



THE READY ROOM



FEBRUARY 2023

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.3, Issue 2

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

February is Purple Heart month for the Wing and we had the privilege of honoring several Purple Heart veterans at our meeting. Dave Dyer continues to bring in great guest to speak. If you are not making it to the meetings this winter, I hope you try and come out in the near future. Member conferences are being held in Dallas on March 16-19. This is a good way to find out what the CAF is all about and meet some new people from other wings. Several of our members will be attending. If you are interested, please get signed up. It is a little cheaper if you sign up by March 1.

Those of you at the meeting this month noticed that we are doing work downstairs. We had a water leak in the men's bathroom, caused by a frozen pipe. Rick Schubert and Jim Boughan have taken the leadership role in getting it fixed. We decided to spruce up the bathroom while we had it torn apart to fix the leak. It is looking great. The walls are painted and the tile is up and grouted. We are putting in an epoxy floor down very soon. Upstairs we are going to clean the carpet and have it looking nice for our wedding on March 11.

Our next big event will be on April 1st. Make plans to attend our **2nd Annual Authors, Art and Airplanes** event. B-29 DOC will be here for a tour stop. Tickets will be \$45 and will be going on sale soon. Z and M Twisted Vines winery will be serving a glass of wine in a souvenir glass with each ticket sold. We will have several authors and artist in attendance as well. A free tour of DOC will be included. I hope you can come out and support the Wing for this fund raiser. We will be discussing the event at our next Staff meeting on March 2 at 7pm upstairs at the hangar. If you would like to help, please come to the meeting.

Wednesday nights at the hangar at 7pm are typically PT-19 work night most weeks. Come out and help Ken and the group get the fuselage ready to cover and put back together. This is a chance to learn a little, enjoy some comradery, and help get the PT-19 flying again.

NEXT MEETING:

18 MAR, 10:00

EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR

-- Steve Zimmerman

"Authors, Art, and Airplanes"

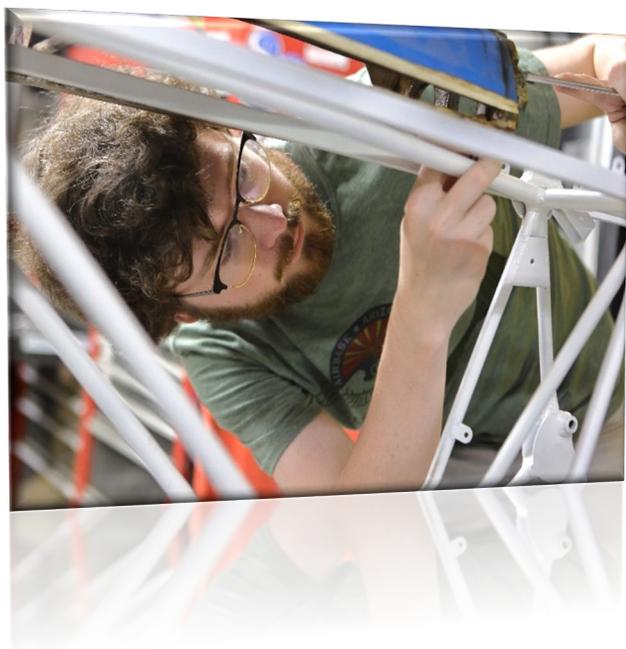
Following the success of last summer's (AAA...
"triple A") event, our friends with the B-29

"DOC" have agreed to a return visit to the CAF-HOA. DOC will arrive at New Century Air Center
sometime on March 31st and will be the feature attraction at our April 1st Open Hangar Day. That
evening, we'll be holding another AAA event from 6 until 9 p.m. in the hangar. Tickets for the AAA



reception will go on sale shortly. For \$45, participants
will receive a commemorative wine glass (filled with
their choice of wine from our friends at the Twisted
Vines winery), guided tours of Doc's interior, the
chance to mingle with veterans, authors,
photographers, and artists, and can enjoy appetizers
with the world's only flying Kansas-built B-29 as the
backdrop.

Save the date! We'll have more information as
planning gets finalized.



Did you notice the photo contest in this month's
Dispatch magazine? This year marks the 14th
anniversary of the CAF's annual photo contest. Our
own Wing photographer, John English, won second
place in the "CAF Members" category with his shot of
HOA Wing member Alex Kennerly working on the PT-
19 fuselage (page 16 in the magazine). Alex is part of
the Wednesday evening crew getting our fuselage
ready for when the wings get back from restoration

Congratulations, John! Another winner!

Hangar Update

Wing members Rick Schubert and Jim Boughan installed new tile in the Mens' restroom and it looks great! Following our latest broken-pipe incident during the last hard freeze, the restroom was looking kind of ratty. Water had soaked the insulation and sheetrock on the north wall, and the rest of the place needed "sprucing up." Now the walls have been painted, we've got a new water heater, and we're waiting to get the floor epoxied. It's going to look great when done, and will be a definite asset not only for Wing members, but also when we rent the facility out.

Thanks for all the hard work, guys! The place is going to look sharp!



MONEY MATTERS

Hello HOA members and friends.

We look forward to another exciting year of Open Hangar Days this year. Your officer team is reviewing several ideas for the special events! Stay tuned.

If you know of anyone looking for a wedding venue, or for some other event, please tell them of our hangar as a potential site. Along that same line, the Wing is looking forward to the completion of a major remodeling project to the men's restroom in the hangar. That project should be finished by early March.

As a quick reminder, it is that time of the year again to pay our annual dues to our local Heart of America (HOA) Wing. If you pay

the HOA dues with cash or check, the cost is \$50, the same as last year. However, if you pay on-line (copy and paste the link below into your browser), the cost is \$52. Thank you to all who had paid their dues to date.

I will be out-of-town for the February monthly meeting, but please give your check or cash to one of the other officers who will be there, and I will get it processed.

<https://checkout.square.site/merchant/D7X53H0BRNSFT/checkout/3W3OVPN4WVS442JNPXZL32NG>

**Wing Staff
Meeting
2 Mar, 7 PM**

-- Mark Schlicht

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 first 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



Not many people know that the Federal Government's Aviation Weather Center, responsible for issuing weather information and forecasts for flights over the United States, is located right here in Kansas City. AWC's forecasts are very important to aviators, and include predictions for freezing levels, atmospheric icing, wind and turbulence levels, cloudy areas and thunderstorms. The AWC is also responsible for hazardous condition aviation warnings including AIRMETS and SIGMETS for the United States, including its overseas territories, and northern portions of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. When you hear on television about forecasts of volcanic ash and forest fire smoke plumes, those forecasts came from the AWC.

As part of our continuing community outreach, the CAF-Heart of America Wing is partnering with the AWC to put on a weather seminar for local pilots and interested parties.

We're still finalizing the date, but it should be the third or fourth week in May. We'll be holding the seminar down in the hangar. Look for updates via email, or on the website or Facebook page.



As part of the preparation for the seminar we recently hosted several AWC meteorologists for a tour of the CAF-HOA. Scott Minnick, Jennifer Stroozas and Tyler Snider enjoying looking around the hangar and museum, and extended an invitation for us to visit the AWC. We'll be setting up that "field trip" shortly.

-- Brian vonBevern

What in the World is THAT?

THAT is a Dornier Do-335 “Arrow”. Designed by Claude Dornier, it was the company’s attempt to break into the fighter market after having focused for years on bombers and floatplanes. Dornier took his knowledge of pusher/puller engines and applied it to the -335 in hopes of making a faster fighter than was currently available. It worked. The -335 reached a top speed of 470 MPH, a good 40 MPH faster than the Hawker Tempest, which was the fastest Allied fighter at the time.

The Arrow featured cutting-edge design. The two engines were kept as close to the center of gravity as possible, allowing for an eye-watering roll rate. This design also eliminated the asymmetric thrust issues if an engine were to go out. Other unique items included an ejection seat and a cruciform tail that

contained exploding bolts, which would release the tail in the event the pilot had to eject. It also featured an internal bomb bay.

Though plans were to expand the design to include a night fighter, Allied bombing hampered production, and only 40 airframes were built, consisting of a mix of single and dual seat aircraft. Though there is no known combat of the Do-335, Allied pilots on certain occasions did report an airplane that matched the -335’s description flying at high speed down near tree-top level. At war’s end, a handful of examples were captured and studied. The -335 was found to perform quite well, and would have held its own against Allied fighters. There is only one example currently in existence, which resides at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

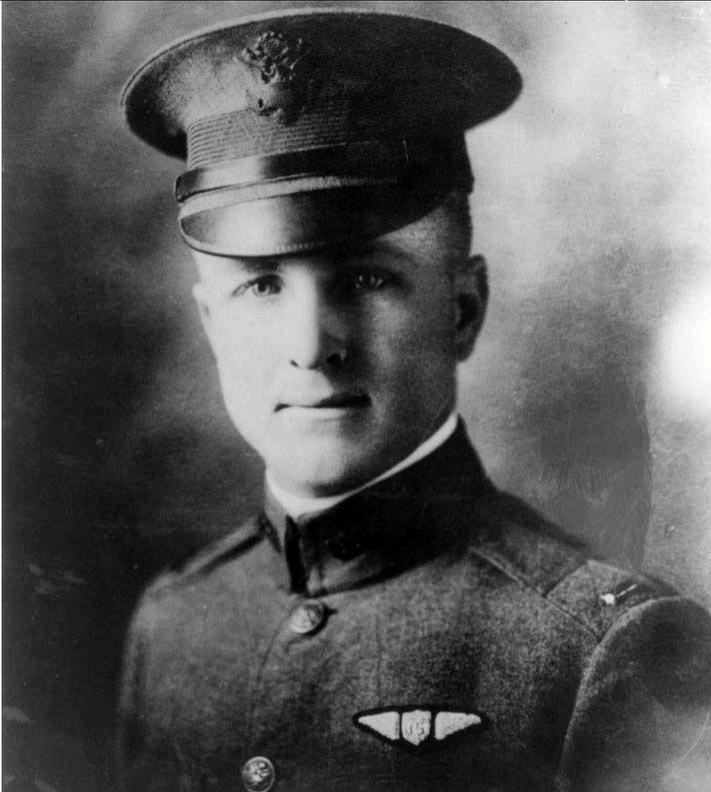


The F-22s that downed China's spy balloon had call signs

named for this WWI fighter ace

Meet the 'Arizona Balloon Buster.'

BY [MAX HAUPTMAN](#) | PUBLISHED FEB 6, 2023 2:54 PM



Frank Luke Jr. who received the Medal of Honor for shooting down 14 German balloons during World War I (Task & Purpose image).

The saga of that Chinese spy balloon floating across the continental United States at an altitude of about 60,000 feet came to an end over the weekend after a pair of F-22 Raptors from the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia sent the balloon plummeting into the ocean with a single AIM-9X Sidewinder missile.

The balloon's downing was the first air-to-air kill ever for the Air Force's F-22 Raptor, which made its combat debut in 2014 by bombing an Islamic State group

command center in Syria, and the Navy is currently working to recover its debris from off the Carolina coast.

While downing a balloon is an unlikely kill in the 21st century, the call signs used by those jets, as well as a second pair of F-22s, were a nod to an American fighter ace who made his name doing just that during World War I.

That ace was 2nd Lt. Frank Luke Jr., the so-called “Arizona Balloon Buster” and the first U.S. Army Air Service airman to receive the Medal of Honor who earned his nickname by shooting down 14 German observation balloons over France in less than three weeks.

“The call sign of the first flight was Frank01. The second flight of F-22s was Luke01,” said Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck, commander of United States Northern Command on Monday. “Frank Luke, Medal of Honor winner in World War I for his activities that he conducted against observation balloons. So, how fitting is it that Frank01 took down this balloon in sovereign airspace of the United States of America within our territorial waters.”

Luke enlisted in the Army Signal Corps in September 1917, receiving his pilot training and commissioning in January 1918. He excelled in training, completing his initial flying course two weeks early and graduating first in his class at flying and second in gunnery at the U.S. Aviation Center Instruction Center in Issoudon, France, when he arrived on the continent in the spring of 1918.

While Luke wrote to his sister that “I will make myself known or go where most of them do,” he initially made himself known for his cocky attitude, which was not well received by many of the other pilots of the 27th Aero Squadron where he was assigned. Initially detailed as a ferry pilot, on one of his first combat missions in

August he broke away from the formation to chase after a group of German planes, according to *Air and Space Forces Magazine*. He did the same thing later that month, but without any witnesses, his claim of having shot down a German plane went ignored.

In September, as the American Expeditionary Force prepared for one of its final major offensives of the war around the town of St. Mihiel in northeastern France, Col. William Mitchell, commander of all American air combat units in the country, ordered a new mission: shooting down German observation balloons. The balloons, while carried aloft by highly flammable hydrogen, were heavily defended from the ground with anti-aircraft cannons and machine guns. To counter the balloons, all squadrons selected pilots to fly in pairs, one high and one low, to attack the balloons. Among them was Luke.

Flying from the town of Rembercourt, he recorded his first balloon kill on Sept. 12, going so far as to land at a nearby American balloon site and collect a pair of written statements to ensure he would get credit. On Sept. 14, he shot down another two balloons, then three more the next day. On Sept. 16, with Mitchell observing, Luke and his wingman, Lt. Joseph Wehner, downed another pair of balloons. And two days after that, Luke scored five kills in just a matter of minutes – two balloons and three planes – although Wehner was killed in the engagement.



American World War I fighter ace, Frank Luke Jr., with his SPAD S.XIII biplane, France, 18th September 1918. (Getty Images)

In just a week, Luke had become the leading American ace of the war, which garnered him both plenty of publicity and not-so-positive attention from some of his superiors. When he returned from five days of mandated leave on Sept. 25, now without a wingman, he began taking off on missions without filing a flight plan. Still, the victories continued: on Sept. 28, he shot down another balloon and ground-attack plane.

The next day, Luke's squadron commander wanted him grounded for insubordination but was overridden by the group commander, who authorized another mission. Taking off at dusk, witnesses on the ground reported three downed balloons, bringing Luke's tally of victories to 18, including 14 balloons. He didn't return from the mission, however, and was reported as missing in action.

His habit of flying alone meant that Luke's ultimate fate was shrouded in mystery. He was posthumously recommended for the Medal of Honor a week after the armistice in Nov. 1918. A couple of months later, when Luke's body was identified, local witnesses

were interviewed, although the officer compiling the report spoke no French. The witnesses claimed that Luke had strafed German positions, crashed, and continued firing at German soldiers on the ground until he was killed. But when a second officer, this time able to speak French, re-interviewed some of the witnesses, they said no shots had been fired.

A version of the more heroic recounting of events eventually became part of Luke's Medal of Honor citation, which reads that, "Forced to make a landing and surrounded on all sides by the enemy, who called upon him to surrender, he drew his automatic pistol and defended himself gallantly until he fell dead from a wound in the chest."

Regardless of his ultimate fate, Luke's confirmed accomplishments made him one of the notable American figures of the war, second only to Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, who finished the war with 26 aerial victories, in terms of fame as a pilot. Today, Luke Air Force Base is named for the "balloon buster." Now, more than a century later, at least one Air Force pilot can join Luke as a certified "balloon buster" — for now.

<https://taskandpurpose.com/news/frank-luke-jr-balloon-buster-china/>



GoodYear was pretty creative today, flying over the Daytona 500! 😂





13 thoughts China's balloon (probably) had while floating over America

By Sarah Sicard

Feb 6, 12:26 PM

The Chinese spy balloon that took its American journey last week has finally ended. While floating over Billings, Montana, on Wednesday, it rose (quite literally) to prominence among the American public, prompting political outrage, 24/7 watch parties, and, of course, the generation of thousands upon thousands of memes.

And while much of the coverage centered on what the U.S. government should do and how its military should respond, the perspective of the balloon was given no credence ... until now.

These are the thoughts the balloon (probably) had while floating adrift over the United States, until its epic demise at the hands of an F-22 fighter jet over Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

1. I'm in Idaho. What a ridiculous name for a place. Do they not know what it sounds like?
2. What exactly is Montana? A state? A famous quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers? It's really pretty here though.
3. I am definitely a weather balloon. I think. Am I? This is probably a bad time for an existential crisis. I don't feel like a spy balloon though...
4. Why is there a Kansas City in Missouri when Kansas is right next door? It makes no sense at all.
5. They call so much of the Midwest "flyover country." It's perfect for me. I'm a balloon. This is where I belong.
6. ...Okay, I get it now. This is really, really boring. Why is there SO MUCH CORN? What do they even do with it? Corn pudding, corn dogs, corn cob pipes.
7. There's been a lot of chatter about blowing me up lately. I'm a balloon. Technically I'm already blown up! HA!

8. It's awfully nice of the FAA to suspend flights along my path. There's nothing scarier than a roaring Boeing 737 with 348 passengers headed straight for you. I never liked playing chicken in the pool, much less in the air.

9. Is that water? WATER! I've made it to the coast. Finally.

10. I love the beach. It's a shame I forgot the sunscreen though. My white skin is going to burn something fierce!

11. Huh. What's that sound? It's like an air conditioning unit is running inside of a washing machine.

12. That F-22 Raptor looks awfully close.

13. Oh God. Oh NO. OH S***!

<https://www.militarytimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2023/02/06/13-thoughts-chinas-balloon-probably-had-while-floating-over-america/>



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: 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**