

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

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

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Vol. XXXI No. 5



© Photo by Dave Flood

Here's our new Yak-3B. Come out and see her!

Visit us on line at www.cafsocal.com and www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal



© Photo by Dave Flood

One of our most consistent, hardest-working volunteers is Alex Ferrasci. Here he is with our SNJ-4 #N6411D "Blue Bird" – which he helped to build. He custom-made the .30-caliber machine gun from pvc pipe and aluminum. Alex hand-made it using original SNJ/AT6 specifications. Way to go, Alex!

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, May 14, 2011 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.

May 2011

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

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Maintenance Officer	* Ken Gottschall	(818) 439-5885	kgts@netzero.com	Just Another Day at CMA 4
Safety Officer	* Shari Heitkotter	(559) 285-0430	planejanex15@gmail.com	Florida Wing's TBM Project 4
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* Denotes Staff Position				

Museum Update

by John Woolley

General announcement to SoCal Wing membership:

There will be a Wing event honoring **Russ Drosendahl - Saturday, May 7 at 4 p.m.** - to include a presentation, a fly-by and food.

Please RSVP Pat Brown at (805) 479-2221 or cbrown@aspenhelo.com by May 5 re: your attendance so we will have a headcount for the purpose of ordering food.

Museum Special Event announcement:

There will be a presentation covering the development of tactics of **Electronic Warfare** in **Vietnam** from 1965 – 72.

The perspective is from two people who participated in the Vietnam aerial war - flying F-105 **Wild Weasel** defense-suppression and EB-66 stand-off jamming aircraft.

The discussion will be presented **using power point** charts and audio tapes. The presentation will also briefly cover F-111 and B-52 mission tactics.

The event will held in the "O" Club on Saturday, June 4 at 11 a.m.



Republic F-105G Thunderchief – “Wild Weasel”

Brett Gibbons, a Docent and Aviation Museum Library volunteer, is now going through an 8-week Officer Candidate School training session at Ft. Benning, GA. He writes to John Woolley, “Getting letters here is like Christmas morning.”

Please consider sending Brett a note to lighten his day:

SPC Brett Gibbons, Roster #202
2nd Battalion 46th Inf. Regt. C 3/47
9597 2nd Armored Div Rd – Bldg 3510
Fort Benning, GA 31905

Thanks! And Brett, if you're reading this, we're all thinking about you and looking forward to your being back with us at CAF-SoCAWing !

Wing Air Show Schedule: 2011

Date	Place	Planes
May 14-15	Chino, CA	F6F, F8F, A6M3
June 3-5	Gillespie, CA	F6F, F8F, A6M3, Spitfire
Aug 20-21	Camarillo, CA	All Aircraft
Oct 8-9	Midland, TX CAF's Airsho 2011	TBD

If you plan to attend any of these air shows, please contact us at 805-482-0064 before you go, as plans often change.

Jack Hartswick's Memorial Service



© Photo by Dave Flood

Bill Main and Joe Peppito reminiscing about their experiences with Jack Hartswick at his memorial service.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Some of the friends and relatives who attended Jack's memorial service at our Museum Hangar – looking at memorabilia of Jack's service in the U.S. A. A. F. and his many years as a commercial airline pilot.

Just Another Day At CMA by Dan Newcomb

Yesterday was another one of those special days at CMA that I've talked about over the years. It was one of those days when you think that you will be working on A - and then B comes along so you get going on that... and then C shows up.

My morning started with that special adrenalin rush you get after an idiot in a black SUV with his head firmly stuck in his anal orifice attempts to run you into the oleanders planted in the center divider of the Ventura Freeway.

This incident occurred just a few miles from the hangar, so I arrived with adrenal fluid still pumping through my veins and further enhanced with a two-cup injection of Jeff Birdt's freshly brewed, and quite excellent, I might add, coffee. My day up to lunchtime is just a blur. I read Marc Russell's report this morning and from that I infer that I did some riveting.

After lunch things got very interesting for me when I had the pleasure of assisting (emphasis on the first syllable) Jeff with repairs to the Mustang. Unfortunately, the plane had sprung a hydraulic leak and John's brother's flight had to be aborted. The Mustang had other flights scheduled, so it needed to get back on line without delay. Jeff Birdt to the rescue.

It is always a pleasure to watch a professional performing his craft. J. B. should have been a teacher. He has taught me a lot over the years - especially how to approach a mechanical problem. Jeff has the attitude that anything can be fixed except "stupid". Also, he has taught me that you don't just fix it - but you fix it correctly.

I guess the other part of yesterday that I enjoyed was seeing so many fellow wing members turn out. Usually Tuesdays are kind of quiet around the hangar but yesterday felt more like a Saturday. We had several tours come through, so we had a lot of activity on the ramp.

Terry Cedar flew his twin in for an oil change, so Wayne and the SNJ boys were out working on that. We had the aborted Mustang ride and Daddy (Marc Russell) took a friend up in the T-34. In the late afternoon, I had the pleasure of watching Wayne Brancato make some of the prettiest three point landings you would ever want to see in "Old Blue" (SNJ-4 #6411D). The day ended with what has turned out to be quite a task as we "shoehorned" our airplanes into the hangars for the night.

I got home around 7:30 and walked in to an apologetic wife who informed me that she arrived home late and that I would have to settle for pizza and beer for supper. Are you kidding me? What a perfect ending to what turned out to be a very nice day. As I struggled to stay awake watching the Kings getting their clocks cleaned, I wondered, "Oh where in the world is "Bucker Boy" (Scott Drosos)?

Just another day at CMA.

Florida Wing's TBM Project by Marc Russel



©Photo courtesy of Dick Russell

Grumman TBM Avenger with engine mounted in the CAF – Florida Wing's hangar in Deland, Florida.

This is the Florida Wing's project plane. I was out there on Wednesday, March 30 to see the work accomplished so far and it is looking really great.



© Photo courtesy of Dick Russell

Florida Wing's TBM Project Crew

It was hoped that the engine was to be hung on that day, but due to weather, it was postponed until April 1 (after I had left).

My dad, Dick Russell, is an active member of the Florida Wing. He and his Wing colleagues are very proud of their accomplishments with the TBM project

Don't forget to watch the video below.

CLICK ON THIS. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOu-Oul7Rdo>

Please call Pat Brown at 479-2221 and let her know that you'll be attending Russ Drosendahl's party on Saturday, May 7 at 4:00 p.m. - and how many will be in your party. We'll have presentations, fly-bys, & food.

U.S. Naval Aviation Centennial: 2011 Carriers At War

by Dwight Jon Zimmerman
Centennial of Naval Aviation: Celebrating 100 Years

Since WWII, the aircraft carrier has been the pre-eminent symbol of a nation's sea power. Of the handful of nations in the aircraft carrier fraternity, only the U.S. has in active service more than three aircraft carriers.

From a humble beginning in WWI using converted vessels equipped with cranes for their sea-launched aircraft to today's specialized superships utilizing powerful catapults that fling multi-ton supersonic aircraft off a non-skid, low solar-absorbing flight deck, the carrier has taken the fight to distant enemy shores, conducted reconnaissance, battled enemy fleets, defended supply convoys, supported amphibious operations, conducted humanitarian missions, defended the international laws of free sea travel, diffused regional military tensions, recovered astronauts – in short, the aircraft carrier has proved to be more versatile than its early advocates imagined.

The U.S. Navy's introduction to naval aviation officially began in 1910, when civilian stunt pilot Eugene Ely successfully flew his Curtiss biplane off a wooden platform constructed on the light cruiser USS Birmingham. Shortly thereafter, a department of aeronautics was established within the Bureau of Ordnance. The Navy sent pilots to Europe during WWI, but they operated from land-based airfields.

In February, 1921, the Bureau of Aeronautics was formally established, with Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, considered the father of naval aviation, as its first chief.

Thought committed to battleship fleets, the U.S. Navy moved aggressively to develop naval air power. In 1922, the Navy commissioned its first carrier, the USS Langley, a converted collier. From 1923 to 1940, the Navy conducted Fleet Problems 1-XX1, a series of exercises that historians regard as pivotal in developing U.S. carrier doctrine. Langley's impressive performance in Fleet Problem VI, an attack on the Hawaiian Islands, caused the Navy to accelerate the construction of the fleet carriers USS Lexington and USS Saratoga.

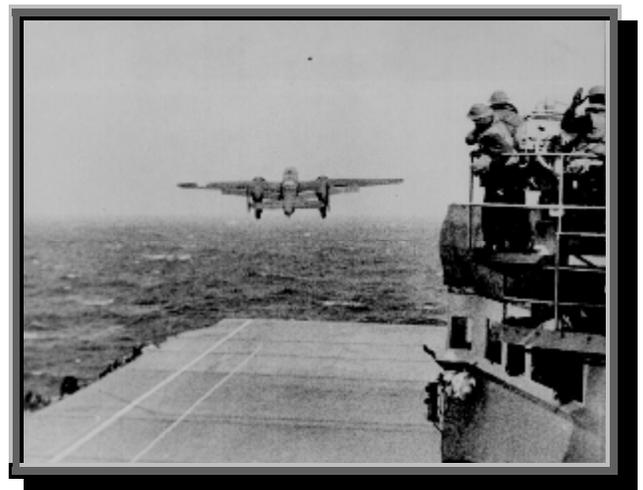


U.S.S. Lexington – CV-2

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Fleet launched one of the greatest attacks in naval aviation history. The Japanese fleet, under Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, containing six heavy aircraft carriers, achieved total surprise over the U.S. military bases on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. When the Japanese squadrons retired, the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet had been gutted. The heart of the fleet, its battleships, were either sunk or badly damaged.

America was now at war. President Franklin Roosevelt urged the Joint Chiefs of Staff to quickly launch a retaliation operation against the Japanese home islands. Initially, such an operation was thought impossible: the short range of Navy dive bombers would place the carriers too close to Japanese air bases. But some imaginative Navy operations officers determined that specially modified Army Air Corps B-25 Mitchell medium bombers could be launched from a carrier deck.

On April 13, 1942, the USS Hornet, carrying sixteen B-25s on its flight deck, and her escorts rendezvoused with Admiral William Halsey's Task Force 16 built around the USS Enterprise. The plan called for the Hornet to launch the bombers when the carrier was about 550 miles off the Japanese coast. After the bombers hit their targets, they would continue to China, where they would land on friendly airfields. Japanese patrol ships discovered the fleet when it was about 700 miles off Japan's coast. Despite the extreme range, the bombers were launched. Tactically, the Doolittle Raid caused little damage. But, strategically its impact was enormous. American morale received a tremendous boost. It also caused Japanese leaders to focus on destroying the American carriers.



B-25 taking off from USS Hornet on its way to bomb Japan – April 13, 1942

The Imperial Japanese Navy saw its first opportunity to achieve that goal in the Southwest Pacific with an offensive designed to capture the strategic harbor of Port Moresby. Because the Japanese codes had been cracked, Admiral Chester Nimitz, CO Pacific Fleet, was aware of the Japanese plans. He ordered Read Admiral Frank Fletcher and Task Force 17; built around the carriers USS Lexington and USS Yorktown. to stop it.

The result was the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first carrier vs. carrier battle. It was also the first time that both sides fought without either side's ships seeing each other. When it ended on May 8, 1942, the Japanese scored a tactical victory, losing just the light carrier Shoho, the destroyer Kikuzuki, and the minelayer Okinoshima sunk. The fast carrier Shokaku was damaged. The Americans had lost the heavy carrier USS Lexington, the destroyer Sims, and the oiler Neosho sunk, and the USS Yorktown damaged. But, America achieved a strategic victory. The invasion of Port Moresby was cancelled by the Japanese. Also, the damage to the Shokaku and the destruction of most of another Japanese carrier's (the Zuikaku) aircrews meant that these two carriers would be unable to participate in the next great carrier engagement of the war – the Battle of Midway.

For the Japanese, the primary purpose of Midway was to lure the surviving U.S. Navy carriers into a trap. The heart of the attack was the First Carrier Striking Force, containing the four fleet carriers Hiryu, Soryu, Akagi and Kaga, under Adm. Nagumo. Against a Japanese force that also included eleven battleships and twenty-three cruisers, Adm. Nimitz could only assemble three carriers (including the crippled, partially-repaired USS Yorktown), eight cruisers and a handful of destroyers. In addition, many of the Navy's pilots had never seen combat, and their squadrons were composed of slow and obsolete aircraft. As Walter Lord wrote in his classic account of the battle, *Incredible Victory*, the Americans "had no right to win. Yet they did."

The squadrons of the USS Enterprise, USS Hornet, and USS Yorktown sank all four Japanese carriers and turned back the assault on Midway island. The cost to the U.S. Navy was high. The damaged Yorktown was further wounded and eventually scuttled. Torpedo squadrons flying obsolete Devastators were wiped out. But America now had the strategic initiative.



The USS Yorktown badly damaged and listing – Battle of Midway, June, 1942

The first U.S. offensive, carrier vs. carrier engagement of the war was the Battle of the Eastern Solomons on August 24 and 25, 1942. Squadrons from the USS Enterprise and the USS Saratoga dueled with squadrons from the heavy carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku and the light carrier Ryujo. The Enterprise was heavily damaged, but the battle was an American victory because the Japanese lost more ships (three sunk, including the Ryujo), and reinforcements intended for the Japanese forces on Guadalcanal were temporarily turned away. The Japanese later got some revenge when sub torpedoes sunk the USS Wasp a month later.



U.S. Navy Douglas SBDs made the difference in the Battle of Midway – helping to sink many Japanese ships, including four carriers.

The Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands (October 25-27, 1942) was the next carrier vs. carrier battle. This time, the Hornet and the repaired Enterprise squared off against the heavies Hiyo, Shokaku and Zuikaku, and the light carrier Zuiho. When the battle ended, America had only one carrier afloat in the theater, the USS Enterprise. For the Japanese, the Shokaku and Zuikaku were both damaged, but afloat. More importantly, the Japanese had suffered a crippling loss of pilots. Combined with losses from earlier battles, Japanese aircrew quality never recovered.

In the carrier vs. carrier Battle of the Philippine Sea (June 19-20, 1943), Japan lost three carriers sunk and more than 600 planes (carrier and land-based) destroyed. American losses were negligible. The engagement became known as "The Marianas Turkey Shoot."

When Gen. Douglas MacArthur landed troops on the Philippine island of Leyte, the Japanese high command decided to risk everything in one knockout blow. Three fleets were organized. One, under Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa, was built around four aircraft carriers. Largely empty of pilots and aircraft, its sole purpose was to act as a decoy to lure away from the beachhead Adm. William Halsey's powerful Third Fleet, with its sixteen heavy and light carriers.

Once Halsey's aircraft spotted Ozawa's fleet, the aggressive commander commenced pursuit. Though the second Japanese fleet, under Vice Adm. Kiyohide Shima, failed to reach the landing beaches, it succeeded in drawing away the bulk of the U.S. Seventh Fleet. When

Winners, Winners, Winners by Ron Fleishman

The winner of our first Museum Contest is one of our newest members: **Col. Janet Rizzoli**.

Janet is a former U.S.A.F. Captain, and is now working at California State University – Channel Islands. She joined the Wing a few weeks ago, and, in that short time, has helped with a Special Event; went to the Camarillo City Council meeting with our group to show support for our museum and the grant proposal; has become very active with the Library Development Committee and the Website Unification Committee; is now the liaison between our Museum Manager, John Woolley, and CSUCI – where we hope to develop many ongoing and new partnerships with the students' projects vis-à-vis our museum activities.

Janet was last seen also dusting airplanes and display cases.

The contest, as you may remember, was to identify the campaign ribbons worn by the WAC figure displayed in our Museum.

The identification of the ribbons as worn by the WAC are:

Top ribbon = WW II Victory Medal;
Bottom left = WW II U.S. Army Good Conduct Medal;
Bottom center = Woman's Army Corps Medal;
Bottom right = WW II American Campaign Medal.

Our good friend **Wilbur "Wil" Richardson** also sent in an entry from Chino Hills, CA, and for his good try we are also sending him a prize. He was in the 94th Bomb Group with **Orville "Bill" Main**.

The details for the next contest are still in the works, so keep reading the *Flight Line* and visit the museum and displays. Who knows – maybe looking at a display could win you a prize?



Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress – 94th Bomb Group

This is the type of bomber flown for 35 missions over Germany by Col. **Orville "Bill" Main** (pilot) and **Wilbur "Wil" Richardson** (gunner). Orville and Wilbur got together as a team when they helped to fly the CAF Arizona Wing's B-17G "Sentimental Journey" many years ago. Our thanks to both these men of "The Greatest Generation" for all the hardships that they endured on behalf of their country.

We stand in awe – and will never forget.

Forget? Never ! A Tribute To The Men of "The Mighty Eighth"

by Albert P. Hall, 489th BG
A survivor.

"The years have passed, it seems I'm old,
Yet still the memories unfold –
Of fine young boys in battle dress,

Who to their country's call, said "Yes,"
Who chose to serve in skies above
For freedom's sake they showed their love.

All volunteers – they asked to fight,
To break the back of Hitler's might.
They picked the toughest job of all,
"The Mighty Eighth" would be their call.

In heavy bombers, crews of ten,
We changed from kids to older men.
Between the members of each crew,
A bond of friendship grew and grew.

This bond of love can never end,
For one on each they did depend.
Six miles straight up, no place to hide,
They did their job with guts and pride.

The 17s got glamour more,
But none surpassed the 24.
They roamed the skies and fought the fight,
And brought us home both day and night.

Through heavy flak and fighter's fire,
They gave me so much to admire.
Of missions – limit twenty-five,
How could we live? How could we survive?

With purest luck I did stay well,
Lord knows we had our share of hell.
My heart is sad, the tears they burn,
For thousands who did not return.

Their life was sweet – a brimming cup,
Yet willingly they gave it up.
Dear God, my life I'd gladly give,
If they could have a chance to live.

Each one a hero in my mind,
We nevermore will see their kind.
My hair turns white, my body lame,
Still proudly do I bear its name.

With love, respect, abiding faith,

I can't forget 'The Mighty Eighth'."

Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Barry Schoen

Quite a sight! Five WWII fighters lined up on a flight line! They are running up at CMA prior to their taking off for the Yuma MCAF Air Show. From left: Spitfire, Mustang, Bearcat, Hellcat, and Zero. The photo is by Barry Schoen, a visitor who wrote us this note:

To The Commemorative Air Force of Southern California:

On Thursday, March 24th I had the distinct pleasure of participating in your "Cockpit Orientation Tour" of your Mustang, Spitfire and Zero as the group did their pre-flight to Yuma.

Thanks to Ken Gottschall as the CAF point-of-contact for assisting in making the arrangements and for his general tour assistance. Thanks, too, to Jason Somes for his enthusiastic discussions about what it's like to fly these wonderful war birds.

Each of the pilots, mechanics and support personnel I talked to were incredibly friendly, freely answered my questions, and were willing to help me experience in this small way the world of a WWII fighter pilot. Seeing these fighters up close and personal was a dream come true.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a VIP-like tour.

Sincerely, Barry Schoen, Springfield, VA



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Here are the pilots of the 5 fighters that flew to Yuma: Chris Rushing, Ken Gottschall, Jason Somes, Steve Barber, Sr. and Gary Barber. Not in the photo & arriving later with our SNJ-5 was Al Kepler. We are so proud to have such a group of experienced, competent and devoted pilots – who represent us well wherever they fly our memorable vintage warbirds!



© Photo courtesy of Gene O'Neal

Here's our own Gene O'Neal just before taking off in the CAF's B-29 "FIFI" at the Yuma Air Show.



© Photo by Gene O'Neal

Even though he flew on the B-29 as a crew member, Gene somehow managed to get this great photo of the Colorado River below.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Jeff Birdt (r.) and John Syrdahl watching for any oil leak after they fixed the P-51 Mustang "Man O' War." See "Just Another Day At CMA" (p. 4) for details.

Hathaway School Class Visit by Dave Flood



© Photo by Linda Bell

Ms. Linda Bell's 5th grade class from Hathaway School in Oxnard visited our CAF-SoCAWing Aviation Museum recently.

The students were so impressed by their tours of our facilities that they wrote letters thanking our Docents.

Below are a few of their letters. They indicate that we are fulfilling one of the main goals of our CAF organization – that of teaching children and young adults about the devotion and contributions of our service men and women, and the airplanes they made, serviced and flew in securing our freedoms throughout history.

Thanks for giving us a good report card, kids !

Dear Docents,

Thank you for your time. I never really knew anything about airplanes, bombs and machine guns. I really loved going in The China Doll. I got to stick my head out the window and sit on the seats and go crazy in a happy way.

One thing I learned was about Women At War, which really made me feel good inside. Men didn't just get to go to war. "Girl Power!" ha ha!

Well, thanks for all your time!

Thank you.

Sandra

Dear Docents,

Thank you for showing our class the World War II Aviation Museum. I really enjoyed it and I learned a lot.

What I like best was going inside the airplane called China Doll. I imagine that it was very scary to jump out of a

plane. I learned that the guns could be underneath, on the side or the top of the plane. I learned that the gunner had to be a small person so he could fit inside the capsule.

I learned that pilots were trained in a simulator so they didn't have to fly and sometime the airplanes had wings that could bend so they would fit on an aircraft carrier.

I learned about the different kinds of weapons.

I discovered that American airplanes had self-sealing gas tanks so that more Americans survived after getting hit.

I thought it was really interesting how a pilot got to be an ace by downing five enemy airplanes.

I especially was impressed by the secret maps on the cards that showed captured airmen how to escape from enemy territory.

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

Isai

Dear Docents,

I liked the China Doll because it is big. I can't believe the airplane is still there. I think that's very cool.

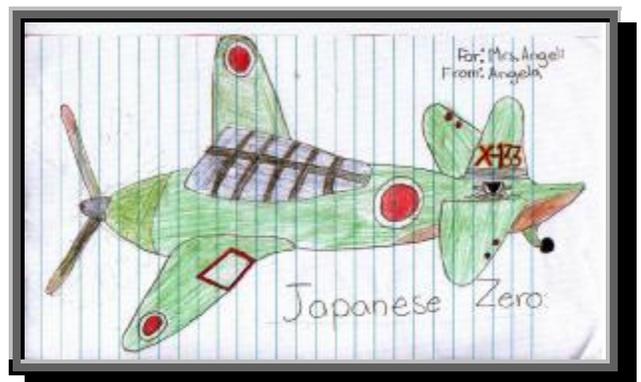
Inside the China Doll it was interesting. I learned that there are two lights – the green one and the red one. The green one is so they could parachute out and the red one means you need to wait. I also learned that when you jump out you could break a bone when you land on the ground.

When you gave us the tour to see all the airplanes, I got to learn so many things/

It was my first time to go inside an airplane.

Sincerely,

Cristal



Here's a beautiful drawing of our Zero by Angela in Ms. Angeli's class at Las Posas Elem. School in Camarillo. What detail! And Angela is a 2nd grader!

Wing Photo Page II



© Photo by Dave Flood

Russ Drosendahl, at a recent Docent Meeting, with a cake and glass stein which were presented to him on the occasion of his retirement from the Docent ranks.

The inscription: "To Russ Drosendahl, the greatest docent of them all."

Russ will still be active in the Wing, and will join Bill Main in trying to keep Joe Peppito in line.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Boeing B-29 Superfortress model built by Col. John Syrdahl – currently on display in our Aviation Museum. Its scale is 1:48, and it has two cut-away sections so you can see inside – with great detail.

Very nice job, John – thank you so much for this wonderful addition to our museum!

John also has contributed a Douglas F4C Phantom model and a Republic A-10 Warthog model to our museum. We have a "Resident Model Maker" – who also works on our PBJ Restoration Team.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Katelyn Russell with four friends on the wing of her dad & mom's plane. They were celebrating Miller's sixth birthday. He's the young man on the right.



© Photo by Dave Flood

A local Triumph Sports Car Club visited our Aviation Museum recently. Here are some of the nifty autos lined up to have their photos taken with our Spitfire.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Les Bedding has this painting on his desk of what our Spitfire will look like when it's re-painted. Col. Charles Carr is the painter, and a fine rendition it is! We have another "Resident Painter" in our illustrious ranks !

Jugs vs. Jets

by Warren E. Thompson
Flight Journal, June, 2011

To all P-51 Mustang or P-47 Thunderbolt pilots who flew combat over France and Germany in WWII, any jet kill they made would rate at the top of the charts. Their most successful prop vs. jet victories were made against the Me 262, which was produced in larger numbers (1,430), while the tiny rocket-powered Me 163 only had a production run of about 370. The Allied pilots ran up some impressive scores against the Me 262. Germany was always far ahead of England and the U.S. in their research and production of jet-propelled aircraft, as they had designed and tested at least 12 different jet airframes by war's end.

The first real competition the Luftwaffe faced over France from the American fighters was the presence of the P-38 Lightnings and the P-47 Thunderbolts (aka "Jugs"). The latter was like a flying tank built around ruggedness and sporting eight .50-caliber machine guns. The first P-47s in England went to the 78th Fighter Group in January, 1943, with T-Bolts becoming operational in March. Their numbers continued to grow, and by the spring of 1944 they peaked when the 8th Air Force had eighty P-47 groups.

This epic story concerns the 366th Fighter Group that brought its Thunderbolts to England in January, 1944 and began flying combat missions over France in mid-March, 1944. Most of the 366th's pilots had been flying missions with more seasoned groups to learn all they could before facing the Germans over hostile territory. Once they were well prepared to take on the Luftwaffe in aerial combat, their core strengths remained in low-altitude interdiction in search of anything that moved on the rails and roads in France.



Republic P-47 Thunderbolts in WWII – looking for anything that moved on the rails and roads of France.

Another important mission for the "Jugs" was close air support for ground troops. Thunderbolts from Col. Harold N. Holt's 366th Fighter Group got a hurry call from XII Corps in the Braunschweig area on April 19, 1945. A large German tank force was advancing against the Americans. After GIs had been pulled back to allow a safe bombing

margin, Col. Holt's "Hun Hunters" pounced on the tanks, setting the leader afire, upsetting several others and routing the entire column. Survivors fled to the woods. Shortly afterwards, XII Corps closed in and captured the tattered Wehrmacht remnants.

A commendation from Maj. Gen. Alvan C. Gillem to Col. Holt read:

"The close cooperation given in this afternoon's attack by squadrons of your group to the armor of my Corps established a new high in air-ground cooperation. Your bombing was so accurate, the ground troops were able to close effectively with the Krauts"

From: "Mission Accomplished: The Story of the XXIX TAC" Stars & Stripes, 1945.

Preventing the Germans from attempting to shift reserve troops and equipment to the hot areas was high priority among all of the P-47 units. At war's end, the 366th was officially credited with 103 aerial kills, and one of them proved to be monumental because it was a very rare German twin-jet bomber that the Allies knew practically nothing about – the Arado 234 – code-named "Blitz."



The German twin-jet Arado Ar 234 (top) was introduced late in WWII. The P-47D was nicknamed "Daddy Rabbit," and flew with the 366th Fighter Group.

During January/February, 1945, the 366th Fighter Group was heavily involved in going after targets inside western Germany with an emphasis on rail traffic and major rail yards. On the morning of February 22, the 391st Squadron took off with the same game plan. Early in the mission, a flight of Thunderbolts from the squadron caught a locomotive frantically pulling about 30 oil tank cars. Squadron commander Maj. Sheldon Brinson, carrying two 500-lb. GPs went into a steep dive and put both bombs squarely on the engine and the first two cars. It did not take any additional ordinance to destroy the entire train, as the explosions "walked" down the tracks and consumed every tank car.

Minutes later, as the flight continued down the tracks, another train was spotted moving toward the east, and it was taken out with .50-caliber rounds. As a result of the destruction of the two trains, dense smoke could be seen for many miles. Most of the 391st fighters still had their bombs intact, so orders were given to move deeper into Germany, past the Aachen area and closer to the major

cities of Dusseldorf and Cologne, which were east of the Allied frontline positions.”

“Leading two flights of P-47s from the 391st was Lt. David B. Fox. He recalls the unusual chain of events as they unfolded. “Our eight Thunderbolts had been concentrating on ground targets, which included dropping bombs and shooting up anything we could in and around Cologne. We were very aggressive against any river traffic (barges, etc.) that we could destroy with our .50-caliber guns. As we approached Aachen, lots of smoke everywhere was rising up through the low-scattered undercast. It was directly above our ground troops that were engaged in some close-in fighting with German troops.”



P-47 Thunderbolts bombing & staffing a German truck convoy somewhere in Germany – WWII

“When one of the pilots in our flight called out that a German jet was firing on us, I looked hard to locate what he was talking about! I recalled that we had been told that a twin-engine British jet was operating in our area, so I was hesitant. I saw it at a distance and had no idea what it was, because we had never seen pictures of what it looked like.”

“On this day, however, at least a dozen German Arado Ar 234 jets were glide-bombing Allied troop positions. Once the P-47s dived on them, they accelerated quickly while firing their rear-mounted 20 mm cannons at pursuers, and this is what triggered the response from the 391st pilots who were being fired upon.”

“None of us were able to get close enough to pick out any identifying markings on their wings or fuselage. Suddenly, one of the jets flew directly in front of me at a very high rate of speed. I remember seeing the image of the pilot, but it was just a blur, and before I could react, it was out of sight. Just below us was a scattered undercast mixed with dust and debris caused by all the bombs that were dropped by that group of fast-moving German bombers. This undercast was only about 2,000 feet above the ground. I looked around and spotted a jet flying off in a westerly direction just above the cloud layer. I radioed the leader of my second flight and told him to take the rest of

the aircraft and head back to base because we had already delivered all our bombs and shot up most of our ammunition, and we still had a long distance to fly back to base.”

“I took my wingman, and we began a steep climb to get as much altitude as we could while still keeping the lone Arado in sight. It was still moving west, and then, as I suspected, it did a 180-degree turn and headed east, toward its German base. As he passed under us, I dropped the nose of my Thunderbolt and headed straight down, using water injection.”

“I came out of my dive slightly above and behind the Ar 234 at a 45-degree angle. When I got in range, I opened up with all eight guns. My biggest worry was that I didn’t have enough ammo left to bring him down. I kept the trigger down so my gun camera film would get some good pictures of this almost unknown twin-jet bomber. My first rounds scored hits all around both engine nacelles, and they both started spewing black smoke. His airspeed and altitude dropped quickly as he went under the undercast.”

After they returned to their base in Belgium, Lt. Fox learned that the German Ar 234 had bellied in on an open field behind Allied lines, and that it was basically intact. It was then shipped to RAF Farnborough, and from there on to the U.S. for testing and evaluation.

The P-47 Thunderbolt had bested Germany’s newest jet!



Specifications: Arado Ar 234 Twin-Jet Bomber

Crew: 1

Length: 41 ft., 5 ½ in. **Wingspan:** 46 ft., 3 ½ in.

Height: 14 ft., 1 ¼ in.

Max. Takeoff Weight: 21,720 lbs.

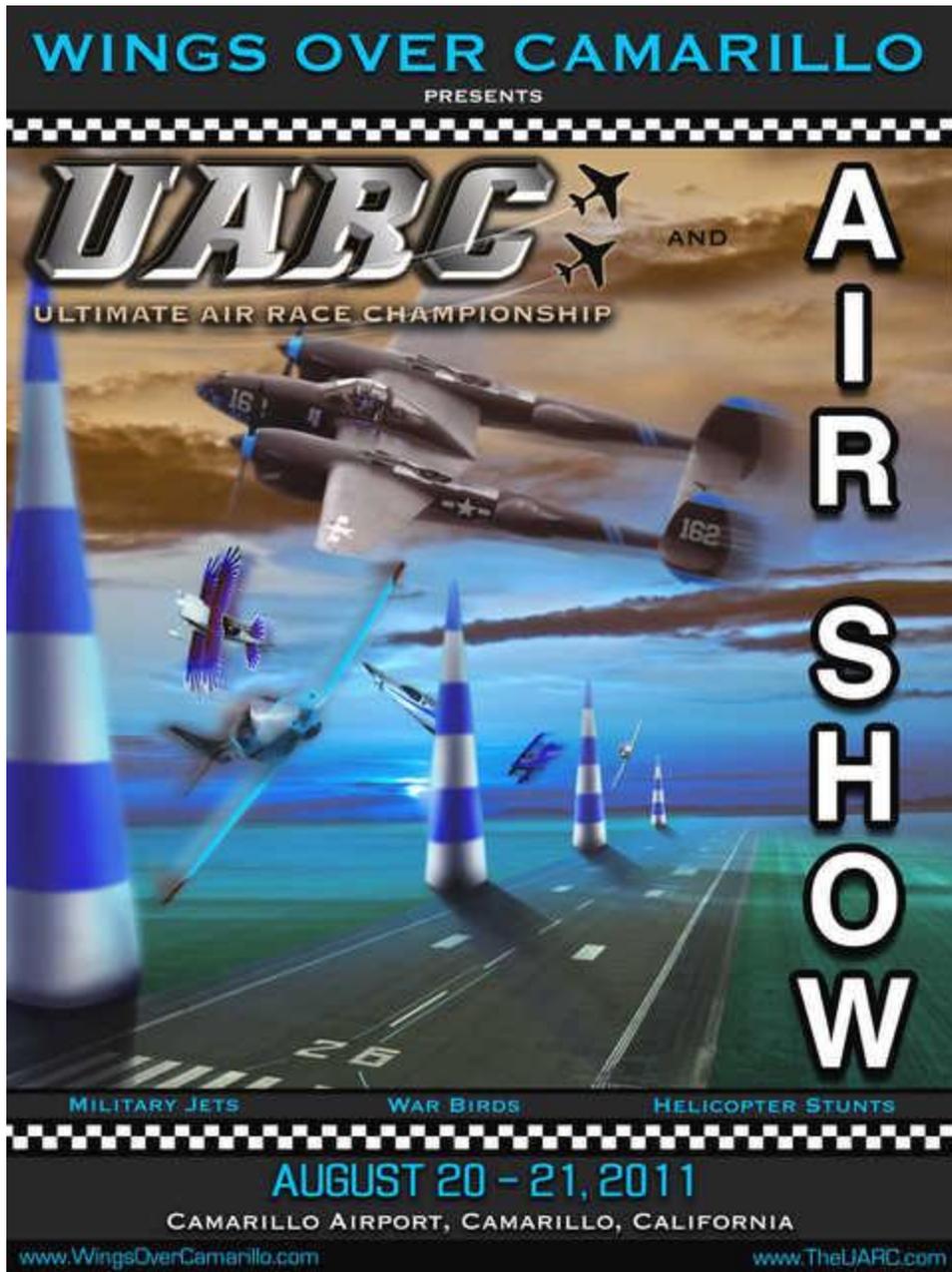
Powerplant: 2 X Junkers Jumo 004B-1 turbojets

Max. Speed: 461 mph at 19,700 ft.

Range: 684 mi. with max. bomb load

Ceiling: 32,800 ft.

Armament: 2 X 20mm cannon; 3,309 lbs. of bombs.



Wings Over Camarillo Air Show

Saturday & Sunday, August 20 & 21, 2011

All our CAF-SoCAWing Aircraft Will Be On Display

Rides will be available in our P-51, SNJ-5 and PT-19

Our Gift Shop will have lots of great items for sale to help you remember our planes – T-Shirts, Caps, and plenty of toy planes for the kids.

Remember to bring your camera. We also will take your picture in one of our vintage warbirds for a small donation.

Mark your calendar and be with us for a great air show!

That's August 20 & 21, 2011

**CAF – So CA Wing Aviation Museum
Camarillo Airport**