

# WARBIRD FLYER



★★★EAA Warbirds Squadron 2 Newsletter★★★



## CO's Cockpit

By Ron Morrell

Congratulations, we have arrived at the end of another year. How was 2016 for you, our members and our squadron? Looking back at the last 12 months, are we continuing in the right direction and providing the activities and support for our squadron goals? Just as a reminder, the complete set of squadron rules and the purpose of our organization is contained on our website: CascadeWarbirds.org. I encourage everyone to look and remind yourselves why we do what we do. You only need to click on the "Legal" menu and read all about what our goals are under Article 2. I will also encourage all of you to give your leadership some feedback over the new year and let us know where you see us falling short and where we are doing a good job. Part two of that request is for you to get involved and help us improve our efforts to meet those goal...it takes teamwork and cooperation to make it happen.

I am happy to follow-up with all our members concerning the situation we found ourselves in during the Joint-Base Lewis McChord airshow this past August. The final report concerning our complaint to the FAA has been rendered and we have been found to be in the right. We have been thanked by the local FSDO leadership and by other FAA officials for bringing the situation to their attention. There will be airshow industry wide training done by the FAA to ensure local airshow FAA personnel know what the rules are and do not cross the line like happened at JBLM. The situation was also discussed at the International Council of Airshows Conference and I am satisfied that we have been vindicated. As an extra aside with the local FAA, I was told that a search over the past 7 to 10 years turned up only one minor safety issue reported concerning a Cascade Warbird aircraft at an airshow in that time frame...an extremely good record for our pilots and ground personnel! Keep up the diligence and safety

attitude.

I hope everyone enjoyed Christmas and Hanukkah and Festivus and hope that everyone had a great New Year's Eve. I was given many compliments regarding the squadron Christmas party, despite the minor food glitch. The bartender stayed late to help make up for any bad feelings...alcohol almost always makes up for other drawbacks. I especially want to thank Karyn King for her effort to add to our scholarship fund. Her work over the past flying season, attending our activities and begging for rides and getting great pictures of our aircraft, as well as doing the work of putting the calendar into print for us was truly appreciated. I also want to thank Karyn for putting together the posters of some of the pictures she took while we escorted the Aluminum Overcast around the Seattle area, I was honored to make them available for the impromptu auction. I hope everyone enjoys their 2017 calendars and uses it wisely to keep track of our squadron activities. I'm not sure of the final count for our scholarship building activity but I'm sure Fred will let us know the final numbers at our next meeting.

Now to the new year. The Cascade Warbirds Squadron has already been invited to the Fairchild AFB Airshow at the end of July and we are informally invited to the Arlington Airshow. I will be attending the Northwest Council of Airshows Conference in March and will be able to report back concerning any more invites we receive at that time. I hope everyone can attend our events and will be putting out notices soliciting volunteers soon. Thanks again for a great 2016 and I'm looking forward to another fine flying season with our members, pilots, ground personnel and every "Warbird enthusiast" we can muster. I hope we all meet new friends and encourage them to share in our military heritage as it presents itself with our Warbirds. "Keep Em' Flying"! ✪



A shot of the 2016 CWB Christmas Party  
(Eric Olsen Photo)

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★★★ Cascade Warbirds ★★★  
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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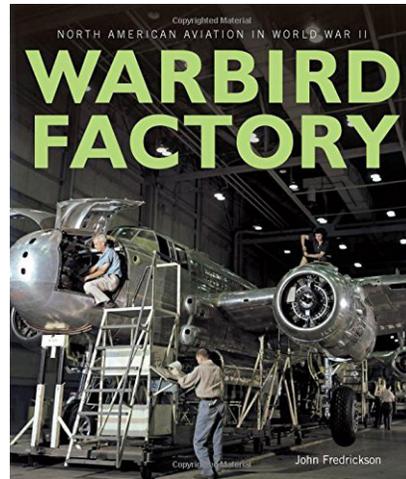
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## Media Review

By John Clark



*Warbird Factory: North American Aviation In World War II* is a 224 page hardcover book that provides coverage on much more than just airplane production. This book includes studies of NAA airplane designs, the personalities that brought the company to prominence and a detailed history of the North American Aviation company prior to, during and after World War II. Written by retired Boeing manager John Fredrickson, the very well researched content also includes the difficulties of wartime production, several detailed discussions of the B-25 Mitchell and P-51 Mustang as well as highlights on developmental models that never made it to production. The author concludes with a look at the short-lived "Super" Mitchell, the P-82 and briefly touches on the influences that brought NAA into the jet-age Cold War.

Fredrickson dives deep into the North American company's genesis with coverage on its establishment, its founders and the early airplane designs. He looks into the life of factory workers with snippets on pay scales, training, living in wartime conditions and even covers a strike that was quelled by government troops. A lot of detail is provided when describing the expansion airplane design from trainers to the B-25 bomber and the iconic P-51 Mustang. There were many more airplane designs than production models and some, like the pressurized XB-28 Dragon, seemed like potential world-beaters in their own right.

## Warbird Factory: North American Aviation In World War II

Author: John Fredrickson

Hardcover: 224 pages

Zenith Press; 1st edition (November 2, 2015)

ISBN-10: 0760348162

ISBN-13: 978-0760348161

*Warbird Factory* is printed on high-quality paper and is filled with rarely seen black & white and color images. For the most part, the image quality is sharp and striking. The people involved with producing the aircraft get as much visual coverage as the factories and aircraft.

Not all is perfect and there are several captioning errors. Among these are a P-51 misidentified as an A-36, an A-36 misidentified as an early P-51, and a Piper L-4 misidentified as an L-5. The most glaring is on page 188 where a Spitfire Mk.IXc is misidentified as an A-36 Apache. These issues aside, "Warbird Factory" is an excellent read and just as enjoyable as a picture book. Highly recommended.

This book is available from Amazon Prime for \$24.61 at the time of this writing and Amazon will donate a portion of the proceeds to Cascade Warbird EAA Chapter if you order it through their website. ★



# Getting Started with Researching Fallen Soldiers

By Peter Stekel

I'm a professional writer who specializes in telling the stories of World War II aviators who were killed in the United States during flight training. How to best tell these stories is a big challenge. Many of the boys (they called young men boys in those days) who served during World War II were in their late teens and early twenties and didn't self-document their lives to the same degree we do today.

Discovering anything about people who died seven decades ago is certainly a daunting task but not an impossible one. The best primary source for stories about these fallen soldiers comes from their families. Siblings and other close relatives can provide the important information that gives life to these boys. But herein lies another problem. Most of these next of kin are already in their 80s and 90s. Many have died. How does one find the living?

The first task in solving this riddle is to realize the past doesn't go anywhere; it is always with us. Memories may fade and records may be hard to locate but those memories and records still exist. The best place to start on a paper trail into the past is with subscription-based online sites like [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and [www.newspaperarchives.com](http://www.newspaperarchives.com). Both are useful for figuring out genealogy and that means finding surviving relatives.

Local museums, historical societies, and newspaper morgues are great sources of information when looking for people from small towns. If surviving next of kin are located they might have letters or journals. If not, they may have their own scrapbooks filled with photographs and newspaper clippings about the person you're researching. This family memorabilia may have been handed down to the second or even third generation following the soldier's death.

The United States military conducts an investigation for every member of the armed forces who dies, whether it be by accident, disease, natural causes, or combat. These Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF), which can be anywhere from a page or two to hundreds of pages, are stored by whichever branch of service the service member was assigned to. Family members can request the IDPF of their loved one. Researchers with legitimate reasons also

have access to IDPFs through the Freedom of Information Act.

But, I'm getting ahead of the story here. How did I, a person with no military background, come to write two books about World War II aviation training accidents occurring within the borders of the United States?

During the summer of 2007 I was climbing across the Mendel Glacier at over 12,000 feet in the wilderness world of Kings Canyon National Park. The remains of missing World War II aviation cadet were discovered two years previously in this glacier. Since no airplane wreckage had been found news media assumed the soldier had parachuted out of his airplane and the airplane had to be somewhere else. I've been hiking and climbing in this

section of California's Sierra Nevada since 1965 and all the media reports surrounding the frozen airman's discovery showed a basic ignorance of this amazing range of mountains and its history. I was resolved to explore the glacier where the airman's remains were found to solve the first of many mysteries concerning



Consolidated B-24D-25-CO (S/N 41-24226) "Joisey Bounce" and second aircraft is (S/N 41-24147) "The Duchess". (USAAF Photo)

him. Where was his airplane?

It didn't take long to find evidence of the frozen airman's Beech 18 AT-7 navigator. Helped by my hiking companion we found a wheel, both of the AT-7's engines, a section of wing, and loads of little pieces of aluminum. Here, then, was plenty of evidence the airman had not parachuted from his airplane.

We found something else too, completely unexpected. We found the remains of a second of the four crewman from the AT-7. I wrote a book (published in 2010) about the experience, *Final Flight - The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra*. It covered my research into what had caused the airplane to crash, why so many decades had passed before any of the crew were discovered, the lives on the boys on board, how pilots were trained during World War II, and other historical airplane accidents in Kings Canyon National Park.

A natural outgrowth of *Final Flight* is my second book, *Beneath Haunted Waters*, which will be coming out in September, 2017. (Continued on pg 6)

# Squadron News

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## DINNER PARTY HUGE SUCCESS

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It just never seems to get old. This year 70+ members and guests got together at the Medallion Hotel in Smokey Point (except for one couple who showed up at last year's Tukwila venue) and had another great party. Of special note were our guests of honor: ELMER JOHNSON, ART UNRUH, and DICK NELMS, all WWII Vets. We had some frivolity, which always seems to find its way into what we do, and some seriousness, too. Maybe the highlight of the evening was our awards presentations. Our Volunteer of the Year went to DAN SHOEMAKER for his extraordinary efforts in making this year's B-17 Tour Stop, despite many obstacles, a resounding success. We've even convinced Dan to have another go at it again next year.

Our Search for Excellence – Oak Tree Award was presented to BRANDON EDWARDS. He went above and beyond with his care and attention to our many WWII Veterans who helped us with the B-17 visit this year. And Brandon continued his efforts with his introductions of our guests of honor, giving a synopsis of their wartime service.

But the highlight of the evening may well have been KARYN KING, of PhotosHappen.com, who, with her 2017 Warbird calendars and on-staff auctioneer, managed to raise \$1,300 for our scholarship program. We thank Karyn for her efforts on behalf of our future scholars and for all those who so generously donated during the evening.

Finally, we want to thank JOHN CLARK for putting together another video montage that showed continuously during the evening.

## JANUARY SPEAKERS

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DICK NELMS will be our featured speaker at our 14 January member meeting. Dick was an Army Air Force pilot and flew 35 B-17 combat missions for the 8th Air Force. Be sure to come hear his story. And our Know-Your-Warbird segment will feature GREG ANDERS and his Interstate Cadet "The Pearl" that was in the skies on a flight training mission over Hawai'i on that fateful day in 1941.

## FREE MONEY

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Just wanted to get your attention – it's that time of year again. Annual dues are still just \$20 and if you haven't renewed, we encourage you to do so now. Your dues expiration date is displayed on the envelope that delivered this newsletter; if it's Dec 2016, then send a check to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. Thanks for your continued support.

## BUY AN AIRPLANE

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Three members have warbirds for sale. Contact them directly with any questions you may have.

ADRIAN COOPER is selling his 1988 CJ-6A. Contact Coop directly at cooperairracing@gmail.com. JOHN GEYMAN has on offer a 1951 DHC-1 Chipmunk. You can reach John at jgeyman@uw.edu. STEVE HEWITT is looking to part with his 1953 C45H, originally a 1943 AT-7 that served in Fairbanks during WWII. Contact Steve at snjhewitt@gmail.com.

Photos and specs for these aircraft can be found on the squadron web page: [www.cascadewarbirds.org](http://www.cascadewarbirds.org)

## AVIATION SCHOLARS

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We've just received word that our 2015 Aviation Scholar ALEX JONSON has been accepted by Embry Riddle and will start in the fall, 2017. He's even considering ROTC as a way to help with his schooling. We wish Alex all the best!

Don't forget to pass the word regarding our scholarship program. We're still teamed with Galvin Flight Training on Boeing Field to start as many as eight area youth on their way to earning a Private Pilot license. The application can be found on our web site and the deadline is 28 February. The value of each award is in excess of \$1,100. US citizens aged 16 to 21 are eligible to participate.

## WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Joining us in recent months are BRIDGET GRANBERG of Edmonds and BILL NEWMAN of Kirkland. You may remember our earlier mention that Bill was CO of the Blue Angels in '78 and '79. We welcome both these folks to our group; make them feel welcome when you get a chance to see them at a squadron event.

## SQUADRON CALENDARS

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We've still got a few 2017 warbird calendars available. If you haven't received yours yet and can't make it to a meeting, send \$23 to CWB, 1066 Yates Road, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. That price includes postage. Remember, the net proceeds benefit our scholarship program. We have Karyn King of PhotosHappen.com to thank for this project. Contact Fred directly to get a postage quote for more than a single calendar.

# Christmas Party



Brandon Edwards accepting the Oak Tree award for 2016. (Eric Olsen Photo)



Karyn King presenting the check to the CWB Scholarship program (Eric Olsen Photo)



Dan Shoemaker accepting the 2016 volunteer of the year award. (Eric Olsen Photo)



# Getting Started with Researching Fallen Soldiers (Cont.)

This is the story of two B-24 Liberators which were lost in the Sierra Nevada in December, 1943. The first disappeared while returning to Hammer Field, in Fresno, California from Davis-Monthan in Tucson, Arizona. When it failed to return with its crew of six, a squadron of ten Liberators were dispatched to find it; one of these search planes was also lost when it ditched into the Huntington Lake reservoir in the Sierra foothills. There were eight boys on board this second B-24 and two successfully parachuted from their stricken plane. The other six were lost.

Time marched on and both Liberators were forgotten. That all changed in 1955 when the power company that owns Huntington Lake lowered the reservoir's water level in order to winterize the dam.

Everyone was surprised when the wreckage of a B-24 Liberator was uncovered by the sinking water level.

In 1960, two geologists and a park ranger discovered the first of the planes that went missing in 1943. They were at an unnamed lake at over 11,000 feet in Kings Canyon National Park when they discovered wreckage. The copilot's father, Clinton Hester, had dedicated his life to finding his son only to have died less than a year before the crash site was discovered. The lake is now known as Hester Lake in his honor.

It's a little known fact that we lost more army air forces aircraft to accidents within our own country than in combat against the Japanese. More than 4500 aircraft were lost in the Pacific Theater of Operations but 7189 combat aircraft and 5317 training aircraft were lost in the United States due to accidents in

training or during transportation. This resulted in 15,530 pilots, crew members, and ground personnel being killed in over 52,000 accidents (of which 6350 were fatal accidents).

And Navy records show that once our Navy and Marine pilots reached the South Pacific, losses due to accidents and other causes kept pace with combat deaths. There were 3618 deaths due to enemy action (2891 in air combat) and 3257 non-operational aviation deaths.

Seven decades after the end of World War II aviation archeologists are re-examining aircraft crash sites found within the boundaries of the United States. These archeologists are engaged in memorializing the crews and documenting their sacrifices. As I've already mentioned, finding records and locating next of kin or families of the deceased aviators is challenging.

There are a number of sources for obtaining accident investigation documents. Family members or researchers with a valid reason for obtaining the records can contact the US Air Force at Maxwell Field in Alabama and request the information using the Freedom of Information Act. The Air Force rarely charges a fee for these reports. The Navy, on the other hand, usually charges a per page fee that can often be \$1.00/page. People unable to use FOIA can pay a fee and obtain military accident reports from <http://www.accident-report.com/index.html>.

A map of civilian and military plane crash data within the US is available at <http://planecrashmap.com/>.

Civil aviation accident reports can be found at [http://ntsb.gov/\\_layouts/ntsb.aviation/index.aspx](http://ntsb.gov/_layouts/ntsb.aviation/index.aspx).

Finding records about individuals who served in our military is extremely difficult due to a 1973 St. Louis



Hester Lake B-24 crew. (Peter Stekel Photo)



Army diver, Hester Lake, 1960 (National Park Service Photo)

warehouse fire where paper records were being kept. Arson was suspected but no firm evidence was ever presented and, hence, no arrests were made. Sadly, the records were destroyed not by the fire but by the sprinkler system that extinguished the blaze. Read about it at <https://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/fire-1973.html>.

This website is helpful for finding military personnel. <http://www.history.army.mil/reference/records.htm>. Search for enlistment records at <https://aad.archives.gov/aad>. Missing Aircrew Reports (MACR) for battlefield casualties are located at <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/missing-air-crew-reports.html>.

At [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) (monthly membership required) you can find living or deceased relatives of flight crews. The primary source for these data is US Census Records. Another pay-site is <http://www.genealogybank.com>. Already knowing the names of relatives and hometowns and birth dates can help you sift through people with common names like Smith or Jones.

A site affiliated with Ancestry is <http://newspaperarchive.com> (monthly fee). Searching through old newspapers is a good way to track down information about individuals before the war. Small town newspapers are great sources for finding stories about families, goings-on at school or church, weddings and funerals, and so much more. Be prepared with alternate spellings of names though as reporters in mid-Century America were pretty sloppy when it came to such details.

Most military units now have a website with unit histories, photographs, memoirs, and news about alumni and reunions. Most of these websites are now being run by the grandchildren of those who served during World War II.

A simple search for the unit is usually enough to locate the website.

A few of the best aviation archeology sites on the internet are <http://aircraftwrecks.com>, <http://aviationarchaeology.com>, and <http://wreckchasing.com>. More can be found by searching for aviation archeology. Some sites have discussion centers where people share data, information, and ideas.

At the archeologist's websites you'll also find a plethora of recommended reading. Those books that can't be found in your local library are usually available at on-line bookstores like [www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com), [www.abe.com](http://www.abe.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

To locate internment locations a good place to begin is with <http://www.findagrave.com>. The site is easy to use; begin by searching on the person's name. There are often links to other people the servicemember served with, especially if they were killed at the same time. Information about burials in national cemeteries is available at <http://www.cem.va.gov>.

Should you be interested in learning more about our fallen soldiers, or have a family member killed in service to our country, the above resources are a good place to begin your search. Finally, don't forget to make use of your local university library. They often have special collections that have been donated by alums. Your local veteran's groups might also be able to help. The secret of research success is to be persistent. Talk to people with similar interests and share, share, and share. Good luck!

Peter Stekel is the author of *Final Flight: The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra* and *Beneath Haunted Waters: Two B-24 Liberators Lost in the High Sierra of California*, which will be published by Lyons Press Fall, 2017. ★



Huntington Lake B-24 tail section in 1955 (Myron Glenn Photo)



Huntington Lake B-24 center section, 1955 (Myron Glenn Photo)

# CWB Support

Your business card here for  
\$25 per issue

## **Cascade Warbirds** **Quick Look Calendar**

### January

- 14 Squadron Meeting at  
Musuem of Flight
- 21 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BVS

### February

- 11 Squadron Meeting at  
Musuem of Flight
- 18 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BVS
- 25-26 Northwest Aviation  
Conference

### March

- 3-4 Northwest Council of  
Airshows
- 11 Squadron Meeting at  
Museum of Flight
- 18 Heritage Flt Museum  
Open House at BVS

\* Denotes Max Effort Event  
See Website for Detailed List

## Check Six



John Glenn relaxes after the flight of Friendship 7. (NASA Photo)