

WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



XO's Cockpit

By Dave Desmon

Some of you may note a different face in the cockpit above, some of you may not - if not, some of you may need new glasses! Important safety test - brought to you free of charge by Cascade Warbirds - just in time for flying season!

Most of you know by now that our CO has once again been called to duty - this time to run for US Congressman from Washington's 2nd District (Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island, and parts of Snohomish Counties.) While Greg is busy getting his campaign into afterburner, I'll be doing what a good XO does, and cover his six.... Which includes picking up "Other duties as assigned". Hence, you get to look at my mug again for now!

One of those (thoroughly enjoyable) duties was to help organize and lead the Cascade Warbirds participation in the 13th Annual Olympia Airshow, June 18 & 19. I think I've been to all 13 of them, too! Despite somewhat less than optimal weather, particularly in the North Sound, we had 17 intrepid flyers show up from Washington, Oregon, and B.C. This year, for the 1st time Olympia was the EAA Warbirds of America "Warbird Wings" designated event for the West Coast.

Warbird Wings is a program to recognize pilots who help "Keep 'em Flyin'" by participating in designated flying events. You need to fly in at least 5 events, and have at least 250 hours in civilian Warbirds to qualify. Those who flew at Olympia this year are one event closer to their Wings! FMI: http://www.warbirds-eaa.org/programs/warbird_wings.html

I want to talk about our participation in airshows for a minute. Airshows and Fly-ins are an important part of what we do as a Squadron. They serve as venues for us to display our aircraft, share their history with the public, as well as to gather socially. Cascade Warbirds seldom puts on these events as they require a lot of time, work, coordination and money to organize. Instead, we rely on others to organize the events, and we focus on what we

can contribute to the organizer's show - when we are invited.

I want to emphasize that point - when we participate in Air Shows and Fly-ins, we are *invited guests* - just as if we had been invited into someone's home. The organizer has put a lot of work, time, coordination, planning and money into making their event happen, and it is important that we are seen as contributing positively to the event if we want to be invited back and to continue to have venues to gather and do our thing.

What does this mean? Having been intimately involved with the organization of many Fly-Ins and Airshows over the past 10 years or so, I think the event organizers want "Value" for their money. They want their paying visitors to have a good time, and they want their show to be a good one, that visitors will want to pay to come back to. We contribute to that in several ways.

1 - We need to be good guests. We need to conduct ourselves in a way that reflects credit on the show, the organizers, and the Cascade Warbirds. We need to keep the hassle involved for the organizer in inviting a big, diverse group to a minimum. When some hospitality is offered, and we ask for participants to sign up for a show - which we do when we need to know how many to plan for (like when rooms, food or

gas will be provided) Please sign up by the deadline, and if you commit to come, do your best to make it. Everybody understands that sometimes old airplanes (and pilots!) break, and everybody understands that we aren't going to tackle terrible weather in our birds. However, our host will have reserved rooms and/or food, and may end up having to pay for them anyway if you don't show up. I'll tell you from experience, adding, dropping and shuffling hotel rooms at the last minute is a HUGE hassle for the host. Most hotels require their group reservations be locked down 1-2 weeks in advance of the event. Try to make up your mind, commit early, and do your best to stick with it once you do.



Dave Desmon in the Fougou (Dave Desmon Photo)

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WARBIRD FLYER

★★★ 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's July already and the weather has not been that kind to us this year. However, as I'm typing this the sky is clear and it makes we think my time might be better spent over at Paine Field...

We've got a great newsletter this quarter and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did putting it together. We continue to focus on our members stories and learn a little more about Dick Kloppenburg and the story behind this Distinguished Flying Cross. Jake Schultz has chipped in and shares the story of his Pietenpol project. In addition, we welcome John Wolcott as he provides some "local reporting" on the Paine Field

GA Day activities and the FHC's newest member. Lastly, Ed Rombauer provides another riveting safety message as we work our way through the flying season.

Remember, there is only one more newsletter left to be published this year, and if you intend to be in the running for the 2011 Warbird Literary Award you'll need to submit your story by 16Sep. I always look forward to the work of our members. It is always interesting and the foundation of your *Warbird Flyer*.

Let's hear it at editor@cascadewarbirds.org ✪

XO's Cockpit

2 - We show our nice clean Aircraft on their ramp. We can further enhance our value by having good entertaining explanatory signage on our planes, and even more by being present when our planes are on display to answer visitor's questions. Some of us choose to let the little ones into our cockpits under our supervision - that's a choice that's up to you, but I'll guarantee you, the little ones and their parents will remember and appreciate that. **WARNING!**: If you do this - check the important controls (Mags, Gear handle, Fuel Selector, Master) before you walk away, and check EVERY control before you fly.

3 - One of the things that sets Cascade Warbirds apart from many other Airshow acts is that we do both static and flying demonstrations. This gives Visitors the opportunity to watch us in the air, and say - "Hey, I talked to that guy!! I know what that airplane is!" Or even, "I SAT in that Airplane!" We don't do daredevil aerobatics in our show, but what does make it unique and interesting is the broad diversity of airplanes, colors, sounds, and continual action we can bring to a fly-by. I know of times that we have had up to 24 CWB airplanes in the air, over the show at once, varying from an L-3 to a B-25 or a Jet. All at once! If all we have is 3 Navions going around in a circle, that's not too exciting. But 24 Airplanes, all at once!! That is a show! If you have come

to a show, and are enjoying the host's hospitality and the social interaction with your fellow Cascade Warbirds, please go the extra mile and fly in the demo. You do have to go through a briefing, and let the FAA look at your license, medical, airworthiness and registration, but the flying is not very technically demanding, only takes a few gallons of gas, and the result is spectacular.

Lastly - If you have a problem at the show, Let the Lead Cascade Warbirds Representative know - do not complain to the show organizers. If, on the other hand, you are having a good time, please do tell our hosts!

A couple of unrelated things in closing - flying season is just getting underway, and many of us have not flown much in the past (too) many months. BE CAREFUL out there! Take your time, use your checklists, don't do nuthin' dumb.

Congratulations to Doug Owens, Warren Nadeau, and everyone who helped with the highly successful B-17 tour stop over Memorial Day! Despite a very challenging economy, Cascade Warbirds once again came through, and has set the bar for the 2011 B-17 tour! "BZ"!! Well Done, all!

I'm going to Oshkosh in a few weeks, and flying back with 2 other CWB members in my plane. This helps deal with \$6/gallon gas, some non-owners get to enjoy the experience, and it's ALWAYS more fun to share the journey! "Keep 'em Flyin'!" ✪

My DFC Story

By Richard Kloppenburg

The Distinguished Flying Cross is a medal awarded to any member of the United States forces who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight".

My DFC citation was prepared by my commanding officer, Col. Mack Gibson. He was the commander of the 183rd Aviation Company in 1966 and 1967.

The citation reads as follows: "Col. Gibson relates that because of significant enemy activity, it became necessary for Lieutenant Kloppenburg to fly his O-1 Birdog in support of night operations underway near Bao Loc, a Province for which the 183rd Aviation Company was responsible for visual reconnaissance and other missions". "It should be noted that this particular province was one of the most hostile (and primitive) areas that we were assigned to support".

The only airport in Lam Dong Province was the Bao Loc airport, which had a 900 foot dirt runway with no air control facilities. This was not an American airfield. The airfield was leased from a Frenchman named Beacbeau. He owned the runway and the surrounding tea plantation. There were no improvements at the airport, no radar, no beacon, no runway lights, and deep ruts in the dirt runway. We kept our airplanes inside of sand bag revetment areas. We never went to the airfield during the night. Standard operating procedure was to be in the military compound before night fall.

During this day, I spent most of the afternoon flying visual reconnaissance, looking for signs of Viet Cong activity. At the end of this particular mission darkness was setting in, with deteriorating weather conditions. It was raining with fog on the surface of the field, and there was absolutely no lighting that would provide capability for night operations. Bao Loc airfield was a daytime, primitive, fair weather air strip only.

The details of the mission were as follows. I was conducting a FAC (forward air controller) mission of visual reconnaissance (VR) along highway 20, between Bao Loc and Di Linh, Vietnam. The date was about the 15th of September in 1966. I received a radio call from an American ARVN (Army Republic of Vietnam) ranger platoon leader-adviser. I was told that the platoon was to be on location for the night. The platoon was located about 2 clicks East of highway 20 near the Dai Binh river. The location was about 5 clicks from the sub sector headquarters at Di Linh.

The American adviser indicated that he wanted me to scout the area for any Viet Cong activity. At that point, the Viet Cong began firing at the ARVN platoon. The American leader-adviser

called me and indicated that he was under small arms fire, but could not determine which direction the small arms fire was coming from. I determined that the small arms fire was coming from the direction of the Dai Binh river.

It was late in the afternoon and I could see the bad weather moving in my direction. I continued to support the ARVN Rangers trying to determine where the Viet Cong were located. Time was passing and I was running low on fuel. The American Advisor kept advising me that he had to know where the Viet Cong were located along with the number of enemy troops? I stayed on location much longer that I should have because of his repeated requests.

At about this time it was near darkness. The idea was to draw fire from the Viet Cong. When they shot at me, I then knew their precise location. Did I really try to draw fire from the enemy? I flew over the river. At that point I could see the Viet Cong swimming across the Dai Binh river. They were moving away from the Rangers in a Northerly direction. At first I did not recognize the black forms in the water. During another flight over the river at a lower attitude I determined that it was a Viet Cong squad size or bigger unit swimming across the river. The American adviser indicated that they were still under enemy fire. He said, "we are taking direct small arms fire". "We fear for our life tonight". The Viet Cong had the American adviser and the ARVN forces in an ambush situation. "Stay longer on location and help us pinpoint the Viet Cong". At that point I also came under fire from the Viet Cong forces. Because of the darkness I could now see the tracers from both forces. I could now see and hear the small arms fire directed at my aircraft. I made two low "passes" over the ambush area. The low passes were made from a different direction each time, because I did not want the Viet Cong to predict my direction of flight. Repeating direction of flight caused the demise of several Birdog pilots. At this point my altitude was so low that I felt

extreme distress. The Ranger advisor was the military person that was the sponsor of the my DFC. He was quoted as saying, "the presence of the Birdog caused the Viet Cong to break contact and retreat into the jungle". The Ranger commander told me that his company would surely have been overrun. It was later determined that there were several hundred Viet Cong in the area.

It was now dark and I was in the monsoon rain and extremely low visibility. Very, VERY bad flying weather. I was about 40 plus miles from Bao Loc airfield. I had no choice but to tell the American Ranger advisor that I had to return to the airfield at Bao Loc, because I had a severe low fuel situation and no safe flight visibility.



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Squadron News

SAVE THE DATE

It's never too early to plan ahead, and it's even more important for this topic. Our annual Christmas dinner banquet is set for Saturday, 10 December 2011 and will again be held at the Medallion Hotel in Arlington (Smokey Point), WA. Further information will be published at the appropriate time, but we're happy to say that the prices remain the same as last year. Put this on your calendar now so none of us are disappointed later.

RENO AIR RACES

We know it would be one heck of a kitchen pass, but if you could get permission to go, there is still room for you in our reserved box at the races. Five days of racing, seven days in the pits, reserved parking, and all the camaraderie you could hope for. Your price is only \$320; if you're interested, contact Fred at fred@fcsmyth.com.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The squadron has a two-phase scholarship program and the second phase selectees have just been announced. These five high school students will attend Private Pilot Ground School classes at a local FBO and will also participate in two introductory flights which will earn them logged time. The five winners from this year's applicants are Nicholas Co of Issaquah, Chey Joseph Hards-Lane of Seabeck, Dakota Lanning of Shelton, Daniel Tereshchenko of Snohomish, and Max Wasser of Seattle. Biographical details of these students will be published in an upcoming newsletter.

GET IN TOUCH

Have you lost touch with us? Are you getting email traffic from the squadron? Are the lines of communication open? If you're out of the loop, send your updated contact info to Fred at fred@fcsmyth.com.

ANNUAL DUES

Ten of you, just ten. If you folks would send your 2011 dues to the Finance Officer at CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277, you would not hear another word from him about that subject this year. Just look on that mailing label that is getting this issue of the newsletter to you and you can determine if you're one of whom we are speaking.

WAAAM, Ma'am

One of the fun things about travelling throughout the Pacific Northwest is all the aviation places you can run into. An excellent example is the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum in Hood River, Oregon. They've been open about four years now and have amassed a collection of over 75 airplanes and a like number of automobiles (trucks, too). Of particular interest, fellow member Skeets Mehrer has three of his Stearman on display. The staff is friendly, the hangars are airy and inviting, and the strolls through the corridors are a walk back in time. WAAAM is open 362 days of the year, so if you're anywhere close to Ken Jernstedt Airfield (4S2), drop in – whether you're flying or driving. They'll treat you right. For more information directly from the source, visit www.waaamuseum.org. BTW, the 5th Annual Hood River Fly-in is 10 September this year.

WELCOME ABOARD

We say "Hello" to the following new members and welcome them into our midst:

Richard Boyce	Seattle, WA
Scott Corbin	Solana Beach, CA
Dan Murphy	Bainbridge Island, WA
Steve Terjeson	Seatac, WA

Be sure to introduce yourself when you meet one of these folks and make them feel a part of our family.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

This year is an election year for the squadron. The Personnel Committee is the process of collecting names. If you, or someone you know is interested in participating in the operation of the squadron please send the information to Frank Almstead at editor@cascadewarbirds.org. The goal is to build a pool of candidates over the remainder of the year.

B-17 TOUR STOP

Congratulations to the team once again for packing them in!



Tony Caruso Photo

General Aviation Day - Paine Field

By John Wolcott

A crowd of 8,400 visitors gathered at Paine Field to celebrate the 16th Annual General Aviation Day May 21, only 100 people short of last year's record attendance in spite of low clouds and chilly temperatures instead of last year's hot sunshine.

Cascade Warbirds were on hand for the crowd pleasing static displays, as well as mid-day flybys of vintage aircraft, although the weather limited the air show and the number of CWB members who showed up with their planes, said Executive Officer Dave Desmon, one of the squadron members who were able to be there.

Tours of the field's aviation tourism attractions and rows of civilian and military planes kept visitors on the move all day.

The Washington Pilots Association's set a new record by a flying 288 free Young Eagles orientation flights, a significant increase over 2010's total flights.

Sponsored by the Paine Field chapter of the Washington Pilots Association and the Snohomish County Airport, the event's aircraft displays and food booths filled a large area near Paul Allen's Flying Heritage Collection.

The FHC drew a steady crowd of visitors throughout the day, showing off an array of World War II aircraft from the major nations involved in World War II, including a P-51 Mustang, P-47 Thunderbolt, Me-209, Spitfire and Japanese fighters.

New to this year's displays was a temporary exhibit, Allen's latest acquisition, a Russian Mig-29 jet fighter recently restored by John Session's Historic Flight Foundation.

The afternoon air show included the FHC's first "fly

day" of 2011, the start of summer flights to "exercise" the air museum's rare warbirds that have been restored to flying condition.

After several flybys of the FHC's British Spitfire and P-40 came low-level flights by the Historic Flight Foundation's World War II Navy Tigercat and Bearcat in

formation, followed by a half-dozen historic planes flown by members of the Cascade Warbirds squadron.

Following the air show, shuttle buses carried people across the airfield to the Historic Flight Foundation Restoration Center for a tour of John Sessions' civilian and military planes, along with displays of equipment and uniforms by the Puget Sound Military Vehicle Collectors Club.



John Wolcott Photo

One of the most popular attractions was the HFF's B-25 Mitchell bomber, Grumpy, one of only a few in the world in flying condition, plus P-51s and an equally rare 1929

Travel Air with three seats for passengers behind the pilot and co-pilot. Owned by Pole Pass Airways on Orcas Island, it's hangared at the foundation's Paine Field facility.

The day began with the annual Fly Day 5k Race, attracting a record 300 registered runners and raising more than \$2,800 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, up more than \$1,100 from last year's event. Afterward, the Paine Field fire department's annual pancake breakfast served

596 people and raised \$3,000 for the Northwest Burn Foundation.

Crowds also enjoyed the Mukilteo Chamber of Commerce's "Taste of Mukilteo," with food for sale by a variety of local restaurants, the Kiwanis BBQ, kids' activity tent and "The Tempos," a swinging music group that attracted crowds with its Big Band-era music. 🌟



John Wolcott Photo

My DFC Story (continued)

I turned South toward Bao Loc. After about 10 miles, I had to descend to the top of the jungle and follow the Highway 20 back to the Bao Loc airfield. At that point I determined, because of the darkness and low visibility, I must have help in finding the 900 foot runway. I then called Specialist Gilbert Hartzog, my crew chief, on the jeep radio. I told Hartzog to position the jeep, with the lights on, at the North end of the runway so that I could, number one, see where the airport and number two, see the runway as I was landing. I told my crew chief, "Don't turn on the jeep lights until you can hear my airplane".

The area of operation was called "Lam Dong Provence". Lam Dong is like a state and is about the size of King County Washington. There was no navigational aids, no runway lights, and very little security at the airport. There was not one other airplane in the air and especially no helicopters. There was not one helicopter anywhere in the Provence. If I went down there would be no one to pick me up. Helicopters could be called in the next day, from another Provence. That means that I would be on my own, if I survived the crash. I did have a survival radio, but I would have had no one to talk to until the next day. It was a well known fact that in the vicinity of Bao Loc, there was reports of 2000 Viet Cong in the area. Their mission was to overrun Bao Loc and kill or capture all of the American personnel. There were only approximately 30 Americans in the area, including 2 Air Force pilots and 2 Army pilots, and no helicopters. At that point in time I was the only Army pilot. After dark there was no flying to support the ground operations. We all retreated to the U. S. Army compound and locked the gate. This fact gave rise to the saying, "Charlie owns the night".

Vietnam is very VERY dark at night. There are no road lights, no house lights, no farm house lights, no lights period, except in the large towns and cities. As a matter of fact, flying at night, is so spooky that it is hard to fly in the dark hours. In the United States, no matter where you fly, you can always see the light of a farm house. If there is a light in the jungle, it probably would be a Viet Cong campfire. You could see the campfire flickering thru the jungle, if you were to fly directly over the campfire. The campfire was used for cooking their rice. The Viet Cong would cook only once a day and take the balance in their

knapsack for the other meals of the day.

There was no alternate airfield (I had to land at Bao Loc). Bao Loc had no navigational facilities. I flew time and distance in the skud, while maintaining level flight and altitude. I had Highway 20 memorized and therefore knew exactly where I must turn from the road to the airport. When I believed that I was near the airfield, I gained altitude and turned toward the airfield. I then entered IFR. Otherwise known as low clouds and rain. I had no forward visibility. The airplane was then in IFR conditions. After only a few seconds I determined that the time was OK to descend. I descended and the airfield was within sight. I did not have the altitude to fly a normal pattern down wind or a base and was very low on fuel. I may not have had enough fuel to make a go around. I was only

150 feet above the jungle. I was not on a straight in approach to the airfield. I could not go around and did not want to bail out. There were mountains approximately 1800 feet near the runway. If I missed the airfield, there would be no go around. I probably would have had to "force land" into the jungle. I had to immediately slip the aircraft to slow the aircraft down and lose altitude. I had to land the aircraft in a crab, and thus almost lost control. I knew that I had only one chance at a landing--this had to be it.

It was not over! We still had the 1 1/2 mile jeep ride to the MACV compound. The road was not secure at night. We had been known to be shot at during the drive to the Frenchman's airport. Night flying was a no go, because of the non-secure highway and no navigational aids.

The only NAV aid was radio contact with an Army Specialist on the radio at the compound. Bao Loc had no nav aids. No radar, no beacons, nothing. With low cloud cover over the airport, I had been known to have the MACV shoot up a flare, thru the overcast", to determine where the airport was located. Then we had to find a hole in the overcast. There were mountains in the vicinity of the MACV compound. We had to land on the non-secure road or fly to Phan Thiet, which was located on the South China Sea. We did have a pilot land on the road. I did fly to the coastline twice, because of being caught in severe weather condition. I could not get back to the Bao Loc airfield to land. This was during the day light hours.



The next day I met the American Ranger advisor in the Bao Loc compound. The advisor indicated that I saved his unit from the certain ambush situation. He indicated that many lives may have been saved. The Viet Cong broke contact and retreated across the river, because of seeing my airplane. The Viet Cong knew the capabilities of a Forward Air Controller airplane. The VC knew that when a forward Air Controller was seen, they were in risk of airstrikes, artillery, more troops coming in support and etc.

Bao Loc was in Lam Dong Province in the central Vietnam highlands. Highway 20 is the same highway where U.S. Army Captain Linus Chock was shot down and KIA. Chock was the Army pilot that took my place, when I was on R & R. Chock was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (the second highest military award). This is the same highway that an Air Force FAC named Captain Wilbanks was shot down and KIA and consequently awarded the Medal of Honor. Both Chock and Wilbanks died approximately in the same location as my ARVN Ranger incident. The day that Wilbanks was KIA, was the day that I cannot remember the actions of the

day. I think I was adjusting artillery. We now know that there was a Viet Cong, 2000 man main force located in this area. Highway 20 between Bao Loc and Di Linh was called "death alley", because many people were KIA during convoys. When Chock and Wilbanks were KIA there was many soldiers, including Americans and ARVN'S, killed when the individual convoys were attacked and overrun by the local Viet Cong forces.

The 0-1, or L-19 pilot before my tour in Bao Loc was KIA. Captain Chock was KIA while I was on R & R. I would have been flying that day. Captain Wilbanks was KIA while covering an attack of a convoy between Bao Loc and Di Linh. Captain Sawyer, my replacement was KIA near Bao Loc.

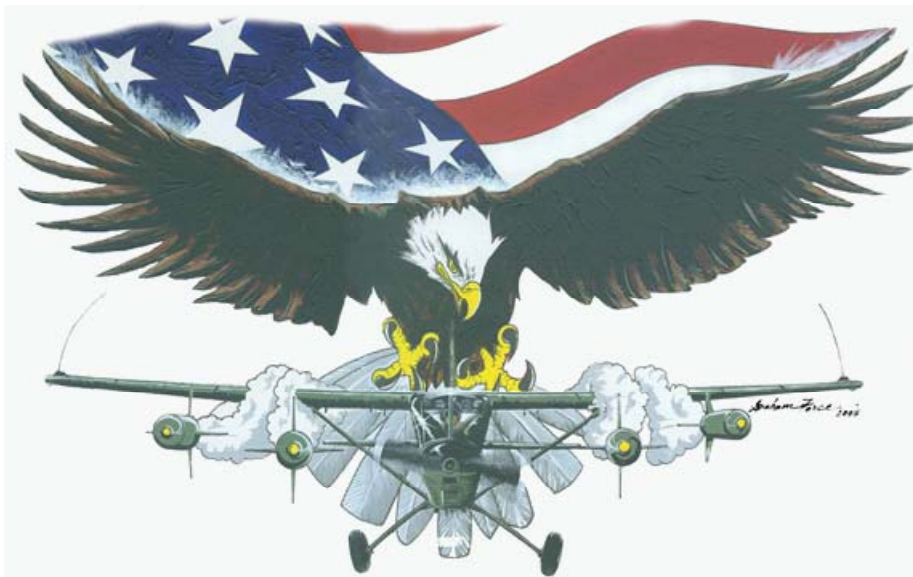
The only NAV aid was radio contact with an Army Specialist on the radio at the MACV compound. He was

only qualified to write down my latest location. We took a French Contour map of the entire Province and created squares with numbers in each square. The grid interval on the old French map was 300 feet. Small mountains would not show on the map. I could not believe this was our only method of determining our location in Lam Dong Province (a province is like our state, but smaller. Lam Dong is about the size of King County). We then radioed the Army Specialist our location or square number. Remember that Bao Loc had no navigation aids. No radar, no beacons, nothing. With low cloud cover, we had been known to have the MACV personnel shoot up a flare to determine where the airport was located. Then must find a hole in the overcast. Some times we would let down thru the overcast. Hopefully there were NO mountains in the area of the "let down". There were mountains in the vicinity of the

MACV compound. If the airport was obscured, another option was to land on the highway 20. The subsequent Army pilot did land on highway 20. Captain Roger Sawyer was KIA on another mission a few months after I came back to the United States. Another option was to go to the top of the overcast and fly to East to the

coastline. I did fly to the coastline on two occasions This will be another story in the Vietnam Chronicles to follow at a later date.

The reason for the delay in the presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) was because of the citation was issued after I left Viet Nam. The paperwork was then lost because of a fire at the military records section in St. Louis, Missouri. The entire file was resurrected by Col. Mack Gibson 5 years ago. I had 2 presentations of the DFC, one during a reunion of my flying squadron in Washington D.C. and the second presentation was at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. ✪



Concentration or Fixation?

By Ed Rombauer

Concentration: “The act or process of concentrating,” also “to concentrate one’s efforts, or attention on a problem.”

Fixation: “To focus or concentrate ones gaze or attention,” also “an obsessive or unhealthy preoccupation.” (Emphasis added)

While reviewing the definitions for these two words, it appears that, aside from libidinal activities, the meanings are very similar. It is after closer examination that we can see a subtle difference between the two, especially as it applies to our world of aviation. When concentrating on flying, we are focusing all of our skill and attention on operating our aircraft in a safe and efficient manner, thus insuring the safe completion of the flight. Every aspect of flying is brought to the attention of the pilot where they are not only woven into the fabric of the flight but prioritized for immediacy (it would do no good to be asking for the destination weather when you have lost your only engine on take-off.) It is this ability to prioritize the details of the “big picture” while retaining an overall view that keeps us out of trouble.

Fixation, on the other hand, is the concentrating on just one part of that larger picture. This type of flying gives you a kind of virtual myopia, in which you have a perfect view of the immediate task but the ship is still headed for the sand. It’s a bit like juggling; the trick is to stay aware of where everything is while giving a little extra attention to the piece that’s ready to fall. In flying, fixation can be deadly. This is especially true in military aviation where there is a high level of competition between pilots, and a command structure that is results oriented. In all cases each flight needs to be broken down into its component parts and then reassembled into the proper priority order while maintaining an overall clear picture of the flight.

Sometimes due to peer pressure, it becomes very easy to focus on the “WOW” factor part of the flight rather than the more mundane business of basic flying. The dangerous

part is when a pilot has an audience and tries to emulate the abilities of an above-average squadron mate while making-do with only average or marginal skills. These are the pilots that it’s best not to emulate, but instead learn from their mistakes, as you may not live long enough to make them all yourself.

Operating off a carrier has the same hazards as land based flying but with a few more “gotchas” thrown in just to make it interesting. Learning from the mistakes of others is essential if you intend on living long enough to make the next day’s flight schedule. After all, why have all the “fun” yourself when you can watch and learn from some other pilot making a mistake? Sometimes though, these lessons come at a high price and the event as well as the lesson it imparts are forever burned into your memory.

It was on one of those high humidity, grey, rain-swept mornings in the South China Sea that the carrier task force found itself plowing through the remnants of the passing thunder storms. With the Indo-China war raging, the C.A.P. had to be maintained over the carrier. The all-weather night fighters had provided this coverage during the night, and



VF-121 F-11F launching from the USS Lexington circa 1959 (US Navy Photo)

now it was up to the day fighters to protect the carrier. With dawn just breaking, the dividing line between sea and air had disappeared into the “clag,” as the pilots called it. Not the greatest day for flying, but not the worst either.

The two F-11 Tigers taxied up to the catapults, lead on the port cat while his wingman took the starboard side. In a few moments the catapult officer dropped his arm and the lead Tiger accelerated down the track followed by whiffs of steam that blended with the morning haze. It was now Curt’s turn as he felt the shuttle tension the aircraft against the hold-back. Moving the throttle into afterburner, the aircraft began to shake while the deafening engine noise penetrated his helmet. In a moment, the salute was given, the catapult fired, and Curt’s helmet was pushed back against the headrest as the catapult threw the aircraft down the track.

I had known Curt since we were all newbie’s, assigned to the training squadron that would prepare us for flying

a new fighter with a fleet squadron. Curt was an affable young officer with an outgoing personality and the ability to get things done while fitting in with the other pilots.

Everybody liked Curt, especially if there was a social event which he always helped plan. The only problem was that he really didn't look like a fighter pilot, being a bit short and pudgy (we were all into image in those days) and with a beaming freckled face. Well, there was one other slight problem, he was a lousy pilot, but he tried so hard that no one had the heart to tell him.

At that time, your first flight in a new fighter was your first solo flight and Curt was unable to get the aircraft on the ground. I heard the training officer, on the radio, tell Curt to land on the next pass or he'd shoot him down. After several months of training, Curt's flying ability improved enough to be minimally acceptable; however his party arranging ability was second to none. And so Curt became a valued member of the squadron.

I find it ironic that while the aircraft has the most to lose in an accident (especially if you have a parachute), it is entirely indifferent as to the pilot's ability. It doesn't care that you have managed to survive by sharpshooting the flight schedule and only flying wing with the experienced pilots, or that you put on great parties which the C.O. likes because they boost squadron morale. Curt had fallen into the trap that every time someone told him what a great guy he was, he translated that into—what a great pilot he was. It's too bad his aircraft didn't care about what a great guy he was.

The F-11 was thrown off the deck at just above flying speed and quickly accelerated to its maneuvering speed a few moments later. His lead had done a 180 turn after take-off and was now paralleling the ships track in the opposite direction while maintaining 250 knots. This would allow Curt to make a running rendezvous and join up.

As he climbed up to the 500 foot join-up altitude, Curt caught a glimpse of his lead at three o'clock. Quickly rolling the Tiger into a steep right turn, he concentrated on keeping his leader in sight as he tried to turn inside the track of the other aircraft; the F-11 was now starting to play its game of "gotcha". As Curt's aircraft crossed over the track of his section leader's aircraft, his concentration changed to fixation as he attempted to tighten up his turn. With everyone watching from the ship he could not afford to lose sight of the other aircraft. Fixation tends to shut down the logical thought process, a kind of mental myopia, and Curt was neatly falling into its trap.

When Curt shifted from concentration to fixation he forgot that he was still in full military power, and the

F-11 obligingly accelerated to near Mach. Curt, unmindful of his speed, pulled harder in the turn trying to salvage the join-up. Suddenly, in the grayness of the morning, he became aware that he was rapidly over-running the lead aircraft. A steep turn with a high airspeed at low altitude and no defined horizon is a recipe for disaster. As Curt rapidly closed on



VF-33 Tigers in formation circa 1959 (US Navy Photo)

his leader, he continued to fixate on the other aircraft, and as he passed underneath, he tried to maintain visual contact while pushing forward on the controls. Those older fighters were extremely sensitive to pitch inputs at low altitude and high Mach numbers, and we can only imagine how in the blink of an eye it was all over.

It was estimated that the F-11 impacted the water at near Mach 1 off the Starboard side of the carrier. The only things recovered were the plywood spacers from the gun bays—the South China Sea is home to everything else.

No matter who's looking at you, no matter what else is happening, don't fixate—Fly the Airplane. ✪

When is a Bird Just a Bird...

By Jake Schultz

When is a bird just a bird - and not a warbird... or, why an article about a non-warbird is in the CWB newsletter...?

Most of the aircraft in the Cascade Warbirds chapter, naturally, are planes that have some connection to the history of the armed services. Yet one question I have occasionally pondered is, "how many military pilots and crews found their aviation inspiration through early homebuilt planes such as the Pietenpol...?" While it is true that the Pietenpol was designed as a homebuilt - nothing more - in 1929 and was never used by the military, I suspect that because of the THOUSANDS of sets of Pietenpol plans sold prior to WWII that a good number of those plans were sold to people who went on to fly some of the nation's greatest warbirds.

So here I present a bit about my Pietenpol homebuilt project. The homemade P-51 Mustang article will have to wait till that plane becomes a reality later in my life (ha!)

When I began my Pietenpol project in 2009, there were various thoughts that I considered at the time which led me to undertake such a journey. Foremost was my love to create - to bring something into being which only existed thus far in my mind. Second was my love for vintage aircraft. By building a Pietenpol, an experimental homebuilt, I could essentially create the look and character of a vintage plane, yet have all the benefits of a newly constructed ship. Another stated fundamental goal was "to take a summer off and discover America by air..." More about that in a minute...

In terms of full disclosure, this is my second go at a Pietenpol project. The first did not get very far. I began it in 1989 and shortly thereafter transferred jobs with Boeing from one coast to the other. Once settled in, I took up building a Molt Taylor Mini-Imp and was detoured again, this time with the project of writing a book about Molt's Aerocar based on his personal friendship and archives. In 2006 the book was published and after a few years of getting my shop and other things in order I was finally set to get serious about building a homebuilt. I decided to once again go for a Pietenpol.

I am rather familiar with the Pietenpol, it's design, and it's history. In fact, I flew to the Brodhead, Wisconsin Fly-in roughly 30 years ago in one of Ed Wegner's beautiful vintage biplanes. During that weekend I also flew as a passenger in Viril Deal's Corvair-powered Pietenpol. What wonderful ways to step back in time.

My initial plan for my Pietenpol project was to use a Ford Model A engine, yet as I read more and more about other's experiences with that engine, there seemed to be a trend. It is a

good powerplant for what it is, but there were numerous stories that seemed to go something like, "had the Model A, had four forced landings and replaced it with a Continental..." or, "had the Model A, flew it local for several years and donated it to a museum..." or, "have the Model A Piet, am looking to sell the plane for something with more power...", etc. So I thought about one of my fundamental goals, using the plane for a summer tour around America, and figured I should step up to a "modern engine."

In keeping with my desire for a vintage look and feel, I was not especially drawn to the traditional flat-four aircraft powerplants. I had, however, been aware of the Rotec R-2800 radial for a number of years. In fact, as a volunteer event photographer for the Arlington Fly-In, I had photographed the Rotec display as far back as 2001.

About the same time as I was considering engine choices, Dick Navratil's Pietenpol graced the cover of Sport Aviation. What a beautiful plane and engine combination. The thing that really cemented my choice of a Rotec, however, was finding vintage photos of the Pietenpol that Bernard built in 1931 with a 65hp Velie radial engine. That was it. I decided to have my Piet be a "modern recreation" of that aircraft.

So it's been a couple of years since the project began and it is moving along well. At the suggestion of CWB member Curt Kinchen I purchased



Jake Schultz in the workshop with his project (Jake Schultz Photo)

completed set of wings and fuselage from the Port Townsend Aero Museum. They were parting out the project because they had acquired a completed, flying Pietenpol and therefore no longer need the project. The wings and tail woodwork had been done by a local gentleman who took the project that far, and for various reasons, chose to not take the project further. Since I only wanted the wings and tail components, I sold the wooden fuselage to another local gentleman who had recently completed his wings. My intent all along was to build a steel-tube version of the Piet, even though the 1931 plane I am emulating had a wooden fuselage.

As you can see from the images, my fuselage is coming along nicely with all the major components in place. Now comes the long and detailed process of fabricating controls, systems, wiring, engine accessories, cowlings, etc. I am under no illusion that I have a very long ways yet to go, yet I am thoroughly enjoying the process of creating something out of not much more than a set of vintage plans. I would love to hear a pilot come up to me one day and comment how they were initially inspired to get into aviation "back in the day" by the humble little Pietenpol. ✪

Flying Heritage Collection's new B-25 arrives

By John Wolcott

After 12 years of meticulous restoration, a fully restored B-25J flew into Paine Field in mid-June to join Paul Allen's Flying Heritage Collection of World War II aircraft from around the world. "This B-25J is the most accurately restored bomber of its kind," said FHC Executive Director Adrian Hunt. "Everything has been restored to perfection, just as it was when it was built in 1944. It's accurate right down to its cup holders and working bomb bay mechanisms."

Painted in the olive drab style of Army Air Force planes, the Mitchell rolled down the runway looking like it has just been delivered from the North American Aviation factory, bristling with machine guns and sporting the distinctive 490th Bomb Squadron's famous "Skull and Wings" nose art. "It's a large plane but tall enough to allow other planes to be displayed underneath its wings and fuselage," Hunt said. "With so much glass in the canopies you can see a lot of the detail inside. All of our collection's planes have immaculate, detailed cockpits but you can't see them because we can't let people just climb all over them. So the B-25 allows much more visibility for inside detail."

The FHC's B-25J's glass nose shows off the bombsight and nose guns; side guns and the tail gunner and top turret positions are also clearly visible. Since B-25s were often used for ground strafing missions in the Pacific, many of the "J" model planes were equipped with additional machine guns mounted on the sides of the nose, like this model, Hunt said.

Nose art for all of the B-25s in the 490th Bomb Squadron featured a fierce looking skull atop a set of pilot's wings – even though it was never an emblem officially adopted by the military. The squadron was tagged as the "Burma Bridge Busters" for their wartime efforts. "Because Paul Allen is a friend of Steven Spielberg, he decided to paint this plane in the colors of the 490th Bomb Squadron in honor of Spielberg's father, Arnold, who was a member of the squadron but not a crew

member, plus honoring all of the pilots and crews of the 490th's B-25s," he said.

According to Aero Vintage Books, there were 43 operational B-25s at the end of 2009, including Historic Flight Foundation's "Grumpy" B-25D, based at Paine Field. Another four bombers were under restoration to operational flying mode at that time, including the FHC's just delivered B-25J. Another 60 B-25s were

on static display, with three more in restoration for non-flying roles.

Although most of the B-25s that served in World War II later became scrap metal, the FHC's B-25 continued to fly for many years, first with the Air National Guard and then with civilian operators. It was one of 117 B-25s modified by Hughes Tool Co. in California for use as fighter radar control trainers. In the early 1960s, the plane was bought by Cascade Drilling Co. of Calgary, Alberta, and became the first B-25 in Canada to be

converted into a fire-fighting water bomber. By 1995 the plane, painted bright yellow at that time, had ended up at the Arlington Airport's historic World War II Naval Air Station hangar.

In 1999, Allen acquired the B-25J and sent it to Aero Trader in Chico, Calif., the world's top-ranked restorer of B-25s. There the bomber was rebuilt to its original state over a 12-year span that included searching out original B-25 gun turrets, radios, crew equipment and a variety of other parts from the bombsight to cockpit control panels, flight control systems and bomb handling mechanisms.

The FHC's B-25J will be flying for public view twice this year. On July 16, the bomber makes its first flight for the FHC's 2011 Fly Days. Then, on Sept. 24, the FHC's last Fly Day of 2011, the B-25J will fly over Paine Field

in formation with John Session's B-25D from his Historic Flight Foundation collection. ✪



John Wolcott Photo



John Wolcott Photo



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Check The Expiration Date Below.**

Cascade Warbirds Quick Look Calendar

July

- 15-16 Felts Field Fly-In
- 16-17 Thunder over MI
- 16 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
- 21 Dawson Creek
- 23-24 Concrete
- 23-24 Baker City Fly-In
- 28-31 NAS Whidbey Island
100th Aniv. NAVAIR
- 25-31 Oshkosh 2011

August

- 6 BC Aviation Museum
Open House
- 6-7 SEAFAIR
- 12-14 Abbotsford
- 19-21 Oregon Int'l Airshow
- 20 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
"Props and Ponies"
- 26-27 Chico Air Fest
- 26-28 Madras, OR
- 26-28 Wings over Republic
- 28 Chilliwack Flight Fest

September

- 2-3* Vintage Aircraft
Weekend @ PAE
- 3-5 Annual Yak Discovery
Fly-In, BC
- 4 Bremerton Blkbry Fest
- 9-11 Hood River Fly-In
- 12-18 Reno Air Races 2011
- 17 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
- 17-18 Mountain Home AFB

October

- 8* Squadron Meeting at
Museum of Flight
- 8-9 CAF Midland
- 8-9 San Fran Fleet Week
- 15 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
- 20-22 Copperstate

* Denotes Max Effort Event
See Website for Detailed List

Check Six



Thank you to our *all* of our B-17 volunteers for another great year (Tony CarusoPhoto)