

CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE NEWS

Estrella Squadron



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

Volume VI Number 3

Paso Robles, California

March 1995

March Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 1995 at the Hangar. Social Hour beginning at 6:00pm and Dinner at 7:00pm. It is reported that Diner will be BBQ chicken by Mike Wing so BE THERE and get your fingers sticky!

It is requested that all Colonels be in uniform.

Our program for the evening will be a very interesting and timely one provided by Katherine Hulme who is currently the President of the Santa Maria Museum of Flight, Inc.

A brief biography of Mrs. Hulme's background, especially as it relates to her educational and museum activities is on page 3.

Her observations will be of very great interest to all of us in view of our current and future plans with regard to the Estrella Warbirds Museum, Inc.

Open House A Great Success

Thanks to Col. Don Leedom and all those who assembled on Friday, February 18, our first Squadron "activity" resulted in a good turnout of local people, many of whom had never been to the facility at all.

Chef Gary Morrison, and crew (guess who?) provided over 75 tasteful breakfasts and all those in attendance were able to wander around, at their leisure, in and amongst the various aircraft on display.

Rides were provided by the L-Bird group as well as individuals in their own aircraft including Col. Tom Leatherwood in his beautiful Beech.

It was a low-key, laid back day for our visitors and many expressed their thanks to a number of members.

As was indicated previously, these informal programs that bring in local people are superb vehicles to help us establish the rapport we want to foster with the city residents.

A job well done!

More Thanks

Just a brief reminder of the benefits and results of a single suggestion by one member. It was Col. Park Parkening who came up with the idea of the 50/50 Raffle at each meeting. The very first one at the February meeting netted a total of about 218 bucks which, when split, netted \$109 for the Squadron. This may not sound like a whole lot but just ask the Dinner crew how much work it takes to net each 100 bucks that they earn after four or more days effort!

Anyway, our thanks to Col. Park for a great idea!

Meeting Notes

We were finally able to hear from Captain Wooldridge at our February meeting and he was well worth waiting for. There was some question of Naval navigational proficiency but this was all ironed out!

It should also be brought to the attention of the membership that there were a number of people contributing to the dinner, in

The Estrella Squadron Newsletter

is published monthly as an unofficial voluntary contribution. Content and opinion, other than by-line columns, is the sole responsibility of the Editor, Bruce MacE. Toomey unless otherwise noted.

Submission for inclusion are not only welcomed but solicited, including articles, display and classified ads, etc. Please send all submissions to the Editor (by name) at P.O. Box 3065, Paso Robles, CA 93447.

Graphics, computer layout, design and use of photocopying machine as well as paper and other supplies are the contribution of Stuart Toomey and,

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3044 Propeller Drive
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(Bruce Toomey has no business connection with or financial interest in Toomey Aviation).

addition to the regular sufferers, namely, Marie Compere, Carol Thurber and Ruth Rezich. With Willa Killion these fine ladies provided the desserts which were scarfed up in short order by our group of gourmands.

The point of this is to thank these dear ladies and to let others know (men as well as women!) that when called upon by the dinner crew to help out, it isn't exactly the toughest thing you can do.

These characters work for days to get a meal ready so a little response when asked would help a lot. "Nuf said!"

"Warbird Scene"

by: Col. Tom Leatherwood

Well we're not exactly experiencing "flying weather lately so there's not much to report on the local scene. Although last weeks "open house" seems to have been a success. Lots of flying, food and camaraderie. Great weather too! I keep wondering when the rest of the Warbird world is going to wake up and discover Paso Robles. I must admit though that "things" sure seem to be happening right now. We're pouring concrete for our own new development. John Moore is starting the Highway Patrols new facility as well as his new hanger/office complex at the west end of the big Port-A-Ports. Kim Lilly has stated that he is ready to begin his similar project adjacent to Johns while on the south side. Chuck Wentworth is gearing up for his development of large hangars near where "Second Wind" is proposing a large hangar complex of their own. I guess it just points out that you'd better watch what you wish for, you might get it!

Internationally Speaking

The sale of the three T-6's in South Africa has come and gone with a Texas based company bidding successfully on all three. One was sold right off to an individual in England while the other two are slated to arrive in Houston Texas via container ship sometime soon. Asking price, 130,000.00! Of course asking and getting are two different

things. 130k will buy you a pretty nice airplane these days and these two are working airplanes right off the line. It's hard to believe that the venerable "Texan" is still earning its keep after all these years. Yet besides these 3 the AFRICANS STILL HAVE 120 T-6's in inventory. However, this is the beginning of the end for these as the phasing out program has begun and as I understand it they will be released in groups of 12 aircraft. Over the next few years. It will be interesting to see what impact this has on the market prices. for these airplanes. In addition to these aircraft I have been informed that they have some museum aircraft that may be disposed of. They include a Dehavilland Mosquito, Focke-Wulfe 190, and an ME-262. Nothing else to add at this time but "I'm working on it".

Tuskegee Airmen!?

I wonder how many of you know what that means? For those that don't this term was applied to a group of Black fighter pilots in WWII that served their country with great distinction. They're finally making a motion picture about their exploits and are filming as I speak near Muskogee, Oklahoma. Tuskegee's in Muskogee! Say that 10 times as fast as you can. Anyway, my Bonanza was hired as a camera ship for the aerial sequences and is back there shooting film of Spitfires, Mustangs and ME-109s going at it.

Estrella Squadron Staff

Commanding Officer	Col. Jeff Welles
Executive Officer	Col. Hal Chilton
Finance	Col. Rosemary Netto
Adjutant	Col. Bob Singleton
Operations	Col. Glen Thomson
Maintenance	Col. Bob Miller
Safety	Col. Keith Bowers

Staff Appointments

PIO	Col. Blake Wideman
PX Officer	Willa Killion

"THE BEECH GROUP"

My favorite topic. Since my rhetoric in last months newsletter I have good news and bad news! The good news is that the airplane has been sequestered in the hanger. A step in the right direction. However until the hangar is better organized we really can't begin any serious work. The bad news is we have "no dough". No bread, no quid, no greenbacks, no smackers, none-o-that good stuff, without which we ain't nowhere! At the risk of beating that poor dead horse, again, Ten of our worthys have still yet to cough up with the bacon. Without mentioning any names the initials are;

JS,DL,BM,BT,BW,JS,AG,KB,G M, and WK. Now I'm sure that putting your names down on that sign up sheet that night gave everyone that "warm fuzzy" feeling of belonging to something worthwhile. Maybe I should have specified which "Year" I had intended this project to begin? Bottom line! Everyone that pledged their support that night has a responsibility to every other individual on that list to

follow through with that promise.

Last month the response to this same issue was an additional 1100.00 bucks which put us just over the hurdle of the original 8000.00 for the purchase. The additional 5000.00 pledge, though yet to be seen, is critical to getting this airplane off the ground. I believe that there are lot of other members, whose support we desperately need, who are waiting to see what happens here before committing themselves. How about it?.....ADIOS!

Katherine Hulme

Current President, Santa Maria Museum of Flight, Inc.

Recipient of the Silver Patrick Henry Award of the Military Order of World Wars. The first private citizen to be so honored in the Central Coast area.

Invited to speak to the Mutual Concerns of Air Museums Seminar held at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Subject was "Operating An All Volunteer Museum."

Served as volunteer Executive Director of the Santa Maria Museum of Flight 1990-1992.

President of the Board
1988-1990

Director of Educational
Programs 1986-1988

Coordinated the P-38, P-51 and Santa Maria Airport 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

Supervised construction of the first museum building.

Served as Director of Admissions for the Golden State Air Fair 1984-1988.

Past Accomplishments:

Director of School Volunteer Programs - Ocean View Elementary District.

Adult Education Program Coordinator - Huntington Beach High School District.

California Coordinator - National School Volunteer Program

Invited to write a monograph for the California State Department of Education, Adult Education Division. The subject was, "Volunteer Training as an Adult Education Program."

Married to Dick Hulme, have four children and nine grandchildren. Moved to Santa Maria in 1981 after spending 21 years in Huntington Beach. Originally from Seattle, Washington.

On Tour With'Aluminum Overcast'

by Dan Bowlin WB 6793
From EAA Warbirds Magazine

They walk slowly toward the big bomber, pausing every few feet to stare, trying to remember something from 50 years ago. Some are accompanied by family members, but some come alone because sadly, they are left alone in life now with only their memories. They are all men in their seventies, very brave men... heroes in my book!

Those of us lucky enough to be on tour with the EAA Aviation Foundation's B-17 can almost always pick the aircrew members from World War II out of the

Committee Chairs

Program	
George Marrett	466-7640
Dinners	
Bob Miller	434-1594
Rosemary Netto	467-3521
Membership	
Obbie Atkinson	238-9212
Air Show	
Ashley Lightfoot	239-4461
Hangar/Grounds	
Kevin Craig	238-4643
Bruce Toomey	238-9266 238-9516
Ground Equipment	
Dave Geiger	239-1598
Project Manager	
Gary Corippo	238-2090 238-0888
Insurance	
Elmer Belmont	466-1062
Refreshments	
Doug Miner	239-1054
Activities	
Tina Leatherwood	239-7450
Don Leedom	238-4313
Meeting Setup	
By Flights (see Kevin Craig)	
Photo	
Ralph Grasso	237-2813
Historian	
Dirk Hale	237-0819 238-8447
Museum Director	Open

crowd now...they have that look about them, like they've been there. It's hard to explain, but I wish all Warbird members could experience meeting some of these men.

I have compiled some of the incidents I have witnessed while on the tour, which hopefully will give you a little taste of our tour. I won't use any names because the last thing I want to do is to embarrass these men that I respect so!

Little boys, probably great-grandchildren, ask "Gramps" how he fit into the ball turret. He

replied, "Well, I guess it's the 50/50 rule boys...that was 50 years ago and 50 pounds ago." Great answer! I really enjoyed it, but I'm afraid the little boys didn't quite grasp the humor.

Another ball turret gunner in another town was gazing at the open turret on the ramp I walked up and struck up the conversation with my opening remark that seems to always work. "You were an aircrew member?" That's all you have to do; just ask that one question and LISTEN to another history lesson. He told me of an incident that happened on a mission that he still can't explain all these years later.

Returning from a bombing run deep into Germany, his B-17 was still in formation, far from where they thought there was any more fighter activity. He said he was sitting there "fat, dumb and happy" looking at his buddy, the gunner in the next airplane, when his buddy's guns suddenly swung around and were pointed right below his position. His friend screamed, "He's right below you! I'm jammed!" He looked out the side of the turret and was startled to see an Me-109 with dark green camouflage right under his airplane...100 feet away. He said the German fighter pilot "looked up at me and smiled...he had a red handle-bar mustache and a light blue flying suit...he just smiled...and before I could swing my guns around to fire, my buddy blew him out of the sky. One second he was there grinning at me, the next he was gone. I never fired a shot!" He

said, "I still wonder why he was there so close to us? Or maybe he was just tired and decided to call it quits!"

A rather small man was standing at a distance, admiring the old Fortress. I thought perhaps he was a ball turret gunner because of his stature (they were usually the smallest man on the crew because of the confining space in the turret), but he turned out to be a pilot. He hung around with us all day, telling stories and reminiscing about his war experiences, but he refused to go on board the airplane.

He finally confided in me that he had lost so many friends in his Group that he just couldn't go onboard "the old thing...too many bad memories." I told him that's the reason why we were on tour with the B-17 - to honor his friends and all the other aircrew members that had died in the war.

He said, "I made a promise to God that if I ever got our of that German prison camp alive, that I would never set foot on an airplane again!" I said "I betcha after 50 years He'll forgive you if you break that promise." We went on board together...and the next morning we flew!

He showed up precisely on time, ready to go, and received his safety briefing as a B-17 Historical Society member from our Crew Chief, Engineer, Pilot, Mechanic and Boss, Larry New... and boarded to fly an airplane for the first time since he got shot down in 1944!

The program calls for our Society Members to actually fly the aircraft from the left seat in

cruise, with one of our regular EAA pilots in the right seat. We take four photos of them at the controls, with the last one being made by the copilot. As I tapped him on the shoulder to look at me so I could get his picture, he turned and flashed a big toothy smile with tears running down both cheeks! Back on the ground, he gave us all a big hug and a sincere "thank you." I knew what he meant.

Another city on the tour and another Eighth Air Force pilot is receiving his briefing from Larry New prior to flying the B-17 again. He has arrived this morning dressed "properly" for the mission; Bomb Group Reunion hat, white silk scarf, original radio headset and leather A-2 flying jacket complete with Eighth Air Force patch and his B-17 name and nose art hand painted on the back. Now this ain't no run-of-the-mill jacket he bought at Oshkosh; it's the real thing with tattered cuffs and cracked, properly scuffed leather - a thing of beauty!

It is obvious from the onset that this gentleman is a tiger. Once in the left seat he assumes his Aircraft Commander role again, and with great ease! He tells me that he has a friend in a little town up ahead who was in the POW camp with him. We are at 1500 feet, cruising to our next stop on the tour, and he says he would like to fly over his friend's home. He very quickly located his friend's house in this little southern town and racks the big bomber into a 45 degree left bank! He is constantly looking

out and talking about his friend, then smoothly rolls into another 45 degree turn the other way, and shouts with glee when his buddy RUNS to the front yard and waves. What was amazing to me and the other pilots on board was that through both steep turns, the flight instruments were virtually FROZEN; the turns were both perfect, he didn't lose or gain a foot, and was looking outside all the time. These guys were good pilots and still are!

From 1942 until the long range escort fighters arrived in numbers in late '43 and early '44, every time these bomber crews went on a mission hey lost one third of the planes...send out 100 and 66 come home. Hundreds of guys were getting killed or captured on every major mission. You had to complete 25 missions to go home, so simple logic will tell you that your chances of completing your tour of duty and going home were just about nil! And yet, they went anyway. That is incredible bravery! Even the "Little Friends," the fighter pilots of the Eighth Air Force, who have always had a friendly rivalry with the bomber guys, will lower their voices in reverence when referring to the bravery of the bomber crews!

"Aluminum Overcast" will be going out on tour again in mid to late April. Come to see us if you get a chance. You, too, might get a chance to meet some real-life heroes as I have.

Thanks to Dr. Bill Harrison and Tom Poberezny. Keep 'em Flying!

(Submitted by our CO, Col. Jeff Welles)

Ed. Note: The above, of course, relates to an EAA program but the article itself also serves as a poignant reminder of what the CAF is all about.

Hey! What About The "Rock?"

Maybe we had better start a Society Column!!

Somebody, (a member) is sporting a Big Rock on her third finger, left hand, given to her by somebody (a CAF Colonel) !!! Now we don't want to give away any secrets or mention any names but their initials are Geraldine Siegel and Keith Bowers!! Yea!, Yahoo! and Congratulations and Best Wishes from the whole crew!!

We understand that a September Wedding is planned, possibly at Geri's base in Southern California.

(Can't you just see a gaggle of L-Birds, S-2's, Morrisseys, Bonanzas, Beeches, Navions, Cessnas, ultra-lights and whatnot, all on final at some totally freaked-out Air Base??)

Again, Our Very Best Wishes To You Both From The Whole Bunch!!

Classified Ads

Private Pilot Ground School 12 Week Class

Spring Class: March 23-
June 15, 1995

Ground training in preparation
for FAA written exam for private
pilot license

Day: Thursday
Time: 7:00-9:30pm
Room: 105, Junior High,
North Campus
Fee: \$40.00
Instructor: Warren Crain
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Upcoming Event

There will be a special program
sponsored by the Atascadero
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Estrella Warbirds Museum, Inc. Museum News

Volume I Number 1

Paso Robles, California

March 1995

Paso Robles Air Show Update

by: Ashley Lightfoot,
Air Show Chairman

It's that time of the year again, folks! Only ninety more shopping days until the Paso Robles Air Show! There are a few new things to tell you about this year, so sit back, relax and prepare to be dazzled.

As many of you know, last year's air show, thought a huge operational success, was a dismal financial failure. The problems of last year guided the Museum Board to reevaluate the show's purpose and goals. The Board voted to make some significant changes. Briefly, they are as follows:

1. Go back to a one day show. The wear and tear of a two day show, along with the increased financial risk of a two day show drove the decision to step back, regroup, and "go with what we know." The air show date has been set for (get out your notebooks) June 4, 1995.
2. Air races are history. The air races, although an excellent idea and risk, proved to be too much

of a financial burden for the return. They will not be featured in the foreseeable future.

3. Adopt a reoccurring theme and logo. Paso Robles has the unique ability to feature aircraft from all periods of aviation history. With this in mind, the theme of "Aviation Through the Ages" has been adopted as the reoccurring theme for this and future air shows. A logo representing this theme is currently being refined and should be ready for publication soon.

These changes offer our air show the opportunity to get back on track toward its designed goal of making money for the Museum.

We have multiple acts and displays *scheduled* to appear this year. The performers include two separate acrobatic performers and a showdown between the two toward the end of the show; an appearance by a (get this) B-29 Stratofortress along with its playmate B-24 and C-46. Yet to be confirmed is an AV-8B Harrier Demo Team, an F/A-18 Demo Team, an A-10 Demo Team and even a possible appearance by a B-1B bomber and the F-117A Nighthawk

Stealth fighter! I want to emphasize that none of the military aircraft are confirmed and won't be until the day of the show. That's just the nature of the beast. Of course, we will also have the usual outstanding collection of warbirds from around the country.

The publicity this year will also have some interesting twists. Plans call for jump teams to descend into school yards to foster interest among the kids, skywriting to herald the show over the population centers of Fresno, Bakersfield and Santa Barbara and additional visits to the local schools by Army helicopters scheduled to perform in the show. All of this in addition to the normal radio, newspaper and television blitz that precedes the air show date.

It's tough to do all of this by ourselves, though. Also printed in this issue are the subcommittee heads and the tasks assigned to each. If you have a talent to lend in any of these areas, PLEASE call the subcommittee chairman and offer assistance! We need all of the help that we can get!

Building Project Update

by Col. Gary Corippo

This column is being written to try and keep all of the members informed of all that is happening with the new buildings on the new building site.

First of all, I would like to thank the members who volunteered their Friday before Christmas to help install the new chainlink fence. This crew was made up of Bill Kitchen, Mike Wing, Don Leedom, Kevin Craig, Blake Wideman, Tom O'Hara, Cliff Thurber, Ben Tuckey and Ron Thompson and yours truly. The fence came out really nice and adds a lot to the property.

Two weeks later we met at the property to lay out the site for the placement of the buildings and the parking lot.. This was done by Glen Thomson, Keith Bowers, Ron Thompson and a couple of others that I fail to remember.

On February 12, Ron Thompson and Mike Wing excavated the area in the taxiway where the water line crosses and prepared it for the blacktop. Also, Ron Thompson and his son, Mike, helped me get the taxiway cleared of weeds. The blacktop was provided by the head of the Paso Robles Water Dept., Dick Avery. Dick came out on Saturday morning and loaded,

delivered and dumped the blacktop in such a way that it was very little work for us to spread and roll it. If you see Dick downtown you might thank him as he saved us a lot of work.

Anyway, that job is now done and we don't have to worry about the rain causing us trouble on the taxiway. Another job well done!

We plan to spray in the taxiway and along side of the blacktop area so that we will be rid of the pesky weeds. Col. Don Leedom says that he has a spray outfit so it should not be too hard to get done.

Another job that should be started right away is the block wall entrance. We need to excavate and pour a concrete foundation. Once this is done we will be able to lay blocks. Anyone who is a mason or who has ALWAYS wanted to be one, call me and we will get it done. Should really look great.

On the 25th of February we plan to start moving dirt on the site (if the weather will cooperate with us). Not a lot to do but this is just another preliminary job that will get us closer to putting up the Hangar. Once we get the dirt moved we will start work on the concrete foundation. Col. Glen Thomson tells me that the work permit will be in his hands on Monday.

Well, that shows you that we are not standing still and that we are

moving ahead. Once the weather settles down we will start to make things happen. I will try to have a report each month so that you will know what is happening. If each member can give a little time it will make the jobs easy and each member will feel like they have done their part to make our facility closer to reality. See ya' next time! . . . Gary.

Ground Breaking Ceremony

Don't forget! There will be a Ground Breaking Ceremony at the new site in the very near future. Information as to the exact date will be disseminated by your Flight Leaders. Please plan to be there This will be a very important moment in our brief history and, again, another chance to put our best foot forward with regard to the community.

Beech Group

There will be a date and time announcement at the March CAF Meeting regarding a meeting of the Beech Restoration Group. (More Beech info in the "Warbirds Column" this issue.)

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Dan Lichti
Artwork

Blake Wideman
Publications

Judy Corippo
Hospitality Tent

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Rosemary Netto
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Mike Slason
Ramp Transport

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Aircraft Marshalling

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Bruce Toomey
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