

The Estrella Warbird Museum

# The Eagle

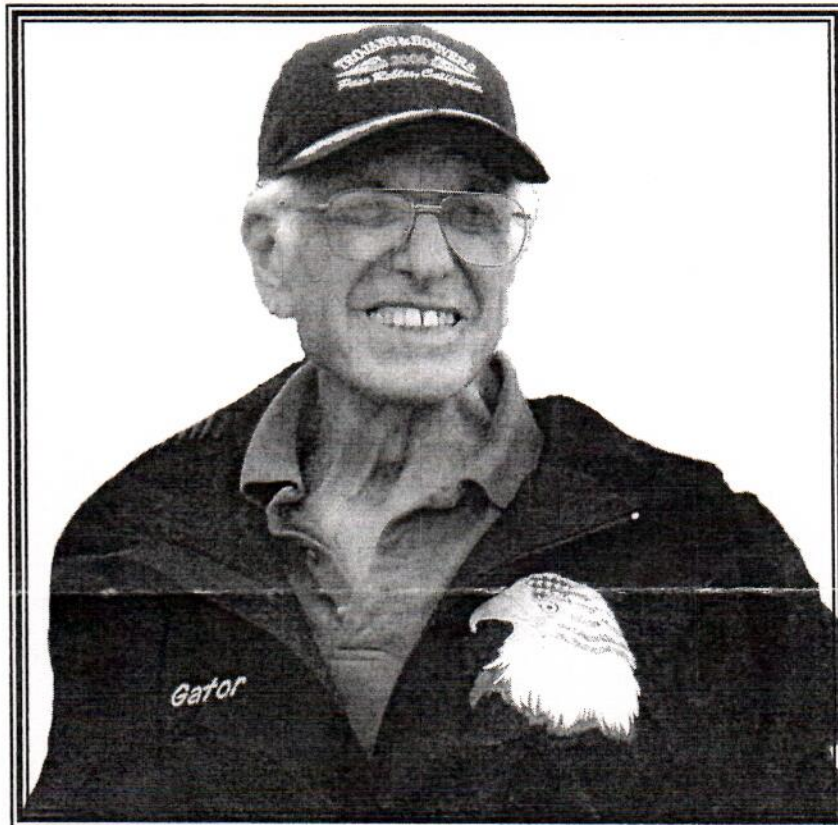
Honoring the Past—Inspiring the Future

Volume 15, Number <sup>2</sup> —Paso Robles, California—February 2010



VOL: XXI-02

1930



2010

Glen Thompson, with Gary Corippo one of the two founders of the Estrella Warbird Museum, passed away in January leaving behind a legacy of accomplishment and friendship that will long endure. Read Peter Visel's thoughtful recollection on Glen's life and his role in making the Museum what it is today on Page 6.

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Words to Live By from the Old Curmudgeon:

Definition of a Goonie Bird pilot: A man who has an interest in aviation but a basic fear of flying.



## **“Thoughts From the Flight Line” Musings by the President, Peter Visel**

This January, one of our founders, Glen Thomson, took his final flight away from the world we all know. He has touched the lives of many. Recently, I walked through the grounds of Estrella Warbirds Museum and marveled at the fact that one individual can make a huge difference in many people's lives. Thomson Hall was appropriately named due to the foresight and dedication of one individual, and that was Glen. It was he, along with Gary Corippo, that just over 20 years ago, said, "Hey, we've got a couple of planes. Let's build a museum."

As I walked the grounds, I wondered if Glen had any idea what the museum would become years down the road. I saw certain portions of the museum that would not be there, had it not been for Glen. He was a generous individual who had a keen interest insuring that portions of aviation history would not be forgotten. During the past many years I've been associated with the museum, I've met many people who probably would not be part of the museum had it not been for Glen. Yes, the museum is going to be a vibrant part of tomorrow, it's not going to fail. Glen helped form part of a team that worked together to dig a formidable foundation, a strong base, to help insure that Estrella Warbirds Museum would be there to remind our children that our freedoms were not given to us without cost. Glen played a major role in the development of the museum because he had a passion and he realized that with his involvement in the museum.

Where is your passion? I've been looking for a few good people with passion to join the board of directors for Estrella Warbirds Museum. Do you have a desire to make an impact? Do you have a strong interest in aviation history? Are you willing to contribute a few extra hours each month to share your expertise and ideas and experiences? The pay is terrible. There is none. But, the rewards are great and the opportunities are endless! And yes, one person can make a difference—even working on a team! Got interest? I've got the time. Call me.

---

Peter D. Visel  
Estrella Warbirds Museum  
President

### **In Memorium**



*Remembering Our Comrades—Though You Have Left Our Presence  
You Have Not Left Our Hearts*

- **Willis Kenagy, served USAF, retired CHP 1930-Dec 2009**
- **Roger Lance, World War II B-26 Pilot 1922-Dec 2009**
- **David Rowe, World War II P-38 Pilot 1921-Dec 2009**
- **Dwaine Thwing, World War II Thunderbolt Pilot 1922-Dec 2009**
  - **Glen A. Thomson, EWM co-founder 1930-2010**

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**February 3 Program— Col. Clyde East**  
**The “Ace” from Virginia**  
**The Fabulous Life of an American Original**  
*George Marrett, Program Chairman*

Not many fighter pilots of World War II shot down three German planes in one morning. There are also only a few airmen living who flew an English Spitfire 200 hours in the Battle of Britain after transferring to the U.S. Army Air Force. In retrospect, it seems natural that the pilot who did this would shoot down the first German plane on D-Day. Our February guest speaker, Col. Clyde East, was decorated by the governments of England, France and Belgium for his bravery during World War II. He flew 200 combat missions during that time and piled up an amazing total of 350 hours of combat time.

His own country awarded him the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with an incredible 36 Oak Leaf Clusters. Before his 25 years of service were completed, he was to add more repeat medals to the above, plus five more Oak Leaf Clusters to his Air Medal.

Clyde’s accomplishments as a fighter pilot were recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records 1955-56* as having the highest number of repeat awards for combat of any pilot before him.

After retiring from the Air Force Clyde spent some 20 years with the Rand Corporation as a military specialist. Today, Clyde is a docent at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, a volunteer in a program that provides transportation to cancer patients, and to our delight a willing speaker for our February dinner.

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**Dinner Menu**  
**Wednesday, February 3, 2010**

Baked Ham with Cherry glaze sauce  
 Roasted Red Potatoes with Rosemary  
 Waldorf Salad  
 Dinner Rolls  
 Seasonal Vegetable  
 Sherry's Sweetheart Cupcakes  
 No Host Bar

\$15.00 Per Person

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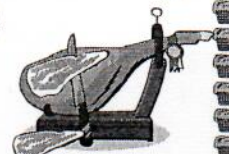
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**By NOON Tuesday, February 2**

**Thank You**

**Social Hour 6pm-7pm**



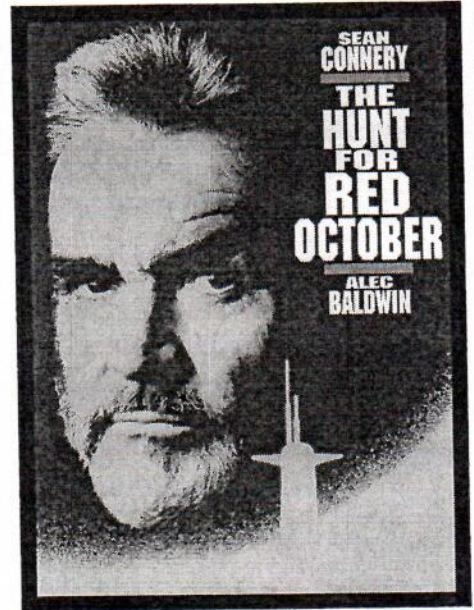
# Movie Nite !

Wednesday - February 10th

6:00pm - Pizza & Popcorn

6:30pm - Movie Time

## THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER



**STARRING:** Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, James Earl Jones



Exciting, complex thriller from the best-seller by Tom Clancy. Connery stars as Soviet submarine Captain Ramius who may (or may not) be planning to defect to the U.S. during the maiden voyage of a super-secret nuclear sub; Baldwin is the American intelligence ace who tries to anticipate his every move. Suspenseful, with great effects, and Nominated for Best Sound Oscar.

★★★1/2 Leonard Maltin (1990 - 135 min.)

### MOVIE BUFF'S QUIZ

Towards the end of "The Hunt for Red October" a U.S. Navy aircraft is seen crashing on the deck of USS Enterprise. While "Hunt" is set sometime in the 1980s the aircraft that crashed was developed in the closing days of WWII and entered the fleet in 1949. So Movie Buffs, who built it, what was it called, and what was it called after it was reconfigured with swept wings? You'll find the answer on Page 11. Want A Hint: This aircraft scored the first 'kill' of the Korean War. For bonus points, what did it 'kill'?



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## **Remembering 'Gator'**

### **Glen Thompson—A Man With A Vision**

On Friday evening, January 8th, 2010, Glen 'Gator' Thomson took his final flight and left the world, as we know it, far behind. Glen was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan where he lived until graduating from Michigan State Normal College with a Bachelors in Recreation. He moved on to do his graduate studies at UCLA and Long Beach State where he received his Masters in Education.

Although Glen wanted to serve his country in the military, a previous knee injury prevented him from being accepted for military service. He began his working career, first with the Laguna Hills Boys Club, and then as a teacher for Manhattan Beach High School. Glen also spent time as a Real Estate agent while earning his Contractor's License for construction work

At the age of 30, Glen found his passion in aviation when he received his initial pilot's license. He flew his first solo flight after only 9 hours of instruction. His love of flight led to a career with Western Airlines where he served as a Flight Simulator Instructor for Western Airlines pilots.

Glen and his wife Betsy, first purchased property in Paso Robles in 1970 but did not move there full time until four years later. Glen and Betsy established the first commercial pistachio ranch in San Luis Obispo County.

Glen Thomson, along with Gary Corippo had a dream of building an aviation museum in Paso Robles. The two were very instrumental in founding the Estrella Squadron of the Confederate Air Force. Feeling compelled to do more for the community they became the initial founders of the Estrella Warbirds Museum. Last September, Glen helped celebrate the Museum's Twentieth Anniversary.

Glen Thomson was very instrumental in helping to build the museum, and will be sorely missed. His expertise in construction, aviation, power plant maintenance and his willingness to sacrifice both physically and financially, played a key roll in the success of the museum. Several years ago, Glen founded The Gooney Bird Corporation, which had a sole goal of obtaining and restoring a Douglas C-47. He realized that goal at the museum when he recently received license from the FAA to bring the C-47B "Betsy's Biscuit Bomber" to full flight status.

A Celebration of Life honoring Glen Thomson was held Saturday, January 16th, at 2 p.m. in the Museum's Thomson Hall. The family requested donations in Glen's name be made to the Estrella Warbirds Museum or the charity of your choice.

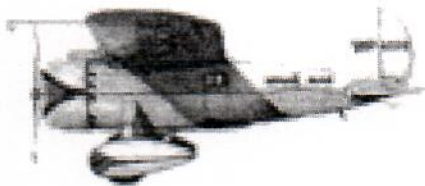


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## MUSEUM MUSINGS & DOCENT DOINGS

By Betty Miller, Museum Curator

**CURATOR'S COMMENTS:** I am continuing to enter existing and new items into the Past Perfect Museum software system. We have catalogued more items and placed them into the storage room which gives us more room in the office for the constant flow of donated items.

The Central Coast Woodworkers will be installing two new large uniform display cabinets for us the week of January 25<sup>th</sup>. These will house our more fragile WW I and WW II uniforms. They have donated their labor and the Museum only had to pay for the materials. We still have to get glass installed on each one, which will be expensive, but necessary to keep out dust and vermin. Many thanks go to member and Central Coast Woodworker, **Jerry Sprouse** for his hard work in accomplishing this job.

We have received a large model of the Hindenberg, lighter-than-air airship, courtesy of **Mr. And Mrs. H. E. Blythe, Ron Boyte, Gary Corippo and Ron Brooks**, got the necessary work done to make a device to allow it to be hung over our existing lighter-than-air exhibit and it looks great!

We are awaiting the construction of an enclosed case for the 6 foot PT Boat that was recently donated by Lon Allan and that should be done by the end of February.

I am still looking for the donation of a lap top computer to be installed at the Docent Desk, so some of our more Computer-savvy Docents can do some much needed research on some of our artifacts.

In the MIA category: We are still missing two sets of US Navy white enlisted uniforms. They seem to have gone missing somewhere between the office in Hangar One and the Brooks Bldg. Curator storage room. If anyone has any idea where these might have gone, please call me.

**DOCENT DOINGS:** We welcome our new Docents: **Dave Brooks, John Gramentine and Mike Levine**. We lost Docent Coordinator **Randy Majewski** and long time Docent, **John Kendall**, so the addition of these three will certainly help.

Betty Miller

### GIFT SHOP UPDATE

#### Happy New Year!

Remember, the Gift Shop & Museum are open, free of charge, from 5:45 to 6:45 PM before our monthly Dinner Meetings. Drop by, browse the shelves, and take a look at the progress your Museum is making. It's also a great place to bring your dinner guests and show them our facility.

As always, the Gift Shop is in need of docents. If you would like to help out in the Gift Shop call me, Jackie Brooks, at 703-0028. You can also leave us a message on the EWM answer machine at 227-0440.

Shifts are available Fridays & Saturdays 10am-1pm and 1pm to 4pm, and on Sundays 12 noon to 4pm. Volunteers usually work once a month, scheduled according to their choice of day and time, and receive individual training.

Jackie Brooks, Gift Shop Mgr.

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### **MOVIE BUFF'S QUIZ—THE ANSWERS**

The aircraft that crashes onto the deck of the Enterprise is a Grumman F9-F Panther. Design work for the Panther began late in World War II and test pilot Corky Meyer gave the prototype its first shakedown flight on 24 November 1947. The Panther was cleared for flight off carriers in 1949. When the Korean War began the F9-F was the Navy's primary carrier-based aircraft. On 3 July 1950 Lt (jg) Leonard Plog scored the War's first air victory by shooting down a Yak-9. Four months later LCDR Bill Amen scored the first victory over a MiG-15. Astronaut Neil Armstrong flew F9-Fs in Korea and successfully ejected from one when it was brought down by a wire strung across a narrow valley.

After concerns arose about the Panther's inferiority to its MiG opponents in Korea a conversion resulted in a swept-wing derivative, the Grumman F9F Cougar, which retained the Panther's designation number.

How many answers did you get?

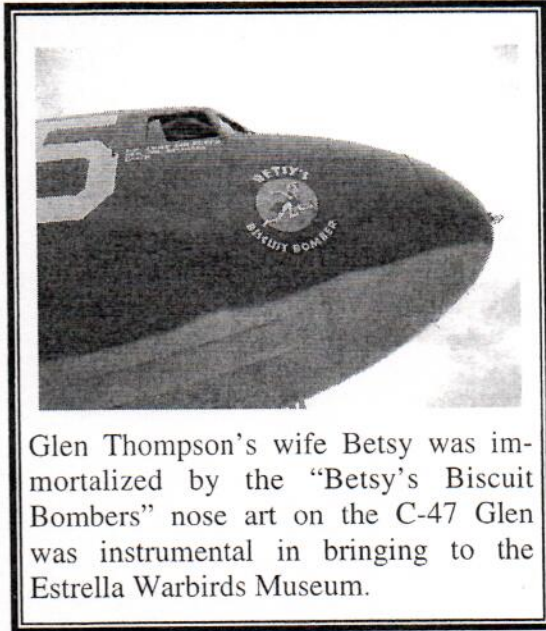


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Glen Thompson's wife Betsy was immortalized by the "Betsy's Biscuit Bombers" nose art on the C-47 Glen was instrumental in bringing to the Estrella Warbirds Museum.

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