

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE NEWS

Estrella Squadron



All the news that's fit
to print and then some!

Volume V Number 10

Paso Robles, California

October 1994

October Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday October 4, 1994 at the Hangar. Social Hour commencing at 6:00pm and Dinner at 7:00pm.

As for the dinner, Bob Miller, at the last Staff Meeting, graciously offered his and Rosemary Netto's services again, for at least the next few months, so the meals should be as good as usual. Rosemary was somewhat less that ecstatic but finally succumbed to the entreaties of the entire Staff. There will be more on the structure of dinner arrangements later.

The program, as again provided by George Marrett, will be a most interesting discussion by George Kastner regarding the latest information concerning the search for what happened to Amelia Earhart. Mr. Kastner is the owner of the Los Osos Book Exchange and is very interested in various aspects of military aircraft. He is a member of the Tiger organization which is a group involved in the recovery of lost aircraft.

Staff Elections

The Staff Nominees were presented at the September Meeting and were unanimously elected by the CAF members. They are as follows:

Commanding Officer	Jeff Welles
Executive Officer	Hal Chilton
Finance Officer	Rosemary Netto

Adjutant	Bob Singleton
Operations Officer	Glen Thomson
Maintenance Officer	Bob Miller
Safety Officer	Keith Bowers

As stated in the last newsletter, each officer was nominated after a diligent search and request for nominations by the Nominating Committee. Each of these members has agreed to serve and each deserves the best we can give them.

The new Staff has a number of most interesting ideas in mind which will give our organization a tremendous kick-start toward bigger and better things ahead!

Periodically our CO and Exec will present reports or articles in the newsletter outlining what is proposed for the future and updating us on a number of issues.

We are definitely on the move!

Gary Corippo - TVG

During WWII one of the most highly regarded signals that a ship or unit could receive from Fleet Command was the flag hoist from the yardarm of the Flag Ship saying, TVG, or Tare Victor George (old usage!). Right out of the Fleet Signal Book this meant, simply, Well Done, but considering the source, it was a terrifically powerful statement. It was rarely sent and had to be the result of a definitely superior piece of operational execution and damn well deserved.

Since 1989 when Gary Corippo and Glen Thomson first dreamed up the idea of the Estrella Squadron there

has been one individual who has been the constant spark plug of the organization and that person has been Gary Corippo.

Without his early efforts there would be no "home" as we now know the Nunno Hangar. Without his efforts there would be no cement pad, no asphalt apron or tiedown pads, all of the materials for which were "arranged" for by Gary and much of the physical labor was his as well.

Without his imagination and drive there would be no new building site nor would three buildings have been made available for our future use. Not only did he develop the idea but he also provided the tools to get the job done as well, with the generous help of his company, San Luis Tank.

These are concrete things and there are many, many more. Even beyond these we are indebted to Gary for his constant and unflagging zeal and belief in the capabilities of the Squadron and its membership.

We are also indebted to him for his two year tenure as Commanding Officer and the direction he has given us and the drive to succeed that he has imparted to all of us during this period.

On top of all this he is one hell of a good friend.

To Gary Corippo... TVG.

The Estrella Squadron Newsletter

is published monthly as an unofficial voluntary contribution. Content and opinion is the sole responsibility of the Editor, Bruce M. Toomey unless otherwise noted. Submissions for inclusion are gladly accepted and solicited, including articles, display and classified ads etc. Send all submissions to: P.O. Box 3065 Paso Robles, CA 93447

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CO's Column

by Col. Jeff Welles

Taking over the helm is somewhat of a daunting task. The Squadron has been ably served for the past two years by our outgoing CO, Gary Corippo, and by the officers you elected 24 months ago. I think everyone would agree that Gary has made a giant contribution to our group. I would like to go on record with a warm "thank you" for his leadership and devotion. Gary is a "get things done" kind of a guy. The status of our building project has been reviewed in the past couple of newsletters. Suffice it to say here that the development is moving expeditiously through the process. Glen tells me he will have the plans into the City for a plan-check this week. The new building committee will be preparing cost estimates for review by our Staff shortly.

After Obbie Atkinson and the Nominating Committee contacted me about running for CO this term I

Committee Chairs**

Program	
George Marrett	466-7640
Dinners	
Bob Miller	434-1594
Rosemary Netto	467-3521
Membership	
Obbie Atkinson	238-9212
PX	
Willa Killion	461-5405
PIO	
Blake Wideman	237-2810
Air Show	
Ashley Lightfoot	239-4461
Grounds/Hangar	
Open	
Ground Equipment	
Dave Geiger	239-1598
Project Mgr.	
Gary Corippo	238-2090
Insurance	
Elmer Belmont	466-1062
Refreshments	
Doug Miner	239-1054
Photo	
Open	
Historian	
Open	
Activities	
Open	
Museum Director	
Open	
Meeting Setup	
Open	
Museum Director	
Open	

**Committees and Chairperson list not finalized as of publication date. Further announcements will be

thought it prudent to sit down and try to put together a list of goals and objectives for the coming year.

First on my list was to take pause of where we are and what we have accomplished over the past few years. It is really amazing that this group has grown to its present size of over 120 members and over 30 colonels in such a short period of time. We have produced four very entertaining and well-received air shows. We have raised money for the development of a permanent home at the airport. We

have put on dozens and dozens of successful dinners with great speakers, And we have worked countless hours on one project or another.

With all of our efforts, I want to remember why we "joined up" with this outfit. And that was to have some fun, fly airplanes, and be a part of preserving the aircraft and remembering the heroes who served in World War II. Along this line of thinking, I want to be sure that your leadership is meeting those goals. A key element in meeting those goals is to provide regular activities for us. I'm talking about fun activities and restoration projects.

Tom Leatherwood has a twin Beech project which he would like for us to consider. I'm sure that others may have suggestions for specifics. I would like to see us make these Squadron projects, involving all of us. I don't think I ever had so much fun as when coming out to the hangar on Saturdays and getting involved in the L-16 project.

I also want to try to provide some flying-related activity at least once per month. If you're like me you want to be able to come out to the hangar on weekend, see your fellow members and comrades and know you will have a goodtime. Our Activities Chairman will coordinate that. Please "step up to the line" and get involved with this - it will be a lot of fun and some of you newer members will get to know others quickly. What kind of activities would you like to see?

Thank you for your vote of confidence. I think we have a Staff that can get things done and can meet the goals of our group. Please see any one of us. Have fun and get involved!

"Warbird Scene"

By: Col. Tom Leatherwood

It's been 2 months since my last installment here, although with the amount of material I have to consider it seems more like two years. A lot can

happen in eight weeks. Oshkosh! the Reno Air Races, Our trip to the "Yankee Air Museum" at Chino, and coming up in two weeks, "Airshow 94" at Midland. However I'm going to wait until next month for that stuff for two reasons. One is that my deadline is tomorrow and two is that I've been asked by the powers that be to make a proposal that actually has been kicking around for some time but for a lot of reasons fizzled out.

TOPIC: A SQUADRON AIRCRAFT!

We currently have an opportunity to acquire an aircraft that for many reasons is probably the perfect airplane for our group. Given our current situation, personnel involved, finances etc. It doesn't matter whether we are CAF or the Museum or whatever. Whichever way it goes it makes perfect sense.

QUESTION: What would make "the perfect squadron aircraft"? First of all it has to be a World War two vintage airplane. Second it has to be cheap. This narrows the field considerably. It has to be practical from a maintenance standpoint. That is, an aircraft that our membership has the expertise and the means to maintain. A B-29 is out. It should be at least 6 to 7 place. Have good parts availability and be able to fit in our proposed facilities.

If you examine this criteria carefully you can only draw one conclusion. The Twin Beech, D-18, C-45, SNB, AT-11 etc. The venerable Twin Beech is all of this and more. Good range, great load carrying ability, excellent parts availability, World War II history, good looks and most importantly, they SOUND great! It's an easy aircraft to maintain. The systems are simple and straightforward. The Pratt & Whitney R-985 is probably the best aero engine ever designed. Stone reliable. The Twin Beech is easy to fly and reasonable to insure.

Why do we need a squadron aircraft? Because that's what this group is supposed to be about. This should be the focal point for all of our activities. Something that everyone can

participate in and get a sense of pride and accomplishment out of. Unless all you expect of this group is a pot-luck social club then none of this makes any sense. If this sounds good to you the time to act is now!

This "perfect Warbird" is no secret to the rest of the world. The best examples have already been snapped up and prices on the remaining aircraft are climbing steadily and like most Warbirds there's no end in sight. Our opportunity is now and it's right in our backyard!

We've talked about it before and I have to admit I was a little leery about getting involved in this before. Well, certain facts have come to light recently that put a whole new complexion on this matter. First my involvement with my own aircraft has really opened my eyes to the capabilities of this AC. Secondly the specific airplane available has a lot more going for it than I had thought.

Of course I have been talking about one of Leon Herman's Twin-Beeches', of which there are only 3 left. I recently went up to Leon's and inspected these aircraft and found this: One of these Beeches is the same model as mine. A Canadian 3NM (D-18) that is in untouched original military configuration! Leon has removed and stored all of the interior navigation tables and instrumentation which are included in the sale. The astrodome is still on it. And the outer skin is in much better shape than my airplane if that tells you anything. Also included is every component needed to put her back in flying shape with the exception of engines. Plus a complete set of recovered (ceconite) flying surfaces goes with the deal. The price is between 7 and 8 thousand dollars for all of this.

Sure there's a lot of work to accomplish. But a lot of it is work that most anyone can do. Cleaning of parts, painting, assembling, disassembling. We have the manpower needed. It will need a spar strap. That will take some doing. But we CAN do it. We took those

buildings down didn't we? Engines will cost about 27,000.00. I'm not saying this can happen overnight. But within the 2 years or more it will take to get it to the point of needing engines we will have figured out a way to do it.

I had planned to buy this airplane and do it myself and in fact I have first right of refusal to purchase same. However if there is enough interest in this project and enough sponsors to put this together I'll step aside and turn it over to the group plus I'll donate the first one thousand dollars for the purchase. In addition I will volunteer to head up the restoration committee. Please give this some serious consideration and at the next meeting we will bring it up for discussion and ask for your input. We'll need 8 to 15 sponsors to put in 500 to 1000 dollars each (tax deductible) to get started

We may never have another opportunity to buy an untouched, low time, fully documented airplane such as this again. I couldn't think of a more fitting centerpiece to our new facility and activities than this. ADIOS!

Exec's Column

by Col. Hal Chilton

A New Direction

Last Wednesday I attended my first Staff meeting after being elected Executive Officer and I've come away with a lot of excitement for the coming year! Our new Commanding Officer set the tone early in the meeting by stating his goal for the coming year of "Let's Have Some Fun". How can anyone not love a guy who obviously has his priorities in order!!

I'm also very pleased with the makeup of the Staff. Each of the members show a strong commitment to improving our organization by retaining our strengths while adding new and innovative ideas that will certainly give us a clear focus for the future. Jeff certainly has spent a significant amount of time thinking

about where he wants to lead us and formulating a plan of action to assure our success.

We are certainly a group that has a bright opportunity. The hard work and dedication of many of our long time members have us ready to step up to the next level which all successful growing organizations achieve. Within the next few weeks we'll all be proudly walking in our new hangar which will be the start of one of the finest facilities in the CAF. Our airshow has grown into one of the best entertainment events in the North County and, regardless of its financial success, is greatly appreciated by the community, which is a success unto itself.

Certainly with the show's growing reputation in the area and some changes in our fiscal controls we can keep the event's entertainment value and get back to making a few dollars in the process.

Jeff and the board are also serious about getting more members involved and attracting new members as well. Don't be surprised if your phone rings and please don't hesitate to get involved in our activities. The more you're involved the more fun you'll have.

Stay tuned for an exciting year!

The CAF & the Pifer School

The Squadron was involved in the opening ceremonies of Paso Robles' new Pifer elementary school this month. Pifer's Principal, Mrs. Biddell, wanted an aerial photograph of the ceremonies during which the children, by grouping themselves according to plan, spelled out the word "Pifer" on the playground.

We were delighted when she thought of the Squadron by calling Hal Chilton hoping that we could accommodate her.

As luck would have it, all of our L Birds were otherwise engaged so Steve Grasso was called upon for help. In his usual gracious manner Steve willingly agreed, so the impressive

picture we all saw in last weeks Country News was taken from the back seat of his very sharp Navion!

This is a classic example of the Squadron being able to do something for the community and our sincere thanks go to Steve for donating his time and his airplane for this event.

The Subject of Dues and a Couple of Other Items

An Editorial

It has been brought to the attention of the Staff that there are still 27 members who have not paid dues for the period May 1 1994 through April 30, 1995.

This is particularly disturbing because the members of the Staff believe that we are entering a new era of stability and success for the Squadron.

At the same time it is recognized that there have been some disturbing events and misunderstandings in the past, most of which are simply the inevitable growing pains of an expanding and dynamic group. Our problems with HQ, while mainly the result of over enthusiasm were, nevertheless, divisive, but the Staff sincerely believes that they will be solved to everyone's satisfaction in the immediate future. Even so, there are those who have wondered, "Just who are we and where are we going?"

To those who have held back their dues and, quite possibly, their level of involvement as well, I would like to say that, as an observer of both the new Staff and of the membership as a whole, I could not be more enthusiastic or excited about our future.

On occasion I'm sure many of you have observed an occasional note of pessimism in some of the articles in the newsletter that have crept in solely because of my own previous outlook.

In all honesty and seriousness, at this point I am simply overwhelmed at the thought of the possibilities ahead. No matter who we are by name, we have the most incredible future ahead of us that we can imagine.

These feelings and beliefs are not only about buildings and projects, which are exciting enough, (especially some of the new ones!) but they encompass the whole spectrum as to what we can become. Such as; a force in the community, a tremendous example of the best aspects of volunteerism, a highly visible and viable facility for the community; a great CAF unit, a base of stability for local youth (Cadet Program), projects for ourselves like the twin Beech, fly-ins, fly-outs, aviation flea markets, weekend informal activities.; fund raiser barbecues, the list can be endless and all of them can be one heck of a lot of fun.

Some have said that there might be too many activities. Well, when you get right down to it there are about 15 members, maximum, who have been personally and physically involved in our main project, the new buildings. That leaves 110 or so who just might be interested in something else! Not everyone will become involved in every project. Everyone has different interests so why not come up with new and different things that will involve more members?

One of the erroneous concepts that should be eliminated immediately is that we are a "Club".

We are not a Club. We are, as we have been since day one, a para-military organization dedicated to a particular set of ideas, the restoration of military aircraft and the furtherance of the respect due those who gave their lives for their country.

A Club is like a dinner Club where people come out for food and some entertainment. This is not us. Or if this is what you are looking for, I regret to say that personally I think you are in the wrong group.

The key to our organization, in my opinion, is involvement. It should be a requirement for joining and it should continue as long as one is a member. On the other hand it is obviously up to the Staff and membership as a whole to provide activities of interest to those who wish to join.

This involves us ALL, speaking of involvement so for those of you who wonder who we are and where we are going, send in your dues, jump in again and become part of the team and know in your heart that you are one of the ones who make the decisions about who and what we are and who make this outfit TICK!

Back up the group with your funds and yourselves. Your rewards will be incredible.

Checks (for now) to: Estrella Warbirds Museum, P.O. Box 570, Paso Robles, CA 93447.

End of Editorial.

Flea Market Fund Raisers

Speaking of involvement, another nifty idea that two of our good members have come up with is to raise money at the local Flea Market. Both Rosemary Netto and Willa Killion have offered to staff a booth at the monthly market held at the Fairgrounds.

Out of over 140 people on our list there should be tons of stuff accumulating in garages and attics throughout the entire North County!! Maybe stuff that is no longer needed but that you really just don't want to give away.

This could be turned into cold hard cash for the Squadron and from all accounts there is a fair amount of money made at these Markets. Please consider this request and give Rosemary a call. If you want to bring things to the meeting that would be fine but if you want to make arrangements for a pick up of larger items or a volume of items, give her a call and we can have someone handle it. A great idea!

Name Tags

As we all know, our departed good friend and fellow member, Paul Tardiff, arranged for the name tags that are given out at the meetings. It has been noted that many of you are not picking them up and displaying them on your shirt front or whatever.

Please try to do so. We are fortunate in having a number of new members and it is certainly a help to all to be able to make the proper introductions when trying to integrate these members into the group.

If you don't have a tag, look around your house!! Everyone had one at one point. If you really didn't get one please call Bruce Toomey at 238-9266 or 9515 and leave a message. Dan Leedom has the label machine and has been most helpful in getting names to us at the meeting.

Membership

As you can see on the new, partially completed committee roster, Obbie Atkinson has agreed to head up a newly created Membership Committee. Obbie has a number of excellent ideas in this regard and he is preparing a letter that will be sent out under separate cover. We could not include it in the newsletter simply because of time.

Your Editor hereby wishes to apologize to Obbie for stealing a few of his ideas for inclusion in his own editorial but they were so good that I just couldn't wait. Obbie has some very strong feelings about the entire membership question that will go a long way toward strengthening our organization. and helping everyone to get to know one another. Obbie has taken this program on just like he does everything else, with a lot of thought and giving it a lot of his effort and time.

A Kind Gesture by Paso Robles Glass

The little contractor-type building that was hauled out to the new site from the almond plant a week or so

ago was in pretty sorry shape. Since then Glen Thomson and Kevin Craig and perhaps others have been working on it to rehang the doors or make new ones and to repair the glass windows which were all smashed out.

Glen took the windows to Paso Robles Glass last week and left them to be repaired. When he came to pick them up he was told that there would be no charge because they were for the CAF/Museum!

There were a number of windows so this was not an inexpensive gift. We are most grateful to Paso Robles Glass for their thoughtful donation.

Membership Inducements

At the September meeting Tom Leatherwood was offering rides in the twin Beech for anyone who wished! This was a great gesture and a number of people happily took advantage of it.

Depending on the amount of interest shown, Tom has offered to take new members on a 30 minute or so tour of the area if the CAF would foot the bill for at least part of the gas. This is a pretty nice gesture since gas isn't exactly the only expense in operating the aircraft.

So those of you who are actively recruiting, keep this offer in mind and check with Tom as to possible times and dates.

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