

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

Southern California Wing
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(805) 482-0064

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© Photo by Eric Van Gilder



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our new Wing Flag being displayed ably by the donor, Robert Smith (right) and Russell Drosendahl. Bob and Russ are longtime Docents, and exemplify the finest in our Wing's volunteer staff. See Page 12 for Chief Docent Ron Fleishman's appeal to all of us.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, March 14, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

[Our CAF Mission: To Honor American Military Aviation Through Flight, Exhibition and Remembrance.](#)

March 2009

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

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS				IN THIS ISSUE
Wing Leader	* Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Wing Calendar 2
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Safety Officer	* Norm Swagler	(805) 482-6994	pswagler@hotmail.com	Wing Photo Page I 5
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* Denotes Staff Position				

Wing Leader's Report : Pt. 1 by Robert Albee

My fellow members – the word “leader” is described as a “person or thing that leads, directs, commands, or guides a group or activity” (*Webster's New World Dictionary, Fourth Edition*). O.K., with that in mind, let's see how well our new Wing Leader is doing on a beautiful Saturday at Camarillo Airport, home of the Southern California Wing. After all, it's time to display leadership qualities!

Out of bed at 6:00 a.m. (way too early); jump into the shower (way too cold); shave (ouch, that hurts); get dressed (jeans are too stiff); kiss the wife good-by (oops, woke her up); and hop into my new (?) 1987 (yes, 1987) wagon for the thirty-minute trip. Some of our members, including yours truly, meet at Cronies every Saturday (our local breakfast hangout), enabling our waist lines to continue their never-ending expansion. Sorry, I can't help it – age, you know. After having toast and bacon, and listening to war stories, we all head to the airport where my fellow members supposedly need my leadership / direction.

Arriving at our facilities, which consist of two very large hangars, I notice that some of our aircraft have already been moved out of the hangars, while others are being looked at and pampered, yes, pampered. My wife always asks, “Why didn't you marry one (plane, that is).” Hmm.

As a Wing are we described as having the best collection of aircraft the CAF has? Let's see: C-46 *China Doll*, F6F Hellcat, F8F Bearcat, Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero, Spitfire Mk XIV, PBJ-1J (B-25), SNJ-4 and SNJ-5 Texans, PT-19A Cornell, and F-24R Argus, just to name a few. Yep!

How are we going to be entertained today? First things first – check in with our Finance Officer Casey de Bree and ask if I can be of any help or assistance. “No, Bob,” he answers, “all of our bills are under control and I am working on the budget, but thanks anyway.” O.K., I get it and move on.

I next spot Gary Barber, our Operations Officer, driving a tug and removing aircraft from our hangars. Does he need my help or leadership – nope. He flies most of our aircraft and probably does not need my assistance in “Tug Driving 101.” Oh, well!

Next – let's go over to the Zero, which Crew Chief Yoshi Abe is working on. He was born and raised in Japan, and speaks both Japanese and English fluently. “How's it going,” I ask, “and what do you need, if anything?” “Great,” he says, “and no, I have everything I need and another member is helping me.” Why do I feel rejection creeping in? Where are all those members who need direction under my leadership?

O.K. – over to the parts crib to speak with Maintenance Officer Joe Peppito and two other members. Surely, they are going to ask my advice on something. Wrong!

Joe is preparing a memo for next week's Crew Chiefs Meeting, and gives me a quick run-down on all the aircraft. Les Bedding, the Spitfire Crew Chief, also gives me an update on the progress of its engine overhaul, and when they are expecting the engine to be ready to come back to us. If you do not know, Les worked on Spitfires during WWII in India. Does he need my advice? Nope!

Quietly sitting next to Joe Peppito is Orville “Bill” Main, a WWII B-17 pilot, with thirty-five missions over Germany. Yes, the answer is the same, “everything is great.” Where, oh where am I going to find someone who needs my advice – anyone?

How about the PBJ crew? I quickly ask Iran Ausley and Jerry Royce if I can be of assistance to them, and their response is very straight forward. “Bob, what do you know about hydraulics?” Hmm...”not much,” I say, “but I can hold a wrench and the fluid is red in color.” They will let me know...blah, blah, blah. Rejection!

About this time, I hear a funny sound like a broken washing machine going by, and I discover it's a T-28 taxiing by. Wow! I love that round-engine sound! I slip out of the hangar while no one is watching and decide I must see the T-28 take-off at all costs. Done...back to my job as Wing Leader, and over to the other hangar where the Museum is. I know this time they will want my advice.

“Hi, everybody, is there anything I can do for you?” As usual, Ron Fleishman and crew state, “Nope,” but they say, “but here is some information for you to think about: average number of visitors per day, last week's PX sales, their thoughts on being open on Wednesday, and why no heat?” Well, I am finally moving forward...or am I?

Off to have a brief conversation about coming events with Sarah de Bree, our Museum Director. She is busy working on inventory for the PX, and trying to determine what they have and what they should purchase for the near future. Shirts are all over the place, with various colors, sizes, logos, etc., etc. Where is our automatic inventory counting machine? Oh, I see – it's called “people” who do the counting. Did I stick my nose in where it does not belong? Nope. I was born at night – but not last night.

Sarah was kind enough to take a few minutes and explain the upcoming “Event” and the requirement for planning, people, and money. Can we get some additional help? Boy, this is a big deal. You mean to tell me we have to have members here until midnight just for cleanup and to put our planes back in the hangar? Does a membership drive have any meaning now, Bob? It sure does!

As I walk out of the Museum, I notice a drop of oil on the floor – which is a big “no-no.” I better clean it up before a visitor or member is hurt. O.K., I get a rag and it's gone in a flash – that's leadership and a job I can handle. As I close the lid on the trash can the lunch bell rings. Thank God, I've been working so hard I need a break!

(Part 2 coming next month).

In Memoriam: William R. "Bill" Hartill



© Photo Courtesy of Bill Hartill
Bill and Inza Hartill in 2001.

William R. "Bill" Hartill

August 24, 1924 – December 12, 2008

One of our long-standing members, and father of our member Brian Hartill, passed away on December 12, 2008. Bill Hartill was a veteran of the Army Air Corps in WWII – a flight engineer on C-46 Commandos flying "Over The Hump" in the China/Burma/India campaign. He flew over 400 hours in the CBI Theater, and was awarded the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross, with Oak Leaf Cluster.

Bill was a Crew Chief on our C-46 *China Doll* for many years. Many of our long-time members knew Bill, and will miss him. Our Wing's condolences go out to Brian and his family. Bill will always have a permanent place in the remembrances of our Wing. He has a place in our hearts and on our Memory Board of those who have Gone West.



© Photo Courtesy of Bill Hartill

Inza and Bill in front of Bill's pride and joy, the Taylorcraft F-19 N 3673T. It was in this plane that Bill and his son Brian flew from Myrtle Beach, SC to Camarillo in 1990. A trip to remember, as Brian recalls it.

Maintenance Officer's Report by Joe Peppito

Well, things are looking better maintenance-wise. We had a Maintenance Crew Meeting on January 24th, and it was a huge success. We had 43 members in attendance and everyone participated in the discussions. We talked about our plans for operating and maintaining our aircraft in 2009, and discussed the improvements in maintenance policies and procedures that will be implemented this year.

We will improve our communications between the various aircraft work crews, and also with our counterparts at Headquarters. We will also improve the financial activities for all of the Wing's assigned aircraft, both those in restoration and in flying status.

Aircraft maintenance is progressing well on all aircraft. The PBJ (B-25) group has received the outer wing panels from Carl Scholl in Chino, CA. There is much sheet metal work to be done to the wings before they can be put on the airplane. In the meantime, the crew is busy fabricating and installing all the fluid lines.

Robert Albee and his crew are moving right along on the fuselage of the Fairchild F-24R. Both wing panels are now covered and are almost ready for installation.

The Spitfire is coming along well, and the engine is expected to be here ready for installation in March. Les Bedding is "on pins and needles" waiting for that engine. He will probably be working day and night installing the engine and propeller.

We have finally solved the problem of the aileron control cables and center section fuel lines on the SNJ-4 airplane. Keith Bailey, Alan Nicholson, Alex Ferrasci and Sib Bosso have been working on these problems for almost a month. When they get the fuel tank covers installed, we will run the engine again to adjust the hydraulic and vacuum pressures. We still have a fuel indication and manifold pressure problem to solve on that airplane.

Mike Perrenoud has been keeping himself busy working on the Zero fuel tank leak problem, which he has now licked. He is also working on a pitot static system leak on the PT-19A. Mike works on all of our airplanes and does a wonderful job. We would be lost without him.

The SNJ-5 "290" is kept flying most of the time, giving rides to people signed up in the Warbird Ride Program.

All in all, everything seems to be going well, and we are making steady progress.

'Til next month – have fun and "Keep 'Em Flying!"

Wing's Sick Bay

Ken Barger (surgery): 818-998-5209; Don McMillan (surgery): 805-647-6423; Bob Thompson (stroke): 970-921-4088; Jasper Solomon: 805-495-3628. They will appreciate getting a call from you.

Wing Photo Page I



Photo Courtesy of Ron Fleishman

Window to the Past: Bob Thompson, Gary Barber, and Bill Main receiving special awards for “ditching” a T-6. Bob was named “Old Man of The Sea” (Huntington Beach); Gary was “Old Man River” (river at Santa Paula); and Bill was “Father Christmas” (Christmas tree farm in Oxnard). The festivities were at the American Legion Hall in Woodland Hills. Note: the young guy in the foreground is Steve Barber.



Photo Courtesy Lloyd McAfee

Another “Golden Oldie,” showing Lloyd McAfee displaying his newly-donated flag. This was when we had the old nose hangar. Note the landscaping!

Looking for a Computer Donation

If you have a computer that you would like to donate to our Wing, please contact Ron Fleishman at (805) 482-0064.

We could use one for Docent and Museum organization.

Tower, monitor, keyboard, printer and mouse would be most appreciated.



Photo Courtesy Gen. Reg Urschler, USAF (Ret)

Our special friend, Reg Urschler, flying his famous P-51D “Gunfighter” in one of his last Legacy Flights – along with an F-16, F-4, and A-10.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Just for the record – “Middle Earth” has been cleaned up in anticipation of the steel structure to be installed.



© Photo by Dave Flood

On February 4, Mike Perrenoud and friends Joe Morris (right) and crew patched our ramp with asphalt. All the time, energy, materials and equipment were donated! Many thanks to Mike and his friends for their work!

Missing In Action: Down Behind Enemy Lines in Italy March 28 – June 25, 1944

By Capt. Stewart B. Gilbert (written in 1946)

Excerpts published with permission of Diane Gilbert.

(Part One of A Four-Part Series)

Excerpts from the amazing story of Stew Gilbert's survival behind enemy lines in Italy during a 3-month period in 1944 are taken from "TARPA TOPICS," the magazine of the TWA Active Retired Pilots Association. Russ Drosendahl of our Wing is a retired TWA pilot and a member of TARPA. Russ knew Stew Gilbert as a fellow pilot, and wanted to share his story with us. We will publish the excerpts over a three -month period. Stew passed away in June, 2007. RIP.

+++++



Stew (left) when he was a B-26 bomber instructor.

March 28, 1944, Gaudio, Italy:

"Bombing of supply and communication lines had taken a decided turn north of Rome during the early weeks of March, and, as spring weather became more pronounced, the missions became more frequent and the amount of Nazi supplies reaching the front decreased considerably... it was far from cut off due to the extensive net-work of small roads through the entire "boot" that could readily be used in an emergency.

At Gaudio that morning, it looked like we were going to spend the day on the ground because of the usual reason – weather. I got up about seven a.m. and, after a quick bite of C rations I climbed into the Squad six-by-six and went over to Group to find out what kind of mission we were scheduled for. In spite of the threatening weather overhead, we were thoroughly briefed by intelligence, weather officer, navigator, group bombardier, chaplain, and then the usual last-minute by the Group CO, Colonel Smith.

It had become a nice flying day by 2:00 p.m. - only a few white clouds in the sky and not much wind, but very cold at 11,000 feet, and I was thankful that I had such a good supply of warm clothes to wear. Assembling over the field gave me a beautiful view of Mt. Vesuvius, still in quite

violent eruption and throwing dust and smoke into the Mediterranean, almost obscuring Capri.

Starting northward, we circled the mouth of the Volturno River to wait for our fighter escort to get airborne and assemble. With our P-40 top cover, we were on course for Avezzano, the first check point along the irregular and zig-zag course intended to avoid all the enemy flak positions, and then up the back-bone of Italy, flying slightly east of Rieti and Terni... Near Lake Trasimeno, we swung almost at a right angle and commenced our bomb run on the huge railroad bridge at Perugia. We were still nineteen miles from the target, but a purposely long run had been planned to assure knocking out our bridge.

No doubt the Jerry anti-aircraft crews were just waiting to see the whites of our eyes. Suddenly, the whole formation was engulfed in rapid bursts of 88 flak – and accurate this time. Concussions were tossing the B-25 around like it was a feather. The first burst caught a ship not far ahead of us almost directly in the bomb-bay, and the ship disintegrated in midair. From the same salvo, an 88 shell went crashing through our glass nose, inches from our bombardier. Pieces from the other airplane were blown through our windshield and probably crippled us in several other places... At almost the same instant that our bombs were away, we were thrown out of formation so suddenly and violently that I think we were all shocked out of our senses for an instant. The left engine had been severely hit, and was whining and vibrating so much that it sounded like it would tear itself from the airplane... The left vertical surface of the tail was blown away, several feet of wing tip and aileron were gone, glass broken out of every window, and the side of the fuselage caved in somewhat.

With the left oil pressure reading zero, the prop completely out of control – our chances of rejoining our formation were impossible. Our P-40 escort was running low on fuel and had they stayed to protect us they would not have made the return distance to their field. To lighten our weight, most of the 50-caliber machine guns were dumped over-board by the gunners... We had lost considerable altitude, and the ship was in range of their smaller caliber rapid-fire guns. Evasive action was difficult on one engine...we could not keep it under control for many seconds longer. (*The next section was censored by the War Department, Bureau of Public Relations.*)

As I fell clear of the ship the cold wind was a stimulant. My chute blossomed out about 1500 feet above ground. At about 1000 feet an ME-109 fighter came directly at me, and, at the last second, veered off. As he passed within about 100 feet, the pilot waggled his wings and I happily observed that he waved to me instead of shooting. I turned in my harness just in time to see our ship go into the side of a mountain and a huge column of black smoke shot into the air, followed in seconds by a roaring explosion... I scanned the surrounding sky to count the other chutes and there were five besides my own. One of us was either in the ship or had jumped earlier... I hit the top of a steep rock cliff with a terrific jolt... falling hard on my right foot. In a few steps my foot had become so painful that I could hardly use it and I could plainly hear the Jerries shouting."

Missing In Action (cont'd.)

"I was hurriedly searched by one while the others stood close guard. I couldn't understand a word of their conversation but the motions were clear enough. I was to start marching with the sharp end of a rifle muzzle in my back. A few steps convinced them that my foot was in no condition to do any walking and one of them, the largest, let me put my weight on his shoulder. Seated between the two soldiers in the back seat, we started up the hill in the Volkswagen.

After rounding a few turns, we drove through a small village which I later learned was San Stefano. Every citizen of the village must have had his head out of a door or window, but all seemed afraid to come into the street. On the hill on the far side of town, we dismounted and I was led into a small school house which didn't look as if it had been used as a school house since the war had started. There I was glad to see Bob Bell sitting by the fire place, even though I would rather have seen him under different circumstances. He was very dejected looking, and to see me seemed to have the same encouraging effect as it did for me to see him. Presently, we were asked to give our name, rank, and some other information by an English-speaking lieutenant whose English was so broken we couldn't understand much of what he said. We refused to give anything but our name, rank and serial number, trying to excuse ourselves for not giving more because we couldn't understand what he was talking about, even though we could understand a little.

We sat there praying and wondering and once in a while hearing short bursts of machine gun fire and an occasional rifle shot. Jerries tracking down the rest of the crew, we guessed. Between eight and nine o'clock, the rest of the crew were marched in, except poor Pvt. Fagan, who, I found out from the tail gunner, had gone down with the ship...(clause struck by the War Dept.). The six of us were carefully searched and closely watched as we tried to guess what the next move in this game was to be.

From the first I planned escape and was going to take advantage of the earliest opportunity. I knew that all American prisoners were shipped to Germany and, with the Allied Air superiority, it was a long and dangerous trip on an unidentified prison train. Many prisoners had been strafed and bombed by our own ships on the route to Brenner Pass, and a chance of escape at the right time was not any more dangerous than the trip to Germany.

I thought I'd have to wait a long time before I could even take advantage of such an opportunity because my right foot had become so swollen and painful that I couldn't support my weight on it. The original five-soldier detail was all that remained to guard us that night. About midnight, we were still all wide awake and huddled around an open fire in the one-room stone school house. We heard whistles and shouts, first from the direction of the mountain slope, and followed immediately by an answer from the opposite direction. The Jerry guards seemed excited and

all rose and jabbered among themselves. First they seemed to be talking about us, and then they seemed more interested in something else. There was a salvo of light machine gun and rifle fire and the Germans all left through the front door with their rifles. We started out the rear window without knowing for sure what was going on, but just that it would be safer away from the fire light. Bob Bell gave me a hand in helping me to a clump of bushes several hundred feet from the school house, and, in the confusion, we didn't notice where the rest of the crew had gone. There were confused shouts in German and Italian, none of which we could understand, but the firing continued for several minutes.

March 29 – It seemed like we hid in that clump of bushes for hours without moving or even whispering. When we did hear a shout in Italian we decided to answer, and five or six men and a woman came to our hiding place. When they saw that we didn't understand anything they were saying they only talked louder and faster. When they calmed down a little we discovered that the woman knew a little English, and had spent a little time in Pennsylvania before the war. Here we had something in common, anyway, but it made her much happier than it did us. Even though we were temporarily away from the Germans, our future looked pretty dark. Our new woman friend asked us to come to her house for the rest of the night and she would feed us, but her house was right on the paved road and we knew the whole area would be searched soon, so the men decided to take us with them to another small village several hours distant.

A burro from San Stefano was led up the hill for me by another bunch of men, and each one (by this time about a dozen) was anxious to have the honor of lifting me on the animal's back. They all had a hand in it and off we started along the narrow trail up the mountain.

It was three days before Bob and I saw any of the other crew members, but from what we could gather from our new friends, they were safe with partisans.

April 1 – Just before sunrise we arrived at San Martino, which looked just about the same as any of the other places we had passed. We were finally motioned on to the most prosperous looking house in town. This was the house of Fosta, the leader of this band whom we had been hearing about and whom we were anxious to meet.

We were welcomed at the front door by the rest of the crew, except Fagan, and had a good visit discussing all the details of our misfortune. They were all dressed in civilian clothes similar to ours, and we had a good laugh about how funny we all looked. The people stood around us amazed at hearing such a peculiar sounding language.

We warmed by the fire and were given plenty to eat and drink, which consisted of bread and vino, for which I was rapidly acquiring a taste. Many of the band that had helped us escape were there, and all trying to tell us about it at the same time."

Missing In Action (cont'd.)

April 1, cont'd.- "Our reunion was cause for celebration, they told us. In spite of our all-night trip, we had to join them in drinking large quantities of vino. It helped the outlook on the whole situation and we found we knew more Italian words than we had realized, and the Italians were soon learning a few English words. We were regarded as heroes of the cause, and anything that they could do for us was done. They fashioned a crutch for me out of a fork-shaped branch, and padded it with old rags and carefully whittled it off at the proper length.

We slept a little that afternoon and felt much more at ease, knowing that we had sentries through the hills to give us plenty of warning of approaching troops. That night the signal was given to move on up the valley, and within a matter of minutes we were on our way. This time I was riding an old grey horse that was in about the same condition as the donkey.

This was a night of no sleep because the German and Fascist troops were reported headed toward Fortcello, and we would have to be ready to move within short notice.

We passed through the streets of Fortcello and stopped at a house on the other side of town. Inside we shook hands with everybody and our story was related to these new acquaintances. They regarded us as heroes too, and tried to explain how we were all fighting for the same cause. It sounded good and helped to make us feel welcome.

About midnight we changed guard shift, and, during the early morning hours, I was able to get a little sleep sitting in the chair by the fireplace. It was bitterly cold outside, and had begun to snow a little. Every time people would come in they had a terrible habit of leaving the door wide open, so the wind could blow in and I'd have to limp over to the door to close it.

In the early morning hours word came down from the sentries that troops were only two or three kilometers away on the road to Fortcello, so what there was of the band organized for an ambush, and started out of town in the direction from which we had come.

We would have been of little help with them since I was crippled and none of us could understand much of what was said. Mounted on Stefano's big white horse, I started out in the other direction with Bob Bell and a half-wit member of the band who was always given the work details. He walked ahead to lead the way to the next village and was completely barefooted... After an hour or more on the road, we heard machine gun fire, and even some mortar fire behind us. It lasted for several minutes, so we judged that the troops must have come in quite a force. We learned the next day that the ambush had been successful, and not a single soldier had reached Fortcello. Our half-wit guide was very frightened. Shooting always frightened him, even when it was at a safe distance. Bob and I became separated from him in the darkness, so just

followed along the mountain trail until we reached Resina, where we would meet the other boys and spend the next night.

In Resina, we were given a stall in one of the cellars to sleep in. We were very tired, and fell asleep almost as soon as we crawled into the hay. The cows gave out enough heat to keep us comfortably warm and we slept well.

April 2 – Resina was well situated in that it was isolated and well off the most used trails or roads. It would have been quite impossible for any kind of vehicle to pass over the steep trails leading to the village. The Germans and Fascists had been through only a few times since the war had begun and so naturally this had become one of the favorite hide-outs of the Partisans.

Our first day in Resina was Palm Sunday and all six of us spent most of the morning in the little village church, kneeling on the narrow knee boards between the seats. The church was only a single room, about twenty by forty feet, but was plenty large enough to accommodate the entire village. We could tell that the service was partly about us but could not, of course, understand any of it. The priest spoke very rapidly...After the ceremony the men all gathered in small groups in the streets to talk and play games.

Resina was, comparatively, in an almost self-sufficient situation, with just enough cultivated soil on the steep slopes of the mountains to barely provide for the seven or eight families there. Their most noticeable shortages were salt and sugar which, before the war, they had been able to obtain in the valleys by trading potatoes and a little barley. Had it not been for the roving Partisan bands and bombed-out refugees from larger towns, life would have been carried on in the village the same as it has been for hundreds of years.

Almost the total population was related, and all had some Yugoslav ancestry. Their ancestors had built their houses, and, except for a few glass windows, they have stood practically the same for seven hundred years, we were told.

It was decided that we split up among the village families for our meals so as not to be too much of a burden on any one family. Even as it was, I felt that my own requirements were too much to ask of the family I was boarding with. However, they seemed to feel actually honored to have me eat with them and to allow them to give me any assistance they could. I felt greatly honored to have such fine people want to help me. The memory of their generosity and hospitality will always be with me.

April 5 – Franco and Fosta arrived in the morning with a band of some fifty-odd rebels, all heavily armed....

Missing In Action, cont'd.

Fosta was heavily built, but not tall, and had a long handle-bar mustache. He was handsome, with good strong features and spoke both Slav and Italian perfectly, we were told. Months later, at 12th Air Force Headquarters, I found that he was working with American Intelligence and had a long record of outstanding accomplishments behind him. I learned then that he spoke English fluently, but neither we nor any of his rebels even suspected he knew anything of our language. Even though he never intimated his true identity to us in any way, he must have been glad to see Americans again. Some very important movements and information were a direct result of his activities in occupied Italy. Thinking back, his activities did seem strange in that he would disappear for days and no one knew where he went or had any contact with him. Then just as suddenly he would reappear and no questions were ever asked. I am sure that not even his closest associates in the band knew of his real job. He was making contacts through Rome to allied headquarters and contacting the more organized underground movements in the cities. He was usually well informed as to what was about to happen.

Franco was a huge good-looking fellow of about thirty, with a heavy mustache and beard and long, wavy hair coming down below his shoulders. He was very friendly, well dressed, and always eager to do all he could to help us.

We were all anxious to learn what plans Franco had for our escape through the front lines. Franco, Fosta and the six of us proceeded to an upstairs room and the door was bolted for the important conference. Franco explained his plan in French to Bob Bell, who had remembered some school French and Bob relayed it on to us. His plan was for us to split up and start a trek to a fishing village named Porto Civittonova on the Adriatic coast. Here we would be able to contact a fisherman whom Franco knew who had made several trips to allied posts carrying escapees for 30,000 lire each (\$300.00). It sounded great and we were all very much encouraged at the thought of possibly being in Foggia in a few weeks.

Fosta's opinion of the plan was not nearly so optimistic, but he thought it might be possible and worth a try. He advised us that if we failed, we should return to this same place for protection. Also he gave us the safest route and pointed out danger points en route to the Adriatic (about 175 miles by road and trail). Fosta spoke of his plans for us to Franco in Italian, and Franco repeated them to Bob in French. Then Bob gave us the information in English.

After several more days in Resina, I was able to get about fairly well with the aid of my cane, and could even help with the guard duty at night. The nights were bitterly cold, and it was still early enough in the year to snow. During the day it would all turn to mud.

We decided that it would be best for us to travel in pairs to avoid suspicion and to relieve the problem of bumming food, Sgt. (Paul) Anglin and I started the day before

Easter; Bob Bell and Joe Gately would have to stay in Resina several more days while Bob recovered from an attack of indigestion. Ted Jones and Jim Currie left at the same time we did, but were taking a slightly different route. This was the last time we saw Ted and Jim. After reaching the coast and finding they couldn't contact anyone, they gradually moved south and never returned to Resina. They safely made their way through the rapidly advancing line about two months later.

As we climbed over the hill toward Piagia, with Resina disappearing behind us, we were actually on our own for the first time, and the realization of how alone we really were caused many thoughts to enter my mind. All the discouraging obstacles in our path seemed to occupy my thoughts. We were hundreds of miles into enemy territory with no immediate help at hand, and with no one whom we felt we could sincerely trust or go to for help. No money, no food, and with clothing neither sufficient nor suitable for the country. In bailing out of the plane, Paul had sustained a rupture, and this was giving him spasmodic pains. My foot was still very painful, and above all we couldn't even speak fluently with the people we met. It seemed like a truly hopeless situation, but to be alive and to think of how much worse it could have been consoled us. At least there was the possibility of getting home someday.

Curious heads were poking out of all the windows in Piagia as we entered the village after about an hour walk. When the farmers, gathered around the store, learned of our misfortune, they were all typically willing to help... The partisan had presented me with a cloth map...and, as I was going over it with the farmers, planning our next course, we heard a bomber formation approaching.

I haven't mentioned the allied air activity, but almost every day that weather permitted, allied aircraft were in the air, and, if they were too far to hear the noise of the engines, we could hear the roar and thunder of the bomb salvos on their targets. As these ships drew closer, we could recognize them as B-25s, and it appeared to be two entire groups (about 72 ships). We knew, of course, that these were ours because only the 340th and 321st bombardment groups were in the Mediterranean Area.



A B-25 on a bombing run over central Italy

(To be continued next month...)

Finance Officer's Report

By Casey de Bree

I am asked frequently "How are we Doing?" Here's how.

The first quarter of any year is usually difficult, with us spending on average about \$25,000 more than we take in. The reason is that the air show season has not started, so income is low, and we have a quarterly payment for \$7,487 for ANUAC, and \$4,635 for aircraft insurance due in March. The fire insurance on our hangars of about \$6,000 comes due in February. So that's \$18,122 in large expenses. This is followed up in April with an air meet insurance bill of about \$6,000, \$300 for PX insurance, and \$500 for property and casualty insurance.

What is ANUAC and why do we pay it? It stands for Annual Unit Administrative Charge and we pay it to CAF Headquarters to help pay for their operation. A charge is assessed on the wing and each of the aircraft it has assigned to it. \$1,600 is charged for the wing, and aircraft charges range from \$6,400 for the C-46 to \$500 for the Fairchild 24 in restoration. Our ANUAC bill for 2009 is \$29,950 for the wing and our 10 aircraft.

You might be surprised at what it costs to open our doors each day. What I mean by that is assuming we don't buy any PX merchandise and don't repair or fly any of our aircraft, how much income must we generate each and every day to pay for our hangars, utilities, and telephone, as well as the fixed aircraft expenses? In 2008 we spent \$77,304 to operate our 30,000 square-foot buildings plus \$46,890 in fixed aircraft expenses. That's \$340 for each and every one of the 365 days in a year. It means we run a high-overhead operation and we need to constantly hustle to generate the income to pay for it.

How do we pay for it? Fortunately, the museum and aircraft tie-down income just about covers the cost of the facility. Our museum income has remained good despite, or perhaps because of, the economic downturn, and we expect that to hold through 2009, although our 2009 budgeting exercise allows for a slight downturn in museum income, just in case.

We have 10 aircraft assigned to the wing, five of which are airworthy and our C-46 should be airworthy soon. Last year air show opportunities were few and far between, and early indications are that 2009 will be considerably better. The persistently high cost of aviation gas in 2008 put a crimp in air show budgets, and added considerably to the cost of operating our aircraft. In mid-February 2009 fuel prices at Camarillo are \$3.83 per gallon. With our fighters burning between 50 and 60 gallons per hour, fuel costs are between \$192 and \$230 per flight hour for them. The C-46 burns \$650 of fuel per hour. Fuel peaked at \$5.73 per gallon in Camarillo in July 2008, which explains the dearth of air shows last year. At \$5.73 per gallon, the C-46 burns \$975 per hour in fuel.

What is the prognosis for 2009? We polished up our crystal ball and prepared the budget from a "bottom-up" perspective. That is, we analyzed each of the one-hundred or so subcategories of 2008 income and spending to decide how different each might be in 2009. This required us to make some educated guesses as to how the current

economic downturn would affect each one. The projection is that we will lose perhaps \$25,000 in 2009 and we are looking at strategies to mitigate this potential loss. Since this is far from an exact science, we will review the budget periodically as 2009 unfolds and we see actual numbers.

All of this should tell you that we are not running a small club, but rather a small to medium size business. And if we forget that it has become a business and make decisions that are counter to good business practices, we can easily get into serious financial difficulties. To help keep us out of trouble we formed the Financial Resource Committee, with me, Terry Cedar, Bill O'Neill, and Clifford Brown as members. Keeping the wing's finances sound is a big job. Bill has spent countless hours fine-tuning our 2009 budget with inputs from the rest of the committee. He also prepares the California Sales tax paperwork for our gift shop operation. Terry takes care of invoicing wing members for wing aircraft flight time, fuel, and tie-down of personal aircraft, as well as being our bill collector. Clifford does a lot of analysis for the group. I keep the wing's books, keep track of all the invoices, print the checks, prepare the monthly financial reports for the wing staff, prepare the quarterly reports for CAF Headquarters, file the property tax exemption paperwork with the county, and do anything else no one else wants to do.

Sometimes we forget when we are at the wing that it is different than when we were employed and our employer paid all the bills. We did not worry too much about turning off unneeded lights and conserving supplies. While we run a pretty tight ship, we should never forget that a dollar we don't spend is a dollar we don't need to fund-raise. There are many ways to save money, and it adds up.

For example, each hangar is lit by eight 400-watt lamps, or 3.2 kilowatts if all eight are on. That comes to about \$5 per day per hangar. It may not seem like much, but small things add up to real savings. If we need the lights, by all means use them, but if the hangar doors are wide open and the sun is bright, turn them off and save the wing \$5. The same goes for desk lamps that are left on overnight.

We recycle plastic bottles and cans, and come back with \$100 or so when we redeem them every couple of months, yet there are countless bottles and cans placed in the trash only a few feet from the recycle barrels. Go the extra few feet and make some money for the wing.

What does it cost to fill the barrel in the maintenance hangar with oil absorbent? The answer is about \$50, so don't use more than you need, and wipe up small spills with a rag and solvent rather than using oil absorbent.

What does it cost to replace the paper towels in the restrooms? The answer is \$4.20 for the roll-towel dispenser and \$3.25 for the multifold dispenser. You can help by using only as much as you need.

The point is that many small, seemingly insignificant items can produce real savings to the wing, and \$100 saved here and there can make a big difference in closing the projected \$25,000 or so 2009 budget deficit.

Every one of you can help make us succeed in 2009 by paying attention to the details.

Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our PBJ-1J's wings were transported to our hangars from Chino via Lloyd McAfee's truck and trailer. Here is one of the wings, after the other had been unloaded.



© Photo by Dave Flood

The unloading crew included (from left): Lloyd McAfee, Brian Hartill, Tim Kutzbach, and Dick Roberts.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Jeff Birdt cleaning up one of the newly-arrived PBJ wings, with Ken Barger supervising. The PBJ crew is now in the process of inspecting the wings for what work needs to be done to bring them up to specs.

Air Show Season Begins

by Dave Flood

Our CAF-SoCAWing Air Show season is about to begin. With Steve Barber, Jason Somes and Ken Gottschall as the Air Show Troika for 2009, we are very hopeful for a more successful season than has been the case in the past couple of years. We were laboring under the heavy cost of fuel last year and the year before, and that situation has eased somewhat, although there are still problems, including security tightening at the military bases.

Here is our schedule to date (subject to change):

March 14	El Centro NAF	F6F, Zero
March 27, 28	Riverside, CA	All Aircraft
April 24,25	Half Moon Bay, CA	F6F, Zero, SNJ-5
May 15-17	Chino, CA	F6F, Zero, SNJ-5, PT-19A, F8F
May 23, 24	Watsonville, CA	F6F, Zero
June 4-6	Hill AFB, UT	F6F, Zero, C-46
July 10-12	Geneseo, NY	F6F, Zero
July 17-19	Thunder Over MI	F6F, Zero (tent.)
July 27-Aug 2	Oshkosh, WI	F6F, Zero
Aug 22,23	Camarillo, CA	All Aircraft
Aug 27-29	Chico, CA	All Aircraft
Sept 10,11	Fallon NAS, CA	TBD (tent.)
Sept 19, 20	Reno, NV air races	Spitfire (tent.)
Sept 25-27	Redding, CA	All Aircraft (tent.)
Oct 7	Tucumcari, NM	TBD
Oct 8-11	Midland, TX	TBD

Note: if you are planning to attend any of these air shows, be sure to check with us well in advance in case of changes. Call us at (805) 482-0064.

Wanted: A Few Good Women !

For our *Women In War* special event to be held on May 9, 2009, we're looking for women who participated in World War II – so we can honor them.

If you know of a woman (spouse, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, neighbor, friend, fellow churchgoer, etc.) who was a WASP or WAC, or a "Rosie The Riveter," or a nurse, spy, reporter or held any other position to help the war effort, please let Ceci Stratford know, or have them contact her at (805) 482-0064.

Valentine Family Sends Thanks

"To all members of the CAF – SoCAWing:

Thank you so much for such a wonderful tribute to my dad. I have forwarded the newsletter off to all of my family in both England and here. We will always be thankful that he had such great friends in his last few years who appreciated him as much as we did.

Thanks again, Sue Evans" (Charlie's daughter)

What's Old Is New Again by Ron Fleishman

Our new Wing Leader, Robert Albee, requested that I write a few lines asking the membership to "give" a little more. What we want is not more money (although that would be nice and we need that too!) – but rather time, your time.

The Museum has just reopened on Wednesdays, so we have one more day during the week to staff our team of Docents. As the Wing's presence becomes known, we have attracted school groups as well as tour groups to view what we have on display and to hear about the heroes of the conflicts from WWI through the present Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

There are plans for new displays and exhibits. What we need is help – help from our members. Docents, front counter help, folks willing to sort and catalog donated artifacts and, of course, help to keep the Museum looking its best.

I'm sure that you have heard this all before, and I couldn't think of any new words or inspirational phrases to get more volunteers, but while going through a file box, I came upon a small article that my late wife Jerri had put in the *Flight Line* several years ago.

It is as true now as it was when she gave it to the editor at the time, Paul Koskela, to put into our newsletter. [Yes, for you purists, it does have our old name mentioned prominently, but this is strictly for historical purposes.](#)

Please read the Commissioning Exercise and the Oath. It exemplifies why we all joined the CAF, and why we formed the Southern California Wing. So, in the spirit of new times, new leadership and new plans for the future of our organization, if you can afford it – donate some time and help!

One more thing...read the Exercise and the Oath again. It is as true now as it was then.

CAF Commissioning Exercise/ Oath

By Col. Jerri Fleishman

Since it's been raining the past several days (all right, months), I had a chance to do one of the things you promise to do on a rainy day...cleaned out my desk!

It was like opening a tomb. The best thing I can say is I didn't find any unpaid bills...no un-cashed checks either!

What I did find made me stop for a few minutes and think. I found the commissioning exercise and the CAF oath of office. Unless you were commissioned at headquarters, you've probably never read them. But even if you have, it's been awhile. As we start another year, with new leader-ship, new airplanes, and lots of new ideas, let's remind ourselves of what we are about. Please take a few minutes to read the following words...and let's try a little harder to make them come true.

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE

COMMISSIONING EXERCISES

DULY AUTHORIZED COLONELS OF THE CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE HAVE ASSEMBLED HERE FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMISSIONING THOSE WHO HAVE MET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP.

OATH TO THE OFFICERS

I, (NAME) , DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT I WILL CONTRIBUTE, INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE, OF MY TIME AND TALENTS IN WORKING TO ATTAIN THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE. I DO FURTHER AFFIRM THAT BY MY ACTIONS, I WILL REFLECT CREDIT UPON THIS ORGANIZATION AND THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO MY COUNTRY.

CHARGE TO THE OFFICERS

Each of you has been nominated for commission in the Confederate Air Force.

You have acknowledged that you fully understand and are willing to help attain the objectives of this organization.

We, the officers of the Confederate Air Force, are very proud of this fleet of historic aircraft – and the accomplishments of this organization.

We charge you to always respect and promote the serious and patriotic objectives of the Confederate Air Force and never to look upon it as purely a pleasure group.

You are never to use the uniform, insignia, membership card or any other item of CAF recognition for business or personal gain.

Our final charge to you is probably the most important of all – the aircraft of the Confederate Air Force represent an era in which military aviation strength helped to keep our nations free, and, as officers of the Confederate Air Force, we will preserve these historic aircraft as living symbols of our accomplishments, our heritage, and our aviation past – that the courage, sacrifice and accomplishments of our respective nations throughout our histories shall not be forgotten.

Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree

The Museum Special Event for May, "Women in War", as discussed in Dave's article, will be a look at women's many contributions during WWII. It will include pilots in the WASP; nurses in the WAVES, SPARS, etc., as well as the women who served in many, many jobs so that the men would be freed up to fight the war. It took the social structure at that date way out of its comfort zone as concerns about 'what the women's role should be'. The women were let out of the pre-defined boxes and were none too happy to go back into those dark containers when the men returned from war and demanded their jobs back.

CDR Valerie Overstreet will be asked to share some of her observations on how the military has changed in their attitude towards the women's role in military assignments and tell us a little bit about herself and her rise to CDR in a bastion of male dominance.

The Museum really got lucky! Below you will see a computer interfaced Epson Multi-Media Projector, with audio interface for showing DVS's, etc., as well as a beautiful screen. This was a gift from Greg and Lou Ireland from Cumming, Iowa. We have coveted this set up for a very long time but Finances were such that we couldn't justify buying this in lieu of paying bills. We are so very grateful for this gift and we will put this to good use right away as we prepare for the Special Event noted above. If you are reading this...thank you, thank you.

If any one of our readers knows of a WWII women veteran who would be willing to talk for a few minutes, or just come and be introduced, please talk to them and send me a note at scdebree@aol.com.

The CAF Gift Shop will have 'Women in War' specialty items - so please stop by



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our new donated projector and screen for showing power point presentations and aviation movies.

Special Event: *Women in War* Dave Flood

The World War II Aviation Museum is planning another major Special Event for Saturday, May 9, 2009. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for a spectacular event commemorating Women in War.

A very special added attraction for this event will be a special guest, Commander Valerie Overstreet, USN, the new commanding officer of the VAW-117 E-2C Hawkeye Squadron based at NAS, Point Mugu.



© Photo by Rob Varela, *Ventura County Star* text by Scott Hadly
CDR Valerie Overstreet, new CO of the famous E-2C Hawkeye VAW-117 "Wallbangers" Squadron

CDR Overstreet is the first female commander of an E-2C Hawkeye squadron. She has been interested in flying since she was a little girl. "Oh, I knew in the second grade already," she said. "No one ever told me it wasn't possible."

CDR Overstreet is the daughter of Capt. Gilman E. Rud, USN (Ret.). He was a decorated Navy pilot, a former commander of the Blue Angels, the Navy's famous demonstration team, currently flying FA-18s, and the CO of the aircraft carrier USS Constellation. It is appropriate that CDR Overstreet's next deployment, with the 173 men and women of her squadron, will be aboard the USS Constellation.

The Grumman E-2C Hawkeyes act as sort of mini-Airborne Warning and Control Systems, working as the eyes and ears of the ships and planes that make up a carrier strike group. They help to keep flight crews in communication with ground and sea forces so that operations work together seamlessly.

CDR Overstreet's experience includes deployments in support of combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo. She has made more than 380 carrier landings.

Kudos to CDR Valerie Overstreet! Please plan to join her at our *Women in War* special event on Saturday, May 9, 2009 at our WWII Aviation Museum.

Many thanks to the Ventura County Star for sharing their article.



Southern California Wing
 455 Aviation Drive
 Camarillo, CA 93010

2009 WING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

March 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 31, 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