



THE READY ROOM



MARCH 2023

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

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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

Spring is here, which means more activities at the hangar. It will soon be time to get the Stearman going for another busy flying season. Spring cleanup is also happening at the hangar. Many thanks to the crew who remodeled the men's bathroom -- we came in ahead of schedule and under budget (clearly not a government contract!) Thanks to Jim Boughan, Rick Schubert, Phil Pardon, Bob Robinson, Terry Clevenger, and Jim Neese for all the hard work they put into this project... And to Dave Dyer for staying out of the way (Just Kidding!!!) Hope I didn't forget anyone. The bathroom looks great and should be nice for years to come. (These projects that enhance our hangar help ensure we have more facility rentals in the future.)

Numerous events are scheduled for the hangar this year. We have already had our first wedding event – 'thank you' to everyone who helped make this such a huge success. Events like this are extremely important to the Wing's finances. Thanks to Jim Neese for putting in the effort to make these events a reality.

The next big event at the hangar will be March 30-April 2. The B-29 DOC will be in town on a tour stop and giving rides. We will have our second annual Authors, Art, and Appetizers event on April 1st from 5-8pm. The B-29 will be open for tours along with several authors and artist in attendance to chat with during the evening. I hope you will come out and support the Wing. Tickets are \$45 and will be available on-line. Due to catering, this event will be restricted to ticket holders only and there will only be a limited number of tickets sold. As of this writing, there are still some tickets left. Don't Miss Out! You can also call John Wittenborn to purchase tickets at 913-486-4123. Please come out and enjoy an evening with friends and airplanes. There are also tickets still available to ride on B-29 DOC. Their website is www.B-29 doc.com/rides.

Hope to see you at a CAF hangar near you.

EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR

-- Steve Zimmerman

NEXT MEETING:

15 APR, 10:00

Authors, Art, and Appetizers! Get your tickets today!



Saturday, April 1, from 5 until 8 p.m. we'll be hosting a private event at our museum/hangar featuring the only flying Kansas-built B-29 remaining---the fabulous "DOC." In addition to "DOC" and several other warbirds on display, we'll have wine tasting and sales from Twisted Vines winery, displays of artwork and photography highlighting military aviation, and veterans and authors telling their stories.

[Tickets \\$45 per person](#)

Each attendee will be entitled to appetizers, a glass of wine from Twisted Vines winery, a commemorative wine glass, and an "insiders" cockpit tour of the fabulously restored B-29 *Doc*.

Attendance will be restricted to ticket holders only!

To buy tickets scan this QR code:



or call John at (913) 486-4123

For more information visit: www.kcghostsquadron.org

or visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CAFHOA>)

This is a fundraiser for the CAF-Heart of America Wing, a 501(C)(3) charitable museum dedicated to honoring America's veterans.

Operations Update

Spring is now upon us as per the calendar but I'm not quite sure Ma Nature got the memo. Still, flying weather is just around the corner and calls are coming in for rides. Gift certificate sales have been brisk from folks donating rides to their favorite charities. The Stearman is in Annual, and we are getting our pilots current and ready. We had an open Crew Resource Management (CRM) meeting last March and we plan to do the same later this Spring. I've spoken to members from other Wings and tossed around the idea of hosting a larger, multi-Wing safety weekend to included time for selling rides plus safety meetings. More to come on this as details are clarified.

Wing Staff Meeting
6 Apr, 7 PM

Most of this past winter was spend repairing yet another water leak in our downstairs men's room. After some repair and extensive remodeling, this was completed just in time for our first wedding of the year on March 11. (See report on this below.)

Other scheduled events so far include: *[(?) items to be confirmed.]*

April 1 - "DOC" come to the AAA event

April 22 - Retirement party at hangar

May 18 - Hangar event

May 22 - Vietnam Run to the Wall Flight

May 24 - Weather Seminar

July 4 - Prairie Village fly over (?)

July 15 Hangar Dance (?)

August 5 - Council Bluffs, IA fly-in (?)

August 17-20 - KC Airshow at IXD

September 9 – wedding

September 15 - wedding

October 6-7 - wedding

October 14 - wedding

October 17 or 21 - Lineman's Rodeo (?)

October 21 Moonlight Serenade Hangar Dance

November 11 - Ottawa, KS fly over (?)

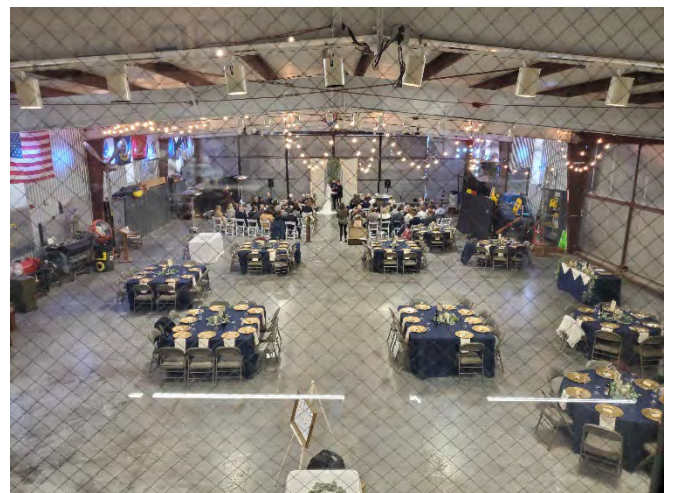
Plus assorted Stearman ride dates. Please mark your calendars and help when you can. It is good to see new faces at these events.

-- Bob Robinson



First Wedding of the Season

On 11 Mar, we hosted the first wedding of the season in the hangar. About 90 folks attended on a cool and rainy day but the hangar was comfortable. Jim Hathcoat was kept busy making dog tags, while Chuck Haake, Bob Robinson, Jerry Sladish, and I parked cars and kept the place neat. Beth had the museum looking great for the ladies to have a place to relax and get dressed before the wedding. Of course, our crew over did it... I can't tell you many times we were told what a wonderful event this was, how they loved the facility,



and especially how great it was to work with a host that appreciated them being there. One repeat comment heard was how relaxed and easy we made it for them -- coming from the Mothers and Grandmothers made the comment especially rewarding. The dog tag machine was a hit and it gave Jim and I a chance to visit with those in line. It was too rainy and cold to give Jeep rides, but we spent time explaining the history of the Jeeps parked outside. They were a hit to those that stood out in the rain. Thank God for the big umbrellas. Thanks to all those that helped clean up the hangar and a special thanks to Linda for cleaning the bathrooms and kitchen. Beth mentioned she couldn't remember when the upstairs bathroom floors were that clean. The men's bathroom is looking great thanks especially to Rick.



One event down in 2023 with more weddings, birthday parties, a Navy Chief's retirement party, and corporate events booked for the year. Hangar events will be a big boost to our financials.

-- Jim Neese



MONEY MATTERS

Hello HOA members and friends.

We are getting ready for the busy summer season, and our Wing has already received several donations for rides in the PT-13! Many of the buyers are putting these rides into auctions for different charities. Our Development Team has also been busy setting up both weddings and other events that will provide rental income to the Wing. Thank you Jim Neese! We wanted to thank everyone who donated to the Gene Linder Memorial Fund. We received cards and letters with contributions totaling of over \$1,800.

As a quick reminder, please submit your 2023 annual dues to both our Heart of America Wing, and to CAF National in Dallas. As of today, our Wing has received dues payments from **55** of a total of **114 members** who were active last year.

If you pay the HOA dues with cash or a check, the cost is \$50, the same as last year. However, if you pay on-line, the cost is \$52. Thank you to all who have paid their dues to date. If you want to pay on-line, here is the link:

<https://checkout.square.site/buy/ZHNO7ZZ6YYOYEOTJGACTBBPG>

-- Mark Schlicht

Who can guess what these three aircraft are? This picture was taken out the window of our bus last year as we left the airport in Munich, Germany. We probably have some pilots in our Wing who have flown one or more of these types of aircraft! (I hate to see these aircraft sitting out in the open, exposed to the elements!) -- Mark Schlicht



World War II: “Donut Dollies” & the American Red Cross



February 1945. France. American Red Cross clubmobiler Margaret Lamb, Norfolk, Virginia, samples one of her wares in company with two fellow Virginians: Cpl Earl A. Conn, Charlottesville, and T5 James E. Parker, Hampton, Virginia. As in this case, American Red Cross clubmobile girls carry their donuts and coffee in trucks over roads too rough for regular clubmobile travel to reach units that are an isolated spots. Photo by Hazel Kingsbury

Are you familiar with the Donut Dollies and the important role they played during World War II? Donut Dollies was the popular term used to refer to the American Red Cross women who volunteered to work overseas in mobile service clubs called clubmobiles. These Red Cross volunteers served to provide food, entertainment and a bit of a connection to home to servicemen stationed in Great Britain and those on many European battlefronts.

Once the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941, the American Red Cross (ARC) rapidly mobilized in order to fulfill the mandate of its 1905 congressional charter requiring that they supply voluntary aid to the sick and wounded of armies in time of war and to serve as a source of communication between the civilians of the United States and their military. The War Department decreed that the Red Cross would be the only civilian service organization permitted to work with overseas military personnel. Realizing that building and maintaining troop morale was an important component of victory, military leaders and the War Department assigned much of the responsibility for morale of the troops to the ARC, beginning during the early phases of troop buildup. Stateside, civilians volunteered to work in canteens and at transportation hubs, providing food and entertainment to the GIs who were in training or travelling. As servicemen started to go overseas, the need for volunteers escalated and the Red Cross created a sophisticated campaign to recruit women to serve in this role

The Red Cross had very high standards for their female volunteers, standards which were higher than those of the military. Applicants had to be college graduates, at least 25 years of age, have stellar reference letters, pass physical examinations and have an outstanding personality as demonstrated at personal interviews. With the rigorous selection process only one in six applicants made the cut.

Once accepted, the new volunteers were sent to Washington, D.C. to the American Red Cross training program located on the campus

of American University. There the volunteers received multiple immunizations, were fitted for Red Cross uniforms and underwent several weeks of basic training in the history, policies and procedures of the ARC and the American military. There was considerable attention given to the appropriate way to wear the uniform, with ten pages of specific instructions in the Red Cross uniform manual – collars always to be pinned, no earrings, hair ornaments, “brilliant nail polish” or “excessive use of cosmetics.” After basic training some recruits received additional training in programs emphasizing such things as recreation or administration. Once training was completed the volunteers worked locally while awaiting their overseas orders.

Many servicemen were stationed in Great Britain either permanently or prior to being shipped to the European Theater. One necessity for troop morale was the opportunity to leave base and enjoy simple civilian pleasures. To prevent the soldiers from overwhelming local British facilities and to curtail disciplinary problems, the Red Cross created for the American servicemen on leave a massive network of hotels and recreation clubs. One of the best examples and most famous was the Rainbow Corner near Piccadilly Circus in London. Many GIs and airmen flooded this site to spend a few days of rest and recreation

However, there were many times when servicemen could not go to these permanent clubs and the mobile service club served as a way to reach servicemen in airfields, camps and other theaters of war. The idea of a mobile service club, or clubmobile, was provided by Harvey D. Gibson, a retired U.S. Army colonel, prominent New York banker and the American Red Cross Commissioner to Great Britain. Clubmobiles travelled throughout Great Britain and Europe between late 1942 until 1946.

Most clubmobiles were single decker English Green Line buses fitted with coffee and doughnut making equipment. The clubmobiles also carried chewing gum, cigarettes, magazines and newspapers, a phonograph

with loudspeakers and records. A lounge in the back of the bus provided a place to sit and talk. The buses were driven by British drivers. Perhaps most importantly, each clubmobile carried three American Red Cross women volunteers. Popularly referred to as “donut dollies” since one of their biggest tasks was making and serving doughnuts to the servicemen, these volunteers were the actual stars of the show. They provided a little touch of home to many a home sick GI.

Doughnuts dominated the activities of the clubmobilers. Next to the women themselves, the doughnuts and the coffee served with them were among the GI’s most beloved symbols of home and they also became the trademark of the wartime Red Cross. The Doughnut Corporation of America loaned the Red Cross 468 doughnut machines, each which could turn out 48 dozen each hour. As time went on, these proved inadequate in keeping up with the demands of the soldiers and the Red Cross set up central bakeries to supply the majority of the doughnuts served to the GIs. Just how many doughnuts are we talking about? A report for December 1944 showed that 205 Red Cross women in Great Britain served 4,659,728 doughnuts to the troops.

Red Cross clubmobiles did not just serve in Great Britain. After the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, ten groups of clubmobilers with eight converted GMC trucks per group were sent into France. These clubmobiles, driven and staffed by teams of three American women, traveled with the rear echelon of the Army, receiving their orders from the Army. The women were stationed in nearby towns and would drive to different bases. There they performed the same duties they had while in Great Britain – making and serving doughnuts and coffee, serving snacks, talking with servicemen, playing music and delivering a little slice of home. The clubmobilers served throughout France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg until VE Day in 1945 and continued to service in post war Great Britain and the Army of Occupation in Germany until 1946.

In addition to the Red Cross clubs and clubmobiles, the Red Cross served many other roles during World War II. Beginning with the invasion of China by Japan in 1937 and then the subsequent invasions of various European countries by Hitler’s armies, the International Red Cross became the primary provider of relief supplies for civilian victims. The American Red Cross played a leading role in this international effort. The U.S. government responded to these hostilities by beginning preparations for possible American involvement in the wars in Europe and Asia. At the request of the government, in early 1941 the ARC began their Blood Donor Service in order to produce plasma for the armed forces

On the homefront millions of Red Cross volunteers served in the war effort by providing aid and comfort to military personnel and their families, serving in hospitals experiencing severe staffing shortages, providing first aid and water safety training, conducting scrap drives, organizing victory gardens, initiating educational programs in-home nutrition and producing emergency supplies for victims of war. The ARC also recruited thousands of nurses to serve in the Army and Navy Nurses Corps.

The ARC served American prisoners of war by being a conduit for communication between the prisoners and their families and by providing essential care packages to the prisoners, as well as the victims of several German concentration camps, though many captors thwarted these efforts.

Red Cross war time activity reached its peak in 1945, at which time 7.5 million volunteers and 39,000 paid staff were supporting the war effort. By the time of the end of the war, the American public had contributed over \$784 million in support of Red Cross activities.

Red Cross World War II Statistics

Over the course of the war years, 86 Red Cross workers-52 women and 34 men-lost their lives as the result of their wartime service.



July 1945. Arles France. ARC clubmobile worker Elizabeth Williamson, Mitchell, South Dakota holds the tray, while Mary Teresi from Portland, Oregon, does a neat balancing job to hand out doughnuts to obviously satisfied customers Pvt Earl Watson, Los Angeles, California; Pfc Warren Hawkins, Pine Island, Minnesota; T5 John Brewer, Lake Charles, Louisiana; Pvt Raymond Wlaker, Tallahassee, Florida; and T4 Wayne Bringgold, Springfield, Missouri. Photo by Jerry Waller

<https://history.delaware.gov/ww-ii-donut-dollies-the-american-red-cross/>



What in the World is THAT?



THAT is a Vought V-173 "Flying Pancake". This odd-looking aircraft was a test aircraft developed for the US Navy as a "proof-of-concept" for the idea of a flying wing. Using the ideas of "discoidal" aircraft design put forward by Charles Zimmerman (related to our very own Wing Leader Steve Zimmerman), Vought created a disc-shaped flying surface, as opposed to Northrop's later flying wing. The V-173's first flight was on 23 November 1942, with Vought test pilot Boone Guyton at the controls. He found that slow speed control was heavy and that the gearbox for the propellers

caused too much vibration. However, he also found that no matter what he tried, the aircraft wouldn't stall. The V-173 was flown 132 hours over 190 flights in the Connecticut skies, humorously producing a number of "UFO" sightings. Charles Lindbergh flew the aircraft and was impressed by its handling capabilities. It also proved to be a strong design. On one test flight, Boone had to make an emergency landing on a beach. As he landed, he noticed to beach-goers in front of him. Jamming on the brakes, he inadvertently flipped the aircraft. Surprisingly, no major damage was done to the airframe and Boone walked away unscathed. The testing of the V-173 would lead to the Vought XF5U, which improved upon the original design. Unfortunately, the XF5U never went into production. The last flight of the V-173 was made on 31 March 1947. The airframe now resides, fully restored, at the Frontiers of Flight museum in Dallas, Texas.

-- Darren Roberts

CAF HOA Raffle!

The Heart of America Wing's museum continues to grow and we are essentially out of storage space. We are currently renting a climate-controlled storage unit to keep overflow items safe and secure. The monthly cost is \$60, which adds up over time. To help offset this, I'm going to hold a Quarterly raffle. Each raffle ticket is \$5 and you don't have to be present to win. You can see Darren Roberts (the Museum Curator) at the monthly meeting or, if you can't make it one month, simply email him (droberts9799@comcast.net) with your name and phone number. You can get him the money later. You can also purchase as many tickets as you'd like. You can buy tickets for three months before the raffle is held. The item to be raffled will be different every Quarter.

The first drawing will be held at the April meeting.

The item for raffle is a wall plaque with two mounted F4U-4 Corsairs in the markings of Lt. Thomas Hudner and Ens. Jesse Brown. Their story was recently depicted in the movie "Devotion". Brown, who was the first black Naval Aviator, was shot down and trapped in the wreckage of his Corsair on the side of a mountain. Hudner crash landed his Corsair in an attempt to extricate Brown, but he was not successful and Brown succumbed to his wounds. Hudner was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism.

-- Darren Roberts



Meet the Night Witches, the Daring Female Pilots Who Bombed Nazis By Night

They were a crucial Soviet asset to winning World War II.

BRYNN HOLLAND

UPDATED: JUN 7, 2019

ORIGINAL: JUL 7, 2017

They flew under the cover of darkness in bare-bones plywood biplanes. They braved bullets and frostbite in the air, while battling skepticism and sexual harassment on the ground. They were feared and hated so much by the Nazis that any German airman who downed one was automatically awarded the prestigious Iron Cross medal.

All told, the pioneering all-female 588th Night Bomber Regiment dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on Nazi targets. And in doing so, they became a crucial Soviet asset in winning World War II.

The Germans nicknamed them the Nachthexen, or "night witches," because of the whooshing noise their wooden planes made

resembled that of a sweeping broom. “This sound was the only warning the Germans had. The planes were too small to show up on radar... [or] on infrared locators,” said Steve Prowse, author of the screenplay *The Night*

Witches, a nonfiction account of the little-known female squadron. “They never used radios, so radio locators couldn’t pick them up either. They were basically ghosts.”



Women pilots of the “Night Witches” receiving orders for an up-coming raid. (Credit: Sovfoto/ UIG via Getty Images)

Using female bombardiers wasn’t a first choice. While women had been previously barred from combat, the pressure of an encroaching enemy gave Soviet leaders a reason to rethink the policy. Adolf Hitler had launched Operation Barbarossa, his massive invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941. By the fall the Germans were pressing on Moscow, Leningrad was under siege and the Red Army was struggling. The Soviets were desperate.

The 588th’s first mission, on June 28, 1942, took aim—successfully—at the headquarters of the invading Nazi forces.

A Woman Leads the Charge

The squadron was the brainchild of Marina Raskova, known as the “Soviet Amelia Earhart”—famous not only as the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force but also for her many long-distance flight records. She had been receiving letters from women all across the Soviet Union wanting to join the World War II war effort. While they had been allowed to participate in support roles, there were many who wanted to be gunners and pilots, flying on their own. Many had lost brothers or sweethearts, or had seen their homes and villages ravaged. Seeing an opportunity, Raskova petitioned Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin to let her form an all-female fighting squadron.



Marina Raskova, Moscow, 1938. (Credit: ITAR-TASS Photo Agency/Alamy Stock Photo)

On October 8, 1941, Stalin gave orders to deploy three all-female air force units. The

women would not only fly missions and drop bombs, they would return fire—making the

Soviet Union the first nation to officially allow women to engage in combat. Previously, women could help transfer planes and ammunition, after which the men took over.

Raskova quickly started to fill out her teams. From more than 2,000 applications, she selected around 400 women for each of the three units. Most were students, ranging in age from 17 to 26.



(Credit: Nikolai Ignatiev/Alamy Stock Photo)

Beyond their steep learning curve, the women faced skepticism from some of the male military personnel who believed they added no value to the combat effort. Raskova did her best to prepare her women for these attitudes, but they still faced sexual harassment, long nights and grueling conditions. “The men didn’t like the ‘little girls’ going to the front line. It was a man’s thing.” Prowse told HISTORY.

Making Do With Hand-Me-Downs and Relics

The military, unprepared for women pilots, offered them meager resources. Flyers received hand-me-down uniforms (from male soldiers), including oversized boots. “They had to tear up their bedding and stuff them in their boots to get them to fit,” said Prowse.



A partisan airplane, the Polikarpov Po-2, during World War II. (Photo by: Sovfoto/UIG via Getty Images)

Their equipment wasn’t much better. The military provided them with outdated

Those selected moved to Engels, a small town north of Stalingrad, to begin training at the Engels School of Aviation. They underwent a highly

compressed education—expected to learn in a few months what it took most soldiers several years to grasp. Each recruit had to train and perform as pilots, navigators, maintenance and ground crew.

Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, 1920s crop-dusters that had been used as training vehicles. These light two-seater, open-cockpit planes were never meant for combat. “It was like a coffin with wings,” said Prowse. Made out of plywood with canvas pulled over, the aircraft offered virtually no protection from the elements. Flying at night, pilots endured freezing temperatures, wind and frostbite. In the harsh Soviet winters, the planes became so cold, just touching them would rip off bare skin.

Due to both the planes’ limited weight capacity and the military’s limited funds, the pilots also lacked other “luxury” items their male counterparts enjoyed. Instead of parachutes (which were too heavy to carry), radar, guns and radios, they were forced to use more rudimentary

tools such as rulers, stopwatches, flashlights, pencils, maps and compasses.

There was some upside to the older aircraft. Their maximum speed was slower than the stall speed of the Nazi planes, which meant these wooden planes, ironically, could maneuver faster than the enemy, making them hard to target. They also could easily take off and land from most locations. The downside? When coming under enemy fire, pilots had to duck by sending their planes into dives (almost none of the planes carried defense ammunition). If they happened to be hit by tracer bullets, which carry a pyrotechnic charge, their wooden planes



Captain Polina Osipenko (Co-Pilot and Commander of the plane), Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Valentina Grizodubova (Navigator), and Senior Lieutenant Marina Raskova right before taking flight. (Credit: Sovfoto/UIG via Getty Images)

The planes, each with a pilot upfront and a navigator in back, traveled in packs: The first planes would go in as bait, attracting German spotlights, which provided much needed illumination. These planes, which rarely had ammunition to defend themselves, would release a flare to light up the intended target. The last plane would idle its engines and glide in darkness to the bombing area. It was this “stealth mode” that created their signature witch’s broom sound.

There were 12 commandments the Night Witches followed. The first was “be proud you are a woman.” Killing Germans was their job, but in their downtime the heroic flyers still did needlework, patchwork, decorated their planes and danced. They even put the pencils they used for navigation into double duty as eyeliner.

Disbanded and Overlooked

Their last flight took place on May 4, 1945—

would burst into flames.

Long Nights, Stealth Tactics

The Polikarpovs could only carry two bombs at a time, one under each wing. In order to make meaningful dents in the German front lines, the regiment sent out up to 40 two-person crews a night. Each would execute between eight and 18 missions a night, flying back to re-arm between runs. The weight of the bombs forced them to fly at lower altitudes, making them a much easier target—hence their night-only missions.

when the Night Witches flew within 60 kilometers (approx. 37 miles) of Berlin. Three days later, Germany officially surrendered.

According to Prowse, the Germans had two theories about why these women were so successful: They were all criminals who were masters at stealing and had been sent to the front line as punishment—or they had been given special injections that allowed them to see in the night.

Altogether these daredevil heroines flew more than 30,000 missions in total, or about 800 per pilot and navigator. They lost a total of 30 pilots, and 24 of the flyers were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Raskova, the mother of the movement, died on January 4, 1943, when she was finally sent to the front line—her plane never made it. She was given the very first state funeral of World War II and her ashes were buried in the Kremlin.

<https://www.history.com/news/meet-the-night-witches-the-daring-female-pilots-who-bombed-nazis-by-night>



Another example of the Greatest Generation. God bless them all.

Audie Murphy's Wife



american-heroes-wife-never-gets-too-old-to-tell/

truly unbelievable.

Before we get to Audie Murphy's wife, some background on her husband. He was born in rural Farmersville, Texas, and was only 46 years old when he died in a plane crash in the Virginia Mts. He was bothered from PTSD after he came back from War II, and it affected him all his life.

Few young people know who Audie Murphy was or how big a war hero he really was. He was born into a poor sharecropper family in rural Texas. He started picking cotton in the 5th grade. His father abandoned them, and his mother died when he was 16. A year later he tried to join the service but was rejected due to his diminutive size. He succeeded later at 17, illegally.

Two or three service medals would make most soldiers proud, but to have earned as many as he did with most being combat decorations is

List of Decorations for Audie Murphy

Medal of Honor
Distinguished Service Cross
Silver Star *(with oak leaf cluster)*
Legion of Merit
Bronze Star *(with oak leaf cluster and Valor Device)*
Purple Heart *(with two oak leaf clusters)*
U.S. Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal
U.S. Army Good Conduct Medal
Presidential Unit Citation *(with First Oak Leaf Cluster)*
American Campaign Medal
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal *(with One Silver Star, Four Bronze Service Stars (representing nine Campaigns) and one Bronze Arrowhead (representing assault landing at Sicily and Southern France)*
World War II Victory Medal
Army of Occupation Medal *(with Germany Clasp)*
Armed Forces Reserve Medal
French Fourrage in Colors of the Croix de Guerre
French Legion of Honor - Grade of Chevalier
French Croix de guerre *(with Silver Star)*
French Croix de guerre *(with Palm)*
Medal of Liberated France
Belgian Croix de guerre *(with 1940 Palm)*



Additionally, Murphy was awarded :

The Combat Infantry Marksman badge with Rifle Bar, Expert Badge with Bayonet Bar.

Now about the other hero.

From the Los Angeles Times on April 15, 2010.



Pamela Murphy, widow of WWII hero and actor, Audie Murphy, died peacefully at her home on April 8, 2010. She was the widow of the most decorated WWII hero and actor, Audie Murphy, and established her own distinctive 35 year career working as a patient liaison at the Sepulveda Veterans Administration hospital, treating every veteran who visited the facility as if they were a VIP.

Any soldier or Marine who came into the hospital got the same special treatment from her. She would walk the hallways with her clipboard in hand making sure her boys got to see the specialist they needed.

If they didn't, watch out.

Her boys weren't Medal of Honor recipients or movie stars like her husband, but that didn't matter to Pam. They had served their Country. That was good enough for her. She never called a veteran by his first name. It was always "Mister."

Respect came with the job.

"Nobody could cut through Veterans Administration red tape faster than Mrs. Murphy," said veteran Stephen Sherman, speaking for thousands of veterans she befriended over the years. "Many times, I watched her march a veteran who had been waiting more than an hour right into the doctor's office."

She was even reprimanded a few times, but it didn't matter to Mrs. Murphy. "Only her boys mattered. She was our angel."

Audie Murphy died broke in a plane crash in 1971, squandering millions of dollars on gambling, bad investments, and yes, other women. He wasn't the ideal family man by a wide margin. "Even with the adultery and desertion at the end, he always remained my hero," Pam told me.

She went from a comfortable ranch-style home in Van Nuys where she raised two sons to a small apartment - taking a clerk's job at the nearby Veterans Administration clinic to support herself and start paying off her faded movie star husband's debts. At first, no one knew who she was. Soon, though, word spread through the VA that the nice woman with the clipboard was Audie Murphy's widow. It was like saying General Patton had just walked in the front door. Men with tears in their eyes walked up to her and gave her a Hug.

"Thank you," they said, over and over.

The first couple of years, I think the hugs were more for Audie's memory as a war hero. The last 30 years, they were for Pam.

One year I asked her to be the focus of a Veteran's Day column for all the work she had done. Pam just shook her head no. "Honor them, not me," she said, pointing to a group of veterans down the hallway. "They're the ones who deserve it."

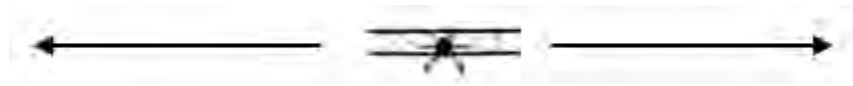
The vets disagreed. Mrs. Murphy deserved the accolades, they said. Incredibly, in 2002, Pam's job was going to be eliminated in budget cuts. She was considered "excess staff." "I don't think helping cut down on veterans' complaints and showing them the respect they deserve should be considered excess staff," she told me.

Neither did the veterans. They went ballistic, holding a rally for her outside the VA gates. Pretty soon, word came down from the top of the VA. Pam Murphy was no longer considered "excess staff."

She remained working full time at the VA until 2007 when she was 87.

"The last time she was here was a couple of years ago for the conference we had for homeless veterans," said Becky James, coordinator of the VA's Veterans History Project. Pam wanted to see if there was anything she could do to help some more of her boys. Pam Murphy was 90 when she died. What a lady. What a hero.

By Dennis McCarthy,
Los Angeles Times on April 15, 2010



American Women of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) During WWII 35% of those who served in the forerunner to the CIA were women



Virginia Hall, who smuggled secrets in her prosthetic leg she named "Cuthbert." Considered "the most dangerous of Allied spies" by the Gestapo.



Elizabeth McIntosh, fluent in Japanese, was one of the first women to conduct Psychological Operations using propaganda leaflets in China. She wrote the script that was read over the radio foretelling of doom... before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.



Betty Lussier, pilot who did counterintelligence, building an extensive double agent network to track down collaborators and Nazi agents.

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**