

The Estrella Warbird Museum

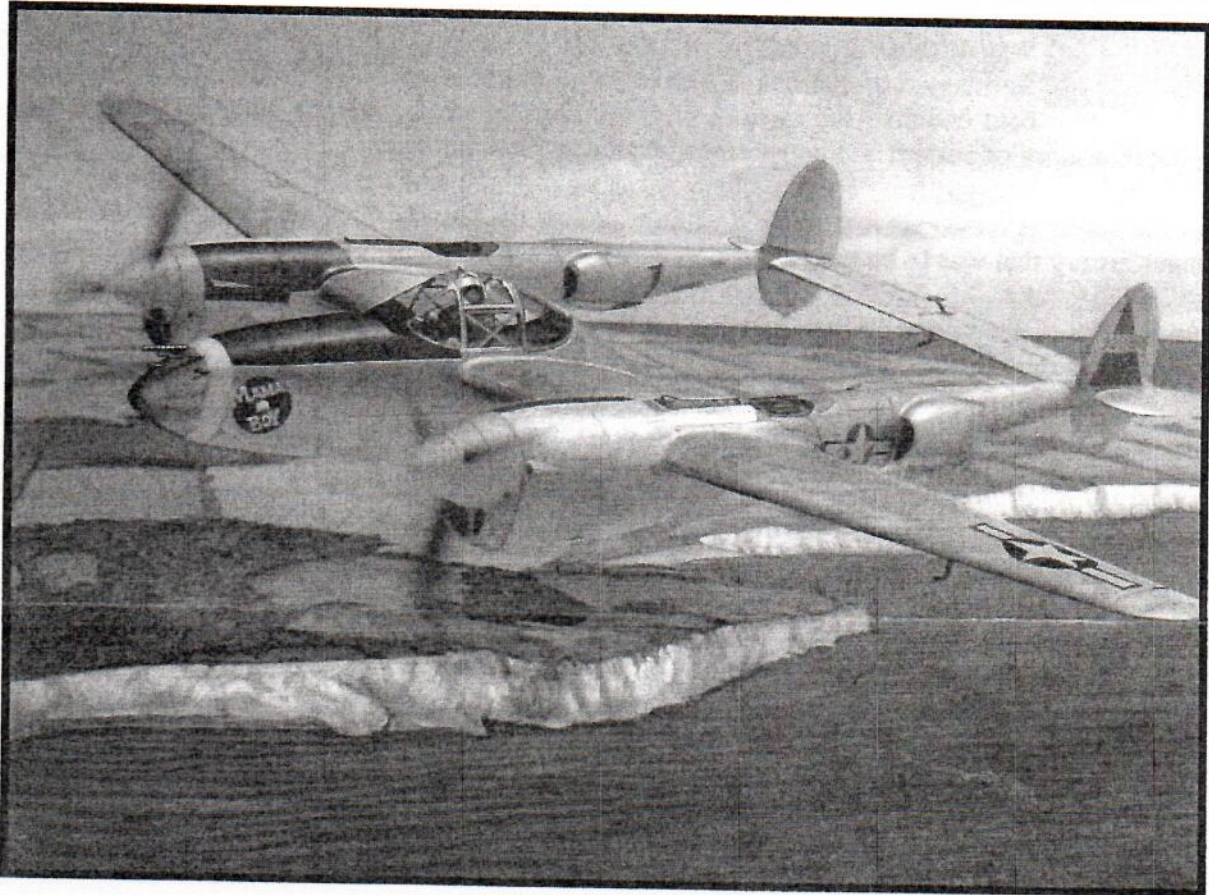
The Eagle

Honoring the Past—Inspiring the Future

Volume 14, Number ¹²~~10~~—Paso Robles, California—December 2009



Vol 14 No 12



Our latest addition to Freedom Hall's growing collection of aircraft painted by the nationally-recognized artist Mel Wysock shows a P-38 flying over the White Cliffs of Dover. You can read more about Mr. Wysock and his story and his remarkable generosity to EWM on page 7 in Betty Miller's Museum Musings.

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Words to Live By from the Old Curmudgeon:

“Will Rogers never knew a pilot.”
A comment on Roger's claim he never met a man he didn't like.

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“Thoughts From the Flight Line”

Musings by the President, Peter Visel

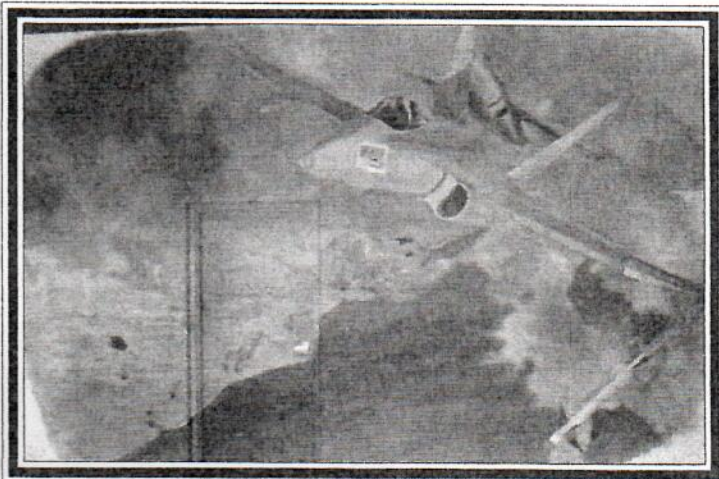
During the past several months, I've been on a wake-up call. It was something about our guest speaker's presentation in October that opened my eyes to the reality of World War II and the reason that generation has been called the "Greatest Generation" ever. It became personal to me. I was struck by the vast amount (literally) of aircraft expended and lives lost in the battle for freedom of not just the United States, but the world. Several days following the presentation, I received via email, a copy of a personal flight log for a WW II co-pilot detailing all 25 of his missions during bombing raids over the cities of Germany. I was struck in awe of the personal ordeals he went through from the crippling cold endured, the intense, gripping faces of death, and the sheer number, not tens nor hundreds, but thousands of aircraft and crews sent out on individual missions

During this past week, I was again mesmerized while watching the History Channel's series of WWII in HD. It was no longer history that was to be read from a book, packed on a shelf and forgotten about, but once again, it brought home the grim reality that the personal memories of the horrors of conflict and war remain with the participants the rest of their lives. Much of what happens while fighting for freedom, never makes the news media. It remains in the hearts and minds of those who were there for a lifetime. Estrella Warbirds Museum is very fortunate that many have chosen to share those memories with us and leave for us to display for future generations, those items or artifacts that were personal to them during conflict.

It is with this vein of thought that I extend my deepest appreciation to everyone who has played a role in developing and progressing Estrella Warbirds Museum. It is critical that we keep our mission in the forefront at all times, dedicated to the restoration and preservation of military aircraft, vehicles and memorabilia of those who flew the aircraft or worked on or around them. Our greatest strength is not to glorify conflict, but rather to make a future generation aware of the fact that our way of life does not come without extreme sacrifice. The results of our endeavors will always be a reminder to our children and grandchildren with the hopes that there is no need to repeat history but to learn from the realities of the past.

Thank you for your support and dedication!

Peter D. Visel
Estrella Warbirds Museum
President



Gerri O'Brien's latest contribution to the Museum is this stunning depiction of two FA/18's in combat. You can see it the next time you visit the Brooks Building. Other examples of Gerri's remarkable work can be seen in the Woodland building and at the back of Freedom Hall, where her painting of scenes from the Korean War serve as a fitting backdrop to the MASH unit on display. Next time you see Gerri at a Museum function or dinner, tell her thanks for helping make the EWM such a special place.



December 2 Program— Gary Ryan
The Joy of the Banjo
“You can’t help but smile when Gary’s on Stage”
By George Marrett, Program Chairman

Gary Ryan, banjoist extraordinaire, gifted pianist, pilot and builder of aircraft, air-show announcer, licensed cruise boat captain and artist, former candidate for the Presidency, and successful entrepreneur will be our speaker at the December dinner. Gary has been playing a banjo since a young boy and made his show business debut while in the eighth grade. Of that experience, Gary says, “Showtime arrived and I sat down and played ‘The World is Waiting for the Sunrise,’ a then popular song by Les Paul and Mary Ford. The crowd loved it and clapped and cheered. They wanted an encore. Encore? I’d just played the only song I knew . . . But the lesson was learned. If you want to dazzle your audience, you’d better know more than one tune!” Gary has since learned more than one tune. His musical journey has taken him from Berkeley to Denver to Las Vegas and beyond and, of course, to Morro Bay where for 14 years he was captain of the riverboat bay cruiser and its chief musician, a “gig” that was supposed to last “just for the summer.”

Gary has played with the Great American Jazz Band at festivals across the nation and is a “roving ambassador” for the Mammoth Jazz Festival along with Philip Smith of the Stevie Wonder Band and they still play at events up and down the west coast. He is a recording artist and has been called “a jack of all trades and master of *all*.”

Charlie Brown once said, “Everybody should have a banjo.” Gary will show you why!

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Dinner Menu
Wednesday, December 2, 2009



Prime Rib
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\$15.00 Per Person

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Social Hour 6pm-7pm
Dinner & Program Follows

Movie Nite !

Thursday - December 10th

6:00pm - Pizza & Popcorn

6:30pm - Movie Time

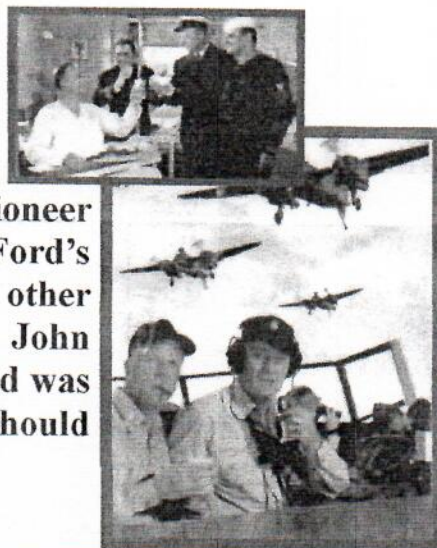
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John Ford & John Wayne's soaring tribute
to a courageous friend.

STARRING: JOHN WAYNE, Maureen O'Hara, Dan Dailey
Based on true story of Commander Frank "Spig" Wead, pioneer aviator turned screenwriter (he wrote screenplay for John Ford's *They Were Expendable*.) Wayne and O'Hara play off each other well, both playing strong characters. And, the only film John Wayne ever made without his toupee! The real "Spig" Wead was bald and Ford thought for authenticity's sake the toupee should go! It went when "Spig" grows older in the film.

★★1/2 Leonard Maltin (1957 - 110 min.)



BRAIN-TEASER FOR TRIVIA BUFFS

Okay, film buffs, here's one that will test your knowledge of a film I'm certain you've seen at least once and probably more, Alfred Hitchcock's "North by Northwest." In it is one of the most iconic scenes in film history, shot on Highway 155 just east of Corcoran Road (a bit northeast of Lost Hills) a half-century ago in October of 1958. It was the scene where a crop-duster chases Roger O. Thornhill (Grant) through a cornfield. Now the question: **What type of plane was it?**

Find the answer and a bit more on Page 9



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MUSEUM MUSING

By Betty Miller

New Painting in Freedom Hall: We have just received an awesome acrylic painting of a P-38 over the White Cliffs of Dover by Cayucos artist, Mel Wysock. Mr Wysock has previously donated 6 other paintings of aircraft that are currently hung in Freedom Hall. This large painting really is an eye-popping, must-see addition to the P-38 exhibit, so be sure to come in and check it out soon!

Originally from Chicago where he attended the American Academy of Art, Wysock later went to the Illinois Institute of Technology to study Mechanical Engineering until he was drafted to serve during the Korean War. The military sent him to Fort Belvoir Engineering School to study Civil Engineering. Wysock was stationed at Beale AFB in California and Elmendorf AFB in Alaska, as a Civil Engineer.

After his discharge from the military, Mel Wysock owned an advertising company and was a partner in Super Speed Equipment Company, producers of racing equipment.

Best known for his paintings of cars, trains and airplanes, his work can be found from Germany to the South Pacific, and places like the Corvette Museum, Vandenburg AFB, Estero Bay Visitors Center, and now at the Estrella Warbird Museum!

December Exhibit: Many people born before 1935 can remember exactly where they were on Sunday, December 7, 1941. We will have an in-depth display with accompanying video commemorating Pearl Harbor day during the month of December.

Uniform Collection: The uniform collection has now been entered into the computer system. We have just been offered a WW II female Marine uniform belonging to a woman who served with the Marine Corps Woman's Reserve, which was reactivated in 1942 to free up men for combat duty. This will be an important addition to our WW II US Navy "Wave" uniform, once worn by Betty Rowe and our rare WASP dress uniform. We are now looking for a donation of a US Army "WAC" uniform, so if you are aware of one that might be donated, please call me!

We recently obtained the donation of a cedar chest from *Don and Aquilla Hart* which will be a great storage unit for some of our woolen items that can be folded. (Pullovers, overseas caps, etc.)

If you have or are aware of any items that you think we might like to obtain for the Museum, I request that all prospective Donors use my cell phone or home numbers (805-471-0472 & 805-466-1212) so that I can determine if the donation is unique or a duplicate of existing items already in storage. Some folks recently asked me why their donation was not on display. Museums always have items that are in storage awaiting a future exhibit. This keeps us from being static and offers something new to see for repeat visitors. With our limited space, we cannot always have everything out on display and some items are for research and may never be displayed, but are still very important to the Museum.

ESTRELLA WARBIRD MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Jackie Brooks

The Gift Shop welcomes Jean Thiebaud & June Cunningham to its family of volunteers, and also wants to take the occasion of the end of the year to express its gratitude and thanks to all of the volunteers who have given so generously of their time to make the Shop a success. Thank you SO much!



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ANSWER TO BRAIN-TEASER

The plane flying in the scene is an N3N--a World War II Navy pilot trainer built in the 1930s. They were a popular plane to be converted for crop dusting. This plane was owned and piloted by Bob Coe, a former WWII lieutenant who lived in Wasco and made his living dusting crops. He

later remarked that he could have made more money that day dusting crops. He passed away in 1987 in his 80s.) And by the way, the plane that hits the truck and explodes? It's another plane--a wartime Boeing Model 75. Hitchcock bought the worn-out plane for the explosion for a few hundred dollars.

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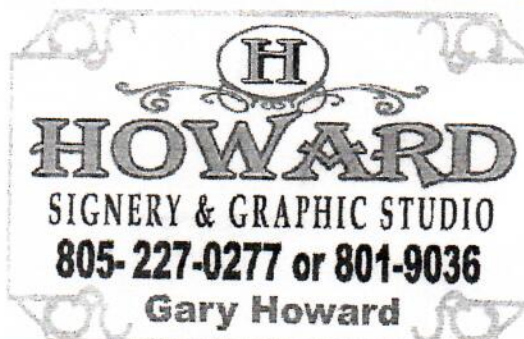

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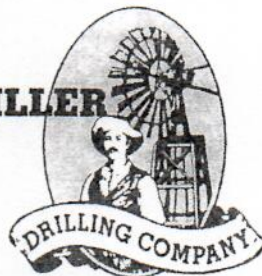
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Around the 'ol Flight Line



Why yes, Ron does most of our electrical work. Why do you ask?



DOCENT DOINGS by Betty Miller



We have two new Docent Trainees, *Dave Brooks* and *John Gramentine*. We always need more Docents and we all need to keep our eyes open for prospective volunteers. I was recently the speaker at the MOAA (Military Officers Association of America) and I was able to get two more prospective volunteers for

Docent Duty (one for the Woodland Building) and will get them into training asap. I am scheduled to do a morning Kiwanis Club meeting in December and hope to get more folks interested in joining us and volunteering.

Speaking of Volunteering---December is always a busy month with family, holiday events, and travel. It is very important that if you are an existing Docent or Gift Shop Volunteer, you **step up and volunteer** for a shift. We depend on our volunteers and during the holiday

season **we really need you** at the Museum to keep our doors open! It is a huge disappointment for a visitor to find our doors locked because we couldn't get Docents and Gift Shop Workers. (Besides, you may find it very restful to get away from your holiday guests for a few hours!) Please say "**YES**" when Docent Coordinator Randy Majewski or Gift Shop Manager Jackie Brooks calls you for service!



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