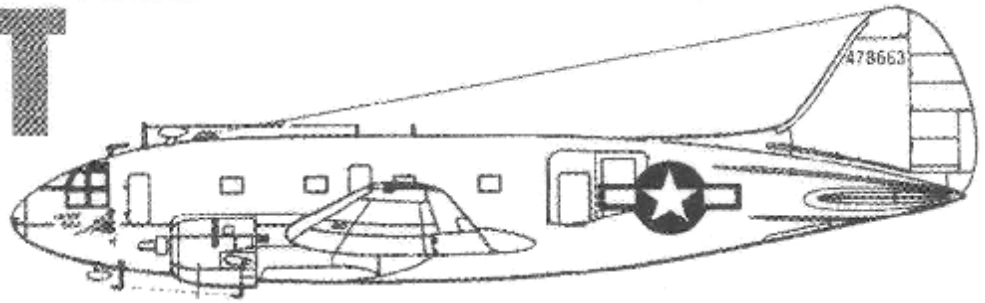


FLIGHT LINE



THE OFFICAL PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING OF THE CAF

Vol. XXVI No. 7

Visit us on the web at www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal

July 2006

July 4 Social at the hangar – Bring your own dinner. Social hour at 6:00pm, Dinner at 7:00pm, fireworks start at 9:00pm



Photo by Dan Newcomb

The Wing's B-25/PBJ is the subject of an up-coming segment of The History Channel's "Save Our History." Seen here are the host of "Save Our History" Steve Thomas on the right, and Col. Marc Russell, on the left, being taped by a History Channel Cameraman. This episode will be aired in early August, 2006.

**WING STAFF MEETING, SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2006 AT 9:30 AM AT
THE CAF HANGAR, 455 AVIATION DRIVE, CAMARILLO AIRPORT**

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMBAT AIRCRAFT – 1939-1945

July 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Work Day
2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY Fireworks at the hangar	5	6 Work Day	7	8 Work Day Staff Mtg 9:30AM
9	10	11 Work Day	12	13 Work Day	14	15 Work Day
16	17	18 Work Day	19	20 Work Day	21	22 Work Day
23	24	25 Work Day	26	27 Work Day	28	29 Work Day
30	31					

STAFF AND APPOINTED POSITIONS				IN THIS ISSUE
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Operations Officer	* Gary Barber	(805) 659-4319	bearcat69@pacbell.net	Oops 5
Maint Officer	* Dick Troy	(805) 522-5061	konvair@aol.com	Our own Heroes 5
Safety Officer	* Bob Goubitz	(805) 388-8341	rgoubitz.cafsocial@zoemail.net	Freeway Signs 6
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Personnel Officer	Sharon Wilson	(818) 991-8705	tmandskw@prodigy.net	The Beast. 9
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<p>HANGAR PHONE (805) 482-0064</p> <p>HANGAR FAX (805) 482-0348</p> <p>WEBSITE www.orgsites.com/ca/caf-socal</p>				<p>Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month</p> <p>Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing 455 Aviation Drive Camarillo, CA 93010-9501</p>
* Denotes Staff Position				

Wing Leader's Report

by Casey de Bree



As I write this in mid-June, we have just completed a very busy series of air shows. We started with flyovers on May 28 at Brentwood and on May 29 at Ojai. This was followed on June 10 by the C-131, F6F and FM2 appearing at the Hemet/Ryan air show, and on June 11 these same three aircraft appeared at the Van Nuys air show.

At the same time, our A6M3 *Zero* was flown from Midland to Hill AFB, Utah for the air show there on June 10-11, and then flown to Mesa, AZ where it will be for the foreseeable future in the hangar of the Arizona Wing. Then on June 12 our ramp was filled with a variety of visiting warbirds, including the CAF's rare, only flying example, Curtiss SB2C *Helldiver*, for the annual QB air show over the Broome ranch. Thanks to the pilots and the air show crews who flew the aircraft, staffed the PX and conducted tours through the C-131 at all these shows, and to the ground crew who handled the aircraft at the QB show. The Van Nuys show was particularly good for us financially and this group of shows earned much needed revenues for the Wing. All aircraft performed reliably, a real tribute to the crew chiefs and mechanics who work hard to "keep-em-flying". A "well done" to all who made these successes possible.

A "well done" also to the museum docents who, despite being very short-handed, have managed to staff the museum gift shop and museum seven days a week. I want to thank those from the aircraft maintenance/restoration side of our operation who have volunteered to help the beleaguered docent staff. I hope more of you will do that, and volunteering in the museum only one or two days per month will be a great help. I found it very enjoyable and rewarding to explain our exhibits and aircraft to our museum visitors in the several years that I served the Wing as a docent, in addition to working on the B-25 restoration. My wife was particularly appreciative of the days I spent as a docent because I came home with clean clothes and shoes. You could win brownie points at home.

The museum is blessed with a great staff that can be there during our normal workdays. Many of the exhibits we have are showing ravages from the poor environment we need to operate in, and they are making progress in repairing these to their original condition. Progress is also being made to protect the many uniforms we have in storage from the ravages of bird droppings and the ever-present dust in our hangar. Until our hangar build-out becomes a reality some time in the future, the harsh environment is something we must live with and do our best to work around. A "well done" to the museum staff.

I get a lot of questions about the C-46, which has been down for several months while the critical structure of the

aircraft underwent a complete NDI (non-destructive inspection) using eddy current inspection equipment. The C-46 was given a clean bill of health and is good to go from a structural integrity point of view. We are doing work on the fire detection system on both engines, and this work will be completed in the next few weeks. There is some surface corrosion that will need to receive serious attention before long and we are deciding how best to repair/replace those areas of the aircraft without taking it out of service for any longer than necessary.

I get a lot of questions about the C-131 as well. I wrote extensively about the aircraft's future in last month's column, and there is not a whole lot more to say about it. The Wing Staff did vote to postpone the date when the aircraft will be listed for sale to June 7, 2006. A number of members have expressed an interest in helping to repay the debt on the aircraft and have opened their wallets, with pledges totaling near \$100,000 as of this writing in late-June. A significant number of those pledging money to retire the debt are not wealthy individuals, but members of ordinary means who want to give \$1,000 or more to keep the airplane. Let me know if you want to join those of us who would like to be a part of raising the funds to retire the debt. The C-131 has been very reliable in the past year and a half, and has been able to operate almost entirely on free air show fuel because of its huge 1,800 gallon fuel capacity. We purchased only about 200 gallons of fuel for the C-131 in the past 18 months. If the debt and its interest payments were gone, the C-131 would have earned considerable money for the wing in 2005 and 2006 to date.

Our financial system has been under scrutiny from time to time when members who asked were unable to easily extract income and expense information about our aircraft and other parts of the wing's operation that they wanted to treat as a cost center. Some wanted an improved financial system, but it was clear to me that the problem was not with the accounting system, but with our inability to identify income and expenses precisely. Doing that requires a lot of research and is well beyond what can be asked of an already overworked Finance Officer.

To improve things, at the beginning of the 2006 accounting year, I revised several of the subcategories into which we classify income and expenses, and we are now getting better information as long as we are diligent in classifying income and expenses properly. The purchase order system that Cliff Brown started during his tenure has helped greatly in properly assigning purchases to specific aircraft and other expense categories. Several of us have volunteered to classify income and expenses in greater detail, such as splitting air show appearance fees among the aircraft earning them, not just by air show. This gives us more complete information than in the past and allows us to make better decisions. Thanks to those who are helping with this task.

Until next month. . . .



The Pearl Harbor display is down for refurbishment; re-scan of sun lightened pictures; enlarging of some and installing new frames where needed.

Work continues on the refurbishment of the Museum displays. This has been a slower process than expected, primarily due to the high cost of supplies that seems to be the story coming from all of our vendors. Display cabinets, framing materials, building materials, etc. all have been an explosion to our planned budget. Why am I telling all the wing members about this problem? Because, we need your help; the Wing needs your help!

One thing I would like to point out, as some of you have probably noticed, a number of the gift shop items are on sale at a very impressive discount. Come by and look! Certainly, all of your grandkids deserve one....or two....toy airplanes and we have some very nice ones. Besides the beautiful die-cast planes, there are also some snap-together, pre-painted planes that will give the kids a little work to do before the fun starts, and look great when finished. Start capturing their interest in airplanes by making use of the many books that make excellent learning tools. After all, they may be our volunteers of the future. If you don't have grandkids, how about a dollar or two cash donation?

I have put new DVD players in the remaining two kiosks and they are now showing snapshots on each of the Roaring Glory DVDs.. The gift shop has received a selection of the more popular Warbird DVDs, that have been digitally re-mastered and are very impressive to see. We hope you take advantage of these marvelous films; the color and sound are very exciting.

Again, regarding the work going on in the museum, I will list below the major items that the museum is hoping to find. We are going to some of

the local businesses to seek donations to help in the refurbishment of the museum. Look it over and if you know of someone that would assist in acquiring any of the items in the list, we would be very grateful. If any of the members would like to donate any of these items, this would help the tasks immensely. Remember, the museum is one of the tools we use to help the Wing continue to maintain and to grow.

1. Black metal frames; protective plastic for covering the exhibit (photos, maps, etc.); matting, adhesives, photo-mounting adhesives. Smaller plastic photo holders. (\$3,800.)

2. Protective canvas bags and stands for uniforms. (\$500.)

3. Gator boards on specific exhibits (e.g. Doolittle Tokyo Raid Exhibit; Flight-in-Time Exhibit) (\$750.)

4. Industrial carpet runners for walking areas around exhibits. (\$700.)

5. Rubber floor protectors for electrical cords. (\$250.)

6. Enamel paint for clean up tasks on displays (\$55.)

7. Display cabinets for exhibits; glass with a minimum of two shelves. (\$1,200)

8. Wood for shelving. (\$500.)

Many of our exhibits are looking shabby and we owe it to our visitors to show them the best our Wing can offer. If those of you in the maintenance hanger haven't taken the time to come through the museum, please do. See where you might be of help rejuvenating our displays or perhaps do a little wood working on shelving. etc., (and there's no grease involved!) or just enjoy what we have done.



The China-Burma-India display will be given a fresh look with new frames and more written text to explain the views.

Again, many thanks to all the museum volunteers: Shirley, Carol, Ceci, Pat and Jim H. and Jim T. for their many hours of creative work in museum

restoration tasks. A continuing thanks to Cliff Brown for taking on the big task of cleaning the museum floor and to Jim Hinkelman for his many 'fix-it' projects especially for the new door leading into the museum library.

Remember, we still need Docents. Please offer what time you think you can share.



Oops.....

By Ceci Stratford

In last month's Flight Line, I made an error in the article "Interns at the CAF World War II Aviation Museum". Please make note of the correction in our next issue.

I mentioned that intern David Barrera had interviewed Eugene Lore who was "a recipient of the Medal of Honor and Distinguished Flying Cross". Actually, he received the **Air Medal** and the Distinguished Flying Cross. My deepest apologies to Commander Lore!

Ceci



Our Own Heroes!

By Ceci Stratford

(Second in a Series)

Since the last article on our members who served in World War II, I've learned of many more. Here is the second in a series of articles to honor them.

This is just a small tribute to the SoCal Wing CAF members who served. Each one deserves much greater recognition, but at this time let's give these heroes a big salute!!

- Alex Ferrasci – Had basic training in Texas in 1944-1945, U.S. Army. His Port of Embarkation was Fort Ord, to go to the South Pacific, but he ended up being assigned to the Military Police. He worked in disciplinary barracks, then with German POWs (Rommel's Africa Corps) in fields in the San Joaquin Valley. (There were 40,000 POWs in Stockton and approximately 2,000 worked in the fields. After the war, the POWs were sent back to Europe.) Before being discharged, Alex ran the personnel section of disciplinary barracks. He was discharged from the Army in 1947 as a T5 (Corporal with T stripe).
- Al Smith – Joined the Coast Guard on March 23, 1943. He had boot camp at Alameda and served on horse patrol. Then he went to radio school and was assigned aboard AK92 USS Eridanus. They went to Pearl Harbor, Eniwetok, Guam, Saipan, Subic Bay, and participated in the invasion of Lingayen Gulf. (His ship earned a battle star). Al was discharged in

June 1946 as a Quartermaster 3rd Class in visual communications and navigation.

- John R. Snider – Enlisted in the Army Air Corps, November 1942, receiving orders for active duty in January 1943. He had pre-flight training in Santa Ana, primary training in Tulare (flying PT-13 & PT-17 Stearman), basic training in Minter (flying BT-13s) and advanced training in Douglas, AZ (flying AT-9s and AT-17s). He was assigned to Merced Army air Field as a basic flying instructor, then to Bergstrom Field (Austin, TX) for C-47 troop carrier training and then C-46 transports. He picked up a C-46 in Savannah, GA and flew it to India as a first pilot. John flew the Hump with the 4th Combat Cargo Group and later transferred to the 331st Troop Carrier Group and flew Chinese Nationalist troops from Shanghai to Northern China. He returned to the U.S. in May 1946 and was discharged in July.
- Roland McMinn – Entered the Army Air Corps on January 2, 1942. Trained as a weather observer and served 8 months at Waller Field, Trinidad, BWI. He also trained for twin engine pilot and graduated in Flying Class 43-G (July 1943) as a 2nd Lt. He then trained as a troop carrier and flew a C-47 from Fort Wayne, IN to Port Moresby, New Guinea from December 25, 1943 to January 2, 1944. In New Guinea and the surrounding areas, he flew C-47s until September, and then was checked out in the C-46. He flew the balance of the war in the Southwest Pacific area, based at Nadzab, New Guinea, Biak, Dutch New Guinea, Tanuan, Leyte Island, Clark Field (Luzon) and Iea Shima, Okinawa. Roland logged approximately 2,000 hours and participated in 7 campaigns. He was awarded the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters. He was discharged as a 1st Lt. In January 1946.
- Harry Bell – Enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserve on January 1, 1943 as an Aviation Cadet, was washed out along with 499 other cadets! They were sent to aerial gunnery schools. (Harry had already passed the commercial pilot test in civilian life! He feels they just needed more crew for the B-24 being built by Ford at the rate of one per hour!). Initial aerial gunnery training was at Gulf Port, MS, then Kansas City, then and Tucson, AZ. In Lincoln NE he and a crew flew a new B-24 across the Atlantic to Cherignola, Italy. (Girls were stomping grapes in a nearby vineyard while they were getting briefed on their mission). He was in the 757th bomb Squadron of the 459th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. By October 1944 he had flown 50 missions (38 sorties over Europe, 3 of which were to the Ploesti oil fields). After the engineer was shot on a mission, he became

the engineer and top turret gunner. He came home for Christmas in 1944. He went back to Biloxi, MS for Mechanics school. He was discharged soon after the A-bomb. He received 7 Air Medals and 7 Battle Stars. (Currently Harry is a flight instructor and owns a Piper Tomahawk at Whiteman Airport).

- Robert Smith – As a teenager, in the summer of 1941, he interned at Floyd Bennett NAS, draining Stearman oil sumps and cleaning the planes. Then, after high school graduation, he enrolled in a government aviation ground school in Passamodaquoddy, ME. After graduation from ground school, he became an instructor there. Eventually, he joined the Air Force as a mechanic and volunteered for gunnery school for B-24s. He was kept at Harlingen TX after training to be an instructor there. Finally in the spring of 1945 he was scheduled to go overseas, assigned to B-29s. He had to go back to school, this time at Fort Meyers, FL, and ended his Air Force “career: as a student, again! Discharged March 1946 as a S/Sgt.
- William J. Wilkinson – Entered the Army Air Corps on September 18, 1943 as an Air Cadet, receiving training as a fighter pilot. During the war he spent 11 months in the hospital, as he was injured in training. He graduated in Flying Class 45-H. He married his high school sweetheart during basic flying school, on July 14, 1945 at Spence Field, Moultri, GA. He was discharged March 14, 1958 as 1st Lt., Air Force Reserve.

I thoroughly enjoyed gathering this information. I had to shorten and paraphrase some of what I received from you. Please advise me if anything is not correct or if you wish to add to what is mentioned here. Also, if anyone knows other members not listed here who served in WW II, please let me know so we can update the list and acknowledge them in future articles in the Flight Line. Soon, we'll do another article about more members who served in World War II and other conflicts.

Ceci



Freeway Signs for the CAF So. Wing

By Frank W. Doerfler

Our bill, AB 2234, was previously passed by the California Assembly with a voice vote. It was then heard by the Senate Transportation Committee on Tuesday, 20 June, where it passed 13 to 0. Thanks to those of you who sent e-mails to the Committee members urging them to support the 101 Freeway Signs for our WWII Aviation Museum. Senator Tom McClintock is the Vice-Chairman of this Committee,

and that was good news for us. Tom is a very good friend of the CAF. He was the main speaker at the ground breaking of our two Museum hangars a few years ago. Many of us can still hear his stirring words about honoring our WWII Veterans.



Nominating Committee

By Russ Drosendahl

It's time to think about nominations for the four Wing Staff offices that are up for election for the 2007-2008 term. They are:

- Wing Leader
- Executive Officer
- Maintenance Officer
- Safety Officer

In accordance with the requirements of the CAF Unit Manual, Wing Leader Casey de Bree has appointed a three-person nominating committee consisting of:

- Russ Drosendahl
- Sib Bosso
- Bill O'Neill

Should you wish to nominate someone for one of these offices, please call me at (818) 888-1679, or e-mail me at redcaf@aol.com.

Elections will be in November and the results announced at the Christmas party in December.

The CAF Unit Manual requires that nominees for unit staff officer positions shall be current dues paid members in good standing with the unit and the Commemorative Air Force. In good standing indicates that the nominees have paid all membership fees and/or other financial obligations prior to the scheduled election date. The actions to meet all financial obligations should be completed not later than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled election date. It is preferred that the nominees have at least two (2) years of unbroken service as a member in good standing with the Unit and the CAF.

Minimum requirements for Wing Leader include at least two (2) years as a CAF member in good standing, background in military or business management, ability for good public appearance, adept at public speaking and preferably have a background in aviation.



Maintenance Officers Report

By Dick Troy

This month's column will be rather short. Since last month we have attended the Hemet and the Van Nuys air shows. Both of these shows were unqualified successes. I could not believe the crowds at Van Nuys this year and I believe it will turn out as one of our

largest air show events ever. We have seen a bit of history pass before our eyes as this is the last Van Nuys show to be put on. I understand that portion of the Airport will be under commercial development in the not to distant future. It was quite obvious that the city was sending a loud and clear message to all who attended this show. The vendors ran out of food, the portable lavatories were not in sufficient numbers to handle the crowds and lines were long for their use. Additionally there was very little in the way of aircraft on display so again I'm assuming that few were extended an invitation. No B-17 nor B-24 no Air Force tankers or air cargo craft. Come to think of it we had the largest aircraft on the ramp. As it ended up I suppose that was a good thing as we were the only large aircraft conducting tours. From 0800 till 1630 it was non stop people through the aircraft. The line never stopped and lots of times they were lined up out on the ramp waiting to get in line to go through the aircraft. The guys couldn't take the money fast enough. PX sales were fantastic and Bill told me he was selling broken toys as they ran out of most items. I think they could have sold the boxes the stuff came in. Was a great day, I want to thank each and every volunteer who gave so generously of their time and talents to make this the success it was. Thanks again. Until next month, fly safe and be safe.



Greetings from the Air Show Circuit!!

By Bill O'Neill

The weekend of June 10th and 11th was very, very busy!! It actually started on the morning of the 9th with the crew of the C-131 meeting at the museum at 9:30 AM in order to fly to Hemet.

Photo by Larry Kates



Gloria Troy outdid herself again!!!! She served us a ham and cheese omelet, potato puffs, apple sauce, coffee, orange juice and fruit.. Col. Whyte said, "What a way to start the weekend!!"

We didn't get off the ground until 1 PM due to weather at both CMA and Hemet. We eventually arrived at Hemet at 2:10 PM. We were given a rental

van for our use as a shuttle and we were quartered at the motel 6 which was about 3 miles away. Friday evening there was a Meet and Greet social followed by dinner; which consisted of roast beef, chicken, various vegetables, drinks and desert. There was a band which played until 9, which is the time the festivities ended.

Photo by Larry Kates



While we enjoyed filling ourselves at the Hemet sponsored Bar B Cue, good old Dick Troy filled the 131's gas tanks.

Saturday morning arrived all tooooooo early!!! The gates opened to the public at 6 AM which was really the kickoff for the pancake breakfast. We arrived shortly after 6 to set up in a pre-constructed booth which was located about 100 yards from where the plane was being displayed. We used the van to ferry our goods to the booth and were ready for business by 7:15. The crowd started slowly with the weather being overcast for most of the morning.

As noon approached the weather cleared and the crowd increased significantly so we started to have a continuous flow of people at both the airplane and the PX.

The Hemet people served lunch to all of the performers, which were various types of Mexican food or if you preferred, sandwiches. The revenue from this show was good. Our tours and PX sales combined for a total of \$2389 and we also received an appearance fee of \$500.

The fighters flown by Carter Teeters (F4F), Mark Mayte (F6F) and Gary Barber (F8F), were part of the static display and were also part of the aerial performance. They put on a nice show which was a big crowd pleaser. They arrived at Van Nuys earlier than the C-131, probably because they didn't have to pack the PX and they fly faster.

After the show ended (3 PM) we packed the plane with all of the remaining merchandise and flew to Van Nuys. We arrived at Van Nuys at 5:30 PM. Our plane was met by Gail Metcalf, Walt's wife. She drove to Van Nuys to pick up some of the crew and take them

to CMA. My wife Lorraine parked our van earlier so that the rest of us also had transportation to CMA. Thank you Gail, and Lorraine, for taking the time to help us. It was a good trip but we weren't finished; tomorrow was another show.

Sunday morning we started bright and early. We started arriving at 6:30 AM for a gates open to the public at 9 AM. We had to set up the PX, its canopy and clean the aircraft due to the flight to Van Nuys from Hemet on Saturday (When we arrived at Van Nuys, all we wanted to do was go home).

When we parked the plane at Van Nuys Saturday evening, I was a bit apprehensive about the location. It was parked at the end of the tarmac, probably a few hundred yards away from the entrances. It would require a bit of a walk for the public to visit us. I shouldn't have worried. Approximately 65,000 people attended the show and most of them visited us.

WE HAD A FANTASTIC DAY!!!!

Neither the members running the tours or the PX had any real break. From 9:30 until 5 PM it was non stop. There was always a line waiting to see the plane and there were always people at the PX buying our merchandise. As I said earlier, it was a fantastic day. Our PX and Tour revenue exceeded \$10,400. At the end of the day (for which we were all very grateful) we packed up the plane with the tables, chairs, canopy and a few small boxes of merchandise and were gone by 6 PM. Terry Cedar, Rich Johnson, Dick Troy and Gene O'Neal flew the 131 home.

We had a number of people from the wing attend the show to help man the tours or the PX. We wouldn't have survived the day if they hadn't helped. Gino and Betty Dellanina, Ceci Stratford, Lawrence Allen and his Grandson John Curry did yeomen's work at the PX. Lawrence should be very proud of his grandson, not only is he friendly, polite and hard working, he is honest. I witnessed John chase after a customer who had forgotten his change from purchasing a toy.

Cliff and Pat Brown spent a lot of time helping at the PX. Larry Simmer, Dan Cuvier and Dan Schrantz were an integral part of our tour personnel. These members coupled with the Hemet show members (Larry Kates, Gene O'Neal, Dick Updegraff, Dick and Gloria Troy, Whyte and me, plus Terry Cedar were able to hold our own with the many thousands of visitors to this show. (Walt Metcalf, Chuck Kelly and Marc Russell were part of the Hemet-Ryan contingent, did outstanding work at Hemet, but were unable to attend the Van Nuys Show).

This was perhaps the most difficult air show weekend that I have experienced. We had to pack up from one show, travel to the next show, drive home or to a motel, arrive at Van Nuys the next morning

between 6:30 and 7 AM. Work all day until 5 PM, and then fly/drive home.

It was great!!! As hard as we worked we had a great time with each other kidding around, talking, sharing stories etc. We all went home that evening tired but feeling great about our contribution to the Wing!! Maybe you want to join our fun loving group? Call me!!!

μ.

Here Come the QB's

By Dan Newcomb

As I looked into the mirror this morning, which is something that I try to avoid as much as possible, I noticed the bump on my head, (I can't be around an airplane without bumping my head) the raccoon eyes, and the farmer tan, were visible evidence of my first air show of the season.

The ramp boss for the QB show this year was Tim Kutzbach and he deserves a standing ovation. I spent the day trying to keep up with him serving as his assistant. Tim is one of the most even-tempered men I know and he proved it yesterday. With all of the hassles and glitches he never once raised his voice or became flustered. We had two aircraft arrive late. We had another show up unexpectedly. We had two scratches. We had a tug die on us. The flying schedule was revised two or three times. The airport authority drove up and advised Tim that a citizen up on the hill north of the airport reported a part fell from a T-6 while over his neighborhood. We notified the planes before they landed and they were checked on the ground. Last I heard all parts were accounted for. Apparently the report was bogus. They also told us that some knucklehead called 911 to report a plane crash out at the ranch, also bogus. Unfortunately some fire equipment rolled on that one.

The ramp moved smoothly and safely. While trying to keep up with Tim I did manage to take some photos but not as many as I would have liked.

The old gentleman (90s) standing in front of the P-40 flew one in the war. Wow! I even tried my hand guiding Clay Lacy's DC-3 into a parking spot but thankfully Jeff stepped in front of me and took over before things got out of hand. Jeff always seems to be around to pull my fat out of the fire.

It was great to see the Dauntless and the Helldiver. The Helldiver is the only one flying. The Dauntless is one of three in the world flying. With the Wildcat, Hellcat and Bearcat the Navy was well represented. The P-40 was also a wonderful addition

as well as the DC-3. It was great to see Getch and the Sea Fury again. If you haven't met Ellsworth Getchell you are missing something. He is a character. I have always found him to be one of the nicest guys out there but he does have a wicked sense of humor. I overheard part of his conversation with one of the FAA guys yesterday and it went something like this. "Why it was easy to spot you as a FED! You dress like a FED! You talk like a FED! You walk like a FED! And you even smell like a FED!" Oh Getch!

After we put all of the toys away and closed up the hangars Tim, Jeff, Dave and I grabbed some cold beers and dragged some chairs out on the ramp and we watched the sun set over the Pacific with the Helldiver and Dauntless silhouetted in the shadows of the hangar. While I love to see them fly, this part, the after air show quiet part, can be just as rewarding. The Dauntless sitting before us actually flew in combat in the South Pacific. I could just imagine a young man about Tim's age in the cockpit with a pimple faced 18-year-old gunner in the back seat. Where are they now? Maybe this plane and her crew members had shipped over from Port Hueneme? It was a privilege to share a Pacific sunset with her.

Photo by Walt Metcalf



92 year old (Mike?) Rossi was one of the original Flying Tigers. He is an ACE with 6 1/2 kills to his credit. The P-40N is from the "Planes of Fame."



Photo by Dan Newcomb

The Planes of Fame's beautiful SBD.

μ

"The BEAST!"

By Walt Metcalf



Photo by Walt Metcalf

The CAF West Texas Wing's SB2C-5 visits Camarillo for the QB's fly-in.

*"Oh Mother, dear mother, take down that blue star.
Replace it with one that is gold.*

*"Your son is a Helldiver driver; he'll never be 30 years old.
"The people who work Curtiss are frequently seen good and drunk.*

*"One day with an awful hangover, they mustered and designed
that old clunk.*

*"Now the wings are built with precision, the fuselage so strong it
won't fail.*

*"Who were the half-witted people who designed the cockpit and
tail?*

*"The skipper hates Helldiver Drivers and he doesn't think much of
that clunk.*

*"Each time we fly aboard his carrier, he prays his ship won't be
sunk.*

*"My body lies under the ocean, my body lies under the sea.
"My body lies under the ocean wrapped up in an SB2C!"*

Anonymous

The Helldiver had a bad reputation on carriers because more SB2c's were lost in deck landing accidents than to enemy action. Because of its unpleasant flying characteristics it's air crews nicknamed it the "BEAST" while some had a stronger name for it, (SB2C) stood for 'Son of a Bitch, 2nd Class.'

Although the SB2C was hated by many of its crews when it was sent into combat the bomber was responsible for the destruction of more Japanese targets than any other dive-bomber.

Watching the CAF's Helldiver land at Camarillo the other day I was thrilled to see the only flying SB2C in the world, but, I was also sad, sad that my wife's uncle was not there to share my good feelings.

My wife's uncle is RADM Martin Doan (Red) Carmody, USN (Ret.) who lives with his wife, Barbara in Virginia Beach, Virginia, not far from where he first met the SB2C-1 in 1943.



Lt. Red Carmody one of the more experienced pilots within VB-8, on the Bunker Hill CV-17 during the unit's first combat tour with the Beast.

My wife, Gail and I visit Red (who is 89) once a year to be with him and to hear his war stories, which he loves to tell.

The following is one of my favorite stories as told to Col. Bob Halsey of the CAF Old Dominion Squadron, in Virginia Beach, for their newsletter.

After completing a seven month combat deployment from October, 1942 to 1 May 1943, the USS ENTERPRISE (CV-6) and Air Group Ten departed Espiritu Santo for Pearl Harbor, where they were relieved by USS SARATOGA (CV-3) and her air group. Before arrival, the aircraft flew ashore and were soon turned over to another group. Red Carmody and the rest of Air Group Ten's personnel then boarded a transport ship (ex-liner) headed for Fort Mason terminal at San Francisco, arriving in late May, 1943. Many of the Air Group Ten pilots were transferred to other air groups on both the east and west coasts.

Shortly after checking in, Red was directed to join the newly forming Air Group Eight's dive-bomber squadron, VB-8. CVG-8's three squadrons were spread over three fields out in the farmland woods. The fighter and torpedo squadrons—VF8 and the re-established VT-8 (the original was decimated at the Battle of Midway)—were at Creeds and Pungo, while VB-8 was at Fentress Field in Norfolk County (now called Chesapeake.)

Red and his friend and fellow pilot from VS-10, LT (jg) Les Ward, were two of only six in the VB-8 with any combat experience. The CO, LCDR Ralph Shifley, had

some flying experience, but no in dive bombers. Besides Red and Les, there were only four other pilots who had flown SBDs from a large carrier and the balance were mostly "nuggets," pilots who had just recently qualified. VB-8 was expected to have their aircrews trained and ready to board USS INTREPID (CV-11), then under construction, by late summer. Red and Les were the only ones who fully understood how difficult this was going to be!

There were a couple of bright spots, however. The planes that VB-8 was just then receiving were the newer SBD-5 Dauntlesses, with reflector gun sights instead of the old telescopic sights, also with shoulder harnesses, and the newer type of electrical system and propeller. Red had 900 hours in SBDs and on 1 July was promoted to Lieutenant.

Early in September, the Navy decided to begin phasing the new, and very troublesome SB2C-1 Helldiver in to combat status. They could then train and become familiar with the plane before going into combat with it. Helldivers had problems, many of them! It was longitudinally unstable due to the relatively short fuselage length as a result of Curtiss's design to meet the original 1939 specification which required carrier planes to fit on the smaller elevators of pre-war carriers. The larger tail surfaces were intended to counter this but there were other problems. The engine was somewhat underpowered and the electrical system had numerous problems and maintenance intensive hydraulic system had complex cockpit controls. There was also the problem of "hook bounce", in which the tail hook would bounce back up after hitting the deck, thus miss catching the wire. The plane would then run into the barrier and become damaged. This was eventually resolved by increasing the damping on the hook mechanism. In addition to several known mostly minor, shortcomings that required many design fixes, there was no reliable operating manual to tell new pilots the basics of the planes operating parameters and procedures. Curtiss was too busy making modifications and improvements. The first batch of SB2C-1s had so many problems, accidents, and aircraft losses the CO of USS YORKTOWN (CV-10), the initial trials ship, recommended that the Navy not accept them for service. These were the very aircraft the VB-8 inherited, and was expected to train with and take aboard the INTREPID! Although many modifications were made to these early models, they still were not combat-worthy.

The VB-8 pilots would need a lot more time to become familiar with their new aircraft, but they didn't have the time! Red and Les first flew these imperfect planes as much as possible to learn about the SB2C's flying characteristics in order to train the other pilots. Compared to the SBD, the Helldiver required longer takeoff and landing distances, was less maneuverable and definitely not an easy plane for new pilots to learn to handle! It was a VB-8 pilot who came up with the epithet "Beast". It became the Helldiver's unofficial nickname. By late September, VB-8's pilots averaged only 20 hours in the Helldivers, before starting carrier qualification landing aboard the INTREPID in the Chesapeake Bay.

After Air Group qualifications were completed, the INTREPID Task Group departed on a direct, high speed, no flight ops transit to the Gulf of Paria, a nearly hundred mile wide body of water between Trinidad and Venezuela. It was

protected from U-boat entry by nets at both north and east open sea access points. Generally good weather and with the nearby US military airfields on Trinidad, made an excellent site for carrier flight training. On the way down, VB-8's mechanics caught up on routine maintenance of the squadron's 36 planes and did more modifications, to ensure they were ready for training flights.

Air Group Eight and the INTREPID, commenced training operations almost immediately. By the second day, three SB2Cs had lost power on their takeoff runs and gone into the water just forward of the bow. Although no flight crews were lost, the ship CO was so disgusted, he ordered VB-8 to take their planes ashore to one of the Trinidad fields and work out their problems before coming back aboard. While VB-8's skipper remained aboard the ship, Red took the squadron ashore to Xerxes field, where he first ordered the mechanics to perform complete inspections of the aircraft including 30 hour engine checks. They found nothing wrong. After analyzing and discussing why they were having power failure on takeoff from the carrier, Red and the few experienced pilots realized that because there was no operating manual, they would have to develop one with the proper takeoff procedure, which was : no idling at less than 1000rpm (to avoid fouling spark plugs), cowl flaps full open during run and taxiing, half open cowl flaps and 2/3 wing flaps on takeoff with a minimum of 400 feet deck run on takeoff. Red had to insist strongly upon this takeoff distance with carrier Flight Deck Officer when they later re-embarked.

In the meantime, Red., as Training Officer, decided they would take full advantage of the flying opportunities at the field. From his college football days and previous SBD experience, he emphasized operating discipline and preached teamwork. When they resumed flying, they began to practice filed carrier landings. After the days ashore, at the army airfield, they returned to the carrier, with a lot more confidence and proficiency, although not trained in combat tactics, nor having any bombing practice.

At the end of October, 1943, the ship (with the Air Group aboard) made a high speed run back to Norfolk. During the month after the ship returned, Red came down with pneumonia. INTREPID was scheduled for a 1 December deployment to the Pacific. Recuperating, Red Carmody had to spend most of his first days back on the ship in his bunk. Again, the carrier made a high speed transit, this time to the Panama Canal.

Enroute to San Francisco, Red thought they should do some training. He recommended that LCDR Shifley ask the ship CO if a target sled could be towed behind the ship while they proceeded northward. A sled was rigged and VB-8 and VT-8 made a bombing runs for the first time on a moving target.

The flight plan called for releasing practice bombs at 1,800 feet and pulling out at 700 feet, resulting in about a 7G recovery. On the third bombing run, on 19 December, Red finally learned first hand why the Helldiver was called "The Beast." As he started to pullout, things went wrong fast! The right landing gear suddenly extend, the plane rolled 360 degrees. Red desperately tried to counter the roll by forcefully holding the stick all the way to the left and stomping on the left rudder in order to try to level out. His

desperation increased when he saw the plane was headed directly at the ship and still rolling. Slowly, it seemed, the plane rolled back upright and Red gained some altitude as he passed to starboard of the INTREPID. This all happened in just a few seconds! When he finally regained level flight, he knew he couldn't hold it level for long and called on the intercom to his gunner, Jake Orshansky, and told him to bail out. During the intense struggle for control, Red had unknowingly pulled the intercom wire from its connection. He unbuckled his shoulder straps and seat belt, started to climb out of the cockpit while still holding the stick full over. Looking aft, to check that Jake had gone, he got another surprise. Jake was still sitting there. He hadn't heard Red call him.

The rudder had been wrenched loose from its top two connections to the fin and was now tilted away from its normal vertical alignment! Red realized he would have to ditch instead of bailing out. Getting back in, he discovered the loose intercom wire then reconnected it and told both Jake and ship's air boss that the plane was not controllable enough for a deck landing. They would be ditching, which is safer than bailing out. Turning the plane east, he pulled the landing gear handle to extend the left landing gear, countering the imbalance caused by the right gear, then retracted both in preparation for ditching. Although Red couldn't buckle his shoulder straps, he was able to reconnect the seat belt then made a smooth water landing. Neither was hurt. After boarding the life raft, they were soon picked up by a motor whaleboat from the plane guard destroyer, USS Gatling (DD-671). The lucky aviators rode the destroyer the rest of the way to San Francisco.

Jake never talked about this incident, but years later at a reunion, he said how glad he was that Red didn't bail out, and thereby saved his life!

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More Photos

Photos by Dan Newcomb



It looks like Marc Russell is checking to see if he needs a shave. This beautiful B-26 shines like a mirror.



The West Texas Wings SB2C-5 landing at Camarillo.



Marc Russell and Steve Thomas doing a lighting test.

ATTENTION!!!!

Please send me your August Flight Line articles by the **10th of July**. My wife and I are going on vacation shortly after the 10th. Walt Metcalf



"The Planes of Fame's" P-40N.



Clay Lacey's DC-3 visits the QB's at So. Cals., Hangar.



Good buddies Marc Russell and host Steve Thomas of History Channel's "Saving our History."

