

# WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



## CO's Cockpit: Sympathy for the Devils

By Greg Anders

The mental image we have of flight is indeed romantic and inspirational. Alpenglow sunlight of an approaching evening, the San Juan islands glistening like emeralds off the nose of the Mustang as I start the pull up for the loop, quickly followed by the peak of Mt Baker, apparently upside down in the windscreen, as I start the nose down on the second half of the loop. And once again I revel in the fact that I am blessed to dance with the angels on laughter silvered wings.

For moments, that is the way it is. But flying also has its share of devils that are part and parcel of aviating. And whether I end a flight with the awe that should have been inspired by my opportunity to cavort with the angels, or I end the flight as a victim of the devils, often hinges on whether my capacity to handle, avoid or tolerate the various devils of a sortie was exceeded.

What are some of those devils? Let's "chair fly" and identify some of them for a sortie flying to a fly-in/airshow venue.

In keeping an aircraft ready to fly, there are devils that must be faced even before I get to the airport: pilot certification, medical certification, aircraft certification, annual inspections (is that a chunk of metal too big to even come out of the oil drain?), insurance payment, hangar payment, uncertain regulatory future (AvGas, user fees, freedom of operations), etc..

Upon arriving at the airport there is a whole squadron of devils waiting in the wings: how is the weather, what's that pool of hydraulic fluid by the left wing? The tug won't start!! \$5.60 a gallon!!?? When did I fly this plane last? And the list goes on.

Now we are ready for the pre-flight and flying so more burdens: will this thing start? Flying safely (weather, focus, avoiding channelized attention, distraction) and communicating with controllers. What's that noise in the engine?? Working with controllers and with other traffic.

There's a TFR? Don't forget the gear. That crosswind wasn't forecast. Taxiing to a parking spot and shutting down safely with non-airplane people setting up their stuff all over, and did I raise the flaps before taxiing in? What's that noise in the engine?? I'll need 40 gallons just to fly in the parade tomorrow. \$6.20 a gallon!!??!! It's supposed to rain tonight? What about tomorrow's weather? The Ops Officer's plane broke and I have to do the warbird briefing in the morning? I don't have a way to get to the hotel? etc..

My first "Angel" at a Cascade Warbird venue is usually the Cascade Warbird marshaller. Then there are all of the Cascade Warbird members with the simple "Great plane, thanks for bringing her in." And with those simple words, my devils are struck down, one by one.

As an owner/operator, when I shut down at a venue, I have faced both angels and devils. And the relative weight of those devils, as countered by the angels, determines whether the sortie was "worth it." I try to put on the "happy face" when I arrive at every venue but sometimes there were more devils than angels and that "happy face" is masked by the devils. So if you see an owner/operator with a furrowed brow and darkened demeanor,

have sympathy for the devils that have burdened the sortie. And maybe BE one of the angels with a bottle of water, or a "thanks for flying." Displays of appreciation go a long way to countering those devils.

And as an owner/operator, always remember that you aren't the only one that has had to face the devils. Devils arise in the planning. They stalk the field during set up and perch on the shoulders of our organizers, marshallers and volunteers as they try to bring together the venue prior to anyone's arrival.

We all need sympathy for the devils.

Sic Tempus Ad Fugit!! ☘



P-51 in maintenance (USAF Photo)

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

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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!

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## Editor's Page

By Frank Almstead

It seems that every January newsletter starts the same; "I can't believe that another year has flown by." Well, that's because I do find it hard to believe. This will be the sixth year that I've worked on the newsletter and I am starting to run out of new ideas. As usual, I am open to input from the members. Remember this is our newsletter and it needs to continue to meet your needs.

2010 was a great year for the Warbird Flyer. We started the year setting a few simple goals. First to have a full 4 quarters of 12 page editions. Second, attract new authors and retain past authors. Lastly, work with the EAA *Warbirds*, Oshkosh 365 and the *Briefings* e-letter to gain additional exposure. Looking back, we met our goal of 12 pages each quarter. We attracted new authors in Lyle Jansma, Ron McIlroy, Chris Zimmer, Peter Stekel, Tony Caruso and Dick Kloppenburg. In addition, we continued to receive material from Walt Spangenberg, John Clark, Ed, Fred, Curt and Greg. In terms of working with the EAA, I was a little late in getting to that, however, it has not slowed down our exposure. Lyle Jansma's story was picked up by *Warbird Digest* and published in the March/April edition. Ed Rombauer's B-17 article is going to be published by the EAA. And lastly, your *Warbird Flyer* took home first place at Airventure. Overall I would say that we've exceeded our goals.

So what will we do in 2011? I spent a lot of time thinking about this and have decided we are going to tackle a tough problem. Our members have a great deal of history, valuable lessons and plain old great stories tucked away in their minds. Many of them don't like to discuss the most poignant memories, but if they don't, eventually the knowledge will be lost forever. So I am going to come to you this year for material, and work with you to publish them in a way that you feel does justice. I will be persistent so you may as well start capturing your thoughts now. The Warbird Flyer will not be denied. Lastly, I will continue to coordinate with the EAA and other

publications to share what we are doing and our excellent stories.

Moving on to the squadron activities, there is much to do this year. With our membership ranks at an all time high. We continue to look for volunteers to lead the different activities that will allow us to accomplish our mission. That is; To promote camaraderie amongst Warbird enthusiasts in the Northwest region in order to encourage the preservation and display of Warbird aircraft and to preserve the respect for the stories of those that flew them in defense of free nations.

One activity that I feel has the potential to really build some camaraderie amongst the members is the acquisition of a squadron aircraft. This is an activity that the Board of Directors really wants to stay tied in with the members on. It would have to be a framework that is self sustaining and we all know the challenges involved with aircraft ownership and operation. In order for the squadron to make it work, members will have to provide input to ensure it provides value for all. It is a challenging goal to be sure, but one that I know we can meet if we work together.

So in order to ensure we are all communicating; are you getting email traffic from the squadron? If not, then we most likely don't have your current email address. Update your contact info and send it to: [fred@fcsmyth.com](mailto:fred@fcsmyth.com) and stay in touch with all we're doing.

Lastly, 2012 will be an election year for the Board of Directors. The Personnel Committee Chair is starting the planning activity. If you, or someone you know is interested in participating on the nominating committee or, on the Board of Directors, please send the information to Frank Almstead: [editor@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:editor@cascadewarbirds.org). The goal is to build a robust pool of candidates over the course of the year.

We continue to evolve and grow and participation is essential to maintaining that course. Again, you do not need to be on the Board to chair an activity or a committee. Leadership is taking action, not taking a position.

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

# 2010 Photo Review

By John Clark



# Squadron News

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## NOW HEAR THIS

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It's time to renew your membership. Dues for 2011 are still only \$20. Have a look at the date on this newsletter mailing label; if what you see is 12/10, then send your renewal check to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Do it now while it's fresh in your mind.

## RENO AIR RACES

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The 48th Annual Reno Air Races and Airshow will be held 14 – 18 September this year and you are invited. Each year the squadron reserves two boxes and there is room for you to join us. To get involved, send a \$100-per-seat reservation payment to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Full payment – expected to total about \$325 per seat – will be due in the April time frame. This price gets you entry into the reserved box for five days, entry into the pits for seven days (assuming you arrive on Monday), and five days of reserved parking (one parking pass for every two box seat tickets purchased). If you would like more details, visit [www.airrace.org](http://www.airrace.org).

## JANUARY SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

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We are pleased to announce that Peter Stekel, author of *Final Flight: The Mystery of a World War II Plane Crash . . .* will be our featured speaker. Peter, a member of our squadron, was on the Mendel Glacier in the High Sierra in 2007 and discovered the second crewmember missing since 1942. You'll want to hear Peter's riveting story of this training flight turned deadly and how bureaucratic confusion contributed to a 60-plus-year delay in understanding exactly what

happened. For more information, visit [www.finalflightthebook.com](http://www.finalflightthebook.com). Be sure to bring your wallet; Peter will have copies of his book for you to purchase and have autographed.

## SQUADRON CALENDARS

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You still have time to pick up your 2011 calendar. Contact Lyle Jansma at [lyle@jansmadesign.com](mailto:lyle@jansmadesign.com) for this collector's item. Featuring squadron photographers and squadron aircraft, this issue is a true work of art. Lyle has kept the price at only \$15 while competitors charge up to \$25. Plus, Lyle is donating a portion of the proceeds to the squadron.



## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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The squadron is pleased to announce the continuation of its scholarship program. In 2011, the program will again be comprised of two parts. Through the generosity of EAA and its Senior Air Academy held during AirVenture, we will send two lucky campers to Oshkosh for the week-long program. Additionally, we are teaming with Wings Aloft of Seattle and Avian Flight Center of Bremerton to provide classroom instruction and all study materials for the Private Pilot Ground School. Included in this award, for up to five lucky students, will be two instructional flights in a Cessna 172 or similar aircraft. If any of you know

of deserving youths in the 16-to-18-year-old age bracket, encourage them to apply online by visiting our website, [www.cascadewarbirds.org](http://www.cascadewarbirds.org). The deadline for the EAA applications is February 28 and for the Ground School and Flights is April 30.

## IT WAS A PAR-TEE!

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By now you've learned that you missed one doozy of a party. Nearly 70 fellow members and guests joined together at the Medallion Hotel in Smokey Point to toast the season and put the comrade back in camaraderie. We were again well fed by the Medallion's capable catering staff and Beaver did her usual splendid job pouring the libations. Not counting the dinner and the socializing, maybe the most fun all night were the drawings for door prizes, B-17 rides, and the presentation of our annual awards. The Literary Award, established and funded by Frank and Susan Almstead, went to Warbird Flyer Publisher Ed Rombauer. Issue after issue has seen Ed provide an exciting story of aviation that ties safety considerations with military air power. Runner-up awards in this category went to Tony Caruso, Richard Kloppenburg, and Walt Spangenberg. Next on the agenda was the drawing for the main event of the evening – two rides on Aluminum Overcast during her next visit to Seattle. This year the gods smiled on Carole Lamberton and Al Sauer. The B-17 will be here in May so you'll see these folks at Boeing Field come then. Finally, the most important award of the evening and the season was due. Created to give sincere thanks to a worthy member for outstanding continuing support to the squadron and its mission, this year we were pleased to honor Dave Desmon as Volunteer of the Year. Everyone in attendance was in agreement that this was a well-deserved tribute.



# Heroes

By Ed Rombauer

When I was a young lad, one of my favorite activities, providing that it was Saturday and I had the necessary twenty-five cents in my pocket, was to spend an afternoon at the movie theater. There I would vicariously live the life of a western movie star hero as he fought for law, order, justice and the American way of life. In my young mind these were the real heroes of that time. I would watch in awe as Randolph Scott, Lash LaRue, Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers and the Lone Ranger all made the West a safer and better place. As I grew older, these childhood heroes faded into oblivion and were replaced by real people involved in real heroic events.

By the time I was allowed to wear a snappy military uniform with gold braid and insignia, I was already sporting a couple rows of what I call “showing up” ribbons. These were awards you received for just being someplace, that given a choice, you probably would rather not be. There was nothing I had done other than show up to personally earn these awards.

There is another type of medal though that has less to do with showing up than it does with showing character in an heroic way, the Distinguished Flying Cross or D.F.C. I remember the first dress blues inspection in a squadron I had recently joined, in which one of the pilots in my flight stood in the formation of officers wearing a chest full of medals, one of which was the D.F.C. This quiet, unassuming pilot never mentioned anything about this award that he received in a war, years past, in which he not only had to “show up” but show heroic character and ability in a combat setting.

There is a second category of service member that earns a D.F.C. This is the person that voluntarily, without being ordered to do so, goes into harm’s way to save the

life of a fellow service member. One of the greatest aerial rescues in the annals of Naval Aviation was undertaken by two such Navy pilots in the rescue of a fellow officer. I was privileged to serve with one of the pilots, Aviation Chief Machinists Mate John McCants, years later on a small backwater Navy airfield. Chief McCants was one of the last of the wartime enlisted pilots.

On 15 May 1941 a Marine Corps R2D-1 (DC-2) was flying over the San Diego area while Marine parachutists practiced jumping from the aircraft. As jumpmaster, Marine 2nd Lt. Walter Osipoff was the last to jump from the transport. As he attempted to push a cargo of rifles and ammunition out the door of the R2D his rip cord became entangled with the rip cord of the cargo pack.



Curtiss SOC-1 scout-observation aircraft (US Navy Photo)

Osipoff’s parachute opened pulling him out the door which caused the cargo chute on the cargo pack to open and twist itself around the Lieutenant’s chute. The attachment fitting on the aircraft ripped out allowing all the static lines to wrap around Osipoff’s risers as well as

that of the cargo

chute. The entire bundle of shroud lines and parachutes entangled the tail of the R2D causing the elevator to jam. Osipoff, badly injured and being dragged feet first behind the tail of the aircraft was unable to extricate himself. With only a few minutes fuel remaining in the R2D, the pilot had only one choice; land and save the aircraft and crew, but lose Lieutenant Osipoff.

As the R2D circled the Naval Air Station at North Island, Navy test pilot Lieutenant William Lowrey looked up and saw what he thought was a test dummy twirling behind the transport. Quickly realizing that it was a real person, he told his fellow test pilot Chief McCants to fuel up a Curtis SOC that was on the ramp, while he telephoned the tower to explain what he was going to

do (neither the R2D nor the SOC had a radio). As they started the engine on the small biplane, some Marines ran out from the barracks throwing their combat knives into the cockpit while yelling, “cut his shroud lines.”

Lowrey and McCants took off and climbed up to the Douglas. The crew on the transport had managed to pull Lt. Osipoff closer to the tail but were unable to get him any closer. Lowrey maneuvered the Curtis under Osipoff and tried to get close enough for Chief McCants to grab him. Twice he managed to get in position under the tail of the R2D but the air was too turbulent and all they managed was to bounce Osipoff with the upper wing. Time was critical, the R2D only had fuel for a few more minutes, and Osipoff not only was gravely injured but was in danger of being torn out of his harness which was now twisted around his ankles.

Flying along side the R2D, Lowrey signaled the pilot to climb to a higher altitude, hoping to find smoother air. At three thousand feet the air was slightly better and Lowrey was able, with difficulty, to slide in under the R2D. While McCants stood in the rear cockpit, Lowrey fought to keep the propeller from hitting Osipoff’s head as he edged the SOC closer.

He was now almost close enough to grab. Suddenly, McCants was able to grab the Lieutenant around the waist and try to pull him upside down into the small rear seat of the scout plane. As there was not enough room for more than his head, Osipoff lay on top of the rear fuselage while he held onto Chief McCants. Using a knife that the Marines had given him, McCants attempted to saw through the dozens of shroud lines that were now draped over the biplane. Holding a precise position under the tail of the transport was extremely difficult in the turbulence from the R2D, and Lowrey knew that he could not hold that position for more than a few seconds, not enough time to cut the lines.

Sometimes in life, unlike the movies where a make-believe hero saves the day, there is a moment of divine

intervention. This was to be one of those moments. As Lowrey fought to hold the small biplane precisely under the tail of the transport, and McCants stood in the back seat holding onto Osipoff while attempting to cut through the bundle of static lines and shrouds, a gust caught the SOC throwing it up into the tail of the R2D. With a grinding screech of the propeller cutting into the tail of the transport, Lowrey was momentarily stunned. Quickly recovering, he realized that not only were they still flying, but that they were safely below the tail of the transport. In cutting off twelve inches of the R2D’s tail cone, the propeller had also cut through all of the lines holding Osipoff to the R2D. There was, however, to be one final test of ability before they could get back on

the ground. With Chief McCants standing in the rear cockpit, Osipoff lay on the top of the rear fuselage with his head inside, creating an aft center of gravity for the small aircraft. Osipoff’s parachute, now free of the transport, had blown back and was jamming the rudder of the biplane. All McCants and Osipoff could do was hold onto each other as Lt. Lowrey skillfully managed to land the Curtis safely at the North Island Air Station.



Lowrey and McCants pose next to the SOC-1 (US Navy Photo)

Second Lieutenant Osipoff had endured

thirty-three minutes of being dragged behind the R2D at 110 mph, but would recover from his injuries. Lt. Lowrey and Chief McCants were both awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this rescue.

I quote from the last lines of the award: “This is considered one of the most brilliant and daring rescues within the annals of our Naval history. The skill, courage, initiative, and resourcefulness displayed by Lieutenant Lowrey and Aviation Chief Machinists Mate McCants in effecting the rescue of Lieutenant Osipoff at the imminent risk of their lives were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.” ✪

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

**Cascade Warbirds  
Quick Look Calendar**

*January*

- 8 Squadron Meeting at  
Museum of Flight
- 15 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI

*February*

- 12 Squadron Meeting at  
Museum of Flight
- 19 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI
- 17-20 National Warbirds  
Operators Conference
- 25-26 Northwest Council  
of Airshows
- 26-27 Puyallup Air Expo

*March*

- 12 Squadron Meeting at  
Paine Field
- 19 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BLI

\* Denotes Max Effort Event  
See Website for Detailed List

## Check Six



Douglas TBD torpedo bomber taxiing to parking area aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6). (Carl Mydans Photo via Life Magazine)