

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**

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



© U.S. Navy Photo  
**A Grumman TBM taking off from the USS Lexington (CV-16) in 1944.**

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© Photo by Jack & Jo Brinckerhoff

**CDR Don McMillan, USN (Ret.)  
1920-2010**

Our long-time member and friend, Don McMillan, died on Saturday, May 22, 2010 at the age of 89. The photo above was taken at CAF, Midland on the occasion of Don's being inducted into the American Combat Airman's Hall of Fame in 2007. His wife May is sharing his pride at the awards ceremony. Don was one of our true American heroes, and we shall dearly miss him. See a remembrance of Don on Pages 4 through 8.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, June 12, 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.**

# June 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday and major holidays</b>		1 <b>Work Day</b>	2	3 <b>Work Day</b>	4	5 <b>Work Day</b>
6 <b>D-Day</b>	7 <b>Museum Closed</b>	8 <b>Work Day</b>	9	10 <b>Work Day</b>	11	12 <b>Work Day Wing Staff Meeting 9:30</b>
13	14 <b>Air Show Quiet Birdmen Museum Closed Flag Day</b>	15 <b>Work Day</b>	16	17 <b>Work Day</b>	18	19 <b>Work Day</b>
20 <b>Father's Day</b>	21 <b>Museum Closed</b>	22 <b>Work Day</b>	23	24 <b>Work Day</b>	25	26 <b>Work Day</b>
27	28 <b>Museum Closed</b>	29 <b>Work Day Air Show Santa Monica</b>	30	<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday 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
Adjutant	* Terry Cedar	(805) 570-8048	tac1966@msn.com	Wing Leader's Report	3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	In Memoriam: Jean Doerfler	4
Operations Officer	* Jason Somes	(818) 292-4646	nbnh@aol.com	In Memoriam: Don McMillan	4
Maintenance Officer	* Mike Perrenoud	(805) 857-5580	micprnd@aol.com	Oral History: Don McMillan	5
Safety Officer	* Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	Don McMillan in Combat Hall of Fame	8
Museum Director	(Vacant)			Wing Photo Page I	9
Gift Shop Manager	Jim Tierney	(805) 522-7067	jirneriet@aol.com	My Dream Flight in a C-17	10
Public Info Officer	Pat Brown	(805) 479-2221	(no e-mail)	Zero at "Warbirds Over Wanaka"	11
Hangar Event Mgr	Stephen E Barber	(805) 223-1077	barber.stephen@gmail.com	A Day Trip by Airship	12
Chief Docent	Walt Metcalf	(805) 482-8291	wtmetcalf@yahoo.com	Steve Brown: CAF Air Bases	13
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* Denotes Staff Position					



## Wing Leader's Report

Shirley Murphy

The last few months have been busy. Our crews have continued to work hard on our aircraft.

Lloyd McAfee has been appointed Ground Equipment Officer, as he continues to do the much-needed repair and maintenance to all our ground equipment.

The long overdue Fire Wall in the Maintenance Hangar is in progress, with Dick Troy insuring that all needed permits are in place.

The wall will make it possible to enlarge the attendance rental events and our own special events in our Museum Hangar.

The Air Shows, including the Wanaka show in New Zealand have proven a real benefit to our Wing.

John Woolley is progressing with the program to formulate a professional program to upgrade our Museum management. It hopefully will eliminate the unfair overloaded management duties of the past.

Our Zero has just come back from Long Beach airport after its long journey to New Zealand. There was a few days delay in Long Beach to repair the tail wheel oleo.

A challenge faces our Wing. It is the vital need for new members, as well as current members who have not been active at the museum renewing their membership. We need more docents, maintenance crews, mechanics, those who can help with our landscaping in front of our buildings, help in the library program and with the artifact duties. We need members who can present our program and goals to local schools, clubs and senior centers.

Crews are needed to help with special events and presentations. Due to the need to move equipment and help with the closure of the museum for the evening events, a crew of young volunteers would be most useful.

We will insure that each person who steps forward will have a mentor who will help them find a position that will be compatible for them.

## Marjorie Jean Doerfler (1930 - 2010): In Memoriam

**We remember with affection Frank Doerfler's wife Jean. Our collective condolences go out to Frank and his family at this time of grief. May she rest in peace.**



Marjorie Jean Doerfler, age 79, of Thousand Oaks, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Monday, May 10 after a 4 year illness.

She was born on Nov. 13,

1930 in El Paso, TX and has been a Ventura county resident for the past 34 years after moving here from Woodland Hills. In her youth she attended Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, TX and taught at St. Anthony's Academy. Jean was a wife, mother and wonderful homemaker.

After their retirement, Frank and Jean travelled extensively in their motorcoach together throughout the U.S. compiling many wonderful memories.

She was also a 40 year member of the Republican Women's Federated and an 11 year docent at the Ronald Reagan Library and Museum. She had the honor of being awarded "Docent Emeritus" by Nancy Reagan.

Jean sadly leaves behind her beloved husband of 59 years, Frank W. Doerfler, her sons: Stephen A. Doerfler, Frank W. Doerfler Jr. and Lawrence P. Doerfler, as well as her daughter Lisa J. Lockman (Dalton) and her sister Betty Jo Tips (David).

She also leaves behind her grandson's: Brandon A. Doerfler, Travis C. Doerfler and Ethan F. Lockman, as well as her granddaughters Alissa M. Macias (Rawley) and Lily C. Lockman.

A Requiem Mass was held on Thursday, May 13 at 11 a.m. at St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church, Thousand Oaks. A Private family burial service followed at Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, Calif.

The family kindly asks for donations in Jean's name to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, 155 E. Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA.

## Don McMillan: In Memoriam



© Photo by Jack & Jo Brinckerhoff  
**CDR Don McMillan, USN (Ret.)**  
**1920 – 2010**

Donald W. McMillan was born on June 19, 1920 in Wamego, Kansas. He passed away on May 22, 2010 at the age of 89.

Don will be greatly missed by his loving wife May; son Larry and wife Sharon; daughter Janice and husband Dick and five grandchildren; and step-daughter Darlene and husband Matt; and many friends.

Don was preceded in death by his first wife, Verla, and his sisters Julia and Jane.

Don was inducted into the Commemorative Air Force's American Airman Combat Hall of Fame in 2007. The photo above shows Don next to the commemorative plaque that the Hall of Fame has placed in the CAF Airpower Museum in Midland, Texas.

As a Navy pilot in World War II, Don flew TBM Avenger torpedo bombers with VT-19 aboard the aircraft carrier USS Lexington (CV-16). Don, and several other planes from his Air Group 19, put torpedoes into the Japanese aircraft carrier *Zuikaku* in the Battle Off Cape Engano. The *Zuikaku*, one of the remaining carriers to have participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, went down shortly after the attack by VT-19. Don took satisfaction in the fact that he had avenged somewhat the men who lost their lives on December 7. For that action, Don received the Navy Cross, the highest award given by the Navy.

Don flew twenty-five combat missions off the USS Lexington (CV-16). Other medals that Don earned during

WWII were: Air Medal, American Defense Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic/Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Naval Reserve Medal, Philippines Presidential Unit Citation, and Philippines Liberation Medal.

Don retired as a Commander, USNR.

Don was a very talented business man, and owned and operated both McMillan Toy Store and McMillan Bike.

He was a member of the Commemorative Air Force – Southern California Wing; Camarillo VFW; and Eastminster Presbyterian Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Don's name may be made to the Commemorative Air Force, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, 8180 Telephone Road, Ventura at 11:00 a.m. A reception outside will follow the service, and the CAF-SoCAWing will conduct a flyover in honor of Don at that time.

To fulfill Don's request, his ashes will be scattered over the ocean from a CAF airplane by his children at a later date.

All the members of the So CA Wing of CAF send their heartfelt condolences to May and her family. May he rest in peace.



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Don in the midst of naval officers from VX-30 Squadron, Naval Air Station, Point Mugu at a special dinner celebrated by the squadron. The officers, all pilots, kept Don busy answering all kinds of questions about his exploits during WWII – particularly about his techniques in torpedoing the Japanese carrier *Zuikaku*, for which he received the Navy Cross.**

Editor's Note: The June, 2010 issue of *Flight Journal* magazine (page 58) has a wonderful story about Don by James P. Busha, entitled "A Piece Of The Pie." – with a vivid description of his torpedo attack on the *Zuikaku*.

## **Partial Transcript of an interview between Dennis Posten of the Southern California Wing, Commemorative Air Force and Donald McMillan on December 16, 1993**

### **Dennis Posten:**

Today's date is December 16, 1993. I am Dennis Posten speaking for the American Airpower Heritage Museum. Today I am interviewing Don McMillan about his part in World War II. Don, go ahead.

### **Don McMillan:**

Dennis, I was a junior at Kansas State College in Manhattan, Kansas ( from 1940 to January, 1941)and was taking a civilian pilot training program to be a Naval aviator eventually, I hoped.. So when I finished that year in school I enlisted in the Navy and went to elimination base training at Kansas City, flying Navy N3Ns. After qualifying there, I went on to Jacksonville in a pool and was assigned to Corpus Christi for flight training in July of '41. I was not through flight training when December 7 came along. In fact, I was in the theater that afternoon in Corpus when it came on in the theater that we were at war. Bad weather held up my final graduation, and I would have graduated from PBY patrol bombers, seaplanes, and gone to American Airlines school at Fort Worth as a transport pilot. But being held up about a month by bad weather, I lost that berth and was sent to the training command as a flight instructor. I instructed at Corpus Christi until November of '42 and was sent to Olathe, Kansas as a flight instructor there, and in July of '43 was sent to San Diego and was assigned to a torpedo squadron. That didn't thrill me very much because I remembered very vividly about Ensign Gay and what happened to Torpedo 8. Nevertheless, I became a torpedo pilot and trained there and in the Hawaiian Islands at Maui, and we went aboard the USS Lexington as Air Group 19 in July of '44 and were in the campaigns against the Palau Island group....

### **Dennis Posten:**

What were you flying at the time?

### **Don McMillan:**

Torpedo Bombers.

### **Dennis Posten:**

What designation?

### **Don McMillan:**

VT-19 had the TBMs, as they were called. They were actually an adaptation of the Grumman TBF, but these were built by General Motors. We had two .50 caliber machine guns, one in each wing, and a crew of three. The radioman lost his stinger, a .30 caliber in the tail, and simply became a radio/radar man. The gunner had a .50 in the turret. Anyhow, we served aboard the Lexington and supported the Guam invasion and landing. We hit all of the Philippine Islands, starting at Mindanao in the south

and worked north, went up and hit Okinawa, we hit Iwo Jima prior to the landing, and then up to Chichi Jima.

Then in early October went on up to Taiwan and up to the Pescadores where I got a lucky hit on a Japanese ammunition ship and blew her to smithereens. And I know I was the only one that was on it because I was stopped in my initial dive by another plane in my path and I had to abort the first dive. So I dove again and everybody else was gone and the ship was still there.

### **Dennis Posten:**

Were you delivering torpedoes or bombs?

### **Don McMillan:**

We were glide bombing for most of the time. Actually, we came in at about 65 degrees. We didn't come 90 degrees like the dive bombers, and we got up to about 300 knots and released our bombs at around 2,000 feet. I once "walked" a string of four 500 pound bombs across a Japanese ammo ship, and that was the end of that ship.

Our group had pretty good success; we sank quite a few ships in the Philippines and we lost a few pilots to anti-aircraft fire, and some of them were recovered in the water. But mostly we did pretty well and got up to late October and the Jap fleet came out. Part of it came through the central Philippines, and was making a run on our landing craft from the Sabuyan Sea and the straights through there. The groups were battleships and destroyers and cruisers and they really took our light carrier task force to just about destruction.

### **Dennis Posten:**

You were flying off of carriers at that time?

### **Don McMillan:**

I was flying off the Lexington. Mostly we were trying to support the general operations in the area. In other words, we were in close cover on this landing in the Philippines with [General] McArthur. We were out there stationed to intercept the big boys - their battleships and carriers.

It seemed we had shot down about 200 airplanes, our carrier plus others in our group, just in the day or two before the second battle of the Philippine Sea and when they came down from the north they were actually a suicide force. We didn't know it, but they were down there to draw us north to follow them and take that much support away from protecting our lightning force. We were suckered and did go north and [Admiral] Halsey was criticized for that because it might have stopped the invasion. Anyhow, we found a force of Japanese ships, 17 of them, some converted battle carriers that had the rear equipped to catapult planes into the air - they couldn't come back to land, and they had what was left of the Japanese carrier groups. Anyhow, out of 17 ships we sank 11 of them that day and we lost only one plane and crew. We were in the force with the Essex and, I forget, oh, the San Jacinto, which George Bush was on, he was on another part of that group.

**Dennis Posten:**

Did you get quite a bit of fighter cover when you were on these dive-bombing missions? Did you have fighter cover?

**Don McMillan:**

We had good fighter cover. Our fighters were above us at all times. I remember when I hit shipping in the harbor in Manila; we were covered south towards Nielson Field and as we were regrouping after a bombing run Jap fighters attacked us and one of them got inside the screen. One of our turret gunners knocked down this fighter, but for the most part they never got into us. Our fighters did a wonderful job.

And the fighters really took the worst end of things. They lost about 50% of their pilots. They had 36 pilots originally and when they put some night fighters aboard they cut them down to 30 planes . . . I may be wrong about that, they had more than 30 pilots but they cut them down to 30 planes. They usually had a 1-1/2 to 1 pilot to plane ratio, but they lost 3 skippers and finally got down to a skipper who was no more senior than I, so here he was a Lieutenant Sr. Grade and skipper of the fighter squadron simply due to attrition. And our dive-bombers lost their skipper. He had been hit somewhere and made a water landing short of the carrier and drowned when he stepped out of the cockpit, his parachute apparently pulling him down.

All told we lost one or two here and there, and I'd say we lost about 1/3 of our group of pilots and crew.

And finally about... it was after the Philippine Sea battle, which was late October, we were kamikazed and we lost 13 dive bomber pilots and crew who were standing on the aft end of the [carrier's] island structure by secondary control, and the kamikaze hit where they were standing and so we had a mass burial at sea off the deck at the elevator.

**Dennis Posten:**

Is that the heaviest hit that the Lexington ever took?

**Don McMillan:**

Pretty well it was, because they lost all of the 20-mm gunners in the starboard side of the island in the gun tubs and wiped out secondary control and just killed everybody in the area. Luckily I was down in the ready room so I didn't see it or do any more than hear it and smell it. Then we pulled into port for temporary repairs to secondary control and to clean up the mess. While we were there a Jap sub came in and sank a tanker right beside us, one of the miniature 2-man subs. About that time it was Thanksgiving and we were seated to Thanksgiving dinner and they called us all to attention and announced that Air Group 19 was being replaced and we were going home.

We got on the Enterprise [which] was going back to Pearl [Harbor] and we crowded on that long island and crowded into bunk rooms down below with the crew and we slept, I

think, about 4 tiers deep in bunks that we were glad to get home in.

**Dennis Posten:**

The flights from the Lexington, did they have a number of missions or sorties that you might fly and then come home the way the Air Force pilots bomber did?

**Don McMillan:**

No.

**Dennis Posten:**

You flew until they didn't need you anymore, right?

**Don McMillan:**

Or until you were dead.

**Dennis Posten:**

There was no point in time where you could look ahead and see the light at the end of the tunnel where you could say "I've done my time, now I get to go home", where you had done 40 or 50 or whatever missions?

**Don McMillan:**

No, there was nothing like that, the only thing being that, I think for morale purposes, that when you lost so many people they figured that it was pretty hard for the guys to keep going up and figuring the only way out was....

**Dennis Posten:**

They would retire a squadron or a group and send them home and replace them.

**Don McMillan:**

Yes. So we actually had possibly a short tour. We were, let's say, aboard from July through the end of November and we lost all told, of all the people in the group, probably almost a third. So I guess that was the deciding factor.

**Dennis Posten:**

So you were decimated down to the point at which you were no longer a viable force?

**Don McMillan:**

Right. And what we did out there when we would lose a person, they had supply carriers that had standby pilots and crews and planes, and they flew them over and said "Hey, this is you new pilot and your crew." Well, the thing was that they never trained with us, they didn't know the skipper, didn't know our techniques. And this one pilot we lost when we hit the Jap carriers, he had been with us previously, but we were over-complement so they took him away and put him on a Jeep carrier. And what do you know, he ends up back with us. So this kind of thing happened.

**Dennis Posten:**

But if you had a plane and you lost part of the crew, they would add another man to that crew to bring it up to a full crew? Or if you lost a plane but not the crew they would replace the plane?

**Don McMillan:**

Right. If we lost planes there were ferry pilots who came over and brought us new planes and then they went back by the boatswain's chair, back to a destroyer and then were taken back to their supply carrier, and that is how the situation was. Our air group had a pretty good record. There were 4 carrier groups and I was down to Corpus Christi where the Lexington is anchored as a museum ship. I was down there in February for our air group's 50th reunion, and painted on the side of the hanger deck bulkhead, right below the island, is all the battle kills of the four air groups that were aboard. Air Group 19 had the best record; we had 168 planes shot down, that is we shot Jap planes down in that number, we sank 258,000 tons of Jap shipping. I think we destroyed 61 planes on the ground, these figures may not be correct because . . .

**Dennis Posten:**

These planes you shot down, were they air-to-air combat? Your bombers were engaged in a defensive measure?

**Don McMillan:**

The fighters were most always up there, however the torpedo [plane]s got one plane and the dive bombers got five.

**Dennis Posten:**

With the ball turret or the . . .

**Don McMillan:**

Well, the dive bombers had a rear-facing gun, a couple of .50s, and . . .

**Dennis Posten:**

Nothing in the front except the fixed guns in the wings?

**Don McMillan:**

Right. Now I think the dive-bombers had 20-mm guns in front and we just had .50s in the TBMs.

We did a lot of training in aerial gunnery, both pilots and crew, but thank goodness the torpedoes were pretty well protected and only had just one run on us. This one fellow was knocked down over a five-fingered lake, or something like that, called Laguna Bay, just south of Manila. Other than the thrill of making the torpedo run on the Jap aircraft carrier Zuikaku, which was the command ship for the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7th, we felt pretty good that we got to sink the Zuikaku. It was one of the 17 ships, of which we sank 11.

**Dennis Posten:**

Would your TBMs make a pretty good water landing? Did they land intact so you could step out of them if forced down? I assumed a lot of you went into the water, right?

**Don McMillan:**

We lost only 3 airplanes into the water, and we lost 2 people out of 9 [on board those planes]. A fellow had some thrills; you remember things that aren't pleasant and some that are. It isn't pleasant to think of blowing up an

ammunition ship and losing all the lives that were aboard it, but at least those ammunition items did not go against our people. So that was good. I lost a wingman over Manila. The Skipper signaled did we hear a message about not going down because it was too thick and to just fly over horizontally and drop our bombs in the harbor. My wingman was yacking on the mike and his message was blocked out and he signaled me that everything was O.K. I asked for a thumbs up and he gave me a thumbs up. Well, he didn't get the message and when he dove down he lost his gunner, he was hit and then they made a water landing and of course the gunner went down with the plane and the other two survived.

We saw a lot of territory, we bombed Palau, we bombed Iwo Jima, Okinawa. We went clear down to Mindanao and bombed a lot of stuff down there. We were heading for Truk once, but they called that off. We were going to re-supply at the Gulf of Leyte, not Leyte but some island in the South Pacific down there in the Solomons.

Anyhow, I was glad to get home and that was what counted.

**Dennis Posten:** Thank you, Don!



© U.S. Navy Photo

**A TBM Avenger Torpedo Bomber of Squadron VT-19**



**Don McMillan as a young Navy Lieutenant during WWII**

## Don McMillan In Combat Hall of Fame

The Commemorative Air Force, in a letter signed by Col Kenneth W. Fields, Co-Chairman, American Combat Hall of Fame, and Robert R. Rice, President, Commemorative Air Force, notified Don McMillan, a long-time member of our CAF – Southern California Wing, that he had been elected to the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame.

Excerpts from the letter read as follows:

*“The American Combat Airman Hall of Fame was established in 1997 by the Commemorative Air Force at CAF Headquarters in Midland, Texas. Seven individuals and a combat unit are inducted annually. As Co-Chairman of ACAHOF, with my friend, Ollie Crawford, I have the honor of advising that you have been selected as an inductee for 2007.*

*The guidelines for election to the Hall of Fame are simple: Any American who served in the air in any war or conflict in a manner that reflects credit upon the United States is eligible for nomination to the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame. A formal display plaque, containing biographical information and photographs of each inductee is displayed at the American Airpower Heritage Museum at Midland.*

*It is our sincere hope that you will honor us with your presence at the induction dinner, to be held on Friday, September 28, 2007, in conjunction with CAF's AIRSHO, at which we wish to present you with a specially struck medallion reflecting your election to the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame. In addition to honoring you at the induction banquet on September 28, we hope that you will remain with us for the AIRSHO 2007, September 29 and 30, as our special guest.*

*On behalf of the Commemorative Air Force, please accept our warmest congratulations on your selection. It is our sincere hope that you will honor us with your presence at the eleventh induction banquet for the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame on September 28, 2007 and AIRSHO 2007.*

*Yours very truly,*

*Signed: Kenneth W. Fields  
Colonel, Commemorative Air Force*

We in the CAF – Southern California Wing extend our warm congratulations and good wishes to our good friend Don McMillan. We think it is very appropriate that he be honored and recognized for his combat experience during World War II in the Pacific Theater.

Don flew TBM torpedo bombers for VT-19 off the *USS Lexington* during WWII. He was part of the strike group that went after some of Japan's largest aircraft carriers in the Battle Off Cape Engano. A torpedo dropped from his TBM struck the Japanese carrier *Zuikaku*, a veteran ship of the Pearl Harbor attack, and put the carrier under water.

He was mentioned in the book “Skipper: Confessions of a Fighter Squadron Commander, 1943-1944” by Capt. T. Hugh Winters, USN (Ret.), with a photo taken of his direct hit on a Japanese munitions ship in the harbor of the Pescadores, west of Formosa. An F6F pilot from VF-19 broke radio silence when he saw the ship blow. His remark to all: “One of you torpeckers really blew *that* one up!”



© USN Photo – from “Skipper: Confessions of a Fighter Squadron Commander, 1943-1944” by Capt. Hugh Winters.  
**Photo showing the Japanese ammo ship after Don McMillan put a 500-lb. bomb down its smokestack.**



© USN Photo – from “Skipper: Confessions of a Fighter Squadron Commander, 1943-1944” by Capt. Hugh Winters.  
**The Japanese carrier *Zuikaku*, after being torpedoed by US torpedo bombers of VT-19, including that flown by Don McMillan. Don received the Navy Cross for his part in sinking this ship, which was the last surviving to have participated in the attack on Pearl Harbor.**

Editor's Note: This article was reprinted from the May, 2007 issue of *Flight Line*.

## Wing Photo Photo Page I



© Photo by Frank Mormillo  
Our Bearcat flying close formation with the Planes of Fame Hellcat at the Chino Air Show.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
Collings Foundation's B-24 "Witchcraft" on a visit to Camarillo Airport.



© Photo Courtesy Ken Barger  
Col. Ken Barger, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, with side arm and buddies, in Da Nang, Viet Nam – 1964. It was Gunnery Sergeant Ken Barger, USMC – ready for action.



© Photo by Jack Buckley 3<sup>rd</sup>  
No...this is not our Zero flying at Wanaka, but a one-fifth scale replica RC model of our Zero built and flown by Jack Buckley of Marlboro, MA at the "Top Gun" RC competition in Lakeland, Florida.



American paratroops enroute to France on June 6, 1944.



The American War Cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach on the Normandy Coast.  
Lest We Forget.

## My Dream Flight In A C-17 by Vern Olson

On April 29, 2010 I was lucky enough to fly to March Air Force base with Jon Ingoldsby in our Wing's SNJ 290 for March's air show. After a perfect landing in some strong cross winds behind our Bearcat and Hellcat, flown by Jason Somes and Ken Gottschall, we checked into the welcome center at the base. The center was run by members of the March Air Force base C17 group. After getting our housing and rental car, I was introduced to a C17 Demo pilot named Tim Harris. Tim is the air show coordinator for the C17 aircraft in the states of California, Arizona, and Nevada and was busy setting up the media flights for the air show. I inquired about a chance to fly on a C17 and was surprised when he handed me his phone number and asked me to call him at 9:00 am on Friday. At 8:55 the next morning I had his number in the phone, and when the clock hit 9:00 I pushed the dial button. Tim answered and asked for my SS# and said he would call back in 10 minutes. At the 8 min. mark my phone rang with the message to be at the welcome center at 10:30 for a ride to the airplane. I WAS IN !

When all the media gathered at the welcome center, we were bused to C17 tail # 5141.



We were all loaded aboard the aircraft, given ear plugs, a briefing on the emergency procedures and then given time to walk around the inside of this incredible cargo aircraft. With a cargo area that is 88 ft. long, 18 ft. wide and 12' 4" in height it looked a little empty with just 16 of us on board.

When the time came for us to depart we were seated on cloth along side of the cargo bay. The rear door was opened and the load master TSGT Michael Carrier was stationed at the opened ramp and was giving directions to our pilot so he could back out of our parking spot. Once out and ready to move forward, the rear doors were closed and we taxied to the active runway. Our flight was to be a 1 hr. flight with a tactical descent to San Clemente Island and a circular approach back to March.

The takeoff, with 4 Pratt & Whitney engines producing 40,440 # of thrust each, and as lightly loaded as we were, was spectacular. The climb angle was approx. 33 degrees. Once we were airborne and heading out to San Clemente, we were allowed to move around the cargo area, take some pictures out of the 6 portholes and visit the flight deck. It was here that I was told that I was going to remain

on the flight deck for the approach to the island. I strapped into the seat behind the pilot and was able to see through his HUD (heads up display) that our altitude was still 13,000 ft., with the island airport now moving under the nose of the airplane. It was at this time that the aircraft commander, Lt Col Paul Thompson, looked back to me, smiled and said "here we go!"

At that time the pilots grabbed all 4 throttles and pulled them into reverse thrust. The nose pitched over and the airport, now visible in the wind screen, started getting bigger and bigger. Our rate of descent reached 17,000 fpm - and in a very short time we were level at 700 ft and starting a turn around the island.



This steep approach is required for the missions that these crews fly into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan - to keep away from possible ground fire. After this wild "roller coaster" ride, I went back to my seat in the cargo bay so others could witness the landing at March. On our return to base the air show practice was still going on, so we had to circle over some mountains east of the base until the tower could fit us into the pattern for landing.

I am truly impressed with the personnel who operate these aircraft for the Air Force Reserve Command based at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside. I didn't meet anyone who didn't have a smile on his face the whole time we were at the show. They treated us to a wonderful weekend of flying and some of the best aircraft demos and static displays I have seen in a long time. This show takes place every two years and I will have it on my calendar in 2012.

I am working to get a C17 at our "Wings Over Camarillo" air show on August 21 & 22. Who knows - maybe I can score another flight.

Special thanks to Jason, Ken and Jon for allowing me to go along. It was an unforgettable ride!



## Zero At “Warbirds Over Wanaka”



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**One big difference between New Zealand and American Air Shows is how close the planes can get to the crowds in NZ.**



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**Here’s Jason waving to the crowd after returning from another crowd-pleasing aerial display of this treasured vintage warbird.**



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**Our CAF pilots, Jason Somes (left) and Steve Barber, Sr. plan their flight maneuvers for the “Warbirds Over Wanaka” air show.**



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**Jason taking off from Wanaka for the trip north and eventually to Camarillo. The wonderful journey is coming to an end, but the memories will last forever!**



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**The Zero trailing smoke over that gorgeous New Zealand scenery. The Zero wowed the crowds with its dogfights with the P-40 Warhawk and the Spitfire.**



© Photo by Atsushi “Fred” Fujimori

**Some of the breathtaking scenery of New Zealand’s South Island shown under our Zero’s wings during an air-to-air photo shoot at Wanaka. Thanks to Fred Fujimori for these wonderful photos!**

## A Day Trip By Airship \*

by Ceci Stratford



© Photo by Al Watts

Have you always wondered what it would be like to fly in an airship? It's been a dream of mine for years, and I finally got to take a flight in one on May 15, 2010.

Airship Venture's zeppelin "Eureka" was at Camarillo Airport on its way home to Moffett Field (San Jose). "Eureka" is one of three of the world's largest airships at 246 feet in length, 64 feet in width and 57 feet in height. It was built by Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik (ZLT) in Friedrichshafen, Germany. Its maiden flight was on May 21, 2008. It is powered by three Lycoming IO-360 200 h.p. engines – two mounted on the frame on each side above the gondola, and one in the rear (with 2 propellers). Its airspeed ranges from 0 (hovering) to 64 knots, and its range is 1600 miles, with a maximum endurance of 24 hours. It has two pilots, a flight attendant, and room for ten passengers.

We gathered for the 2:00 p.m. flight at the SunAir facility at Camarillo Airport and attended a briefing on safety procedures and what to expect during the flight, how we would be transported to the airship, and how we would be boarded and disembarked. Cameras in hand, we excitedly watched the giant airship float above us, waiting clearance to land.

We were shepherded to a van, driven to the east end of the airport and onto a large grassy area. The huge zeppelin was hovering overhead. Soon it drifted down towards us, landing quietly and easily on its nose wheel. A crew member grabbed a long rope hanging from its nose while others rolled a staircase to the airship's door. After two passengers disembarked, two waiting passengers were helped on board – until all ten were boarded. The stairs were rolling and lifting slightly, and I had to be careful as I climbed the five steps up to the gondola.

Here I was in a spacious 35 foot-long cabin, much like a bus, but more comfortable, with a row of seats along each side. Panoramic windows surrounded the cabin. A large window seat in the back had an even larger panoramic view! Soon the "Eureka" gently rose in the air and we

slowly turned to the east, leaving the airport's traffic pattern.

Carol, our flight attendant, told us we could now walk around the cabin. Everyone got up and started taking photos of the incredible views – and also of the inside of the gondola. It felt like we were floating, gently swaying, with a soothing hum from the engines. It was amazingly quiet. At a leisurely 25 to 35 mph, we flew around south and east of Camarillo, turning occasionally to change the view, sometimes hovering. Ventura County is always beautiful, especially from the air, and this time it was great fun to gaze out traveling at such a show pace.



© Photo by Al Watts

We cruised over the Reagan Library in Simi Valley. Note the shadow of our airship on the building housing the president's plane – Air Force One.

I chatted awhile with our pilot, Jim Dexter, who is also Director of Flight Operations. He has over twenty-seven years of airship experience, first starting with Goodyear in 1981. He loves his work and wouldn't trade it for any other commercial flying job. He has flown all over the world.

All too quickly, our 30-minute flight was coming to an end. We slowly approached the airport, quickly descended to the landing area, then crept to the touchdown spot. What a memorable day that was! Thank you, CAF and Airship Ventures for fulfilling my dream of a lifetime!



© Photo by Al Watts

**Airship Venture's "Eureka" hovering over Camarillo.**

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## From the Desk of CAF President Steve Brown: CAF Air Bases

Many of you may remember the Flight Lead article that appeared in the August 2009 *Dispatch* called "Next Destination: **CAF Air Bases**." The article talked about the first End Statement developed by the General Staff under the new Governance Policy that states:

*The mission of the CAF is education, such that generations of Americans will value and support the contributions of military aviation in assuring our nation's freedom.*

It is the task of headquarters staff to develop a plan to fulfill this end statement. In the same article, I began to describe the concept of **Air Bases** as a method to reach this goal.

In the coming weeks, you may be receiving a fundraising letter created to help us build these bases, but before you do, I wanted to take a moment to share the headquarters vision with you and remind you of some of the details I highlighted in the August Flight Lead.

**Air Bases** are an opportunity for our members and units to band together to increase their resources and presence.- Over the years, the trend has shown units splintering, often due to personality conflicts. This is not a good-business rationale and has resulted in smaller units, which struggle with maintaining manpower and monetary support.

If we gather in larger groups, where possible, we can:

- Have a larger, year round presence with a public "attraction;"
- Make a larger impact in our towns, which leads to more members;
- Have more manpower to draw upon;
- Have more financial resources to draw from;
- Support a larger number and variety of aircraft;
- Accomplish our mission better, by educating more people.
- Although combining resources may be possible in some areas and not in others, it is something all units should voluntarily explore. It just makes good sense.

Some areas may be able to support a larger organizational structure than a squadron or a wing and merit a new classification of unit, a **CAF Air Base**. This type of unit would have to meet nine very stiff criteria. Meeting those criteria would guarantee the increased presence of CAF in its host city. Having six to 10 **CAF Air Bases** would similarly increase the presence, relevance and impact of the CAF - nationwide!

### Air Base Criteria:

1. Be located on airport grounds.
2. Have both display and flying aircraft.

3. Have a touring performance group.
4. Host an annual AIRSHO.
5. Employ paid staff to manage day-to-day operations.
6. Have an adequate number of member/volunteers.
7. Have sufficient capital funding.
8. Have local community support.
9. Be located in a population base of one million.

Let me be clear on one thing, we are not forcing all units to become part of an **Air Base**; it wouldn't make good business sense in all areas. I am asking each unit to take a moment to reflect on their current situation and consider if forming an **Air Base** is a logical move for the unit.

I am happy to share with you that several units have indicated strong interest in the concept and one unit in particular is moving forward as a prototype and working with officials in their area to develop the very first **CAF Air Base**. As the project progresses, we will take the lessons learned and move on to other areas that want to make this next leap in evolution.

Yes, this is a major undertaking. But a big vision requires a big reach.

Steve

You can e-mail Steve [sbrown@cafhq.org](mailto:sbrown@cafhq.org).

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## Maintenance Officer's Report

by Mike Perrenoud

The Zero is back, and spent a few days in a hangar at Long Beach Airport while the tail wheel hydraulic actuator was removed and repaired. The actuator was reinstalled and the Zero flown back to Camarillo.

The SNJ-4 "Bluebird" crew has finally resolved the hydraulic issue, and the aircraft is once again airworthy.

Plans for the C-46 "China Doll's" future are still ongoing, and Steve Barber, Sr. is handling the talks with Midland.

The F8F-2 Bearcat and F6F-5 Hellcat have returned from a successful appearance at the Planes of Fame Air Show in Chino, CA, and no major problems were reported.

As some of you may have noticed, the PT-19 was undergoing minor maintenance (oil leaks) and was returned to service on May 22.

The Spitfire and PBJ are still progressing.

I would like to thank Lloyd McAfee for agreeing to become the Ground Support Equipment Officer. This position was created to insure that our tugs, fork-lifts, and related equipment receive routine and remedial maintenance. His assistant will be Dick Roberts.

## Warbird Ride Winner at NAWCC Mart

From "Ventura County Chrono Times" – by Ken McWilliams  
Chapter 190 – National Assoc. of Watch & Clock Collectors, Inc.



© Photos Courtesy Ken McWilliams

Seated at the controls of the North American SNJ-5 is Mitchell Lopes, the recipient of the free ride that was won at our Annual Antique Clock & Watch Show (held for the second year at the Commemorative Air Force – Southern California Wing's Aviation Museum at Camarillo Airport in April). The big smile on Mitchell's face is credited to his grandmother, Wilma Lopes, who held the winning ticket at the raffle. Wilma and her husband, Larry Lopes, are members of Chapter 190 and brought the family, three generations of the Lopes, to the Mart.

Wilma said, "It is fitting that Mitchell should enjoy the ride as he is off to Notre Dame in the fall where he will be majoring in Aerospace Engineering and is ultimately aspiring to be a Navy pilot". The smile on Mitchell's face when seated in the cockpit is only exceeded by the smile on the face of Wilma when she is talking about her grandson. Mitchell's other interests are helping his dad, David Lopes, in their hobby of restoring Model A automobiles where they have received National Championship Awards.

We were happy to see many families enjoying the Mart this year. We expanded the scale of the Mart so as to reach a larger group of interests this year. How fitting that the reward should go to the Lopes' family.



© Photo Courtesy Ken McWilliams  
**The Lopes family celebrating with Mitchell.**

**30th Anniversary**

**August 21 & 22, 2010**

**Wings Over Camarillo**  
*Airshow*

**Fun for the Entire Family!**

Flying Displays of Experimental,  
Military, and Vintage Aircraft  
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[www.wingsovercamarillo.org](http://www.wingsovercamarillo.org)

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## Wing's Air Show Schedule – 2010

June 14	Quiet Birdmen Show – Private	All Aircraft
	(forming up at CAF – Camarillo)	
June 29	Santa Monica Airport	F6F, Zero
July 10	El Toro Air Show	F6F, Zero
Aug 21,22	Wings Over Camarillo, CMA	All Aircraft

This schedule is tentative, so if you plan on attending any air show, please call us at (805) 482-0064 for updates.