



THE READY ROOM



December 2021

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

Well, my time's finally up! It's been entertaining, enlightening, and educational being Wing Leader for the last four years, but it's time to pass the baton on to someone new. Congratulations to Steve Zimmerman for winning the election as our new Wing Leader, to John Wittenborn as our new XO, and to Bob Robinson as the "new" Operations Officer. I wish them all the best of luck.

It's nice to go out on a high note: as the Wing emerges from the nightmare of the COVID epidemic, Finance Officer Tom McChesney announced that we're "in the black" for 2021. Things went so well the Stearman even made money this year! That's due to the hard work put in by the pilots, ride crew, and our ever hard-working Ops Officer. If he doesn't sell the rides we can't make them happen. Thanks to all for their great efforts!

We couldn't pay the bills without the revenue generated by our facility rentals. Kudos to Jim Neese for making the CAF-HOA the "go-to" place to get married. And I know that no matter how well he sells the place, the rentals wouldn't work without the efforts of our volunteers. To all who gave up their Saturdays to clean the hangar out and then put everything back afterwards I'd like to say, "Thank you very much."

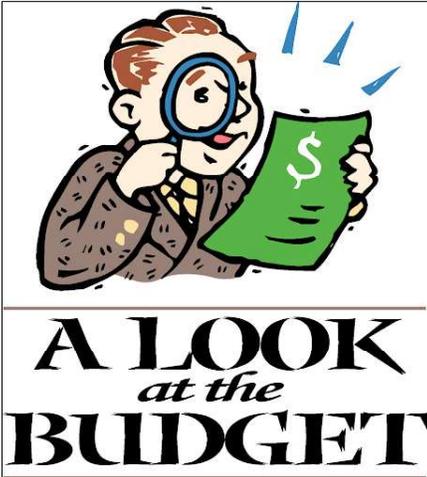
The list of those I'd like to thank for making my stint as Wing Leader so great goes on and on. Dave Dyer's efforts as Speaker Coordinator make our monthly meetings fascinating; Beth McCale and Janet McKenny are always cooking up something great in the kitchen; Jerry Sladish is always ready to help where ever he's needed, and the rest of the membership was always there when I called for help. To all who pitched in without comment or complaint I'd like to say, "Thank you."

--Brian VonBevern

NEXT MEETING:

15 JAN, 10:00

Money Matters



It's that time of the year again! No, not the holidays...it's time to pay your annual dues. More on that later!

We've held our own and even gained a little ground financially, despite suffering through some of the ongoing effects of that damn virus. (I don't like to talk about it, so enough about it.)

A few highlights for the year, through November 30:

- The Stearman has been flying more often than the scheduled airlines. Or at least it seems that way. Just ask Brian, John and Steve! Between rides, airshows, and flyovers, the airplane has brought in over \$16,500 in 2021!

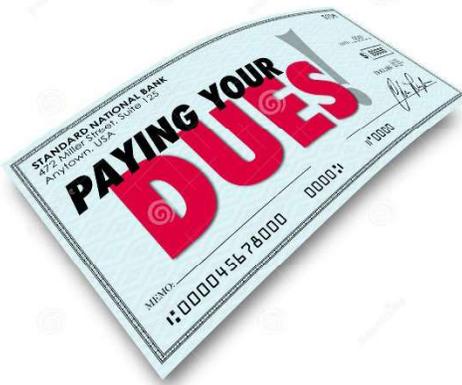
- We've had several events at the hangar that have generated roughly \$8000.
- The market has been good to us, with our investment accounts adding over \$9000. But as we all know, markets are fickle and this could change.

We are looking at some projects that will require lots of money in the next couple of years. Just to give you an idea of what is under consideration, here are just a few of the big ticket items:

- We have made the decision to outsource some of the repairs on the PT-19. Airbase Atlanta has been awesome, but their resources are extremely limited and we need to get things rolling on getting our original warbird back home and in the air. Costs are still being determined, but I expect we'll need to raise an additional \$20-30,000 to finish things up.
- New carpeting for the education center/museum.
- A new HVAC system. Hopefully one that will be more efficient than what we have, as we spend a lot – and I mean a lot – on heating in the winter.
- Repairing the pavement on the north side of the hangar.

If you have any rich relatives that would like to adopt us, or if you want to make a donation to the wing (it's tax deductible if you itemize), please send money our way!





As far as dues are concerned, it is time to get squared up for 2022. Quite a few folks have already paid, so don't think that it's too early to get them in. Still only \$50. If you pay by check, you can make one payable to "CAF-HOA" to:

Commemorative Air Force
6 Aero Plaza
New Century, KS 66031

If you prefer, you can pay with credit card at:

<https://checkout.square.site/merchant/D7X53H0BRNSFT/checkout/BXKRFE3ZOO3BZM4TFJVI F6NX>

If you bump your donation to \$52, that will cover the credit card fees.

Thanks for your support of the Wing!

-- Tom McChesney



Cross Country To Get The PT-19 Tail To Michigan

On December 6, Mark McMahon and I drove my Suburban down to Atlanta to pick up the horizontal and vertical tails from the PT-19. We delivered them to Mike Kelly in Coldwater, Michigan, for rebuilding. The guys at Airbase Georgia did a magnificent job rebuilding the right wing for the PT-19, but they've run into staffing problems that prohibit them from finishing the rest of the woodwork on the airplane. Mike is going to rebuild our tail, hopefully having it finished by next summer. The wings are heading for Pennsylvania this Winter for rebuilding by Mark Denest, PT-19 Guru. Hopefully he'll have them done by Summer 2023, and we'll get the airplane flying soon after.



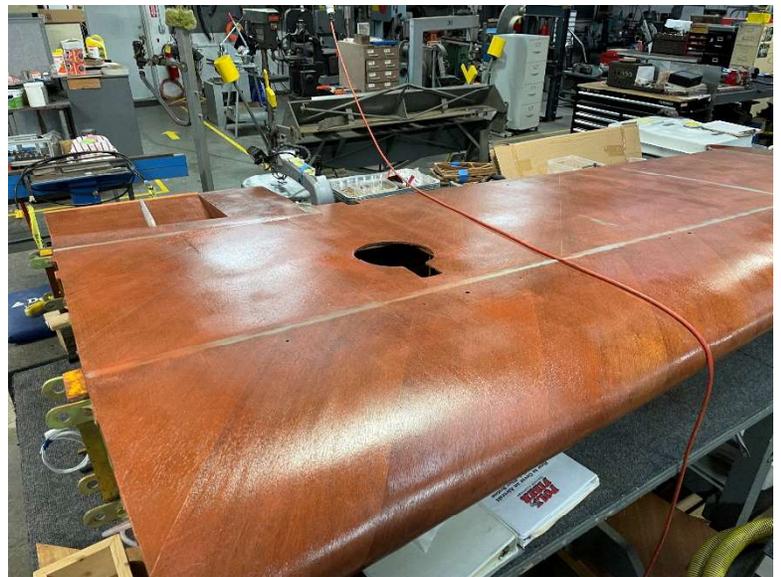
-- Brian VonBevern



Mark McMahon



Mike Kelly, PT-19 Guru



Operations Report, End of Year Recap

Well, 2021 started slowly with no flights logged until July, but we soon caught up finishing the year with one of our busiest ever. During the months of July, August, and September, we averaged just under 15 flights a month or nearly one flight every other day! Even though our flying season is much shorter than many (open cockpit in colder weather), only one rider per airplane, and we have very limited air show invitations, we

still managed to hang in there in total number of flights ranking in the top third of the CAF. Many thanks go out to the efforts and flexibility of our pilots but mostly our ride crews. Jerry Sladish, our Ride Crew Chief, has assembled a dedicated group of volunteers able to participate (often on short notice) most any time of day, most any day of the week. Their attention to safety, "top shelf" customer service, and care offered to our ride guests are exemplary. The list of repeat customers and referrals is growing. Thank you Jerry and all who helped with rides this year. We are looking forward to a full flying season next year.



Steve Zimmerman with an excited rider.

-- Bob Robinson



Jerry Sladish, making that Stearman look good



Linda Sladish, another satisfied rider, and John Wittenborn



Maintenance Report:

The Stearman will be taken off line in January for winter maintenance. We should have it up and running for the spring flying season. We only have a few squawks to look at this year. We will be using a new mechanic, as the previous one no longer has time to inspect our plane. It is always good to have a new set of eyes looking at it.

The PT-19 project continues to move forward at a slow pace. Many thanks to Brian VonBevern and Mark McMahon for driving to Atlanta to pick up parts and delivering them to Michigan. Airbase Atlanta can no longer work on this project, due to a lack of manpower. The wings will be transported from Atlanta to Pennsylvania in the next month. The center section will be shipped to Pennsylvania about mid-January.

Colonel of the Year.

Janet McKenny and Beth McCale were awarded the Colonels of the Year at our annual Christmas party. They have both put in countless hours making sure the troops are well fed. Not only supplying food at monthly meetings but at many extra activities in our hangar also. Congrats to Janet and Beth, and Thank you!

-- Steve Zimmerman



STEVE ZIMMERMAN GIVES A VETERAN'S RIDE 2021-12-01



Dennis Dolan and Steve Zimmerman

On Wednesday, December the 1st, 2021, Steve Zimmerman gave Vietnam veteran, Dennis Dolan, a ride in his L-19 Bird Dog. Dennis served with the US Army's 220th Reconnaissance Airplane Company (RAC) based in Dong Ha, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam. They were the "Catkillers" and they flew the Cessna L-19 Bird Dogs. Dennis was Catkiller 23 with over 2000 hours in a Bird Dog. The Catkillers were based roughly 10 miles south of the DMZ and made missions into North Vietnam to search and find enemy units and then call in either air strikes, artillery, or off-shore naval shelling. A good read describing the missions of the 220th RAC is a book ***A Hundred Feet Over Hell*** by Jim Hooper.



Some of the 1st Platoons pilots at Dong Ha.

From left: Fred Willis, Terry Scruggs, Roger Bounds, Charlie Finch, Bill Hopper, Lee Harrison, and **Dennis Dolan**

-- Ron Wright



2021 Riotous Wing Christmas Party

Our Masters-of-Ceremony, Jim Boughan and Bob Robinson, outdid themselves working to put on a great show. We had a great turnout for the party. Joe Gavlek got the "Orange Cone" award for his efforts to set up for CAF events. Debbie Atcheson got the Black Crow clock award, because she's the Open-hangar-Day pet wrangler responsible for many adopted orphan pets (and nobody else would give that ugly thing a home). Museum Curator Darren Roberts got an authentic WW2 artifact, also known as Wing member Max Deweese. Jerry "Wrong Way" Sladish got an award of his own, for giving family members of Stearman riders a Jeep ride to the end of the runway the Stearman was *not* taking off from. Most importantly, Beth McCale and Janet McKenny were named Colonels of the Year. They continuously and tirelessly prepare tasty lunches for the monthly meetings and still have time to support so many other projects that keep the Wing going. Next time you see them, give them a big thank you for their energy and commitment.



Jerry "Wrong Way" Sladish and John Wittenborn



Brian was roasted about his vision problems, thankfully resolved. And something about trimming his toenails with a grinder.... while wearing his shoes!

Winners of the new officer election were announced. John Wittenborn, Executive Officer. Bob Robinson, Operations Officer. Steve Zimmerman, Wing Leader. (Left-Right)



Joe Gavlek was awarded a "Gold Pylon" for his efforts as Parking Guru. And any other job that needs doing. Joe is always the first to arrive, and the last to leave. Thanks for being there Joe,



Ever-stoic Museum Director Darrin Roberts reacts to the Museum's newest WWII Artifact, Max, "Been There, Done That" Deweese. Max is one hundred years old, was a Marine rifleman at the battles of Tarawa and Iwo Jima. Jim Boughan and Heather Hauser approve.

Debbie Atcheson reacts to an award for her efforts during Saturday Open House events. The award was some item that had been littering up the office for years. Her efforts were real, and appreciated. Emcee Jim Boughan officiated.





Outgoing First-Lady Susie Von Bevern was honored for all the sacrifices and support rendered throughout Brian's two terms as Wing Leader. Susie is an active Colonel in her own right, was the Open House Saturdays spark plug. She starts a tradition of First Ladies named Susie. Susie Zimmerman will assume the crown with the swearing of Steve as new Wing Leader.

There are MANY more pictures (too many to show here) to see at the Wing Facebook site:
<https://www.facebook.com/CAFHOA>

A huge “Thank You” shout out to John English for his Christmas Party photos and perfect captions!



Wing Elected Staff Officers:

Wing Leader: Brian VonBevern

Executive Officer: Linda Sladish

Finance Officer: Tom McChesney

Operations Officer: Bob Robinson

Maintenance Officer: Steve
Zimmerman

Safety Officer: Jim Boughan

Adjutant: Beth McCale

Development Officer: Beverly
Wittenborn

Education Officer: Janet McKenny

**Wing Appointed Staff
Officers:**

Guest Speaker/Veteran

Outreach/Heritage Speaker: Dave
Dyer

Open Hangar Day Operations: Linda
Sladish

Facility Rentals: Jim Neese

Wing Newsletter: Anita Mack

Museum & Library Curator: Darren
Roberts and John Curatola

Photographer: John English



**COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE**