

Flight Line

The Official Publication of the CAF

Southern California Wing

455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

(805) 482-0064



COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

October, 2015

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© Photo by Gene O'Neal

The "Force" behind our developing new
campus—Col. Steve Barber



Tech. Sgt. Ben Kuroki

Aerial Gunner/Radioman, WWII

European Theater—B-24 Liberators – 30 Missions

Pacific Theater—B-29 Superfortresses – 28 Missions

May 16, 1917 – September 1, 2015

See pages 4, 5, and 6 for details of Ben's career.

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, October 17, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. at the
CAF Museum Hangar, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo Airport**

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMBAT AIRCRAFT.

October 2015

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 Museum Closed	6 Work Day	7	8 Work Day	9	10 Work Day
11	12 Museum Closed Columbus Day	13 Work Day	14	15 Work Day	16 Docent Meeting 3:30	17 Wing Staff Meeting 9:30 Work Day
18	19 Museum Closed	20 Work Day	21	22 Work Day	23	24 Work Day
25	26 Museum Closed	27 Work Day	28	29 Work Day	30	31 Work Day Halloween

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* Denotes Staff Position

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Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month

Southern California Wing
455 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010-9501

Wing Staff Candidates



© Photo by Casey de Bree
Col. Sarah de Bree, candidate for Adjutant

Sarah de Bree: Candidate for Adjutant

Sarah has recently returned to the So. Cal. Wing and has resumed her duties as Museum Director. She has volunteered to run as **Adjutant** on the Wing Staff.

She has a solid background in leadership roles and organizational support, as she was an Engineering Program Manager for a major aerospace company for over 30 years.

Sarah is an 'original' Californian; was educated in California schools with masters degrees in business and psychology. Along with her husband Casey, she moved to Camarillo in 2000 and joined the Wing in 2006.



Col. Jason Somes, candidate for Operations Officer

Jason Somes: Candidate for Operations Officer

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

Jason has been one of our fighter pilots, currently flying the Zero, the Hellcat, the Bearcat, the Cornell and the Texan. He has also been very instrumental in our procuring many spots for our planes in air shows throughout the western states, and in arranging for our fighters to fly on its western tour with the CAF's B-29 "FIFI" on two occasions - allowing us to realize sizable income from our Warbird Ride Program - including our P-51 Mustang and SNJ-5 Texan.

In his "spare time" he works as a jet pilot/mechanic with corporate jets.



Col. Paul Willett, candidate for Finance Officer

Paul has been a CAF and SoCal wing member since 2008. He worked as a Controller for 27 years for Urbatec, an Encino property management & real estate development company.

He earned a BS in Physics from UC Irvine in 1980, an MBA from Pepperdine in 2007, and his private pilot's (ASEL) license in 2009.

Paul has lived in West Hills for 23 years. He's married, with three kids - who currently live in Germany (US Air Force), Sacramento (UC Davis), and Shanghai (teaching English).

His blog (i.e., silly scribblings & photographs) can be found at: <http://www.PaulJWillett.com>.

The 2015 Wing Staff Election will be held on Saturday, November 28, 2015. The ballot "box" (helmet) will be in a conspicuous place in the "O Club."

The ballot will be printed on the last page of the November issue of "Flight Line." Everything you need to know is printed on the ballot. "When everything else fails, read the directions."

We will be voting for three positions on the Wing Staff: Wing Adjutant, Wing Operations Officer, and Wing Finance Officer. Many thanks to the Nominating Committee: Janet Rizzoli, Casey de Bree, & Robert Blair.

Ben Kuroki Obituary

May 16, 1917 – September 1, 2015



© Army Air Corps/Courtesy of Ben Kuroki via AP
From the L. A. Times

Ben Kuroki, the celebrated [World War II](#) hero who was the only Japanese-American to fly over Japan during the war, has died at his home in Camarillo, California, the Associated Press and Los Angeles Times report. He was 98.

Raised on a farm in Hershey, Nebraska by his Japanese immigrant parents, Kuroki and his brother, Fred, quickly volunteered for service after the bombings in Pearl Harbor. Both brothers were rejected by their first recruiter, per the American military policy that discriminated heavily against the children of Japanese immigrants. But the brothers persisted because, as Kuroki described his experience in an interview for the The Omaha World-Herald during the conflict, "I have the face of a Japanese but my heart is American."

According to the Associated Press, the brothers then drove 150 miles to the next recruiter, who allowed them to sign up for service. Kuroki then set his sights on another challenge: becoming an airman despite an Air Forces' ban that prohibited soldiers of Japanese ancestry from flying.

Kuroki earned his chance when, while serving as a clerk at an Air Force base in England, he volunteered from training as a desperately-needed aerial gunner. From there, he quickly earned a stellar service record, flying 58 bomber missions over Europe, North Africa, and Japan during the war. His assignments to the Pacific, originally rejected because of his ancestry, were approved by Secretary of War Harry Stimson.

After the war, Kuroki received a journalism degree from the University of Nebraska in 1950 and worked as a [journalist](#) until his 1984 retirement as the news editor of the Ventura Star-Free Press.

In 2005, Kuroki's combat efforts and work overcoming prejudice earned him the U.S. [Army](#) Distinguished Service Medal, one of the nation's highest military honors. "I had to fight like hell for the right to fight for my own country," Kuroki said at the award ceremony in Lincoln, Nebraska. "And I now feel vindication."

According to the New York Times, he is survived by his wife, Shige; his daughters Julie Kuroki, Kristyn Kuroki and Kerry Williams; a sister, Rosemary Ura; four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

© Photos below by Dave Flood



Ben Kuroki with Dave Flood at CAF – So Cal Wing during B-29 "FIFI's" visit in March, 2013. Ben was a gunner on B-29 "Sad Saki" which flew raids on Japan from Tinian in WWII.



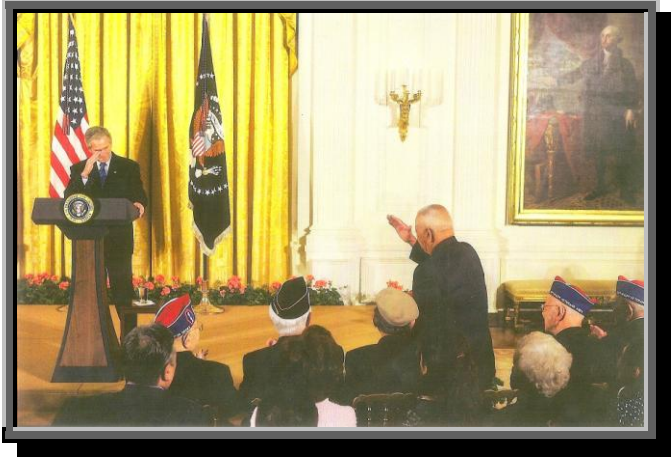
Ben with Joe Catramboni, a previous CAF member, who flew as a gunner on B-29s in the Korean War.



Ben Kuroki with Russ Drosendahl, a long-time CAF member, who was a B-24 flight instructor in WWII. Ben flew as a gunner in B-24s in No. Africa and was in the famous raid on the Nazi oil fields in Ploesti, Romania.

Ben Kuroki, Patriotic American

by Dave Flood



© White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian
President George W. Bush salutes Tech Sgt. Ben Kuroki, of the 93rd Bomb Group, during his remarks Thursday, May 1, 2008, at the Celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the East Room of the White House. Ben and his wife live in Camarillo.

Ben Kuroki, highly-decorated veteran of WWII, visited our Wing on August 15, 2008 (the 63rd anniversary of VJ-Day). Ben, in talking with me before his visit, asked me not to have any “fanfare.” So we made it a low-key visit, where the two of us went out between our hangars and sat in the shade and talked about Ben’s latest wonderful experiences in Washington, D.C.

On May 1, 2008, Ben was honored at the White House, along with five other American veterans of Japanese descent. The others were members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, who had served in eight major campaigns with distinction during WWII. Ben served as a gunner on B-24s in Europe (30 missions – including Ploesti) and on B-29s in the Pacific (28 missions).

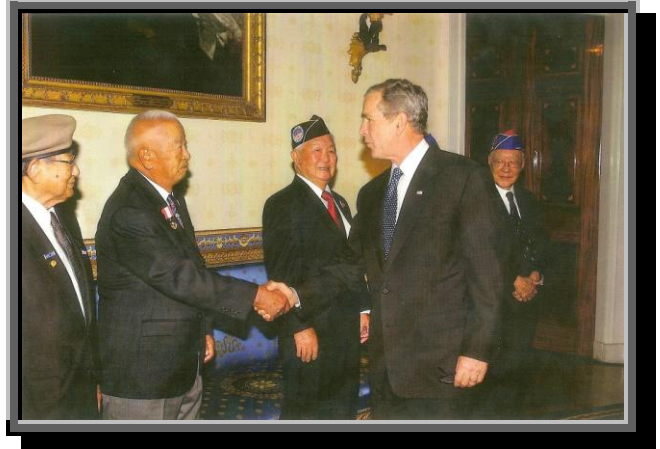
After President Bush had lauded those members of the 442nd, he turned to Ben Kuroki with these words:

“I do want to point out one soul who’s joined us – and Ben is not going to be happy about it – Ben Kuroki. He probably doesn’t want to be called out, but I’m going to do it anyway, Ben. I’ve got the podium – and you don’t!”

“Two days after Pearl Harbor, Ben volunteered to join the Army, where there is no doubt he met prejudice at nearly every turn. Still, he became one of the few “Nisei” admitted to the Army Air Corps. He flew 58 missions over Europe and Japan, and he earned three Distinguished Flying Crosses. When he came back home, he turned to another mission: working to overcome the intolerance he had experienced during his early days in the Army Air Corps. Ben edited newspapers. He spoke to audiences around the country. He became a strong advocate of racial equality. He knew something – and he knew the subject well, unfortunately. Sixty years after the Japanese surrender, Ben received the U.S. Army Distinguished Service Medal. And at the ceremony, here’s what he said:

“I had to fight like hell to fight for my country – and now I feel completely vindicated.”

“We are glad you feel vindicated, but I am proud to tell you America is a better place because of you, Ben. Thank you for coming.”



© White House Photo by Joyce N. Boghosian
President Bush shaking Ben’s hand after the celebration in the White House.

Ben and his wife of 63 years, Shige, along with their daughter Julie Cooney and granddaughter Lexie, were also guests of the Smithsonian Museum of History, where Ben’s memorabilia from WWII will be housed permanently.

They were taken to the Smithsonian’s new Museum of Flight in Virginia, where their Smithsonian guide took photos of them in front of the famous Boeing B-29 Super-Fortress *Enola Gay*. This, of course, was the plane that dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Ben was in the crew of a B-29 (*Sad Saki* – named after Ben) that occupied the same hard-stand as the *Enola Gay* at the air base on Tinian, from which many of the raids on Japan originated in the late stages of WWII. This was the first time since 1945 that Ben had seen the *Enola Gay*.



Photo courtesy of Ben Kuroki/ Smithsonian Museum of Flight

Julie Cooney, Lexie Cooney, Shige and Ben Kuroki – at the Smithsonian’s new Museum of Flight in VA, where they observed the B-29 *Enola Gay*.

Ben Kuroki in Photos



T. Sgt. Ben Kuroki in his flight suit during his stint as Gunner/radioman on a B-29 named "Sad Saki" (named after Ben) that had as its partner on its hard stand on Tinian the legendary B-29 "Enola Gay."



A portrait of the famous B-24 Liberator raid on the Romanian oil producing facilities at Ploesti. Ben flew on one of the Ploesti raids – one of his 28 missions against Nazi installations during WWII in B-24 bombers. An early crash in his B-24 put Ben and his fellow crew members in a Spanish jail for 3 months.



This is Ben's B-29 on Tinian – "Sad Saki," named for Ben by his fellow crew members. He had to fight for the right to fly in B-29s which were bombing Japan in the final months of WWII. He completed 30 missions in "Sad Saki," the only Japanese-American who served against the Japanese in the Pacific Theater. He has always said that his 59th mission was to fight against prejudice in the armed forces and elsewhere in the nation.



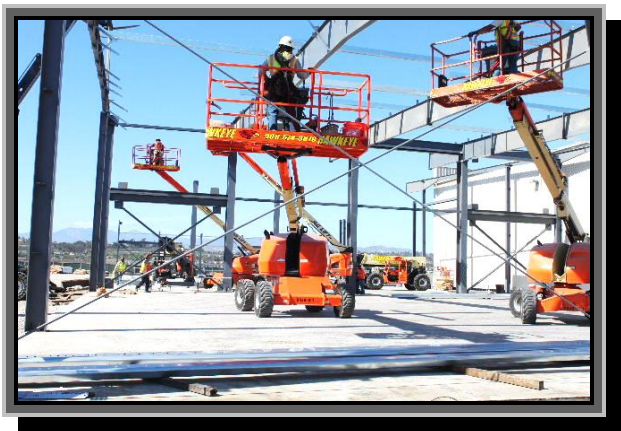
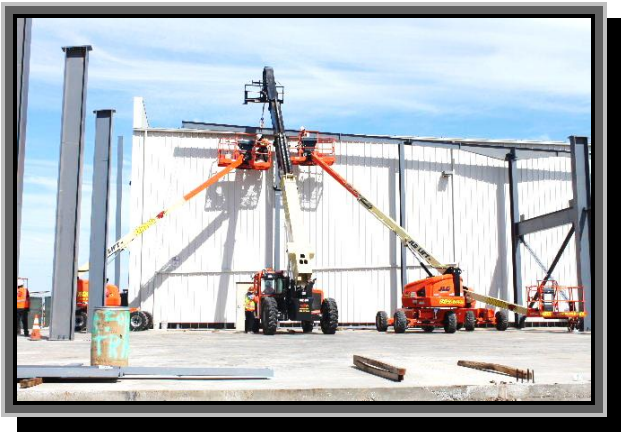
Ben Kuroki and his lovely wife Shige, during the celebration of the documentary film on PBS entitled "The Most Honorable Son: Ben Kuroki."



Ben in a recent photo. He died at the age of 98 on September 1, 2015. We were honored to have him join us and celebrate the visit of CAF's B-29 "FIFI" during her visit in 2013. Rest in Peace, Ben.

Photo Page I: We're Being Framed!

© All photos by Ron Fleishman



John Leslie Munro, Last of the World War II 'Dambuster' Pilots, Dies at 96

by [DAN BILEFSKY](#) AUG. 4, 2015, *The New York Times*



John Leslie Munro was in the daring "Dambusters" mission that struck at Germany's industrial heartland.
© New Zealand Bomber Command Association

On the night of May 16, 1943, a squadron of Lancaster bombers set out from [Britain](#) to conduct strikes against heavily fortified dams in the Ruhr Valley of [Germany](#), using bombs that bounced on the water before exploding. Of the 133 crew members who started the mission, only 77 returned.

The last surviving pilot of those who came back was [John Leslie Munro](#), who died Tuesday, August 4, 2015 at the age of 96 in Auckland, [New Zealand](#).

His death, announced by the New Zealand Bomber Command Association on [its Facebook page](#), elicited tributes from around the world, including in Britain and in his native New Zealand, for his role in the daring "[Dambusters](#)" mission that struck at the industrial heartland of the Nazi war effort and lifted Allied morale.

Mr. Munro, who was known as Les, was part of the Royal Air Force's 617 squadron, which was assigned to destroy three dams with specially-designed bombs shaped like 55-gallon drums, that had to be dropped spinning from about 60 feet.

The bombs were made to bounce across the water, allowing them to avoid obstacles like antitorpedo nets, and then sink to the base of the dam walls before exploding, magnifying their effect.

During the mission, the Lancaster bomber piloted by Mr. Munro was hit by flak. The plane's communications abilities were destroyed, and he was unable to attack the dams. But he managed to fly to safety despite a large hole in the aircraft's body.

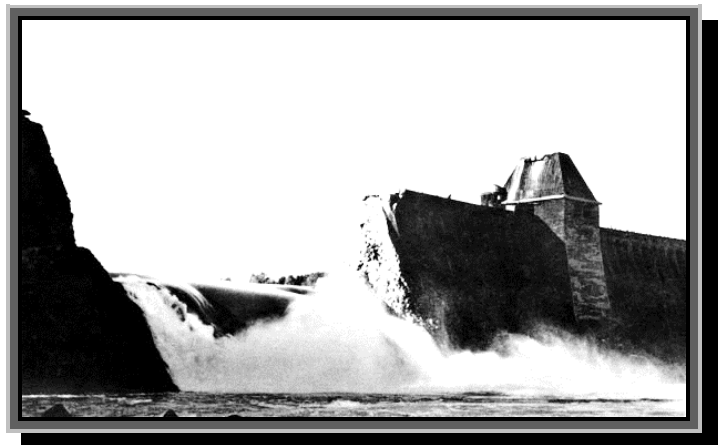


Mr. Munro, front center, with his crew in front of the bomber they flew on the Dambusters raid.
© Rex Features, via Associated Press

Mr. Munro was "very modest about what he did during the war," the BBC quoted Dave Homewood of the New Zealand Bomber Command Association as saying. "I think he was pretty proud to have been part of the Dambusters, although he was disappointed he never got to drop his weapon."

According to accounts of those who survived the mission, called Operation Chastise, the pilots and crew members had only a few weeks to prepare, and they learned of their targets just hours before the raid. The dams in the Ruhr Valley supplied [hydroelectric](#) power and water for steel making, and were therefore important to Hitler's war machine.

The bombs caused devastating flooding in the Ruhr Valley, and historians estimate that more than 1,300 people on the ground, including prisoners of war, were killed.



One of the dams hit in May 1943 – the Mohne. The mission caused devastating flooding, and historians estimate that more than 1,300 people on the ground, including prisoners of war, were killed.

© Culture Club, via Getty Images

The bombers were hailed as heroes, and the mission was immortalized in [“The Dam Busters,”](#) a 1955 film starring Michael Redgrave and Richard Todd that told the story of a determined aeronautical engineer who persuaded initially skeptical R.A.F. leaders to embrace his innovative “bouncing bombs” theory to destroy the dams.

In an interview with the BBC on the 70th anniversary of the Dambusters mission, Mr. Munro said he had not been afraid. “I approached most operations with a thought: ‘If I’m going to cop it, so be it,’ ” he said.



John Leslie Munro, 96, died on Monday in New Zealand.

© Alan Gibson/New Zealand Herald, via Associated Press

The son of a Glasgow-born father who emigrated to New Zealand, Mr. Munro was born there on April 5, 1919, in Gisborne. He enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1941.

After returning from the mission, Mr. Munro became a squadron leader. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1943.

After the war, he returned to New Zealand, where he farmed and became involved in local politics. He eventually became mayor of a local council in Waitomo, on the North Island of New Zealand.

His wife, the former Betty Hill, and a son, John, died before him. Mr. Munro is survived by two other sons, Graeme and Gregory; his daughters, Gail Robin Munro and Elizabeth Anne Fielder-Munro; 11 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Munro was still flying planes well into his 90s.



Aviation Art – “Dam Busters – Low Pass Over the Mohne Dam,” © by Anthony Saunders

Under fire from the defending garrison, Squadron Leader Guy Gibson powers his Lancaster AJ-G at full throttle over the Möhne Dam to confirm the extent of the successful breach during Operation Chastise on the night of 16/17 May 1943. The bright moonlight reveals the huge rupture in the dam’s massive wall as the swirling avalanche of water surges into the Ruhr valley below.



“Bomb Away! The Third Assault,” © by Robert Taylor.

On the night of 16th - 17th May 1943 nineteen specially modified Lancasters of No.617 Squadron departed from RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire on one of the most secret and daring bombing operations undertaken during World War Two.

The ultra-secret operation to destroy the huge hydro-electric dams that powered a significant part of Germany’s industrial war machine in the Ruhr valley, code-named Operation Chastise, had been planned in stealth for months. Using a revolutionary 10-ton ‘bouncing bomb’ designed by the brilliant designer Barnes-Wallis, a special squadron comprised of the most talented crews that RAF Bomber Command could muster would be formed to attack primarily the Möhne, Eder and Sorpe dams.

Using highly modified Lancaster bombers to carry the secret bomb, Operation Chastise was to become one of the most dangerous precision bombing raids ever undertaken.

Note the probe lights that measured the exact altitude. The bomb was the shape of a 55-gal. drum, but larger.

474th Fighter Group August 25, 1944 – “Black Friday”

By Gary Koch

Synopsis of the Battle

On the 25th of August 1944, the Ninth Air Force had something special planned. The Allies had continued to gain a larger toehold in Northern France since landing in Normandy on D-Day. However, progress was being delayed due to the Luftwaffe which still had many bases in France. It was to be on this Friday that the 9th Air Force wanted to deal the Germans a blow that would hasten their retreat back to the Fatherland. It was ordered that all available 9th Air Force assets be dedicated that day to attacking any Luftwaffe sanctuary remaining on French soil.

Officially known as Group Mission 135, the 474th Fighter Group was assigned to attack three Nazi airfields in the area of Laon, France. They took off at midday from their airfield, called A-11, near the hamlet of Neuilly-la-Forêt. It was a dusty little 5,000 foot strip carved from an apple orchard only a few kilometers south of Omaha Beach. The entire formation of 23 P-38Js consisted of 12 ships from the 428th Fighter Squadron and 11 ships from the 429th Fighter Squadron, each plane carrying two 500-pound bombs. Their flight plan was to take them to the city of Evreux as a waypoint then turning northeast towards Laon. But as with many missions of that time, this one was "Not as Briefed" as the saying went.

Near Beauvais, France, the 474th FG formation was warned by ground controllers that enemy aircraft were in the area and to be on the alert. It wasn't long after that Lt. George Guyon, a 428th FS pilot, sighted a large formation of German fighters at their 9 o'clock position headed in the opposite direction at roughly the same altitude.

The formation of German fighters turned out to be 30-plus Bf109G-14s of III./JG76 being escorted by 12 Fw190A-8s of I./JG26. The Bf109s were being led by Hauptman Egon Albrecht while the Fw190 escorts were led by Leutnant Georg Kiefner. They were on a free fighter sweep (called a "*freijagd*" in German) headed towards the Normandy area to hunt for Allied fighters.

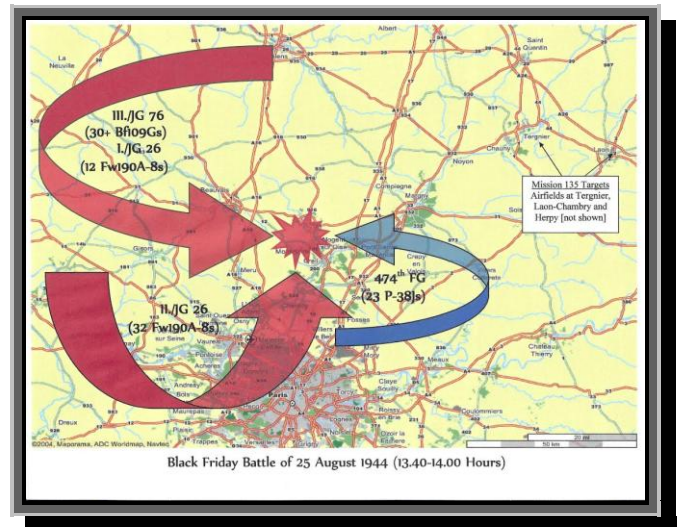
Both formations sighted each other simultaneously. The Germans dropped their external fuel tanks, the P-38s jettisoned their bombs, and both turned into each other in a head-on pass at 11,000 feet directly over Cambronne-les-Clermont. Several ships from both sides went down in that initial pass before the fight broke up into many individual dogfights.

The fight had gone on for only a few minutes when a formation of 32 Fw190A-8s of II./JG26 happened upon the scene and engaged the furball in progress. This did not bode well for the 474th as this group included several crack German aces and was led by well-known Luftwaffe ace, Hauptman Emil "Bully" Lang. Planes from both sides continued going down in flames with so many

parachutes in the air that one 428th FS pilot remarked that "it looked like a 101st Airborne invasion".

As with most dogfights, the fight was pretty well over not long after it had begun. The 474th group leader, Captain Ernie Nuckols, was across the Seine River calling for any P-38s still flying to rejoin on him and head for home. In the end, eleven of the twenty-three P-38s had been lost (eight 428th ships and three 429th ships). A miracle - considering they faced better than 3 to 1 odds against some of the best German pilots in theater at the time. The 474th did not come away empty handed however. They managed to shoot down at least twenty-one Bf109s and one Fw190, including the Bf109 group leader Hauptman Egon Albrecht. This count was confirmed by intelligence intercepts of Luftwaffe communications the following day that also showed another five Bf109s had been badly shot up with two more crash landing back at their home base of Athis, France.

Of the eleven 474th FG losses that day, four pilots (Capt. Charles Holcomb, Lt. Joseph Stone, Lt. Jerry Zierlein, and Lt. Ray Packard) were killed, five would escape and evade capture, and two were taken as prisoners of war. This was one of the largest dogfights the 474th Fighter Group was involved in during the entire war and, because of the losses suffered, would forever be known as "Black Friday".



A map showing the conflict on “Black Friday” – August 25, 1944 over Cambronne-les-Clermont, France – between 23 P-38s of the 474th F.G. and 74 German Bf109s and Fw190s.



A Lockheed P-38 Lightning of the 428th Fighter Squadron, 474th Fighter Group

Note: thanks to Col. Avery Willis for this article.

Photo Page II: We've Been Framed

© All photos by Casey de Bree



Pacific Theater Game Changers: WWII

By Barrett Tillman

Aug 25, 2015, Flight Journal

In the world's largest theater of war, three aircraft proved decisive: a Navy dive bomber, a Navy fighter, and an Air Force bomber.



CAF – Dixie Wing's Douglas SBD Dauntless

The Douglas SBD Dauntless won essential victories in the year after Pearl Harbor: Coral Sea, Midway, and the Guadalcanal battles. Thereafter, Japan never regained the strategic initiative.



© Photo by Frank Mormillo

CAF-So Cal Wing's F6F-5 Hellcat "Minsi III" in colors of top Navy ace CDR David McCampbell

Grumman's F6F Hellcat defeated Japanese airpower. Hellcats represented the tip of the spear in America's Central Pacific Offensive between 1943 and 1945, destroying nearly as many Japanese aircraft as all Army fighters in the Pacific and China-Burma-India Theaters combined.

Then there was Boeing's B-29 Superfortress. The B-29 was unlike anything else flying, a half-generation leap from the B-17 and its contemporaries. Pressurized for 30,000-foot cruising at high speed with a large bomb load and a 1,500-mile mission radius, it was in many ways the world's most advanced aircraft. The AAF ordered 14 evaluation samples and 250 production aircraft in May 1941, long before the first flight.

But there were problems. Lots of them.

Leading the long list of technical gremlins was the Wright R3350. Though delivering 2,200 hp, the twin-bank Duplex Cyclone suffered serious heating problems that were only cured late in the program. If the magnesium case caught fire, the crew had a 13% chance of saving the airplane.

The prototype flew in September 1942, but five months later Boeing's chief test pilot Eddie Allen and 10 others died trying to land with a fire. Nonetheless, the Army Air Force persisted.

Eventually nearly 4,000 Superforts were built, a massive effort expanding well beyond Boeing's home in Seattle. Factories in three other states contributed to the effort while the AAF struggled to deal with a myriad of problems. "The Battle of Kansas" was fought in early 1944 when the Wichita plant overcame most of the 29's problems.

Meanwhile, Gen. Hap Arnold insisted on deploying the new bomber prematurely. The first B-29 wing went to India in early 1944, at the end of the war's longest supply line. Eventually Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay produced results, but logistics forced the CBI units to move to the Marianas Islands in early 1945. There, with XXI Bomber Command, the Superfort showed its worth.

From November 1944 to August 1945, B-29s destroyed most of Japan's urban-industrial areas. The awesome effectiveness of incendiary weapons was demonstrated one night in March 1945 when LeMay's crews razed one-sixth of Tokyo. The nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki finally convinced Emperor Hirohito to "bear the unbearable" and over-ride his war cabinet.

Superforts flew again in Korea from 1950-53, mainly limited to night missions owing to the MiG threat. With improved engines the B-29D became the B-50, which soldiered on as a tanker until the 1960s.

Seven decades later, the Superfortress remains high atop the pyramid of strategic game changers.



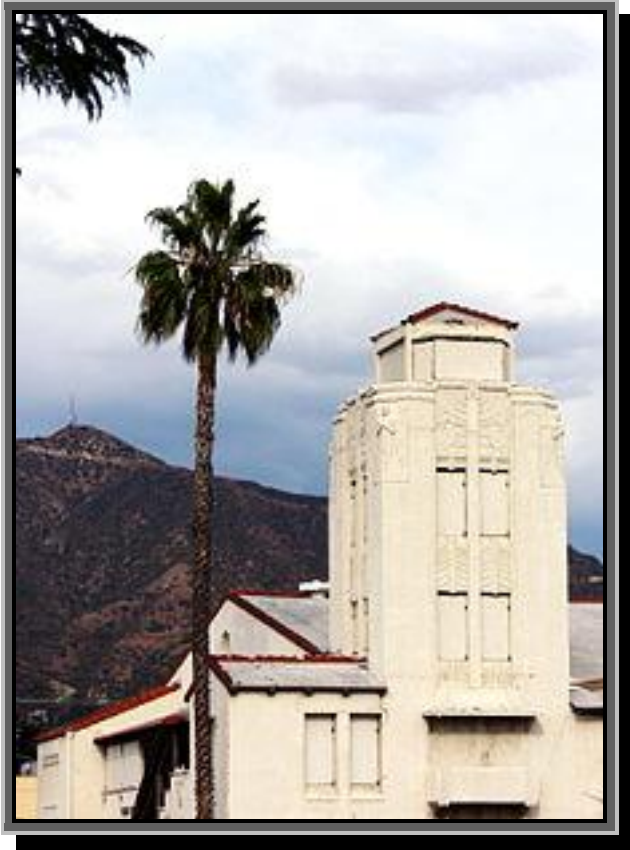
© Photo by Scott Slocum

CAF's Boeing B-29 Superfortress "FIFI"

Grand Central Airport (United States)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the former airport in Glendale, CA



Grand Central Air Terminal, October 2005

Grand Central Airport, [Glendale, California](#), also known as **Grand Central Air Terminal** (GCAT), was an important facility for the growing [Los Angeles](#) suburb of Glendale in the 1920s. It was also a key element in the development of United States aviation. The terminal, located at 1310 Air Way, was built in 1928 and still exists, owned since 1997 by [The Walt Disney Company](#). Three hangars also remain standing. The single concrete 3,800-foot (1,200 m) runway still exists, but it was dug up and converted into Grand Central Avenue.

Beginnings

The concept for the airport probably began with [Leslie Coombs Brand](#) (1859–1925), a major figure in the settlement and economic growth of the Glendale area. He had purchased land on the lower slopes of [Mount Verdugo](#) overlooking the city, and in 1904 built an imposing residence that became known as Brand Castle (which today houses the [Brand Library](#)). Just across the mostly dry [Los Angeles River](#) he could see the [Griffith Park Aerodrome's](#) grass field, built in 1912. Just three years later he decided to build his own grass airstrip below his mansion. He built his first hangar in 1916 and put together a fleet of planes, and held fly-in parties. The only requirement was that guests had to arrive in their own planes and bring passengers.



The Douglas DC-1 in front of the terminal.

From this modest beginning, plans were soon hatched by local [entrepreneurs](#) to establish an airport with commercial possibilities a little further down below his field. In 1923 the 112-acre (0.45 km²) Glendale Municipal Airport opened with a 100 ft (30 m). wide paved runway 3,800 ft (1,200 m). long, and came to be renamed "Grand Central Air Terminal" when it was purchased by other venture capitalists, who expanded it to 175 acres (0.71 km²).

On February 22, 1929 a terminal with a control tower had been built, and was opened to much fanfare. Designed by [Henry L. Gogerty](#), the intention was to construct an air terminal along the lines of a classic railroad terminal. It combined a style consisting of Spanish Colonial Revival with Zig-zag Moderne influences (Art Deco). GCAT became a major airport of entry to Los Angeles and provided the first paved runway west of the [Rocky Mountains](#). Within a year, the entire enterprise was sold to a group calling itself the Curtiss-Wright Flying Service, managed by Major Corliss C. Moseley, a co-founder of the future Western Airlines. It became the city's largest employer.



The former runway – now Grand Central Avenue.

Pioneering people at GCAT

Many famous aviation pioneers made their home and their mark at GCAT, as pilots, designers, mechanics, teachers, salesmen, and airplane/power-plant builders, often serving in some combination, including:

[Charles Lindbergh](#), who piloted the nation's first regularly scheduled coast to coast flight from Grand Central's runway as organizer of [Transcontinental Air Transport](#) which, after merging with Western Air Express, came to be Transcontinental and Western Air [TWA](#).

[Amelia Earhart](#) used the airport and bought her first plane there-

[Wiley Post](#) used the airport.

[Laura Ingalls](#) became the first woman to fly solo across the country when she landed at Glendale in 1930.

Albert Forsythe and [Charles Anderson](#) were the first [African American](#) pilots who made the transcontinental flight, completed at Glendale in 1933. Their achievement paved the way for the black [Tuskegee Airmen](#) who fought in World War II.

[Thomas Benton Slate](#) built an all-metal [dirigible](#) and hangar in 1925. It was 212 ft (65 m). long, and supposedly fireproof. He named it "City of Glendale", and it left the ground briefly in 1929, popped some rivets, and crashed.

[Howard Hughes](#) built his record-setting [H-1 Racer](#) in a small building at 911 Air Way in 1935, thus beginning the [Hughes Aircraft Company](#). The building burned to the ground in the late 1990s.

[Jack Northrop](#) started his 'Avion Aviation' company on the field in 1927, where he built multi-cellular metal structures.

[William Boeing](#) bought the business from Northrop, and moved it to Burbank's United Airport (now [Bob Hope Airport](#)).

[W. B. \(Bert\) Kinner](#) built Amelia Earhart's first plane, the Kinner Airster. He was the inventor of the compound folding wing.

Major [C. C. Moseley](#) established overhaul facilities there, and operated a flight academy whose pilot and mechanic graduates traveled to Europe as the all volunteer [Eagle Squadron](#) who flew against Hitler at the [Battle of Britain](#) before the country entered the war.

Actor [Robert Cummings](#) was an active pilot and flight instructor who used this airport.

In addition, airlines originating at GCA included [TWA](#), [Varney](#), [Western](#), and Pickwick Airlines (1928-30).

Movies and movie stars

The airport was the setting of several films, including [Howard Hughes'](#) [Hell's Angels](#) (1930), [Shirley Temple's](#) [Bright Eyes](#) (1934), [Lady Killer](#) (1933) starring [James Cagney](#), [Sky Giant](#) (1938) with [Joan Fontaine](#), [Hats Off](#) (1936) with [John Payne](#), the musical [Hollywood Hotel](#) (1937) with [Dick Powell](#), and the adventure film [Secret Service of the Air](#) (1939) starring [Ronald Reagan](#). Episodes of the 1941 movie serial, [Sky Raiders](#), show the terminal and other GCAT structures. The terminal was a favorite shooting location-

The airport was also known for stunt flying, and supplying planes for use in the movie industry by people like [Paul Mantz](#). Just about every airplane design flying during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s could be seen at GCAT for use in movies, or there to be serviced.

Wartime

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941, Grand Central Airport (like all other west coast airports) was immediately closed to private aviation. (The remaining airlines had already moved to Burbank.) The government moved in, heavily camouflaged the place, and converted it into an important defense base for Los Angeles. In 1942 the runway, which originally ended at Sonora Avenue, was extended North to Western Avenue, giving it a 5,000' length to accommodate large airplanes and future jet aircraft.

Began training United States Army Air Forces flying cadets under contract to Grand Central Flying School; Cal-Aero Training Corporation, and Polaris Flight Academy. Assigned to West Coast Training Center (later Western Flying Training Command) as a primary (level 1) pilot training airfield. Also instructed Royal Air Force flying cadets. Flying training was performed with [Fairchild PT-19s](#) as the primary trainer. Also had several [PT-17 Stearmans](#)

A [P-38](#) training base was built on the west side near the river which prepared pilots for the 319th Fighter Wing, to be ready for action in Europe. Hundreds of [P-51s](#), [C-47s](#), [B-25s](#) and others transitioned through Grand Central Airport in Glendale for refurbishment and reconditioning. Larger aircraft, like the [B-29](#), were sent to the Grand Central Service Center in Tucson, Arizona.

Postwar

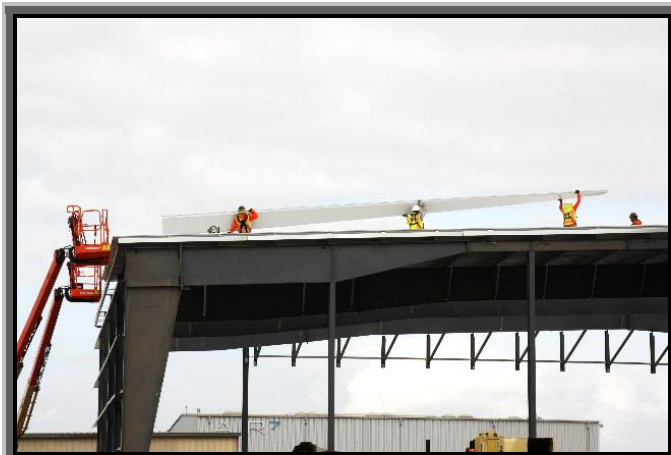


1400 Air Way in Glendale (just northwest of the old airport terminal), where several films of the [Disney Renaissance](#) were partially produced.

In 1947 the runway was cut back to 3,800' (southeast of Sonora Ave) due to pressure from local government. The airport was returned to private use, renamed Grand Central Airport, ceased to be profitable, and was closed in 1959 to make way for the development of the Grand Central Business Park, which today houses corporate offices of the [Walt Disney Company](#) as well as the headquarters for [Walt Disney Imagineering](#).

Photo Page III: Boxed In

© All photos by Gene O'Neal



SAFETY CORNER by Gene O'Neal, Safety Officer

We are all responsible for SAFETY. Here are some things that can cause UNSAFE conditions that could result in an injury to you or others:

- (a) RUSHING: It is a standard practice not to run in the hangar or on the ramp around the airplanes;
- (b) FRUSTRATION: Step back and take several deep breaths;
- (c) FATIGUE: Assess your own condition and take a break;
- (d) COMPLACENCY: Always be alert and aware of your surroundings; Situational awareness.

Use extra care on the ramp during this construction phase.
If you see something that is not safe, fix it or at least tell others about it.

REMEMBER ALL ACCIDENTS ARE PREVENTABLE.

Remembering Lou Lenart (1921-2015)



Capt. Lou Lenart, USMC – a pilot who joined the fledgling Israeli Air Force in 1948

As we enter the New Year, we remember those we've lost this past year, including one of our pilots - Lou Lenart, who passed away on July 20 at age 94.

A former World War II Marine Corps pilot who flew in the Pacific, Lou was one of the first volunteer pilots to arrive in Israel in May, 1948. Lou led the Israeli Air Force's first combat mission on May 29, 1948, striking a column of Egyptian trucks and tanks less than 30 miles from Tel Aviv. The mission stopped the Egyptians in their tracks and is considered a key turning point in Israel's War of Independence.

We will miss Lou - as we do our other pilots: Coleman Goldstein, who passed away in 2014, and George Lichter who passed away in 2013.

Nancy Spielberg

Producer, *Above and Beyond*

Documentary on the birth of the Israeli Air Force

LITTLE KNOWN TIDBIT OF NAVAL HISTORY...

The U.S.S. Constitution ("Old Ironsides"), as a combat vessel, carried **48,600 gallons of fresh water** for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea.

She carried no evaporators (i.e. fresh water distillers).

According to her ship's log....

"On July 27, 1798, the U.S.S. Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and **49,400 gallons of rum.**"

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and **38,300 gallons of rum.**

Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November...She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and **14,300 gallons of Portuguese wine.**

On 18 November, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war ships, and captured and scuttled twelve English merchant ships, **salvaging only the rum** aboard each.

By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted.

Nevertheless, although unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland... Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred **20,000 gallons of single malt Scotch** aboard by dawn.

Then she headed home.

The U. S. S. Constitution arrived in Boston Harbor on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, **no rum, no wine, no whisky, and 28,600 gallons of water.**

GO NAVY! (thanks to Avery Willis for this gem.)



The U.S.S. Constitution, still a fighting ship in the U.S. Navy, on a shakedown cruise outside Boston Harbor. Note the "Blues."

Photo Page IV: Ramp Redo

© All photos by Dan Newcomb



Note: This ramp reconstruction is a most welcome adjunct to our New Campus Buildout. It has been in the works for many years, and the airport has been anxious for it to be done. We can now sport a new ramp all the way out to the taxiway, and all the way across our campus from east to west. Oorah!

Blue Angels Pilot Speaks to Scouts

By Arash Afshari



© Photo by Arash Afshari

Capt. Katie Higgins, USMC, the first female member of the Navy's **Blue Angels** demonstration team, visited the CAF So Cal Wing just prior to the Point Mugu NAS Air Show for a presentation to an enthusiastic group of Girl Scouts. They were from Junior Troop 60696 and Daisy Troop 60156 in Camarillo. Capt. Higgins flies the C-130 Hercules Aircraft (nicknamed "Fat Albert") – which carries the Blue Angels' crew and supplies. She had been a girl scout.



© Photo by Avery Willis

The Blue Angels' C-130 Hercules "Fat Albert"

Captain Higgins's inspirational speech covered most aspects of her duties with the Blue Angels as well as fielding difficult questions, ranging from what got her interested in a Navy career, what it takes to be successful at such a demanding level of performance, how large is the C-130 aircraft she flies, and yes, of course, what is her favorite color! (the answer was not Navy blue!)

It's safe to say more than a few of the young ladies in the audience were inspired to follow in her footsteps. CAF SoCal salutes Captain Higgins, the Blue Angels and all of our service personnel for their outstanding service to our country and going above and beyond in inspiring the next generation of Americans – a goal we humbly share.

Thanks for visiting CAF SoCal, Capt. Higgins!

Blue Angels at Pt. Mugu NAS Air Show

© All photos by Avery Willis



Photo Page V: CAF-So Cal Aircraft at Pt. Mugu Air Show

© All photos by Dan Newcomb



Two of the former Blue Angels plane types – the Grumman F6F Hellcat and the Grumman F8F Bearcat. Our CAF – So Cal Wing planes, flown by Robert “Lips” Hertberg & Jason Somes, give a flyby honoring the Blue Angels of the past.



Jason Somes (l.), with Chris Rushing (r.), a member of our Wing and also with the 146th Air Wing of the CA Air National Guard – based at Point Mugu NAS.



Ken Gottschall, with a back-seat rider, ready to take off in a tribute to the ETO airmen of WWII in the CAF – So Cal Wing's Mustang .



Our North American P-51 Mustang “Man O’ War” and Grumman F6F-5 Hellocat “Minsi II” taking off for a memorial flyby – with Blue Angel FA-18 No. 7 in foreground.



CAF – So Cal Wing's Bearcat, Mustang and Zero on the flight line at the Pt. Mugu NAS Air Show. Steve McCartney was the Zero's pilot.



The CAF-So Cal Wing's Supermarine Spitfire Mk XIV, piloted by Steve Barber, Sr. and North American P-51D Mustang “Man O’ War,” with Ken Gottschall in the cockpit - paying tribute to the USAF and RAF airmen who flew so gallantly in WWII.

TA DA! Here's Our Wing's Aviation Museum Gift Shop Superb!



We have a number of wonderful tote bags, Priced at \$5.95 and \$7.95.



Sturdy mugs, with handles that fit your whole four fingers, are available at \$12.00 each. Aircraft depicted include: Bearcat, Cornell, Hellcat, Mitchell, Mustang, Spitfire, Texan, and Zero.



Colorful Tee Shirts, in all sizes, show our F6F-5, F8F-2, SNJ-5, P-51D, PT-19A, PBJ-1J, A6M3 Zero, Spitfire Mk XIV, and B-29 "FIFI." Reasonable prices, from \$24.00 - \$26.00.



Great caps, all adjustable to size, with the following logos: Spitfire, Zero, Bearcat, Mustang, Hellcat, Texan, American Huey Helicopter, and CAF – So Cal Wing. All \$20.00 each.



In addition to all the above items, all attuned to our CAF-So Cal Wing aircraft – we have some metal pin-up signs (\$16, \$18, and \$20), along with a great display of night lights (\$16.00). For your shopping pleasure, and for gifts for all the family, including the grandchildren, we have many airplane models in addition to all the goodies we show on this page. Come on in and bring this page with you to stock up for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, graduations, etc. We have what you've always been looking for! And remember – members get a discount!