



Friends of the Museum Newsletter



Commemorative Air Force

455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

(805) 482-0064

Volume 1, Number 2

November, 2007



© Photo by Dave Flood

Dear Friends,

Again, we thank you for your support for our World War II Aviation Museum! Come visit us and look me up when you're at the Museum! (I'm usually here on Thursdays). The above photo shows how important we are in educating young people. Look at their happy faces! Who says learning about aviation history isn't fun?

When you start planning your holiday shopping, consider our Gift Shop. We have new merchandise and lots of gift ideas! Remember, you receive a 10% discount on all items.

Note these special items in this newsletter:

- Page 2 - Update on the Museum. Note the new hours. We hope this doesn't inconvenience you.
- Page 4 - Friends Donor Form. Please share it with your neighbors and friends. We would love to have them join us.

Please send me your comments on the newsletter.

Ceci Stratford
Friends of the Museum Program Director
(805) 630-3696 calfsocalfriends@sbcglobal.net

UPDATE ON THE MUSEUM

by Sarah de Bree

The Fire Department has issued an order closing the hangar to the public due to problems with building permits. We have been careful to comply with the letter. Docents are escorting Museum visitors around the outside of the building so they can view the aircraft through the wide-open doors of both hangars and peruse the gift shop set up there. This is hard on the docents and visitors aren't able to see all the exhibits. Unfortunately our income has dropped considerably – about 50%!

Our Col. Jim Tierney has started to work on a solution to correct the County's permitting issues.

GOOD NEWS! The County officials and Airport management met to discuss the permit problems and how it has affected the Airport and community. Thanks to their cooperation we may be able to reopen the Museum fully in November!

Friends of the Museum, as part of the So Cal Wing, may enter the Museum artifact and exhibit area any time. Your understanding, patience, and support are appreciated! We will be contacting you in the next few months for your continued support as we start a fund raising campaign for a new Museum building.

We have drawn up a footprint of a new building for our Museum. We're excited about having a climate-controlled, special place for our memorabilia, non-flyable aircraft, archives and library, with suitable space for educational programs. We hope to become Ventura County's showplace for the history of military aviation, preserving the meaning of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other conflicts, in the memory and hearts of all Americans.

Please keep visiting us! Until we reopen completely, our new hours are:

- Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10:00 – 4:00
- Monday and Wednesday - Closed

Sarah deBree
World War II Aviation Museum Director
(805) 482-0064 (Museum)

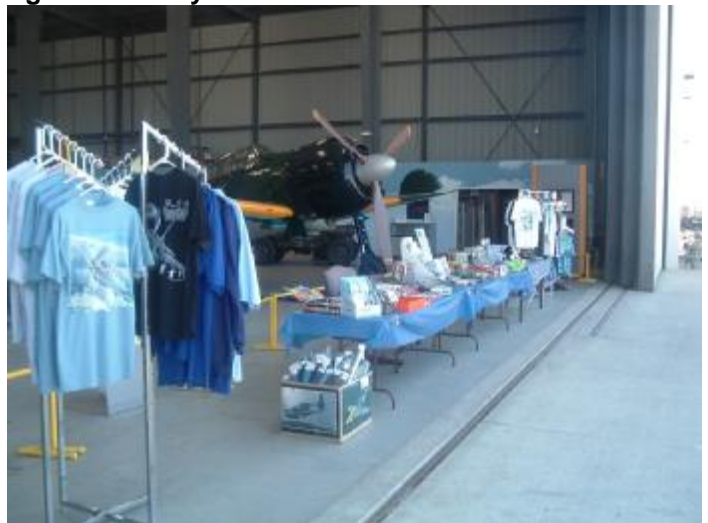
P.S. Also, we're having a work party November 7th to get the work area back to where it was before the closure, so that we have a clean, organized environment to continue our work inside. If you can help, please let me or Ceci Stratford know. Thanks!



A recent advertising “shoot” involving our C-46 *China Doll*. You may have seen it in a recent Centrum Silver vitamin commercial on television.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Here's Ceci Stratford with her CAF Cadet protégé, Brittney Johnson, after Brittney's solo flight. On right is Brittney's instructor.



© Photo by Dave Flood
Our Gift Shop – at the Museum hangar doors during the “shutdown period.” Open for business!

MUSEUM DOCENT PROFILE

Russ Drosendahl joined the Southern California Wing shortly after it began in 1982. He immediately became very involved with the Wing and was one of the most respected pilots of the C-46. He served as Wing leader from 1992-1994. For a number of years, he and two other Colonels in the So Cal Wing owned a Navion aircraft, selling it when he stopped flying in 1997. After that he became a docent in our Museum.

Russ's background lends itself appropriately to his reputation as one of our best docents. He has been involved with aviation ever since he graduated from high school in Cowlesville, New York (near Buffalo). He started working as a P-39 assembler at Bell aircraft Corporation, at 50 cents an hour. (After 30 days his pay increased to 55 cents an hour!).

When the War started in December 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, hoping to fly for them soon. While he waited to be called, Russ learned to fly. He soloed in a Porterfield in 1942 at Graf Airport, Lockport, NY. The AAC called him to active duty in the spring of 1943. After 40 to 50 hours of flying, he graduated in Flying Class 44-E, from Valdosta, Georgia. His advanced training was in AT-10s (twin engines) and then he was sent to Maxwell Field, Alabama, for B-24 flight training.

Russ served as a flight instructor in B-24s until the war started winding down. Then the USAF assigned him to B-29 flight training, but the war ended soon thereafter. Until he was discharged, Russ was based at Gunter Field, where he flew AT-6s and learned to play bridge. He was discharged from the Service in December 1945.

A friend told him about the Curtiss Wright Technical School in Glendale, CA, so he moved there and applied for the training. But too many signed up and his entrance was postponed for a month. Another friend told him about a job flying C-47s (DC-3s) on the East Coast, so back again to the other side of the country. He flew for Air Freight, Inc. from New York to Miami to Puerto Rico, and back again, carrying cargo both ways. He especially enjoyed flying across the beautiful Caribbean. Soon Air Freight went bankrupt, and, in 1947, he joined TWA as a pilot. He was with them for 34 ½ years - starting in DC-3s. He eventually became a Captain on L-1011s, retiring in April 1982 when he turned 60.

Thence began a new phase of his life with the CAF. Russ explains that his most enjoyable experience with the CAF has been meeting people of like minds, those who appreciate the history of military aviation. As a docent, he has met a variety of caliber of people, people from all walks of life, and people from all over the world. One of his most interesting experiences as a docent was talking with a visitor whose parents ran an underground operation in the Netherlands during the War, helping downed pilots get back to the Allied Forces.

Russ lives in Woodland Hills. His wife of 32 years, Lucille, died in 1987. They had a daughter whose son, Eric Lange, now 17 years old, volunteers with the CAF as a Cadet, and is learning to fly.

Russ is usually at the Museum on Fridays and Saturdays. If you're lucky enough to have him as a docent, ask him about his flying experiences and he'll regale you with his stories. You'll also enjoy his knowledgeable talks about World War II and the So Cal Wing's aircraft and memorabilia.



Docent Russ Drosendahl (middle) taking Museum Interns David (l.) and Shane through the paces as to how to best show off our WWII warbirds.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

An example of the B-24 Liberator bomber that Russ flew during World War II.

Benefits for CAF Friends

1. Unlimited Museum access (including during our shutdown period);
2. Personalized Friends of the Museum ID card;
3. "Friends Newsletter;"
4. Gift Shop discount of 10%;
5. Wing patch (based on \$ support);
6. Drawing for ride in SNJ (based on \$ support);
7. Ride in SNJ and photo (based on \$ support).

COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING
World War II Aviation Museum
455 Aviation Drive Camarillo CA 93010 (805) 482-0064

The CAF So Cal Wing is looking to increase support for our Wing's Museum from the public. The Wing has created a financial donation opportunity by establishing a "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).

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM DONOR FORM

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



Print Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone () _____ Cell () _____

Email _____

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