



THE READY ROOM

NOVEMBER 2022

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.2, 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 busy year is winding down. My thoughts this week have been with our CAF family of the Texas Raiders and King Cobra. What a tragic accident. Lots of speculation on the reason why this happened, but we won't know for sure for quite some time, if we ever know. There will probably be some changes made to operations to make it safer in the future. It really hit close to home for me because I knew some of the crew members and have flown the same routine several times this year at various airshows. If you are asked about this accident, please refer inquiries to Headquarters in Dallas.

Work at the hangar to spruce it up a little bit continues along with work on the PT-19. If you are interested in helping, just let me know. Jim Boughan, Rick Schubert and Alex Kennelly have taken on a new role. Actually not a new position, but one that hasn't been filled for a while. They are in charge of hangar maintenance and will be tasked with keeping the hangar in good operating condition. As projects come up, they will need some help.

Starting 2023, we will have several new staff members. The announcement and introduction will be made at the Christmas party on December 3rd. Thanks to everyone who stepped up to be on Staff. There is plenty of work to do and it is good to see some new faces. Please reach out if you would like to help.

Please keep Janet McKenny in your thoughts and prayers. She was involved in an automobile accident and remains in ICU at Overland Park Regional Hospital.

There will be no meeting in December, it will be replaced with the Christmas Party on December 3, 2022.

See you then,

EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR

-- Steve Zimmerman

NEXT MEETING:

21 JAN, 10:00

Tragedy in our family...

Dear members and supporters of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF),

I wanted to share with you the news of a tragic accident that happened earlier today. On Saturday, Nov 12, at approximately 1:20 p.m. CST, two CAF aircraft were involved in a mid-air collision at Dallas Executive Airport during the CAF's Wings Over Dallas WWII Airshow.

The aircraft involved were our B-17 Flying Fortress *Texas Raiders* N7227C and our P-63 Kingcobra N6763, both based out of the Houston area.

The B-17 operates with a flight crew of 4-5 individuals, and the P-63 operates with a single crew member.

The Commemorative Air Force is working closely with local and national authorities who are investigating this accident. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the accident. Currently, no additional information is available.

We will continue to share information with you as we are able. It is always difficult to share news like this, however you are part of our aviation family. It is important that we support one another in times like this.

Hank Coates
President/CEO



Terry Barker



Craig Hutain



Kevin "K5" Michels



Dan Ragan

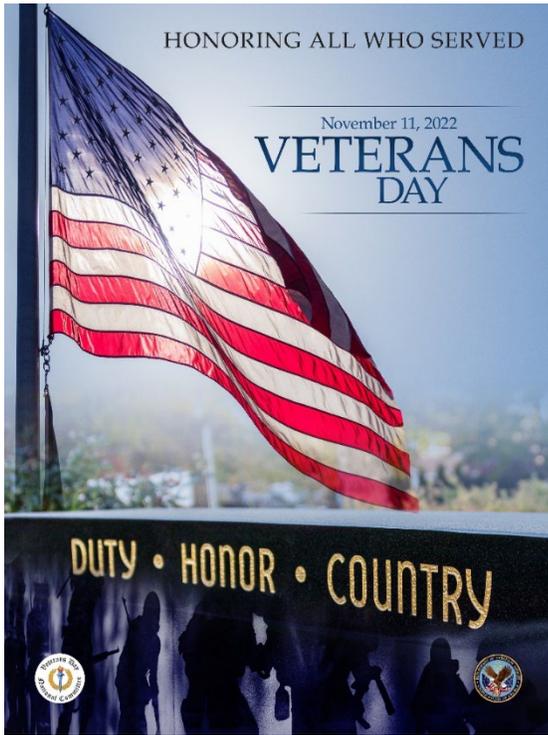


Leonard "Len" Root



Curt Rowe





Famous Veteran American Musicians:

Jerry Garcia, 'Grateful Dead' – Army

Johnny Cash – Air Force

B.B. King – Army

John Fogerty, 'Creedence Clearwater Revival' – Army

Jimi Hendrix – Army

Tony Bennett – Army

MC Hammer – Navy

George Strait – Navy

Gene Autry – Army Air Forces

Kris Kristofferson - Army

Meet the American who inspired the nation in two world wars: Christian soldier Sgt. Alvin York

Tennessee backwoodsman sought exemption from WWI as conscientious objector, battlefield heroics astounded Europe's toughest soldiers

By [Kerry J. Byrne](#) | [Fox News](#) Published November 11, 2022 2:00am EST

Sergeant Alvin York was a reluctant Christian soldier.

Yet the battlefield heroics of the born-again backwoodsman and Tennessee sharpshooter astounded even the most hardened soldiers of World War I.

"What you did was the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier of all the armies of Europe," he was reportedly told by French military hero Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the commander of Allied forces in the Great War.

York's actions, for which he earned the Medal of Honor, still astound Americans today.

Leading seven men behind enemy lines — the remnants of a U.S. Army platoon slaughtered in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on Oct. 8, 1918 — York killed an estimated 20 Germans, took 132 prisoners and silenced as many 25 machine guns.

He brazenly marched his captors past enemy trenches back to American lines.



Full-length portrait of Sergeant Alvin C. York (1887-1964), of the 328th Infantry Regiment, who with the aid of 17 men captured 132 German prisoners and became one of the most decorated American soldiers of World War I, near Cornay, France, February 1919. The location of the photo shows the hill upon which the raid took place. (Photo by Interim Archives/Getty Images)

Sergeant York earned the acclaim of the nation.

Yet he suffered a personal battle much of his life, fearing condemnation in the eyes of God for taking the lives of other human beings. Young Alvin York "lived a life of drinking and gambling and smoking," his grandson, retired U.S. Army Colonel Gerald York, told Fox News Digital. "His fortunes changed when he gave his life to Christ" around 1915.

York first refused to fight when the United States entered World War I in 1917. He filed as a conscientious objector, but ultimately submitted to Uncle Sam.

His World War I heroics inspired the World War II generation. The movie version of his life, "Sergeant York," starring Gary Cooper, hit the silver screen in 1941. It earned 11 Academy Award nominations and two Oscar wins, including Best Actor for Cooper, and was the top-grossing movie of the year.

"Sergeant York" was being shown in theaters on Dec. 7 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, launching America into World War II. "There were numerous reports of young men leaving movie theaters and going to enlist, so fervent was their patriotism," reported the Knoxville Focus.

York may have doubted his deadly actions — but never his patriotism. Among his eight children: Woodrow Wilson, Sam Houston, Andrew Jackson, Betsy Ross and Thomas Jefferson York. "He was just daddy to me," daughter Betsy Ross York, now 89 and a resident of Bowling Green, Kentucky, told Fox News Digital. "He never did talk about the war, and we didn't ever ask him."

Born in backwood poverty

Alvin Cullum York was born in Pall Mall, Tennessee, on Dec. 13, 1887, to William and Mary (Brooks) York. "The Yorks struggled in poverty, which only worsened when York's father died in 1911," writes the National Museum of the Army. "York only had nine months of schooling but had gained a variety of skills exploring and hunting for game in the mountains of Tennessee. York became a skilled marksman and continued

to work jobs around Pall Mall to support his family." He became a member as an elder at the Church of Christ in Christian Union following his awakening, adopting pacifism.

The movie shows York's conversion come as he was nearly struck by lightning. But that was Hollywood's dramatization of the event. "He told producers that he felt like he was struck by lightning when he found Christ," grandson Gerald York said.

The future Sergeant York was of fighting age — 29 — when the U.S. entered World War I. "My religion and my experience ... told me not to go to war, and the memory of my ancestors ... told me to get my gun and go fight," York wrote of his inner conflict. "I wanted to be a good Christian and a good American, too. I was not a Sunday Christian. I believed in the Bible, and I tried in my own way to live up to it."

Uncle Sam gave him little choice. Alvin C. York, who had rarely if ever left his little corner of heaven in rural Tennessee, shipped off across the ocean for hell.

Mowed down like blades of grass

York entered the war in France as a member of the 82nd Division — which become the 82nd Airborne Division of paratroopers. They rose to fame jumping into Normandy in World War II.

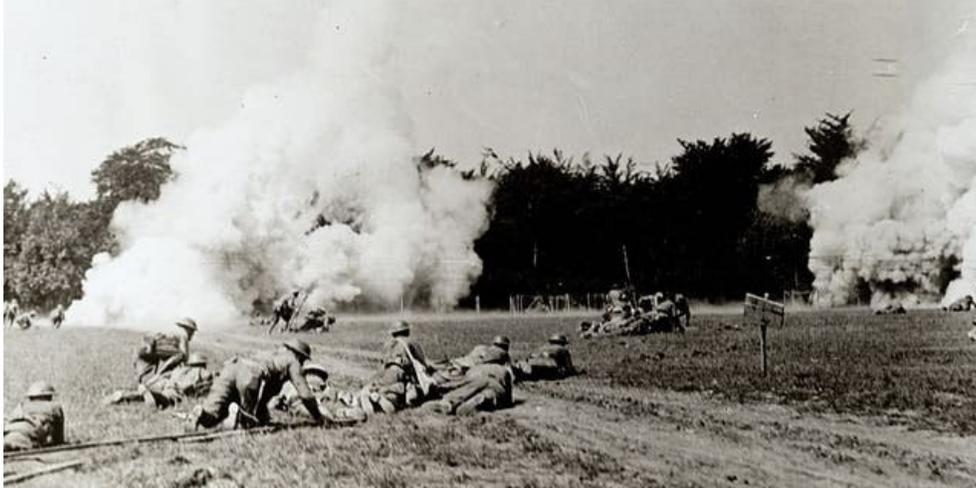
He awoke on the morning of Oct. 8, 1918, to find himself in the midst of a savage battle, which he recorded in a diary published in 1922.



Portrait of U.S. Army Sergeant Alvin York (1887-1964) seated in his military uniform, between 1915 and 1920. (Photo by Library of Congress/Interim Archives/Getty Images)

His unit was struck by artillery and gas attacks and then marched on a German position heavily fortified with machine guns. "Our boys just went down like the long grass before the mowing machine at home," the hillbilly soldier wrote metaphorically of watching his comrades slaughtered. "I just knew that we couldn't go on again until those machine guns were mopped up. So we decided to try and get them by a surprise attack in the rear. We figured there must have been over 30," he also wrote — meaning 30 machine guns.

York was in charge of the few remaining men after all their officers were killed. Frighteningly outnumbered and behind enemy lines, York found a firing position and began picking off German soldiers one by one.



Photograph of the 326th Infantry, 82nd Division, advancing on enemy positions in Choloy, France. Dated 1918. (Photo by: Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)

"Every time a head come up, I done knocked it down ... I was giving them the best I had." He likened it to the way he shot turkeys back home. "In the middle of the fight a German officer and five men done jumped out of a trench and charged me with fixed bayonets ... I only had about half a clip left in my rifle; but I had my pistol ready. I done flipped it out fast and teched them off, too."

The Germans were stunned after seeing six men dropped so quickly. They began surrendering en masse, fearing they faced a larger American unit. A German major, who spoke fluent English, facilitated the surrender and the march back to American lines. "There was so many [Germans] there was danger of our own artillery mistaking us for a German counter-attack and opening up on us," York wrote.

"Lieutenant Woods came out and counted 132 prisoners. And when he counted them he said, 'York, have you captured the whole German army?' And I told him I had a tolerable few."

York's exploits became legend on the battlefield. But he never shared his story in his many letters back home. His family only learned of his heroics when the exploits were written up in the April 26, 1919, edition of the Saturday Evening Post, then one of the most widely read publications in America.

"He outfought the machine-gun battalion with his rifle and automatic pistol," enthused Canadian war correspondent George Pattullo.

"It stands out as the greatest individual feat of the war, not only because of the amazing things he did that day, but because of the man's deep religious convictions and scruples."



Close-up of American soldiers of the 18th Infantry, 1st Division holed up on the side of Hill 240 in the Ardennes, during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France, Oct. 11, 1918. (Photo by PhotoQuest/Getty Images)

‘Sense of peace before he died’

Sergeant Alvin C. York died on Sept. 2, 1964, in Nashville after a long illness that left him incapacitated in his later years.



World War I hero Alvin C. York. "He outfought the machine-gun battalion with his rifle and automatic pistol," enthused Canadian war correspondent George Pattullo in the Saturday Evening Post. (Getty Images)

President Lyndon B. Johnson led a long list of dignitaries who attended his funeral. York is buried in his hometown of Pall Mall.

His legacy lives on an incredible number of ways, both big and small.

The 82nd Airborne gifted one of its most famous veterans in his later years a 1957 Pontiac. The York family still keeps and cherishes the automobile today.

Sergeant York used his royalties from the movie to support his church and fund a short-lived Bible school.

He also founded the Alvin C. York Institute in 1926. It was transferred to state management in 1937 and still teaches high school students today, "It is the only comprehensive secondary school in the United States that is financed and operated by a state government," according to the school website.

The Sgt. Alvin C. York State Historic Park is a Tennessee attraction that includes the York Farm, a National Historic Landmark.

His descendants run the Sergeant York Patriotic Foundation. Pall Mall hosts a Veterans Day celebration on his property each November 11. His family will attend.

York Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side appears to be just another New York City landmark attributed to its namesake community in England. However, it was named for Sergeant York in 1928.

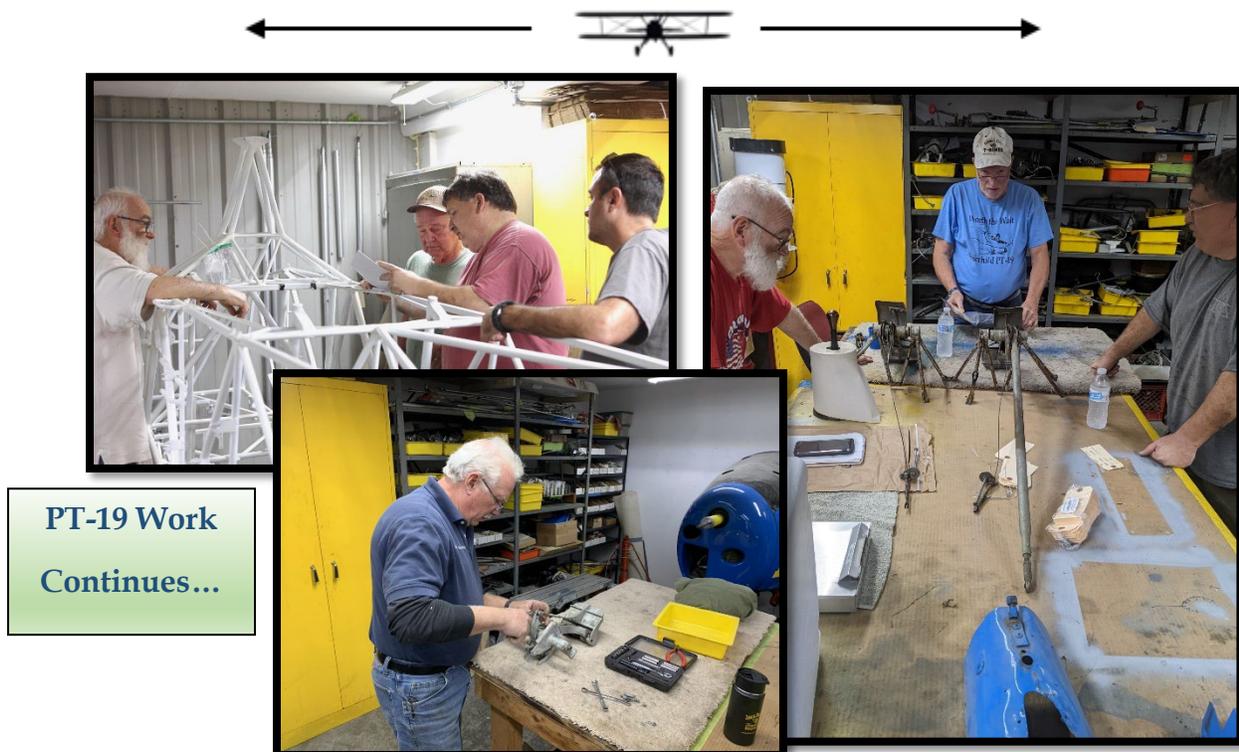
York's second child, George Edward Buxton, was named for the sergeant's commanding officer in the army.

George answered the call of Christ and became a minister. Sergeant York asked his son for forgiveness for his sins in battle as death approached, according to Col. Gerald York.

"My dad told him, 'You did what you did out of service to your country and your fellow soldiers. You didn't do it out of malice or hate. You did it to save lives, to stop the carnage of your own men.'"

Added Colonel York, "I think it helped. I think it gave my grandfather a sense of peace before he died."

<https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/meet-american-who-inspired-nation-two-world-wars-christian-soldier-sgt-alvin-york>



Operations Report

Another flying season is drawing to a close. We've given two pay rides early in November and that will probably wrap us up for the year. I entered these rides in to Rally Point (our electronic CAF log book) and compared the 2022 season to 2021. We got off to a late start in 2021 but still logged 64 flights. Some were proficiency but most were pay rides. We had a better start to flying this year but weather kept us doing mostly proficiency early on. As temperatures climbed, so did our ride schedule. We are at 84 rides with the vast majority being with paying customers. That is a 30% increase in flights.

Many thanks, as always, go to our Maintenance crew for keeping the prop turning, our pilots for sacrificing so much of their personal time, and to our Ride Crew members for their top shelf treatment of our guests. We continue to receive compliments on the both the flight experience and the friendly warmth of all the crews. It's been a good year.

-- Bob Robinson



*Our PT-19, N50481, will be featured in this year's 12-Planes of Christmas fundraising campaign. The campaign launches on **Giving Tuesday, Nov. 29**, and will run throughout December 31, 2022. Look for updates via Constant Contact emails.*

*The 12-Planes program was initiated several years ago to help CAF units that require funding to restore or keep their airplanes airworthy. The Heart of America Wing has been very successful in raising money for the PT-19, which we'll hopefully be flying in a year or so, but more is needed. In addition to participating in the campaign, we'll be featured in December's **Dispatch** magazine. Be sure to look for N50481!*

For those that don't know; N50481 was grounded in 2016 when it failed its annual inspection due to some failed glue joints. The wings and tail on a PT-19 are made primarily of wood, so failing glue is a serious issue! The airplane hadn't had a total restoration since WWII, so she was more than overdue. Airbase Georgia, with their much larger maintenance facility, agreed to help us out in restoring N50481, which was a first for cooperation between CAF units. Unfortunately, after rebuilding one of our wings they've had to focus on their own projects, and put ours on "hold."

Because we've been so successful in fundraising, Staff made the decision to hire experts to finish the work AB Georgia couldn't. Our tail parts were restored by Fairchild expert Mike Kelly in Michigan and only recently returned to the CAF-HOA. Our wings were moved to PT-19 "Guru" Mark Denest's facility in Pennsylvania, and will be finished once he gets his new woodworking facility up and running. Our own PT-19 crew, led by CAF-HOA members Ken Tyler and Jim Stella, plan to finish some repairs to the fuselage and start reassembly by next Spring.

While we've been successful with our efforts, more money is needed to get the airplane finished (It's been said the total amount needed to restore an airplane is "more"). We need to purchase covering and painting supplies, new radio and intercom equipment, and possibly pay for some engine restoration. The Wing accepts donations for the airplane anytime, of course; but it'd be nice if we could show the world how much the airplane means to us by making ours the most successful 12-Planes campaign. Please consider helping out with a donation, no matter how small.

Wing Staff Meeting
1 Dec, 7 PM



Our own CAF-HOA member Jeff Shetterly has been selected as a Class II director of the Experimental Aircraft Association's Warbird division. Jeff is one of five new directors who will help shape the future of the Warbirds division.

In addition to flying his big yellow T-6 at airshows, Jeff is an airline pilot and expects to soon begin managing Cedar Air Park, the small grass-runway airport located just north of New Century AirCenter. If all works out as planned, Jeff will be offering tailwheel aircraft instruction at Cedar Air Park, in addition to providing a haven for antique aircraft and their owners.

Congratulations, Jeff!





Wing Safety Officer Jim Boughan accomplished another long-term project when he, HOA-member Luke Klenke, and Ops Officer Bob Robinson hung the Olathe NAS sign that was salvaged from the old Olathe NAS museum several years ago. The sign apparently adorned the front gate of the Naval Air Station and was rescued when the museum shut

down. Now hanging from the wall downstairs in the hangar it not only looks great, it will serve as an artifact helping us tell the story of US military aviation. Nice work!



Holiday Party

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



Saturday, December 3, 2022
6:00 p.m. Drinks and Appetizers
7:00 p.m. Dinner

at the
HOA-CAF Hangar
Upstairs in the Museum\Education Center

*After dinner, we'll present the 2022 Wing "awards"
You won't want to miss that!*

**This year's party will be catered by Johnny's BBQ
in Olathe.**
Tickets are \$15 per person.

**We're asking folks to bring a "potluck" dessert if
they can.**

Iced tea, coffee, soda and ice will be provided.
Please BYOB and mixers.

Money Matters

Welcome to Fall! The level of activity at the Wing continues to be high and it's showing in our financials so far this year.

A few highlights for the quarter:

- Despite the fact that we got punished on our investment accounts (down \$4555 for the quarter), we had a great summer. Our revenue was just north of \$22K (even with the unrealized loss) and our net was over \$10.4K.

- In the quarter, we booked \$12,600 in aircraft rides or gift certificates. We only did \$13,100 for the entire year in 2021!

I also did a first 3 quarter comparison to last year. Granted, 2021 was still a COVID year, but the numbers are interesting.

- Investment accounts...down \$29,500. No surprise on the down, but the amount is significant. Fortunately, it's "funny money" at this point.

- Operating revenue (everything else in the revenue category)...up 60.7% to \$72,571.

- Aircraft rides and gift certificates...up 75% to \$18,216.

- Expenses...up 44.1%. This includes a big chunk for the new HVAC in the Education Center and some new expenses in support of fundraising. Fuel is a big hit, up 37.7% over last year.

- Net income, excluding the unrealized investment losses...up 15.2%

We hosted the NAS Olathe/Johnson County Airport Commission anniversary celebration on October 1st, which ended up being lucrative for the Wing (final numbers not in, but I expect we'll net around \$1K for that day) and we have two great events booked for October, worth \$7500. Many thanks to Jim Neese and Bev Wittenborn for their work in getting these events booked!

As always, thank you for your support of the Wing!

-- Tom McChesney

Did you know that we're archiving the newsletter on our webpage? Go to the "about us" drop down and you can read or download prior editions. Additionally, we've got a few printed copies on the bookcase shelf at the rear of the meeting room, and there are some hanging on the bulletin board across from the kitchen counter downstairs. Feel free to take some and share them around!

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 McKenny

Facility Rentals: Jim Neese

Wing Newsletter: Anita Mack

Museum & Library Curator: Darren
Roberts

Photographer: John English

Celebrating 65 years!



**COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE**