

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

Southern California Wing
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Visit us online at www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal



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



© Photo by Dave Flood

The Wing's "Fabric Gurus," Gil Brice and George Sands, patiently plying their long needles in the stitching of our Fairchild F-24's left wing fabric covering. Already expert in the art of riveting fabric to metal control structures, this daring duo took on the ancient art of stitching fabric to wood, and are becoming very sharp at the task. See Page 3 for more F-24 photos.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, June 14, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

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

June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Work Day	4	5 Work Day	6 D-Day	7 Work Day
8	9 Museum Closed	10 Work Day	11 Museum Closed	12 Work Day	13	14 Work Day Staff Meeting 9:30 AM Flag Day
15 Father's Day	16 Museum Closed	17 Work Day	18 Museum Closed	19 Work Day	20	21 Work Day Amed Forces Day
22	23 Museum Closed	24 Work Day	25 Museum Closed	26 Work Day	27	28 Work Day
29	30 Museum Closed					

	STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS		IN THIS ISSUE
Wing Leader	* Steve Barber (805) 485-5405	f8f2cat@gmail.com	Wing Calendar 2
Executive Officer	* Jason Somes (818) 292-4646	nbnh@aol.com	Staff and Appointed Positions. 2
Adjutant	* Bob Albee (805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Fairchild F-24R Update 3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree (805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	You Could Have Heard A Pin Drop 4
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber (805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	Air Show Schedule 4
Maintenance Officer	* (Vacant)		Wing Flying Sponsors 4
Safety Officer	* Marc Russell (805) 955-9404	captmarcr@aol.com	Fly Like An Eagle 5
Museum Director	Sarah de Bree (805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	USN VX-30 "Dining In" 6
Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree (805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Wing Photo Page I 7
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Hangar Event Mgr	Dick Burrer (805) 444-8285	gatjohnston@aol.com	Flying "The Hump" 9
Chief Docent	(Vacant)		Museum Update 10
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Facility Officer	Bob Albee (805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Wing Photo Page II 13
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			455 Aviation Drive
			Camarillo, CA 93010-9501

* Denotes Staff Position

Fairchild F-24R Restoration Update

by Dave Flood



© Photo by Dave Flood

Photo Board created by Crew Member Jim Hinckley.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Norm Swagler working on the trailing edge of the F-24's right wing.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Dan Cuvier checking specs for an F-24 project.



© Photo by Dave Flood

The F-24 crew readying the plane for an engine run-up.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Contact! Bob Albee at the controls. Norm directing!



© Photo by F-24 Crew Member Jim Hinckley

Dave Sica checking on engine run-up conditions. Note the special gravity-feed gas tank, mounted with the intake nozzle set for air-to-air refueling on long trips.*

***(just kidding!)**

To become a "Silent Member" of the F-24 Crew, please send your donation to: F-24 Restoration, Commemorative Air Force, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010. You will be a very important member of our team!

You Could Have Heard A Pin Drop...

There was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and American engineers. During a break, one of the French engineers came back into the room saying, "Have you heard the latest dumb stunt Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims. What does he intend to do, bomb them?"

A Boeing engineer stood up and replied quietly: "Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with the capability of feeding 3,000 people three meals a day; they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh water from sea water each day; and they carry half a dozen helicopters for use in transporting victims and injured to and from their flight deck."

[You could have heard a pin drop...](#)

A U.S. Navy admiral was attending a naval conference that included admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French navies. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries.

Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks, but a French admiral suddenly complained that, "Whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English." He then asked, "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitation, the American admiral replied, "Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German."

[You could have heard a pin drop...](#)

A group of Americans, retired teachers, recently went to France on a tour. Robert Whiting, an elderly gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane. At French customs, he took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carry-on bag. "You have been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically. Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously. "Then you should know enough to have your passport ready," said the officer.

The American said, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it." "Impossible. Americans always have to show their passports on arrival in France!" The American senior gave the Frenchman a long, hard look. Then he quietly explained, "Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach on D-Day in 1944 to help liberate your country, I couldn't find any damn Frenchman to show it to."

[You could have heard a pin drop...](#)

Tunnel Harvey: The Great Escape

Nearly everyone has seen *The Great Escape* at least once, but this is about how the tunnel was built.

The interactive map is also very creative, but in perspective not nearly as much as the creativity and fortitude it took to engineer the escape itself. The animation alone is worth looking at, but the story of the tunnel is amazing.

This WWII tunnel escape story was the inspiration for the Steve McQueen movie in the 1960s.

Electric lighting; a railroad; an air ventilation system. Against incredible odds, the Allied airmen imprisoned at the Nazi POW camp Stalag Luft III secretly engineered these and other technological marvels thirty feet underground in the three escape tunnels they named "Tom," "Dick," and "Harry." They used only tools that they could manufacture themselves out of tin cans, and they scavenged building materials at great risk. When they were done, the airmen carried out one of the greatest mass escapes of all time.

Through this interactive map, drawn after the war by one of the POWs, Ley Kenyon, explore the remarkable story of "Harry," the 300-foot tunnel that 76 men snuck through during their infamous getaway on the night of March 24-25, 1944.

Run your cursor over the numbers to read the descriptive text for each station. Click on the link below, and enjoy the story of the tunnel named "Harry."

<http://www.kerman94.com/tunnelharry.html>

Note: for those of you receiving this newsletter in printed form, you'll have to find a computer and input the above website address to view the tunnel graphic.

Wing Air Show Schedule

7/28-8/3	AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI	F6F, Zero (tent.)
9/20-21	Airsho 2008, Midland, TX	All

Other air shows are under negotiation, and we hope to have more info for you next month.

Wing's Flying Sponsors

Bob Button, Winters, CA	Spitfire NX749DP	\$10,000
Mike Perrenoud, T.O., CA	PT-19A Cornell	\$1,500
Ken Gottschall, Ventura, CA	F6F N1078Z	\$10,000

Thanks so much, gentlemen, from the bottom of all of the hearts of our Wing! You are really "Keeping 'Em Flying!"

Fly Like An Eagle by Nathaniel Liedl, City Editor *The Daily Independent, Ridgecrest, CA*

If you've ever dreamt of joining the planes flying high above the Indian Wells Valley, there's no longer any excuse not to.

You'll have to join the military to fly the ubiquitous F/A-18 Hornet or the EA-6B Prowler, but, thanks to a partnership between Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and Inyokern Airport, anyone can now attain their pilot's license.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Jason Vosburgh, a member of our Wing

Jason Vosburgh, an economics and marketing professor with Embry-Riddle – the “Harvard of the Sky,” instigated the relationship and serves as a liaison between the university and the airport.

“Aviation will change your life for the better,” said Vosburgh. “There’s nothing like it.”

Embry-Riddle has over 27,000 students at 130 campuses and teaching sites in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Middle East. The worldwide headquarters is located in Daytona Beach, Fla., but to say China Lake and other sites are “not as good as the main campuses is wholly wrong,” said Vosburgh. The teachers are comprised of a “very dynamic group.” Approximately 80 per cent of

airplane pilots graduate from Embry-Riddle, said Vosburgh.

It's easy for Vosburgh to get his students excited about flying – airplanes are his passion. He began when he was 17 and now owns his own warplane, built in 1946. Vosburgh also served two years as Chief Financial Officer for the Commemorative Air Force's WWII Aviation Museum in Camarillo – the largest purveyor of warbirds for airshows.

“Most people know they want to do it, they just don't know how,” said Vosburgh of flying. “There's a mental wall. And it's very gratifying and fun for me.”

Those interested do not even need to be Embry-Riddle students. For initial lift-off, prospective flyers pay for a 45-minute “discovery flight” with a local flight instructor.

“That's for everybody to get off the couch and see if you like it. So you can bring friends, family ...and have your first experience flying a powered airplane,” said Vosburgh, adding, “nine out of ten times the student gets bit.”

There's no set number of hours before being cut loose for a solo flight. The flight instructor determines when the student is prepared. It is feasible to obtain a student certificate in four weeks, as long as you pass a doctor's physical, according to Vosburgh.

“Once you get a feel for the plane, soloing is very, very fast, usually 10 hours,” said Vosburgh.

However, flying students must amass a minimum of 40 hours in the sky, divided between solo and dual flights with an instructor, for their license. Student pilots can fly by themselves or with a flight instructor, but flyers with their pilot's license can take passengers.

“If someone flies only twice every six months, he/she will probably forget what they learned the last lesson. Flight instruction is also pay-as-you-go. As you accumulate skill with the airplane, the more you can do, and flying just gets better and better. You're never done learning as a pilot – that's one of the joys of aviation. There's always a new skill, or a new aircraft to master.”



Jason Vosburgh's North American Navion N91104.

Thanks to Col. Jason Vosburgh for sending this article to us.

U.S. Navy Test and Evaluation Squadron VX-30 “Dining In”

by Dave Flood

On Friday, May 2, 2008, approximately 40 members of VX-30, the Navy’s Test and Evaluation Squadron stationed at Pt. Mugu Naval Air Station, had a special “Dining In” event in our WWII Aviation Hangar.

Dick Burrer, our Special Events Manager, worked closely with Lt. Charles Fatora in the planning of the event. DJ’s was the caterer for the evening.

The “brass” (Commanders and Lt. Commanders) arrived early. The ‘troops’ came in en masse, whooping and hollering, about 5:45 p.m., dressed in their flight suits, with fake bibs underneath looking like a tux shirt (complete with fake bow ties). Some of the “troops” wore sombreros; one had a feather-topped artillery cap; one wore a sword; and a woman member of the squadron came adorned with a bright pink wig. It was some spectacle, believe me! Obviously, there was a lot of camaraderie and they had lots of fun during the dinner meeting.

Dick and his able crew of workers, including Mike Perrenoud, Ken Gottschall, Ron Fleishman, and Mike McWaid, moved planes around so that the Navy squadron had our Zero, Hellcat, and Bearcat in the background overlooking their tables. They were also there late to put things back in order. Kudos to all!

VX-30 set up a special lone table in honor of all POWs/MIAs. The table was round to signify that “our concern for them is never ending.” The bible on the table represented “faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.” The black napkin stood for “the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends.” The single red rose reminded us “of their families and loved ones; and the red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation’s call.”

Col. Don McMillan [Commander, USN, (ret.)] was a guest of honor, and brought with him memorabilia and photos depicting some of his experiences flying TBF Avenger torpedo bombers in the Pacific Theater during WWII. He is particularly proud of his Navy Cross, awarded for helping to sink the Japanese aircraft carrier Zuikaku during the Battle of Cape Engano, Oct. 25, 1944.

The attending pilots were in awe of Don and asked him many questions concerning his battle experiences.

Successful events held in our Museum Hangar are the result of long, hard planning and work on the part of Dick Burrer and our volunteers. Please help in getting the word out to organizations you are involved with that our Museum Hangar is a great place for their special event. Have them get in touch with Dick at (805) 444-8285, and he will get the ball rolling to plan and execute an event that they will long remember.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Don McMillan, Cmdr. USN (Ret.), with officers of VX-30, at their “Dining In” in our Museum Hangar.



Cmdr. Christopher D. Junge, Commanding Officer, Air Test and Evaluation Squadron VX-30.

Commander Junge personally thanked Dick Burrer, our Special Events Manager, for the Wing’s gracious and well-planned event. He presented Dick with a plaque honoring our Wing. Dick’s remarks include, “We are the blessed ones to have been a small part of an event involving such a talented and dedicated group of Naval officers.”



© Photo by Dave Flood

Appreciation Plaque given by VX-30 to our Wing.

Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood
Two of the “Caballeros” of VX-30. Note the “bibs.”



© Photo by Dave Flood
The “troops” of VX-30 arrayed in their finest. Cool!



© Photo by Dave Flood
Two of the female officers got into the act. Note the sombrero on the spinner of our Fairchild PT-19A!



© Photo by Ron Fleishman
Table set aside in honor of all POWs and MIAs.



© Photo by Dave Flood
One of two new 101 Freeway signs approaching the Las Posas exit. Thanks to Don Katz, Pat Brown, Casey de Bree, and Frank Doerfler and others for their untiring efforts to get the signs placed on the freeway!



D-Day, June 6, 1944 – First Wave, Omaha Beach, Normandy, France. We will always remember them!

Piggyback Hero

by Ralph Kenney Bennett (2003)

On December 31, 1944 Capt. Glenn Rojohn, of the 8th Air Force's 100th Bomb Group was flying his B-17G Flying Fortress bomber on a raid over Hamburg. His formation had braved heavy flak to drop their bombs, then turned 180 degrees to head out over the North Sea. They had finally turned northwest, headed back to England, when they were jumped by German fighters at 22,000 feet. The Messerschmitt Me-109s pressed their attack so closely that Capt. Rojohn could see the faces of the German pilots. He and other pilots fought to remain in formation so they could use each other's guns to defend the group. Rojohn saw a B-17 ahead of him burst into flames and slide sickeningly toward the earth. He gunned his ship forward to fill in the gap. He felt a huge impact. The big bomber shuddered, felt suddenly very heavy and began losing altitude. Rojohn grasped almost immediately that he had collided with another plane. A B-17 below him, piloted by Lt. William G. McNab, had slammed the top of its fuselage into the bottom of Rojohn's. The top turret gun of McNab's plane was now locked in the belly of Rojohn's plane and the ball turret in the belly of Rojohn's had smashed through the top of McNab's. The two bombers were almost perfectly aligned -- the tail of the lower plane was slightly to the left of Rojohn's tailpiece. They were stuck together, as a crewman later recalled, "like mating dragon flies."



Three of the engines on the bottom plane were still running, as were all four of Rojohn's. The fourth engine on the lower bomber was on fire and the flames were spreading to the rest of the aircraft. The two were losing altitude quickly. Rojohn tried several times to gun his engines and break free of the other plane. The two were inextricably locked together. Fearing a fire, Rojohn cut his engines and rang the bailout bell. For his crew to have any chance of parachuting, he had to keep the plane under control somehow.

The ball turret, hanging below the belly of the B-17, was considered by many to be a death trap -- the worst station on the bomber. In this case, both ball turrets figured in a swift and terrible drama of life and death. Staff Sgt.

Edward L. Woodall, Jr., in the ball turret of the lower bomber had felt the impact of the collision above him and saw shards of metal drop past him. Worse, he realized both electrical and hydraulic power was gone.?

Remembering escape drills, he grabbed the handcrank, released the clutch and cranked the turret and its guns until they were straight down, then turned and climbed out the back of the turret up into the fuselage. Once inside the plane's belly Woodall saw a chilling sight, the ball turret of the other bomber protruding through the top of the fuselage. In that turret, hopelessly trapped, was Staff Sgt. Joseph Russo. Several crew members of Rojohn's plane tried frantically to crank Russo's turret around so he could escape, but, jammed into the fuselage of the lower plane, it would not budge. Perhaps unaware that his voice was going out over the intercom of his plane, Sgt. Russo began reciting his Hail Marys.

Up in the cockpit, Capt. Rojohn and his co-pilot 2nd Lt. William G. Leek, Jr., had propped their feet against the instrument panel so they could pull back on their controls with all their strength, trying to prevent their plane from going into a spinning dive that would prevent the crew from jumping out. Capt. Rojohn motioned left and the two managed to wheel the huge, collision-born hybrid of a plane back toward the German coast. Leek felt like he was intruding on Sgt. Russo as his prayers crackled over the radio, so he pulled off his flying helmet with its earphones.

Rojohn, immediately grasping that crew could not exit from the bottom of his plane, ordered his top turret gunner and his radio operator, Tech Sgts. Orville Elkin and Edward G. Neuhaus to make their way to the back of the fuselage and out the waist door on the left behind the wing. Then he got his navigator, 2nd Lt. Robert Washington, and his bombardier, Sgt. James Shirley to follow them. As Rojohn and Leek somehow held the plane steady, these four men, as well as waist gunner, Sgt. Roy Little, and tail gunner, Staff Sgt. Francis Chase, were able to bail out.

Now the plane locked below them was aflame. Fire poured over Rojohn's left wing. He could feel the heat from the plane below and hear the sound of 50 machine gun ammunition "cooking off" in the flames. Capt. Rojohn ordered Lieut. Leek to bail out. Leek knew that without him helping keep the controls back, the plane would drop in a flaming spiral and the centrifugal force would prevent Rojohn from bailing. He refused the order.

Meanwhile, German soldiers and civilians on the ground that afternoon looked up in wonder. Some of them thought they were seeing a new Allied secret weapon -- a strange eight-engined double bomber. But anti-aircraft gunners on the North Sea coastal island of Wangerooge had seen the collision. A German battery captain wrote in his logbook at 12:47 p.m:

"Two fortresses collided in a formation in the NE. The planes flew hooked together and flew 20 miles south. The two planes were unable to fight anymore. The crash could

be awaited so I stopped the firing at these two planes."

Suspended in his parachute in the cold December sky, Bob Washington watched with deadly fascination as the mated bombers, trailing black smoke, fell to earth about three miles away, their downward trip ending in an ugly boiling blossom of fire.

In the cockpit Rojohn and Leek held grimly to the controls trying to ride a falling rock. Leek tersely recalled, "The ground came up faster and faster. Praying was allowed. We gave it one last effort and slammed into the ground." The McNab plane on the bottom exploded, vaulting the other B-17 upward and forward. It slammed back to the ground, sliding along until its left wing slammed through a wooden building and the smoldering mess of came to a stop. Rojohn and Leek were still seated in their cockpit. The nose of the plane was relatively intact, but everything from the B-17 massive wings back was destroyed. They looked at each other incredulously. Neither was badly injured.

Two of the six men who parachuted from Rojohn's plane did not survive the jump. But the other four and, amazingly, four men from the other bomber, including ball turret gunner Woodall, survived. All were taken prisoner. Several of them were interrogated at length by the Germans until they were satisfied that what had crashed was not a new American secret weapon.

Rojohn, typically, didn't talk much about his Distinguished Flying Cross. Of Leek, he said, "In all fairness to my co-pilot, he's the reason I'm alive today."

The two were re-united at a reunion of the 100th Bomb Group in Long Beach, California in 1987. Bill Leek died the following year.

Glenn Rojohn was the last survivor of the remarkable piggyback flight. He was like thousands upon thousands of men, soda jerks and lumberjacks, teachers and dentists, students and lawyers and service station attendants and store clerks and farm boys who in the prime of their lives went to war. He died in 2003 after a long siege of sickness. Let us be thankful for such men.



Capt. Glenn Rojohn and his B-17 crew in England.

Flying "The Hump"

by Wally Brown

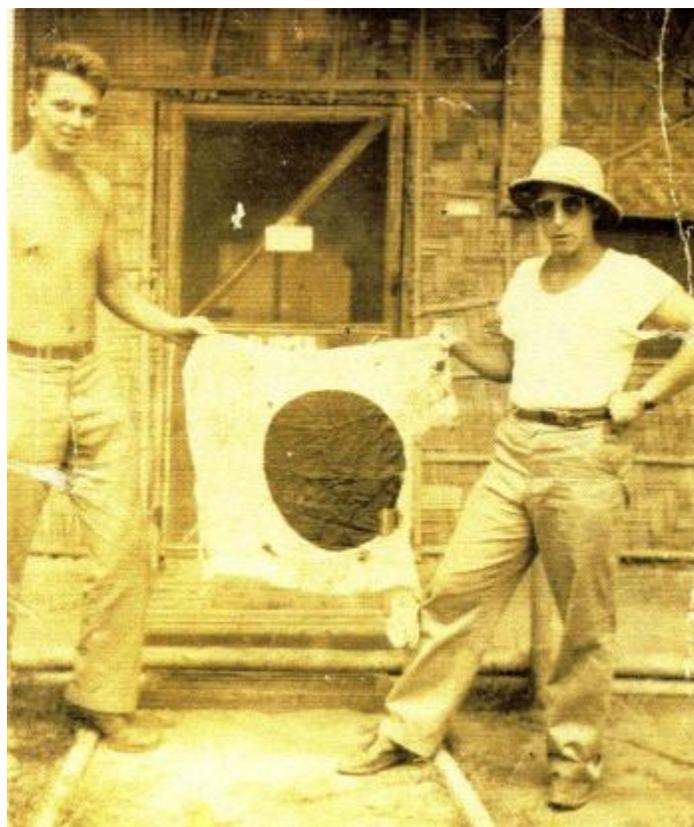


Photo Courtesy of Wally Brown

Wally Brown (left) and Paul Behm, in front of their eight-man basha (living quarters) at Mohanbari, India.

I had been flying The Hump steadily for over two months when the Japanese decided to mount an invasion into India. As the Japanese approached the India-Burma border, many units of the British 14th Army were by-passed and isolated in the area of the Kaladan River in Western Burma. Five Mohanbari aircraft (C-46s) were detached from Hump flying to join a few other aircraft from sister bases to provide aerial supply to these units. I flew five air drop missions in this manner between 27 and 29, February, 1944, until an engine fire and emergency landing put our aircraft out of action.

I returned to Mohanbari and resumed flying The Hump until 19 March, 1944. By this time, the Japanese advance had crossed the Indian border and the cities of Imphal and Kohima were being threatened. Between 20 March and 31 March I flew eighteen missions, sometimes three a day, into Imphal and satellite airstrips carrying ammunition and supplies in and bringing wounded out.

On one of these trips, Paul got the flag shown pictured in the above photo, by horse-trading with one of the evacuated combatants. We did not get too close to the combat except having a few landings waved off because the airstrip was under artillery or mortar fire.

On 16 April, 1944 I continued flying The Hump, making the last of 106 missions on 17 September, 1944.

Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree



Gen. James Doolittle of the "Doolittle Raiders"

The Museum's first topic in the "Special Events" series is the Jimmy Doolittle mission to reach Tokyo Bay and surrounding targets.



This 'Heavenly Body' B-25 flew in from the Van Nuys Airport to join in our festivities as we paid special tribute to the role this type aircraft played in the mission to prove that the US could reach the Japanese shores and even administer damage prior to setting a heading toward China. Some made it, some didn't, but every single man that made up the Jimmy Doolittle mission on April 18, 1942 was a hero on that day.



B-25 Executive Sweet

Our neighbor, Ed Schnepf, graciously agreed to bring over his B-25 to join in the celebration. Many thanks to both B-25 owners for coming to the party and thanks also to Ceci Stratford for arranging for these planes to come to Camarillo.



Col. Jim Hinckley

Jim Hinckley gave a very interesting talk about Jimmy Doolittle and some highlights of his career as well as details of the 'Doolittle Raid'. My five-year-old grandson was sitting on my lap listening to Jim's talk. At one point he looked up at me and said, "Oh Grandma, he's good!" 'Out of the mouths of babes!'



Jimmy Doolittle's Tokyo Raid. Many thanks to Shirley Murphy, and her Museum helpers, for the arrangement of this photo depiction of the Doolittle mission.



Thanks, Ceci, for another successful SNJ Photo Op.!

Until Next Time...

Doolittle Raid Special Event Photos



© Photo by Dave Flood

Stars of the CAF-SoCAWing Special Event on May 10 were the B-25Js "Executive Sweet" and "Heavenly Body." What a thrill to see them land and taxi up to our hangars! Many thanks to their crews for coming!



Photo Courtesy of B-25 Heavenly Body

"Heavenly Body" was the first B-25 in 50 years to take off from a carrier. Here she is taking off in April, 1992 from the USS Ranger (CV-61) in San Diego Bay, commemorating the April, 1942 Doolittle Raid.



© Photo by Dave Flood

B-25 "Executive Sweet's" new nose art by John Thow. It is our pleasure to have "ES" as our neighbor!



© Photo by Dave Flood

B-25 "Executive Sweet" proudly flies her stars & stripes plus the POW/MIA flag honoring those who did not return.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our ramp was crowded with warbirds! Our fighters took off at 2:30 p.m. and flew flybys along with B-25 "Executive Sweet." A good crowd attended.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our SNJ-4 #N6411D was rolled out for the attendees to see. It is almost ready for engine run-up, and should be flying in the not-too-distant future!

How to Make A Boy Very Happy!

By Dan Newcomb

We only had two planes at the "Warbirds In Action" air show at Minter Field in Shafter, CA this year, but we made the most of what we had. Jason Somes and Ken Gottschall flew the Zero and Hellcat and the crowd really loved it! Seeing a real Zero and a real Hellcat dueling in the sky is very special.

On the ground both pilots also made a huge contribution by making themselves available for questions and cockpit tours. This was Ken's first show with the Hellcat but he caught on quickly to the public relations part. Jason is an old hand and I have always marveled at his patience with the public. Cockpit tours in a Zeke are not to be taken for granted, but Jason will always grant one to a veteran and selected others.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Little Kenny waving from his perch in the Hellcat.

I had an opportunity to follow Jason's lead and make a little boy very happy indeed. His dad told me that he had just gone through a divorce and that it had really been tough on his boy. His dad told me that this was his son's first air show and that his favorite airplane was the Hellcat. Well, with that information you know that I had to give the kid a cockpit tour. But it got a lot more exciting thanks to Ken Gottschall.

Ken told me to put the boy in the seat and let him ride out to the ramp as the tug pushed the plane along. I jumped up on the wing and away we went, right down the flight line in front of the crowd. As we passed in front of hundreds of spectators I realized we were the center of attention and I couldn't have been more proud. I don't think that I have ever seen a kid so excited and so thankful! I could hear people making comments as we rolled by.

When we stopped, and after I helped him down, his dad told me that when they walked out to the flight line the first plane his son saw was our Hellcat and he couldn't believe it. Then, when he found out that it was going to fly they both really got excited! But having his son ride down the ramp was simply awesome!



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Little Kenny just prior to his ride down the flight line!

I must admit that I felt pretty "awesome" to have played a small role in this little drama. And we all created a ton of good will for the So Cal Wing of the CAF. Needless to say, our buttons were popping off with the pride that we felt!

As a follow-up to this heart-warming story, I received an e-mail message from the dad after I had forwarded some photos I took of his son in the Hellcat. Little did we all know that not only was the pilot named Ken, but so were the dad and the excited little boy! How great a coincidence is that?

Here are excerpts of the dad Ken's "thank you" message to me:

The pictures are great. My son Kenny will love them. I will have copies made so he can show his friends. He told me that he did not think he would ever see a Hellcat. He was so happy just to see one. He was blown away when he got to sit in and actually ride in one! That is all he talked about for the rest of the weekend. He also drew pictures of Hellcats. Maybe he can meet you again and talk planes. I could not believe how much Kenny knew about all the planes at the show. We had a great time! Thanks again...we will never forget it.

Signed: Ken and little Kenny.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

The Zero and Hellcat doing their thing at the show.

Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Dave Flood

Gene O'Neal putting final touches to the new floor boards of our C-46 *China Doll*. Our "Mother Ship" is still in the Restoration Hangar, ready for riveting to start.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Matt Norklun giving TLC to his favorite SNJ-5 #290



© Photo by Dave Flood

Rose Avenue School students who recently visited our WWII Aviation Museum, with their teacher.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Japanese photography team who visited in May – taking many photos of our Zero, and also taking air-to-air photos of the Zero & Bearcat from B-25 "Executive Sweet". Here examining the Zero's wingtip mechanism.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Atsushi "Fred" Fujimori, aviation photographer extraordinaire, who was with us for awhile taking photos of our Bearcat and Zero on special assignment.

New Website Under Construction

With the enthusiasm of Ken Gottschall, who has visions of a website where the Wing can merchandise tee-shirts, caps, mugs, etc. tied in with our individual warbirds, and with the generosity and expertise of Bill Allen, President and CEO of AICS Global, and son of Wing member Don Allen, we are up and running with a new website! It will be under construction for some time, but you can access it easily now by going to: www.cafsocal.com.

Dave Flood will continue to be the Wing Webmaster, and will receive much-needed help from Ken, Bill and others who will provide graphic art and website expertise, making for a more easily-accessed website, and one where we can start to supplement our finances with merchandise sold over the Internet.

Many thanks to Ken and Bill for their time and effort!

Wing Photo Page III



© Photo by Dave Flood

Here's our Warbird Flight Program pilot Jason Some showing a recent rider where they'll be flying. To reserve a ride for a loved one, call 805-482-0064.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Irv Cohen, a recent visitor, flew B-24s in WWII.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Guests at Russ Drosendahl's birthday breakfast at The Way Point. The genial host was Jim Hinckley (left).



© Photo by Dave Flood

Russ with his grandson Eric Lange, and his daughter Julie Lange. Russ received a watch for his 86th.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Bill Main, Russ's friend of many years, probably telling Russ how much better the B-17 was over the B-24.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Another of Russ's cronies, Joe Peppito, giving Russ a hard time about something in the past. A good time was had by all, especially Russ on his 86th birthday!