



November 2021

# THE READY ROOM



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

Busy, busy, busy! You'd think as the Fall weather gets cooler and the days get shorter things would slow down around the Heart of America Wing, but it seems like we've got more going on right now than ever.

The Stearman crew keeps cranking out the revenue rides! Finance Officer Tom McChesney informed us at the last Staff meeting that the PT-13 has netted (netted, not grossed) several thousand dollars in revenue this year. We're one of the most "flying-ist" units of the CAF, even though we've currently only got one airplane flying. Not only have we been flying "pay" rides, but we've also performed several overflights for veteran birthdays', and our annual Linemen's Rodeo overflight in October went off perfectly. Thanks to all who helped there!

We hosted a Cub Scout pack for a tour of the hangar several weeks ago. They were so impressed with our facility and people they told their friends, and I've been getting phone calls from other Scout groups ever since. We've got another tour scheduled for November 9, with more to follow. Again, thanks to all the volunteers that make those happen.

Our November meeting looks to be another great one. Speaker Coordinator Dave Dyer has arranged for us to see a huge (7 foot by 11 foot) diorama of the invasion of Tarawa. November 20 marks the 78th anniversary of the invasion, one of the most brutal battles of WWII. Come hear our own HOA-member and USMC veteran Max Deweese (who participated in the invasion) describe what happened.

We'll also be holding our annual Staff election at the meeting, so make sure to attend if you can!

--Brian VonBevern

**NEXT MEETING:  
20 NOV, 10:00**

## Maintenance Officer Update:

Plans continue to develop on the PT-19. We are planning on moving the wings to a shop in Pennsylvania. They will need to be picked up in Atlanta and transported to Pennsylvania. The tail feathers will be going to a shop in Michigan. They will need to be picked up in Atlanta also and transported to Michigan. The center section is in our hanger and is being crated for transport to Pennsylvania to join the wings for

restoration. Hopefully this will all take place in the next month.

The Stearman has been doing a lot of rides this year and will be taken down for winter maintenance probably in January. There are several items we want to look at this year. We should have it up and running and ready for a busy 2022 season by early spring.

-- Steve Zimmerman



We are working with a custom shirt vendor on new HOA shirts that have our full color Wing logo, expected to cost \$32.50 each. They will be cotton, short sleeve polo ("golf shirts"). There will be a sample to show the membership at the November meeting.

No, you didn't miss the October edition of the newsletter... real world events kept the Editor from eating, sleeping, or writing!



# **WING ELECTIONS, 20 NOV**

## **COME OUT AND VOTE!**

HOA CAF Staff Nominee Profiles For 2021 Elections

### **Wing Leader:**

Mark McMahon and Steve Zimmerman are running for Wing Leader.

Mark McMahon ([skid\\_pilot@yahoo.com](mailto:skid_pilot@yahoo.com))

Colonel Mark McMahon grew up as an Air Force brat and knew at an early age he would be a pilot. Mark followed through with his dream, flying for both the Marines and then the Air Force, flying jets and helicopters. His dad, flying as a pilot for the B-25 Fairfax Ghost and a founder of the Airline History Museum, instilled an early love for Warbirds in Mark. This love led Mark to join the CAF as a Life Member in 2012 and the HOA in 2014. After retiring from the military Mark worked as a contract pilot flying drones overseas for the Air Force. Mark's favorite aircraft to fly are the T-38 and Super Cobra.

Mark's passion for aviation runs deep. He feels it is important for members on staff to be passionate about the CAF mission and engage in the day-to-day operations to best contribute to the Heart of America Wing. Mark thinks the restoration of the PT-19 is important. He would like the Wing to research the possibility of acquiring another aircraft, organize a pilot development process, and work on ways to become more visible to the greater Kansas City Metro.

When Mark is not flying, he enjoys muscle cars, motorcycling, target shooting, and hunting.

Steve Zimmerman ([swzaviator@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swzaviator@sbcglobal.net))

Colonel Steve "Steve Z" Zimmerman has been a member of the Heart of America Wing since 2005. Steve is a Life Member of the CAF and belongs to several other Wings. Steve has held several positions on Staff, including Safety Officer, Operations Officer, and Maintenance Officer. Steve has been on several committees as a member, including the Airshow Committee which he chaired for three years. Steve is the Check Pilot for the Stearman and PT-19, and flies several other aircraft for the CAF. Steve owns several aircraft which he uses to support CAF functions.

Steve is married and has two kids and a granddaughter. His wife, daughter and son-in-law are also involved with the CAF. In real life, Steve is an airline pilot and will be retiring after 40 years this December. Steve will have more time to spend with the CAF and would be honored to serve you as Wing Leader.



**Executive Officer:**

John Wittenborn

([chiller\\_52@yahoo.com](mailto:chiller_52@yahoo.com))

When Colonel John Wittenborn was seven years old, his love of aviation was sparked with a flight on a TWA Constellation. During that flight from Orlando to Downtown Kansas City, John was invited to ride in the cockpit. In 1967, John joined the Air Force where he became an Instructor and Evaluator Pilot

on the C-130, and was the Chief of the Wing's Standardization and Evaluation unit, charged with keeping aircrews qualified and current. John's favorite aircraft to fly are the T-38 and B-747. While flying his Pitts Special, John stumbled across the Heart of America Wing's hangar. John became enamored with the mission of the CAF and was impressed with the passion of the people he met after attending a meeting. John is one of the Wing's Stearman pilots.

John would like to see the HOA improve its financial base through sponsors and donations to the Wing. He also feels it is important to continue new member recruiting efforts especially in recruiting and retaining aircraft maintenance personnel. He would also like to investigate hangar expansion ideas to provide more storage and aircraft maintenance space.

For fun and relaxation John plays the piano. At one time playing professionally.

**Operations Officer:**

Vince Hill and Bob Robinson are running for Operations Officer.

Vince Hill ([pike2378@hotmail.com](mailto:pike2378@hotmail.com))

Colonel Vince Hill has been hooked on aviation since his grand-dad bought him a model of a T-6 when he was a kid. He then started reading every book he could get his

hands on about WWII. When Vince moved to Kansas City in 2014, he was looking for a way to keep history alive and joined the Heart of America Wing becoming a Life Member. Vince is passionate about aviation; it is his whole life. He is constantly growing as a pilot and aircraft owner. His favorite plane to fly is not a plane at all but the Huey helicopter. If he must choose a plane, it is the DC-3. “A narrow mind eventually becomes so small that it allows you to go nowhere”. This is a quote Vince tries to live by and helps him push for better all the time, an attitude that has made his company one of the go-to exotic and super-car maintenance and repair facilities in the MidWest.

Vince would like to see the HOA Wing grow and expand the aircraft the Wings flies, bringing a fighter or heavy transport to the Wing to share with the large population of the Kansas City metro. He also feels it is important to expand the number of aviation certified mechanics in the Wing. This is a skill set that is much harder to learn, in order to service and fully understand aircraft systems. Furthermore, Vince believes there should be much more focus on the ground staff and support systems as they are who keep the aircraft flying.

Vince is looking forward to teaching and learning with the next generation.

#### Bob Robinson ([pt19pilot@everestkc.net](mailto:pt19pilot@everestkc.net))

Colonel Bob “Bubba” Robinson joined the Wing 30 years ago when it was a Squadron under the Missouri Wing. Bob was instrumental in locating the HOA’s home at New Century AirCenter along with fundraising and building the hangar. Bob became one of the first sponsors of the PT19, even housing the plane in his personal hangar at New Century before the HOA hangar was completed. Bob has served in various Staff and other volunteer positions and has been involved with expansions and enhancements to the HOA hangar. Bob is always happy to donate money and most importantly his time and labor to see projects come to completion. He is thrilled that the HOA can meet in a very nice hangar, that is supported by talented, hardworking group of volunteer members enabling the HOA to offer rides in vintage aircraft.

Bob is confident that the HOA will be able to keep the doors open by planning and early efforts of sound fiscal management even with uncertain financial times ahead. Bob is proud to be part of this legacy and looks forward to future of the HOA.



We'll be holding the staff elections at this month's general meeting, November 20. If you can't make the meeting here's how you can obtain an absentee ballot:

Email your request to Phil Pardon at: [philpardon@yahoo.com](mailto:philpardon@yahoo.com)

If you prefer to use paper you can send your request by regular mail to Phil at:

14100 W. 90th Terrace  
Apartment 509  
Lenexa, Kansas 66215

Email requests for absentee ballots must be received (USPS requests must be postmarked) by November 19 (prior to the election day).

Absentee ballots will be mailed out by November 25.

Hopefully everyone can make it to the meeting (we're going to have a great program this month, commemorating the invasion of Tarawa in 1943) but if you can't, remember your vote counts, too!



Here at the HOA Wing of the CAF, one must be ready to improvise...

Brian is currently seeking sponsorships for a battery drill.



## *The Origins of Veterans Day*

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This site, on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the city of Washington, D.C., became the focal point of reverence for America's veterans.



Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor (in England, Westminster Abbey; in France, the Arc de Triomphe). These memorial gestures all took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated ending of World War I fighting at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The day became known as "Armistice Day."

Armistice Day officially received its name in America in 1926 through a Congressional resolution. It became a national holiday 12 years later by similar Congressional action. If the idealistic hope had been realized that World War I was "the War to end all wars," November 11 might still be called Armistice Day. But only a few years after the holiday was proclaimed, war broke out in Europe. Sixteen and one-half million Americans took part. Four hundred seven thousand of them died in service, more than 292,000 in battle.

### **Armistice Day Changed To Honor All Veterans**

The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947. Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized "National Veterans Day,"

which included a parade and other festivities, to honor all veterans. The event was held on November 11, then designated Armistice Day. Later, U.S. Representative Edward Rees of Kansas proposed a bill that would change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. In 1954, Congress passed the bill that President Eisenhower signed proclaiming November 11 as Veterans Day. Raymond Weeks received the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Reagan in November 1982. Weeks' local parade and ceremonies are now an annual event celebrated nationwide.

On Memorial Day 1958, two more unidentified American war dead were brought from overseas and interred in the plaza beside the unknown soldier of World War I. One was killed in World War II, the other in the Korean War. In 1984, an unknown serviceman from the Vietnam War was placed alongside the others. The remains from Vietnam were exhumed May 14, 1998, identified as Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Joseph Blassie, and removed for burial. To honor these men, symbolic of all Americans who gave their lives in all wars, an Army honor guard, the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), keeps day and night vigil.

A law passed in 1968 changed the national commemoration of Veterans Day to the fourth Monday in October. It soon became apparent, however, that November 11 was a date of historic significance to many Americans. Therefore, in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

<https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/vetday.pdf>



How time flies!

Our fearless leader, Brian Von Bevern has been a member of our Wing for 12 years.

Brian tells us he joined our Wing because his private hangar located right behind our hangar had no bathroom facilities and the CAF hangar did.

There are many reasons for wanting to join our unit. Some for patriotism, some for the love of old airplanes, and some for learning history of our military. Brian's reason was unique. Sometime between his swearing in (note picture) and a few months later, Brian became a committed member seeking ways to help the Wing both with his time, sweat and monetary contributions. Truly the Wing has prospered and grown due to his efforts. So every time we swear in a new member, we should encourage them to follow Brian's example.



-- Jim Boughan



## Hangar Update

Finally we have a gutter system on the west face of the hangar. We've had several good rain storms and little or no water incursion into the hangar. The gutters are doing a great job. The picture is of the west door during a rain and you will notice no splashes of water at the base of the door. We are grateful for Rick Shubert finding and working with the guttering contractor. Now all we have to do is find a solution to New Century lake (visible at the south side of the hangar in the attached picture).



# Wings Over Dallas



The Ramp Rats (Dwight Staples, Ron McNabb, Joe Gavlek, John Helms, Steve Zimmerman, and Mark McMahon) from Heart of America Wing did their annual pilgrimage to Dallas and CAF HQs to support the Wings Over Dallas airshow, 29-31 Oct. They were 'by name requested' again this year due to their reputation of being consummate professionals in the business of towing priceless warbird aircraft. The airshow got off to a slow start on Friday, due to winds gusting 35-40mph, which kept many aircraft from arriving and most of the airshow venue tents from being set up. Saturday and Sunday turned out to be gorgeous, sunny days that led to big crowds and some great aerial demonstrations. Once again, Heart of America members are leading the way on the national stage.



Steve Zimmerman (left) and Mark McMahon (right).

I think John Helms (center) is looking for the prop wash...



Left to Right: Ron McNabb, Dwight Staples, Mark McMahon, John Helms



Cub Scout pack 3247 visited the facility October 27. They toured the museum, looked at the airplanes downstairs, and got a chance to walk thru the Huey on display (thanks to VVA243 member Arnie Swift for conducting that part of the tour).

In addition, we had a Q&A session upstairs beforehand. Ron Wright, Fred Wicke, Arnie Swift, and Richard Schroder all talked about what it means to serve in the armed forces. The kids (and parents) appreciated it greatly.



Here are a few shots of hanging the new sign on the west side of the HOA hangar yesterday. The "Hanging Crew" was Randall Hauk, Jim Boughan, and new member Luke Klenke. Luke is the tall guy in the gray sweatshirt.



# Holiday Party

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



Saturday, December 4, 2021

HOA CAF Hangar  
Upstairs in the Education Center

*6:00 p.m. Drinks and Appetizers  
7:00 p.m. Dinner*

*After dinner, presentation of 2021 awards  
and a program of fun and hilarity presented by  
some of our own wing members!!!*

**This is a potluck dinner,  
so please bring a side dish or dessert.**

**The wing will provide the meat...ribs.**

**If you prefer to contribute to the purchase  
of the ribs, rather than bringing a dish,  
please email [hoacafinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:hoacafinfo@yahoo.com)**

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

**Please RSVP to [HOACAFInfo@yahoo.com](mailto:HOACAFInfo@yahoo.com)**

## **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**