

WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



CO's Cockpit

By Ron Morrell

The Cascade Volunteer: As a pilot and aircraft owner, it may be unusual for you to hear this: the volunteer is the most important aspect of what the Cascade Warbirds are about. Our squadron would not exist nor would it have grown and prospered over the last years without the everyday time, work and money that has been contributed by the many, behind the scenes, people that keep us moving forward. Many of these volunteers are obvious, many are not seen nor acknowledged enough by any of us. I want to take time to do that and I hope that all of you use this as an opportunity to “thank a volunteer”.

The very newsletter you are reading is a huge example of how much work is done quietly and without much fanfare. I will be the first to acknowledge that I don't appreciate how much work it takes...just getting your humble commander to get his article to the editors in a timely manner is challenging enough (mea culpa). The actual editing, typesetting, assembling, printing, mailing and all the other aspects I don't know about, is very intensive and, best of all results in an award winning newsletter that has been recognized by others outside our organization. Thanks are owed to all that have taken on this endeavor.

Another large aspect of our squadron activities is the EAA B-17 visit we host every year. This takes a huge amount of prior planning and volunteerism to pull off. We tend to gloss over the many who help prior to the airplane showing up. The advertising, personal emails to organizations and individuals to remind them about the timing of the visit. Then, the many that are needed to man the ramp and help with the crowds during the visit. We should all be thankful for those that make this event happen.

The squadron has the best (of the few that have any) internet exposure of anyone in the country. We have a web site that includes nearly everything the public needs to find out about us and explore our squadron from afar. Our Facebook pages are constantly updated and used by many to advertise our events and keep people informed about our members activities. There are many that keep this all in place and push the notifications to help our squadron stay in front of the rest. The additional of pictures and descriptions that keep people informed of our exploits is a great advertisement for our squadron as well as being a reminder

to all our members that we are keeping busy, and that anyone can join us. Thanks to all and I encourage many more to get involved in the “new medium” of our “old Warbird” squadron.

The fact that venues such as the Olympia Air show planners and the VAW planners ask for and utilize our marshaling crew to such a great extent proves that they are a valuable resource. This group of volunteers help make it much easier for our own pilots to feel comfortable taxiing their airplanes around the venues but they also make inviting our squadron to an air show a positive for the planners... we have our own safety volunteers. These marshalers do a great deal of planning and training before we see them posted out front of our spinning propellers, telling us where to go (in a good way). I appreciate every one of them that goes the extra mile (literally, they usually drive to the venue) to take the time and effort to keep us all safe during our flying events, I only wish that we had a military transport to get them to the events...the Blue Angels have not yet let us borrow their Hercules.

These projects and the volunteers associated with them are just a few of the duties that are done daily by members of our squadron. There are many more: the coordination for every event our pilots are invited to, the meeting planning that goes on all winter (with the associated, constant lookout for interesting speakers and meeting content...any help is appreciated), the scholarship committee that strives to involve new, younger members in our activities, the all-important Christmas party. Volunteers are mandatory to keep this squadron running.

Lastly, I bring up the other aspect of our volunteers. Our pilots and Warbird owners. This may seem obvious, we ARE a Warbird squadron. It must be mentioned, every pilot who brings an aircraft to an event under our CWB banner is also a volunteer. The pilots volunteer their time, airplanes, maintenance costs, fuel costs and their expertise to make our squadron what it is. Many of our pilots volunteer purely for the glory and the accolades that are continually heaped upon us (I just had to add that). But most simply want to keep our public flying and Warbird enthusiasts involved in the effort to “Keep ‘em Flying” ✪

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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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Ops Tempo

By Dave Desmon

Well – Flying Season is officially here!! We've had our first several events – PAE GA Day, Cascade Warbird Day at the Museum of Flight, BLI Warbird Weekend at the Heritage Flight Museum, and the Olympia Airshow. Good times were had by all! Though we had some great times and great flying, it seems to some of the older hands that attendance (in terms of airplanes and CWB members) may be off somewhat from years past.

For instance, we had only 8 of our planes at "Cascade Warbird Day" despite fabulous weather, "Our" B-17, and a whole big, empty ramp waiting just for us.

This begs the question – "Why"? YOUR Squadron Board wants to make sure that YOUR Squadron is properly serving the needs and desires of the membership – So let us know – WHAT is it that YOU want to see as far as

Squadron Events? Are there things that we can do or arrange to better serve you? What can we do to get more members and planes out to the events? What kinds of events do you want to see?

You can contact me (info below), or CO Ron Morrell (CWBCOMMANDER@gmail.com) or ANY of your Board Members to provide feedback. You can also comment on the Cascade Warbirds Members Facebook Page. We'd like to hear from you!

Speaking of Facebook – We are trying

to make more use of it to let members know about upcoming events, and to provide info and photos and comments post-event. Not only can our Highly Talented Photographers post their photos, but YOU can too!! Great way to share the fun. Again, comments invited!

Pilots – do you have your "Airshow Book" current? If you plan to fly in an airshow where the FAA is present, which is any

one with waived airspace, have a binder with your most recent License, Medical, a copy of your Airplane's Annual sign-off from the logbook, your BFR date, Airworthiness Cert and Registration in it, as well as Insurance info, and Formation and Parachute info, if applicable. The Feds will be highly impressed, and you'll breeze through the pre-flight ramp checks.

CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION to see that yours is current !! Registrations now expire every few years, and must be renewed.

Go to www.FAA.gov

and put your N Number in the "N-Number Inquiry" box on the home page to check your expiration date. One of the FAA inspectors at Olympia told me NOT to count on the FAA sending you a renewal notice. He said that if everything works right, they SHOULD, but that things were getting fouled up, and Owners sometimes did not get the notice. Even if that happens, it's still a violation to fly with an expired Registration.

See you in the Pattern! ✪



Scenes from CWB Day at the Museum of Flight with "our" B-17. (John Clark Photos)



Squadron News

SAVE THE DATE

The annual Christmas Dinner Party is scheduled for Saturday, 08 December, at the Medallion Hotel in Smokey Point (Arlington), Washington. Full details will be provided at a later date. We hope you'll attend this year.

RENO OR BUST

If you're interested, we can still squeeze another couple folks in our reserved box at this year's National Championship Air Races. The price is the same as last year, only \$320 per seat for a full week of racing, pit passes, etc. If you can get that kitchen pass, contact Fred at fred@fcsmyth.com.



PAY UP NOW!

Over 200 of you have renewed for 2012 and we appreciate the support. Much of your annual dues goes toward our highly touted and very successful scholarship program (see across). But a few of you are challenging our Finance Officer and he's getting ornery. If the date on this newsletter mailing label is 12/11, you're overdue.

Please send US\$20.00 to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Don't make Fred send you a personal email. Thanks for your cooperation.

OUR SCHOLARS

We've named our two scholars headed for EAA's Air Venture this summer. Alex Wencel lives in Des Moines and attends Aviation High School where he just finished his sophomore year. He plans to attend Big Bend in Moses Lake to complete his aviation training and is looking forward to a career as a professional pilot. Taylor Tillson lives in Renton and attends Liberty High School. She's looking forward to becoming a military pilot. Her most auspicious dream is to be the first female Blue Angels pilot.

The second phase of our annual scholarship program was achieved in May when we named five area youngsters to receive the Private Pilot Ground School Award. In concert with our two partners, Avian Flight Center in Bremerton and Galvin Flying in Seattle, this award includes all books and tuition for the ground school plus two instructional flights. Tyler Frogness is from Bremerton and attends Central Kitsap High School. He aspires to become a commercial pilot and will this Fall enroll at Olympic College in Bremerton. Kyle Clark is from Kent. He attends Rainier Christian High School in Auburn and will graduate in June, 2013. He plans

to become a Naval Aviator. Christine Chappelle attends Liberty High School in Renton and wants to become a pilot to broaden her educational horizons. Of note is that she and her family survived a power-out off-field landing in the family Cessna 206 four years ago. Eli Everson attends school in Silverdale and has his heart set on attending the Air Force Academy. To that end, he is immersing himself in their academic requirements. Jordan Parker attends Bainbridge High School and is involved with the fire department's Cadet Training Program. He thinks he might like to one day spot forest fires or pilot life-flight aircraft.

WELCOME ABOARD

It is our pleasure to say "Hello" to our new members. When you see them at an event or meeting, introduce yourself and make them feel a part of our family.

Justin Drafts	Snohomish, WA
Chris Fosse	South Bend, WA
Tom J Rogers	Covington, WA
Bob Webb	Sunnyside, WA



CWB aircraft holding at PAE GA Day (John Clark Photo)

Transitions

by Ed Rombauer

What is it about flying that attracts us? Flying airplanes or working around them can become a siren's song causing us to spend an inordinate amount of time and treasure in pursuit of our vocation or avocation. Also, there are few endeavors that combine both the danger and satisfaction that is realized by flying a multi-ton machine in something as ephemeral as air. I suspect that if you were to ask a thousand people why they became fascinated with aviation you would get a thousand different reasons. Perhaps there is more "pop" than "sizzle" in the initial attraction, but then like any relationship, you commit to a life-long affair with of all things—a machine.

It might seem that the following piece strays away from this column's purpose of writing about safe flying—or does it?

Driving alone from Texas to California was both hot and dusty. My four-window air conditioning was maxed out and the gritty desert sand blew in the open windows as I consumed my favorite hot weather drink, a lukewarm orange soda. Even with the long hot trip,

I was feeling good. Having just finished flight school, and with my recently acquired wings, I was heading for my new duty assignment. Now I could relax and take a break from the intensity of flight training and enjoy flying without the pressures of the training command. The only problem was that I had no idea what type of squadron I had been assigned to. What would the Navy be doing in the middle of the desert hundreds of miles from the nearest ship? And why did all my classmates go to recognizable squadrons while I was sent to something called a detachment? Oh well, when you're a nineteen year old fighter pilot, optimism is hard to squelch.

Checking into the windy, sand swept base, I was given a paper that showed me where the different activities were located, with the warning at the bottom of the page to watch out for rattlesnakes in the living and parking areas! As I checked into the unit to which I had been assigned, my enthusiasm was further eroded when the admin officer informed me that not only was I the only pilot but that there were no aircraft assigned to the organization. I had a humorous thought of an assignments officer totally ignoring the expensive flight training I'd had, just to fill a slot.

Later in the day I introduced myself to my new C.O., a kindly, older Commander with service from both WWII and the Korean War. While finding out what

my responsibilities would be (in charge of a large aircraft electronics repair facility), I hesitatingly asked what I could do to maintain my flying proficiency. After a moment of thought he said that there were several aircraft parked out on the back ramp, and to help myself to any that I was qualified to fly. The only aircraft that he was sure about was a pair of twin Beech SNBs which I was



A TV-1 Shooting Star assigned to Naval Air Station (NAS) Miramar, California, pictured on the ground at the station. (National Museum of Naval Aviation, Robert L. Lawson Photograph Collection)

not qualified to fly, at least not at that moment.

A few days later, I had some time to take a look at the airplanes that I could choose to fly. There was the pair of SNBs, which were being used as station hacks, a TBM from WWII, several old helicopters, and sitting alone, with sand and grime covering it, was—the United States first jet fighter! Although I had never seen one before, I recognized the aircraft as an F80C which after being transferred from the Air Force to the Navy was marked as a TV-1. This airplane would wind up as the last F80 on active duty in the Navy. Checking with the maintenance chief, I found that the aircraft had not flown

in a long time as there was no one qualified (or wanting) to fly it. Since the F80 was the predecessor to the T33, which I was qualified in, the airplane was mine. In those days, “checking out” in an aircraft meant reading the operating manual and then seeing if you could, with the help of the ground crew, start the engine. If you got the engine started you were on your own. What I didn’t realize on that first flight was that now I had to become my own instructor and safety pilot, and as there were no restrictions on how or where I flew, staying out of trouble would be up to me.

During the next several months that I flew the Shooting Star, I began to understand the true personality of this old vintage fighter. As the flight hours added up, (thanks to my favorite uncle buying fuel) I discovered that it was possible to fly this obsolete aircraft against the more modern fighters of the day, as the straight wing of the F80 allowed it to turn faster than the swept wing FJ Fury’s from the gunnery school, that were my playmates. Also, as the wing tip tanks had been removed, the old fighter had a more sprightly performance than

many of the aircraft of the time. The bad news was that without that extra fuel, I had to be on the ground in less than fifty minutes. The outside parking had also taken its toll, as the hot desert sun had dried out the canopy pressure seals and made some of the wiring insulation brittle. It was in this old airplane with its leaky cockpit pressurization that I suffered my first and only case of what divers call “the bends” while climbing to a higher altitude—another point on the learning curve.

I flew that old airplane a lot that winter, so much that the C.O. asked me to cut back on my flying as the fuel costs (at about ten cents a gallon) were ruining his budget. However every time I would drive by the old airplane sitting alone on the ramp, and knowing that it was just months away from the scrap yard, I could almost hear her call out to me; “can we go flying today?” It was not only a call that I couldn’t refuse, it was a call that I didn’t want to refuse. The itch that you can never scratch had taken up a lifetime residence; I had discovered the true freedom of flying and learning.

As I packed my car in preparation to transfer to a real fighter squadron, I stopped for a moment to reflect on the past several months in this desert land of snakes,

bugs, sand and airplanes. It was an experience that you remember the rest of your life as a defining time. I couldn’t know, when I first arrived, that this assignment would unknowingly prepare me for my future career in aviation. That here I would meet and “hang out” with many of the legendary pilots in military aviation, their stories and experiences falling like gold dust onto the local cantina floor. That it would be here I would first

experience the terrible loss when other pilots at that air station were involved in fatal accidents. And, as there was no one “to watch over me”, it was here that I learned to be responsible to myself. But mostly I remembered that old F80, with its leaky pressurization, intermittent instruments and bad wiring, and how it had taught me that flying is and should be a complex affair of the heart as well as the mind. ✪



TV-1 Shooting Stars of either Advanced Training Unit (ATU) 200 or 3 pictured in formation. (National Museum of Naval Aviation, Robert L. Lawson Photograph Collection)

Beneath Haunted Waters

By Peter Stekel

I first became aware of Cascade Warbirds a few years ago when involved with research for my last book, *Final Flight - The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra*. Central to the story was the disappearance of a Beech 18 AT-7 Navigator with a pilot and three student navigators on November 18, 1942 over California's Sierra Nevada mountains.

I'm not a pilot but, like anybody who was ever a child, I've always been interested in airplanes and aviation. The problem for me, when writing *Final Flight*, was that aviation was an integral part of the story but I didn't know anything about airplanes and flying, much less the Beech 18. I heard through some friends that a Beech 18 had been on display at Paine Field General Aviation Day, did my homework, discovered the Beech was associated with Cascade Warbirds, found the CWB website and contacted Fred Smyth. Fred put me in contact with Michael Kopp, the owner of the Beech. Not only was I able to learn about the Beech 18, Michael took me flying, and a great friendship has developed.

Fortune smiled on me further when I joined Cascade Warbirds. Greg Anders agreed to write a blurb for *Final Flight* which has helped boost the book's visibility in aviation circles. I was asked to make a presentation about *Final Flight* for a CWB meeting, which was warmly received, and which led to other invitations to tell my story.

To show my appreciation for how welcome the group has made me feel, I want Cascade Warbirds to be among the first who officially hear about my latest book, *Beneath Haunted Waters*. By virtue of your knowledge and experience, I believe this is a story you can feel deeply about and understand. It's another aviation mystery story that takes place in the Sierra Nevada mountains but this time it involves two B-24 Liberators. It's a story full of drama, irony, and tragedy.

During the early morning hours of December 6, 1943, a B-24 Liberator with a crew of six was lost somewhere over the Sierra Nevada mountains. They were with the 461st Bombardment Group (H), returning to their base at Hammer Field in Fresno, California, after a day and night training mission to Phoenix, Arizona.

Later that morning a second B-24 called the "Exterminator" fell from the sky over the western Sierra while searching for the first Liberator. Of that crew of eight, the co-pilot and radio operator managed to bail out. In 1955 the Exterminator was found when the reservoir constituting Huntington Lake was drained so a utility company could perform repairs to the dam's spillway.

Adding to the tragedy of losing one aircraft and crew

while searching for another is the ironic story of Clint Hester.

Co-pilot of the first missing airplane was Clint Hester's 24 year old son, Lt. Robert Hester. The elder Hester spent the next 15 years looking for his son. Clint hiked all over the Sierra, centering his search around the Mt. Whitney area in Sequoia National Park. In February, 1959, Clint Hester suffered a fatal heart attack. Then, on July 29, 1960, two USGS geologists and a park ranger chanced upon the crash site of Lt. Hester and his crewmates in an isolated and unnamed lake at 11,255 feet. They were about 40 air-miles north of Mt. Whitney and the search zone of Clint Hester. The unnamed lake was soon christened, "Hester," honoring the father and the son he never succeeded in finding.

On August 4, 1960 the army flew a detachment of soldiers via a Piasecki H-21 into the Kings Canyon National Park wilderness. From a base at 8800 feet in LeConte meadow the team was shuttled to Hester Lake in a Kaman HH-43 Huskie. There were around eight support staff and two hard hat divers who were tasked with recovering the crew of Lt. Robert Hester's sunken Liberator. Due to the terrain and high elevation the HH-43 was unable to set down anywhere near the lake. As the chopper hovered over an area 700 yards below the lake basin, equipment was pushed out the door. The soldiers followed, jumping from a height of eight feet. It took three hours to carry all the diving and camping equipment about a quarter mile up slope to the lake.

After eight days of diving, on August 11, the search for remains concluded. The water was too deep and cold, the elevation too high, and the diving technology of the 1960s too rudimentary for the divers to stay in the lake for very long. However, some crew remains were recovered from water 35 feet deep. The flight engineer, Sergeant Robert Bursey was the only one who could be identified and he was sent home to Rutland, VT, to be buried. The rest of the remains were consolidated and interred October 3, 1960 at Arlington National Cemetery. Some airplane wreckage was brought up from the lake and taken home as souvenirs.

The Hester Lake B-24 has excited and intrigued historians, aircraft aficionados, Sierra Nevada hikers and climbers, and divers ever since its disappearance. Many have tried to reach the lake; most have failed. I first began hiking in the Sierra Nevada during the 1960s. During those years and well into the 1970s people in the backcountry were still talking about Clint Hester's search for his son.

Several parties have attempted to SCUBA dive Hester Lake in order to examine the wreckage that lies at the bottom of the 100 foot deep lake. A 1989 expedition was successful; all others have failed. The reason is simple.

Hester Lake is remote and difficult to reach. It requires a long hike over a 12,000 foot pass, crossing a river, and then ascending a 3000 foot canyon wall within one mile. Without a trail.

Divers haul their gear in by packstock but they still have to carry everything across the river and up the canyon wall. The climb includes a 350 foot technical rock climb through a narrow notch full of vegetation, loose rock, and the outlet stream for Hester Lake. The trip is arduous and not for the faint of heart or inexperienced. Invariably, divers make a reconnaissance hike to the lake and are so discouraged by the difficulty in getting there, and their fear of being injured, that they never return.

Despite the difficulty of reaching Hester Lake, people do succeed in reaching it. A few people with a direct historical connection to Hester Lake have attempted the trip. Lt. Hester's daughter, a babe in arms when her father disappeared in 1943, has made the trip. The nephew of Robert Burse tried in 2003 but was unable to reach the lake.

Most of what can be taken away of the B-24 has been removed from the lake. Journalist accounts from 1960 mention lots of wreckage around, and in, Hester Lake. They also mention removing parts of the airplane - mostly engine components and instruments - for souvenirs. A national park ranger gathered up several sacks of airplane debris and arranged for them to be flown out in 1987 and 1988. In the course of researching this story I've actually met a few people who have pieces of the airplane.

I spent three days at Hester Lake during the middle of August, 2011. The purpose was to search for airplane wreckage and chart a debris field (if one existed) that might be helpful in constructing a crash scenario. The army recovery team from 1960 believed the B-24 crashed into a rock cliff at the edge of the lake and exploded, scattering the airplane and crew across the frozen lake. When the lake melted, everything sank to the bottom.

I got in touch with the only SCUBA diver to successfully dive in Hester Lake and he sent me a short video he shot. The Liberator lies at the bottom of the lake, twisted and distorted. Other than two engines and a few propeller blades it's unrecognizable to me as an airplane. The lake bottom is covered with a deep layer of silt. There is no way of knowing what is buried there.

A college student who became interested in the story made a trip to Hester Lake in 1994, exploring with a wetsuit and snorkel. He described to me finding one of the bomber's four engines in about 15 feet of water. He's positive the propellers were feathered, which suggests that engine failure could have been responsible for the crash. I

did not see this engine when I visited Hester Lake.

Reviewing training reports from the 461st I was intrigued by records of poorly maintained aircraft or aircraft out of service due to parts shortages or general unflyability. Shortages of aircraft had led to training being three months behind schedule. I assume this made it acceptable for questionable aircraft to be in use. Documentation shows that the Hester Lake Liberator had a faulty compass.

During my three day visit I looked around Hester Lake and the other lakes around it but was unsuccessful in finding debris or any trace of the B-24 crew. No evidence of the plane was found around any of the surrounding peaks which leads me to believe the aircraft didn't hit anything before it went down.

Using my Thermarest pad, some swim goggles, and an underwater camera I paddled around the shoreline of Hester Lake and peered into its waters and took pictures. I was unsuccessful in locating any significant or large pieces of wreckage. This included the feathered engine spotted in 1994.

In the evenings, I ate dinner and gazed across the lake, turning over and over in my mind what might have happened here during the early morning of December 6, 1943. The B-24 Liberator had no business being over these mountains; they were supposed to fly up the western side of the Sierra, not the eastern side. Were they tricked by their faulty compass? Had they been blown off course by a storm forecasted for later that morning? What role might engine failure have to do with the aircraft's loss?

All is quiet, serene, and still in Hester Lake today. And, that is how it should be. One of the great advantages of being at Hester Lake is that it lies within Kings Canyon National Park. This is a government protected free from any significant man-made intrusions. That makes it possible to stand in the footsteps of past visitors, even historical visitors, and experience the same scene. It's a wonderful feeling when you're able to see the landscape with your historical mind's eye; when you can study the documents and photographs and actually put together all the pieces to construct a story.

On my last day at Hester Lake I stood in the quiet morning as the sun rose. Looking southward along the spine of the Sierra Nevada, in the light of a new day, I could almost see Lt. Robert Hester's B-24 coming in below the peaks... 🌀



CASCADE WarBIRD EAA CHAPTER

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

Cascade Warbirds Quick Look Calendar

July

- 11-15 Arlington Fly-In
- 14 American Heroes @
MOF
- 21 Princeton, BC
- 21 Friday Harbor Fly-In
- 21 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
- 21-22 McChord Air Expo
- 27-28 Concrete
- 27-29 Tri-Cities H2O Follies
- 23-29 Oshkosh 2012

August

- 3-5 SEAFAIR
- 3-5 Oregon Int'l Airshow
- 4 BC Aviation Museum
Open House
- 10-12 Abbotsford
- 17* Props & Ponies
Heritage Flt Museum
- 18-19 Chilliwack Flight Fest
- 24-25 Madras, OR
- 24-26 Wings over Republic
- 31-1* Vintage Aircraft
Weekend @ PAE

September

- 1-3 Bremerton Blkbry Fest
- 7-9 Hood River Fly-In
- 12-16 Reno Air Races 2012
- 15 Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI

October

- 4-8 San Fran Fleet Week
- 13 Squadron Meeting at
Musuem of Flight
- 20* Heritage Flt Museum
Open House at BLI
- 25-27 Copperstate

* Denotes Max Effort Event
See Website for Detailed List

Check Six



Cascade Warbird member Ken Wheeler in his USAAF uniform with the B-17 Aluminum Overcast.
(Stewart Hopkins Photo)