

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

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

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



© Photo by Al Watts



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Col. Clay Lacy waving from the cockpit of the Grumman F7F Tigercat
See Page 4 for information on this soon-to-be member of our HQ General Staff**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, October 11, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

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

October 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday & Wednesday			1 Museum Closed	2 Work Day	3	4 Work Day
			5	6 Museum Closed	7 Work Day	8 Museum Closed
12 Columbus Day	13 Columbus Day (observed) Museum Closed	14 Work Day	15 Museum Closed	16 Work Day	17	18 Work Day
19	20 Museum Closed	21 Work Day	22 Museum Closed	23 Work Day	24	25 Work Day
26	27 Museum Closed	28 Work Day	29 Museum Closed	30 Work Day	31 Halloween	

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Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Col. Clay Lacy 4
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	Bill Rheinschild 5
Maintenance Officer	* (Vacant)			Navy Reenlistments in our Hangar. 5
Safety Officer	* Marc Russell	(805) 955-9404	captmarcr@aol.com	The Bloody red Baron 6
Museum Director	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Wing Photo Page I 7
Gift Shop Manager	Sarah de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Oshkosh, B'Gosh 8
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Training Officer	(Vacant)			CAF '08 Summary Advisory Conference 14
Collections Manager	Jim Tierney	(805) 522-7067	jimerniet@aol.com	Views from the Battle of Midway Event . 14
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HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064 HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348 WEBSITE www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal				Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing 455 Aviation Drive Camarillo, CA 93010-9501
* Denotes Staff Position				

Museum Update

By Ceci Stratford (for Sarah de Bree)

Wow! That's how I view our successful "Battle of Midway" special event! Many thanks to all our members who helped make it a success, either by working overtime, donating funds, or bringing friends. **The Planes of Fame** enabled Ron Hackworth to fly in their **SBD Dauntless**, an airplane that was significant in the Battle of Midway.

Docents helped show the 130+ visitors around our Museum and the airplanes.

Members helped with photo opportunities. Dick Witten provided a beautiful photo package that included a 5x7 framed personalized and dated photo along with special photos of the Midway flyer and information about the CAF, pages of warbird pictures, and a CD with more warbirds, worth far more than the \$15 we charged. Thank you Dick for your hard work and impressive package!

The **SBD** flew along with our **Zero** (piloted by Steve Barber) and our **Hellcat** (flown by Gary Barber)—three flyovers that thrilled the crowd. David Price brought his beautiful **P-51** over from Santa Monica. That's always a crowd pleaser! Thank to members and Friends of the Museum who donated funds for the aviation fuel fund—see the listing of the names of our fuel donors (below). We now have enough money to pay for another special event flying day!

Friend of the Museum Win Burkhardt, brought six beautiful vintage cars—a Mercury convertible, two Fords, a Lincoln Continental, a Model A Coupe & a Roadster.. They fit in perfectly with the airplanes.

Speaker Col. Jim Hinckley gave an informative presentation and provided colorful handouts and posters depicting the Battle of Midway statistics, aircraft, carriers and people involved. Jim spent weeks preparing his talk, doing research, compiling figures and photos, and memorizing all the facts. Here are Jim Hinckley's own words about Midway:

Why we remember Midway.

The world's naval historians compare the Battle of Midway to Trafalgar in 1805 and Jutland in 1916.

After Midway, the Japanese six-month offensive after Pearl Harbor ended. They were then on the defensive until August, 1945. In that almost 3 ½ year period there were many battles, many losses, many heroes, and, finally, their surrender in Tokyo Bay.

Once again, the vast Pacific Ocean area was the peaceful and tranquil paradise it had been for centuries. The price was horrific, but freedom never has come, and, unfortunately, never will come, for free. There always has been a steep price to defend it.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Ceci Stratford introducing main speaker Jim Hinckley. Jim spoke extemporaneously about the pivotal battle.

Special exhibits were on display in the Museum. Sarah de Bree and Shirley Murphy spent many hours looking for appropriate photos, scanning them and presenting them in a crisp, easy-to-look-at display.

This event was very successful in its goals to present an entertaining as well as informative presentation that would also add funds to the Wing's operating accounts.

Here's a summary of income and expenses for the day:

TOTAL INCOME:	\$1,613
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$383

Aviation fuel donations: \$2,266 (from members, Friends of the Museum, visitors, the Kiwanis Club of Camarillo and Amgen). We don't have the fuel expenses yet, but they should be less than \$500. This leaves enough for aviation fuel for our next special event commemorating **Pearl Harbor**, scheduled for December 6, 2008.

Donors to Aviation Fuel Fund:

CAF Members – Jim Hinckley, Al & Lois Watts, Charlie Valentine, Russ Drosendahl, Bill O'Neill, Gil Brice; Al Kepler, Dick Witten, Ceci Stratford, Chuck Kamphausen, Ken Barger, Shirley Murphy, Walt Metcalf, Terry Cedar, Marc Russell, Howard Ulm, Dave Flood, Robert Monetti, Sarah and Casey de Bree.

Friends of the Museum – Charlotte Craven, Floyd Caldwell, Clay Paschen, Joe Halcomb.

Others – Kiwanis Club of Camarillo (thanks to Walt Metcalf), Visitor donations in cash box (Museum).

Matching Funds – Amgen (many thanks to Dr. Halcomb for submitting the request!)

Col. Clay Lacy – Nominee for CAF General Staff

Clay Lacy is a native of Wichita , Kansas and a graduate of Wichita East High School . He started flying at the age of twelve at Orville Sanders Cannonball Airport , located at Tyler Road and Maple

In January 1952, he left Wichita to join United Airlines as a copilot on DC-3 aircraft. In January 1954, Clay took military leave from United Airlines to attend Air Force Pilot Training. After completing F-86 Gunnery School in August 1955, he returned to United Airlines and continued flying military fighters and other aircraft with the California Air National Guard.

One of the first pilots to receive a Learjet Type Rating in November 1964, Clay was the Manager of Learjet Sales for California Airmotive, the Learjet distributor in the seven Western States.

Flying his P-51, Clay placed first in the 1970 Reno Unlimited Pylon Race to become the 1970 National Champion. In 1971, he placed first in the last propeller unlimited cross-country race held. He followed that by winning first place in the Fighter Pilot Tournament held in St. Louis, and also placed first in the Jet Class of “The Great Race” from London , England to Victoria , British Columbia the same year - flying a Learjet 24. Clay flew in every Unlimited Race from Reno 64 through Reno 72, also two LA races, Lancaster and 1970 Cape May, New Jersey. In addition, Clay flew in two Mojave Races; one in a four engine DC-7, placing 5th in a field of 20 P-51s, Sea Fury’s and others

Clay flew with comedian Danny Kaye on four fund-raising trips for UNICEF. The last UNICEF trip in 1972 covered stops in 35 of the lower 48 states, and every province in Canada. The trip was kicked off by President Gerald Ford at the White House, then involved flights of 65 hours in 5 days with 50 stops; a record for 5 days.

With his exclusive Astrovision equipped Learjets, Clay does almost every airline commercial filmed, most Hollywood aerial filming, and much of the photo work for the aircraft industry and military.

As a member of the Screen Actors Guild and Directors Guild of America, Clay has participated in dozens of movies. He faked a gear-up landing of a Learjet for the movie “Capricorn One” and landed a DC-3 (for real!) gear-up for the movie, “The Island”.

With over 50,000 hours as a pilot, Clay holds an Airline Transport License with thirty (30) type ratings: helicopter, seaplane, flight instructor, and flight engineer. He retired Seniority Number One from United Airlines on August 31, 1992 after 40 years and 7 months. At the time of his retirement, Clay was flying Boeing 747-400s from Los Angeles to the Orient.

On January 28, 1988, Clay flew a Boeing 747SP around the world, establishing a New Around the World Speed Record, and in doing so, raised over \$500,000 for children’s charities.

In addition, Clay has done test flying, making first flights on the original Pregnant Guppy, world’s largest airplane at that time; the STOLIFTER; the GENIE; and the TRI TURBO-DC-3.

Clay is the owner and Chief Executive Officer of Clay Lacy Aviation, founded in 1968, at Van Nuys Airport, which is a Full Jet Service FBO (fixed base operator). Clay Lacy Aviation operates a FAR 135 Air Taxi Charter with a fleet of 45 Jets from Lear, Gulfstream and BBJ.

The man who once said, I have seldom met an airplane I didn’t like,” was singled out by *Professional Pilot* magazine as the ideal person to evaluate the latest and the best contributions by the Aviation Industry. *Professional Pilot* engaged Clay as an experienced advocate for both pilots and operators, and arranged to have him flight check and editorialize about the many new aircraft in this exciting marketplace. Clay began writing his editorials and commentary for *Professional Pilot* in May of 1997, and after dozens of byline articles was repeatedly voted the most popular writer, year after year.

With over 50,000 hours of flying time in over 200 different aircraft, 30 type ratings on his ATP, Helicopter, Sea Plane, Flight Instructor, and Flight Engineer ratings, Clay is known to his friends as the “Flyingest Pilot Ever!”

Clay still flies an average of 18 days per month, over 35 hours per month.

Colonel Lacy has been a CAF Life Member since 1977, LM #0158. He has been a significant contributor to the Southern California Wing’s hangar project.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Clay Lacy with the beautiful Douglas DC-2 he and others helped restore – on a visit with the plane to our CAF – SoCAWing hangars in May, 2007.

Bill Rheinschild – New Wing Member



© Photo courtesy of Bill Rheinschild www.unlimitedair.com

Bill Rheinschild, CAF Life Member (#1483) – owner of Hawker Sea Fury FB Mk. 11 #N42SF “Bad Attitude,” and North American P-51D Mustang #N35FF “Risky Business.” We look forward to seeing one or more of his famous planes at our hangars soon. Bill is owner of Unlimited Air, Inc. and a developer of prestigious homes in Southern California.



© Photo by Scott Germain
P-51D “Risky Business” shown flying at the Reno Air Races.



© Photo courtesy Bill Rheinschild

Hawker Sea Fury FB Mk. 11 “Bad Attitude.” She was flown in Reno in 1998 and placed 7th in Gold Unlimited.

Navy Reenlistments in Our Wing’s Museum of Aviation

by Dave Flood

Stephanie Tagliaferri, Joe Peppito, and Jim Hinkelman teamed up to arrange two re-enlistments of Navy seamen from Point Mugu Naval Air Station at our Wing’s Museum.



© Photo courtesy of Stephanie Tagliaferri
AD3 Pierre Pilacin, COMAEWWINGPACDET AIMD, receiving his certificate of re-enlistment from Lt. Michael Wagenaar, FRC SW Site, Pt. Mugu, MMCO.



© Photo courtesy of Stephanie Tagliaferri
AD2 Kelly Simley, COMACCLOGWINGDET, W/C 41L receiving his re-up certificate from Lt. Willie Bernard, FRC SW Site Pt. Mugu, MMCO.

Congratulations to these two young men who have re-committed themselves to service in Uncle Sam’s Navy!

The Bloody Red Baron of Germany

by Dave Flood



*After the turn of the century,
In the clear blue skies over Germany,
Came a roar and a thunder men had never heard,
Like the scream and the sound of a big war bird.*

*Up in the sky, a man in a plane,
Baron von Richthofen was his name,
Eighty men tried, and eighty men died,
Now they're buried together on the countryside.*

*Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more,
The Bloody Red Baron was rollin' up the score,
Eighty men died tryin' to end that spree,
Of the Bloody Red Baron of Germany.*



Manfred von Richthofen
2 May 1892 – 21 April 1918

Baron von Richthofen was a German fighter pilot known as "The Red Baron." He was the most successful flying ace of World War I, being officially credited with 80 confirmed air combat victories. Richthofen was a member of an aristocratic family, with many famous relatives. In the photo above, he is wearing the *Pour le Merite*, the "Blue Max," Prussia's highest military honor. The photo is c. 1917.

In 1917, Richthofen became a wing commander and led a unit of German fighters which became known as the "Flying Circus" – due to the fact that they moved on short notice to

different parts of the front, using tents, and their planes were all painted bright red.



Here is one of the planes that the Red Baron flew and in which he scored many of his victories. It is the Fokker Dr. I Triplane, Built in 1917, powered by a Thulin-built Le Rhone 9J 9-cylinder air-cooled rotary 110 HP engine. It weighed 1,289 pounds, had a maximum speed of 103 mph, and a ceiling of 19,685 feet. Its armament was two synchronized Spandau machine guns.

Richthofen was killed just after 11:00 a.m. on 21 April 1918, while flying over Morlancourt Ridge, near the Somme River. The Baron had been pursuing at low altitude a Sopwith Camel, piloted by a novice Canadian, Lt. Wilfrid May of No. 209 Squadron, RAF. Richthofen was hit by a single .303 bullet, which caused severe damage to his heart and lungs. He died after setting his plane down.

There was (and continues to be) controversy over who had actually fired the shot that killed the Red Baron. Most historians who have searched the evidence have concluded that the shot had to have come from one of the anti-aircraft guns which were manned by Australian gunners on the ground.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Jim Hinkelman readying our Fokker Dr. 1 model for duty as a vehicle for photo-taking ops with young children at venues such as air shows, fairs, etc.

Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood

About 50 members & spouses & friends turned out on August 9, 2008 for our first General Meeting in years. Everyone enjoyed the Wing BBQ arranged by Norm Swagler and crew. We need to do this more often!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Wing Leader Steve Barber presided at the meeting.



© Photo by Dave Flood

La Tanya Barber's grand-nieces enjoyed the meeting.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

"Did you know I'm a pilot, Daddy?" Katelyn Russell talking to her dad Marc from his T-34. What a doll!



© Photo by Dave Flood

Our "O" Club is getting framed! Here John Jones (r) instructs Steve Barber, Jr. in the art of setting joists.



© Photo by Dave Flood

The "Pomona Roamers," a visiting senior club touring our Museum. They actually knew about WWII events !

Oshkosh, B' Gosh

by Gene O'Neal



© Photo courtesy of Gene O'Neal

Here's Gene on duty at the CAF's Tent at Oshkosh. Note Gene's new official CAF shirt, with added US Flag patch on left shoulder (and Wing patch on right). The man on the left is none other than Steve Brown, the new CAF President and CEO, who was the guiding force behind CAF's much improved image at Oshkosh.

My long-time desire to attend the Oshkosh air show became reality this year, as I flew with a friend to Wisconsin in his Cessna 172R. Four days of low altitude sight-seeing and dodging thunder storms could not have been better. Oshkosh is called an adventure, but it is that and more. Words cannot adequately describe it. You must see it and experience it.

One thing – organization – became very evident as we drove to the parking ticket booths. Then, excellent directions by a large crew, to one of many well-marked parking lots. Then abundant directions and assistance to the many event ticket windows. And even more directions, maps, free newspapers and information was available throughout the very large air show and exhibit areas. All of this was staffed by volunteers from all over the USA. Only Disney may be better at moving crowds and making it a pleasant visit.

After the first look at the maps and the schedules, you know you can NOT do everything. So just plunge in, and, as days go by, you learn to become more selective and enjoy it more.

There was something flying from early morning until the main air show – from one to four or five o'clock. They flew the rocket engine sport plane, the electric motor plane, and home-builts. There was a long list of world champion aero-

batic pilots and many military aircraft flying, including the: F/A-18, AV8B, V-22, and the F-22. All of this, plus a long list of warbirds. Many central static displays, like the U-2, 747 Dream Lifter, John Travolta's 707, and all the warbirds were rotated in and out of the center display.

I cannot even begin to describe all the vendor displays; rotating static/show displays; work shops; rows & rows of home-builts; huge areas of planes in the camping grounds; ultra-lights; vintage planes; sea planes; and very good food stands everywhere. Even diaper-changing tables – some stocked with fresh diapers (oh...maybe those were Depends for us older folks?). Lots of good porta-potties everywhere. Volunteers must work all night to produce the official newspaper that was free and available every morning. It was 48 pages of news and pictures of yesterday's events, plus a new event schedule, and lots of EAA aviation stories. It is an absolutely amazing production.

If you go to a future Air Venture at Oshkosh, be sure to wear your best walking shoes. There is a network of shuttle trams and buses available. Lines do form at some stops, so just walk your four or five miles a day and enjoy the sights and the people.

I was there Tuesday through Friday. Friday was the first day of a really huge crowd – it was like wall-to-wall people. The lines were longer for food, but you could still walk around o.k. We spent several hours on Friday morning at the EAA Air Venture Museum – absolutely first class.

I sacrificed more walking and exploring time on Thursday to work in the CAF Hangar 57. What a great group of people from Midland, supplemented by other CAF volunteers. It was fun because they were so well organized and super friendly, and we were still able to watch most of the air show. CAF President Steve Brown was there, preparing the daily e-mail, energizing everyone, promoting CAF and hand-cranking the siren when new members signed up.

This is only a very brief description of the Oshkosh Adventure. Did I see everything? No way! Would I go again? OH, YES!



© Photo courtesy of Gene O'Neal

Gene at the flight line entrance of Air Venture, 2008.

Wing Photo Page II



© 2008 Eric Van Gilder

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

Clay Lacy flying the F7F Tigercat on "full burner." Clay brought this beautiful bird to the show from Van Nuys to participate in the Air Expo on August 16/17, 2008.



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© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Three Grumman "Cats" buzzing the crowd at Air Expo 2008 – F7F Tigercat, F6F Hellcat & F8F Bearcat.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Our ever-reliable SNJ-5 #290, with Marc Russell in the cockpit, taking Air Expo visitors on rides. Our Warbird Ride Program was in full operation during the Expo.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Charlie Valentine and Jim Hinckley greeting a visitor during the EAA Camarillo Air Expo. The weather was great, and the crowds were large and appreciative. Many veterans visited and shared memories.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

Tim Kutzbach and his new bride, Crissy, helping out with the towing of airplanes during the Air Expo. Many of our volunteers helped on the ramp, in the gift shop, providing security and just generally by being there.



© 2008 Eric Van Gilder

© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

As usual, the North American B-25J *Heavenly Body*, out of Van Nuys, was a huge hit with the attendees. Here she is with her bomb bays wide open during a low fly-by. Her "partner," B-25J *Executive Sweet*, joined her for several passes that wowed the crowd.

Wing Maintenance Report

by Joe Peppito

If you have been in the West Hangar (Maintenance Hangar for you people who don't know how to read a compass), you have probably noticed a great deal of activity in the southeast corner. That's where Col. Albee has his "Wooden Wonder," the Fairchild F-24R. He has a substantial sized crew working on the airplane, and they are doing an outstanding job, having to work with a minimum of back-up data. Bob hopes to have the landing gear completely restored and installed shortly, along with the freshly fabric-covered right wing panels. They are also getting the airplane ready to install the fuselage fabric envelope covering. Keep up the good work – Fairchild crew!

The maintenance crew working on the SNJ-4 #N6411D "Peppito's Problem" is also coming along in good time. Although it looks like nothing is happening on this airplane, work is definitely progressing. The wing flaps have been completely installed and rigged. All the control cables have been checked for installation and coated with protective Para-ketone. Howard Uhm has done a fantastic job of installing all the radio and intercom equipment. He has done a professional job in this respect. Alan Nicholson has completed the installation of all the instrument lines for the front and rear cockpits. We are thinking of making him an "Instrument Specialist." We still have about fifteen squawks to comply with before we can even think about flying the airplane, but we are almost there.

The biggest maintenance job in the Restoration Hangar is the C-46 airplane. The PBJ-1J (B-25) sheet metal crew has done a great job of replacing all the damaged and corroded skins on the top of the airplane, and is presently applying the finishing touches to this job. There are still a few other items of maintenance to be accomplished by the C-46 crew before they move the airplane out of the hangar. That is going to be a big day that everyone is looking forward to, and we are really going to celebrate.

There is a lot of activity going on in the Maintenance Hangar, and it requires a lot of manpower to accomplish and complete it. If you are looking for some really great activity, something really worthwhile doing, and you don't know where to find it, come on down to the hangar and we can help you find the job that just fits you. Besides, we can always use all the help we can get! Thanks for pitching in! "KEEP 'EM FLYING!"

Wing Golf Tournament

Because of an unexpected development, our First Annual Wing Golf Tournament has been postponed until May 4, 2009.

We just learned in late August that the Las Posas Country Club has decided to revamp their course, completely restructuring their front nine holes. More details to follow.

2008 Wing Staff Elections

by Joe Peppito

In preparation for the upcoming Wing Staff election, the Wing Staff has appointed a nominating committee, which will select candidates who will run for the 2009/2010 Wing Staff positions that are open as of January 1, 2009.

The Nominating Committee consists of three members of our Wing: Joe Peppito, Norm Swagle and Sib Bosso. The Wing Staff offices open for election this year are:

Wing Leader, Executive Officer, Safety Officer and Maintenance Officer.

Any member of the Wing who is interested in running for any of these offices are urged to contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee and make their intentions known – before October 15, 2008.

Now is your chance to participate as an active member of your Wing and help to maintain this Wing as one of the best in the Commemorative Air Force.

The Wing Election Ballot will be printed in the November issue of *Flight Line*. We're hoping that all eligible members will vote this year and make it the year that we had the highest percentage of members voting in this very important election! All ballots must be delivered to the Election Committee by November 15, 2008.

Our Wing currently needs good, talented, committed and enthusiastic members to step up and volunteer to serve!

Be an active Wing member – participate now !



Wing Christmas Party

Thursday, December 4 – 6:30 p.m. social; 7:30 dinner.
Wedgewood Banquet Center., 5880 Olivias Park Drive,
Ventura, CA – Buenaventura Golf Course.

Check for \$35 per person to: Casey de Bree, CAF, 455
Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010.

Wing Photo Page III



© Photo by Dave Flood

Shari Heitkotter and Eric Lange were indispensable in helping move aircraft during the EAA Air Expo.



© Photo by Dave Flood

One of the visiting "future pilots" who got their photo taken in our Hellcat at the EAA/CMA Air Expo 2008.



© 2008 Eric Van Gilder

© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Our Zero and the Planes of Fame's P-40 Warhawk – two old enemies now sharing the peaceful skies. It's wonderful for kids to see these warbirds still flying!



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Fifteen AT-6s flew in formation over Van Nuys to honor the memory of Dick Sykes, who died recently. Dick had been one of the founders of the Condor Squadron, of which our Chris Rushing is a member.



© 2008 Eric Van Gilder

© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Our Bearcat and Hellcat up close and personal. Gary Barber flew the Bearcat & Chris Rushing the Hellcat. Other Wing pilots flying during Air Expo included Ken Gottschall, Steve Barber and Jason Somes.



© 2008 Eric Van Gilder

© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

CAF Inland Empire Wing's outstanding Douglas C-53 SkyTrooper flying formation with a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber. Echoes of World War II !

Ben Kuroki, Patriotic American

by Dave Flood



© White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian
President George W. Bush salutes Tech Sgt. Ben Kuroki, of the 93rd Bomb Group, during his remarks Thursday, May 1, 2008, at the Celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the East Room of the White House. Ben and his wife live in Camarillo.

Ben Kuroki, highly-decorated veteran of WWII, visited our Wing on August 15, 2008 (the 63rd anniversary of VJ-Day). Ben, in talking with me before his visit, asked me not to have any “fanfare.” So we made it a low-key visit, where the two of us went out between our hangars and sat in the shade and talked about Ben’s latest wonderful experiences in Washington, D.C.

On May 1, 2008, Ben was honored at the White House, along with five other American veterans of Japanese descent. The others were members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, who had served in eight major campaigns with distinction during WWII. Ben served as a gunner on B-24s in Europe (30 missions – including Ploesti) and on B-29s in the Pacific (28 missions).

After President Bush had lauded those members of the 442nd, he turned to Ben Kuroki with these words:

“I do want to point out one soul who’s joined us – and Ben is not going to be happy about it – Ben Kuroki. He probably doesn’t want to be called out, but I’m going to do it anyway, Ben. I’ve got the podium – and you don’t!”

“Two days after Pearl Harbor, Ben volunteered to join the Army, where there is no doubt he met prejudice at nearly every turn. Still, he became one of the few “Nisei” admitted to the Army Air Corps. He flew 58 missions over Europe and Japan, and he earned three Distinguished Flying Crosses. When he came back home, he turned to another mission: working to overcome the intolerance he had experienced during his early days in the Army Air Corps. Ben edited newspapers. He spoke to audiences around the country. He became a strong advocate of racial equality. He knew something – and he knew the subject well, unfortunately. Sixty years after the Japanese surrender, Ben received the U.S. Army Distinguished Service Medal. And at the ceremony, here’s what he said:

“I had to fight like hell to fight for my country – and now I feel completely vindicated.”

“We are glad you feel vindicated, but I am proud to tell you America is a better place because of you, Ben. Thank you for coming.”



© White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian
President Bush shaking Ben’s hand after the celebration in the White House.

Ben and his wife of 63 years, Shige, along with their daughter Julie Cooney and granddaughter Lexie, were also guests of the Smithsonian Museum of History, where Ben’s memorabilia from WWII will be housed permanently.

They were taken to the Smithsonian’s new Museum of Flight in Virginia, where their Smithsonian guide took photos of them in front of the famous Boeing B-29 Super-Fortress *Enola Gay*. This, of course, was the plane that dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Ben was in the crew of a B-29 (*Sad Saki* – named after Ben) that occupied the same hard-stand as the *Enola Gay* at the air base on Tinian, from which many of the raids on Japan originated in the late stages of WWII. This was the first time since 1945 that Ben had seen the *Enola Gay*.



Photo courtesy of Ben Kuroki/Smithsonian Museum of Flight
Julie Cooney, Lexie Cooney, Shige and Ben Kuroki – at the Smithsonian’s new Museum of Flight in VA, where they observed the B-29 *Enola Gay*.

Wing Photo Page IV – Midway Event



© Photo by Al Watts
Col. Jim Hinckley giving his speech to a rapt audience.



© Photo by Dave Flood
David Price's P-51 backing up the vintage autos.



© Photo by Dave Flood
David Price and Don McMillan side by side at event.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Planes of Fame's SBD Dauntless arriving at event.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Ceci Stratford and Ron Hackworth of Planes of Fame posing next to POF's beautiful SBD. Ceci was the driving force behind the Battle of Midway event.



© Photo by Dave Flood
When pilots get together...! Trading stories, no doubt!

CAF '08 Summer Advisory Conference

by Clifford Brown

Here is my take on what I feel were the most important topics at the CAF 2008 Summer Advisory Conference:

Governance

That is the new way the CAF is going to be managed. At present, the General Staff, which is our board of directors, is really acting as ten co-presidents. The Governance concept means the General Staff sets the policies and the President and his HQ staff carry them out.

This change will require adjustment in the CAF by-laws and constitution. At present, there are interlocking policies and procedures that hog-tie both the General Staff and the President from doing very much of anything. You will be asked to approve these changes in the upcoming election. (By the way, Clay Lacy is running for CAF General Staff. Be sure to get your absentee ballot and vote!).

Will Governance solve all of the CAF's problems? Absolutely not. But, ten co-presidents weren't solving them either. It's a start. We now have a new President who has put together a new HQ staff. There are a lot of new faces.

Finance

A couple of financial issues sort of slipped by during the course of the Conference. Even though the Auditors gave the CAF a clean bill of health on the numbers. The Auditors are uncomfortable with the fact that there is no common accounting software being used by the Finance Officers in the 74 CAF Units. There are at least five different software programs used that present the data in slightly different ways. This presents a real challenge when you are dealing with 74 financial reports each quarter. Further, the Auditors are uncomfortable with the method of accounting used – accrual vs. cash – and that our control of inventory is lax. The Auditors referred to this as “not an inconsequential concern.”

How has all this happened? Over the years, the CAF grew aviation-wise but not management-wise. The same people have been doing things the same way for years. To no one's surprise, we are still getting the same unsatisfactory results. No one wanted to “rock the boat.” Well...the boat has been rocked. You don't have to be a weatherman to know that “the times they are a'changing.”

CAF Membership

The final issue is a policy that has just been established to add value to our CAF membership. Everyone who flies or works on our aircraft must be a CAF member. Everyone who works in our museum must be a CAF member. If certain individuals can't afford the dues, and the Wing thinks they are critical enough to our operation, then the Wing may pay their dues. Working on our historical aircraft and in our museum is a privilege of membership.

Views From Battle Of Midway Event



© Photo by Dave Flood
Col. Dick Witten working his magic with visitor photos. Dick and Chuck Williams worked the Photo Program.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Visitor David Cecil after his photo op in our Hellcat.



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Special display of Battle of Midway photos and maps fashioned by Shirley Murphy and Sarah de Bree.