

# WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



## CO's Cockpit

By Greg Anders

**M**ission Statement: To promote Camaraderie amongst Warbird enthusiasts in the Northwest Region in order to encourage the preservation & display of warbird aircraft and to preserve the respect for the stories of those that flew them in defense of free Nations.

At our Annual Meeting in November, we amended the by-laws to update our Squadron Purpose. We also adopted a Mission Statement. The Mission Statement is the basic core of what we do and I am proud of our Board of Directors for developing it, and I am proud of our membership for adopting it.

To me, the most important word in the Mission Statement is Camaraderie. Camaraderie as defined in Webster's is "a spirit of friendly good-fellowship." And the most important of all attributes of the squadron is our ability to come together on the common ground of "Warbirds" and enjoy the good-fellowship of our shared interest.

But how do we grow and nurture our squadron Camaraderie? It is nurtured every time we get together. Whether that get together is a large squadron function, or simply a few members hanging out at an airport.

Camaraderie is the fellowship generated when any of us gets to sit with some of those honored veteran's that join us at our activities. It is the fellowship of those with a passion for warbirds that don't as of yet own a warbird, as they come together with those who are lucky enough to be honored with the temporary stewardship of a warbird. It is the fellowship of our group joining together to share our passion with those who have not recognized that their



John Clark captures Fred in Action at the Christmas Party.

passion for warbirds can be met by attending one of our events, or better yet, joining our squadron. It is the fellowship garnered when our members can be a small part of touching the lives of a youth who has the spark of interest ignited by the activities of our squadron.

I am very much looking forward to being a part of the

squadron activities this coming year. I look forward to the good-fellowship I anticipate.

Camaraderie: Our Camaraderie is the fellowship of Warbird enthusiasts and it is the cornerstone of our squadron.

Sic Tempus Ad Fugit!! ✪

# WARBIRD FLYER

★★★ Cascade Warbirds ★★★  
EAA Squadron 2 Newsletter

## Commanding Officer

Greg Anders

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Curt Kinchen

## Operations Officer

## Veterans Affairs

R.D. "Crash" Williams

## Finance Officer

Fred C. Smyth

## Newsletter Editor

Frank Almstead

## Newsletter Publisher

Ed Rombauer

This is the official publication of the Cascade Warbirds EAA Squadron 2. As such, it serves principally as a communications vehicle for our membership. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of the Squadron or the EAA. As members you are encouraged to contribute articles, comments, squadron news, and anything else involving Warbirds or associated subjects to the editor. He will gladly work with you and see that your material is put into print and included in the newsletter, no matter your level of writing experience or computer expertise.

Articles can be submitted via e-mail, to the editor's address. Deadline for submission of articles is generally two weeks prior to the next publication, but earlier is always appreciated!

## Business Office:

1066 Yates Road  
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

## Cascade Warbirds Homepage:

[www.cascadewarbirds.org](http://www.cascadewarbirds.org)

## Editorial E-Mail:

[editor@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:editor@cascadewarbirds.org)

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## Editors Page

By Frank Almstead

I know I say it every time but I cannot believe that another year has passed. Greg's closing is true. It looks like 2008 isn't going to go out without a fight and as I pen this column from editor's desk the snow is flying outside the window. I'm actually looking forward to 2009 and believe that amid the chaos there will be much opportunity.

As mentioned later in the squadron news Walt Spangenberg won the Warbird Literary Award for the second year in a row. I'd like to thank Walt for graciously donating the \$100 purse to the Cascade Warbird Scholarship Fund. Fred, having missed out on easy money two years running, is determined to capture the award this time and has submitted a story in this newsletter. I encourage you all to participate in the competition as I fear Fred's celebration dance should he win.

Moving on, as you know one of my favorite things about editing the Warbird Flyer is the research. On 18Nov2008 a great new resource became available. Google and *LIFE* announced that Google will host an online photo gallery that will eventually feature all 10 million of images from *LIFE* magazine's archives. In its day *LIFE* was the magazine of record. Furthermore, *LIFE* estimates that

97% of the images have never been seen by the public before. The collection includes photos and etchings from 1750 to today. About 2 million photos are online today with thousands being added daily. The new service, available at:

<http://images.google.com/hosted/life>

Once you are in the archive, you'll also notice that you can access a rich full-size, full-screen version of each image simply by clicking on the picture itself in the landing page. The photos can be printed out for free as long as they aren't being used as part of an attempt to make money.

It is an amazing site to see and one can spend countless hours searching the library. Here is a sample of the material available, an SBD in flight during the Palau air raid.

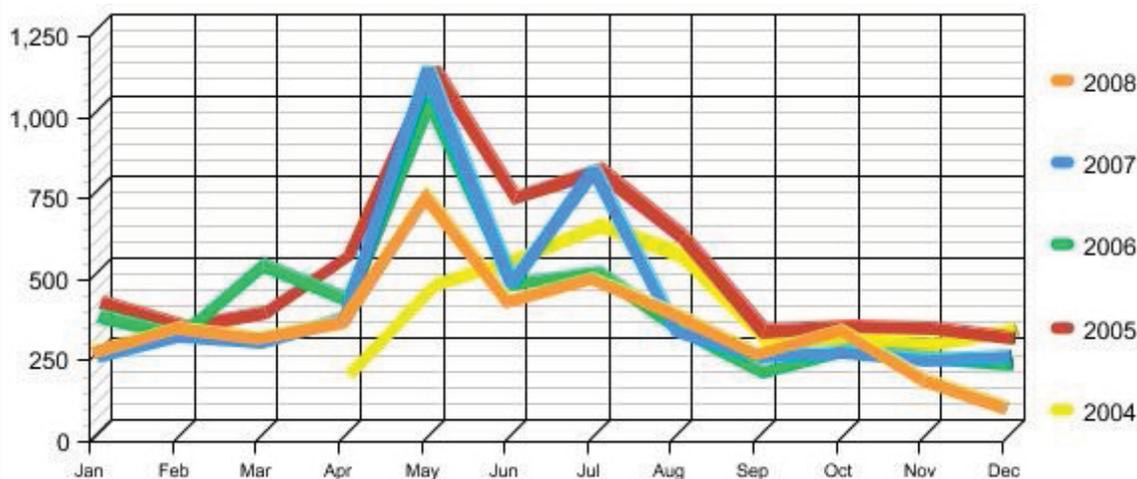


The new service, available at

<http://images.google.com/hosted/life>

Let's hear it at [editor@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:editor@cascadewarbirds.org)

## Warbird WebHits



# Squadron News

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## ANNUAL DINNER PARTY A ROARING SUCCESS

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It was another one of those “ya shudda been there” kind of evenings. We gathered at the Hawthorn in Smokey Point for the annual celebration and let nothing dampen our spirits. The new menu included Chicken Picatta and Flat Iron Steak and was the best food we’ve had at this venue. Adult refreshments were not in short supply, either. When things finally quieted down during dessert, the CO took the time to thank a long list of volunteers who did so much for the squadron in the past year. Of note was a brand new “Volunteer of the Year” award and the initial recipient was Jack Allen. From all the squadron members, Jack, “Congratulations and many thanks for all you do.” Newsletter Editor Frank Almstead and wife Susan have initiated and funded a writing award for those who contribute to our newsletter. The winner this year, as chosen by our Editor, was Walt Spangenberg, long-time member who flew Corsairs in Korea and Phantoms in Viet Nam. This was Walt’s second win of the writing award. Finally, the

big drawing of the evening for rides on the B-17 was held. Winners this year were Jesse Lofquist and George Renquist. No two finer fellows could have been so lucky! And with that, we say Merry Christmas until next year.

## RENO ALREADY

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Will you be going to the National Championship Air Races in Reno come September? The Squadron has two reserved-seat boxes, front-row-and-center A-41 and second-row B-40. They are available to squadron members on a first-come, first-served basis by paying \$100-per-seat deposit to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Reno will set the 2009 price in February and your final payment to the squadron will need to be paid by the end of February. Last year the A-41 price was \$330 per seat and the B-40 price was \$320 per seat. For that price, you get five days entry into the reserved box, you get five days entry into the pits, you get five days reserved parking (one parking pass per pair of tickets), and you get to share in the community coolers that are delivered to and picked up from the

boxes each day. Take note: Our A-41 box is already sold out, so don’t stall on making up your mind. Questions? Email Fred at fred@fcsmyth.com.

## LET’S TALK MONEY

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The dues year starts in January, so have a look at your mailing label. If it says “12/08”, then it’s time to pay up. Dues are still only \$20 for the year, so send your check to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. And remember, your dues are tax-deductible. Just another bonus for belonging to the Squadron.

## POSITION AVAILABLE

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Can we interest you in low pay? Long hours? On the road during your summer weekends? Well, we thought so. Seriously, though, if you love working with the public, if you love talking about warbirds and talking with veterans, and if you have any background in retail sales, then the Squadron would like to have you involved in the PX effort. You’d have use of the PX van - we pay the insurance, gas, and oil – and air show venues outside the Seattle area usually pick up your rooming costs. Your total time commitment is only six or seven events a season plus keeping track of your inventory. We even offer free training. If you’re interested, get in touch with Fred at fred@fcsmyth.com.

## FRESH BLOOD

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We have some new members who need to be properly welcomed into the Squadron. When you see them around, take time to say “Hello” and make them feel a part of our unique group.

Brad Jorgenson	Vancouver, BC
Coleen Regan	University Place, WA
Tom Sando	Belfair, WA
Al Sauer	Seattle, WA



John catches Jack and his family showing off his award.

# It Was Pure Luck: A Series

By Fred Smyth

## TO KNOW YOUR MOUNT

Many pilots acknowledge such an affinity for their aircraft that nothing escapes unnoticed. It is the reason that many of us are more wary using rentals or other unfamiliar planes. I am a firm believer.

It was the early Eighties and a fine August day, CAVU to the moon. I was flying Part 91 for a logging and road-construction company in Southeast Alaska, an archipelago of some 1,100 islands. The only way to get around was in boats, airplanes, and helicopters. This particular day was given over to “ash and trash” flights, nearly a dozen legs that took me from gravel strips to water landings and back again. I was flying our Cessna A185F, a workhorse of the region, mounted on Edo amphibious floats. The 300-hp Continental provided plenty of power for takeoffs and thrummed effortlessly along the various routes.

The morning pre-flight inspection had yielded nothing of concern. No oil dripping, no fuel stains, no dents, just nothing out of the ordinary. In fact, the airplane was only a week or so out of annual and had already performed flawlessly on several “proving” flights. There was no cause for concern. The engine start confirmed that feeling and off we went, another beautiful day where I had to marvel at the good fortune of actually being paid money to perform this job.

The first leg terminated at an island float camp where I tied up at the dock and exchanged some innocuous items destined for that location for other innocuous items headed somewhere else. That’s what “ash and trash” is, moving people and items among various locations to further the overall mission. But it was on the second leg when something scratched in the back of my mind – just a little nudge that made me watch the instruments a bit closer.

The next landing was uneventful, but my subsequent pre-flight mirrored the first one of the day. The oil level always gets checked before each engine start, but now I was checking after the flight to make certain I had secured the oil filler cap. I checked the leading edges of the prop,

the water rudders and their cables, the belly for oil runs and the fuel caps for security. During the flights, more and more of my time was spent staring at the instrument panel: something just did not feel right, but I couldn’t put my finger on it.

All day long this went on, leg after leg after leg of 20- to 30-minutes’ duration. By the last leg of the day, a one-hour jaunt to home, I was starring continuously at the panel, primarily the oil pressure gauge, and only occasionally glancing outside to make certain I wasn’t about to run over somebody. At 1,500 feet over water-skiing-smooth

saltwater, I was still as nervous as a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. And then it happened: the oil pressure needle went to zero and back to normal in the blink of an eye – less than one-half second. Had I been looking outside or napping, I would have missed it.

I immediately reduced power to idle thrust, pitched up to best glide, and got company on the radio (we had VHF repeater sites on several mountaintops and could communicate easily throughout the lower half of Southeast).

I decided to land immediately because the water was exceptionally smooth, there was a float camp just a couple miles away, and, most fortunately, there was a company tugboat just around the corner. The descent and landing were uneventful and the tug quickly located me and attached a towline. When we looked behind the airplane, we were amazed at the oil sheen on the water. A look at the belly confirmed that there might be more oil outside the pan than in.

When tied up at the float camp, I pulled the upper cowling and was speechless at what I found. The accessory gearcase on the Continental mounts the magnetos forward, where they hang over the rearmost cylinders. The left mag had blown off its mounts and was lying on top of the cylinders. The engine was an oily mess.

The fix was easy. I won’t mention it here because I don’t know the statute of limitations, but suffice it to say that we were flying the airplane the next day. I have to admit, though, that I made the boss fly it home. Oh, the day before? A two-hour flight over the mountains in the other direction. Luck always plays a part. 🍀



C-185 on the McNeil River, AK. (Photo: silkeywhite.com)

# Calling 911

By Ed Rombauer

So there you are, climbing into your nifty warbird, eager to show your first time passenger the beautiful Pacific Northwest on a clear but cold winter day. Why not fly down to St. Helens and have a look at the old volcano, drop into some airport and get one of those hundred dollar hamburgers, and return home just before dark. Nearing the mountain, the engine is running smoothly, the weather is CAVU, and best of all, the heater is keeping the cabin snuggly warm. After a couple of passes around the mountain your passenger, an inveterate hunter, asks if you can spot any elk from the plane. Eager to show off your “Drop on my smoke” routine, you obligingly head off into the snow covered foothills at a low level.

An engine that sits unused over the cold damp months can develop some interesting mechanical problems, and this one was no exception. As the aircraft flew low over the cold hills, unbeknownst to you, the engine was being lubricated by oil and chrome plating. There’s nothing like a stopped clock or a stopped prop for being worthless. Suddenly you are very busy trying to find a soft spot for your wounded bird while calling for help on the radio. The only trouble is, the radio was still set to the departure CTAF frequency, and where you are located no one can hear your mayday. After the aircraft slides to a stop in the snow, and you congratulate yourself on getting on the ground in one piece, you get out your cell phone to call for help. Sorry, no cell connection—“Bummer.” Oh well you think, my ELT is screaming away so I’ll just relax and wait for someone to come and find us. Somewhere in the back of your mind there’s something about ELTs that you can’t quite remember.

A long time ago, in a place far away, I found myself standing ramrod straight in front of a Marine Corps Major while my eyes burned two holes in the bulkhead behind him. I was there to have the Major, who was the officer in charge of physical training, sign my check-out card so that I could leave pre-flight and get on with learning to fly. This highly decorated Marine aviator sat there at his desk looking as though he was carved out of rock. His uniform was pressed razor sharp, the insignia and brass on his uniform shined like the sun, and you could see yourself in the shine on his shoes. What I didn’t know until later, was that the Major, who strongly believed in physical conditioning for all pilots, had been a Corsair pilot in Korea during the early days of the war. On one of his bombing missions over North Korea his aircraft was shot down in a rice paddy about twenty-five miles behind enemy lines. It must have been a pretty soft landing, as I don’t remember seeing any evidence of a gun sight imprint on his forehead. As he cleared the aircraft, he realized that his only hope

of survival was to get back to the U.N. side of the line before the enemy caught up with him. In those days before ELTs and cell phones, when your aircraft dumped you in the middle of nowhere you were on your own. The Major took a quick bearing with his survival compass, waded out of the rice paddy and started running his personal marathon towards friendly lines. Evidently the twenty-five miles was no problem for this super-fit Marine as he made it back to friendly forces in record time.

Not so fortunate are our two friends in the Cascade foothills waiting to be rescued. Being over age, over weight, and out of shape, they are not going to be able to walk out of their crash site let alone run. And as there was no planning for this flight, they have no equipment or clothing for a cold night on the mountain. The family members back home think that they are off enjoying an expensive burger and won’t start to miss them until well after dark. Oh, and one other small detail. That ELT our hero was depending on to tell the world that they needed help? That something about ELTs he couldn’t quite remember? This accident happened after February 1, 2009, and on that date the satellites

were no longer listening for the 121.5 signal. There is, of course, the chance that an over flying aircraft may be monitoring the emergency frequency and pick up the ELT signal, however I don’t think I would bet on that against a cold night in the hills. The best that they can hope for is blind luck, and that’s a poor bargain for survival.

As we don’t expect to be shot down in some foreign country, what have these two stories got to do with each other? In the case of

the marine pilot, he had conditioned himself both physically and mentally to survive. He carried the equipment necessary to find his way home as well as being dressed for the conditions he would encounter. He and his squadron mates had planned for such an event. Our fictitious pair in the hills had not planned on anything other than an enjoyable day. They didn’t equip or prepare for anything other than an uneventful flight.

On February 1, 2009 the Sarsat satellite system will stop monitoring 121.5. In the U.S. you will still be able to use your old ELT, however, under the proposed rules, to fly into Canada you will have to install a new 406 MHz emergency locator transmitter in your aircraft. Portable ELTs and personal locator beacons will not be accepted—the ELT must be panel mounted. So if you want to fly out of the country, be prepared to spend a thousand dollars or more on a piece of equipment that will not only tell everyone where you are but who you are – it’s a cheap price to pay for being rescued before the critters get you.

Fly Safe 🍀



F4U Corsair flown by Lt. Joe Bibby of VMF-214 Lost to ground fire 26 Oct 1950. (Ed Rombauer Photo)

# Operation Bodenplatte

By Frank Almstead

In the early morning of 1 January 1945, the German Luftwaffe, against all odds, launched Operation Bodenplatte, a last desperate attempt to break loose the Ardennes Offensive that had come to a smoldering halt at Bastogne. The Luftwaffe, assumed to be starved of fuel and fighting spirit, launched a massive, surprise, low-level strike targeted at 17 Allied tactical airfields throughout France, Belgium, and Holland. The goal was to decimate significant elements of the British 2nd RAF and the USAAF on the ground, while destroying as many hangars and airstrips as possible. Planned under great secrecy, the raid gambled on using the bulk of Luftwaffe fighter assets on the Western Front, and additional units of Junkers Ju 88 and Junkers Ju 188 night-fighters and bombers to act as pathfinders. The attack was timed to be carried out at 0920 hours.

As the winter skies lightened, more than 900 German aircraft, most of them Fw 190s and Bf 109s, swept across vulnerable and unsuspecting airfields, including Brussels and Eindhoven. It was hoped that the speed with which the attack could be carried out would offset the relatively small bomb loads the fighters could carry. It was also hoped that by flying low and fast to the targets maximum surprise would be achieved.

It would be during Operation Bodenplatte that the Legend of Y-29 was born. The Luftwaffe attack on the Asch airbase, known as Y-29, was a total disaster. When the 11th Jagdgeschwader reached Y-29 they found 8 Thunderbolts of the 390th FS, 366 FG circling the field and 12 Mustangs of the 487th FS, 352nd FG just taking off. The ensuing battle came to be known as the "Legend of Y-29".

On December 31st 1945, the 352nd received its orders for the 1st day of the New Year. They were to provide escort for 8th Air Force Bombers on a mission to bomb targets near Berlin. Lt. Col John Meyer, commander of the 487th Fighter Squadron was disappointed with this assignment. He believed that the Germans may try to catch the allies still asleep and hung over from new years

celebrations and requested that the 487th be allowed to fly a patrol early in the morning. Command reluctantly agreed on the condition that the 352nd be able to field a full group of 36 fighters for the escort mission.

The 366th also had received their orders for the New Year. The 391st was to leave early in the morning to attack German armor at Ondenval. Two flights of the 390th were also scheduled to take off slightly later in the morning with the same objective. Thus it was that 8 P47's of the 366th would be circling over Asch, and 12 P51's of the 487th would be on the flight line as the Luftwaffe approached. The battle over Asch went on for 30 minutes. 11 pilots of

the 487th claimed 23 victories while sustaining no losses, and just three aircraft damaged in the air. The 390th and 487th defended the airbase at Asch so well that only one Mustang was damaged on the ground and no casualties were reported. For their courage and performance in the face of overwhelming odds, the 487th earned the only Distinguished Unit Citation given to a fighter squadron in the Northwestern European Theater of Operation.

In Manrho and Putz's definitive study of Operation Bodenplatte they conclude that approximately 305 Allied aircraft are destroyed and a further 190 damaged over the course of the attack. While the airfields remained out of action for up to two weeks.

The Luftwaffe suffered losses of 271 Bf 109s/Fw 190s destroyed and 65 Bf 109s/Fw 190s damaged.

Furthermore 13 Ju 88s were destroyed or damaged. Worse however, were the personnel losses. No fewer than 213 Luftwaffe pilots, including 22 unit commanders, were lost during the operation. The lost Luftwaffe aircraft and pilots were irreplaceable, leaving the Luftwaffe weaker than ever and incapable of mounting any major attack again. Bodenplatte was the final major Luftwaffe offensive in World War II.

Manrho and Putz go on to dissect the failure. In a major oversight, the Luftwaffe planners had set flight paths which took many of Luftwaffe units over some of the most heavily defended areas on the Continent; namely the V2 launch sites around The Hague. These sites were studded by large



Operational overview of Operation Bodenplatte. (www.wikipedia.org)

numbers of Flak units, none of which had been warned about the operation, due to its secrecy. As a result 30-35 German aircraft were lost aircraft to “friendly fire”.

In addition, the course to target was made over front line positions where heavy battles had recently taken place. Consequently, numerous Allied AAA units were concentrated in these areas accounting for about 137 Luftwaffe losses. An additional 84 aircraft were lost to Allied fighters.

Manrho and Putz believe that the majority of the Luftwaffe pilots were very poor marksmen and lacked flight skills. This resulted in multiple strafing runs which allowed the Allied defenders ample time to recover from the surprise and inflict damage on the attackers. In addition, the Luftwaffe paid for poor technique, such as pulling up and turning above the airfield after a strafing run. Lastly the tactical value of the mission is called into question as the attack was planned to coincide with the offensive in the Ardennes, which had clearly ended.

Interestingly, Adolf Galland, Commander of Germany’s Fighter Force, argued strenuously against the operation. Galland envisioned striking the Allied bombers, which he

saw as a greater threat and less replaceable by the Allies. Following Operation Bodenplatte, Galland and other high-ranking pilots and commanders of the Luftwaffe joined in protest of the pointless sacrifice of so many valuable men and machines. The high-ranking officers who joined in this protest were mostly removed from their positions and either sent back to combat units or sent into exile out of the front lines. Galland himself was removed by Göring as Commander of Germany’s Fighter Force and, after having to endure a couple of weeks of forced leave, was reluctantly offered a posting as a front-line fighter pilot in command of an Me 262 unit, which Galland was to call JV 44. ✪



Fw 190 D-9 Black 12 of Lt. Theo Nibel 10./JG 54. Downed by a Partridge near Wemmel (Photo: www.jg54greenhearts.com)

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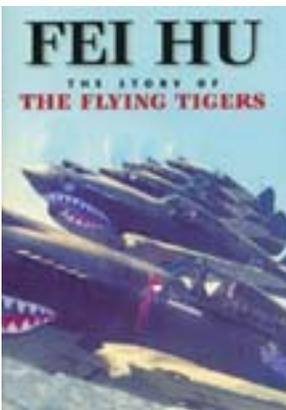
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## Media Review

By John Clark

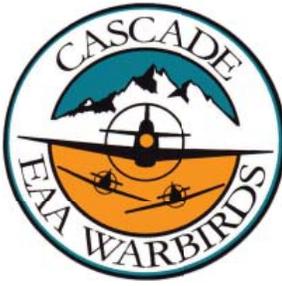


In slightly more time than it takes to complete a Cascade Warbirds flying season, the famed American Volunteer Group aka “The Flying Tigers” earned their place in history as one of the most outstanding air combat units of World War 2. “Fei Hu,” literally “Flying Tiger” in Mandarin Chinese, captures that history in a rich visual record on video tape and a newly released DVD.

The historical film footage, in black & white and color, is drawn from archives that date from the unit’s inception thru induction into the USAAF’s China Air Task Force (CATF). Their 8-month combat history seems more extensively preserved than most early-war air combat units in either the Pacific or European theater. Based on the diverse range of personal film footage, it would appear that many carried small motion or still cameras. A good deal of footage was taken directly from Allied and Axis newsreels, showing the war as it happened. The remaining historical footage seems to have been taken by commissioned film crews, based on the staged look of the archives.

Scores of pilots and ground crew describe their experiences in interviews conducted in the early 1990’s. Their recollections are vivid and detailed, as though the events had just occurred. Still, some memories have been clouded by time, like the mention of fighting the “Zero” which had not been available in that theater of war.

There are also some surprises in this video. The origin of the famed shark mouth is finally revealed with visual proof that helps dispel some of the rumors concerning the source. There are images I have not seen in books including one that shows a P-40 that was likely crash-landed by then group member Gregory “Rats” Boyington who went on to fame with VMF-214 Black Sheep as “Pappy.” Add in a healthy dose of combat footage from both sides of the conflict and you’ll be riveted through this 54 minute production. 4 stars. ✪



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**Have Your Dues Expired?  
Check The Expiration Date Below.**

**Cascade Warbirds  
Quick Look Calendar**

*January*

- 10 Squadron Meeting at Museum of Flight
- 17 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI

*February*

- 7 Squadron Meeting at Museum of Flight
- 21 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI
- 19-22 National Warbird Operators Conference
- 21-22 Northwest Aviation Conference

*March*

- 14 Squadron Meeting at MoF Restoration Center (PAE)
- 21 Heritage Flt Museum Open House at BLI

\* Denotes Max Effort Event  
See Website for Detailed List

## Check Six



On 19 Dec 2008 Edgar Allen (L) went West. Ed completed 30 missions over Europe while assigned to the 328th BS, 93rd BG as a B-24 pilot. While serving he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Ed captured his story in his book Pilot from the Prarie. (Stewart Hopkins photo)