



THE READY ROOM



NOVEMBER 2023

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.3, Issue 11

A **ready room** is the room on a Navy aircraft carrier where air crews hold their pre-flight and post-flight briefs. Crews serving during WWII considered the ready room to be a clubroom.

“The funny thing about a ready room is that you get attached to the hole. As much as you are attached to the ship. It's more than sentiment. It's an urge for protection. The loneliest feeling in the whole of a carrier pilot's world is when he's at sea with the gas running low, and he can't see his carrier. You think of the ready room then, and the noisy guys who make it the most desirable place in the world. It's your office, you live in it, it is the big thing in your life. [...] You sweat and worry in it, and grouse and argue, and you get mad at it when you can't hear yourself speak because everyone is yelling at once, but you're deeply attached to the place.

— Tommy Booth

"Wildcats" Over Casablanca

Wing Leader's Report

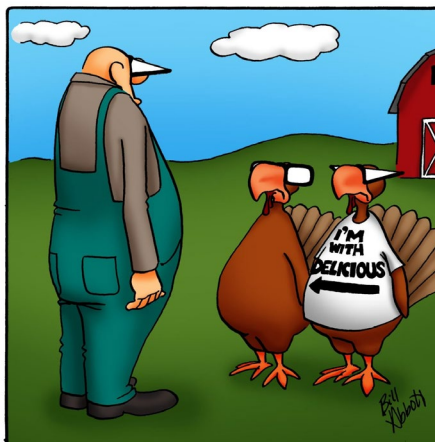
The year is coming to an end and we have had a great year. Many activities have taken place at the hangar, including corporate events, weddings, and Open Hangar Days. Our regular monthly meetings have been blessed with some great speakers. We have had many flights in the Stearman and, thanks to our pilots and great ground crews, the passengers all had a great time.

The flying season is over for now, but come Spring we should be in full swing with the Stearman and PT-19 in the air. The restoration shop in Junction City is doing a great job on the PT-19. We will need more pilots and ground crews come Spring. The Stearman annual is scheduled for late January into February, so it should be ready in plenty of time for Spring training and ride flights.

Our Christmas party, on December 2nd, is the last scheduled event for this year; we don't have a regular meeting in December. We will have some good food and fellowship along with a short program and some awards along the way. Elections were held in November and the results will probably be announced at the Christmas party, depending on the status of the absentee ballots.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and is ready to start a great new year of events at the hangar.

EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR



-- Steve Zimmerman

NEXT MEETING:

6 JAN, 10:00

Holiday Party

**You are cordially invited to the wing's
annual Christmas Party!**



Please bring a side dish or dessert.

**Wing member Dan McFarland will provide the
meat--BBQ beef, pork, and sausage.
Thank you, Dan!**

**Soft drinks and ice will be provided.
Please BYOB and mixers.**

**Please RSVP to Executive Officer John
Wittenborn (email chiller_52@yahoo.com,
or text 913-486-4123) by November 20 so
we can get an accurate head count.**

Saturday, December 2, 2023

**6:00 p.m. Drinks and Appetizers
7:00 p.m. Dinner**

**CAF-HOA Hangar
Upstairs in the Meeting room
COST: \$5 per person
RSVP required and seating is limited.
Reservations accepted on a first-come-first-served
basis.**

**Entertainment provided by our own
David Dyer and Darren Roberts.**

OPERATIONS REPORT

Another flying season has come and gone. I have not heard any numbers from Finance, but it feels like we've had another very busy flying season. I'm pretty sure we've sold more gift certificates? The bottom line is "nice", but the true bottom line is: we've safely given many a unique experience and history lesson. The notion "We fly to keep history alive" is appreciated by many. Many thanks to our pilots, mechanics, and flight crews for another year of courteous, safe service to our guests. I continue to hear how well our passengers were treated. How grateful the public is to see us doing what we do. This is important and very satisfying.



As this season winds down, it is not too early to begin thinking about next season. It looks like we will have a second "convertible" to fly for hire. Our PT-19 N50481 is progressing right along. We are expecting a museum quality restoration with upgraded avionics, lights, fabric, and paint but still...no smoking and no in-flight movies. Potential new pilots for both aircraft: now is the time to be getting your tailwheel endorsements and/or your Commercial ticket if you want to fly for hire. Thank you to the many who have made the full flying sponsor donation. Please know this is only good for you alone. It is not transferable. If you want to support another pilot candidate, please consider making the donation directly to the HOA Wing as a "Wing Sponsorship". This can be assigned annually by Operations to any qualified pilot.

To fly either aircraft, you will need to make a \$1500 donation to whichever aircraft (in your name), understand the responsibilities of sponsorship, or be assigned to fly it by the HOA Wing. You will need to pay your \$300 pilot fee to the CAF. You will need a current tailwheel endorsement or be previously grandfathered. The Commercial Pilot rating is a huge consideration. You will need a MINIMUM of 10 hours/10 landings in a tailwheel aircraft in the previous 12 months before being considered for training. The Wing Flight Evaluation Board (FEB) will then determine the number and need for pilots. You can expect to pay for fuel (\$6.50/gal?) and the Minimum Cost Recovery (MCRP-\$65.00/hr) for the aircraft regardless of the fund balance, for a while at least. Plan on about 12 gph fuel burn on the Fairchild and 15 gph for the Stearman. The checkout for the Stearman is more extensive than the Fairchild, and neither should be considered for your 10/10 in 12 application. I promise, it is worth the expense and effort to get checked out.



Feel free to contact me with any questions about this process.

Remember to ask not what your CAF Wing can do for you but ask what you can do for your CAF Wing.

If you can read this, thank a teacher. IF you can read this in English, thank a Veteran. Have a joyous Thanksgiving!

-- Bob Robinson

Our PT-19 and the CAF Restoration Grant Program

There's an old joke that says the amount of money it takes to restore an airplane is "more." As with all jokes, there's some truth in that. Realizing that getting our PT-19 back in the air was going to take---well, "more,"---one of the sources we turned to was the Commemorative Air Force Restoration Grant Program.



The Restoration Grant Program was set up to provide a CAF-internal way to help units accelerate efforts to return aircraft to flying condition. It's administered by the American Airpower Flying Museum Board (the "American Airpower Flying Museum" is the official legal title of the entity which owns the CAF aircraft). In order to receive grant money, a unit must send an application to the Board prior to one of its quarterly meetings. To be considered for a grant, the aircraft in question must be a CAF aircraft, be of significance to the CAF mission, and its status must have a strong impact on the restoring unit. In addition, applicants need to prove their commitment to the completion of the restoration and provide a reasonable timeline for completion.

One of the brightest spots in this year's PT-19 story was the receipt of a \$12,500 grant from that program. When we decided to hire Raven Aero Services of Junction City, Kansas to complete the restoration we knew the time saved over doing it ourselves would come at a financial cost. We've been working hard raising money to get N50481 (that's the FAA registration number for our PT-19) airborne again, and the grant was a boost not only financially, but a morale boost as well. It reflects that those at Headquarters recognize the responsible attitude we've adopted to keep our airplanes flying.

Our PT-19 has been a part of the Heart of America Wing since its inception, so proving that the airplane is significant to us was no trouble. Explaining that we'd accelerated the completion schedule by outsourcing the remaining work, and that we'd been raising money to fund that work, certainly helped with our request. The Restoration Grant Program is a "matching grant" model, meaning that every dollar we receive from the program must be matched by funds raised elsewhere. We asked for \$25,000; the approximate cost of a new engine. Because of our other efforts we were able to meet the requirement for our half---\$12,500. With the resulting total, we purchased a "new" engine, now currently sitting in the CAF-HOA shop covered in plastic wrap (the "new" is in quotes because it's actually an old engine, newly overhauled. PT-19 engines haven't been manufactured for a long, long, time). It's going to be a wonderful addition to the restored airframe.

This is actually the second time we've received an award from the Grant Program. Several years ago, we applied for and received \$8000, which was spent in our early restoration efforts. As mentioned, the current grant went to fund our engine. While those grants have been very helpful (and greatly appreciated!), there is a lot more work to be done before the airplane is finished. We need to buy new radio equipment, tires and brakes, and a multitude of smaller parts. We'll need more money to get those jobs done. If you'd like to donate to support the restoration, please see Finance Officer Mark Schlicht or Operations Officer Bob Robinson for information on how to do so. Thanks in advance!



If you're interested in learning more about the grant program you can find the information on the CAF members only webpage, under the "unit manual and guides" drop down. Guide #7 explains the program in detail.



Evening With the Greatest Generation

On Wednesday November 8th, my wife and I attended the "Service Stories: An Evening with the Greatest Generation" event at the UMB Auditorium in downtown Kansas City. The event was sponsored by a number of organizations, including Patriot Features, the organization that provides the wonderful videos we show at our monthly meetings. Sean Winn, the head of Patriot Features, facilitated the event. The evening started with an opportunity to meet and talk with six WW II veterans; Ray Schockley, Charles Staubus, Bill Casassa, Sally Keithley-McCulley, Bob South, and John Roberts, and included hors d'oeuvres and drinks. The program started with several speakers followed by Sean introducing each of the veterans and sharing a small portion of their Patriot Features videos. Once the introductions were completed, Sean asked a variety of questions about each veteran's experience in the war. The evening wrapped up with an opportunity for those in attendance to make comments or ask the veterans questions.

The event was sponsored mainly by the Heart of America Patriot Foundation, a charity that provides scholarship money to partner institutions who match contributions and distribute the money to the dependents of deceased or 100% disabled veterans. These individuals qualify for aid under the Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program under Chapter 35 of the GI Bill. The foundation currently partners with 32 schools in 14 states to provide life-changing educational scholarships. You can find out more information---or donate to this worthy cause---at their website: <https://hoapf.org>

-- Bill England



Sally Keithley-McCulley described growing up in England during the war.



Our friend Sean Winn led the discussion.



Ops Officer Bob Robinson connects with WWII veteran Bob South

MONEY MATTERS –

Hello HOA members and friends,

We continue to be solvent, with revenue from hangar rentals, PT-19 donations, PT-13 rides, and our recent hangar dance. At that dance, the Wing raised over \$1,000. Thank you to all who purchased tickets, bought raffle tickets, and

participated in the silent auction! We continue to see interest in sponsorships for the PT-19.

Our major expense continues to be the restoration of the fuselage and wings of our PT-19.

Let me know if you have any questions.



-- Mark Schlicht



FROM YOUR IRA TO THE HOA

The government requires folks aged 70 and 1/2 years or older to take minimum distributions from their IRAs each year. Normally this will increase the individual's gross income---and income tax liability---for the year. One method to avoid increasing your tax liability is to donate part or all of the required distribution to qualified (501)(c)(3) charity such as the CAF. Such a donation is called a "Qualified Charitable Distribution," or "QCD." The current issue of the CAF Dispatch (vol. 5, issue #6; the Dunkirk issue with a Spitfire on the cover, on page 22)

explains the process if a member wants to contribute funds to the CAF general fund. The process is fairly easy; just direct your IRA administrator to transfer the chosen amount (up to \$100,000) directly to the Commemorative Air Force. If you'd like the contribution to be earmarked for an individual unit such as the Heart of America Wing, you can do that, too.

**Wing Staff
Meeting**

4 Jan, 7 PM



To make sure your QCD to the CAF goes to the Heart of America Wing, you'll need to send an email to the CAF Development Officer at Development@cafhq.com with the specifics (where the donation comes from, and where you'd like it credited). Then, when the Development office gets the QCD from the IRA Custodian, they'll process it accordingly. The CAF will send a donation "thank you" letter and tax receipt to you after receiving the money. Since this is a bit of a manual process, donors should double check their thank you letter to make sure the designation was what they expected (if unit, unit name should be listed). If the letter is wrong, just reach out to Rozelyn Beck at the Development Office (rbeck@cafhq.org, or call the Development office at 214-330-1700, extension 105) and she'll make sure to get the money to the right place.

*The mailing address for donations is:
Commemorative Air Force
Development Office
PO Box 764769
Dallas, TX 75376*

As always, consult your financial advisor about your specific situation. If your IRA administrator has any questions, they can contact Rozelyn at CAF HQ (via email, or at the Development office number listed above).

Thanks in advance for considering us when making your end-of-year donations.

---Mark Schlicht



Museum Update

Robert and Robin Frank met me at the museum on Saturday and donated her father's flight jacket from the CBI theater of operation. They paid for the display case, which is lit and rotates. It's a nice addition to the museum.



Oshkosh Adventures

Wing member Alex Kennerly flew his L-2 to the world's largest airshow in Oshkosh, Wisconsin last summer. AirVenture, the Experimental Aviation Association (EAA) annual fly-in/airshow/convention, attracts fliers and their aircraft from all over the world. The EAA publishes its own Warbird magazine, strangely enough titled "Warbirds." While recapping the events of this year's Airventure, the editors of Warbirds saw fit to include Alex and his airplane in the magazine. Aside from calling us the "Heartland of America" Wing it's not a bad write up. Congratulations to Alex on becoming "Famous!"



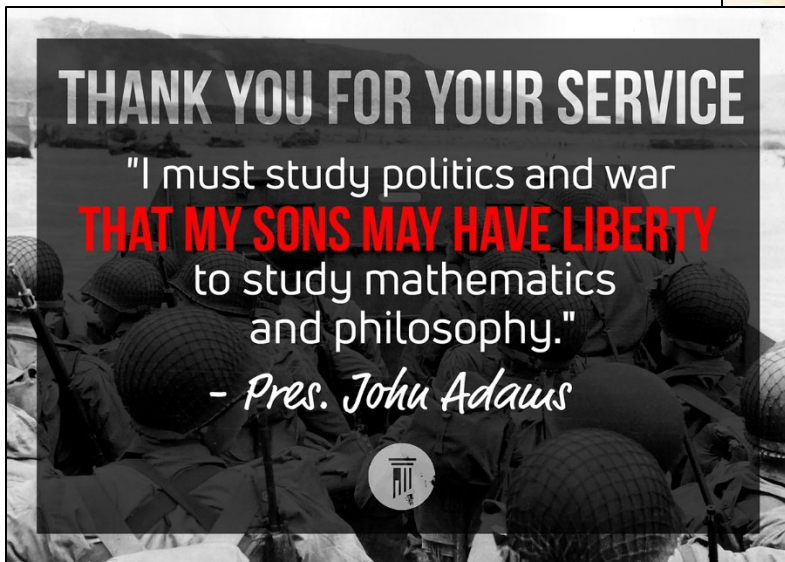
ALEX KENNERLY

While attending the University of North Dakota, Alex Kennerly expanded his flying options by advancing his ratings. He also acquired the skills needed to pursue a career as an air traffic controller, and he now plies his trade in Kansas. He also got his tailwheel endorsement. That option was important because Alex wanted to share his flight experience in an airplane of historical lineage. To that

end, he found this L-2 Taylorcraft at the far north end of Idaho, in Bonners Ferry. He still hand-props the L-2 and, to date, has provided 27 Young Eagle rides. Alex is also active with the Commemorative Air Force's Heartland of America Wing in Kansas City.



VETERANS DAY





Thanksgiving Day 1944—Relived

Museum friend and battlefield guide, Roland Gaul of Luxembourg, recounts Thanksgiving 1944 and how it is remembered today.

November 25, 2020

To commemorate Thanksgiving, we asked our friend Roland Gaul to write about the unique experience that American GIs and Luxembourg civilians shared during November of 1944.

Gaul has been involved with the Museum since we began leading our own educational tours of battlefields across the world, and the The National Museum of Military History Museum, which he helped establish was one of the highlights of that, and subsequent visits to the Ardennes.

Shortly after its initial liberation from an almost four-year nightmare by American forces in September 1944, the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg soon thereafter became a rest and recreation and billeting area for numerous US units that badly needed a respite from combat operations. Thousands of GIs were temporarily stationed or transferred to Luxembourg to rest, restore their morale, allow them some free time, and enjoy hospitality from grateful Luxembourgers, all while their decimated units were being rebuilt by a steady stream of reinforcements arriving from the

United States. Their equipment was brought up to snuff again, and their combat readiness was reconstituted during that time. The grateful nation of Luxembourg, newly liberated from Nazi oppression, warmly welcomed its American liberators. Needless to say, all the GIs greatly appreciated this spontaneous demonstration of genuine gratitude despite the language barrier—to them Luxembourg soon became the “paradise for weary troops.”



American GIs in the liberation of Velfingen, Luxembourg, September 9, 1944. Image by Children of History in Alexandria, Virginia

A fair number of those US troops were stationed in the north and east of the country bordering with Germany, where they

were billeted in many Luxembourg farming villages and small towns. A number of different units rotated through the area during the war. Around November 20, 1944, battle-fatigued troops from the 28th US Infantry “Keystone” Division arrived from the area south of Aachen, where they had experienced a considerable number of casualties in the bloody and costly battle of the Huertgen Forest. They moved into positions and quarters that had been occupied by units that preceded them along the Luxembourg-German border overlooking the Our river. They were actually facing the “Westwall” or “[*Siegfried line*](#).”

As they were now billeted again primarily in villages, rather than in uncomfortable and often leaking tents, there was frequent contact between American GIs and the local villagers. Despite language problems, the locals were happy to host their “American liberators” and went out of their way to make American soldiers’ stay as pleasant as possible by inviting them into private homes, volunteering to assist the GIs with things such as clothes repair, and offering the Americans local food and drinks. With the US liberation of Luxembourg, a bit of American culture and “lifestyle” came to Luxembourg. The music that was “forbidden” for four painful years was soon heard from gramophone records, played everywhere by the GIs during their off-duty hours! Baseball became omnipresent and numerous farmer boys soon learned how to

handle a bat. In addition, US food products, primarily canned food, the so-called “C” ration cans that numerous GIs gave to the villagers in exchange for small services such as “laundry washing,” rapidly gained popularity. Food products like corned beef, vegetable hash, potato flakes, spaghetti and meatballs in tomato sauce, dehydrated powdered eggs, soluble coffee—you name it—brands like Spam, Kellogg’s, and Pilchards soon found their way to locals’ tables as easy-to-make supplementary food. Of course, the ubiquitous chewing gum and “Hershey” bars were cherished by the village children. Chocolate and chewing gum, by the way, became the first two words of English even toddlers picked up very quickly.

Although in late fall of 1944 there were no more combat actions in northern Luxembourg, the understrength units of the 28th Infantry Division held a thin line of defense and were always on the alert. The reconnaissance patrols tried to collect information on the enemy situation across the border, marked by the Our river. Occasionally at night enemy artillery fired a few rounds into US-held Luxembourg territory, which were usually answered by American guns. From time-to-time patrols clashed with each other and bursts of automatic weapons could be heard. But all in all, it was very quiet in late November of 1944, which added to the general and overall belief that the war would end soon.

The end of November customarily marks the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States, and to the GIs in Europe, thousands of miles away from home, the news that the traditional turkey dinner would take place “on the frontline” became a powerful morale booster and a sentimental bridge to their loved ones back home! For their Luxembourg hosts and friends, this was something totally new, never seen, never experienced before in the country. The villagers could hardly believe their eyes when GMC trucks pulled up and mess sergeants distributed live, or frozen, turkeys to the various mess halls and field kitchens, along with cans of cranberry jelly, flaked potatoes for mash, and other ingredients. All day long the “chefs” were frying turkeys in their gasoline-operated field stoves and the smell of freshly-cooked turkey soon filled the air! The hungry GIs enjoyed their turkey dinner and servings as prepared in the local units’ field kitchens. They ate their traditional “Thanksgiving Dinner” out of their mess kits in tents or in the barns. They entertained the Luxembourg families and villagers and got themselves “entertained,” for example with “Quetsch,” a strong local booze distilled from plums. Truly, a piece of home in the GI mess kits on the frontline, provided by Uncle Sam.

Front-line artists toured the villages and gave barn or jeep shows, playing guitar, singing and playing the newest musical records from the United States. Occasionally, larger tents were

put up for front-line movie theaters and many village boys “sneaked in” to watch “Wild West” movies. In larger towns, the USO shows entertained the soldiers—it was announced that Marlene Dietrich would make an appearance in December of 1944. Again, all of those recreational activities, while still on the alert, gave hope for a rapid end to the war, as everyone gradually adopted the mood of the approaching end-of-the-year festivities...perhaps a Christmas in peace. The “ghost front” around Thanksgiving Day was quiet—very quiet, indeed!

Needless to say, many friendships formed between GIs (many of them farmer and country boys themselves) and the villagers. Addresses were exchanged, photos shown, and language barriers were overcome by borrowing interpreters like the village teacher, the priest, or by GIs with a basic command of German or French. Often body language helped too.



American Tank at 2019 Reenactment courtesy of Roland Gaul.

Yes, the Luxembourg townspeople and villagers were totally amazed and pleased by Thanksgiving Day. Glenn Miller's tunes just added to the overall atmosphere. Unfortunately, the German surprise attack on December 16, 1944, known as the "[*Battle of the Bulge*](#)," disrupted those dreams and thousands of GIs became casualties. About 60 percent of the north of Luxembourg was destroyed.

After the war, Thanksgiving Day, as well as Halloween, slowly made its way into the local customs and yearly calendar. Many Luxembourg families, remembering the "November 1944 Thanksgiving Day," adopted that custom. As turkey was generally not widely kept as a fowl in Luxembourg, goose was substituted for the traditional "turkey" dinner along with gravy, occasionally buttered corn-on-the-cob, and mashed potatoes. Only on Christmas Eve, wealthier families in larger cities had "turkey" or "dinde" (in French), an adopted French custom. Cranberry jelly or sauce took a little longer to be "accepted." Gradually, and certainly with the establishment of the first supermarkets in Luxembourg in the 1970s, deep-frozen turkeys and "little butterballs" made their appearances. Nowadays, there are a number of organized "Thanksgiving" dinners and events all over Luxembourg and the German border areas, because of American expatriates living there.

When the Diekirch Historical Museum (later the "National Museum of Military History") came into being and its exhibits took shape, the founders decided that "Thanksgiving Day" and the "turkey dinner" on the frontline would be part of the historical displays around the 28th US Infantry "Keystone" Division. Dozens of interviews around that event, and oral history accounts with GI veterans and local civilian witnesses, provided loads of details and anecdotes to help create the "Thanksgiving Diorama" and fill the museum's archives with testimonies.

Thirty-five years after its creation, the "Thanksgiving diorama" remains one of the key points of attraction of the museum. Tens of thousands of visitors have seen it—many school classes have learned the full story from the museum's volunteer docents.

But, there was even more: on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the "Liberation of Luxembourg," the Diekirch museum and the 28th Infantry Division reenactment group from Leeuwarden (in The Netherlands) together staged a recreation of "Thanksgiving Day" in and around the Diekirch community center, attracting hundreds of visitors and over 600 pre-registered guests, including a group of 28th Infantry Division veterans and a delegation from the Pennsylvania National Guard, including the Division CO (at the time) MG Wesley Craig and Adjutant-General MG

Jessica Wright. The 28th Division band, flown in from Pennsylvania, provided musical entertainment with the “sounds and tunes of Liberty and of 1944/45”. A unique event that made the headlines!



Seventy-fifth anniversary of Thanksgiving Day, 1944 in Luxembourg. Image courtesy of Roland Gaul.

In response to numerous requests, my wife, Silvia, and I, through our company Gaul’s Legacy tours, teamed up on the occasion of the 75th anniversary in 2019 with other partners to once again restage the event by creating an even bigger reenactment in a different environment. This time their partners were CEBA (the Clervaux Battle of the Bulge Museum and Study Society), the same Dutch reenactment group as in 2004, headed by Jorrit Volkers, Quadriga (Luxembourg WWII Military Vehicle Club), and the city of Clervaux.

Luxembourgers enjoying "Thanksgiving Dinner" at the 2019 Reenactment. Image courtesy of Roland Gaul.

To once again recreate this unique atmosphere of Thanksgiving Day 1944, the organizers of the November 22-23, 2019 Thanksgiving Day reenactment in the village of Munshausen organized a living history event that recalled this historic day and at the same time honored the 28th Infantry Division, which at that time bore responsibility for the defense of that sector in Luxembourg. A large operating field kitchen, US military vehicle park, and motor pool with Jeeps, Dodges, GMC trucks, tanks, artillery pieces, a tent city, demonstrations, workshops, and recreations by almost 100 reenactors in striking WWII GI attire, made Thanksgiving Day 1944 come to life again in November 2019. Special guests of honor were HRH, Grand-Duke Henri of Luxembourg, and US Ambassador J. Randolph Evans. Over 1,500 enthusiastic visitors attended and a team of audiovisual artists recorded the entire event.



The village of Munshausen still retains its rural character and thus provided a unique setting

for the public reenactment in November 2019. Furthermore it has a rural restaurant in a barn, adjacent stables, an old-fashioned bakery, blacksmith shop, museum, and many farm animals—a unique environment particularly suited for the reenactment of US 1944 military camp life. Of course, the traditional turkey dinner in the evening supplemented by music and entertainment by Luxembourg, and US military performers also became a highlight of the entire event. The day before the public events there were numerous demonstrations and workshops by talented reenactors,

exclusively reserved for the regional schoolchildren as a living history lesson and passing of the torch of collective memory to the next generation.

All in all, Thanksgiving Day 1944/2019 was an event of record in the context of the 75th anniversary of the two liberations of Luxembourg, an American-Luxembourg friendship event, and last but not least a tribute to the 28th US Infantry “Keystone Division” and all the GI liberators of Luxembourg and the members of “America’s Greatest Generation.”

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/thanksgiving-day-1944-relived>



Wing Elected Staff Officers:

Wing Leader: Steve Zimmerman

Executive Officer: John Wittenborn

Finance Officer: Mark Schlicht

Operations Officer: Bob Robinson

Maintenance Officer: Mark
McMahon

Safety Officer: Bill England

Adjutant: Debbie Atcheson

Development Officer: Jim Neese

Education Officer: Jesse Plous

**Wing Appointed Staff
Officers:**

Guest Speaker/Veteran Outreach:
Dave Dyer

PIO: Brian VonBevern

Open Hangar Day Operations: Jesse
Plous

Facility Rentals: Jim Neese

Wing Newsletter: Anita Mack

Museum & Library Curator: Darren
Roberts

Photographer: John English



**COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE**