

# Flight Line

***The Official Publication of the CAF***

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



Clyde East in his RCAF Uniform.  
See pages 4 & 5 for his story.

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© Photo by Dave Flood

**Our Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero Fighter back in our Museum Hangar, where she belongs.  
See page 9 for the story of her sojourn away from CMA.**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, February 12, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the  
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

**Our CAF Mission: To Honor American Military Aviation Through Flight, Exhibition and Remembrance.**

# February 2011

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

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Museum Manager	John Woolley	(805) 407-4800	<a href="mailto:jwools@sbcglobal.net">jwools@sbcglobal.net</a>	The Saga of the NC-4 . . . . . 8
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Chief Docent	Walt Metcalf	(805) 482-8291	<a href="mailto:wmetcalf@yahoo.com">wmetcalf@yahoo.com</a>	"WingsOver Camarillo" . . . . . 11
Friends Coordinator	Ceci Stratford	(805) 630-3696	<a href="mailto:cecipilot@sbcglobal.net">cecipilot@sbcglobal.net</a>	In Memoriam: Jasper Solomon . . . . . 12
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## Wing Leader's Report

by Steve Barber



January has flown by and much work has been accomplished, and much more is to be done.

The Bearcat is down for a propeller overhaul; the Hellcat is in Van Nuys for a 5-year A.D. on the propeller; the Zero is still in Salinas, CA, with the problem fixed (we hope) and will be coming home this week. Turns out that the #13 cylinder had a couple of broken rings and a cracked intake valve - not to mention a stuck exhaust valve!

I've flown the Spitfire now several times, and we are closing in on the last few adjustments. Overall, it is flying very well and will soon be ready to make some air shows.

Progress continues on the B-25 as the crew there is really starting to move along. Barry Roberts and Norm Swagler are making good progress on the Fairchild, and if you get the time, please take a look at the beautiful work they are doing. As I've said before, it's too bad we have to cover up the wooden wonder with fabric as the woodwork they are doing looks so beautiful.

Congratulations are in order for all of our Cadets and Members that participated in Joe Peppito's maintenance school. We have some great young people and it makes us old folks feel very proud of you!

Last Saturday Dave Casey was given his SNJ check ride and is now signed off for solo. We have also been signing up some new members and I am very gratified to see so many new faces out working on our aircraft and in the museum.

Tomorrow we have another event at the hangar and this year's rentals continue to out-pace the year before by a huge margin. Good news for your Wing! We are getting close to finally putting a finish on the Museum Hangar floor, and it looks like it will be polished cement. A paint process will not work with our water table so high, as it would ruin the finish.

Your staff is working on building out your museum and adding additional hangar space. All of these are big jobs with the cry for funds going out to all who hear our voice.

More information will be forthcoming on these projects at a later time.

Air show flying will commence with the Navy's Centennial kickoff event in San Diego with our F6f and SNJ flying with hundreds of other Naval aircraft. We are hopeful that this year will be a good one for our planes on the air show circuit.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 12th at 4:00 p.m. We are going to have an all-hands meeting (to include significant others and guests) with an update on your Wing and then, if all goes well, a presentation on the Zero's trip to New Zealand. Dinner will be served and drinks will be available for purchase. Don't miss this event, as it will be fun and informative! Yes - you can contribute to the expense of dinner, but if you're poor or cheap, still come on out for some fun and laughs.

See you at the Wing!

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## Museum Update

by John Woolley

### Events coming up:

Warbird Appreciation Day and Battle of Britain Day to be held on Saturday, March 5, 2011. Museum opens at 10:00 a.m.; Spitfire and Battle of Britain Presentation: 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Spitfire fire-up and flyby at 1:00 p.m.

### Future Events include:

July – Wine & Wings  
August – Wings Over Camarillo Air Show (8/20 & 21)  
August – WWII Radio Revue (Aug. 20)  
Sept. – Oktoberfest  
Oct. – Halloween Party  
TBA – Warbird Appreciation Days for Zero and Bearcat.

**HELP!** We need volunteers for the following positions:

Docents – learn about our aircraft, displays, history – lead tours and meet interesting people – [see Walt Metcalf](#).

Library – assist in cataloguing the books, manuals, magazines, and videos - [see Jim Hinkelman](#).

PX/Gift Shop – assist in maintenance, ordering, displaying & selling items at special events & air shows – [see Jim Tierney](#).



*Jim Hinkelman has put lights on our museum displays. They look great, especially on dark days!*

## Clyde East: Flew Spitfires & Mustangs

This is the fascinating story of Lt. Col. Clyde B. East, who not only distinguished himself by flying dangerous reconnaissance missions during WWII, but also became an air ace as well – with thirteen German planes shot down.

As we see now in retrospect, a career in military aviation during the mid-Twentieth Century was like no other in the history of aviation, and the story of this wonderful career begins in the tobacco fields of Pittsylvania County, Virginia in 1921. On July 19 of that year, the fifth of nine children was born to James and Mary East, and they named him Clyde Bennett. Growing up on the rural family farm, Clyde eventually sought the adventure of military life, and, in 1941 travelled to Canada to pursue his dreams and enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force at the tender age of 19. He enlisted in Hamilton, Ontario.

Completing his elementary pilot training in 1942, flying the de Havilland “Tiger Moth,” Clyde advanced to the North American AT-6 “Harvard” and was awarded his flying wings and commission as a Pilot Officer (2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.). He was then assigned overseas to England, completed operational training in the North American P-51 “Mustang,” and reported to the RCAF 414<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron in June, 1943. Upgraded to “Operationally Ready” status in the “Mustang” one month later, East began his combat career by flying 26 interdiction missions (known then as ‘Rhubarbs’) into France, Belgium and Holland, attacking rail, motor and barge traffic, although he saw no aerial combat during that time period.

East then transferred to the U.S. Army Air Force in England as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., and was assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Tactical Recon Sqdn of the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force in February, 1944. Clyde began flying the Supermarine Spitfire Mark VB, as the unit awaited delivery of their new recon P-51Bs and Cs. The Spitfires, however, provided some impressive performance. “We flew the clipped-wing version of the ‘5B’ with derated engines,” East commented, “which meant it was much faster and had more power at lower altitudes. However, as you climbed, you lost power to the point that 10,000 feet was about as high as you could really operate well.” By late 1944, East had amassed approximately 200 hours in the ‘Battle of Britain Spitfire,’ as he called the machine. “It was a great airplane for low altitudes, though,” noted Clyde, “and it was the best flying I ever had.”

With the advent of North American’s P-51Bs entering service, East’s squadron prepared intensively for the upcoming D-Day invasion of Europe with actual recon missions into France and Belgium, and eventually combat missions over the beachhead and deep into Normandy and western France.

On D-Day afternoon, June 6, 1944, East saw not only his first aerial engagement, but the first of his thirteen kills of WWII when he and his wingman shot down two of the four German planes downed that day. While the landing was in progress, Capt. East’s squadron caught a group of

German Focke-Wulf 190s in a landing pattern over Laval, France. He was the flight leader at the time and brought down the first 190. In doing so, he became the first American pilot to shoot down a German plane on D-Day. This kill was followed by another shortly afterward.

On one occasion, East was halfway through his mission when he spotted a Messerschmitt 109 flying at a lower altitude. The Virginian went after him with alacrity. In writing home about the incident, he described the action: “He never knew what hit him. I made one pass, firing about 75 rounds and must have killed the pilot, for the plane went straight in and burst into flames on striking the ground.”

Capt. East made a significant contribution to the Allied cause in the German counter-offensive in the late fall of 1944. This bitterly-fought campaign is now better known as the “Battle of the Bulge.” As a reconnaissance pilot, he flew many missions leading P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bomber squadrons to targets such as truck and rail convoys.



© Painting “Eagles Over The Rhine” by Robert Taylor

**Clyde East’s signature is on this painting of him and his wingman flying over the Rhine River in their P-51s**

In one remarkable episode, he was assigned the task of guiding the fire of the eight-inch howitzers of George Patton’s Third Army artillery. They were engaged in attacks on rail marshalling yards at the town of Trier, near Luxembourg. The doughty captain spent two memorable hours dodging anti-aircraft fire from altitudes of 13,000 feet down to 300 feet in his P-51 Mustang – while directing fire at the targets. The raid was highly successful.

When WWII in Europe ended, his unit was in the process of reorganizing for the invasion of Japan – when VJ Day came about. East returned home after the war as Pittsylvania County, VA’s most highly decorated veteran, but remained in the Air Force. He was one of the veteran pilots assigned to the new jet aircraft. He was the flight commander of the first Air Force squadron to be equipped with the jet-propelled RF-80A “Shooting Star.”

Clyde had been decorated by the governments of England, France and Belgium. His WWII record shows that

he flew 200 combat missions in which he accumulated a total of 350 hours of combat time.

His own country awarded him the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with an incredible 36 Oak Leaf Clusters. Before his 25 years of service were completed, he was to add more repeat medals to the above, plus five more Oak Leaf Clusters to his Air Medal.

When the Korean War erupted in 1950, Capt. East found himself again in a deadly shooting war. By August, 1951, he had flown 130 more combat missions and picked up more decorations, including two more clusters to his Distinguished Flying Cross. Promotions followed.

When the Korean War wound down, Major East took several assignments training pilots for combat. A stint at the Air Command & Staff College followed. Few of his hometown neighbors who watched the Cuban Missile Crisis unfold on television in October, 1962 were aware that one of their own, Lt. Col. Clyde East, was engaged in missions as dangerous as combat. He was a wing commander on one of the units that flew 100 visual and photo missions as ordered by President John F. Kennedy and his staff over a three and one-half week period. That hazardous duty earned him a third cluster to his DFC.

Lt. Col. East remained in the service until his retirement in 1965, after which he joined the Rand Corporation as a civilian. Today he lives with his wife in Oak Park, CA, where he leads a busy life keeping up with his six children and seven grandchildren.

The events of 9/11 have made Americans aware of how essential it is to have dedicated servicemen and women, and how lucky this nation has been to have men like Clyde East on hand when our freedoms have been threatened.

Thanks to Herman E. Melton and the Star-Tribune, Chatham, VA for excerpts of this article.



Here's Clyde in his P-51 Mustang

**Special Note: Clyde East will be our featured guest at our Warbird Appreciation Day/Battle of Britain Commemoration on Saturday, March 5, 2011 – 11:00 to 2:00.**

## Special Events Report

by Steve Barber, Jr.

Welcome to the new year and the new opportunities that await our Wing!

I find the new year, especially the first and second quarter, to be very eventful for our wing. Most needed is still manpower to help our docents and myself out with our events that we rent out in our museum. Please contact me with availability that you'll be able to donate your time and effort for future events as we're in dire need. Please step up - especially the maintenance hangar members who spend most days working on our aircraft - to find time to help with these events.

Do you have questions on how to volunteer? See me, and/or our Museum Manager, John Woolley, and we will gladly assist you.

Here are opportunities for you to help:

March 5<sup>th</sup> Warbird Appreciation/Spitfire/Battle of Britain Museum 1100 – 1500

April 16<sup>th</sup> Wings and Wheels Triumph cars and planes Museum TBD

May 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Private Bar Mitzvah Museum All Weekend

June 11<sup>th</sup> US Navy Retirement Reception Museum TBD

July 9<sup>th</sup> Wedding Museum TBD

August 8<sup>th</sup> Rotary Club Reception Museum/Maint Hangar

September 17<sup>th</sup> Wedding Museum TBD

October 1<sup>st</sup> Oktoberfest Museum/Ramp!

All Hands Meeting: Second Saturday of February @1600. Bobbi's burritos will be served along with sides and our bar will be OPEN! Also a special Video presentation of our Zero's trip to New Zealand will be shown.

Let me know which dates we can count on you for help. Call me at (805) 223-1077. You'll be helping out our Wing, and you'll have a lot of fun doing it!



## U.S. Naval Air Centennial: 2011 A Flight Into History: Curtiss NC-4

The year was 1917, and just months after America's entry into World War I Rear Admiral David W. Taylor, Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, tasked engineers with designing an aircraft that could fly across the Atlantic to the coastlines of Europe and be ready to patrol for German U-boats upon arrival. Over the course of the ensuing weeks, the Navy consulted with aircraft manufacturer Glenn Curtiss, the designer of most of the Navy's early aircraft, and the two parties soon embarked upon a joint effort to construct what would become known as the NC boats, "N" denoting Navy and "C" denoting Curtiss.

Work on NC-1, the first of the aircraft, commenced in December, 1917. A study in craftsmanship, the design incorporated intricate wood work, a maze of wire struts, and many square feet of fabric covering the wings. So large that they could not be assembled in one location, the aircraft components were completed at a host of small factories in the northeast, many of them boat manufacturers. One provider of small metal parts, Under Brothers & Company, in peacetime made an array of jewelry.



When completed, a mammoth wooden hull constructed of two levels of cedar planking supported sweeping wings that stretched to 126 feet. Four Liberty V-12 engines (three "pullers" and one "pusher") fed from tanks containing 1,891 gallons of gasoline provided 1,600 horsepower, enabling a top speed of 85 miles per hour when the aircraft was at its fully loaded weight of 28,000 lb.

Delivery of the NC-1 occurred in late-1918, just weeks before the signing of the Armistice ending the war that had prompted its construction. The NC boats now appeared to be aircraft without a mission. Yet, even before the guns fell silent on the Western Front, a bold proposal written by Commander John H. Towers, Naval Aviator Number 3, was working its way through the hierarchy of the Navy Department. When peace returned, it called for an effort by the U.S. Navy to regain American prestige in aviation by achieving the feat that all who flew aspired to most - flying

the Atlantic. The natural platform for the task were the NC flying boats.

As 1918 passed into 1919, three additional NC boats joined NC-1 as the men selected to attempt to fly the Atlantic under the command of Commander John H. Towers set about making modifications to the aircraft and outfitting them with an array of radio and navigational equipment. The officer assigned to work on the latter was Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Byrd, who was denied the opportunity to participate in the transatlantic flight, but later achieved fame in his aerial exploration of the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Test flights on the machines commenced, with NC-2 carrying aloft Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt on 13 April, 1919, and NC-4 taking to the air for her maiden flight on 1 May, 1919.



On 3 May, 1919 crews of the NC-1, NC-3, and NC-4 gathered in front of their aircraft at Naval Air Station (NAS) Rockaway, Long Island, for the commissioning ceremonies of Seaplane Division One, which would attempt to fly the Atlantic. In the ensuing days a series of mishaps occurred that cast a pall over the endeavor, including a fire that damaged the NC-1 and one of the NC-4's crewman accidentally sticking his hand into one of the flying boats whirring propellers during an engine test, cutting it off and necessitating his removal from the flight.

By 8 May, 1919, with unfavorable weather having cleared and a four-leaf clover presented to each crew member for luck, the three flying boats of Seaplane Division One finally launched on the first scheduled leg of their flight from Naval Air Station (NAS) Rockaway Beach, Long Island, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Only two completed the nine-hour trip successfully, the NC-4 being forced down off Massachusetts with engine trouble, bearing out the words of the aircraft's engineering officer on the occasion of the planes' departure. "If we don't make it," Lieutenant J.L. Breese commented to a reporter, "it will be the fault of the engines." While her sister aircraft made it to Trepassey, Newfoundland, NC-4 remained behind undergoing repairs at Naval Air Station (NAS) Chatham, Massachusetts, the media giving her the derogatory nickname the "Lame Duck."



While the engines were NC-4's nemesis, the weather proved her saving grace, delaying the departure of NC-1 and NC-3 from Trepassey, Newfoundland, and allowing NC-4 to catch up. Finally reunited, the crew of the NC-4 having worked for much of the night to ready their craft, the flying boats of Seaplane Division One launched into the still light early evening sky on 16 May 1919, bound for the Azores Islands with twenty-one destroyers, including ones commanded by future World War II admirals William F. Halsey and Raymond A. Spruance, positioned along their intended path. A New York Times reporter described the scene this way. "For barely three minutes, the three seaplanes "stood out on the horizon in the still bright sunlight, keeping the regular division formation. Then the leading plane, and quickly after her the other two, disappeared from view, committed to the greatest journey aviators ever have undertaken."

As day turned into night, the three NC boats winged their way towards the Azores Islands in the longest and most demanding leg of the transatlantic flight, covering a distance of some 1,200 nautical miles. Early on the aircraft remained within sight of one another, the star shells fired from destroyers on station below exploding above banks of clouds that Commander John Towers in NC-3 likened to "sailing over a sea of snow." Gradually, increasing clouds and rain caused the aircraft to separate, with NC-1 and NC-3 drifting off course and having to make forced landings in the waters of the North Atlantic. Only NC-4 successfully reached the Azores, the crew of NC-1 was rescued by a Greek freighter and the crew of NC-3 actually taxied their battered craft for 205 miles to the destination they had hoped to reach by air.

The "Lame Duck" became the sole survivor of Seaplane Division One, but weather that had been NC-4s ally earlier in the flight caused delays in completing the subsequent legs of the flight from Horta to Ponta Delgada and on to Lisbon, Portugal. Finally, on 27 May, 1919, 1801 hours local time- the keel of the NC-4 flying boat sliced through the waters of the harbor in Lisbon, Portugal. Both man and machine showed the effects of the long flight, which was accomplished over the course of nineteen days across thousands of miles of ocean. The aircraft's commander, Lieutenant Commander Albert C. Read, wrote later to his wife that the successful flight represented, "a continuous run of unadulterated luck," but indeed the skill and bravery

of the crew combined with fortuity in making the NC-4 and her crew the first to fly the Atlantic.

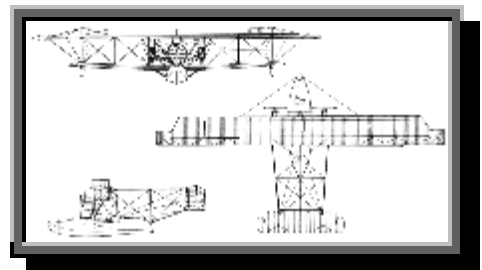
Continuing on to England following the landing in Portugal, Read and his men received what he called "a continuous crescendo of congratulations" there and in France. When the aircraft and her crew returned to the United States, they were the objects of much acclaim. NC-4 was placed on public display in New York City's Central Park, and after refurbishment, launched on an aerial recruiting tour of the Southeastern United States, during which she flew along the Atlantic seaboard, Gulf Coast, and up the Mississippi River.

Following the completion of the tour in January 1920, the aircraft was displayed on one more occasion next to the Washington Monument, and then placed in storage until 1969, at which time the Smithsonian National Air Museum, having restored the aircraft, placed it on outdoor display on the Washington Mall on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its flight. In 1974, the Smithsonian placed the aircraft on loan to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida.



#### Specifications:

Manufacturer: Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company and Naval Aircraft Factory  
 Dimensions: Length: 68 ft., 3 in.; Height: 24 ft., 6 in.; Wingspan: 126 ft.  
 Weights: Empty: 15,874 lb.; Gross Weight: 26,386 lb.  
 Power Plant: Four 400 horsepower Liberty 12 engines  
 Performance: Maximum Speed: 85 M.P.H.; Service Ceiling: 4,500 ft.; Range: 1,470 miles.



## The Saga of NC-4

by Dave Flood

The U.S. Navy decided to enter three of its new Curtiss NC flying boats in a transatlantic flight from Rockaway, NY to Lisbon, Portugal, with stops on the way.

The NC “flying boats” had been built during WWI to provide patrol cover for American shipping in the Atlantic against the attentions of German U-Boats. The NC-1, with three 400 hp Liberty engines, flew on Oct. 4, 1918. On Nov. 25 it set a world record for carrying 51 people on a single flight. The 3-engine configuration was considered inadequate for a transatlantic flight, so a fourth engine was designed for NC-2, 3 and 4. NC-2 was modified to have its engines in tandem pairs, but this design was rejected, and NC-2 was made inactive – only to become cannibalized to repair subsequent damage to NC-1. The remaining three planes retained the between-the-wings separate tractor layout for three engines, with the fourth engine a pusher at the rear of the hull.

On May 8, 1919, the NC-1, NC-3, and NC-4 took off from Rockaway, Long Island, NY for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the first leg of their planned transatlantic journey.

Off shore of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, NC-4’s center engine failed. She landed at sea and taxied to the Naval Air Station at Chatham, MA for repairs. NC-3 and NC-1 arrived at Halifax without incident, but next morning serious cracks were discovered in their propellers, and a day was lost replacing them.

On May 10 NC-1 and NC-3 continued on to Trepassey, Newfoundland, the jumping-off place for their spanning of the Atlantic.

Between Trepassey and the Azores, a fleet of twenty-one destroyers were stationed at 50-mile intervals. The ships were to serve as visual and radio navigation aids and communication links. They also would provide weather reports, and, if necessary, rescue service.

Repairs were completed on NC-4, but she was kept at Chatham by gale-force winds and rain. The weather cleared on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and NC-4 flew to Halifax and then arrived at Trepassey the next day.

On Friday evening, May 16, 1919, the three NC boats roared in turn down Trepassey Harbor and flew off into the gathering darkness over the Atlantic. The evening takeoff was necessary so that they could reach the Azores after sunrise next day and enjoy daylight landing conditions.

Sunrise the next day suddenly brought thick fog, and NC-1 and NC-3 became lost and had to land in heavy seas – both low on fuel. NC-3’s centerline engine struts were collapsed by the landing, and she limped into the harbor of Ponta Delgada in the Azores on May 19. NC-1 did not fare as well, and finally sank after her crew was rescued by a Greek freighter.

NC-4 also became lost in the fog, but A.C. Read, its CO and Navigator, used dead reckoning and his Radio Operator, H.C. Rodd’s radio reports from the destroyers below to finally break out of the fog over the island of Flores, the western-most of the Azores. Read swung NC-4 eastward toward the islands of Fayal and Sao Miguel, and landed safely in the harbor of Horta, on Fayal, shortly before noon. Within minutes, the thick fog completely blanketed the port.

For almost three days, NC-4 rode her moorings at Horta. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, with a break in the weather, she took off and reached Ponta Delgada two hours later. There she stayed for a week – delayed by weather and engine trouble.

The men of NC-4 were up before dawn on Tuesday, May 27. Lt. James Breese and Chief Machinist’s Mate Eugene Rhoads pampered the plane’s engines. H.C. Rodd checked his radio set to make sure it was ready. At word from A.C. Read, Lt. Elmer Stone advanced throttles and sent the big flying boat charging down the harbor in a great v-shaped wedge of spray, lifting off at 08:18 hours.



**Crew of the NC-4: from left, Lt. E.F. Stone, USCG, pilot; Chief Machinist Mate E.S. Rhoades, USN, engineer; Lt. W.K. Hinton, USNRF, pilot; Ens. H.C. Rodd, USNRF, radio operator; Lt. J.L. Breese, USNRF, res. Engineer; Lt. Cdr. A.C. Read, USN, CO and navigator; and Capt. Jackson of the base ship *Melville*.**

In NC-4, all eyes peered eastward where the horizon was fading into the deep purple of twilight. Then, at 19:39 hours, from the center of that darkening line, there flashed a diamond spark of light – the Cabo da Roca lighthouse – and the westernmost point in Europe had been sighted. Minutes later, NC-4 roared over the rocky coastline and turned southward toward the Tagus estuary and Lisbon.

According to Read, a man of few words, this moment was “perhaps the biggest thrill of the whole trip.” Each man on board realized that “No matter what happened – even if we crashed on landing – the transatlantic flight, the first one in the history of the world, was an accomplished fact.”

At 20:01 hours on May 27, 1919, NC-4’s keel sliced into the waters of the Tagus, at Lisbon, Portugal.

## The Saga of NC-4, cont'd.



The NC-4 in the harbor at Lisbon, Portugal on May 28, 1919.

*After two days in Lisbon, where all three NC crews were generously feted by the Portuguese government and the city of Lisbon, NC-4 continued her flight to Plymouth, England, to the port from which the Pilgrim fathers had left for America 299 years before. She was escorted into the harbor at Plymouth by three Felixstowe F.2A flying boats of the Royal Air Force.*

During the twenty-four days of this transatlantic flight, it invariably was on the front pages of American newspapers. But other remarkable Atlantic flights followed, and the world soon forgot the triumph of NC-4 and the skill and sagacity of her crew.

After May 27, 1919, the world knew that men would fly the Atlantic again – and again – and again. They would fly it faster and with fewer stops. They would fly it nonstop, in company, and alone. They would fly it with tens and even hundreds of passengers, at speeds and with comforts difficult to imagine in 1919.

But no one again could be first. That honor belongs to Lt. Cdr. Albert C. Read, his crew of five, and the United States Navy's Curtiss NC-4.

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Editor's Note: This story is of particular importance to me, as my father, Harold A. Flood, was a U.S. Navy Aviation Machinist Mate stationed at the Chatham, MA Naval Air Station in May, 1919, when the Navy-Curtiss NC-4 flying boat arrived at Chatham for repairs on its way to Lisbon, Portugal – and history. Of course, it was always my father's contention that he and his crew were the ones who enabled the NC-4 to successfully complete the historic journey across the Atlantic after they had repaired her center engine.

Many thanks to [www.aviation-history.com](http://www.aviation-history.com) for this story.

## Our Zero Is Back in the Fold!

After almost four months of being in Salinas, CA, our Mitsubishi A6M3 Zero is back in Camarillo and ensconced safely in our Museum Hangar.

She was being flown to the Salinas Air Show in early October and as the aircraft was approaching Salinas there was a sudden total loss of engine power for several seconds, followed by the sudden restoration of normal power. The aircraft was grounded upon landing at Salinas.

The first thought was that the ignition system was the problem since it appeared that both magnetos had shut off, but no fault could be found there. The next thought was that it might be the fuel system. The carburetor was taken off, partially disassembled, and checked on a flow bench. Nothing was wrong there either.

Then a call to Ray Anderson of Anderson Aeromotive in Grangerville, Idaho gave the team something to look into. Ray said, "Maybe it's an exhaust valve getting stuck." They did a compression check, and found that the number 13 cylinder had zero compression.

The fault was fixed when the number 13 "jug" was replaced, and Ken Gottschall was finally able to fly her back to CMA on Thursday, January 27. Whew!

Now our Docents can once again show the visitors to our Aviation Museum one of the three Mitsubishi A6M3 Zeros flying in the world today.

Thanks to the team which worked on the problem, including Ken Gottschall, Jason Somes, Craig Bennet, and Dustin Gelbard. And to Ray Anderson, of Anderson Aeromotive, whose vast knowledge of round engines provided the tip that a stuck exhaust valve in one cylinder of the R-1830 engine can put out the "fire" in the whole engine. Ray's company also provided a zero-time R-2800 engine for our Bearcat, after the previous engine seized up on Steve Barber on the way back from Riverside a couple of years ago. His company has also been instrumental in providing the replacement R-3350 engines for the CAF's B-29 Superfortress "Fifi." So Ray is a very handy guy, and is also a member of our Wing.

Thanks so much, Ray, for all your help!

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## Wing Air Show Update: 2011

- |           |                              |              |
|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Feb 10-13 | NAS, North Island, San Diego | F6F-5, SNJ-5 |
|           | Massive 150-plane flyby      |              |
|           | Commemorating Naval Air's    |              |
|           | Centennial                   |              |
| Feb 14    | Tailhook Legacy Formation    | F6F-5, SNJ-5 |
|           | Training – Lemoore NAS       |              |

Call 805-482-0064 for further updates and changes, since air show schedules sometimes change.

## History of the Curtiss P-40 by Eric Fischler

The P-40 Tomahawk fighter was the backbone of America's military aviation defense early in WWII. It all started with the Curtiss-Wright Corporation, which consisted of twelve different companies in Buffalo, New York.

It was the dawning age of the monoplane when Curtiss built a plane called the P-36 Hawk. The P-36 was one of the first single-seat monoplane fighters.



**Curtiss P-36 Hawk**

In the mid-1930s, Curtiss wanted to come up with a new design of a fighter which came to be known as the P-40. The early P-40 version was actually a P-36 Hawk with an Allison V-1710-19 V-12 radial engine which was liquid-cooled. This engine replaced the regular radial engine of the P-36 Hawk. Curtiss felt it needed to change the design of the P-40, so they gave the P-36 a long, pointed nose to hold the larger Allison engine.

The first P-40 took flight on October 14, 1938. It was equipped with four 50 calibre machine guns. It also could carry up to 500 pounds in bombs, and could carry a 45-gallon drop tank, which provided an extra range of 350 miles. Later versions would vary with the load of weapons.

The P-40 was the first fighter to enter mass production, and Curtiss produced 16,802 of them, over half of which were owned by the United States. It placed third in overall production of fighters during WWII – due to quality and low cost.



**Early Version of the P-40**

P-40s were pretty much the first high-end monoplane fighter aircraft. The first P-40 unit established was based at Langley Field in Virginia – the 8<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group. Later they were stationed at Pearl Harbor, in the center of Oahu, Hawaii. But this was not the first place where our P-40s saw combat. That was with the British in Africa. P-40s were ordered by the French and British at the beginning of their war with Germany. Unfortunately, the French never received their P-40s because France had fallen to the Nazis – so all the P-40s were sent to Britain. The British called the P-40s “Kittyhawks.”

On December 7, 1941 Japan executed a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, which cost the lives of 2,402 American servicemen. It also cost us 12 ships and 188 Army/Navy aircraft. Of those 188 planes lost, 73 of them were P-40s. This is the moment we had entered WWII.

China became in dire need of help because the Japanese were routinely bombing Chinese villages. Thus came the American Volunteer Group (AVG), created by Claire Chennault. The AVG was a group of volunteer pilots who were stationed all around China and helped protect the Chinese villages from Japanese attack. The main plane that the AVG pilots flew was the P-40 Tomahawk. The AVG was nicknamed by the Chinese “The Flying Tigers” because of the shark's mouth and eyes painted on the noses of their P-40s. Each P-40 also had a “flying tiger” logo painted on its fuselage.



**Curtiss P-40 with Flying Tiger Colors**

The “Flying Tigers” were quick to respond in a situation where their mission was to shoot down Japanese bombers and fighters. The strike patterns of the “Flying Tigers” were to dive in on the Japanese targets from out of the sun, and shoot a few bursts from their guns and then repeat the process. The reason why they established this tactic was that the Japanese A-6M Zero fighter was very agile in a turning dogfight, and would easily shoot the P-40s out of the sky. The P-40s were credited with 286 Japanese aircraft shot down in about six months. There is still some controversy to this day in verifying that many “kills.”

The first pursuit squadron of the “Flying Tigers” was marked with an apple containing Adam and Eve in place of the flying tiger. This insignia was commemorated the “First Pursuit” in history. The “Flying Tigers” in all had about 25 aces, such as the famous Tex Hill. The AVG lasted until 1942, when it was disbanded. P-40s served all around the Pacific Theater of War – fulfilling great purposes.

The war in Europe raged on, with the Allies making good use of the P-40. Britain had ordered many P-40s, which served as ground support aircraft and bomber escorts. As in China, the P-40s had a hard time against German fighters such as the Me-109, Bf-109, and the Fw-190. But in the hands of good pilots, the P-40 could out-perform the adversaries. The British's 112<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the RAF adopted the shark's mouth of the "Flying Tigers" in North Africa. Most of the P-40s had an olive drab paint job, but the British gave it a desert camouflage paint job due to the war in Africa.



**The British Version of the P-40**

Britain made a deal with Curtiss to put in a Rolls Royce Merlin engine to replace the original Allison V-12 in their P-40s. The deal went through, which gave the later versions of the P-40 more speed and a better climbing rate. The Merlin engine allowed the P-40 to handle well at higher altitudes than they could with the Allison engine.

The P-40 was America's best fighter for two straight years at the beginning of WWII. It also had the highest "kill-to-death" ratio during that time. The P-40 was the backbone of America's fighter strength, and a great predecessor for later fighter aircraft.

The last P-40 to roll off the assembly line was on November 30, 1944. The P-40 in its 14 different models was used by over 28 nations across the world in WWII. Its last days of service were during VJ-Day (Victory in Japan). At the end of WWII only one P-40 group remained. The last service by P-40s was in Brazil in 1958. Overall, P-40s were rugged, effective fighters.

**Curtiss P-40E Model H87-B2 Tomahawk Specifications**

**Wing Span:** 37' 31/2"    **Length:** 31' 2"    **Height:** 10' 7"

**Weights: Empty:** 6,350 lb./**Gross:** 8,280 lb./**T/O:** 9,200 lb.

**Max. Speed:** 366 mph /**Ceiling:** 29,000' / **Range:** 350 mi.

**Packard Merlin V-1650-39 Engine:** 1,150 hp; 12 cyl. V

**Armament:** Six .50 caliber machine guns; 500 lb. bombs

**Note:** Thanks to Eric Fischler, one of our CAF-SoCAWing Cadets, for this informative article. Good job, Eric !

**"Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show**

Mark your calendars for our "Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show – August 20 & 21, 2011.



**Clay Lacy flying the Grumman F7F Tigercat at the 2010 "Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show**

Jon Whited and Norm Hall, our friends from EAA, were at our Wing Staff Meeting on January 8, 2011 and asked that we get the following message to our CAF-SoCAWing members and friends.

There will be a meeting of the Camarillo Wings Association on February 12, 2011 at noon in the EAA Hangar. This meeting will immediately follow our Wing Staff Meeting held in our "O Club." The main reason for the meeting will be a vote for CWA Board Members. Candidates for the CWA Board are:

- Officers: President – Jon Whited
- Vice President – Jason Somes
- Treasurer – Keith Moore
- Secretary – Steve Steegmiller
- At Large - Art Phillips
- Marja Reed
- Stephen Svanda
- Norm Hall
- Bill Thomas

In addition to the voting, we will also address the following:

What we have learned from last year's air show; a reiteration of our thanks to our faithful supporters; what we intend to improve upon in the future; and a quick run-down on the planning for the 2011 "Wings Over Camarillo" Air Show.

We offer this opportunity to elect the Board of Directors to the members of the Camarillo Wings Association (CWA). **If you have not yet joined CWA, for only \$20 you can become a member and vote for the Board. Membership applications will be available at the meeting.**

Please come, join and vote. We will offer hamburgers and hot dogs while they last, and the program and voting will take place when we are all together at noon on Feb. 12.

## In Memoriam – Jasper Solomon



**Jasper Stewart Solomon  
1920 - 2011**

Jasper Stewart “Sol” Solomon, 90, a 54-year resident of Thousand Oaks, California died peacefully at his home on January 3, 2011.

He was born on April 12, 1920 near Lela, Texas to West Texas pioneers, John Franklin Solomon and Mabel Claire Newton. His Texas family called him “JS” but once he moved to California, everyone knew him as “Sol”. He graduated from high school in Estelline, Texas and attended McMurry College in Abilene, Texas.

He learned to fly at 18 and at the start of WW II he was a flying instructor for the Air Corps, first at Hicks Field near Fort Worth and then at Brady, Texas. In 1942, he was hired by Trans World Airline in Kansas City. During the next 38 years with TWA he accumulated over 25,000 hours flying the Douglas DC-3 and DC-4, Martin 404, the Lockheed “Connie”, the Convair 880, Boeing 707, and the Boeing 747.

While flying with TWA, he had many exciting experiences, but several he was most proud of and always made an interesting and captivating story. As an investigator of the 1956 TWA/United Airlines mid-air collision over the Grand Canyon, he testified to a Congressional Committee about the findings.

Also, he assisted in establishing Walt Disney’s flying operation, flew a 60-day around-the-world TWA charter, was a pilot in the Motion Picture Pilots Association (his airplanes starred in several movies), and attended the fourth wedding of Pancho Barnes at the Happy Bottom Riding Club near Lancaster, CA.

In 1980, he retired as one of TWA’s most senior international 747 pilots and spent the next 30 years as a lively and busy retiree.

A short time after starting his airline career, he met Benora Angeline Hoff, an American Airlines hostess, and they were married on January 15, 1944. From this union came three children: Thomas (Willetta) Solomon of Scottsdale, Arizona; John Solomon of Denver, Colorado; and, Peggy (Perry) Lamy.

Following in the footsteps of their parents, his children were connected to aviation and flying; Tom and John had airline careers while Peggy served in the Air Force. He loved four grandsons: Douglas Solomon, Scott Solomon, Alex Lamy, and Nicholas Lamy; and, a great grand daughter, Eleanor Christine Lamy-Bearskin. He was preceded in death by his parents; his beloved wife; a sister, Cecile LaVerne Fields and her husband, John Wallace Fields, of Shamrock, Texas; and, a grand daughter, Christine Danielle Lamy.

Sol and Bonnie spent many summers in Crosslake, Minnesota near Bonnie’s childhood home and family. He loved the lakes, boating, fishing, golfing, and attending auctions with his wife. During the winter months in Thousand Oaks, he spent days tinkering and visiting with other flyers, military veterans, and airplane enthusiasts at Santa Paula airport where he owned a hangar.

Always busy with some project, he would never fret about time, and took solace in saying “It will be there tomorrow.” Sol watched TV football, car races, western movies, and the stock market report. He was a fan of the Dallas Cowboys, Ronald Reagan, and John Wayne. He and Bonnie were members of and attended Ascension Lutheran Church.

In his later years, he frequented several coffee groups every day. Sol was a master story teller and had numerous friends. He had countless stories about famous and interesting people who flew with him and about exotic locations and experiences from all over the world. No one ever got tired of hearing the tales and anecdotes, even the same story again. Throughout his life, Sol’s recollect and memory were impeccable.

He was a member of many organizations but his favorites were the SoCal Wing of the Commemorative Air Force; the Conejo Valley Model A Ford Club; Santa Paula Airport Association; and the California Republican Party.

A memorial service was held at noon on Monday, January 10, 2011 at Ascension Lutheran Church, 1600 East Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks.

Arrangements were by Pierce Brothers Valley Oaks Memorial Park, Westlake Village, CA. You may visit [www.pierce-brothers.com](http://www.pierce-brothers.com) to sign the online guest register.

The members of the CAF – Southern California Wing send their condolences to Sol’s family. He was an active member of our organization, and will be sorely missed by all his friends in the Wing. May he rest in peace.

## Wing Photo Page



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Eric Fischler, a CAF Cadet, with his Outstanding Performance plaque from his participation in Joe Peppito's class on basic aircraft mechanics.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Gus (dad) and Austin Comegys on their recent visit. Gus is a new member, and made a sizable donation to our Wing while they were here. They will be "adopting" a plane to work on soon.**



© Photo by Dan Newcomb

**One of the engine nacelles recently attached by the PBJ Restoration team. They are also working on installing the engine mounts. The team is looking into having a specialty company work on installing the wiring. Much progress has been made. Come out and see for yourself! Think of becoming a PBJ Donor.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Martin Petersen presents a very generous donation to our Wing Leader, Steve Barber, at our January Staff Meeting. Martin, who is four, is accompanied by his dad, Wing member Esper Petersen. Many thanks to you both for your continued support of our Wing!**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**Las Colinas 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, with their teacher, Thad Robbins (center) on their recent visit to our Aviation Museum as part of our Education Outreach program, funded by a Community Service Grant.**



© Photo by Dave Flood

**The Supermarine Spitfire Mk XIV firing up her engine on a recent workday. The restoration team is checking out her hydraulics and other systems. She will be the highlight of our Warbird Appreciation Day/Battle of Britain Commemoration on March 5, 2011.**

# The Battle of Britain

July – October, 1940



© The Battle of Britain, by Robert Taylor

Plus

**Warbird Appreciation Day: Supermarine Spitfire Mk XIV**  
**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Spitfire's First Flight – March 5, 1936**

## Commemorative Air Force Southern California Wing

455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport, Camarillo, CA 93010

Saturday, March 5, 2011

11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Featuring:**

\*\*\* Clyde East – Veteran Spitfire & Mustang Pilot \*\*\*



\*\*\* Presentation of the Famous Battle of Britain \*\*\*

\*\*\* Spitfire Fly-Bys and Spitfire History Presentation \*\*\*

\*\*\* Guided Tours of Our Aviation Museum \*\*\*

\*\*\* Thrilling Rides Available in our P-51 and SNJ/AT6 \*\*\*

**Donations Accepted – Remember To Bring Your Family, Friends & Camera !**