

# 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](http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal)

September 2008



**Can you guess which CAF-SoCAWing member this is?  
Go to Page 10 to see if you are correct.**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, September 13, 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

# September 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Museum Closed	2 Work Day	3 Museum Closed	4 Work Day	5	6 Work Day  Battle of Midway Special Event
7	8 Museum Closed	9 Work Day	10 Museum Closed	11 Work Day	12	13 Work Day Staff Meeting 9:30
14	15 Museum Closed	16 Work Day	17 Museum Closed	18 Work Day	19	20 Work Day
21	22 Museum Closed	23 Work Day	24 Museum Closed	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day
28	29 Museum Closed	30 Work Day	Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday & Wednesday			

<b>STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS</b>				<b>IN THIS ISSUE</b>
Wing Leader	* Steve Barber	(805) 485-5405	f8f2cat@gmail.com	Wing Calendar . . . . . 2
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Adjutant	* Bob Albee	(805) 583-4872	loll@earthlink.net	Museum Update . . . . . 3
Finance Officer	* Casey de Bree	(805) 389-9185	scdebree@aol.com	Wing Maintenance Report . . . . . 4
Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	The Firecracker . . . . . 5
Maintenance Officer	* (Vacant)			William McCool . . . . . 6
Safety Officer	* Marc Russell	(805) 955-9404	captmarcr@aol.com	Wing Photo Page I . . . . . 7
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* Denotes Staff Position				

## Museum Update

by Sarah de Bree

Well, this writer has procrastinated so long in getting this article in that I've crashed right into the Air Expo calendar and two more hands and a few more days would be very helpful...my fault I know.

Before we get into Air Expo information, you need to see the new editions to the Museum. Below are two photos showing the Women at War Story. First the Museum team introduces major uniforms used by the Women at War. Shown are the WASP flight suit; the Hospital Corp. Nurse's uniform and a great representation of one of Rosie's outfits. The nurse is shown without the distinctive white hat used during this period. This is where we need your help. The Museum is in need of a white hat, like you see in the bottom right photo, to complete this uniform and we hope that someone out there can help find this item.



**The Women at War, who served so courageously during WWII in many services and war related jobs.**

First, I ask your patience in looking at the photos with the reflections streaming through them. Nothing seemed to work in trying to eliminate same so here they are!

First the Museum team introduces some of the uniforms used by the Women at War. Shown is the flight suit of the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) and the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS); the Hospital Corp Nurse's uniform and a great representation of one of Rosie's outfits. The nurse is shown without the distinctive white hat used during this period. This is where we need your help. The Museum is in need of a white nurse's hat to complete this uniform, and we hope that someone out there can help find this item. If you know a source for a white nurse's hat, please notify this writer or any of the Museum personnel.

It is important to note that 57,000 nurses served in the Army and 16,000 in the Navy. Only 61 died by enemy fire which is miraculous considering the heroic duties they performed on battle fields around the globe as well as in

the many hospitals where our soldiers were sent with their injuries.

Speaking of the heroic soldiers, don't forget September 6<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate the many men, American and Japanese, who fought the ferocious, and short, deciding Battle of Midway. We will have a guest speaker, a representation of the aircraft used in this battle and, of course, a story told in visual format as we present our photos of this battle. We look forward to seeing you there.



**This display depicts another presentation of the Women in Service uniform, the Women of the U. S. Army Corp (WAC).**



**This last photo depicts what happens when you are in the middle of implementing a new inventory control process for the gift shop and suddenly realize that Saturday is Air Expo day. SATURDAY!**

Chaos reigns supreme. Never fear, all will be well by the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup>. We'll tell you all about it next month.

## Wing Maintenance Report

by Joe Peppito

*If you have walked into the Restoration Hangar lately, it may look like a hurricane has hit some of the airplanes. Not so...they are all in some stage of restoration and they are not just sitting idle. Work is in progress on a daily basis. These restoration airplanes include the North American PBJ-1J (B-25); the Curtiss C-46D China Doll; the Fairchild F-24R (Wooden Wonder); the SNJ-4 ("No Problem"); and Les Bedding's Supermarine Spitfire Mark XIV.*

We would like to give you a rundown on all of these airplanes: the present activities plus the future plans and requirements. The first airplane we will cover is the C-46 *China Doll*, now taking up most of the Restoration Hangar's floor space. This airplane was the mainstay of the Southern California Wing for a long time, has seen a lot of flying, and now is in need of some tender, loving care. This restoration work on the C-46 is presently being done by the members of the PBJ Restoration Crew. Marc Russell, the PBJ Co - Crew Chief, has put together a brief rundown of the work already accomplished thus far, and what remains to be done. We owe a great deal of thanks and support to this dedicated crew for their accomplishments in restoring *China Doll*.

## China Doll

Most of you know that *China Doll* has been the center piece of the SoCAWing for many years. Unfortunately, she is showing her age, and has been in need of some TLC for some time. Much of what she needs is related to her sheet metal (her aging skin – getting wrinkles like the rest of us), and, since the PBJ crew has the most experience in this area, we decided to take on the project.

This is one of those projects that seems to grow as you go. We all knew that we might be opening up a can of worms when we started, but that turned out to be a real underestimate. Every time we would open up an area, we would find more to do than we had expected. Our biggest problem was how to decide what needed to be done next, and what we could do at a later date. There are a number of issues that have caused our problems, including: the fact that *China Doll* had been parked outside in the elements; the effect of birds nesting and dropping on her skin; and possibly poor preparation when she was last painted. Suffice it to say that there is a lot of corrosion on her.

We removed about twelve sheets of "skin" that started just behind the cockpit, and went all the way back to just behind the trailing edge of the wing. At its widest part, the opening we made was about six feet across. What we found was that a lot of the skin had corroded completely through, and even patches were beginning to go. We also found sloppy repairs that were done long ago – before she ever became a CAF plane.

On the good side, we found very little damage to most of the underlying structure. It would have been disastrous if any of the formers had been damaged, so we are truly lucky. On top of that, when we needed to repair or replace

any parts, Ken Barger stepped up to the plate and did a fantastic job. If not for him, we would not be nearly as far along as we are.

As of July 18<sup>th</sup>, all skins are in place, sealed along all edges, and riveting is about 85% complete. Dan Newcomb, Jeff Birdt, Scott Drosos and I are getting out as often as we can to finish up the rivet work, but personal schedules have limited our working days. When we are out there, we are accomplishing a great deal, but it is slow going. The number of rivets and their location is difficult to comprehend, unless you are there doing it yourself. When done, we conservatively estimate that we will have hit over a thousand rivets! In a couple of weeks, we will be done, and the area will be ready for final clean-up and paint.

One final step for us will be the installation of new radio antennas and co-ax wiring for them. We have the location picked for one antenna, and are planning on the second one right now. This will improve the quality of communication between ATC and the plane considerably.

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**Submitted by: Marc Russell, Co - Crew Chief, PBJ Crew**



© Photo by Dan Newcomb  
**Jeff Birdt working on removing the corroded "skin"**



© Photo courtesy of Dan Newcomb  
**Dan Newcomb and Scott Drosos riveting new panels.**

# The Firecracker

by Maj. Gen. Patrick Halloran, USAF (Ret.)  
Excerpted from *Daedalus Flyer*, Summer, 2008



"Tony LeVier, the legendary Lockheed test pilot, was a young man of 24 when he first became involved in the fascinating and dangerous world of air racing. He was an unknown in racing circles when he contacted Bill Schoenfeldt, the owner of a Keith Rider-designed racing airplane called the Schoenfeldt Firecracker. The original plane, built in 1936 as the R-4, was a tiny 925 lb. machine built with a fabric-covered steel tubing fuselage, wooden wings, and a hand-cranked retractable landing gear. It had an 18 ft. wingspan, but was powered by a big 489 cu. in. Menasco Buccaneer engine which gave the small machine a top speed of 236 mph. In the Thompson Trophy Race of 1936.

Schoenfeldt, a wealthy sportsman, acquired the R-4 later that year from Rider, renamed it the Firecracker, and rebuilt the aircraft with an even bigger Menasco engine, called the Super Buccaneer. The resulting CG issue was resolved with 18 lbs. of lead in the tail. Resolving major problems such as engine cooling and the dramatic CG issues, the plane was entered in a series of 1937 International Air Races in St. Louis, where it came in third in the Greve Race and seventh in the Thompson. Rebuilding the racer again after damage from a landing accident, Schoenfeldt offered the job of pilot to this young, eager, but unknown fellow named LeVier. He was long on enthusiasm and short on experience.

Tony had no experience in flying anything approaching the power and performance of the Firecracker, so he asked Roger Don Rae, who had flown the plane in the 1936 Nationals, to come to Long Beach and check him out. His first test flight was made on a Sunday. LeVier was in the cockpit with the engine running, and ready to go, when he yelled to Don Rae and asked him how to handle the plane. Rae stuck his head in the cockpit and said, "As you apply throttle, the nose will pull to the left and down. Apply right rudder to keep her straight, ease back on the stick and hang onto your hat. That's all I know." LeVier poured on the throttle, and was off the ground in four to five seconds. The next time he glanced at the airspeed it showed more than 200 mph. Following the test flight, the plane was disassembled and hauled to Oakland to participate in the 1938 Nationals.

Tony won the Greve Race with a speed of 250.8 mph, but was scratched from the Thompson Race after cracking up the plane on landing too fast. The first event in the 1939 races was the Greve Race, but Tony was forced to withdraw when his engine misfired on the 11<sup>th</sup> lap. Tony came in second in the Thompson, with a speed of 272 mph. This was the last season for the "Golden Age of Air Racing," as World War II had started.

In a 1970 letter to an aviation friend, Tony said, "The Firecracker 1939 version was, in my opinion, the best all-around racer that ever came out of America. It would do over 330 mph straight away, and, with a fixed-pitch wooden prop – how does that grab you! It was one helluva great racer."

After the Firecracker had been allowed to be sold in pieces and parts after the 1946 racing season, Stan Rackleff, an EAA Chapter One member at Flabob Airport in Riverside, began putting together a replica of Firecracker in the 1980s. After his untimely death, the parts gathered dust in the corner of an old wooden hangar at Flabob, until the new owner of the airport, Tom Wathen, found them and asked me if I could take the project to Colorado and find someone who could finish it.

In 1998 I arranged to haul two big loads of Firecracker pieces and parts, along with at least three old, partially complete six cylinder inverted Ranger engines to Meadow Lake Airport in Colorado Springs, where I persuaded the father/son team of Bruce and Evan McCombs to take on the project. It took years of effort, sandwiched around their normal heavy aircraft maintenance business.

Finally the big day arrived, when the beautifully finished piece of history, resplendent in its original yellow paint scheme and with the racing number 70 emblazoned on its side, was rolled out the hangar door in preparation for its first flight. For nearly eight years I was like an expectant father watching this project come to fruition. I had been dreaming of making the first flight, but a sudden heart attack and by-pass operation made it necessary for me to get a substitute – my good friend Les Tugaw, a highly qualified pilot from California. With my ticker back on schedule and my FAA medical reinstated, I began having my turn in the cockpit, and what a thrill it was!



Maj. Gen. Pat Halloran is an ex-member of our Wing. He flew 100 missions in Korea; flew the U-2 for 9 years, and the SR-71 for 8 more. He has over 8,000 hours in the air

**William C. McCool (Commander, USN)  
NASA Astronaut – 9/23/1961 – 2/1/2003**

by Dave Flood



**“From our orbital vantage point,  
We observe an Earth without borders,  
Full of peaceful beauty and  
Magnificence.  
And we pray that humanity as a whole  
Can imagine a borderless world  
As we see it...  
And strive to live as one in peace.”**

**Willie McCool  
January 29, 2003**

Commander William C. McCool penned these inspiring words from space during his time aboard Space Shuttle *Columbia* on flight STS-107, which lasted 15 days, 22 hours and 20 minutes.

I first came across the Naval Academy's memorial to William McCool on July 1, 2008 on the USNA's golf course. A stone memorial, with three plaques, honors McCool as a Naval aviator and a NASA astronaut. But it was the plaque that contained the words you see above that impressed me, and another which stated that McCool, while a Midshipman at the Naval Academy, was a very competitive runner on the cross-country team, and it was at the exact point of the memorial, on running the Navy's cross-country course, that he would have been just 16 minutes away from the finish line.

Commander William McCool died in space on February 1, 2003, just five days after his inspiring words about world peace, when his Space Shuttle *Columbia* broke up while entering the earth's atmosphere – just 16 minutes away from scheduled touch down.

Space Shuttle *Columbia*'s STS-107 mission was a dedicated science and research mission. Working 24 hours a day, in two alternating shifts, the crew successfully conducted approximately 80 experiments. Commander McCool was the pilot on that mission.



**Commander William C. McCool, USN, NASA Astronaut**

William C. McCool was born on September 23, 1961 in San Diego, California. He graduated from Coronado High School, Lubbock, Texas in 1970; received a Bachelor of Science degree in applied science from the U. S. Naval Academy (2<sup>nd</sup> in class of 1,083) in 1983; a Master of Science degree in computer science from the University of Maryland in 1985; and a Master of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Postgraduate School in 1992.

McCool completed flight training in August, 1986 and was assigned to Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 129 at Whidbey Island, WA for initial EA-6B Prowler training. He made two deployments aboard USS Coral Sea (CV-43) to the Mediterranean, and later graduated from the Navy Test Pilot School in 1992. He worked as a TA-7J and EA-6B test pilot in Flight Test at Patuxent River NAS, Maryland. He returned to Whidbey Island and was assigned to Tactical Electronic Squadron 132 aboard USS Enterprise (CVN-65). He served as Administrative and Operations Officer with the squadron through their work-up cycle, and then received notice of NASA selection while embarked on the Enterprise for her final pre-deployment at-sea period. He accumulated over 2,800 hours flight experience in 24 different aircraft and over 400 carrier arrestments.

McCool reported to the NASA's Johnson Space Center in August, 1996. He completed two years of training and evaluation, and was assigned as pilot on STS-107.

He leaves a wife and three sons. May he rest in peace.

## Wing Photo Page I



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Bill Main has got Joe Peppito “hooked!” Bill stopped by the Restoration Hangar to say “hello” after he had gone through a tough by-pass operation. We were all very glad to see him – still with his sense of humor!**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**A group of Chinese students recently visited our WWII Aviation Museum – they would be heading back to Beijing soon to be there in time for the 2008 Olympics.**

## Wing Elections Coming Up !

Just a “heads up” about our coming Wing Staff elections.

We will have a ballot printed on the last page of *Flight Line* in the next two issues (October and November). All ballots will be due for counting by the election committee on November 15, 2008.

The following positions on the Wing Staff will be open:

**Wing Leader  
Executive Officer  
Maintenance Officer  
Safety Officer**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Scott Drosos pulling his weight with the C-46 restoration, even though he’s among the “walking wounded.”**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Here’s a great group of kids from the Pinecrest School in Thousand Oaks. They enjoyed their tour of our Aviation Museum recently. Thumbs up, guys !**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Jim Hinkelman, our set designer par excellence, has created a replica of a twin Spandau mounted gun on our Fokker Tri-Plane. You have to look very closely to tell it’s not a real period piece from WW I !**

## 2008 Summer Scholarships – Ventura County Chapter of the Ninety Nines

From: [www.vc99s.org/htmlpages/scholarship.html](http://www.vc99s.org/htmlpages/scholarship.html)

We received eight applications for the summer scholarship! Our five judges had a very challenging time choosing the winners from this fabulous group of women.

The first winner is Bridget Gankas, a dedicated primary school teacher who loves to travel and looks forward to doing so by private plane once she gets her license. She trains out of Santa Paula and is scheduled to solo soon! Bridget is involved in community events, particularly with the Surfrider Foundation, a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world's oceans and beaches. Her 5th grade class even helps with beach clean ups.

She is also passionate about preserving local airports. She was personally involved in saving an airport in Northern CA through educating residents about the benefits of having an airport in their back yard.

Congratulations Bridget on your quest to accomplish yet another goal!

Our second winner is Brittney Johnson, who is an impulse-driven, life-loving seventeen year old who flies out of Camarillo in her uncle's Cessna 150. As a full time high school student, she makes time for a part-time job to help pay for her flight lessons.

She says that she's got backbone, wishbone, and definitely a funny bone, but what makes her unique is her heart (drive) and wit. Working toward her private pilot certificate has helped her grow as a person, and the flying keeps it fun.

She has already soloed and looks forward to her solo cross-country very soon. She wants to be commercial pilot and also has an interest in aerobatics.

It is great to see a teenager be so focused. Congratulations, Brittney!



© Photo courtesy of Ceci Stratford

**Here's Brittney, flanked by Ceci Stratford, her mentor, and Roger Vecchio, her flight instructor.**

## Mike Greenhill Now A Private Pilot

Russ Drosendahl reports that Mike has informed him that he has his Private Pilot's License as of 27 July, 2008. He had planned to have it before his wedding, and then to take the oral exam on 28 June (one day before his wedding). The inspector and he went to fly the airplane, but the ELT had expired...so no flying was possible.

Mike had to wait until after the honeymoon and was able to schedule the remainder of the check ride, which happened on Sunday, 27 July.

We wish him well...and wouldn't it be nice if he could become one of our CAF-SoCAWing's pilots?

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## Lawrence Allen Remembers

*Following up on an article we did in the August issue on Gail Halvorsen, the "Candy Bomber" of the Berlin Airlift, Lawrence Allen sent us the following note and accompanying photo from his home in Riverton, Wyoming (always great to hear from you, Lawrence!).*



Dave,

This is myself and Gail Halvorsen at an air show in Arizona – I think it was Mesa around 2002 or 2003. It was really hot when I saw him in front of *China Doll*. I got him a chair and a lot of cold water, and got him under the nose of the *Doll*. I introduced him to the crew and to anyone else I could find. What a great man he is, and he really made my day.

Lawrence Allen

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## Wing Christmas Party Information

Our Wing Christmas Party is set for Thursday, December 4, 2008 at the Wedgewood Banquet Center, 5880 Olivias Park Drive, Ventura, CA. Mark your calendars!

The banquet center is located on the Buenaventura Golf Course. The social hour will start at 6:30 p.m., with dinner served at 7:30 p.m. We should wrap up by 10:00 p.m. Our annual auction will follow the dinner. The cost is \$35 per person. The dinner will be a buffet, featuring barbeque chicken, tri-tips of beef, potatoes, salad, bread rolls, and dessert. Mail or drop off your reservation with Casey de Bree at the hangar, 455 Aviation Dr., Camarillo, CA 93010.



## Wing Photo Page II



© Photo and text courtesy of Karen Loberg, *Ventura County Star*  
**Joe Catrambone (on right) joshing with his fellow workers at the Port of Hueneme, where he and his pals transport new cars to dealerships after they are unloaded off the cargo ships. Joe is described by a fellow worker in a recent *Star* story as, "...the Holy Grail in the van," referring to Joe's ability to tell a story.**

**"At lunchtime, Catrambone regales his colleagues with stories of his missions involving central fire control with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. His hand glides smoothly over the top of the lunch table in the break room as he describes a flight of his B-29."**

**Joe has been a contributing member of our Wing for many years. Note the cap Joe is wearing in the photo.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**For those of us who make numerous trips back and forth between the hangars, the condition of the "Middle Ground" area was a welcome sight in the past few days.**

**Some kind soul (or souls) obviously decided to take it into his (or their) own hands to clean up the clutter in this area. For whoever performed this "random act of kindness," we are very thankful!**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**One of the marvelous Hubbell prints adorning the new WWI exhibit at the entrance to our Museum displays.**

**Kudos to the Museum crew who put up the display!**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Jeff Birdt brought son Kevin in to help with the C-46. Thanks for taking the time to help us out, Kevin !**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**A Photo Board of all our Wing's volunteers has been tastefully put together by Jim Hinckley. Thanks, Jim!**

## Indian Spitfires

by Polly Singh

© <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History/Aircraft/Spitfire.html>



**Our Spitfire N749DP F. Mark XIVe – shown flying over English countryside. You’ve come a long way, baby !**

Designed by RJ Mitchell, famed for his previous Schneider Trophy floatplane designs, the prototype Spitfire first flew on 5 March 1936. The first Spitfires entered service at Duxford with 19 Squadron RAF in August 1939. It thus became the only Allied fighter to have entered production before the war and continued to be produced until after 1945. Spitfires served in every theatre during World War II and with every Allied Air Force at some time. Almost 40 marks and a host of minor ones came into being, with the last Spitfire being delivered on 20 February 1948 to the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force. In all, 20,351 Spitfires and 2,408 Seafires had been built. The Mk V were produced in the largest quantity (total of 6,479), followed by the Mk IX (5,665).

## The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Spitfire

The IAF was one of the last Commonwealth Air Forces to receive Spitfires in October 1944 (8 Squadron), while most squadrons re-equipped only in June 1945, with the aircraft remaining on RAF charge – with the RAF serials replaced with IAF ones only after Independence. This is the main reason why so little is known about their history with the IAF. Coming so late in the war, the Indian Spitfires saw little action during the Second World War, but AFS(I) and No. 1 PR Flight's Spitfires saw some action during the opening months of the desperate defense of the Kashmir Valley in the Oct-Nov, 1947 battles of Badgam and Shelatang.

## Spitfire F. Mk XIVe #N749DP

Taken on Charge RAF – 26 Feb. 1945. Arrived Karachi 28 July 1945. Loaned to AFS (India) May 1946. Transferred to RIAF Dec. 1947. Coded “54” and “D” at different times.

Became ground instructional airframe T3 at the IAF Technical College at Jalahalli, but recovered from Patna AFB by Haydon-Baillie in 1977. Restored at Cranfield, UK and flew again on 9 April 1983. Presently in U.S as N749DP.



**This is N749 in its derelict state in Patna, India in 1977**

David Price brought this beautiful aircraft to the U.S. in 1985, and promptly won an award at Oshkosh. He has been most helpful to our Wing in our quest to own the Spitfire and restore it to its former magnificence.

The expert Crew Chief on our Spitfire F. Mk XIVe is Les Bedding. You might have already figured out that he is our “Cover Boy” for this issue. The photo was taken while Les was in the RAF in 1940. He spent four years in India (1941-1945) with the RAF. Being a native of Great Britain, Les is, of course, very dedicated to the complete restoration of N749DP to its former flying status. He is a man on a mission!

Its Griffon Mk 65 engine is now at *Vintage V-12* in Tehachapi, CA undergoing a complete overhaul. Les hopes to have it back soon so he and his crew can start fitting it back on the plane and beginning engine tests.

Les has a dedicated crew who show up religiously every week to keep the Spitfire company. They are: Colin Bedding, Dick Roberts, Steve Nagle, Mike Perrenoud, Ernest Acosta, Barry Roberts, Alan Gaynor and David Baker.



© Photo Courtesy of Les Bedding

**Here’s Les (on left) with his son, Colin, standing in front of their beloved charge, our Supermarine Spitfire F. Mk XIVe N749DP.**

**The cowl is off, and the massive Rolls Royce Griffon Mk 65 engine is exposed. Note the five-bladed prop needed on this tiger of an engine, with all its torque.**



# Friends of the Museum Newsletter



Commemorative Air Force  
Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

Vol. 2, No. 3

(805) 482-0064

[www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal](http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal)

August, 2008

## Fairchild F-24R Restoration Project

By Ceci Stratford



Here is a photo of what our Fairchild F-24R may look like once it is fully restored, painted and flying.

Our Fairchild F-24R Restoration Team has been hard at work restoring this unique aircraft to its former glory.

The first Fairchild F-24 was the 1932 2-seat model 24C8, powered by a 95 h.p. engine. It was built of wood, fabric-covered, with a welded steel fuselage frame. It was last produced as the 1948 4-seat model 24R46, powered by a 200 h.p. Ranger engine.

Aside from being a famous 1930s "gentleman's airplane," the Fairchild 24 saw military service in WWII for the U.S. as the UC-61, as well as for several allied air forces.

The Fairchild 24 is described as flying easily, competently, and with a minimum of fuss, producing climb rates and cruise speeds rather better than you would expect, and it descends with truly remarkable celerity – all in a fore-and-aft attitude that never varies more than about 7 degrees from the horizon, across the entire performance envelope.

Our plane will be in British colors, and will use the British name "Argus." It will be available for air shows and for our Warbird Ride Program – once it is fully restored and flying.

Our Wing started restoring our 1937 Fairchild F-24R three years ago. Originally, the CAF acquired numerous pieces

of two Fairchild F-24s, and decided to select the best parts from each to create a complete and flying aircraft. The data plate chosen was from a Fairchild type (Argus) used in Great Britain during WWII. Its colors will be all silver, with British markings and, believe it or not, it will carry a real bomb rack for authentic purposes.

The team working on the Fairchild F-24R Restoration Project is a tight group, with varied backgrounds. They obviously enjoy working together, and, every work day, after their arduous tasks, they gather in their comfortable work space to kibitz, share, cajole, drink (soft drinks, of course), and tell big stories. Each member has a unique function to perform, and contributes something special to the airplane's rebuilding process.



© Photo by Dave Flood

Part of the "Fairchild Country Photo Board" created by Jim Hinckley – showing the F-24R Restoration Team members at work.

Let me introduce you to the F-24R team:

**Robert Albee** – Crew Chief – pilot and owner of an Aeronca Champ (also a wood & fabric aircraft). He's been with the F-24R project since the beginning ( 3 ½ years ago). His favorite aspect of this project is the people.

His biggest challenge: getting funds to finish the restoration! His crew members call him among other things, the “plotter, planner and banker.”

**Norm Swagler** – Also 3 ½ years on the project and an original participant. His specialty is woodworking, a job I hear he’s an expert at. He’s a retired electrical engineer for Northrop Grumman. However, at home, he’s a super carpenter. Norm also loves solving engineering challenges, of which the team has many.

**Jim Price** - Also with the team since the start. His participation has been gluing ribs and stringers, working on the wood interior, and cutting fabric.

**Jim Hinckley** – Started in January, 2008, after he realized that he couldn’t do a good job as a Docent in the WWII Aviation Museum due to his hearing loss. A retired Colonel from the U.S. Army, Jim is a general “gofer” and gathers supplies, shirts and caps for the crew. He’s most proud of arranging the work area to make it more comfortable and pleasant to work in. He has also assembled a photo display of the crew members and another display of the airplane restoration process for visitors.

**Dave Sica** – A relatively new member of the team, Dave joined about nine months ago, after working on the C-131 for several years. He’s the key man right now on cabling, ailerons, controls, tail section and our Ranger engine. Dave must also be given 90% of the credit for hooking up all of the carburetion and fuel lines, enabling us to get the engine started on the first three turns.

**Howard Ulm** – Our electrical and electronics specialist. Howard installed the electrical system and the instruments, two BIG jobs.

**Dan Cuvier** – With the crew for one year. He’s worked on covering the wing, painting and helping with the woodwork – an all-around good worker.

**Gil Brice & George Sands** – They are the fabric specialists for the Wing. They have covered the “tail feathers” and the left wing, and will be starting soon on the right wing. They volunteered to do the unique stitching job on the fabric for our plane, and have done a magnificent job.

From time to time, other CAF members pop in to help. Some of those who have contributed significantly, just to name a few, are: **Shari Heitkotter, Eric Lange, Robert Blair, Al Smith, Robert Hohls** and **Joe Peppito** (always with sage advice). **Bob Monetti** is a brand-new member.

Be sure to stop by the F-24R Restoration Project in the Restoration Hangar and meet these members. Look at the displays and see the progress. The tail is completed and covered. The left wing has been covered and recently attached to the fuselage. The engine has been run three times and sounds great. They hope to see the airplane flying some time next year! Good work and good luck, guys!



© Photo by Dave Flood

**The F-24R’s left wing has just been attached to the fuselage after it was covered and painted. The team members are basking in the afterglow of the event. Robert Albee is framed by the gear struts.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Gil Brice, Dan Cuvier and Mike Hohls putting finishing touches on the left wing of the F-24R.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Dan Cuvier, Robert Seeger, Jim Hinckley and Gil Brice beginning to flip over the F-24’s left wing for finishing painting on the other side. It was attached on 7/24/08.**

## Warbird Flight Program

by Dave Flood

Recently our Warbird Flight Program, in which we sell airplane rides of a 20-minute duration to the public for \$300, played host to a Navy veteran pilot who had flown F6F Hellcats. His name is John Seagoe, and he is in his mid-80s. Esper Petersen, one of our Wing's benefactors, sponsored John for the flight. John's son had gone to school with Esper many years ago in the Chicago area.



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Here's John with a big smile after his flight!**

The Warbird Flight Program has been most successful. Over 60 people have signed up for the program. Plans are in place for adding the Fairchild PT-19A to the program @ \$225 for a 20-minute ride.

We have six of our pilots who are qualified. Steve Barber was John's pilot, and, of course, let John take the controls for a while during the flight. John had not been in an SNJ for over 50 years, but he said it was just like riding a bicycle...you never forget. After they landed, Steve asked John if he'd like to take the Hellcat up on his next visit. John replied emphatically, "Hell, no, I want the Bearcat!"



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Here's John with Steve after the flight. In order to order your own or a friend's flight, call 805-482-0064.**

## The Docent / Visitor Connection

by Dave Flood

It's been no secret that our Wing needs Docents in the Aviation Museum. We would like very much to open every day instead of being open just five days a week. Word is getting around about our Museum and our planes and our commitment to passing on the history of military aviation to new generations. In order to fulfill our mission, we need more Docents – men and women who can pass on our enthusiasm about military aviation to those who visit us.



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Here's a mother and her children, Natalie and Michael, who visited our Museum on Thursday, June 19. They really enjoyed their tour of our facilities, and Michael was very knowledgeable about our airplanes. These are the kind of people you can meet and enjoy when you become a Docent in our Aviation Museum! Please call (805)482-0064 to volunteer your services. Thanks!**

## Important Dates To Remember

- **August 16, 17** : EAA Air Expo, Camarillo Airport. The CAF Aviation Museum will be closed those two days, but our gift shop and airplanes will be outside on the ramp. Stop by and visit us! (There is an admission charge for the Expo).
- **September 6** : Commemoration of Battle of Midway, CAF Hangars and Ramp. Come see the airplanes and special displays; purchase a ride in our SNJ-5 Texan or PT-19A Cornell; and enjoy light refreshments. Special speaker on the famous "turning point" battle at 1:00 p.m. Bring family and friends. Admission donation requested ( Friends of The Museum admitted free by showing ID card).
- **December 6**: Commemoration of Pearl Harbor,

CAF Hangars and Ramp. Come see the airplanes and special displays; purchase a ride in a WWII trainer; and enjoy light refreshments. Bring family and friends. Friends of the Museum admitted free.

# COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING

## World War II Aviation Museum

455 Aviation Drive Camarillo CA 93010 (805) 482-0064

[www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal](http://www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal)

The CAF So Cal Wing offers a financial donation opportunity through the "Friends of the Museum" program. (Note, this is not a membership program. Rather, it is a fund raising program.)

The Museum operates on the support of members, events, and donations. The "Friends" annual donation entitles them to unlimited admission to the Museum, discounts at our gift shop, a "Friends Newsletter", and special levels of benefits. At each level, donors have the satisfaction of knowing that their gift helps enrich our educational programs, expand our exhibits, and maintain our airplanes.

If you or someone you know is interested in supporting our mission of preserving aviation history of World War II and beyond, complete this form and send it to the CAF at the address above. (Feel free to make a photocopy of the form).

### COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE – SO CAL WING WORLD WAR II AVIATION MUSEUM



#### FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM DONOR FORM

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if renewing. What is your Friend ID #? \_\_\_\_\_

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Check here if you are a current CAF Colonel

Form of Payment: Cash  Credit Card  Check   
(Make check payable to "CAF SoCal Wing - Friends of the Museum")

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check One Visa  Master Card  Discovery

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to above address.

#### Select Participation Level (Benefits for each level are listed below)

- Individual \$50
- Family \$75
- Supporter \$250
- Sustaining \$500
- Patron \$1000
- Benefactor \$5000

Friends of the Museum donation is valid for 1 year from the month of donation.  
The CAF is a 501(c)3 organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible.  
(See your Tax advisor for your individual tax situation.)

#### Friends of the Museum Levels and Benefits

BENEFIT	INDIVIDUAL \$50	FAMILY \$75	SUPPORTER \$250	SUSTAINING \$500	PATRON \$1000	BENEFACTOR \$5000
Unlimited Museum Access	X	X	X	X	X	X
Personalized Friends of the Museum ID Card	X	X	X	X	X	X
"Friends Newsletter"	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gift Shop Discount 10%	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wing Patch			X	X	X	X
Drawing for Ride in SNJ				X	X	
Framed Certificate					X	X
Ride in SNJ and Photo						X
Name on Plaque in Museum						X