Let’s Make April a Recruiting Month …

With World War II Heritage Days coming up, I ask all members to make a good effort at encouraging attendees to join the Wing and the CAF. Please, either walk your potential members over to the recruiting tent or be sure to give them your name so you can get credit if they join.

With so many people attending, this is a great opportunity to increase our membership. I also ask if any wing members could help out in the recruiting tent on Sunday, as we are a few volunteers short. Even just a few hours would be helpful. Please contact me through e-mail (recruiting@dixiewing.org) or cell phone, or catch up with me at the wing. Let’s all work together to keep ’em flying!

Col. Gerhard Frenz
Recruiting Officer
From the Left Seat:  
Col Jay Bess, Wing Leader

We attended the CAF’s yearly Winter Staff Conference in Dallas, Texas at the beginning of the month. In years past, headquarters staff would make presentations to the unit leaders on various topics on how to best run and operate the units. This year’s conference was organized so that the unit leaders that have successful operations, events, educational programs and ideas presented to our peers. The new approach was highly successful and generated much more interaction amongst the units. The Dixie Wing presented at three different sessions; facility rentals, museum renovation/expansion and community/tourism. Based on feedback from one of the sessions, we are working with the Peachtree City Convention and Visitors Bureau to develop a “how to” guide for all the CAF units to engage and build a relationship with their local CVB.

At the end of the conference we had the opportunity to visit the Dallas North America Aviation plant that is now shuttered. Both our P-51 Mustang and T-6 were “born” there and have the data plate to prove it! Nearly a mile long, raw materials would be delivered in one end and aircraft would roll out the other. For a brief period of time, B-24 Liberators were produced under contract with Consolidated Aircraft. The picture with the large hangar doors shows how two bombers could roll out of production side by side.

Our recent Living History presentation on the Flying Tigers was another successful program followed that evening by the Convention and Visitors Bureau “Wine and Warbirds” event. All of Peachtree City turned out and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, the excellent food and fine wines!

Keep ‘em Flying.

Jay
From Some Other Seat: Operations
Col Jim Buckley, Operations Officer

We are finally ready to do some flying. We have a new SBD pilot -- Casey Roszell checked out this month, and did a fine job. We have completed a third P-51 ground school, LT-6 and a Corsair ground school. Craig Hutain was able to jump through a hat and ferry the P-63 to Atlanta/ Delta Air lines for painting. We are planning on it being ready for a full season this year. We are constantly updating our show/event schedule on our revamped website. Hopefully I'll have a lot more to report in the next Dispatch.

Happy Trails,
Jim Buckley

WHAT’S THAT?
Col Frank Kalinowski

A few hints:

- Based on an existing design, it lost out to the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress.
- It could carry a bomb load of 72,000 lbs.
- Somehow, the phrase “Eight burning” just wasn’t as catchy as “Six turning and four burning.”

WHAT’S THAT? Find the answer on page 18.
Focus On Finance
Col Paul Zampol,
Finance Officer

We now have final numbers for our financial performance in 2016. We ended the year with total bank accounts at about $170,000 (all these numbers are rounded), aircraft investment accounts of $117,000 (depleted to pay for new engines), general investments of $127,000, prepaid expenses of $50,000, and total assets of $1,083,000. Liabilities included $30,000 of accounts payable, prepaid rides of $33,000, and the hangar mortgage at $331,000, producing a total (with several other items) of $1,083,000.

On the revenue side of the P&L report, we had Px revenue of about $24,000, donations of $63,000 (an unusually high amount), special events (WWII Heritage Days, Atlanta Warbird Weekend, etc. but not including rides) of $98,000, rides of $148,000, facilities rentals of $40,000, airshow income of $77,000, and dues of $15,000, producing with other items total revenues of about $486,000. On the expense side, we bought Px merchandise for $10,000, spent $13,000 on advertising and promotions, $155,000 on aircraft maintenance, $45,000 on aircraft insurance, $13,000 on utilities, $92,000 on special events, $49,000 on fuel and oil, $21,000 for ANUAC (CAF licensing fees), and $13,000 on mortgage interest. Total expenses were $503,000, which meant a net loss of $27,000. I will try to cover in next month’s report some discussion about the significance of a net loss for a not-for-profit organization.

Wing dues are now overdue! Gerhard will be following up with those members who have not yet paid 2017 dues to encourage you to do so. As noted before, dues ($48) can be paid in person at the Wing office by cash, check or credit card, or online ($49) through PayPal (go to the Members’ Area and look for the dues payment button).

Members who have not paid 2017 dues by the end of March will be removed from the Wing roster and will not be permitted to participate in Wing activities.

IT MAY BE “TOO LATE FOR TEARS,” BUT IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO PAY YOUR WING DUES! DON’T RISK BEING LEFT OUT!
Dixie Wing Celebrates 30 Years

Pretty bad when your editor misses such an important milestone last month: February 28, 1987 - February 28, 2017 - 30 years of Dixie Wing! It was on December 6, 1986 that the first organizational meeting was held at the American Legion Post in College Park, near Atlanta. Cols Jake Tryon, Mike Conley, John Hill and Bill Baldwin decided that there was a need of a CAF unit in Georgia. So, on February 28, 1987 the Provisional Charter was issued by the CAF, thus giving the official start of what is today one of the largest and most active Wing in the Commemorative Air Force. To honor this milestone The DIXIE DISPATCH will carry this logo on the front page for the next year.

Sunrise Photo Session Scheduled

Have you ever walked the flight line at an air show and wondered what it would be like to photograph those beautiful warbirds without the crowds spoiling the view? Or have you asked yourself what would it take to plan a successful sunrise photo-shoot with these amazing historic machines? If so, then you should take the opportunity to participate, on Sunday April 23, 2017 (time TBD) in the exclusive Aviation Photography Sunrise Photo Session during the 14th WWII Heritage Days.

To register, go to: http://dixiewing.org/aviation-photography-workshop/
From The Bookmaster

Col Dave Porter

BOTM* Dick Cole’s War

It was a privilege to meet and escort Lt Col Dick Cole during our fall Atlanta Warbirds Weekend last September. As we know, Lt Col Cole is the last surviving member of the famous Doolittle Raid on Japan in 1942. Health permitting, he will join us again in April for the CAF Dixie Wing’s annual WWII Heritage Days April 22/23 here at our headquarters at Falcon Field in Peachtree City, GA. At 102, he remains spry and his mind is sharp.

While he mostly associated with the Doolittle Raid, that was merely the start of his service during WWII. Unlike many of the Raiders who returned to the U.S. or were assigned to the European Theater after the Raid, he remained in the China/Burma/India (CBI) theater first flying “The Hump” in C-47s then, after briefly returning to the U.S. in 1943, was recruited to serve with the 1st Air Commandos in support of the aerial invasion of Burma again flying the C-47 including towing the big Waco CG-4A combat gliders.

Dick Cole was somewhat reluctant to have his WWII memoirs published since he felt that he’d done nothing special; rather he was just doing his duty like tens of thousands of other Americans. Author Dr. Dennis Okerstrom convinced LCol. Cole he would also be telling the stories of others who did not return from the war and on this basis Dick Cole’s War was written and published in 2015.

To truly appreciate the accomplishments of Dick Cole and his brethren, one must ratchet one’s mind back in time; those who served in WWII were children of The Great Depression whose main accomplishment was survival in those times of great hardship. At the same time, during the 1930s aviation was coming into its own. Hardly a week would go by without the announcement of some “dare-devil” aeronautical feat or some record broken; it was an era of aviation heroes, among whom was Dick Cole’s boyhood idol and later fellow-pilot Jimmy Doolittle.

In a recent review by Marie Taylor, a Preservation Technician for the National Archives-St. Louis, she explains meeting Dick Cole at an event and being presented with a copy of Dick Cole’s War, being asked to write a review of the book for MidwestRewind. (http://www.midwestrewind.com/)

Ms. Taylor made a particularly important observation in her review when she stated: “… I would caution any reader that is unfamiliar with the larger events or key players of WWII to do some general research before starting this book. The book quickly delves into specific military plans and figures, which can get confusing if you don’t have more background information.” This is particularly appropriate advice to CAF members since WWII military aviation in the form of “living history” is the core of our mission.

Marie Taylor’s review goes on to state: “The book “Dick Cole’s War” follows the true exploits of Lieutenant Colonel Richard “Dick” Cole USAF (ret.) during World War II. Not your average Army Air Corps pilot (if “average” could be applied to pilots during that time), Cole served as Jimmy Doolittle’s copilot during the infamous Doolittle Raid, as a “Hump” pilot during the China-Burma-India campaign, and finally as a C-47 pilot and Air Commando during the invasion of Burma. The reader follows Cole through his early life in Dayton, Ohio, to his career as an Army Air Corps pilot and beyond.” “… I think Dr. Okerstrom is correct when he writes that the world will never see heroes like Dick Cole again.”

Excerpts of Marie Taylor’s review used with her permission as well as that of Sean Derrick, Editor-in-Chief MidwestRewind.com

Lt Col Dick Cole and the Bookmaster - Sept. 2016

*BOTM - Book of the Month - It is on our bookshelf, it’s a good read; borrow it if you like but please return it!
(L-R) Cols Bob Grove, Max Hodges, Jim Fifield, and Larry Combs re-install the prop on Red Nose. Photo by Col Charles Burcher.

Right: Col Malcolm Lelliott shows a visitor the progress made on the Link Trainer.

Below: And, work progresses on the Link as Col Lelliott uses the vise to shape a piece for the trainer. (Sorry Malcolm, I didn’t get your best side!) Photos by FSK.

Right: The answer to the question: What does the inside of a PT-19 look like?
Speaking of the PT-19 ....

Col John Flynn was patiently working on the tail wheel strut for the PT-19 when I interrupted him. Specifically, he was rebuilding one strut using the best pieces from three.

John shared a poem that appeared in the first issue of THE AVENGER, the newsletter of the WASP from Avenger Field, Sweetwater, TX. The date on the newsletter – May 11, 1943. The motto: “We live in the wind and sand … and our eyes are on the stars.”

DOT PT-19-A

(A German spy renders to the Gestapo a report on the PT-19-A as observed at Avenger Field. By Mary Hart, W/P 43-W5.)

Dot Pt-19-A. ja, ja,
I close it haff obserfed,
Und vot I do, Heil Hitler, see
Hass got me quite unnerfed.

It taxes nefer straight ahead;
Der vays of it are veerable
Because der tailwheel dot it hass
Is very seldom steerable.

Dey rool down wind as though gechased
By der own defil’s brodder.
Dey seem to manage to go ofer,
Round, und through each odder.

Dey take off opp into der schy
In every pose conceivable.
Der way der nose ge-points to Gott
Is simply onbeleifable.

Der manner to onspin dot schip
Iss bang der stick ge-howling
Und nearly choin der power plant
Out onderneath her cowling.

Two flops it has fitch hang behing
On each wing down so fonny,
Und if iss taxied in dot way
Instructor lose some money.

Der altimeter keeps der height
A secret military,
Tachometer ant any speed
Does not a hairsbreadth vary.

It stalls it shimmys and it shakes
Like someone mit der chills,
Und ven recofers from der same
Its pilot near outspills.

In landing all its lofely leaps
Der rabbit can’t outdo.
Mein freunds, it is an eagle crossed
Opp mit a kangaroo.

Ja wohl, der plague of Herrenvolk
Dis schip iss efery vay
So well to train der maidchens, ja
Dot PT-19-A!

Apparently, Mary Hart was really Mary Hartson, class of 43-5. (Thanks to the WASP Museum in finding her!)

She was killed while on a test flight in BT-13A #42-88794 Valiant at Perrin Army Air Base, Denison TX, when the aircraft experienced a stall and spin.

She was one of thirty-eight WWII WASPs killed while in the service of their country.

Find out more about Mary at: https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=70667114
Another Old Gal Gets A Facelift

Left and below: At Delta for a long overdue painting, our *Kingcobra* is dwarfed by a commercial airliner. Photos by Col Charles Burcher.

Painters James Morris (L) & Richard Pike (R) start applying the primer coat.
**Our P-63 Kingcobra makes the pages of AIR CLASSICS magazine ...**

**DIXIE WING KINGCOBRA AIRBORNE**

After over four decades on the ground, the Commemorative Air Force Dixie Wing’s Bell P-63 Kingcobra has completed a series of successful post-restoration test flights in the hands of Jim “JD” Dale. JD is well-known to the readers of Air Classics as director of maintenance for Lewis Air Legends as well as being one of the regular pilots of the Palm Springs Air Museum’s P-63 Pretty Polly. After the war, there was a huge surplus of Kingcobras and the government was offering them for sale at $500 — your pick. Unfortunately, there were few buyers and most of those purchased by civilians were utilized in the restarted Cleveland National Air Races where there was even a special class for Kingcobras since they were so numerous.

During 1944, Kingcobras were pouring out of Bell’s Niagara Falls factory by the hundreds and one of the aircraft was USAAF 42-68941, completed on 24 February 1944. Rather than head to Russia as the majority of P-63s were, the plane was retained at Bell for test work, the fighter was transferred to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) at Moffett Field in California. During the war, NACA obtained many military aircraft for testing — often trying to find out if their engineers could improve the performance of the factory aircraft. Currently, the Dixie Wing plans to paint the fighter the way it appeared in NACA service and this makes a lot of sense since it is an interesting scheme and far better than putting the plane in a generic Olive Drab and Neutral Gray scheme. NACA had at least two Kingcobras for test work and, oddly, the other one was 42-68864 that became Palm Springs’ Pretty Polly.

We have gone through our P-63 files but have been unable to find out exactly how the NACA aircraft was sold surplus. However, it was registered to Steven Christiansen of Houston in 1947 with the registration of NX75488. By this time, all the paint had been stripped and the aircraft was in natural metal with the civil registration in black. It is a bit difficult to know what Mr. Christiansen was going to do with his price, but he must have been considering taking the plane to Cleveland.

This did not happen and the aircraft was parked at several locations at Love Field in Dallas and finally wound up parked by one of the entrance roads. The Editor recalls being a twelve-year-old and fascinated with ex-military aircraft and, at the time, Love Field had lots of them. He also recalls opening the P-63’s canopy door and spending time in the cockpit pushing the controls around and acting like he knew what he was doing.

The aircraft just sat, its condition getting worse due to the elements but it was not vandalized. At some point, the lettering New Mexico Asphalt & Refining Company was added on the sides of the fuselage. In 1966, ownership passed to Olin Crabtree, the registration was changed to N191H, and the aircraft passed into the membership of the Confederate Air Force at Mercedes, Texas. Work was done to get the airplane flyable, but that was about it. After arriving in Mercedes it was painted in the then-standard CAF house colors of overall white with red and blue trim and given the name Tumbleweed.

This was not the first Kingcobra for the CAF. That honor fell to P-63E 43-11731/N9004R that had been operated by the Honduran air force as FAH-403. Bob Bean purchased the country’s inventory of P-63s and returned them to the USA in 1980, selling N9004R to the CAF in 1983. The aircraft did not last long. On 6 March 1984, the aircraft was up on a local flight from Mercedes, Texas, when the blower impeller assembly let go causing a fire in the Allison engine compartment. The pilot made a belly landing and escaped from the aircraft, which was then badly damaged by the fire. The remains of the plane are still existent.

When Tumbleweed joined the CAF, it had been purchased by Mr. Crabtree and his friend William Rodgers who based the aircraft at Rolling Fork, Mississippi, when it
This is how the Dixie Wing’s Kingcobra appeared when it was operated by NACA. Note: This is a colorized photo done by Leo Determan.

was not in Texas. The pair wished to donate the plane to the CAF but the paperwork had not been completed when both passed away. On 5 October 1975, Lefty Gardner flew the aircraft from Mississippi to Harlingen, Texas. By this time, the plane had been repainted in French Armee de l’Air markings and we enjoyed several formation flights with it when being flown by our old friend Randy Sohl.

Finally, the aircraft was in such poor condition that it was grounded. There was also a legal battle over ownership. The plane had been transferred to the CAP’s Missouri Wing for restoration and some work had been done but in 1995 it was damaged when its hangar was flooded by the overflowing Mississippi River. A number of parts and components were lost at this time.

The Dixie Wing then took control of the plane, which was disassembled and trucked to Georgia during December 1995. The craft was stored until 1999, when the decision was made to begin restoration. It was a battle. Many parts had to be found or made by hand from original drawings and blueprints. The aircraft had suffered from corrosion in its

Look for this issue of AIR CLASSICS at your news stand:

OR: Subscribe today at:

AIR CLASSICS
PO Box 16149
North Hollywood, CA 91615

Tel: 817-286-3124
Toll Free: 800-562-9182
Nearly 25 years ago (can it really have been that long?), there was a flood in the Mississippi Valley where Smartt Field is located. One of the victims of that flood was a Bell P-63A-6 Kingcobra airplane in the Missouri Wing hangar which had not yet been assembled and readied for flight. The Wing made a decision that it really did not have the manpower and resources to restore the aircraft to flight status and relinquished it back to CAF. The folks at the relatively new Dixie Wing in Peachtree City, Georgia, just south of Atlanta, liked the airplane and dispatched a truck to Smartt Field to transport it to their home base. In 1999 they finally got started with the task of assembling and restoring the airplane. After more than 16 years of painstaking work utilizing their own wonderful machine shop, the Dixie Wing members completed their task of readying the aircraft for flight.

On Saturday, February 18, 2017, the big event was at hand. Veteran P-63 pilot Jim "JD" Dale of Lewis Air Legends came in from Texas to do the honors. Just after 1300 hours local time, the P-63 taxied down the runway at Atlanta Regional Airport (Falcon Field), home of the Dixie Wing, and took off. The flight, the aircraft’s first since 1975, lasted 20 minutes or so, with no major issues to report. After a small adjustment to the RPM settings of the propeller, there was a second smooth flight that day, this one lasting about 25 minutes. There were three additional flights the following day and again the airplane performed very well. All is ready now for the aircraft to be taken over to Delta Airlines for a paint job in its old green color, dating to 1945 when it served as a test aircraft at Moffett Field in California for Ames Research Center, and then to move on to the air show circuit!

The following Tuesday, February 21, Missouri Wing members Bob Moore and Dick Hyde (also a Dixie Wing member) paid a visit to the Dixie Wing. It was jokingly said that Bob was there to reclaim the P-63 for the Missouri Wing. Dixie Wing Wing Leader Jay Bess advised Bob that he better be prepared to write a "rather large" check. Anyway, Bob and Dick had the opportunity to pose next to this iconic piece of aviation history and to wish it well on its new adventures!
My First Warbird Ride
Col Fred Roth

Readers, we have our first submission to the new feature: My First Warbird Ride -- From Col Fred Roth:

Kathy and I live in Utah and I am a Dixie Wing Colonel. My sister is Merikay Franklin and Doug is my brother-in-law (and my CAF wing-man).

Ever since I started building model airplanes in elementary school I have been fascinated with the P-51 Mustang. My favorite model airplanes that I built were the P-51, B-17 and B-25. I’ve always wanted to fly in all them … and my first dream come true warbird ride took place with Red Nose on October 13, 2007 during the Peachtree City CAF airshow.

The fee was $650, which seemed like a lot of money, but I wanted to ride in Red Nose. When opportunity knocks, it’s time to fly!

I was strapped in and ready to go. Col Stan taxied to the end of the runway. Because it was the first flight and a cool morning, he had to let the engine warm up before take-off. Col Stan apologized that we had to let it idle for so long. I replied that it was not a hardship for me and I am enjoying the unique P-51 sound.

We took off. WOW! – I am sitting in an airborne P-51. My schoolboy wish bubbled with excitement.

After a few minutes Col Stan asked if I wanted to take over the controls. YES - I am actually flying a P-51! Col Stan suggested I try a wide turn – nice! I had never flown a plane and now I am at the controls of Red Nose.

Col Stan asked if I was ready to go inverted. Here we go! I can’t remember how many rolls and barrel rolls we did, but I loved each maneuver.

Col Stan started back for the airport. As we approached I asked if we could do a low fly-by over the runway. Low-level fly-bys are great to watch and now I am doing one!

The ride was scheduled for 8:30 AM. I had never been upside down in an airplane and I wanted to accomplish that goal on this flight. I was concerned about an undesirable result so I had minimal dinner the night before and no breakfast before the flight. My empty stomach plan worked!

I met Col Stan Musick as we were preparing for the flight. I expressed my desire to be inverted and he said he would make it happen. Because we would be inverted, I had to wear a parachute. The flight crew provided instructions on how to bail out. Frankly, I was not going to bail out, I would instead spiral in with Red Nose. That’s not a bad way to go!

After the fly-by we circled to get in the landing approach and came in for a landing, all smiles from my Red Nose adventure.

What was your first warbird ride? Was it in the military? Learning to fly? Or just a great ride? Tell us your story. Send in a photo(s) and description and it will be published.
SILENT AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED FOR WWII HERITAGE DAYS

Over the last few years the Silent Auction at WWII Heritage Days has been the source of thousands of dollars that have helped support the activities of the Dixie Wing. Now we ask for donations of military, aviation, and WWII related items to support the auction. Please keep in mind that this is not a rummage sale, so we are not looking for vintage electronics, non-military clothing, or something that was one step away from being put in the dumpster.

If you do have an item or items that you can donate to the cause, please contact Cols Dick or Janet Fink.

2016 Dixie Wing Awards

It may have taken a few months to do so, but the last of the 2016 awards was presented at the March Wing meeting. The award was presented by Col Bob grove. Photo by Col Charles Burcher

Letter of Appreciation

Jim van den Heuvel.

Whether moderating a Dixie Wing election, or working behind the scenes at a special event, Jim’s talents stand out above the crowd. When building a stage for Warbird weekend or a World War 11 Days village, an impossible task for some, it is a snap for this craftsman at his home workshop.
**WWII HERITAGE DAYS**

– 22-23 APRIL 2017

The largest annual WWII event in Georgia returns this April with big band music, swing dance, historic aircraft and military vehicles, antique cars and vintage fashion. The program will includes re-enactors portraying Allied and Axis troops, Rosie the Riveter and Hollywood stars, as well as education displays and activities for school-age children.

2017 will mark the 75th anniversary of several defining World War II events, including the Doolittle Raid, Battle of Coral Sea and Battle of Midway. World War II veterans, guest speakers and authors will provide a unique glimpse into the men and women who changed history.

For more information, please visit www.wwiidays.org

---

**Second Living History Day a Success**

On March 18, Authors Susan Clotfelter Jimison and Billy McDonald narrated the Flying Tigers story based on their research and books they have written about this pioneering group of combat aviators who went to China determined to fight the Japanese.

Jimison authored “Through the Eyes of a Tiger: The John Donovan Story,” about one member of the original Flying Tigers, John Donovan, in his own words through his letters. Donovan, recruited from Pensacola NAS and one of the original 99 pilots in the AVG, was shot down in May 1942 in a raid on Hanoi. His body was eventually returned to the U.S. in 1949. Jimison’s motivation to write the book came from a single letter written to a relative before his death.

McDonald wrote “The Shadow Tiger: Billy McDonald, Wingman to Chennault.” McDonald had an adventurous and dangerous career as a pilot in the Golden Age of Flight, and into WWII. He jumped from military cadet to wingman in Chennault’s famed aerobatic flying group, Three Men on a Flying Trapeze. In China, he moved from instructor for the Chinese Air Force to combat pilot flying Chennault’s legendary Hawk 75 Special against the Japanese.

Based on over 30,000 documents and records, McDonald told the story of his father’s exploits in China. According to McDonald, his father never mentioned that he had been a fighter pilot.
2017 Living Aviation History Day Series

The Dixie Wing of the Commemorative Air Force is proud to announce the continuation of its Living Aviation History Day series for 2017. The series will be set up in two blocks as follows: Note - Keep up to date with the schedule by consulting the online information at:

http://www.dixiewing.org/693_Living_History_Day.htm

**Block 1**

May 20, 2017  The Tuskegee Airmen’s Heritage in U.S. Military Aviation (Zellie Orr)

**Block 2**

October 21, 2017  Flying the F-111 Aardvark (Bruce Connors)

November 18, 2017  The Battle of Midway (Rick Ector)

December 16, 2017  The History of Air Racing - from Warbirds to Racers (Thom Richard)

The schedule for each session will be 1100 – 1300 hrs (11:00am - 1:00pm) and will be held in the Dixie Wing Conference room and the Dixie Wing hangar for presentations with airplanes.

**Descriptions:**

**The Tuskegee Airmen’s Heritage in U.S. Military Aviation** (Zellie Orr)

**Date:** May 20, 2017

**Type of Presentation:** Award-winning Researcher/Historian, Zellie Orr, and a panel of the original Tuskegee Airmen and their successors describe the history and the legacy of this famed group of airmen.

**Synopsis:** The renowned Tuskegee Airmen and their successors in the U.S. Air Force broke many barriers. Originally aided by Eleanor Roosevelt and others who supported the aspirations of blacks to fly in the military, the group went on to set many types of combat and other records during World War II. After the war struggles awaited, but in spite of the obstacles the next generation of airmen continued to shatter barriers. Researcher/Historian, Zellie Orr, will tell the story of how the 332nd Fighter Group won the first USAF Worldwide (Conventional Class) Aerial Gunnery Competition in 1949, and how fifty-five years later, she located the “missing” (3-ft high) trophy presented them. Panelists will discuss their aviation experiences and stories to round out this discussion.

**Format:** Power Point and Panel Discussion

**Presenter:** Zellie Orr

**Moderator:** Rick Ector

**Admission:** $ 10.00 - Free for CAF members & active duty military
Flying the F-111 Aardvark
Date: October 21st, 2017

Type of Presentation: Dixie Wing Col Bruce Connors will describe his experiences flying the F-111 Aardvark, including the April 1986 strike on Libya.

Synopsis: The F-111 was the first production variable-geometry wing aircraft. With its terrain-following capability radar connected to the autopilot, it added a number of new concepts and capabilities to the US Air Force’s quiver of arrows. The F-111 made combat appearances in Southeast Asia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as in the Desert Storm and Desert Shield operations in the early 1990s. Perhaps best known of its actions was the 1986 raid on Libya, which, at 6,400 miles, was the longest fighter combat mission in history.

Format: Power Point

Presenter: Col Bruce Connors
Moderator: Rick Ector
Admission: $ 10.00 - Free for CAF members & Active duty military.

The SBD Dauntless and the Battle of Midway
Date: November 18, 2017

Type of Presentation: Retired CIA officer and U.S. Navy submariner Rick Ector reviews the development of the SBD Dauntless dive bomber and examines the details of the decisive Battle of Midway.

Synopsis: Dramatic events were commonplace in World War II, but few were more dramatic than the Battle of Midway. Midway initially promised to be a strategic intelligence success, yet it nearly ended a tactical disaster save for a fortuitous sighting at a critical moment. The battle’s climactic phase lasted just eight minutes, when three U.S. Navy SBD squadrons struck a blow from which the Imperial Japanese Navy never recovered. This presentation will mix video, unique interactive digital features and a panel of SBD pilots to tell the story of the SBD’s development, the Battle of Midway and the flying characteristics of this famous warrior.

Format: Power Point, video and interactive presentation + the Dixie Wing SBD

Presenter: Col Rick Ector
Admission: $ 10.00 - Free for CAF members & Active duty military
WEB WATCH

Want to see photos of the largest piston-driven aircraft engine ever produced? With 36 cylinders and a power output of 5,000 horsepower, the Lycoming XR-7755 was intended for use in the B-36 Peacemaker, but was cancelled after only two were produced. Find out the real story at (you may need to copy and paste): http://usaac-official.tumblr.com/post/158380215074/enrique262-lycoming-xr-7755-the-largest

See other interesting photos and articles at the tumblr United States Army Air Corps blog. Thanks to Col Chris Schamel for submitting this information.

Disclaimer: WEB WATCH is presented solely to bring information to readers about some websites that may be of interest. Neither the Dixie Wing nor the CAF endorse or imply endorsement or agreement of opinions that may be expressed on the websites, advertisers on those websites, or links to other websites that a reader may follow.

Answer to What’s That?

The Convair YB-60 began its short life in 1951 when the USAF authorized Convair to convert two B-36Fs to an all-jet, swept-wing configuration. Although the converted ship shared 72% of its parts with the B-36, it was given the designation of YB-60.

One YB-60 was completed and first flew in April 1952. The second aircraft was never completed.

Compared to the Boeing B-52, the YB-60 was 100 miles slower.

Where can I see one? As with so many other unsuccessful prototypes, both planes were scrapped in July 1954.

But you can watch it in flight in this clip on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFWH8aaQkmk
ON THE HORIZON ......

Wing and Staff Meetings through June 2017:

April 1, 2017  (NO Fooling!) Staff Mtg - 10 am; Angel Squad – 10:30 am; Wing Mtg 1:00 pm
May 6, 2017   Staff Mtg - 10 am; Angel Squad – 10:30 am; Wing Mtg 1:00 pm
June 3, 2017  Staff Mtg - 10 am; Angel Squad – 10:30 am; Wing Mtg 1:00 pm

Other Events:

April 22 – 23, 2017   WWII Heritage Days www.wwiidays.org
April 28 – 30, 2017   Fighters & Bombers Tour, Savannah, GA (see page 21)
May 15 - 17, 2017    Trip to Savannah: Gulfstream Aircraft and Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum (see page 21)
October 7-8, 2017   Atlanta Warbird Weekend - http://www.atlantawarbirdweekend.com
November 4, 2017    Keep ’em Flying RUN. For more information: http://keepemflyingrun.com/

2017 Living Aviation History Day Series

May 20, 2017         The Tuskegee Airmen’s Heritage in U.S. Military Aviation (Zellie Orr)
October 21, 2017     Flying the F-111 Aardvark (Bruce Connors)
November 18, 2017    The Battle of Midway (Rick Ector)
December 16, 2017    The History of Air Racing - from Warbirds to Racers (Thom Richard)

Submissions to the DIXIE DISPATCH – Always due on the 20th of the month.
Shirts Happen!

From our friends at WARBIRDS NEWS, an exclusive offer of 20% off of apparel from Red Canoe.

Go to (NOTE: Image at left is a screenshot and will not respond to clicking on an image): https://redcanoebrands.com

Select your items, and proceed to checkout (MY BAG). There you will see a box for “coupon code.” Enter “WARBIRDS” to receive your 20% off.

It is well known that most aviation enthusiasts collect aviation-themed items of one sort or another. Who hasn’t gone to an air show or museum without coming away with a special memento or three? Whether it be t-shirts, hats, patches, or other aviation-related ephemera, there is usually something for every wallet range. However, finding high-quality items for a reasonable price is often difficult, which is why we at WarbirdsNews are proud to have Red Canoe as a sponsor.

Red Canoe Aviation Apparel 20% OFF Everything Online with coupon: WARBIRDS

Click on the image
Enjoy A Short Hop to Savannah, GA

Go on a 3-day trip to Savannah to include guided tours of the Gulfstream aircraft manufacturing facility and the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Enjoy a relaxing time on the Riverwalk. May 15-17, 2017

To reserve your space, call Art Martin 678-416-6153 or Bill Bateman 678-392-2515. Leave a message if no answer. Limited seating.

PLANE CRAZY

Recently declassified photo: Based on a concept used in WWII in the design of the “Twin Mustang,” an attempt was obviously made to mate two F-16s. However, this idea never got past the prototype when engineers realized what would happen if the pilots had to eject.
Seeing Double?

Nope. Almost as pretty as our T-34, the Florida Wing flew her in from their headquarters in Deland (north of Orlando) for the TICO Warbird Airshow earlier in March. I spent a little time talking to “Woody” (by checkered flag) and he is a fan of the Dixie Wing. Well … who isn’t?
By the middle of February, it was clear to the ABDA command that the next target for a Japanese invasion was Java. Forces available to defend the island were meager, and dwindling rapidly. British Field Marshall Wavell decided that last-ditch defense would serve no valid purpose, and asked his government for permission to withdraw remaining British forces to India as soon as attrition of fighter aircraft made the defense impractical. American General Brereton, commanding US Army air forces, decided to go with Wavell, and evacuated his B-17 bombers and many transport aircraft. Commander in Chief of ABDA naval forces, Dutch Vice Admiral Helfrich, ordered Admiral Karel Doorman, commanding Dutch, British, Australian and American naval forces, to resist a Japanese invasion to the utmost. Doorman accordingly signaled all ships: “I wish to impress upon all of you the necessity for every effort against the enemy to prevent his landing on Java. Every opportunity for offensive action must be seized and sacrifices must be made . . .”

Java is a long, narrow island oriented on an east-west axis. It is separated from the island of Borneo on the north by the Java Sea, from Malaya on the west by the Sunda Strait and from Bali on the east by the Bali Strait. While Allied heavy aircraft and support equipment and troops were being evacuated to India or Australia, two powerful Japanese fleets sailed around Borneo into the Java Sea. Admiral Kurita led the Western attack force with carrier Ryujo (shown below), four heavy and three light cruisers, about 50 destroyers, and 50 transports and support vessels. Meanwhile, Admiral Nishimura led an Eastern group of cruisers, destroyers and transports, supported by Admiral Takagi with more cruisers and destroyers. As was their preference, the Japanese forces were divided into various units to deceive the enemy. Admiral Doorman searched on the 25th for the eastern group, failed to find it, and returned to the port of Surabaya, on the north coast of Java. Before his ships could replenish, he received an aircraft sighting report of a large Japanese fleet, and set sail again. He did not have time to develop a detailed plan of attack, nor to communicate his intentions to his mixed fleet.

Doorman proceeded north into the Java Sea, his flagship light cruiser De Ruyter in the lead, followed by British heavy cruiser Exeter, American heavy cruiser Houston, Australian light cruiser Perth and Dutch light cruiser Java. Exeter was renowned for its starring role in the damming of the German pocket battleship Graf Spee off the South American coast in the war’s early months.

The accompanying Allied destroyers were in three groups by nationality: British in the lead, with Electra out front, Dutch on the port flank, and American at the rear. Shortly after four on the afternoon of February 27, about 30 miles north of Surabaya, Electra sighted several Japanese ships moving from right (starboard) to left (port). Almost immediately, Admiral Takagi’s two heavy cruisers, Haguro and Nachi, sighted the Allied ships and opened fire on Exeter and Houston from a range of almost 16 miles. Each Japanese ship could bring ten eight-inch guns to bear (that is, each gun fired a shell 8” in diameter); Houston and Exeter, bow-on, only six and four, respectively. So Doorman turned to port and closed range to bring his smaller guns within range. Assisted by spotter planes from their cruisers, the Japanese gunnery was distressingly accurate, and Exeter and De Ruyter were straddled several times (in WWII naval action, the gunnery officer would estimate the bearing and range to an enemy ship from his instrumentation, then fire “ranging salvos” and make adjustments until his shells, marked with a colored dye so as to be distinguishable from shots fired by other ships, straddled or bracketed his target; then he would continue firing on those coordinates, the likelihood of actually hitting the target then being a matter of time and volume of fire, as well as chance).

The Japanese also fired many torpedoes at the Allied column, but none hit. Now Rear Admiral Tanaka, commanding the Japanese destroyers from his light cruiser Jintsu, could see the Japanese invasion transports off to the northwest. He could not let the Allied ships approach within firing range of them. So he turned to port for another torpedo attack. At this inopportune time, shortly after five, one of Haguro’s big shells struck Exeter, damaging several of her boilers.
Comeback in the Pacific (cont.)

and cutting the British cruiser’s speed; she veered to port. Captain Albert Rooks (below) in *Electra* turn sharply left, assumed that Doorman had ordered a simultaneous turn to port by all ships; *Perth* and *Java* did the same. Unfortunately, they now made perfect targets for the torpedoes which the Japanese ships had launched a few minutes before; almost instantly, destroyer *Kortenaer* exploded, broke in two and sank. Doorman turned back and attempted to reform his force, meanwhile ordering the British destroyers to cover his cruisers. Commander May in *Electra* sprang forward, firing rapidly at *Jintsu* and hitting her several times; *Jupiter* and *Encounter* tried to support her, as did *Witte de With*, but were not so quick. *Electra* was pummeled by the Japanese column and went dead in the water; May ordered his men to abandon ship but himself went down with her about six o’clock.

Dorman now steered southeast and reformed his column; there was occasional firing between the cruisers, and ineffective torpedo attacks by the destroyers, but no major damage was done. Having expended their torpedoes, the old American destroyers, led by Commander Binford in *Edwards*, turned south for Surabaya. As they turned west along the coast, British destroyer *Jupiter* was rent by an explosion (there is still some dispute about whether this was from a Dutch mine or a Japanese torpedo) and sank. The cruisers continued west, then turned north, exchanging occasional long-range fire with the Japanese cruisers. About 2330, both *De Ruyter* and *Java* were hit by torpedoes and lost all power. After fire-fighting efforts had been exhausted, their crews were ordered to abandon ship. Doorman went down with his flagship during the night. This Battle of the Java Sea, which continued for over seven hours, cost the Allies two light cruisers and three destroyers, together with many of their crewmen; over 900 Dutch sailors were killed. One Japanese destroyer was badly damaged by gunfire; the Japanese cruisers suffered slight damage and few casualties.

The trials of the remaining Allied ships were not over. They escaped, for the moment, to the port of Tanjong Priok, but they were trapped on the north coast of Java. Captains Rooks and Weller decided to head west, for Sunda Strait, with *Houston* and *Perth*. They did not know that the Japanese invasion force had just entered Banten Bay, east of St. Nicolas Point, covered by heavy cruisers *Mogami* and *Mikuma*. As they steamed west along the coast, trying to be inconspicuous, the two Allied cruisers stumbled on many anchored Japanese transports, and opened fire. Japanese destroyer *Fubuki* sounded the alarm. By coincidence, captains Weller and Rooks had surprised the Japanese transport fleet at anchor, as Admiral Doorman had wished to do, but covering Japanese destroyers, firing torpedoes at the Allied ships between them and their transports, caused more damage than the two Allied ships.

Soon, heavy cruisers *Mogami* and *Mikuma* intercepted, each with six 8” guns and torpedo tubes. *Houston*’s rear turret was inoperative as the result of an earlier bomb hit. The Japanese ships had spotter planes in the air to correct their fire, and their superior searchlights illuminated the Allied ships as well. Soon after midnight, *Houston* and *Perth* had both taken considerable punishment by shells and torpedoes and began to lose speed. *Perth* sank shortly after midnight, March 1, with the loss of Captain Weller and 352 crewmen of her complement of 681. *Houston* sank about 0045; Captain Albert H. Rooks was killed by a shell before his ship sank; he was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his gallantry.

Chaplain Cdr. George S. Rentz (below), seeing a young sailor in the water without a life jacket, took his off and gave it to the younger man. Rentz drowned, and was later awarded the Navy Cross, the Navy’s highest award for valor. He was the only Navy chaplain so honored during the entire war. Of 1,064 sailors and marines aboard when *Houston* set sail, only 368 were picked up by the Japanese; of these, 292 survived their three-and-a-half years of captivity to be liberated at war’s end.

The combined Allied and friendly fire sank two Japanese transports; three others were beached and later refloated. It would have amused the Allied sailors to know that the Japanese army commander, General

Above: Japanese propaganda postcard depicting the sinking of the American cruiser *Houston*.
Imamura, was tossed into the water when his transport sank from under him. According to a Japanese report found after the war, he was rescued by a patrol boat and brought to shore. As he was drying out, an aide “limped over to him and congratulated him on his successful landing.”

Later on March 1, Exeter, with temporary repairs, also headed west to try to escape to Ceylon. She was accompanied by British destroyer Encounter and U. S. destroyer Pope. That night, they encountered Admiral Takagi again with heavy cruisers Nachi and Haguro. As Captain Gordon tried to evade them by turning northeast, he ran instead into two more Japanese cruisers. Despite the efforts of the two destroyers to screen Exeter with smoke and threaten her antagonists with torpedoes, there was little they could do. Eventually, the Japanese cruisers began to hit Exeter with 8” shells, and she lost speed and fire control. That made her an easier target for the torpedoes of the Japanese destroyers, and it was one of them that eventually sank this proud ship just before midnight (below).

Encounter soon followed her big sister. Pope survived another twelve hours by dodging from one rain squall to another. She was finally pinned by six dive bombers from carrier Ryujo, whose bombs caused extensive damage just before noon, March 2. Unable to escape, Pope was scuttled after her crew abandoned ship. That night, American destroyers Edwards, Ford, Alden and Paul Jones fled east, evaded Japanese ships and escaped through the Bali Strait to Australia. The last Allied ships had left the Java Sea.

It is clear from this account that the Japanese were superbly trained in night fighting tactics, with ships and equipment well suited to their needs. The Allies, while overmatched, did not lack for modern, effective fighting ships manned by stout crews. What they mainly lacked was training together as combined units under a common doctrine and common, effective communication systems (as NATO forces routinely train today). They also lacked effective air cover. The difficulty of supplying that is well illustrated by the adventures of USS Langley and Sea Witch. Langley was the US Navy’s first-ever aircraft carrier, converted from a collier in 1922. Relegated to duty as an aircraft ferry, she left Australia on February 22 with 32 Army P-40 fighters aboard, completely assembled. Freighter Sea Witch had 27 P-40s disassembled in crates; both were bound for the port of Tjilatjap, on Java’s southern coast.

After several delays and miscommunications, Admiral Helfrich, with American Admiral Glassford’s approval, ordered Commander McConnell to proceed in daylight. The Japanese 21st and 23rd Air Flotillas, operating from bases newly acquired from the Dutch, spotted the two ferries, escorted by two World War I era destroyers, about noon on February 27 and began their attacks with Mitsubishi A3M twin-engined bombers (later code-named “Nell”). McConnell’s radical maneuvers avoided the first two strikes, but the Japanese scored on the third, with five bomb hits on Langley. Determined damage-control efforts failed to stop inrushing water belowdecks and fierce flames above; the plucky radioman sent out a last message: “Mama said there would be days like this!” The ship was abandoned about 75 miles short of its destination and the destroyers rescued most of the crew. Sea Witch made it to Tjilatjap, unloaded, and steamed safely back to Australia.

Langley is scuttled by torpedoes to keep her out of the hands of the Japanese.

With Allied naval and air forces destroyed or worn down, the Japanese conquest of Java proceeded with minimal interruption. Batavia, in northwest Java, fell on March 2. Surabaya fell on March 7. On March 9, General Ter Poorten surrendered about 100,000 remaining Dutch, Indonesian, British, Australian and American troops on Java. The situation in Burma was also dire: British forces evacuated Rangoon on March 7 and the city was occupied by the Japanese 33rd Division. On March 27, Allied air units were withdrawn from Burma to India.

Early in March, Admiral Nimitz, on orders from Admiral King, sent carriers Lexington and Yorktown, under command of Admiral Fletcher, to the southwest Pacific to cover a reinforcement convoy sailing to Australia. Substantial American forces also landed at Noumea, New Caledonia, on March 12. Fletcher was ordered to use the operation to strike the Japanese if an
Comeback in the Pacific (cont.)

opportunity offered. The news of the Japanese landings on the north coast of New Guinea on March 8 seemed to offer a chance to hit them while they were still unloading and consolidating their beachhead. The only problem was that the Japanese had landed on the north coast of New Guinea, while Fletcher was off the south coast. Should he take time to sail all the way around the eastern end of the island, or fly his planes over the Owen Stanley mountain range, 15,000 feet high in places? After an all-night planning session aboard Lexington, the two carriers launched 104 attack aircraft, which crossed the mountains over a 7500-foot pass. No Japanese fighters were encountered. Despite the usual extravagant claims by the pilots, only one of whom was shot down, a converted light cruiser, a minesweeper and a transport were sunk. Army Air Corps bombers attacked the same port again the next day. Deciding that they had pressed their luck far enough, Fletcher and his carriers headed back home to Pearl, where they arrived on March 26, after a then-astonishing voyage of 54 days at sea.

Besieged with his forces in the small peninsula of Bataan, General MacArthur began hinting that he, too, might “go down with the ship.” President Roosevelt and General Marshall were not willing to tolerate the adverse publicity that would result, and MacArthur was accordingly ordered to leave for Australia. He turned over Allied command to American General Wainwright and MacArthur (below) and his entourage, accompanied by President Acquino, departed on March 11 in a small group of PT boats. As he left, he promised to the remaining senior American and Philippine officers “I shall return.” Evading Japanese ships, planes and submarines, they arrived in Australia on March 17. On March 30, Allied command was re-arranged; the central Pacific was designated the Pacific Ocean Zone under the command of Admiral Nimitz (below) at Pearl Harbor. MacArthur was named Supreme Allied Commander Southwest Pacific, which included Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. British General Blamey was named commander of Allied land forces under MacArthur. Meanwhile, the Japanese, having reinforced and re-arranged their forces, renewed their attacks against Bataan on March 24. At first, their progress was slow, but the intense pressure began to tell.

Next in Comeback in the Pacific: April 1942

UPDATE: The BBC recently reported that several of the wrecks in the Java Sea had been partially salvaged by unknown and unauthorized parties. This has been the subject of much diplomatic activity among the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and Indonesia, and Australian and US Navy divers have conducted surveys of the ships. *Exeter* is almost completely destroyed and *Perth* and *Houston* are damaged. Under international law, the wrecks are not protected as war graves, since Australia and Indonesia are not signatory to the pertinent treaties.