



# THE READY ROOM



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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



View from "DOC" over Oshkosh, flown by Capt Steve

Another busy month for the Heart of America Wing. Most of the activities have been written about in other parts of the newsletter, so I won't repeat.

I'll just say Thank You to everyone who makes things happen every week at the Wing. Without you we wouldn't get things done.

If anyone is interested in being on the nominating committee for the Fall staff elections, please let me know.

I've been at Oshkosh this last week of July. The CAF had several aircraft here from several wings.

Thanks for all you do!

**NEXT MEETING:**

**19 AUG, 10:00**

**EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR**

-- Steve Zimmerman

## Operations Report

"It was a dark and stormy night"... and morning... and evening... for three out of four days in Wichita, KS. The Friends of DOC hosted "Warbirds over Wichita" on July 5-9th. We arrived on Thursday the 6th. Low ceilings and the threat of rain persisted through Saturday, finally clearing up on Sunday. The good news was the clouds kept the temperatures unseasonably mild for July. Pilots John Wittenborn and Steve Zimmerman managed to get in enough flights between low clouds and showers to keep all satisfied. The famous C-47, "That's All Brother", arrived late on Friday after a long four hour flight dodging storms. The crowds were steady and very appreciative of the efforts required to keep these historic aircraft flying. Many thanks to Josh Wells and the Friends of DOC for organizing this event, and for their amazing hospitality. And as

always, a special thanks to our HOA Wing crew: Steve and Susie Zimmerman, Jerry and Linda Sladish, Dan McFarland, Dan Hauser, and Randall Hauk for their generous donations of time and resources.

Our PT-13 is staying busy at home with the warm weather as we sell new rides and honor old gift certificates. Watch the Wing calendar and feel free to come help out when able. Our next big event is the Kansas City Air Show featuring the Navy's Blue Angels on August 19-20th. We will be getting organized and setting up on the 17th and 18th. We'll need about 8-10 volunteers each show day so get your sunscreen out and your wide brimmed hat on. We'll be needing you!

-- Bob Robinson



Using DOC as an umbrella



Our crew L-R: John Wittenborn, Jerry Sladish, Dan McFarland, Susie Zimmerman, Linda Sladish and Dan Hauser





## STOP THE PRESSES!!!

Wing leadership just notified the Editor that the Center Section of the PT-19 is almost done!!

As a point of reference, we shipped it off to Raven Aero on **8 June!** At this rate, the Wing should start planning for the First Flight Celebration on Veterans Day. What a great reason to have a party!



## 'Hope Is A Powerful Medicine...'

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, we held what's become one of our favorite events at the CAF-HOA---our semi-private "Open Hangar Day" for Hopekids. Hopekids is a support group for families that have a child suffering from cancer or other life-threatening illness. Hopekids sets up outings for those families so they can take a break from their stress and just enjoy the day. Having a child with a terminal illness is a strain on all involved, and it's our privilege at the CAF to provide a little emotional sunshine for those families.

In addition to CAF volunteers, our friends from the Heart of America Free Flight Association (HAFFA) came out to help by demonstrating their models and helping kids make their Haffa-trademark Styrofoam plate airplanes. Those are always a hit!

The veterans from VVA-243 opened the Huey helicopter up for visitors to climb in. They're becoming quite the regulars at our CAF events. That's always a popular attraction.

At the end of the day, we're not sure who's had a better time. Experiencing the optimism

and positivity of the families---and the children---is as heartwarming as anything we do at the CAF. If you missed it this year, make sure you volunteer to help next time!

-- Brian vonBevern





Susie Zimmerman did a great job at the kids table.



Wouldn't be a CAF event without hotdogs! Brian vonBevern and Phil Pardon man the grill.



## Dancing Cheek To Cheek

*On July 15<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a dinner/dance at the hangar. A little different from our usual USO-style dances, this event featured a catered dinner ahead of time and we had a 4-piece band instead of our usual big band orchestra.*

*The evening temperature was a little high (around 90F at dinnertime), but other than that everything went off great!*

*In addition to dinner and dancing, the event featured a raffle for a model P-51 (donated by*

*Museum Curator Darren Roberts), a 50/50 cash raffle, and a raffle for a Stearman ride. Garmin employee, Erin Koelling, was very excited to win the Stearman ride. Congratulations, Erin!*

*For our October 21st dance, we'll be back to our normal big-band sound; dancing to the music of our good friends the Moonlight Serenaders. Stay tuned for updates!*

*-- Brian vonBevern*





# Gone West...



Stearman.net

The CAF-Heart of America Wing lost a valuable and much-loved member June 26<sup>th</sup>, when Janet McKenny passed away after a long hospital stay following her automobile accident last Fall. Janet was a mainstay at monthly meetings, serving lunch to all our hungry Wing members. In addition to "kitchen duties" she recently served the Wing as Education Officer. We hosted a memorial celebration of life at the CAF-HOA hangar July 8<sup>th</sup>. The room was packed with CAF members and family members. In her "real" life, Janet worked as a nurse, and the Kansas City Nurses Association presented a wonderful tribute to her at the celebration.

*Blue skies, Janet. Blue skies.*



(L-R) Beth and Janet receive their Colonel of the Year award



## Maintenance Update

*On-going maintenance is one of the realities of operating vintage aircraft, and our PT-13 Stearman is a little challenging in that regard. Our Stearman has an upgraded engine (300 horsepower versus the original 220), and that custom installation requires different tools than normal when performing jobs such as changing the oil. CAF-HOA Wing member Mike Batliner designed and machined a set of custom*



*wrenches to fit the odd-sized plugs and oil screens on the Stearman, and donated them to the Wing. We recently*

*had our first chance to use the custom tools and they certainly made the oil changing job easier and quicker.*

*To prevent the tools from getting lost or accidentally mixed in with "regular" tools we painted them orange. If you see these orange wrenches around the hangar they belong in the Stearman tool bag!*



*Thanks, Mike!*



## MONEY MATTERS

Hello HOA members and friends.

We have some good financial results for the first half of 2023. For the first five months, our revenue is up substantially over the same period last year. We continue to sell PT-13 rides and sold fifteen alone at the recent event in Wichita. The Wing continues to be in a strong cash position, however we do plan for more expenses coming on the PT-19 restoration project.

We had a successful hangar dance on Saturday, July 15th, with over ninety paid attendees. Thanks to all who participated!

Let me know if you have any questions!

**Wing Staff  
Meeting**

**3 Aug, 7 PM**

-- Mark Schlicht



## 'OH THE PLACES [PRIVATE SNAFU] WILL GO': HOW DR. SEUSS TOOK ON GERMANY WITH CARTOONS

Under the direction of Frank Capra Dr. Seuss offered up his services to the U.S. Army's Information and Education Division.

By **CLAIRE BARRETT** 5/4/2023



Before the children of the world read about one fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish, Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, was honing his rhyming skills on a somewhat different audience — the U.S. Army.

As Americans turned citizen-soldier, the Army found themselves in a quandary — how could the service turn the youth of America into fierce, trained soldiers?

Part of the solution? Training films. "Training films were used during World War I, but became even more popular during World War II. Career soldiers, however, found the films unhelpful, and young recruits found them boring," according to the National Archives.

Enter Geisel, who, before the war, worked as a writer and illustrator. Under the direction of Frank Capra ("It's A Wonderful Life"), Geisel offered up his services to the U.S. Army's Information and Education Division.

There, alongside other talented artists such as Mel Blanc (the voice of Bugs Bunny) and Chuck Jones (animator on the "Looney Tunes"), Geisel set to

work to create the beloved character the trio dubbed Private Snafu.

Doing away with the basic, often cheesy films of 1917-18, the Private Snafu cartoon took on the war with slapstick, often raunchy humor.

Per the National Archives, the Army-Navy Screen Magazine (ANSM) was a biweekly production that featured a variety of short segments including propaganda, entertainment and training films.

Snafu, an acronym for Situation Normal: All Fouled (or F-ked) Up, was the Army's attempt to relate to the non-career soldier. And by 1943 standards, scantily clad women (albeit in cartoon form), profanity and sexual innuendos were deemed just the ticket.

From Snafu's premiere in 1943 until the end of its run in 1946, 28 cartoons tackled myriad problems these young soldiers might face — from breaches of security and malaria to spreading rumors and letting loose lips sink ships in order to impress members of the opposite sex.

And while Geisel made most of his war contributions from the safety of "Fort Fox" in

California, he did briefly experience life on the front lines.

In November 1944, Geisel was sent to Europe to screen "Your Job in Germany" to top American generals in the Western Theater. Although six months before the German capitulation, the film short was, according to the Archives, "an orientation film for United States Army personnel who would occupy Germany after the war was over."

Geisel later recalled that he managed to play it for every high-ranking general in the theater except for one: Gen. George Patton. "Somebody else took the film and played it for Patton," Geisel told his biographers, Judith and Neil Morgan. "I was told he said 'Bullshit!' and walked out of the room."

The film advised Army personnel to avoid fraternization with the Germans post-war, with Geisel writing in his script: "They cannot come back into the civilized fold just by sticking out their hand and saying 'sorry'. Sorry? Not sorry they caused the war; they're only sorry they lost it. That is the hand that heiled Hitler; that is the hand that dropped the bombs on defenseless Rotterdam, Brussels, Belgrade. Don't clasp that hand. It's not the kind of a hand you can clasp in friendship."

It was during this time, while traveling around the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and Belgium, that Geisel found himself trapped 10 miles behind enemy lines on Dec. 16, 1944, during Germany's last counteroffensive in Bastogne. Geisel reportedly wanted to go to the front to "see what was what," according to Capt. Wentworth Eldredge's account.

Maj. "Ralph [Ingersoll] and I talked it over," Eldredge wrote, "and concluded that the 'safest' place would be the 106th Division front — a very calm sector. There won't be much action because we've just done an intelligence sweep of the area."

Exactly what occurred next remains somewhat of a mystery, Rick Beyer wrote in the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine.

"Geisel's crisply typed 'Overseas Itinerary,' submitted upon his return, offers little information," Beyer wrote. "It baldly states that he drove from Luxembourg to Aachen, Germany, on December 16; from Aachen to Verviers, Belgium, on December 17; and from Verviers to the safety of Brussels on December 18."

It would take three days before the British could break through and rescue Geisel and his military police escort.

"Nobody came along and put up a sign saying, 'This is the Battle of the Bulge,'" Geisel later told a New Yorker reporter. "How was I supposed to know? I thought the fact that we didn't seem to be able to find any friendly troops in any direction was just one of the normal occurrences of combat."

In typical Dr. Seussian flare, Geisel added, "The retreat we beat, was accomplished with a speed that will never be beaten."

Geisel was honorably discharged by war's end, having attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. But it wouldn't be his last foray with the military. Geisel's "Your Job in Germany" was later expanded into a 1945 American short documentary film, winning an Oscar the following year for Documentary Short Subject.

The following year, according to the Archives, Geisel adapted his short companion piece, "Our Job in Japan," which was largely suppressed by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, into a feature-length documentary — "Design for Death" — that won the 1947 Academy Award.

Talk about the places you'll go.  
A real Uncle Sam-I-am.

<https://www.historynet.com/oh-the-places-private-snafu-will-go-how-dr-seuss-took-on-germany-with-cartoons/>





Here are some YouTube links to a few of the "Private SNAFU" videos. Copy and paste them into your internet browser.

### Private Snafu v. Malaria Mike, 1944



<https://youtu.be/y9mLM1K3U2s>

### Private Snafu, in "Rumors.", 1944



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vaupcu2qqI>

### Your Job in Germany



<https://youtu.be/1v5QCGqDYGo>

# How the Soviet NKVD smuggled Doolittle Raiders to safety during WWII

By [Team Mighty](#)

Updated on **Mar 15, 2023**



Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, Crew No. 1. (U.S. Air Force photo)

On April 18, 1942, 60 officers and crewmen aboard 16 B-25 Mitchell bombers did the improbable. They took off from the flight deck of the USS Hornet and flew a bombing mission over the Japanese Empire's capital of Tokyo and a few select other targets on its home island. It was not only revenge for the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, it was a reminder to Japan that it wasn't invincible – the war it started would soon come to them.

The Doolittle Raid, as it came to be named after its chief planner, Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, didn't hurt Japanese war efforts and only killed around 50 people. For Americans, it was a huge morale booster at a time when things looked pretty grim. For the raiders, it looked like a suicide mission. In the end, three would die in the raid and four of the eight captured raiders would be killed by the Japanese or die in captivity.

After dropping their payloads, the Raiders were to fly to bases in China, refuel and head for the safety of American forces. All but one would either crash in China or be ditched into the sea. The 15 that would crash headed for Chaozhou in China, the one that survived headed for Vladivostok in the Soviet Union – so why didn't they all head for the USSR?

The pilot of one of the American Mitchell bombers flew to the Soviet Union anyway. Capt. Edward York, knowing he didn't have the fuel to make it to China, would land his plane at the Vozdvizhenka base in Primorsky Krai in the Soviet Far East. As an ally of the United States, it should have refueled the Americans and sent them on their way, or at least help get the crew to safety, but its relations with Japan made for a sticky diplomatic situation.

In 1942, the Soviet Union had yet to recover from Operation Barbarossa, Nazi Germany's devastating invasion of the USSR. 2.3 million Red Army troops were captured, and more than 750,000 were killed. Still, despite the Soviet war with Japan's Axis ally and the fact that Japan had brought the United States into the war on the Soviet side, Japan and the Soviet Union maintained a strict neutrality pact, a pact the USSR couldn't afford to break.

In China, most of the missing crewmen escaped to friendly lines with the help of the Chinese. Only eight were captured by the Japanese (three were executed). In spite of the decades of animosity between the US and the USSR that would come after the war, the two countries worked well together during World War II, but the Soviets couldn't just let the Americans go.



Their B-25 bomber was impounded and the crew was officially interned. They wouldn't be seen again until they arrived at the British consulate in Allied-occupied Iran in May 1943, 13 months later. Internment doesn't equate to mistreatment, at least, not in this case. Some accounts say the Americans were greeted with a traditional Russian feast after the confusion of an American bomber landing on a Soviet airfield was cleared up.

Then the NKVD showed up. The NKVD was, at the time, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, both an official police force and a secret police, and was responsible for much of Stalin's repression and purges. Since the Russian-Japanese pact forced the USSR to ensure the Americans remained neutral for the rest of the war, the NKVD moved the bomber crew deep inside Soviet territory.

They offered to train Soviet bomber crews (as the Lend-Lease Act would send B-25s to the USSR in the coming months) but ended up in the Ural mountains, living among the Russians there, but supervised by the NKVD.

After seven months, the airmen were anxious to get back into the war and thought of escaping the cold, harsh conditions of the Urals. The Soviets treated them well, but times were hard for everyone in the USSR. They wrote a letter hoping to get work in a warmer climate, and surprisingly, the letter worked. A Soviet

official arrived to take them to Ashgabat, in modern-day Turkmenistan.

When they boarded a truck to head for Ashgabat, a man named Kolya was waiting for them. He had several bottles of vodka for the journey. The airmen became friends with Kolya, who was working in the same airfield. Eventually, they got his help to form an escape plan. Kolya introduced them to a smuggler who would get them across the border into Iran, which was nearby. He even brought them a hand-drawn map of the area and arranged a truck to take them to the British consulate in Meshad once they were in Iran.

The Americans left their Soviet overseers and crawled under the barbed wire that separated Iran from the Soviet Union, as the border guards looked the other way. The British moved them in secret through India, the Middle East, and Africa until they finally ended up on American soil in May 1943, some 400 days after the raid.

In the decades that followed, especially after the collapse of the USSR, it came to light that the entire escape was orchestrated by the Soviet authorities. Kolya was really Major Vladimir Boyarsky, an NKVD operative, who had been personally ordered by Stalin to engineer their escape. Everything, from their jobs to the barbed wire at the border crossing was faked to make the airmen think they had escaped.

<https://www.wearethemighty.com/mighty-history/how-the-soviet-nkvd-smuggled-doolittle-raiders-to-safety-during-wwii/>



## EVENTS CALENDAR

Aug 18-20	Kansas City Air Show at New Century Airfield
Sep 2	Open Hangar Day
Oct 7	Open Hangar Day
Oct 14	Lineman's Rodeo

### **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