



THE READY ROOM



APRIL 2023

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.3, Issue 4

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

In like a lion, out like a lamb??? Or is that May? March was a windy month at both ends of the month and April hasn't been much better so far.

Despite the weather we were able to host B-29 DOC at our hangar for our second annual Authors, Art, and Appetizers (AAA) event. Even though it was cool, it was an enjoyable evening. We had about 120 guest signed up to come enjoy some wine, talk with our veterans, and tour the B-29. Thank you to everyone who participated. The DOC crew was happy and expressed a desire to do another event in the future. They were able to get in four ride flights, although they were quite late on Saturday because of the cold temperatures in the morning. The primary goal of these events isn't to raise money, it is to honor and educate, but we did come out with a positive cash flow with this event.

There are several events lined up at the hangar over the next couple of months and we will need some help at each of them. Open Hangar Days starts on May 6th. We have a hangar dance in July. I look forward to getting involved with the hangar activities more and more and hope to see some of you at these events. Bring a friend. There is plenty of opportunity to help out and we need the help.

Thank you to everyone who makes this one of the best wings in the CAF.

EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR

-- Steve Zimmerman



What's the difference between an optimist and a pessimist? An optimist created the airplane. A pessimist created the seatbelts.

NEXT MEETING:

20 MAY, 10:00

Commemorative Air Force

Heart of America Wing

Dinner/Hanger Dance

Featuring the Camelot Trio Band

July 15, 2023

Seating at 6:30 Dinner 7:00-8:00pm

Dance 8:00pm-11pm

6 Aero Plaza New Century, KS 66031

BYOB/Setups available

Local accommodations available at the Hampton Inn

151 Cedar Niles Rd Gardner, KS (913) 856-2100

**This is a benefit fund raiser for the Heart of America C.A.F Wing.
Proceeds go towards our mission to educate, inspire, and honor through flight
and living history experiences.**

**Come enjoy a great evening of food and fun while you help us to keep our
historic planes flying!**

Tickets \$45 each and must be purchased in advance.

For tickets call: 913-486-4123



July 2023 dance



OPERATIONS REPORT

Things are starting to pick up at the CAF from the Operations perspective. The winds abated long enough to get Brian Von Bevern current in the Stearman, so now all three of our pilots are ready to go for 2023. Good thing they've gotten that done too; we've already given our first ride for 2023. Dr. Davis Rindt won a Stearman ride last year in a charity auction and picked the perfect day, April 13th, to take his ride. Now that the temperatures are rising and the winds are letting up, I expect us to get busier and busier.

Anticipating our busy year, we held Ride Crew currency training March 25th. We had a good turnout and got everyone up to speed on safety, passenger loading and unloading, procedures around the airplane, and how to deal with the riders' families while the airplane is out flying. If you're interested in joining the Ride Crew, let John Wittenborn or Jerry Sladish know and they'll help you out.

Help Wanted: On a more personal note; this will be my last few months in Operations. My term expires January 1st. It is time for a newer, younger (better looking?) face to get involved. If you are interested in getting more involved with the PT-13 as a future



We had a great turnout at the annual Ride Crew training session.

Operations Officer, please reach out to me. I can "show you the ropes" for the rest of 2023, easing the transition for 2024. This can be as busy a position as you make it but it involves flying so it ain't all bad. You need not be a pilot but it is helpful. Questions? Just ask. Call me (Bob Robinson) at (913) 206-8027 if you're interested.

-- Bob Robinson



John Wittenborn (L) and Davis Rendt (R) after the 1st Stearman ride of the season.

Wing Staff Meeting
4 May, 7 PM



Authors, Art, and Appetizers (AAA)

Our second-annual "Authors, Art, and Appetizers" event was a tremendous success. Headlined by a visit from the B-29 DOC, the event featured about a dozen veterans, authors, and artists, with books and artwork on display. We sold more than 100 tickets to the event, which makes the AAA our first successful fund raiser for the year.

The DOC folks sold rides for Saturday and Sunday, and were almost sold out. High winds prevented them from flying until late Saturday afternoon, but the Sunday morning flights went off without a hitch. Our friends at Twisted Vines Winery once again supplied some of their delicious wine, while CAF-HOA member Beth McCale did a tremendous job supplying the appetizers. Kudos to all the volunteers who made this event a smashing success!



Jack McCale made awesome commemorative dog tags.



B-29 DOC on short final to New Century Airfield. Picture by Joshua Ehrenfeld.



Former F-4 Phantom pilot and Vietnam POW John Clark (R) talks to Darren Roberts (L).



John English had some of his great photography on display.



Arnie Swift, who served in Vietnam, was there with his autobiography.

Hangar Improvements: A NEW RAMP!!

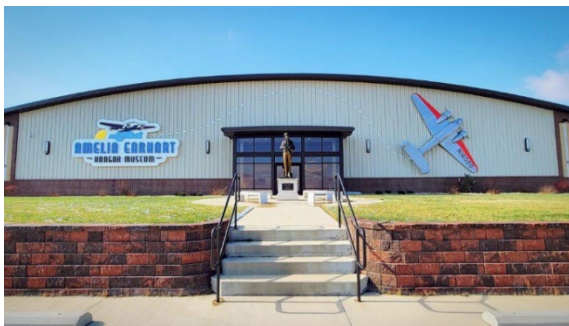
A long-term "want" for us at the CAF-HOA was realized this month when the Johnson County Airport Commission had the asphalt between our hangar and the Advanced Aviation hangar repaved. The area between the hangars has been chipping and spalling for years. It represented a hazard to those walking to our entrance, not to mention the area being an eyesore for visitors. While we've been wanting to fix the issue for some time, we have been unable to raise the money needed for the repairs.



Thankfully the Airport Commission found a little extra in their budget this year and dedicated the money to "our" project. The new surfacing looks much better, and is much easier and safer to walk on. As an added bonus, the repavers built up the pavement in front of our door, so we no longer need the long steel ramp we've used at the door.

Thanks very much to the Airport Commission for tackling this issue. Our only problem now is that our front door looks a little plain. Maybe we need to think about getting an awning, or bigger signage?

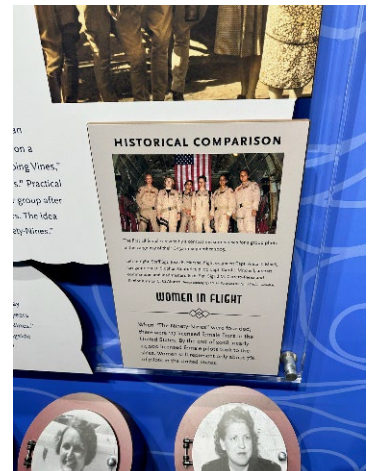
-- Brian VonBevern



The Grand opening of the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum was held April 14th in Atchison, Kansas. John and Beverly Wittenborn, along with some of their grandkids and daughter-in-law made the trip north to enjoy the museum. I decided to take advantage of the nice day and flew up to Atchison. It appeared to be a nice day, but turned out to be quite windy at altitude. I made it to the airport in 13 minutes

with a tailwind, but doubled that on the way home. The museum is the home of the only Lockheed Electra 10-E aircraft. It is identical to the plane Amelia piloted on her fateful round-the-world flight. The plane is surrounded by 14 interactive STEM and history storytelling exhibit areas that take visitors through Earhart's life. They have done a really nice job with the museum and it is worth a visit if you are up that way. It is about an hour and half north of Olathe.

-- Steve Zimmerman



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 and for events at our hangar. We just had a very successful Authors, Art and Airplanes (AAA) event on April 1st with 122 attendees and even raffled off a PT-13 ride! The Wing is in good shape financially, with more funds in our checking account than at this time last year, primarily due to revenues from the AAA event and funds from upcoming hangar rentals. We have had some additional expenses with the remodeling of the men's bathroom in the hangar.

Thank you to most of you who have paid your 2023 HOA dues. If you have not yet paid, 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 about 75% of a total of 113 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. You can pay over the phone with a credit card. To cover our additional expense the cost is \$52. Call the Wing phone (913-907-7902) to pay with a card and do your part to help us keep the lights on.

I was able to attend the annual CAF gathering in Dallas, Texas on March 17th -18th, and attended several breakout sessions for Finance Officers. Regarding the CAF in general, here are some of the ongoing and future concerns that were raised in the general sessions:

- The CAF needs to continue efforts at recruiting new members, especially:
 - Younger people,
 - Veterans and airline pilots, and
 - People with aircraft maintenance experience.
 - The CAF is also facing challenges filling open positions at the HQ office in Dallas.
- There is concern about how to control the increasing cost of liability insurance for our warbird aircraft, especially in light of several accidents in the last few years.
- We need to be working more closely with other warbird groups to present a united front to the FAA regarding rules around warbird operations. The CAF's involvement with The Association of Professional Warbird Operators, or APWO, was discussed.
- We need to be aware of and address a perception problem in the airshow community that warbird operators are not always the best performers at airshows, and who are demanding and difficult to work with.



-- Mark Schlicht



What in the World is THAT?

THAT is a Westland P.12 Wendover. Developed from the Lysander, which proved to be obsolete at the outset of WW II and suffered horrific losses, the Westland was intended to be an upgrade that would perform better in combat and provide an effective ground attack platform. The front half was the standard Lysander, but the rear of the aircraft was changed to incorporate a four-gun turret as well as a tandem wing configuration. It also housed 20mm cannons above the wheel fairings for strafing runs. During testing, it was found to be stable in flight and had excellent diving characteristics. In the end, however, more capable aircraft were developed and the project was abandoned, with no production aircraft being produced.



On April 18, 2017, Robert Frank, one of our newer members, received a Silver Star for actions he and his crew did on April 18, 1972, in the rescue of a crew of a C-130 that had been shot up and crashed at An Loc during one of the most famous battles of the Vietnam War.

The Battle of An Loc was part of the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive Invasion in April, 1972, that eventually led to the downfall of the Republic of South Vietnam. If you google photos of the Battle of An Loc, you have to wonder how anyone survived that battle.

Another example of the unspoken promise to each other that the American warrior will never abandon a fellow warrior on the battlefield.

-- Jim Hathcoat

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2017/04/19/four-vietnam-veterans-awarded-the-silver-star-for-1972-rescue-mission/>

Sean Winn did a Patriot Feature video about Bob, which includes photos from Bob's Silver Star mission. You can watch Bob's video here: <https://www.patriotfeatures.org/portfolio/robert-frank/>



'Home Alive By '45': Operation Magic Carpet

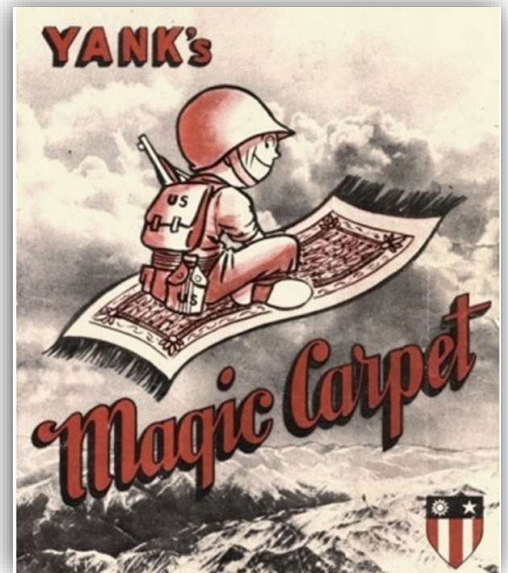
Though lasting only 360 days, Operation Magic Carpet was the largest combined air and sealift ever organized.

October 2, 2020

Separated by vast distances, theater, branch of service, sex, race, and rank, the journey back to the Home Front (United States) at the conclusion of World War II was one of only a handful of incidences universal to nearly all American servicemen who fought and survived the bloodiest conflict in human history. That it was a global experience shared by millions makes it remarkable enough on its own.

However, it is when the sheer volume of Americans returned are considered—eight million men and women from every service branch, scattered across 55 theaters of war spanning four continents—that one can make the case that **Operation Magic Carpet** stands as one of the greatest achievements of the entire war. Though lasting only 360 days, Operation Magic Carpet was the largest combined air and sealift ever organized.

Operation Magic Carpet officially commenced on September 6, 1945, four days after VJ-Day; ending on September 1, 1946. Though on some days and months, particularly December 1945, the return rate was much higher. On average Operation Magic Carpet transported 22,222 Americans home every day for nearly one year straight. The sum total of which provides the mathematical framework behind the beginning of the post-war Baby Boom nine months later.



Yank's Magic Carpet, A souvenir booklet specially prepared for US Army personnel in China, Burma, and India. Pre-censored for mailing.



Doctors returning to the United States in the Mediterranean or Atlantic circa October 1945, The National WWII Museum, Gift of Ms. Dorothy Poitevent, 2007.243.295.

Even though ships, supplies, personnel, and planning from all branches of the military would be needed to execute Magic Carpet successfully, at the head of its organizational development was the War Shipping Administration or WSA. Established by President Roosevelt in February 1942, to deal with the shortage of civilian shipping tonnage available for use by the US military, the WSA, to quote the Executive Order which authorized its creation, was to 'control the operation, purchase, charter, requisition, and use of all ocean vessels under the flag or control of the United States' as well as 'allocate vessels under the flag or control of the United States for use by the Army, Navy, other Federal departments and agencies, and the Governments of the United Nations.'

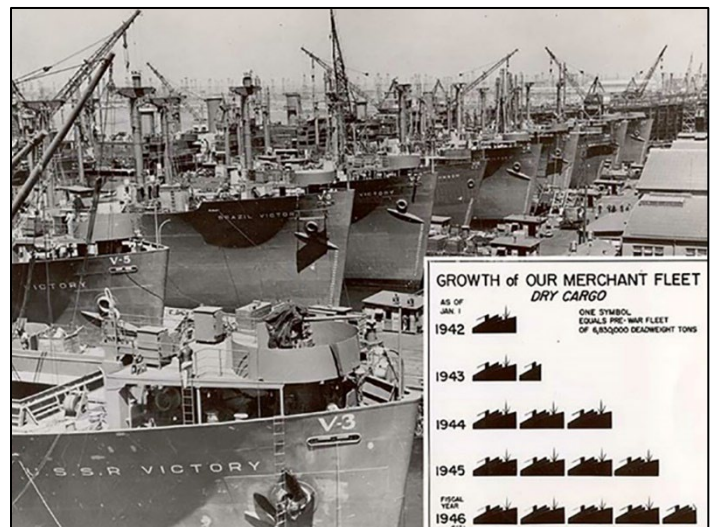
That is, the WSA and its attendant organization, the US Maritime Commission, which were coincidentally headed by the same man, Admiral Emory Land, would tell the Army or Navy which Liberty or Victory ships, transports, and/or civilian craft were to be earmarked for their usage. If World War II was a game of Monopoly, the WSA was the bank.

As early as mid-1943, even though Germany and Japan had yet to be defeated, US Army Chief of Staff George Marshall recognized that once victory in any theater was secured, redeployment and demobilization could and would present a major obstacle if preliminary planning was not begun. Following D-Day, when it was predicted that the war in Europe would end within six months, Marshall and his team had more questions than answers.

Where would troop collection assembly points and processing centers be set up in Europe? What American ports and rail networks were large enough and available to support the influx of returning troops that could then swisk American soldiers inland to separation centers and back to civilian life? And whose ships would be used to bring the boys back home?

As part of the pre-Magic Carpet plan, the WSA, in control with its vast armada of cargo carriers, the Army and its wartime fleet of troopships, and the Coast Guard with its force of assault troopships, would be the primary vehicles available to transport American servicemen back home to ports on the East Coast once Germany was defeated.

Noticeably absent from this nascent plan was the US Navy who, faced with the task of preparing for the likely invasion of the Japanese Home Islands, was unwilling to relinquish any of their force of attack transports and warships for transportation roles. So until Japan was defeated, the process of ferrying GI's westward home would be the sole responsibility of the Army, Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine.



Growth of US Merchant Fleet, 1945, The National WWII Museum, Gift of Dylan Utley, 2012.019.187.

Another question for Marshall and his planners, in addition to 'how,' was 'who.' Who gets to go home and when? By 1945, the average American serviceman and servicewoman had been

overseas for 16.2 months; some much longer. Even before Japan was defeated, there was a strong public outcry to bring the boys home, with some even clamoring for a return home by Christmas with the slogan **'Home Alive By '45.'**

Also, adding impetus to the troops return was the Pentagon's recognition that a gigantic and well-armed static military force without a foe to fight could quickly become an unwieldy disciplinary problem if left in the field. But obviously the United States could not snap its fingers and usher everyone back off into civilian life. So the question became who stays on for occupation duty in Europe and for how long? And, most pressingly, who is redeployed to the Pacific for the planned invasion of Japan?

Enter in the Advance Service Rating Score or ASRS; more commonly known as the Points System. Developed in mid-1944, the point system aimed at producing a systematic and equitable transition to a peacetime military structure and a much smaller military. Under the Points System, servicemen accrued credits for various actions and activities, such as months served overseas, days in combat, wounds, awards and special services, number of dependents, and marital status. In theory, the more points one collected, the quicker one would get back home.

The War Department initially projected that it would demobilize 2 million soldiers in the 12 months following the victory in Europe: 50 percent of this total were in Europe, 33 percent in the Pacific, and 17 percent had already returned to the United States after an overseas assignment. In reality, however, the Points System and points required to qualify to get back home changed and never stopped changing, being revised first in September 1944, and again in February 1945, and again in March 1945. This was due in no small part to the pushback and demands from both the Home Front and the soldiers themselves for more rapid demobilization.

Some soldiers protested their assignments as occupying forces or their planned redeployment to the Pacific. Some soldiers protested the high point score of 85 points originally required for enlisted men to qualify to return home. Soldiers garrisoned in Paris marched at night down the Champs Elysees in protest demanding to be returned home.



American Sgt. George Black addressing the crowd of homesick GI's as they staged a demonstration outside the US Embassy in the French capital in January, 1946. They protested the slowdown in their redeployment from Europe to the US, Courtesy of Bettmann Archive/Getty Images.

In the United Kingdom, 500 disgruntled American soldiers confronted a visiting Eleanor Roosevelt. In a relatively little-known incident, 4,000 American servicemen stormed the city hall of Manila in the Philippines demanding that the repatriation process be accelerated. Ultimately, it was this outcry, coupled with the unexpected surrender of Japan three months later in September 1945, that rendered the original slow demobilization plans moot and propelled Operation Magic Carpet into rapid action.

And rapid it was. On VE-Day, there were over 3 million Americans in the US Army stationed in Europe alone. By the end of 1945, less than 700,000 total soldiers remained in Army uniform around the globe. Similar figures exist for the Navy

whose total force stood at 3,380,817 sailors in 1945, and less than 500,000 by the end of 1946. George Marshall quipped that Operation Magic Carpet was not a demobilization, but rather a rout.

Though homeward bound ships began leaving Europe in late June 1945, Magic Carpet did not truly become effective in moving large numbers of US personnel until after Japan

surrendered. By VE-Day, the WSA miraculously had scrounged up 546 vessels to begin returning overseas troops homeward using nearly anything that could float. With the combat phase of operations completed in September of 1945, the Navy was finally able to add its tremendous fleet of vessels, including over 70 aircraft carriers, to the effort.

In total, by October 1945, there were over 700 ships of all shapes, sizes, and even nationalities involved—from pre-war tankers, ore carriers, and cargo ships to huge battleships and Italian and Panamanian craft. In Europe and in the Pacific, the type of transports available varied widely, with some European GI's returning home in luxury aboard the gigantic British liner the *Queen Mary*, with the prewar First Class Dining Room converted to the enlisted mess hall, while others rode out the return journey in tiers of bunks inside the holds of some 300 converted Liberty or Victory Ships like the USNS *Aiken Victory*.



Aircraft carriers were the most popular modes of transport for most returning vets, offering better entertainment opportunities—movies in the hangar decks, fresh food, hot meals, sports, swimming, ice cream—and much more spacious accommodations than could be found aboard slow moving LST's or APD's. Still, even the most luxurious of spaces were makeshift.

The Aiken Victory, a Victory ship troop transport conversion, arriving in Boston with 1,958 troops from Europe, 26 July 1945, Courtesy of Historic American Engineering Record.

The aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga* in addition to its eight battle stars also brought back 29,204 veterans—the most American servicemen returned by any single US vessel. The *Yorktown*, *Wasp*, *Enterprise* and *Intrepid* all joined the convoy of returning servicemen home. Ships completed near the conclusion or immediately following the end of hostilities were altered to allow for maximum troop capacity such as the carrier *Lake Champlain* which was fitted with bunks for 3,300 returning troops.



There were many exceptions to the Point System in determining the order of which US personnel would be returned. US POWs in both the European, but especially the Pacific theater, were among the first Americans to be selected for return. Indeed, when the initial cease fire went into effect in the Pacific theater on August 15, the Navy immediately sent out aerial reconnaissance to locate POW camps in Japan and on the Asian mainland.

US personnel in hammocks while being transported back to the United States on board the aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid* (CV-11) during "Operation Magic Carpet." Courtesy of US Nave National Museum of Naval Aviation.

Food and supply drops to the Pacific POWs began, followed by the arrival of hospital ships, such as the USS *Benevolence*. Other POWs in both Europe and the Pacific unable or too injured to travel by sea, were airlifted by the personnel of the Army's Air Transport Command or ATC and the Navy's Naval Air Transport Service. Similarly too, Magic Carpet was not solely a one-way flow of traffic.

Over 500,000 German and Italian POWs were returned to Europe by way of the ships of the Magic Carpet system. Nor was it only just servicemen or military personnel either. Cognizant of the fact that over half a million women had wed American GIs during the four years of conflict, the WSA authorized 29 troop ships to deliver war brides to their new homes in North America.

The movement of personnel returned by Magic Carpet took place in stages. In the Pacific, not every ship made a round trip between a foreign port and the United States. Passengers were transported from various locations to collecting centers and then transported on to the United States. Thirty percent of personnel left from the Philippines, 30 percent from the Marianas, and 30 percent from Okinawa. The remaining 10 percent embarked from Hawaii, Korea, China, and the Southwest Pacific. Hawaii was used as a transfer point. Personnel bound for the East Coast were separated from those headed for the West Coast.

Also, some naval vessels were chosen as transports and sent to the United States for the specific purpose of being either laid up, mothballed, or scrapped as the United States downsized its Navy with thousands of ships being as rapidly decommissioned as the men aboard demobilized. This rapid pace was not without its problems, most

notably overseas commands which found themselves stripped of key personnel needed to keep practical operating levels. Tanks, planes, and ships suffered from a lack of trained mechanics, which, combined with a demand for more space for more veterans returning home, gave rise to the jettisoning or destruction of planes, PT boats, and other smaller craft.

Even though not all of America's fighting forces would make it home by Christmas 1945, December of that year was the busiest in Magic Carpet's 11 months of operation with almost 700,000 persons from every service branch being returned home. Month by month the Magic Carpet numbers grew to almost astronomical proportions. Whereas during the War, American shipping had averaged 148,000 soldiers transported to the ETO per month, the post-V-E and V-J Day rush home averaged more than 450,000 GI's returning per month. From VE-Day to September 1945, 1,417,850 American soldiers were repatriated. From October 1945 to April 1946, this number swelled by another 3,323,395 more. By the end of February 1946, the European phase of Magic Carpet was essentially completed. The last of the troops to return from the CBI in the Pacific—in all—would arrive home in September 1946 when Operation Magic Carpet, the largest mass movement of humanity ever attempted or accomplished, would come to an end.

This article is part of a series commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II made possible by the Department of Defense.



<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/operation-magic-carpet-1945>

EVENTS CALENDER

April 22 -	Retirement party at hangar	Sep 9 -	Wedding
May 18 -	Hangar event	Sep 15 -	Wedding
May 22 -	Vietnam Run to the Wall Flight	Oct 6-7 -	Wedding
May 24 -	Weather Seminar	Oct 14 -	Wedding
July 4 -	Prairie Village fly over (?)	Oct 17 or 21 -	Lineman's Rodeo (?)
July 15 -	Hangar Dance (?)	Oct 21-	Moonlight Serenade Hangar Dance
Aug 5 -	Council Bluffs, IA fly-in (?)	Nov 11 -	Ottawa, KS fly over (?)
Aug 17-20	KC Airshow at IXD		

[(?) items to be confirmed.]

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**