰⁰
Hangar/Museum Building Fund	_____
B-25/PBJ Restoration	_____
SNJ-4 Restoration	_____
Fairchild F-24 Restoration	_____
Spitfire Restoration	_____
Other _____	_____
Total	_____

Name: _____ Col. #: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S GREAT COMBAT AIRCRAFT
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CAF ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE