

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF
Southern California Wing
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010
(805) 482-0064



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Mark "Mutha" Hubbard in our Bearcat at WOC Air Show. Special Edition on Reno, Wings Over Camarillo & Oshkosh to come.

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Charles "Chuck" McCammon – 1923-2013

Horst "Rudi" Wallasch – 1949 – 2013

See pages 4 and 5 for their memorials.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, October 19, 2013 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.

October 2013

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

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Wing Leader's Report by Steve Barber, Sr.

Reno was the big news for your Wing this month. Your pilots took all of the fighters, plus Joe Clark's F7F Tigercat and Clay Lacy's P-51 Mustang to the Air Races! That's right – seven fighters. Steve Barber, Jr. took a motor home for our Wing use and arrived Sunday evening before the races.

People involved in the journey include; Steve Jr. and his family: Holly, Luke and Jake; yours truly, Jason Somes, Ken and Rosie Gottschall, Steve McCartney, Robert Hertberg and son, Mark "Mutha" Hubbard, Jessica Bauman, Roland Fogel, Tom Ridderbush, Janet Rizzoli, Ted Romanek, David Petrovich, Shari Heitkotter, Alan Gaynor, Yoshi Abe, Jon Ingoldsby, Jason Johnson, Clay Lacy, and Joe Clark. I hope I didn't forget anyone.
Thanks to all for your hard work and support!

Your Wing opened the show each day around noon and then flew later in the day with 4-5 fighters - with Jason Somes in the Bearcat and Ken Gottschall in the Mustang doing aerobatics, while your Spitfire did flybys, and the Zero was once again shot down by the Hellcat. Everyone flew a safe show and I am very proud of all of you.

The only problem we had other than minor mechanical issues was Mutha found two trucks parked on the side of the taxi way and gave them a piece of his mind with the Hellcat's propeller.

No one was hurt and the engine is at Ray Anderson's shop in Idaho getting checked out and the propeller will soon be heading to the prop shop. We hope to have the F6F back in the air within a month. Mutha and helpers got the engine off in a few days and dismantled the propeller for shipping. Your Hellcat is secure in a hangar awaiting hanging the engine and propeller after repairs.

Janet Rizzoli and Tom Ridderbush did a fantastic job with our PX at the show and many folks are now walking around wearing our shirts and caps. Well done! - to all who worked the PX!! My sincere thanks to all who worked so hard, and who took time off of their regular jobs to make our display at the 50th Annual Reno Air Races such a great success!!!



CAF National Air Base Choice Narrowed to Three Metropolitan Areas

The CAF General Staff is pleased to announce a shortened list of potential locations for the home of the CAF National Airbase. After careful consideration, the General Staff narrowed the list to three metropolitan areas in Texas (alphabetical by airport)

Alliance Airport, Fort Worth
Collin County Airport, McKinney (Dallas Metropolitan)
Dallas Executive Airport, Dallas
Ellington Field Airport, Houston
Lackland/Kelly Airport, San Antonio
North Texas Regional Airport, Sherman/Dennison, (Dallas Metropolitan)

"The future of the Commemorative Air Force lies in Texas, as it has for more than fifty-five years," said Stephan Brown. "Though the locations in Olathe, Kan. and Smyrna, Tenn., were very appealing candidates, the General Staff has been pleased with the interest expressed by the Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio officials in being the home of the CAF National Airbase." The narrowed list will allow the General Staff to focus more on these specific cities and dedicate their time in working with each community to determine the best location for the future of the organization.

Brown said the General Staff envisions this new National Airbase to be the pinnacle of the organization's 60 existing facilities currently spread over 25 states and maintained by our 10,000 member-volunteers.

"The CAF National Airbase will house and serve as a stage to share a rotating group of the most significant military aviation assets in history," Brown continued. "We expect this Airbase to become a premier destination for the chosen host city."

After the initial proposal in June, 23 cities voiced interest in being the home of the CAF National Airbase. After careful consideration, the list was narrowed to eight cities by the General Staff using the CAF's basic requirements of population, runways, weather, and airport suitability. The initial finalist list included two locations outside the state of Texas. After thorough review, the decision was made to secure a home in Texas.

"The CAF was founded in Texas and continues to have a large contingent of members here, in fact we are proud to be the 'Official Air Force of Texas,'" said Brown. "This state has an economic climate unlike any other in the country and we have thrived here and hope to continue to do so for many years to come traveled to. For our members located outside of Texas, each of these six locations are easily and centrally located. We look forward to the next few months of negotiations to determine the home of the CAF National Airbase."

Remembering Rudi Wallasch

Rudi Wallasch – December 25, 1949 – May 20, 2013

Horst "Rudi" Wallasch was born on December 25, 1949 in Bad Krueznach, Germany, the first of four children. He came to the United States in 1956, at the age of six, with his parents. They lived in Glendale for a short time and eventually settled in La Crescenta.

As a teenager, Rudi was a bright student as well as a very talented musician. He played violin, viola, piano, bassoon, guitar and bass fiddle. He was often asked to play first violin or solos with his school orchestras and also at church events. He also played in a small acoustic rock band – called "We Three Trio" – with his friends Dennis Neufeld and Dave Lutkehaus. During this time he also took flying lessons and helped his parents raise his brothers and sisters – since his parents were busy carving out a new life in the U.S.

Rudi worked as an electrician with his father for approximately 38 years. His favorite hobbies included reading, soaring, helping restore WWII aircraft with the Commemorative Air Force, boating, model trains, and remote-control airplane models.

He will be missed by his parents, Horst and Barbara Wallasch; his brother Charlie & sister-in-law Marianna; his brother Ed and sister-in-law Lynette; his sister Heidi Johnston and brother-in-law Greg; along with his many nieces and nephews – Crystal, Nic, Hudson, Sabrina, Tyler, Justin, Jeffrey, Brooke, Katelyn and Aubrey.

Rudy and his dad were always a team, that is - they were always seen working together around the CAF. I first met them at Harlingen, Texas when Airsho was in progress there. Upon the CAF's move to Midland, we all met and worked the event there. Rudi was always on the fuel truck and they put in some long days.

Most of all I remember them in association with our SoCalWing at Camarillo. From work around the old nose hangar to the new ones we occupy now. Not only was he adept at electrical work (his profession, with his father, Horst), but he entered into a lot of other jobs voluntarily.

Whenever he arrived at our hangars he, along with Horst, brought sunshine with him. As they came in there was always a smile and a happy greeting. They put in a full day's work with climbing – Rudi on the floor helping his dad up on a ladder. I can still hear the clanging of the rope on the flag pole which they were installing – with Rudi holding the ladder and Horst at the top of the ladder.

A great guy – Rudi Wallasch!

Russ Drosendahl

Rudi helped start our Wing. He and his dad Horst were CAF members even before there was a So. CA Wing. They would commute from La Crescenta to Mesa, AZ to work on the B-17 "Sentimental Journey." Jerri and I first met Rudi and his dad at our first meetings in Van Nuys.

Rudi at one time told me how glad he and his dad were that there was a new Wing in Southern California, and that they would not have to drive all the way to Mesa, AZ on weekends to work on a CAF airplane. "At last – an airplane in California!" he would say.

At Harlingen, TX and later in Midland, Rudi and Ross Knudsen drove the fuel truck at the annual AIRSHO, and were known to all the flight crews.

Rudi's pride and joy was his pale-green German automobile, and he took great delight in setting unofficial land speed records from Los Angeles to Harlingen, and later to Midland. We nicknamed the car, "The Autobahn Flyer."

Horst and Rudi were the Wing's electricians, and for the first few years they "wired up" just about all we had: airplanes, hangars, you name it – they hooked it up.

The APU on the C-46 "China Doll" – oh, how we yanked on the rope to start it! The Wallaschs read the book and wired in the electrical starting system. From that point on, when you were tapped to "fire up" the APU, you didn't have to run and hide. You just walked over and pushed the button, and Rudi and Horst just looked at you and grinned.

Those of us who were fortunate to work with Rudi will miss him greatly.

Ron Fleishman

I remember meeting Rudi and his dad Horst at our first official monthly meeting on March, 1981 at Skytrails Restaurant at Van Nuys Airport. I think they were both members of CAF from our beginning. Their positive attitude was very infectious at those early meetings. Rudi and Horst attended most of the events and work party Saturdays in those early years.

When we started going to air shows with the C-46, Rudi and Horst were always available to make sure the plane was in good running order, and that the people at the shows got their questions answered. They conducted a good tour of the plane, and rarely turned down a request for service. We were very lucky to have great people like them, and flight engineers were needed on every flight. We decided we needed windows on the sides of the C-46 so that those of us riding in the back could look out during the multi-hour flights, Rudi spent hour after hour cleaning off the brown paper that was stuck to the windows – with no complaints. Rudi was an unusually patient person. May he rest in peace.

Pat Brown

Remembering Chuck McCammon

Charles Mark McCammon – September 6, 1923 – September 8, 2013

Charles M. McCammon, Sr. of Reseda, CA died September 8, 2013, at Riverside, CA, two days after celebrating his 90th birthday with family and friends.

Chuck was born on September 6, 1923, in St. Joseph, MO, the third of four sons of the late Ray and Iva McCammon.

At age 18, he moved to California, where, on June 5, 1948, he married Emma Louise Looney of Fort Worth, Texas – his wife of 62 years.

He served one year in the California National Guard, and was a colonel in the Commemorative Air Force, Southern California Wing at Camarillo, CA. He had been employed by Neal Lear Cadillac in Reseda as an automobile mechanic.

He is survived by his three sons and two daughters-in-law: Charles M. McCammon, Jr. of Mesa, AZ; James P. and Carole McCammon of Grass Valley, CA; Jon M. and Debra McCammon of Corona, CA; eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Chuck was preceded in death by his wife, Emma, and his three brothers.

My earliest remembrance of Chuck was at Van Nuys in the storage area that was “China Doll’s” first home. We were trying to remove or to reattach something on the front of the C-46. Needless to say, it was not going very well, and Chuck kept saying “This is not the way I would do it if I were working on a car,” all the time with a grin on his face. To this day I’m still not sure if he were serious or just having fun with me. We worked the plane over the years, and we did all kinds of projects: painting, “wrenching,” repainting, etc., etc. You could always count on Chuck to help out.

He had lived here in Southern California a long time, and could tell many a story about the changes he had seen in the area. Tales of Basque shepherds herding sheep along what would later become US 101; of little towns that were not there anymore along the same route; and what the drive used to look like.

He never failed to ask how my wife Jerri was doing during her final days, and was amazed that Gavyn was “little Sarah’s” son.

After awhile, he didn’t show for breakfast on Saturdays, and we would hear about him from Russ. In the past few years he would come up to the hangar and work on the landscaping on the front of the buildings. Then there were

long stretches when we would not see him at all. When we would ask Russ about Chuck, he would say that Chuck was at home and not feeling up to driving up to Camarillo.

The Wing has lost a founding member. Chuck will be missed!

Ron Fleishman

Chuck joined the CAF when we had our second meeting in April, 1981. His colonel number was a few numbers after my husband Cliff’s. He was an auto mechanic for the local General Motors car dealership in the San Fernando Valley, and an Amway distributor on the side. We all wanted his Amway products. He decided if we would buy the Amway products from him, that he would bring them to our monthly meetings, and would donate his profits to the Wing so that we could have some operating money.

That was great for us. Some of our members told their friends about the Amway idea, and they bought the products, too.

Chuck had a “green thumb.” When we got the nose hangar in Camarillo a few years later, he planted flowering ice plant around the door to the “O Club” meeting room. The flowering ice plant colors were very brilliant, and it was beautiful. When we would arrive every Saturday, he would water the plant. Soon the plant started spreading outside its boundary area, and we had to ask Chuck to trim it back. It took over very quickly. Chuck said he couldn’t figure that out, because he hadn’t put any soil amendment down first. Nobody was really minding it except Chuck. He then decided we should have a few small fruit trees around the street side of the old nose hangar. He planted those, and in only a couple of years we had more fresh fruit than we could all eat. The fruit trees stayed until we had the building torn down in 2001.

Chuck was a wonderful guy with a big heart who was always thinking of making things better. And he left his mark on us!

Pat Brown

The Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force membership send our heartfelt condolences to the Wallasch and McCammon families.

Rudi and Chuck were long-standing members of our Wing, and both contributed much to our growth and well-being.

We will always remember them, Rudi on a ladder fixing something electrical in our hangars, and Chuck with his weed-wacker out in front of our hangars keeping our landscaping looking good.

We will miss you a lot, old friends. Rest in peace.

Wing Staff Election News

by Dave Flood

The Wing Nomination Committee, consisting of Chairman Bill O'Neill, Steve McCartney and John Knopp have come up with three nominees for the three positions opening up on January 1, 2014, for the term 2014-2015.

Jason Somes: Candidate for Operations Officer

For **Operations Officer**, **Jason Somes** has agreed to run for another term of two years in the position he has held since taking over from Gary Barber in 2010.

Jason has been one of our fighter pilots, currently flying the Zero, the Hellcat, the Bearcat, the Cornell and the Texan. In his "spare time" he works as a jet pilot/mechanic with corporate jets.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Col. Jason Somes, candidate for Operations Officer

Norm Swagler: Candidate for Adjutant

Norm Swagler, who took over the job of **Adjutant** from Terry Cedar during 2011, will run again for the position for the term of 2014-2015.

Norm has been our Safety Officer, our Personnel Officer, and is currently on the restoration team for the F-24R Argus.

He has worked as an electrical engineer for General Dynamics, Servo Corp. of America, and Grumman – serving with the latter for thirty-five years, six in Bethpage, NY and the remaining twenty-nine years in CA at Pt. Mugu NAS – on the F14Tomcat Program.

Norm has been married to Patience for 52 years.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Col. Norm Swagler, candidate for Adjutant.

Janet Rizzoli: Candidate for Adjutant



© Photo by Ned Grabowski

Col. Janet Rizzoli, Candidate for Adjutant

Under the tutelage of Jim Tierney, Janet has successfully doubled annual sales of the PX. As manager, she has brought in custom products to include t-shirts, patches, stickers, and caps.

She's been a member since 2010, and also served nine years in the United States Air Force, successfully deploying troops and cargo in support of Operation Desert Storm.

She currently works at CSU - Channel Islands. Janet hopes to continue increasing sales by bringing additional products to the PX as well as contributing to the overall operations of the Wing as Adjutant.

Aviation Art: Flying Aces

From "Flying Aces: Aviation Art of WWII"



© Painting by Roy Grinnell

First Marine Ace: Marion E. Carl, USMC

"After graduating from Oregon State University in 1938 with a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering, Marion Carl joined the Army, but quickly transferred to the Marine Corps, winning his golden wings in 1939.

The day after Pearl Harbor, his fighter squadron – VMF-221 "Fighting Falcons" – was loaded aboard the *USS Saratoga* and shipped off to defend Midway, a tiny but strategically located island in the mid-Pacific.

On 3 June, 1942, the Japanese struck Midway full-force. On his first combat mission, Carl shot down a Zero and damaged two others, earning him the Navy Cross for valor.

Following the stunning Japanese defeat at Midway, Carl transferred to VMF-223, which arrived on Guadalcanal on 20 August, 1942. Within 35 days of constant combat, Carl had claimed 5 more Zeros and 7.5 Japanese bombers, making him the first air ace in Marine Corps history.

The years 1943-45 brought a second Navy Cross, command of VMF-223, promotion to the rank of major, and a final score of 18.5 aerial victories.

Marion Carl's postwar career was spectacular and packed with accomplishments. He became a helicopter pilot, tested early jets, set speed records in the Douglas Skystreak, served in Vietnam, commanded the 2nd Marine Air Wing, and finally retired with the rank of major general in 1973.

It was a peaceful retirement until June, 1997, when the general was murdered at age eighty-two in a burglary at his Roseburg, Oregon home."

The Unlucky Eight: James E. Swett, USMC

"Jim Swett was born in Seattle, Washington in 1920, and received the golden wings of a Marine Corps aviator in April, 1942. Assigned to VMF-221 "Fighting Falcons," he arrived on Guadalcanal with his squadron on 16 March, 1943.

Swett's baptism of fire came just three weeks later, in the mid-afternoon of 7 April, when a huge formation of Aichi D3A1 Vals with fighter escort appeared over Tulagi Island, twenty-two miles north of the American airfields on Guadalcanal.

The Marines' F4F-4 Wildcats cut through the scattered Japanese dive bombers like death's scythe. Swett shot down three in quick succession before being hit by friendly anti-aircraft fire.

In his now-damaged aircraft, Swett continued to attack the Vals and downed four more, with an eighth possibility downed but officially credited as a "probable."

This eighth Val may have been unlucky in another sense, for its gunner shot down Swett's Wildcat (BuAir No. 12036).

Wounded, Swett ditched into the waters of "The Slot" between Tulagi and Guadalcanal, but was soon fished out.

For this action, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by the Commanding General of Marine Aviation in the South Pacific, Maj. Gen. Ralph J. Mitchell, on 9 October, 1943.

After three combat tours with VMF-221 on Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella, and one on the *USS Bunker Hill* in 1945, Swett finished the war with 15.5 aerial victories and 4 probables. He left active duty in 1945, enjoyed a postwar career manufacturing marine pumps and turbines, and retired from the Marine Corps Reserve with the rank of Colonel in 1970."



© Painting by Stan Stokes

Giant Concrete Arrows That Point Your Way Across America...

Every so often, usually in the vast deserts of the American Southwest, a hiker or a backpacker will run across something puzzling: a large concrete arrow, as much as seventy feet in length, sitting in the middle of scrub-covered nowhere.

What are these giant arrows? Some kind of surveying mark? Landing beacons for flying saucers? Earth's turn signals?

No, it's.....The Transcontinental Air Mail Route.



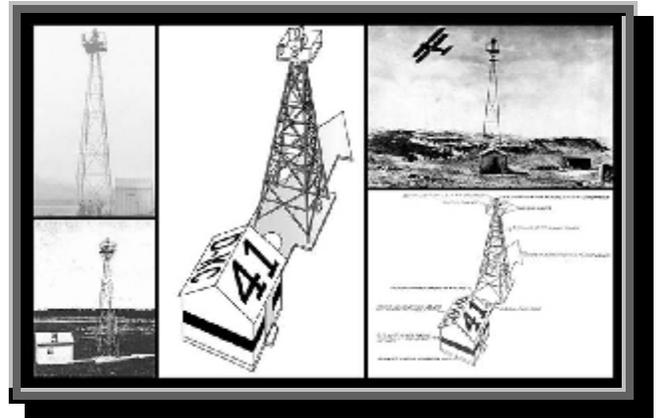
Outline map of U.S., showing route of air mail planes from New York City to San Francisco.

On August 20, 1920, the United States opened its first coast-to-coast air mail delivery route, just 60 years after the Pony Express closed up shop.

There were no good aviation charts in those days, so pilots had to eyeball their way across the country, using landmarks. This meant that flying in bad weather was difficult, and night flying was just about impossible.

The Postal Service solved the problem with the world's first ground-based civilian navigation system: a series of lit beacons that would extend from New York to San Francisco. Every ten miles, pilots would pass a bright yellow concrete arrow. Each arrow would be surmounted by a 51-foot steel tower and lit by a million-candlepower rotating beacon. A generator shed at the tail of each arrow powered the beacon.

Now mail could get from the Atlantic to the Pacific – not in a matter of weeks, but in 30 hours or so.



Note the generator shed for the beacon at arrow's end.

Even the dumbest of air mail pilots, it seems, could follow a series of bright yellow arrows straight out of a Tex Avery cartoon. By 1924, just a year after Congress funded it, the line of giant concrete markers stretched from Rock Springs, Wyoming to Cleveland, Ohio. The next summer, it reached all the way to New York, and by 1929 it spanned the continent uninterrupted, the envy of postal systems worldwide.

Radio and radar are, of course, infinitely less cool than a concrete Yellow Brick Road from sea to shining sea, but I think we all know how this story ends. New advances in communication and navigation technology made the big arrows obsolete, and the Commerce Department decommissioned the beacons in the 1940s. The steel towers were torn down and went to the war effort. But the hundreds of arrows remain. Their yellow paint is gone, their concrete cracks a little more with every winter frost and no one crosses their path much, except for coyotes and tumbleweeds.

But they're still out there.



Thanks to Avery Willis for this story of aviation history.

Three-Plane Inline Pass

by Yoshi Abe

From the article Yoshi wrote for the Japanese aviation magazine "Koku Fan" (translated from the Japanese)



Yoshi in rear seat of P-51 Mustang "Man O' War," ready for takeoff to Arrowhead with Steve Barber, Sr. piloting.

On Thursday, July 4, 2013 – Independence Day – I was out at the Wing for pre-flight maintenance on our Zero X-133 that was scheduled to fly to Lake Arrowhead in San Bernardino County, along with the F-8F Bearcat and the P-51 Mustang for a holiday event.

As I was munching on a BBQ treat the hangar staff had been grilling, one of the members walked up to me and asked if I would like to go on the flight in the back seat of the Mustang. I was under the impression that the planes would not be back until Sunday, but then was told that the event was a fly-by performance only, with all planes back at Camarillo in about an hour and a half. No wonder the participating pilots were boarding without baggage! At 6:20 p.m. we took off and headed east toward Lake Arrowhead – 190 km ahead – in delta formation, with the Zero in the lead, the Bearcat on the right, and we in the Mustang on the left.

Arrowhead Lake is located in evergreen woods at 5,000 feet above sea level. Our planes were flying above this altitude, but it did not look like this to me inside the Mustang's cockpit, as we were flying only 1,000 feet above ground level. We broke away from the formation as we neared the lake. The Zero zipped by just above the lake as the show-starter. Next the Zero made another two passes, chasing the Bearcat. And then finally the Mustang chased after the Zero's tail –into an inline three-plane formation. We were at 500 feet above the water, flying at about 300 km/hour, which is never a high speed for each of these high-performance fighters. But it is good enough to excite the spectators below as the planes come down from a higher altitude to the show center over the lake.

The planes bump up and down in flight above the water due to the rough air. The Mustang heads to the south end of the lake to join up with the other two planes for the final act of our formation flight by turning rapidly to the left once it finishes chasing the smoking Zero.



The Zero making its pass over Lake Arrowhead.

On the way back to Camarillo, we made an "honorable" fly-by over Santa Paula Airport, located 16 km away from our Camarillo Airport. Santa Paula Airport is a small-scaled, non-towered airport situated along a dry river bed between low mountain ranges. A Hollywood movie star, Steve McQueen, who is no longer with us, used to reside at a ranch house in Santa Paula, and would fly his Boeing/Stearman Model 75 out of this airport for several years before he died.

Once we flew past the airport in a delta formation – with the Mustang in the lead, the Zero on the right, and the Bearcat on the left, one of the locals on the ground was heard to say on his radio, "That was 'f-in' awesome!" We flew on through the mountains toward Camarillo, seeing hilltop mansions and then colorful vegetable patches spreading down below.

At 7:50 p.m. we were back at Camarillo Airport, with no casualties. Climbing out of the Mustang's cockpit, our wing leader asked me, "Did you get sick?" I replied, "I'm fine." Fortunately, the BBQ food that I had stuffed myself with earlier had stayed down in my stomach, saving an inboard mess.

Although Steve McQueen was famous as "The King of Cool," we completed this day's mission as "The Kings of 'F-in' Awesome."



The return flight to Camarillo Airport after a successful July 4th fly-by at Lake Arrowhead.

“Above and Beyond” Update

by Nancy Spielberg

Dear Friends of “Above and Beyond:”

Since we last wrote in June, we’ve been very busy working on our documentary about the volunteer pilots in the Israeli Air Force during their War of Independence.



One period Avia turns into four Avias thanks to ILM

Industrial Light and Magic

Much of our time and effort this past summer has gone into working with Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) on the aerial footage we shot at Duxford, England, in June. True to their name, ILM is creating magic, helping us build sequences that *show* rather than tell the stories of some of the missions flown by brave volunteer pilots in the '48 War.

In addition, this summer we filmed an interview with Professor Benny Morris, one of the world’s leading experts on the '48 War.



Flyboy George Lichter

This August, we were deeply saddened by the death of George Lichter, a principal character in our film. A decorated Army Air Force hero in World War II, George volunteered to fight for Israel in 1948 and first went to Czechoslovakia, where Israel had a secret air base. George proved so adept at flying the notoriously dangerous Czech Messerschmitts that he was asked to stay in Czechoslovakia to train other pilots during the war. He eventually made it to Israel, where he joined the 101 Squadron – only to return to Czechoslovakia to train more pilots (including famed IAF pilots Danny Shapira and Motti Hod) on newly-purchased Spitfires.

Lichter led the mission to ferry 12 Spitfires to Israel in December, 1948 and rescued Shapira when he became disoriented in bad weather and broke away from the formation. “I am alive today,” Shapira says, “because of George Lichter.”

After the war, George stayed in Israel for a few years. He became chief test pilot at the Tel Nof Air Base and chief instructor at the IAF’s Advanced Flying School. In an interview last fall, he told us, “I felt more at home in Israel than I did in the United States. I felt this is my home. No question – it was the best part of my life, those years in Israel.



George during our interview for *Above and Beyond*

George was a true hero, and we will miss him.

Thank you, as always, for your support as we continue to make this documentary honoring George Lichter and the other volunteers who fought for Israel’s independence.

Further Wing Staff Election News

As of the time we went to press – no candidate has come forward to run for the position of Wing Finance Officer for the term 2014-2015.

If any member who has financial qualifications would like to run for this office, please contact: Bill O’Neill at scwairshow@aol.com;
John Knopp at jrknopp@hotmail.com;
or Steve McCartney at rv3.flyr@yahoo.com.

Eulogy For A “Checkertail” Pilot: Gerald B. Edwards, Lt. Col., USAF (Ret.): RIP

by Patrice Manget, “Jerry’s” daughter

It is with sad hearts that my family said good-bye to Checkertail Jerry Edwards (Lt. Col. Gerald B. Edwards - USAF Ret.) on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2013 at home on his beloved horse farm in Keeseville, NY.

Jerry was 92, having been born in Yonkers, NY September 28, 1920. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Julie Edwards; plus a sister, eight children and spouses, twelve grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Jerry made a miraculous comeback from a massive heart attack on August 23rd, was released from the ICU and was able to return home several days later. During that week, we spoke to him many times on the phone and had computer Skype calls with him as well. He was upbeat, laughing, singing songs and raring to go home as soon as possible.

Jerry enjoyed himself immensely at the Camarillo Reunion last year, especially the opportunity to pilot the SoCal CAF's SNJ. He told me he hadn't been in that aircraft since 1943, while the CAF pilot said Dad took the stick and flew the entire time. This year in Concord he was in fine fettle, happy to be reunited once again with his Checkertail mates and families.

I will treasure forever that I had such good times with him only a short time before he passed away. If true grit and determination were all it took to remain on this earthly plane, our Dad would be with us for years to come, as would all his fellow Checkertails who have gone on before him.

Gerald grew up in Yonkers, NY. On December 6, 1941, he was a 21 year old civilian pumping gas and looking forward to attending medical school. The attack at Pearl Harbor changed his plans - linking his destiny with the U. S. Air Force as a fighter pilot, comptroller, SAC super secret planner and ultimately commander of the 1st Military Airlift Squadron at Dover AFB.

In his almost 29 years of service in the Air Force, he flew P-40s, P-47s, and P-51s with the 325th Fighter Group in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and Germany. He escorted bombers, flew fighter sweeps, and his group, known as the Checkertails, is credited with being one of the most highly decorated and successful of the European Campaign in WW II. His more than 60 missions over

enemy territory saw Gerald taking part in the action at Ploesti, the invasion of Southern France in 1944, and many flights in and out of Russia, (bombing Germany along the way), knocking down three enemy planes in aerial combat and earning for himself the Distinguished Flying Cross and 11 different Air Medals.

He was a veteran of Korea and Vietnam flying KB-50s, KC-97s, T-33s, F 100s, and C 133s, accumulating over 6,000 flying hours in his Air Force career.

Jerry retired from the USAF in 1970 with the rank of Lt. Colonel.



© Photos by Avery Willis

The 325th Fighter Group Reunion – members and their families – in front of a P-51 Mustang at our Wings Over Camarillo Air Show of 2012.



The 325th Fighter Group, USAAC, also flew P-40 Warhawks in No. Africa in WWII.

A Netherlands Visitor

by John Knopp

Tessa, a university student from the Netherlands, visited our Aviation Museum on Aug. 29, 2013 with her uncle - partly for vacation, but also as a school photo assignment. Her uncle was very knowledgeable and interested in aviation history, but she had another focus. She took photos of our warbirds, including one on the C-46 "China Doll."

When we walked around (and under) the F7F Tigercat, she took a lot of photos because she was impressed with how clean and shiny it had been kept, even after three weeks being outdoors since the Airshow. When she asked, I explained the use of the chrome plates around the exhausts and gun ports. She took a series of pictures. When I turned back from talking with her uncle, I saw how she had left an appreciative visitor's comment on the exhaust plate - "Tessa was here ;-} ".

A few days later another visitor added "Clay is the best". (Clay Lacy flies the Tigercat out of Van Nuys Airport. Joe Clark is the owner.)

As I write this, the Tigercat has flown off to Reno, with the fan notes as remembrance - a much better souvenir than the oil stains the An-2 Colt has to take home.



© Photo by John Knopp

The Sullivan Brothers

by Paul Kleinbaum

Last month, Len Canter wrote about the daughter of a Hellcat pilot who was killed during the war and how she was touched by being able to see and feel the aircraft her father had flown. It reminded me of a tour I gave a couple of years ago to a young woman stationed at Pt. Mugu.

We were standing by our WWII "living room," and I was discussing the blue and gold service banners that were hung in the window of service families. I asked her if she ever heard of the Sullivan brothers who were raised in Waterloo. Iowa.

I then noticed that she started to tear up. She apologized and then stated that she was raised in Waterloo and the Sullivan brothers were still a "big deal" in that small town. There is a museum in Waterloo dedicated to the Sullivan family.

They were a "big deal" because all five sons died on the USS Juneau in November, 1942. The destroyer USS The Sullivans was launched in their honor and the film "The Fighting Sullivans" was released before the end of the war. In fact, that incident was the basis for the movie "Saving Private Ryan".



The Sullivan brothers – Joseph, Francis, Albert, Madison, and George. – USS Juneau, Nov. 13, 1942



USS The Sullivans (DDG-68)

Wing Air Show Schedule: 2013

Oct 4, 5, 6	Minden, NV	P-51, SNJ-5 Rides
Oct 10 – 14	Midland, TX AIRSHO	F6F, F8F, Zero

Should you plan to attend one or more of these air shows, please contact us at (805) 482-0064 for updated information, as sometimes schedules change.

I'm No Hero

by Yoshimi Abe

We have at CAF – So CA Wing, a Fairchild PT-19 Cornell as one of our Warbird Ride Program airplanes. The plane had been on an extensive “repair and maintenance” status for about a year, and finally came back on the program recently.

The PT-19 belongs to Capt. Charlie Plumb, USNR (Ret.). He has been leasing it to us free of charge.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

Fairchild PT-19A, one of three planes in our CAF-SoCAWing's Vintage Aircraft Ride Program.

The Fairchild PT-19 was accepted as a primary trainer by the United States Army Air Corps in 1939. Our plane is a PT-19A, to be exact. It has a Ranger L-440-3 (200 hp) powerplant, which was manufactured at the Fairchild Company's engine division. The engine is an inverted, air-cooled, OHV straight-6 – which is no longer made today.

According so some literature I have on hand, there were a number of airplanes that had this type of engine imported into Japan in pre-WWII time – which were used as liaison and light-duty cargo planes by the military. Also, some airplanes with imported power plants of this kind on domestic airframes were manufactured in Japan. Here in the U.S., where general aviation is larger in scale than in Japan, there still are a few engine maintenance shops that can overhaul engines of this kind.

The PT-19 has alloy tubing/veneer board/fabric construction in the fuselage. It has wooden rib/veneer board/fabric construction in the wings. It also has a pair of fixed landing gear.

The PT-19 has a faster stall speed than the Boeing/Stearman PT-13/17 biplane, due to its higher wing load, making the plane harder to fly at low speed. It is said the Army intended for less cadets to be failed during advanced training on the AT-6 Texan after primary training in the PT-19. The latter was considered to be much harder to fly than the PT-13/17, and had similar flight characteristics to the AT-6 Texan advanced trainer.

When I asked one of our Vintage Aircraft Ride Program pilots about that point, he replied, “The difference between the PT-19 and the AT-6 is the mass. The PT-19 handles better on the rudder.” Also, one of our members who was a bomber pilot during WWII in Europe, and was trained on the PT-17, said, “I object (to the comparison). I think the PT-17 is harder to fly than the PT-19 as its center of gravity (CG) is higher. Also, the landing gear has a narrower track.”

By the way, Capt. Charlie Plumb has a profile that includes: graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis; entered the Vietnam conflict; was shot down over Hanoi piloting an F-4 Phantom on May 5, 1967; and was a POW of the North Vietnamese for 2,103 days, until repatriation at the end of the conflict in 1973.

After he was discharged, Charlie wrote a book titled, “I'm No Hero,” in which he wrote about his upbringings, his military career, his POW experience, and his repatriation.

After publishing this book, Capt. Plumb started a new profession as a motivational speaker, helping everyday people resolve their day-to-day problems by relating to his POW experiences and how he persevered and overcame them – without losing his pride and integrity as an elite naval officer. Among his Viet Cong jailers, he actually was known as one of the toughest prisoners, who never gave in to the torchers.

I hear that he has lectured in Japan – perhaps there are some readers who remember him. As to his words, “I'm No Hero,” he acts as just one of the common people. His casual generosity has brought us at CAF – So CA Wing a very significant airplane.

We are mighty thankful for Charlie Plumb's down-to-earth character. It is an honor to have Charlie as a member of our Wing.



Lt. Charlie Plumb, a young Naval aviator during the Vietnam War. Charlie was shot down on his 75th combat mission, flying a Douglas F4 Phantom. He spent the next 2,103 days in a Vietcong prison. Sen. John McCain was a fellow prisoner.

Wing Advertisements Page

Robert P. Blair, Real Estate Broker
Robert Blair's Current 'Phone No is 805-407-3366



© Photo by Avery Willis

Col. Bob Cheveres giving a talk on aerospace dynamics to the SEASONS Group at Leisure Village on September 3, 2013. Bob's speech was part of the Ventura County Office of Education's outreach program.

President Calvin Coolidge's "Sequester Program"
 Thanks to Ron Fleishman

Jim Hinckley, Lecturer on WWII Great Battles, and Israeli Wars. His 'phone no. is 805-760-0184

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