



THE READY ROOM

SEPTEMBER 2022

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.2, Issue 9

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

We have been pretty busy since last month's meeting. We had our last Open Hangar Day for the year. Thank you to all involved in keeping these events going. If the Wing is interested in having Open Hangar Days again next year, we will need more volunteers. If you are interested in helping with Open Hangar Days, please let a staff member know.

The KC Airshow was a success. We had many Wing members participating which made the job easy. We sold several rides in the Stearman and continue to get inquiries about the rides. The ground and flight crews will be busy. We are always looking for more help with rides also.

The PT-19 restoration committee has been meeting every Wednesday night. Ken Tyler is in charge of organizing the work crews. If you are interested in helping out with the PT-19, give Ken a call. There is lots of work to be done. Mechanical skills are not needed, just an interest in helping out.

It is time to nominate some new members for Staff. We have 6 positions open. They are Adjutant, Finance, Education, Safety, Maintenance, and Development. Please think about helping out and running for one of these positions. You can learn about the positions by going to CAF Headquarter's website or call one of the Staff members and ask them about their job. You can also give me a call and I will fill you in on the duties required. It would be nice to get some new faces involved. This is a good way to shape the future of our Wing. The work takes a little time and dedication but is not hard. Please give me a call if you are interested.

EDUCATE – INSPIRE - HONOR

-- Steve Zimmerman

NEXT MEETING:

15 OCT, 10:00

Operations Report

Our crews and planes continue to keep busy. Not only with rides, but with a monumental effort of support for the **2022 Kansas City Air Show** featuring the USAF Thunderbirds over Labor Day Weekend. Many days of planning and organizing preceded the final four days of setup, practice, and the two day show. Many thanks to all who volunteered including in no particular order: Steve and Susie Zimmerman, Mark Schlicht, Fred Wicke, John Williams, Jim Hathcoat, Chuck Haake, Mike Finley, John and Cindy Roccaforte, Robert Frank, Tom Ward, Randall Hauk, Linda and Jerry Sladish, Darren Roberts, Denis Plumly, Jerry Clevenger, Jim Neese, Dan McFarland, Brian VonBevern, John Wittenborn, Steve Craig, Bill England, Dan Hauser, Alex Kennerly, Tom McChesney, John English and yours truly. Not all who volunteered were able to attend but the effort to volunteer is much appreciated. As always, it was good to visit with the crowds and old friends from far and near. The B-17 "Texas Raiders", the C-47 Spooky," and the beautiful B-25 "Show Me" graced the ramp and enhanced our views.



On Monday, September the 12th, Steve Zimmerman, John Wittenborn, Brian VonBevern and Alex Kennerly took to the skies to do a flyover for Heart of America Patriot Foundation over the Lionsgate Country Club in support of their fundraiser event. Thousands of dollars were raised to support handicapped veterans with college funds. These funds are matched by the various Universities dollar for dollar. A worthy cause for our vets.

Sales are staying strong, showing this Fall will continue to be a busy flying season. Plenty of opportunities for anyone interested to get more involved. Just let me know.

-- Bob Robinson





Wing Staff Meeting
6 Oct, 7 PM



OPEN HANGAR DAY

We held our last Open Hangar Day for 2022 on September 10th. While it was cloudy and cool, the rain held off until we had cleaned up in the afternoon. Our resident "Pet Wrangler," CAF-HOA member Debbie Atcheson, coordinated with three different pet-rescue groups to exhibit. The crowd always loves the puppies! We had to postpone the several Stearman rides we had scheduled that morning because of the weather. We were competing that weekend with a multitude of other events---NASCAR, Olathe Old Settlers Days, the KC Ethnic Festival, and more, but we still had a great turnout.

While we're not holding any more OHDs this year, we are hosting the celebration for the

Olathe Naval Air Station's 80th anniversary (and the Airport Commission's 55th anniversary) on October 1st, which will run pretty much the same as an OHD. That event will run from 10 am until 2 pm. We'll need volunteers to help set up, man the museum and exhibits, and clean up afterwards. Here's a great opportunity to get involved, and show the Airport Commission how much we appreciate being a part of the community. Set up starts about 8:30 that morning. See you then!





PT-19 Restoration Update

Ken Tyler has gotten things moving with the PT-19 restoration crew. The crew meets Wednesday evening at 7 pm and is currently tackling the task of cataloging all the PT-19 parts around the hangar. Next they're going to accomplish the welding that needs to be done to repair the fuselage frame, then start reassembling all those parts prior to recovering the fuselage with fabric. Ken is always looking for more help; come out Wednesday and see what's going on!



If you are tired of seeing the same old people's picture in this newsletter, then come on out and lend a hand!

The Editor would **LOVE** to put in pictures of new faces.



Public Service Announcement

Is Your Husband Secretly Looking At Pictures Of World War 2 Planes On The Internet?
Know The Warning Signs

CHRISTIAN LIVING Sep 13, 2022 · BabylonBee.com

It's a tale that's all too common for marriages these days: things seem to be going great, with love and romance in the air, when suddenly, the husband begins to withdraw. He's more on edge, less interested in intimacy, and only perks up when someone brings up the differences between early P-51 Mustangs and the more common P-51D variant.

Is your husband secretly looking at World War 2 planes on the internet? You should learn the warning signs:



1. **He slams the laptop lid closed when you walk in and shouts, "I wasn't admiring the sleek twin-boom design of the P-38 Lightning, I swear!"** - Not conclusive, but it's a hint. Keep looking for the other signs.
2. **His Facebook ads are filled with suggestions for impossibly gorgeous model B-17 bombers** - The algorithm doesn't lie. His search history is obviously filled with

searches for the Memphis Belle and the Piccadilly Lilly II. How are you supposed to live up to those beauty standards?

3. **He only looks at you with lovey-dovey eyes when you dress up like a Spitfire Mk IX** - The costume you can handle, but when he asks you to imitate the sound of the powerful 1,660-horsepower Merlin 61 engine, it's just too much to handle. It's time for him to get help.
4. **When you drive by the local air museum, his eyes linger a little too long on the beautifully restored P-40 Warhawk complete with that stunning shark mouth nose art** - Remember when he used to look at you like that? Eyes up here, honey!
5. **You guys are fighting more often, with him criticizing you using hurtful statements like, "Why can't you work harder and be more reliable, like a Messerschmitt Bf 109?"** - Ouch. It's time for you to leave him until he gets the help he needs.

If your husband exhibits any of these signs, it's time for him to get help, and the two of you should consider marriage counseling, before it gets worse and he starts looking at pictures of old wooden ships, classic muscle cars, or - God forbid - 19th-century locomotives.

<https://babylonbee.com/news/is-your-husband-looking-at-pictures-of-world-war-2-planes-on-the-internet-know-the-warning-signs>



New member" Debbie Atcheson has been patiently waiting for her Stearman ride for quite a while. We were going to let her fly at September's Open Hangar Day but the weather intervened. Happily we got Debbie airborne September 12th as part of our overflight in support of the Patriot



Foundation fundraiser at Ironhorse golf course (the Patriot Foundation supplies scholarships to the children of veterans that are injured or die in service. You can find more information at: www.patriotfoundation.org).



The CAF Missouri Wing brought three airplanes for the KC Airshow this month: the B-25, their TBM Avenger, and the L-3 "Lil Show Me." The L-3 had to stay in our hangar several days because of weather, but was able to return home later in the week.





Photo # SC 212246 LtGen Sutherland corrects Japanese surrender instrument

2 September 1945

Instrument of Surrender signed on USS Missouri

Gen MacArthur gave a short speech, saying,

“It is my earnest hope, and indeed the hope of all mankind, that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past, a world founded upon faith and understanding, a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish for freedom, tolerance and justice.”

Later, MacArthur would broadcast these final observations on the day’s events:

“Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won. The skies no longer rain death, the seas bear only commerce, men everywhere walk upright in the sunlight. The entire world lies quietly at peace. The holy mission has been completed. We have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door.”



Operation Swift Mercy and POW Supply

At the end of the war, more than 12,000 American POWs were scattered in camps across the Pacific in desperate shape. From August 30-September 20, 1945, in Operation Swift Mercy, B-17s and B-29s flew 1,000 missions and dropped 4,500 tons of supplies to American troops no longer prisoner, but still trapped.

September 18, 2020

Victory in the Pacific was a long time coming for those held by the Japanese as prisoners of war. More than 27,465 Americans captured in the Pacific fell outside of the protections of the Geneva Conventions in relation to prisoners of war. The death rate among POWs in the Pacific was over 40 percent—11,107 would not return home. Most of those who perished were starved to death, ravaged by tropical diseases, or were killed while being transported in the holds of unmarked vessels termed “hellships.”

By the end of the war, the surviving American POWs were spread out in camps all over the Pacific region, barely hanging on to life and clinging to hopes of survival after an average length of captivity of three years. They had endured dismal conditions, often brutal treatment, and had been forced to labor long hours with very little nourishment. Since they were moved throughout Japanese-held territory to wherever laborers were needed, their locations were often very

isolated. Some POWs worked on docks and industrial facilities in urban areas, while many others worked in mines of all types, some in underground or remote locations. There were roughly 775 camps which held Allied POWs, with 185 in Japan and the rest scattered throughout Asia.



Accounting for and recovering all surviving American POWs was a major undertaking that was intended to be carried out as quickly as possible, but some waited almost a full month after Japan's official surrender. From August 30-September 20, the United States carried out **Operation Swift Mercy**, with the objective of aiding and supplying POWs until they could be evacuated. POWs in the Tokyo region were recovered relatively quickly and were taken to hospital ships and then evacuated in the first weeks after the surrender. Even though aerial reconnaissance and intelligence had uncovered the locations of some camps, other slave labor facilities and sites of smaller work detachments were still unknown to Allied officials at the war's end. Expedited efforts to identify and supply the camps began immediately upon surrender. General MacArthur ordered that Japanese officials account for all POWs in their hands and that they visually mark each camp installation by painting "PW" on the roofs of the sites where POWs were detained.



As opposed to the liberation of POW camps in Europe, where liberating Armies were moving through particular areas and overrunning the enemy and their camps, the POWs in the Pacific were first seen from the air. Instead of tanks busting down camp gates, Allied planes dropped leaflets from above with news that the war was over. The Allied aerial campaign, **Operation Bird Cage**, also informed the prisoners to remain in place and that help would be on the way as soon as possible. Often far from fighting and with no discernable front line, the leaflets were the first notification that many received of the war's end and their freedom. For many, after years of inhumane treatment and brutality, the news of Victory seemed like another rumor. One report cited a POW at the Hitachi camp, "Today with the planes coming low and the pilots waving...a huge lump came to my throat. It is hard to realize that three years and eight months of misery, privation, sickness, starvation and death have past and left me here." Former POW Staff Sergeant Lester Tenney described this moment at his camp 30 miles from Nagasaki as "exhilaration."

USMC Private Lionel Bertheaud saved a leaflet dropped on his camp on August 28, 1945 by a B-17. Bertheaud had been a prisoner for 44 months, since the fall of Corregidor in May 1942. While imprisoned, he had lost half of his body weight and by liberation weighed only 80 pounds.

After the leaflets came the supplies, lots of them. Louis Zamperini reported about his experiences in Naoetsu and in the book on his life, *Unbroken*, author Laura Hillenbrand wrote of a supply bombardment. First, as fighters flew over and dropped bags of supplies, "The POWs ran for their lives. One man, leaping from a fence to avoid getting clobbered, broke his ankle. One bag

missed the camp altogether, splashing down in the river. The POWs ventured out, tore into the bags, and split up the loot. Each man received half a tin of tangerines, one pack of hardtack, two cigarettes, and a bit of candy.” Three days later, the full force of supply arrived as B-29s flew over, bomb bays opened, and instead of the incendiaries dropping just days before on Japanese cities, they dropped supply canisters. Crates busted open as they fell and food rained from the sky. Hillebrand wrote, “Louis and Tinker just missed being totaled by a giant drum full of shoes that they never saw coming. It shot through the benjo [latrine] roof, landing on an unfortunate Australian, whose leg was broken, and a Yank from Idaho, whose skull was fractured, fortunately not fatally.”



Col. Charles Frank, a US Army veterinarian, who during the siege of the Philippines was in charge of identifying which of the animals in his care to eat first, was in Korea at war’s end. In his years as a POW, including two years in Davao Penal Colony and also during four hellship transports, Frank had witnessed the death of many friends. In an “After Action Report” style briefing compiled after his liberation, Frank reported on a close call at the Jinsen Camp in early September 1945: “Captain Orson suffered a broken leg here when he was

hit by a 50 gallon drum containing supplies, after the parachute holding the supplies had broken away.”

Incidents and injuries like these led the resourceful former POWs to create and clearly label improvised drop zones, painting targets or “DROP HERE,” onto the ground like they did at Naoetsu. In an oral history with the Museum, Jack Skaggs described men painting bullseyes on the ground with lime in order to direct the supply bombers. Men who had been starving for years gorged themselves on the long-awaited aid. Every bit of it was used, consumed, traded, or recycled. Even the parachutes soon took on other forms and were remade into cozy blankets or into Allied flags sewn by tailors in the camps.

USMC Sergeant Rufus Baker Austin, captured on Wake Island in December 1941, wrote home on September 11, 1945, just two days before his 21st birthday, “Our planes are dropping us supplies now. If we stay here much longer, we won’t even look like X war prisoners. Our good old planes sure do look good.” He signs off, “Mom, it’s great to be an American.”

Staff Sergeant Frederick Spacal reported in a letter to a former crewmate of the days after liberation at the Omori camp, “Our Navy planes started coming over our camp Aug. 26 and B-29s on Aug. 27, dropping all kinds of supplies, those last few days were like Xmas.”

The evacuation of waterfront camps by the US Navy began on August 29, with rescues continuing well into September when camps in Singapore, Borneo, Manchuria, and other faraway regions finally received relief. The first months and years of freedom were spent refeeding, redirecting, and recalibrating. Some would recover and rebuild their lives, but the years of brutality and deprivation were forever imprinted on those who survived as prisoners of war in the Pacific. Operation Swift Mercy definitely saved lives. The 1,000 missions flown, which accounted for 4,500 tons of food, clothing, and medical supplies, however, also cost the lives of 77 airmen lost during the operation.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/operation-swift-mercy-and-pow-supply>



Wing Elected Staff Officers:

Wing Leader: Steve Zimmerman

Executive Officer: John Wittenborn

Finance Officer: Tom McChesney

Operations Officer: Bob Robinson

Maintenance Officer: Mark
McMahon

Safety Officer: Jim Boughan

Adjutant: Beth McCale

Development Officer: Beverly
Wittenborn

Education Officer: Janet McKenny

**Wing Appointed Staff
Officers:**

Guest Speaker/Veteran Outreach:
Dave Dyer

PIO: Brian VonBevern

Open Hangar Day Operations: Beth
McCale, Janet McKenney, and
Bev Wittenborn

Facility Rentals: Jim Neese

Wing Newsletter: Anita Mack

Museum & Library Curator: Darren
Roberts and John Curatola

Photographer: John English

Celebrating 65 years!



**COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE**