

# Flight Line

**The Official Publication of the CAF**

Southern California Wing

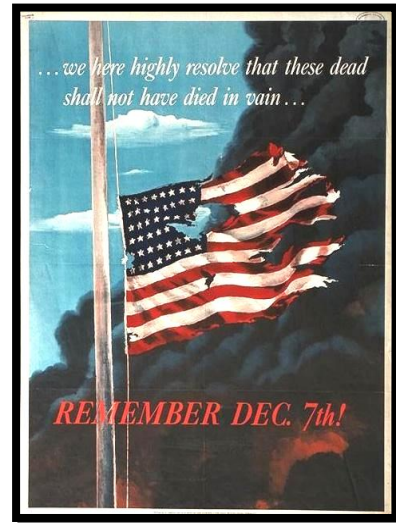
455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

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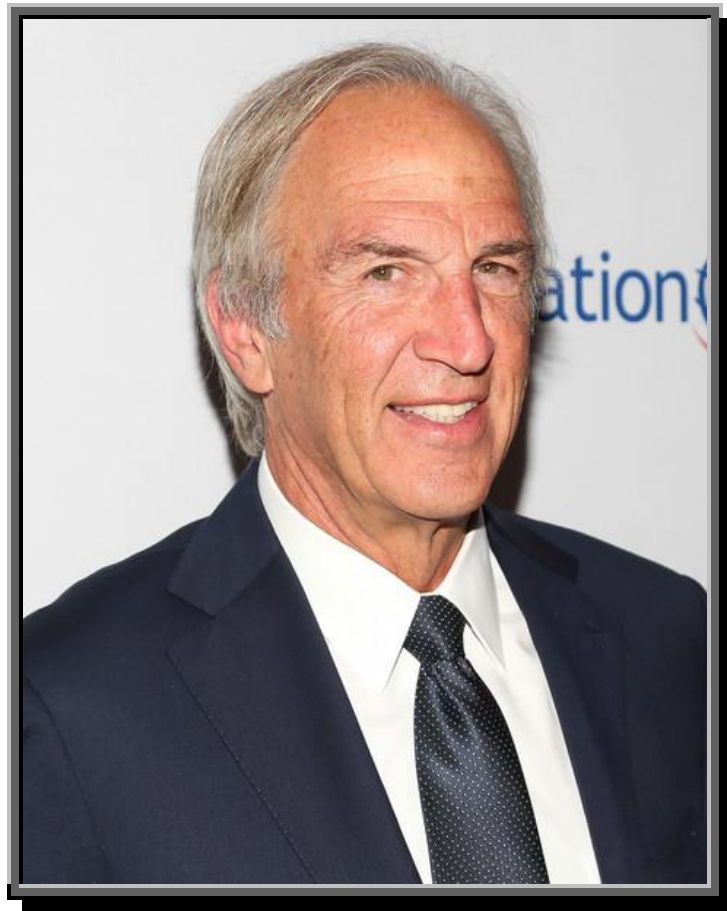
December, 2015  
Vol. XXXIV No. 12



Visit us online at [www.cafsocal.com](http://www.cafsocal.com)

**Did you vote yet in the Wing Election?**

## Merry Christmas



**Col. Randy Sherman, CAF – So Cal Wing's new Director of Development. Randy will be working on financing the rest of our campus at Camarillo Airport – including a new world-class Aviation Museum. We are honored to have Dr. Sherman heading up this most important cause!**

**Wing Staff Meeting, Saturday, December 19, 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.

# December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday and major holidays</b>		1 Work Day	2	3 Work Day	4	5 Work Day  Pearl Harbor Event 10 am
6	7 Museum Closed  Pearl Harbor Day	8 Work Day	9	10 Work Day	11	12 Work Day
13	14 Museum Closed	15 Work Day	16	17 Work Day	18 Docent Meeting 3:30 Christmas Party Hangar at 6pm	19 Wing Staff Meeting 9:30 Work Day
20	21 Museum Closed	22 Work Day	23	24 Museum Closed Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26 Work Day
27	28 Museum Closed	29 Work Day	30	31 Museum Closed  New Year's Eve	<b>Museum Open 10am to 4pm Every Day Except Monday and major holidays</b>	

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## Submittal Deadline - 15th of the month

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

\* Denotes Staff Position

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## Capt. Jerry Yellin, USAF (Ret.): The Last Fighter Pilot in World War II



**Capt. Jerry Yellin, USAF (Ret.)**

The Last Fighter Pilot of WWII who flew the last mission

Take five minutes to watch this video interview ---  
Listen carefully to what he says and how he says it. You won't regret a second of it.

Ask yourself, how many of the few surviving WWII veterans kept themselves and their uniform in such good condition for over 70 years and can still proudly wear it?

Notice his superb delivery, no teleprompter, no script. Just a 91-year-old fighter pilot representing the greatest generation at home and abroad who won WWII.

He has some surprises and a great take on the philosophy of life.

### The Last Fighter Pilot of WWII



**Capt. Jerry Yellin (r.) next to his P-51 on Iwo Jima.**



**Capt. Jerry Yellin with the pilot of CAF's B-29 "FIFI" prior to the Arsenal of Democracy Fly-Over.**

## SAFETY CORNER

by Gene O'Neal

COMPLACENCY and NEGLIGENCE do not have a place in aviation piloting or aircraft maintenance. For SAFETY, all functions of aviation demand the highest quality or professionalism.

All of us must guard against becoming complacent or negligent as we do the routine things over and over. For example, is every preflight done thoroughly as required - or are some things taken for granted? Is every routine maintenance task performed with full attention to every detail? **Complacency or neglect cannot be allowed to become part of our check list or technical instruction.**

Many times it is a small things that will compromise SAFETY.

A recent report of a fuel low point drain problem exemplifies this danger. A low point drain revealed a clear fluid. Expecting water, several more drains were also clear and not the light blue color of Av Gas. Because of professional attention, it was revealed that the aircraft had been fueled with Jet A.

Never trust what has been pumped into your aircraft without checking the low point drain as required.

Remember SAFETY BEGINS WITH YOU. BE SAFE.



### Remembering Joe - Reprise

Within any group of mechanics there is always one guy who knows what needs to be done - that was Joe.

#### Barry Roberts

+++++

When myself, son and father-in-law first joined the maintenance group, Joe was there very welcoming.

He would have always a joke or story. My father-in-law was also about Joe's age and really enjoyed his humor. Thanks, Joe!

#### Fred and Kevin Faustman / Leonard Stricker

+++++

## Col. Martha Raye, U.S.M.C. / U.S.A.



The following is from an Army Aviator who takes a trip down memory lane:

"It was just before Thanksgiving '67 and we were ferrying dead and wounded from a large GRF west of Pleiku. We had run out of body bags by noon, so the Hook (CH-47 CHINOOK) was pretty rough in the back.

All of a sudden, we heard a 'take-charge' woman's voice in the rear. There was the singer and actress, Martha Raye, with a SF (Special Forces) beret and jungle fatigues, with subdued markings, helping the wounded into the Chinook, and carrying the dead aboard.

'Maggie' had been visiting her SF 'heroes' out 'west'. We took off, short of fuel, and headed to the USAF hospital pad at Pleiku. As we all started unloading our sad pax's, a 'Smart Mouth' USAF Captain said to Martha.... "Ms Ray, with all these dead and wounded to process, there would not be time for your show!"

To all of our surprise, she pulled on her right collar and said ..... "Captain, see this eagle? I am a full 'Bird' in the US Army Reserve, and on this is a 'Caduceus' which means I am a Nurse, with a surgical specialty....now, take me to your wounded!" He said, "Yes ma'am.... follow me."

Several times at the Army Field Hospital in Pleiku, she would 'cover' a surgical shift, giving a nurse a well-deserved break.

In appreciation of her work with the [USO](#) during World War II and subsequent wars, special consideration was given to bury her in [Arlington National Cemetery](#) on her death, but on her request, she was buried with full military honors in the [Fort Bragg, North Carolina](#), Special Forces post cemetery as an honorary colonel in the U.S. Marines and an honorary lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army.

She is the only civilian buried at this location who receives military honors each Veterans' Day

## Lockheed-Martin F-35C Lightning II



**An F-35C taking off from the Navy carrier  
USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69)**

The F-35 Lightning II Integrated Test Force at NAS Patuxent River, Maryland, completed the second F-35C Developmental Test, or DT-II, program on 10 October, six days early.

The DT-II testing was conducted aboard USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN-69) from 2-10 October and featured sixty-six catapults and arrestments across seventeen flights. Pilots logged 26.5 flight hours and achieved a total of 280 flight test points and seventeen logistics test and evaluation test points.

## Wing Christmas Party

**Our annual Wing Christmas Party will be held in the Aviation Museum Hangar on Friday, December 18, with cocktails at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. A no-host bar will be set up.**

**The menu: Caesar salad, fresh fruit, bread, rigatoni with four-cheese sauce, penne with Italian sausage, chicken piccata, filet mignon medallions, assorted cakes and pies.**

**A special added attraction will be provided by a brand-new member, Christina Olds, daughter of the famous Air Force fighter pilot and leader, Brig. Gen. Robin Olds. Christina will present a power-point story of her dad's illustrious career in the U.S.A.F.**

**Cost for the event is \$35 per person. Please get your checks to: Paul Willett, Finance Officer, CAF, 455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010.**



## Charlie Plumb Visits Vietnam

From [www.charlieplumb.com](http://www.charlieplumb.com) &  
[www.oldguysandtheirairplanes.com](http://www.oldguysandtheirairplanes.com)



© Photo by John Mollison

**Charlie Plumb outside one of the cells in which he was tortured during his 6-year incarceration in North Vietnam.**

In July, 2015, Charlie Plumb went back to Vietnam, after 42 years since his release from North Vietnam prison camps. This marked the first time Charlie had been to the country since leaving the North Vietnamese prison system on February 19, 1973.

Lt. (jg) Charles Plumb, USN, was shot down over Hanoi in his McDonnell F-4 Phantom jet fighter by a Russian-made SA-2 "SAM" ground-to-air missile in May, 1967.

John Mollison, noted aviation artist, accompanied Charlie on his "pilgrimage" to Vietnam, where he met with some of his former adversaries, including the commandant of one of the prisons in which Charlie and other American pilots had been incarcerated.

Now Capt. Charles Plumb, USN (Ret.) – affectionately known as Charlie by his fellow members at CAF – So CA Wing – since coming home from Vietnam in 1973 has become a much-sought-after motivational speaker, giving inspirational talks all over the world.

Charlie is the owner of our Fairchild PT-19A Cornell, one of the four aircraft used in our Warbird Ride Program.



© Photo by Eric Van Gilder

After taking off from the carrier USS Kitty Hawk on May 19, 1967, with RIO "Gary" Anderson, on his 75<sup>th</sup> mission – Charlie had no idea he was to spend the next six years in Viet Cong prisons – being tortured and deprived of everything we all take for granted.



© Photo by John Mollison

**Charlie posing in front of a Russian SA-2 "Sam" missile at a Hanoi museum.**

Charlie learned very valuable lessons from his time in North Vietnam prisons – and he passes along his ideas of the value of hardship and adversity, and eventually, forgiveness – to those who attend his speeches.

John Mollison has created a beautiful print of Charlie's F-4 Phantom, along with a matching illustration of the C-141 Starlifter that brought him home. The title of John's drawing is "There and Back."



© Photo by John Mollison

**Capt. Charlie Plumb signing the print "There and Back"**



Copies of this print, signed by Charlie, are for sale – with proceeds going to the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force, of which Charlie is a member

A moving documentary of Charlie's trip to Vietnam has been produced by John Mollison. Click on the link below to access both the video and the link to buy the print "There and Back." (CTRL + left click)

[www.oldguysandtheirairplanes.com](http://www.oldguysandtheirairplanes.com)

## **Churchill Was His Copilot** by Verna Gates MOAA, "Today's Officer," October, 2004 © Copyright MOAA

Bill Vanderkloot, an unassuming, studious American pilot, caught the attention of the Royal Air Force – and became pilot to England's most cherished leader in World War II.

When he first attracted the personal attention of the Royal Air Force (RAF) top brass in 1942, American William J. "Bill" Vanderkloot could think of no other reason than he was about to be called on the carpet. When he was driven to a backstreet in an RAF car and told to walk down a dark street to a dimly lighted door and knock, he was sure his days as an RAF ferry pilot were numbered.

However, when a man with a familiar round face, wearing a brightly colored dressing gown and blue velvet slippers initialed "P.M.," smiled and offered him a Scotch and soda, he very much needed a drink. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill simply smiled at his befuddled guest and said, "I understand we are going to Cairo." "It took about two minutes to pick up my jaw when it dropped to the floor," recalled Vanderkloot. "Here was the greatest man in the world, and I was going to be associating with him as his pilot. It's enough to scare you to death."

For the next three years, Vanderkloot would become the person Churchill called "my young American pilot." He captained a big, matte-black, converted Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber, called *Commando*. In it, he flew across dangerous German-held territory to carry the English leader of the Allied powers to secret meetings in faraway places such as Cairo, Moscow, Casablanca, and Algiers.

## **Skilled and Steady**

A native of Lake Bluff, Ill., Vanderkloot was a graduate of the best flight school of its day, the Parks Air College in East St. Louis, Ill. By the time World War II broke out in 1939, he was working as a commercial pilot, flying DC-2s and DC-3s.

In the early days of the war, England needed American-built planes. These were shipped across the Atlantic, a three-month journey, because it was considered suicidal to fly them across the North Atlantic. The tempestuous ocean was equaled by its temperamental weather. Few dared to forecast aviation meteorology for the North Atlantic; the techniques of the time were regarded as only slightly more reliable than fortunetelling.

Regardless, the British government in 1940 set up the RAF Ferry Command in Montreal to deliver the big planes via the air. In January 1941, civilian pilot Bill Vanderkloot was recruited at the incredible salary of \$1,000 a month – in tax-free dollars.

"You've got to remember, at that time, everyone thought Europe was going to fall. Almost all of it had, except England. That's the reason my father volunteered for Ferry

Command," explained William Vanderkloot, Jr. "It was a great risk. If you got shot down, there was no protection for you. That was it. Nothing coming to the family, unlike the military, with pensions and death benefits. It was a big chance for civilian pilots to take."

Vanderkloot considered himself a pilot patriot, not a warrior. Studious and reserved, he decided that to survive flying over great bodies of water, he had to become an expert celestial navigator. His navigation skills were so renowned that he was tapped to map out several routes to England. He also taught navigation in the training school and later wrote a textbook. It was this skill, coupled with superior piloting, that brought Vanderkloot to the attention of the RAF.

"He was an excellent pilot, an excellent navigator, and a gentleman. I believe that was the combination that made him the choice to fly Churchill," Vanderkloot Jr. said. To those who questioned Churchill about his choice of an American, the great statesman simply replied, "He was the best man for the job."

### **Ready – and Responsible (or...The Go-Ahead)**

By July 1942, when Vanderkloot met with Air Chief Marshall Sir Charles Portal, head of the RAF, he already had logged more than a million miles and flown a number of VIPs safely to such far-flung locations as Accra, Asmara, and Fiji.

Vanderkloot answered Portal's questions on how to fly to Cairo. A main concern for the RAF was dragging the aging Churchill through a number of airfields in Africa where no one dared travel without inoculations. Vanderkloot detailed a trip with one stop-off in Gibraltar. Portal was convinced: Vanderkloot and his crew of one American copilot and three Canadian engineers would fly Churchill.

"The plane and crew were my selection. That was some airplane, the Liberator. A fine airplane, built nicely. And the crew was the best; they knew that airplane inside and out," Vanderkloot said.



*A Consolidated B-24 Liberator much like the one Bill Vanderkloot flew with Winston Churchill as his copilot.*

*According to The Man Who Flew Churchill (Bruce West, McGraw-Hill, 1975), Churchill often sat in the copilot's*

seat, a platform from which he could offer all of the direction and advice of a novice pilot. Once, while puffing away on an enormous cigar, the great man turned to the 26-year-old American and said, "You know what Hitler would do to me if ever he got his hands on me, don't you, Vanderkloot?" Vanderkloot nodded.

"But you're not going to let him do that, are you, Captain?" Churchill said, with a twinkle in his eye.

Vanderkloot's nerves were hardly steadied later when his copilot, Jack Ruggles, said, "The fellow is England, and if we ever dunk him in the drink..."

"It was a horrible feeling, the thought of losing Churchill," Vanderkloot recalled. "I would think, here I am, a civilian, and an American civilian at that, with the safety and the very life of the prime minister of Great Britain in my sweaty hands."

The Liberator flew alone in the skies with silence and darkness its only protection. "It was a mighty peculiar feeling. There was the prime minister getting into the plane after being escorted every foot of the way from 10 Downing Street to the airport. But when the door slammed shut, all those guards got back in their cars and left! It was now our responsibility," Vanderkloot said. "You could go crazy thinking about it, so I decided not to think about it, any more than I had to."

Vanderkloot safely guided the *Commando* into its first stop, Gibraltar. Churchill later described landing there. "It looked very dangerous... One could not see a hundred yards ahead, and we were not flying more than 30 feet above the sea. I asked Vanderkloot if all was all right, and I said I hoped he would not hit the Rock of Gibraltar. His answers were not particularly reassuring...."

"Then suddenly we flew into clear air, and up towered the great precipice of Gibraltar...and the mountain called Queen of Spain's Chair. After three hours of flying in the mist, Vanderkloot had been exact. We passed the grim rock face a few hundred yards away, without having to alter course, and made a perfect landing."

"Bringing Churchill into Gibraltar was like landing on an aircraft carrier," Vanderkloot said. "The runway was only 5,000 feet, and it wasn't ours."

### In The Quiet Hours

It became customary for Churchill to take over the copilot's seat before dawn. Vanderkloot recalled listening to the great man "talk about things that had happened and things that were going to happen. He spoke fluently about what he would do if such and such might happen, but it never did. He had a great deal of concern about the reaction people would have to his actions and how the war was going. He only talked about himself in [one] respect: in that he liked flying. I let him fly some."

On the morning of August 4, 1942, Vanderkloot and his celebrity copilot flew into Egypt. Churchill wrote, "There in the pale glimmering dawn, the endless winding silver ribbon of the Nile stretched joyously before us. Often had I seen the day break on the Nile. Never had the glint of daylight on its waters been so welcome to me." One man must have felt an even greater relief: Churchill's bodyguard, who supposedly had orders to shoot the prime minister should the plane go down in enemy territory.

Churchill had traveled to Cairo to decide on a new commander for the African campaign, and he appointed Gen. Bernard Montgomery. Next stop: Russia, for the first face-to-face meeting with Soviet Premier Josef Stalin.

## Destination Moscow

"They waited until we got to Cairo to tell me we were going to Moscow. I had mixed feelings. I didn't know if the airplane could go that far and into such a foreign country," said Vanderkloot. There was little aeronautical information about Russia.

On the first stop, in Tehran, Vanderkloot's early-hours copilot found that a little knowledge can reveal greater ignorance. Churchill told the story on himself in his memoirs:

"By dawn we were approaching the mountains of Kurdistan. The weather was good and Vanderkloot in high spirits...As we descended about 8:30 a.m. on the Tehran airfield and we were already close to the ground, I noticed the altimeter registered 4,500 feet, and ignorantly remarked, "You had better get that adjusted before we take off again." But Vanderkloot said, "The Tehran airfield is over 4,000 feet above sea level."

After a three-week trip, Vanderkloot returned his passengers safely to London. It had been a journey of 15,000 miles – with the entire Luftwaffe on alert for Churchill, a treasured trophy. In November, Vanderkloot was awarded the Order of the British Empire, a ribbon he was later to use to secure curtains to keep the sun out of Churchill's eyes, much to the prime minister's amusement.

Vanderkloot safely carried Churchill for three years. By 1945, the crew had flown more than 200,000 miles and more high-ranking officials than any other aircraft in the British service. However, the limits of luck were beginning to be tested. Every plane in the Luftwaffe was gunning for *Commando*.

"Flying Churchill was a wonderful feeling and a wonderful position. I hated to give it up," Vanderkloot said. Churchill. What a man! He had everything! I was his friend and his greatest admirer, still am and always will be," Vanderkloot said.

(Bill Vanderkloot passed away April 8, 2000, in Ocala, FL at age 85.)

**Editor's Note: this article was in our "Flight Line" of January, 2009.**



## Report From The Road

by Col. Scott Drosos



**Editor's Note:** Scott Drosos is a captain for Atlas Air, a cargo carrier. He flies 747-8s all over the world, and, once in a great while, we are pleased to see him in our Maintenance Hangar, working with the team on the PBJ. Scott sends along his journal, and this is an excerpt from his latest one.

**"Animal Charter!** When I received the paperwork for this flight, I noticed that it had been designated a "live animal charter," which requires extra fuel. The reason for this is that animals, especially in large numbers, produce a lot of body heat, which can build up to unacceptable levels, creating a hazard for them. In order to keep the main deck cargo compartment cool enough for them, our procedures state that anytime we have animals on board we are to run the airplane's three air conditioning packs in what's known as 'high flow.' In this mode the packs tap more air off of the compressor stage of the engines, resulting in a slightly higher fuel burn rate that must be compensated for in flight planning. On a long flight, this may cost thousands of dollars more in extra fuel burn.

I didn't get down to the main deck prior to takeoff, so I didn't know how many animals were onboard this particular flight, but in the past I've flown as many as hundreds of pigs or cattle on a single flight, and, on one flight we had 94 horses onboard. With that many large animals in one space it's very difficult to keep the main deck cool enough, even with all three packs running in high flow. I usually hate animal charters because, even with the upper deck door closed and fresh air being circulated through the cockpit, the airplane ends up smelling like the inside of a barn by the end of the flight. I didn't notice the smell on this flight, however.

Halfway through the flight one of the crew members decided to go down and check on the "animals." After a lengthy search among the rest of the cargo, he located one single tiny kitten in a little cage strapped to a huge pallet that was otherwise empty. So much for our "animal charter," and all the extra fuel we were burning to keep the cargo bay cool! One little kitten wouldn't generate enough heat to warm a shoebox, let alone the huge cargo bay! We took some extra water and food down to the kitten to supplement what it had in its cage, and had a good laugh at how royally this little kitten was being treated. I don't know who it belonged to, but somebody was paying a lot of money to have their pet flown from LA to Seoul first-

class on a 747! Most international passengers don't travel that well.

In addition to my busy flying schedule, I had just been diagnosed with prostate cancer, and was dashing off to doctor's appointments regularly on days off. In addition to this, I was in the process of selling a condominium that I owned in California, which took up a good share of my time as well.

On this particular set of days off, though, I had a commitment of another sort, and it was an opportunity I did not want to let pass, in spite of my crazy schedule. Several months earlier I had enrolled in a B-25 maintenance school at a company called Aero Trader, in Chino, CA. This was a voluntary class that I paid a fairly large sum of money for, to help me learn the systems and maintenance procedures of the WWII-era B-25/PBJ bomber that I have been helping a group restore at the Commemorative Air Force in Camarillo, CA for many years now. The class was only held once a year, so it was now or never. I had been able to bid the days off I needed to attend, but just barely. It would take up four of my five days off, and meant that there would not be time to get home to Florida and back before the start of my next trip. But, so be it. I wanted to go that badly.

So, as soon as I landed at LAX that morning, I rented a car and drove straight to Chino, where I checked into a motel and met up with a friend of mine- John Syrdahl – who also worked on the PBJ with me at CAF – So Cal Wing – and was also enrolled in the class. Over the next four days we were subjected to an in-depth total-emersion course on the B-25/PBJ that included classroom instruction in the a.m., and hands-on maintenance experience in their shop in the afternoons. John and I learned a great deal that will be invaluable in helping us operate and maintain our own airplane once it is flying. Our first post-restoration flight is due to happen within the next month or two, and after having worked on the project for over 15 years, that will be a huge day in my life. Wish us luck!"



© Photo Courtesy of Scott Drosos

**Carl Scholl showing class how to overhaul B-25/PBJ brakes. That's Scott in the dark shirt.**

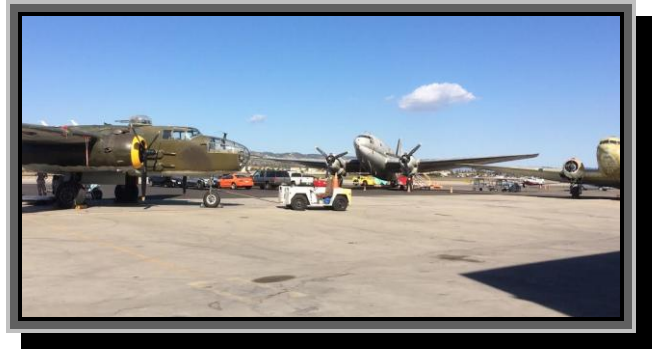


## December, 2015 Photo Page I

"Aviation Career Day" was held at CAF – So Cal Wing on Friday, October 30, 2015. About 250 Ventura County high school students checked out positions in aviation.

Aviation positions included: commercial pilots, weather forecasters, NASA, airport managers, aircraft mechanics, airlines jobs, air traffic controllers, uav & drone operators, charter managers, military/government jobs, and flight attendants.

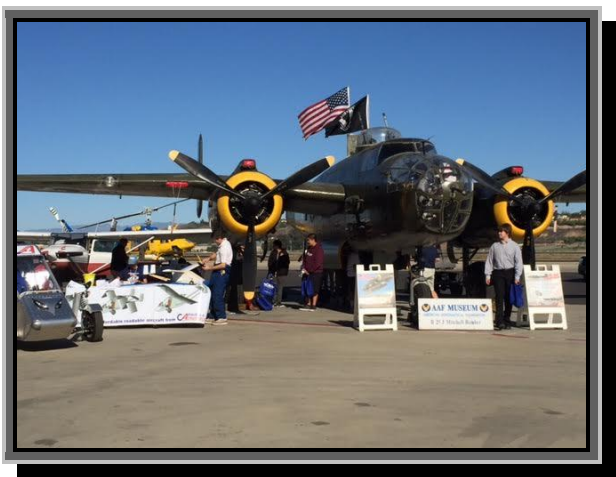
The second annual Aviation Career Day was sponsored by: Ventura County Ninety-Nines, EAA Chapter 723, CAF So Cal Wing, Ventura County Education Center, SBB College, CA Aeronautical University, Channel Islands Aviation, CP Aviation, Ventura County Dept. of Airports, and Scofield Catering.



© Photos on this side by Dan Newcomb



© Photos on this side by Avery Willis



## The Other Howard Hughes: WWII



**Sgt. Howard Franklin Hughes, USAAC**  
**July 19, 1923 – March 19, 1944**

Sgt. Howard F. Hughes was born in Oklahoma On July 19, 1923. Right after high school, he volunteered for the Army Air Corps, and eventually became a gunner / armorer on B-24 Liberator bombers.

On March 19, 1944, he and his crew were on a bombing mission to a Nazi refinery in Yugoslavia. After their bombing run, they were over the Adriatic Sea, on their way back to base, when the accident occurred.

The B-24s were in close formation, with some planes above others. The plane just above Hughes's developed engine problems, and lost power suddenly. It dropped precipitously and crashed on top of Hughes's plane, and the two aircraft plummeted into the Adriatic.

Hughes, as the top gunner, took the brunt of the collision, and was probably killed instantly. Observers of the crash were only able to spot two parachutes emanating from the two aircraft.

Hughes's family, including his younger sister Jewell, who currently lives in Camarillo, got the message that Howard was Missing In Action – but in a short time they got a subsequent message that he had been killed.

Howard, as a young man in high school, had become very adept with tools. As a sophomore, he devoted 87 hours to building a violin, using several different woods, including bird's eye maple, apple wood, black walnut and spruce. He played the violin in a western band for dances at the farmers' grange on Saturday nights. His sister Jewell still proudly owns the violin.

Howard died just four months before his twenty-first birthday. May he, and all his crew, rest in eternal peace.



**Sgt. Howard Hughes's B-24 crew at their airfield In Italy. Howard is the one kneeling.**



**B-24 Liberators of the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force dropping bombs on a Nazi refinery in 1944.**



**Spinazzola Airfield, Italy – one of the bases from which the Liberators bombed Nazi targets.**



**The violin Howard made when a high school sophomore, and two medals earned during his service in World War II.**



## December 2015 Photo Page II

© All photos by John Cutright

Although these photos by John Cutright of the Fairchild F-24R's recent successful engine run-up show Mike Hohls and Barry Roberts doing all the work, they are by no means the only volunteers who have worked on this aircraft over the years.

Barry has put in untold hours of work on the F-24, and Mike has been instrumental in getting the aircraft painted in its Civil Air Patrol colors, in addition to other accomplishments.

There is a cadre of many workers stretching back over many years. One of the mainstays of the F-24 team has been Norm Swagler, who has served as the Crew Chief, and who has also put in innumerable hours in not only renovating the airplane, but in establishing its "legitimate identity."

We will be doing a Special Edition on the F-24R once it gets airborne.



Barry and Mike give "thumbs up" after a successful engine run-up. We're getting close to taking off!



*Your CAF SoCal Wing Presents...*  
**December 7<sup>th</sup> Event**  
**REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR**

*Open to  
The Public*



Saturday, December 5, 2015, 10am-1pm  
CAF SoCal Wing Aviation Museum Hangar

**\*Presentations**  
Our own Ron Fleishman

**\*Displays**  
Charlie Carr's Magic

**\*Flight**  
Zero X-133 flybys

**Be There - Aloha!**

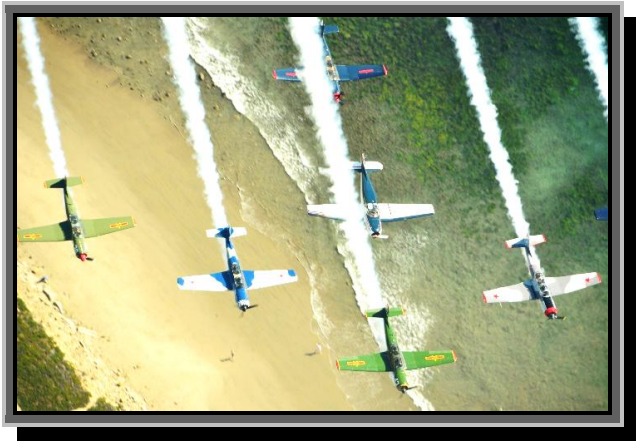




## December 2015 Photo Page III

On November 8, 2015, formations of seven T-34s, seven CJ-6 Nanchings, along with the B-25 "Executive Sweet," our F6F-5 Hellcat, and Kevin Moore's P-51D Mustang "Miss Kandy" flew over Santa Barbara in honor of that city's Veterans' Day Parade.

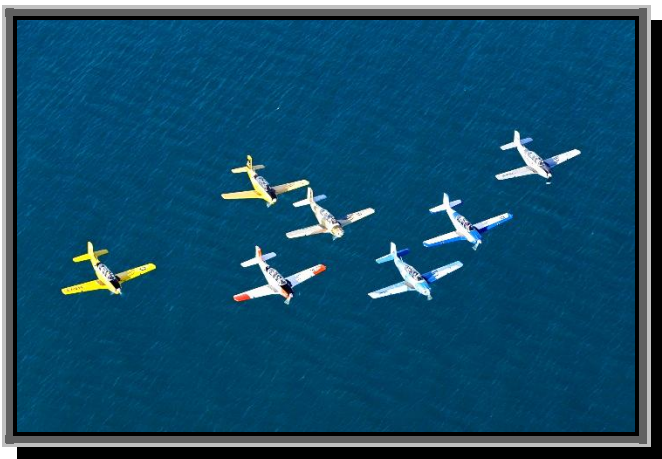
The memorial flyover was a culmination of the T-34 West Mentor Fly-In conducted at our CAF- So Cal Wing during the weekend of Nov. 5 – 8.



© Photo by Dan Newcomb



© Photo by Arash Afshari



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## Commemorative Air Force

**455 Aviation Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010**

**(805) 482-0064**

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### **First Female Blue Angels Pilot Visits CAF – So Cal Wing**



© Photo by Arash Afshari

**Capt. Katie Higgins posing with Camarillo Girl Scouts at our Aviation Museum**

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Can you believe we're almost finished with 2015? The holidays are coming and we need to get ready for them. Be sure to stop by our museum and see the latest exhibits and merchandise in our gift shop. It's a great place to shop for Christmas gifts! Consider giving a gift certificate to celebrate a special event in our hangar or perhaps a ride in one of our incredible airplanes. Just call the office for information [\(805\) 482-0064](tel:8054820064).

Dave Flood, our newsletter editor, has come up with an article about an amazing woman, a pioneer in the field of aviation. She's currently with the Navy Blue Angels! She even spent some time at our hangar talking to a group of Girl Scouts about her career. What a role model! This is a special interest of mine, since I am a pilot and am constantly looking for ways to encourage more women to enter the field of aviation, either by becoming a pilot or pursuing a related aviation career. Several of our cadets are high school girls and are learning things in our maintenance hangar that will help them in their future careers. One just started college as an ROTC cadet and hopes to become a Navy pilot! Others are seeking experiences to build on their interest in aviation.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving. We all have so much to be thankful for in this great country, especially our freedom. Don't forget to thank a veteran for his or her service, helping us keep that freedom.

Ceci Stratford  
CAF So Cal Wing  
Friends of the Museum Coordinator



# Marine Woman Flies Blue Angels To New Heights

By Gretel C. Kovach. Oct. 1, 2015 © San Diego Union



**U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Olivia G. Ortiz**  
**Marine Capt. Katie Higgins is the first female pilot with the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, or Blue Angels. The Severna Park, Md., native, is now the newest pilot of "Fat Albert," a C-130 Hercules flown by the Blue Angels.**

Becoming the first woman to perform as a Blue Angels pilot has definitely been a high point for Capt. Katie Higgins. It is an honor to wear the famous blue and gold flight suit, she said, but it might surprise some people to learn that it hasn't been the pinnacle of her career as a Marine aviator.

Higgins was sitting in the left seat of the cockpit when she makes her debut at the Miramar Air Show, serving as flight commander of the team's "Fat Albert" C-130 support plane. During more than 50 performances across the country so far this year, she has been mobbed by fans who appreciate how she flies like a girl with the Blue Angels.

The fighter pilots on the team used to have the longest lines for autographs, because of their stunning aerobatics in F/A-18 Hornets flying wingtip to wingtip. Now with the first woman pilot in the 69-year history of the Blue Angels, the jet jockeys joke good-naturedly about being "just your average guy."

Higgins downplays her fame as the "Lady Blue Angel." I wouldn't say I'm a celebrity. No way. I'm a Marine," she said in an interview before the San Diego show. "I definitely appreciate the support from the American people, and if I can bring attention to opportunities people have in life, girls included — that they can join the military, be a Marine, even be a Blue Angel pilot, then that's cool."

If it wasn't being selected for the premiere naval flight demonstration team, then what was her most rewarding experience? The moment when Higgins thought this is it, this is why I joined the Marine Corps, this is why I became an aviator?

That began in Afghanistan in 2013, and finished in the African country of Djibouti.

As a KC-130J Hercules pilot, Higgins is responsible for everything from logistics to transport, air-to-air refueling and close-air support.

During a mission in Afghanistan, Higgins and her flight crew unleashed Hellfire missiles for Marines pinned down under enemy fire.

On her next deployment in Africa, a Marine recognized her voice. "He thanked me essentially for saving his life. I get goose bumps even now talking about it," Higgins said. "I joined the Marine Corps to support the Marines on the ground, and to know that I succeeded in doing that is the greatest reward that I could ever ask for."

Higgins, 29, is a third-generation military aviator. She claims Severna Park, Md., as her hometown, but she grew up on naval bases from Lemoore to Yokosuka, Japan. Her father, retired Navy Capt. William Johnson, flew the same Hornet jets the Blue Angels do today. As a little girl, Higgins would run onto the flight line to hug him after he flew home in formation from a deployment.

"I grew up with a love for flying because of my family," she said. Then the gunnery sergeants at the Naval Academy hooked her on the Marine Corps. The best part about being a C-130 pilot is working together as a crew, Higgins said. "We have two pilots on the plane, a navigator, a flight engineer and a loadmaster. So there's five of us that it takes to fly this aircraft."

Why the Blue Angels? Higgins remembers being wowed by a performance in California when she was about 10 years old. Later she was attracted to their mission of helping to recruit the next generation of naval aviators and leaders. "I loved the idea of going out and inspiring excellence to the American people. Not everybody needs to join the military but if everyone tries their hardest and does their best at the profession that they choose, then it's better for the country and our society in general."

The selection process was intense, including a long application, essays, and grilling by the Blue Angels officers about her personal and professional life. In Pensacola, Fla., it came down to Higgins and a male aviator competing for the same position. "Finalist week is probably one of the most intimidating things I've ever done," she recalled. It includes "a very long, beautiful table and you're sitting at the end of it and you have 17 pairs of eyes on you asking a gamut of questions."

Higgins has almost 400 flight hours in combat, but she worried she was too young for the Blue Angels. When she called the commanding officer, Capt. Thomas Frosch, to find out if she made it, he told her: "you're really junior, we really liked having you out but maybe if you get some more flight hours..." "Aw man, I didn't make it," she thought. "Well, Katie, it was nice talking to you. Oh, and one more thing — welcome to the team!" Frosch said. The Blue Angels were all in the room with him and yelled it at the same time.

Higgins was in shock. The gist of her response was: oh my gosh, thank you so much, "But I'm a Marine at heart so I think I used some poor language there that I won't repeat."

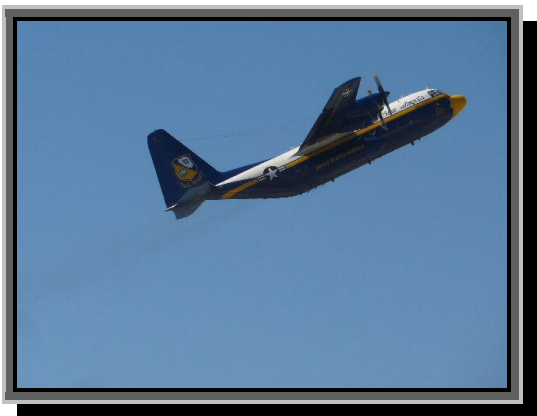
Higgins already belonged to a very small group as a naval aviator. Only 7 percent of the Marine Corps is female to begin with, and pilots are subject to height and weight restrictions that sideline many women. Out of 5,223 flight officers in the Marine Corps, 197 are female. Higgins is one of 19 women who pilot the KC-130, or about 5.4 percent of Hercules fliers.

"I didn't come to the team to break any barriers or smash any glass ceilings," Higgins said. She was selected because she is the best person for the job, not the best woman, Frosch told her. "They don't want to fill any quotas. They want to fit the right person, ensuring you're the right puzzle piece for that next year's team."

Some question why it is taking so long for the Blue Angels to select their first female fighter pilot, since Navy women have been flying jets since 1994. Ron Walters, commenting on the Blue Angels Facebook page, said: "A female flying the C-130, that's some progress but when will the old boys club truly end when they hand a Hornet to a woman? For those who don't know it's Air Force 3, Navy 0..." The Air Force selected the first female fighter pilot for its Thunderbirds flight demonstration team in 2005, and at least two more later joined.

"I don't think it's a matter of if, it's just when all of those things line up," said Navy Cmdr. Jeannie Groeneveld, a spokeswoman for Naval Air Forces Command in Coronado. "Having the Blues at an air show inspires everyone. The precision with which they fly is incredible," said Groeneveld, a former helicopter pilot. "They are a recruiting tool for the Navy because everyone who goes out and sees them wants to be them someday. I speak from experience."

Flying the C-130 in the air show, Higgins demonstrated some of the zero g maneuvers they might have to pull in combat — to evade gun fire and enemy radar, or rapidly descend to base because of a malfunction. Even experienced aviators sometimes lose their lunch in Fat Albert, as their feet jump for the ceiling.



**Blue Angels' C-130 "Fat Albert" at 40 degree climb.**

"She's a big girl but we can zip her around pretty well. It's definitely fun. It's cool to be able to show the American people the capabilities of my aircraft," Higgins said. But her duties on the ground are just as important. "One of the best parts about being on this team is to be able to talk to Americans about those sailors, those Marines, airmen and soldiers currently overseas standing the watch," doing everything from fighting ISIS over Syria to flying transport missions in Asia, she said.

"I get thanked every day for my service, but in reality all those 'thank you's' need to go to ... those true heroes."

## **Girl Scouts and Blue Angels visit CAF So Cal Wing**

[September 25, 2015 cafsocal](#) by Arash Afshari

Marines Captain Katie Higgins, the first female member of the Blue Angels Navy Demonstration Team, visited CAF So Cal Wing today for a presentation to an enthusiastic group of Girl Scouts.

Captain Higgins' 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 C130 aircraft she flies, and yes, of course, what is her favorite color! (surprisingly 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 for going above and beyond in inspiring the next generation of Americans — a goal we humbly share.

Thanks, Capt. Higgins, for visiting our CAF So Cal Wing, and for being such a good role model for the Girl Scouts.



© Photo by Arash Afshari

**Capt. Katie Higgins, USMC, - Blue Angels pilot – talking with the Camarillo Girl Scouts.**

# COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WING

## Aviation Museum

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

[www.cafsocal.com](http://www.cafsocal.com)

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

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

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

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

#### FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM DONOR FORM



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

Friends of the Museum donation is valid for 1 year from the month of donation.

The CAF is a 501(c)3 organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible.

(See your Tax advisor for your individual tax situation.)

### Friends of the Museum Levels and Benefits

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





Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Drive  
Camarillo, CA 93010

## 2016 WING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

December 1, 2015

Dear Wing Member,

It's time again to renew your annual membership in the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force. We sincerely hope you will retain your affiliation with our wing since we expect exciting things to happen in 2016.

We are one of the leading wings in the CAF with more than 250 Wing members and 10 assigned aircraft. Our museum has become a major attraction in Ventura County and both attendance and museum income have risen steadily. Our plans are to continue this growth and we want you to be a part of these exciting happenings.

To renew your membership, just remove this page from the newsletter (or make a copy of it), complete the information requested, enclose your check payable to the Southern California Wing, and return by March 1, 2016 to:

CAF Southern California Wing  
455 Aviation Drive  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
Attn: Personnel Officer

Any contribution in addition to your \$50.<sup>00</sup> annual dues will be greatly appreciated. Contributions are welcome to help us complete the many projects we are undertaking, such as building the new museum facility, the B-25/PBJ restoration, or the Fairchild F-24 restoration, or any other project you may wish to support.

If you joined the Southern California Wing in October, November, or December, 2015 your dues are considered paid for 2016, but any contribution to any of our projects that you wish to make will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Ron Missildine, Wing Leader

2016 Wing Dues	\$50. <sup>00</sup>
Hangar/Museum Building Fund	_____
B-25/PBJ Restoration	_____
Fairchild F-24 Restoration	_____
Other _____	_____
Total	_____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Col. #: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

THE CAF IS A PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD'S GREAT COMBAT AIRCRAFT  
**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CAF ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**