



All the best in Pensacola, Tanner and Valerie! Photo: Dan Shoemaker

❖ Cascade Warbirds Squadron Newsletter ❖

CO'S COCKPIT

By John "Smokey" Johnson



SPRING HAS COME AND GONE and now we are quickly approaching the summer season. Unfortunately, due to the lingering COVID-19 pandemic environment and state of Washington mandated regulations, most of the airshows and other events we attend have already been canceled up to Arlington, which has been modified to an evening drive-through event.

It appears that EAA's Oshkosh "The Big Show" (July 26–August 1) will have record attendance. Our Executive Officer, Dave Desmon, has once again rented and filled all the rooms at two rental houses located on Lake Winnebago just north of the Oshkosh airport. I am going to fly my new (to me) 1944 North American SNJ-5 to the NATA formation clinic in Dubuque, IA and then go up to Oshkosh, WI. Hope to see some of you there on the flight line or at SOS for brats, corn, and beverages in the evenings.

Formation Flying, LLC is still planning on having their local multi-signatory FAST formation clinic at Bremerton airport (KPWT) August 12–15. Roger Collins has once again graciously let everyone use his hangar for ground school class, briefings, and meals. See nwformationflying.com for more information.

The Reno Air Races are scheduled for September 15–19 at Reno-Stead Airport. Contact Fred Smyth for box seat ticket availability.

On April 24th, we had a BBQ gathering at Roger Collins' hangar at Bremerton airport. As usual for April, the weather was not very cooperative, so I and lots of others drove to the event. It was very nice to see everyone's smiling faces, catch up on what has been going on, and share some great food prepared by our master grill man, Victor Norris. Several aircraft did make it to Roger's ramp. The afternoon was sunny and I think we had about thirty people attend. Everyone also got a look at Roger's new airplane, the TF-51 *Lady Jo*.

On May 22, we had a "knock off the rust" event, again at Roger Collins' hangar. Low clouds and IFR conditions impacted our morning flight operations and most of the aircraft arrived around 11:00 to 12:00. We did manage to conduct several training and refresher formation sorties for two T-28s, L-4 and L-19, and Navion and IAR. It was a short but good day and worth the time to simulate an airshow environment, allow the marshallers to practice moving the various aircraft to and from the taxiway, and get some formation flying and briefings accomplished. Thanks to everyone who came out so we could put it all together.

Over the past few months, several of us have participated in missing man formations for US military veterans at the Tahoma National Cemetery. We have had to scramble to get four airplanes airborne, any four airplanes. At one missing man formation, we had a Bonanza A-36, T-34, IAR-823, and a Piper Warrior. This makes for some very challenging briefings and flying. We had decided to meet and brief at Auburn airport for this particular event. There was quite a lot of student training in fixed and rotor wing aircraft plus the usual GA traffic. During the briefing, we mutually decided we should depart early in case the flight got hung up on the ramp or taxiway waiting for landing traffic.

We took off in spaced single ship and did a long running rejoin southbound. With such a big disparity in airspeeds, I had to extend flaps twenty degrees to stay above stall speed while the Piper Warrior was at full power as we made orbits around Bonney Lake for thirty-five minutes prior to heading into the IP (initial point) so as to pass over the ceremony on time and properly aligned to optimize the view for the families. Fortunately, we had Tom and Marian Jensen on the ground attending the ceremony with a handheld radio to assist us with timing and alignment, as well as calling "smoke on" and "pull" for the number three aircraft to go west. After that, we safely broke up the flight and went on our separate ways back to our respective hangars and homes.

Flying these missing man flights for US military veterans who have gone west is truly an honor and a privilege. We have received lots of positive comments from the families who have expressed their grati-

WARBIRD FLYER

✪ Cascade Warbirds ✪

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This is the official publication of Cascade Warbirds. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of Cascade Warbirds. Members are encouraged to contribute any matter related to warbirds, which the editor will gladly work with you to publish.

It is the goal of Cascade Warbirds to promote the restoration, preservation, operation and public display of historically significant military aircraft; to acquire and perpetuate the living history of those who served their country on these aircraft; and to inspire today's young people to become the aviation pioneers of tomorrow.

All correspondence to the squadron may be submitted via the e-mail or mailing addresses below.

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Cascade Warbirds is a tax-exempt charitable organization as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Annual newsletter value: \$6.00

Published quarterly

www.cascadewarbirds.org

tude to CWB. I would like to thank everyone who has participated and especially our Flight Ops Officer, Stan "Sundance" Kasprzyk for organizing and coordinating these flights.

Stay safe and enjoy the company of your friends and families this summer. Hopefully, we will all see each other in the next several months at Bremerton, Oshkosh, or Reno. ✪

SQUADRON NEWS

RENO AIR RACES

The air races are a "GO" for this September and we still have a couple seats available in our second reserved-seat box. The entire week is yours for just \$377—that's seven days of pit passes, box seats for the five days of racing, and week-long reserved parking (one pass per two tickets). Contact Fred if you're interested.

SCHOLARS FLYING

Two of this year's scholars signed up for the April Private Pilot Ground School at partner **Galvin Flying** and are preparing to take their finals. Both **Brooke Swanson** and **Liam Mullins** had their first flights in late May and, upon passing their last tests, will be eligible for their second instructional flights.

2015 SCHOLAR UPDATE

Alex Jonson graduated Magna Cum Laude from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University on May 8th. He earned a degree in Aeronautical Science and is currently at their Prescott, AZ, campus finishing his commercial multi-engine rating.

2019 SCHOLAR UPDATE

Lukas Holloman has earned his Private Pilot certificate and has graduated with honors from Auburn Riverside High School. Thanks to the Running Start program, he has nearly completed his AA degree in Aviation Technology and is pursuing a BA in Aeronautical Science, both at Green River College.

2020 SCHOLAR UPDATE

Harrison Pulido, our 2020 Aviation Grant winner, has now completed his solo long cross-country and is reviewing

his training in preparation for his Private Pilot checkride. To date, he has earned \$2,000 of his \$2,500 grant.

WELCOME ABOARD

Say "hello" to **Justin Griner**, a pilot from Monroe, WA. Next step in his evolution is the formation clinic later this year. And **Heijo Kuil** from Lynnwood has joined us. He's a busy volunteer in the warbird community.

PAY NOW (OR ELSE)

Still a few of you who have yet to renew for 2021. We encourage you to do so, especially since it's only \$20 per year and, as you see above, we do good things with the money we collect. Help us by being a part of it.

FORMATION FLYING, LLC

ANNOUNCES CLINIC

The Northwest Multi-signatory Warbird Formation Clinic will be held August 19–22 at Bremerton National Airport (KPWT). Whether you are looking for initial formation training, to get or upgrade your FAST card, for proficiency, or just to help pass on the skill and enjoy the camaraderie, plan to join the clinic. There will be instructors and check pilots from multiple FAST signatories, including JLFC, NATA, T-34 Association, TRARON, and Red Star. This is the fifth year Formation Flying, LLC has hosted this popular clinic. As usual, meals will be included. Details, training material, and registration forms are at www.nwformationflying.com.

SAVE THE DATE

With the apparent easing of the COVID-19 pandemic, larger scale social events will again be the norm. Our annual Christmas dinner party is scheduled

MEMBERS OF YOUR CASCADE WARBIRDS have been honored to conduct a number of missing man and memorial fly-bys during the spring and our families of veterans on the ground have been very appreciative. We've been able to represent the Cascade Warbirds well, with nice-looking formations over the memorials, supported by members on the ground (thanks, Tom "TP" Jensen) helping with line-up, smoke on, and pull-up calls for the missing man.

As we prepare for any in-flight display of formation aircraft, we always tend to "tighten it up" and try to fly as precisely as possible when it's "show time." At a formation clinic years ago, a number of us talked about the formation flying philosophy known as *precision* flying.

Precision flying:

- Always strive to be in the exact pre-briefed position
- You are either *in* position or getting *back* into position
- Don't accept being out of position
- Make continuous small corrections *now* to avoid big corrections *later*

As we headed to a recent missing man fly-by, while still many miles from the run-in, we had relaxed to a route formation en route. I still noticed everyone in the formation trying to maintain that crisp route formation spacing and symmetry but didn't think much else about it. After the fly-by and return to our home airports, I found a photo posted by a local NW aviation photographer taken as we were over Bellevue, still miles out but looking good.

Remember to always think about *precision* flying, since observers, cameras, and photos may show up where you least expect them.

Fly safe, by flying often! ✪

Photos: Dan Shoemaker

Thanks to Roger Collins for hosting our hangar party and airshow practice!

See the photo albums—click the Flickr icon at cascadewarbirds.org:



for Saturday, 11 December 2021, in Bothell. We'll provide more details as fall approaches, to include hotel accommodations, pricing, and event times. But circle the date on your calendar NOW!

AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE

Pilot and Vietnam veteran **Richard Kloppenburg** owns a restored



1967 O-2, *Saigon Tea*, that served in Vietnam. He is seeking its next caretaker; is it you? E-mail him for details at kloppenburg@mac.com.

Passed member **Bill Junjek's** 1947 Navion was an airshow regular and has a few upgrades. It would make for a fine first warbird. Contact markjunjek@gmail.com for more info.

Longtime member **Tom Elliott** is



selling his longtime airshow circuit mount, a beautiful red CJ-6A, aptly named *NOTAYAK*. Tom can be reached at N13472@aol.com.

Read more about each airplane at cascadewarbirds.org/for-sale/. ✪

Photos (L-R): Richard's 1967 O-2A (Richard Kloppenburg), Bill's 1947 Navion (Mark Junjek), Tom's 1977 Nanchang CJ-6A (JaybirdAviationPhotos.com)



BECOMING A PILOT is something that I have wanted to do from a young age. However, I was not sure how to start. Receiving the Cascade Warbirds scholarship helped by giving me direction. With this scholarship, I started my ground school at Galvin Flying. After completing the ground school course, I took two introduction flights. At this time, I knew I wanted to continue my training and I chose to do this at SpanaFlight.

Thank You, Donors

The regular updates we receive from our scholars demonstrate the positive impact our annual flight training scholarships have on our local youth and on general aviation. You can help us continue these good works with your contributions.

www.cascadewarbirds.org/youth

My experience during flight training was when I started to enjoy flying. My first solo flight was an experience that I will never forget. Planning and flying my first solo cross-country was also extremely rewarding. After soloing, flight training went by fast. Pretty soon, I was studying and preparing for my check ride.

Looking back, the one thing I would change would be to dedicate more time to fly so I could get my certificate quicker. It took me a little over seventy hours, but I spent almost two years flying on and off for the first half of my flight training. By dedicating more time to flying, you will end up getting your certificate in fewer hours and save money, as well.

I am currently taking aviation-related courses at Green River Community College, where I plan to receive my AAS, and eventually my bachelor's in aviation. I am finishing up high school and am excited to start working towards my instrument rating. ✈

L-19 RE-RESURRECTION

By Kris Reynolds

THIS L-19A'S HISTORY was documented by Steve Frushour in the International Bird Dog Association's May 2020 *Bark* newsletter. His excellent research revealed that it was as an active military aircraft with the US Army from 1952, with the Army National Guard. In 1958, it went to Spain and served in their army until 1965, when it was returned to the United States Army and transferred to the Arizona CAP.

It was damaged, probably while with the CAP, and was put up for sale as a failed rebuild project by Gila River Industries, Inc.

...*End of round 1.*

I purchased the wreckage and began the rebuild in 1981 with 13110.0 hours in the civil logbooks. Nothing was then known of its interesting history other than the US Army serial numbers and the US civil registration, so I elected to rebuild it as an example of the Canadian Army L-19s in the attractive bare metal, as they were delivered from the factory. The rebuild was completed in 1993 and the aircraft went on to win Warbirds Best L-19 at Oshkosh 1994 and Warbirds Best Liaison/Observation at Oshkosh 1995.

In 1997, I sold the aircraft to John MacGregor of Langley, BC, a well-known Cascade Warbirds member.



Cessna L-19A S/N 22886, US ARMY S/N 51-12444, before pickup in late 1980. Photos: Randy Umscheid



After restoration at the 2010 Bird Dog Roundup, Canadian registration C-FHDJ, painted to represent Army 713. Photo: John Dicker

He owned it until 2016, having flown it over 915 hours and picked up the 2008 Grand Champion Warbirds and the 2014 Best Liaison/Observation at Arlington.

John, in turn, sold it to George Canyon of Calgary, AB, who used it as an attention-getting addition for his pediatric diabetes charity. The charity went Canada-wide and the L-19 was too slow to cover the territory, so George sold it to an individual in High River, AB, who flew it a total of 19.5 hours before an ill-advised 180-degree turn starting into the wind in ground effect resulted in the inevitable loss of airspeed and ideas.

It was a very complete wreck from which the occupants were able to walk away. You can kill yourself in a Bird Dog, but you have to try a bit harder. They might have avoided facial injuries if they had bothered to lock the shoulder harness before takeoff, per the checklist. Total time: 14283.9 hours. The wreckage went for bids and the winner in Ontario high-graded it for another project and sold the remains to me.

...End of round 2.



Awaiting restoration, again. Some assembly required. Photo: Kris Reynolds



After restoration at the Langley 75th Air Parade. Photo: unknown

I'm in process of rebuilding the aircraft using my stock of spares and a number of the parts from the original that weren't up to Oshkosh award standards, though quite airworthy. I'm always looking for parts—anyone got a DF loop that's surplus to their needs?

I'm planning to rebuild it in either its original US Army paint scheme or the Spanish Army paint scheme, which should be quite unique. Steve Frushour's article included a black-and-white photo of this exact aircraft. I lean toward the Spanish scheme, but always listen for suggestions and advice from other warbird people.

Round 3 has begun... ✪



A pretty looking wreck, but pretty wrecked. Post-accident on 17 August 2019. Photo: Randy Umscheid.

ONCE ON THE CARRIER PIER at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, we met up with Elissa Lines, who was our liaison between the aircrews and the 75th anniversary of V-J Day organization. She is also the Executive Director of the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum located on historic Ford Island. Before leaving San Diego, I had decided to rent an automobile, as quantities were limited due to the lack of tourists from the COVID-19 pandemic travel ban. Once we picked up our car, we were off to find our hotel, the Alohilani Resort, located just sixty short steps from the beach on Kalakaua Ave. in Waikiki Beach. The streets in Waikiki Beach were deserted and lots of people were living outside as a result of most hotels, businesses, shops, stores, and restaurants being completely closed or operating under restricted capacity due to the pandemic. We soon discovered we were the only ones in the hotel, at least until the rest of the group showed up by commercial aircraft ten days later.

That night, we went out to dinner at Duke's, which is named after surfing legend Duke Kahanamoku. Of course, we had to sample their famous mai tai cocktail and had fresh caught mahi-mahi and wahoo. Everything was delicious and it was nice to sit and look out at the sunset on the Pacific Ocean. Seating was very limited and everything was spread out to comply with the local restrictions. It was very nice to sleep in a bed in a room instead of a bunk in my quarters that was rolling and pitching on the ship.

The next afternoon, we drove out to Hickam Air Force Base to move our aircraft from their tarmac over to the south ramp of Honolulu International Airport. As I taxied out from my parking spot, I went by KC-10-30 and KC-135 aerial refueling tankers, and F-15E, F-22, and F-35 fighters. Even though there was minimal civilian jet traffic, ATC decided to taxi me out and around to the ocean runway 8L/26R and then back into the south ramp to our new parking area at Hawaii Air Service. I lucked out and was able to park inside a hangar for the first week. We spent the next several days unpacking everything in the back seat and baggage area from the trip on the ship. We also did a thorough cleaning and checked to make sure everything was mechanically sound and ready to begin flight operations.

In the evenings, we continued to check out the local area and see what was open for dinner. We drove around the entire island enjoying the uncrowded beaches and scenic areas and found the rural areas much more relaxing than the downtown Waikiki Beach neighborhood. We found several places in Haleiwa to relax, have dinner, and enjoy the Hawaiian experience.

After several days of unpacking, cleaning, and checking the airplane, I was ready to go make a short test flight. We had been briefed to take a close look at the FAA document Chart Supplement Pacific because VFR flight in and out of the Honolulu International Airport and the class B airspace is confusing and compli-



Photographed from a PBY, Smokey, another T-6, and a B-25 pass in formation over USS Essex. Photo: US Navy

cated if you are not familiar with the local geographical landmarks. I spent the better part of an hour locating the proper page and trying to identify the various freeways, harbors, and other Hawaiian-named locations with text only; no graphical maps. Sectional and terminal charts offered no help as they did not have the necessary detail. Fortunately, Foreflight has an aerial map feature which shows a satellite image with major features labeled. I decided for my first flight to fly to the southwest along the beach at Waikiki, then to Diamond Head and around the coast to Hanauma Bay, Koko Head, and Makapu'u Head. It was a beautiful flight with the deep blue Pacific Ocean on one side and the striking lush green foliage on the other. I was surprised to see there were very few people out at any of the beach spots along the highway. All the parks were closed due to the pandemic, but the surfers were able to go out and hit the swells.

Even before we had left the USS *Essex*, those of us onboard had discussed a way to show our gratitude to the men and women aboard. The entire crew was unable to come ashore in Hawaii during the unloading and just prior to their sailing out for the RIMPAC exercise, so we thought we would fly out to them as they left Pearl Harbor and give them a little airshow. We spoke with the captain and the air boss and coordinated where to rendezvous with the ship. This was going to happen before most of the other aircrews had arrived and cleared COVID quarantine. We asked for volunteers and the gray PBY, B-25, my T-6, and one other T-6 were interested in participating. We briefed the flight at 1100 hours at the FBO and took off at 1200, single ship, with the PBY leading the way out in front of all the hotels just off Diamond Head. We were to visually locate the ship, then each subsequent aircraft would try and time their entry to fall into formation flying off the PBY in echelon right formation. The ship would be ma-

neuvering in and around the area and there would be an H-60 helicopter as a photo platform above the ship. We spent over an hour at fifty feet above the water, circling the ship trying to get the perfect shot with some of the crew in their dress whites, us in formation, and Diamond Head in the background.

Finally, the photographer radioed that he thought he got the shot. The PBY asked if we could make a few passes off the port side of the ship for the crew and we were granted permission. We made numerous passes for about fifteen more minutes and then headed back to the airport. During the debrief, we all agreed that that was never going to happen again! We received a call from the captain saying thank you from the entire crew as they sailed off to the southwest.

During the next few days, more and more pilots and crews showed up and had their 48-hour COVID lockdown pass with no one testing positive.

The T-6s started to do some four-ship formation flights up to the north near Haleiwa along the north shore. We had to depart and return single ship and join up once north of Wheeler Army Airfield to avoid ATC issues. We did most of our training just offshore between the Dillingham airport and the Opana radar site, which was first used on December 7, 1941, to spot the enemy Zeros, Vals, and Kates inbound to attack Pearl Harbor and is still active.

On August 26, all the pilots and aircrew drove up to attend a mandatory briefing at Wheeler Army Airfield in Wahiawa prior to our entire group moving up there for the last week and a half of our stay to fly in support of the 75th anniversary activities. In recent times, Wheeler Army Airfield has become mostly a rotor wing/helicopter base, so the design, signage, and location of firefighting and emergency equipment was quite different from a fixed wing airplane airport.

The next day, our entire group of aircraft departed Honolulu International Airport and flew in sequence the short distance up to Wheeler Army Airfield, where we landed and parked in our new assigned spots on the tarmac. The flight up and landings had to be carefully sequenced because of the diversity and disparity in speed between the fighters, B-25, PBYs, and the PT-17. The flight went well and everyone made it safely to the tarmac and secured their aircraft prior to driving back down to the hotel on Waikiki Beach.

That afternoon, on the way back to Honolulu, several of us accepted an offer to go fly the Boeing KC-135 simulator at Hickam Air Force Base. We met at the training building and were given a briefing about the simulator, then went inside. Since I had



A PBY, Smokey's T-6, another T-6, and B-25 pass in formation over the crew of USS Essex spelling out honoring the 75th anniversary of V-J Day. Photo: US Navy

the most experience in this type of training device, I was volunteered to go first. We did several patterns at Honolulu, with landings and some touch-and-gos. One of the guys wanted to fly down the strip in Las Vegas, so that was selected in the computer and, *voila*, we were flying down the strip at 100 feet. It was lots of fun and everyone appreciated the experience.

On August 29, the entire group was going to fly our first flight around the island of Oahu. Because the flight was going to transition the Honolulu class B airspace, the F8F Bearcat, F4F Wildcat, and T-28 were going to make a loop to the west past Barbers Point and Kalaeloa Airport, Waianae, Mākaha, Kaena Point, and Dillingham Airfield while the rest of us would go around Diamond Head, Koko Head, Makapu'u Point, MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Kahuku Point, Haleiwa, then back up the Kaukonahua Road to Wheeler AAF. The B-25 would lead our group, followed by the P-51, TBM Avenger, T-6s, and PT-17.

It was an amazing clear day with only a few clouds obscuring the Pali ridgeline and with just a slight breeze from the trade winds. Our spacing was about half a mile and, unfortunately, we were unable to fly in formation. As we rounded the northeast tip of Oahu at Kahuku Point, we heard the other flight coming around the other way and knew it was going to get busy once we all headed up the highway for landing. As we came up to the saddle in the terrain just to the north of Wheeler AAF, the tower started putting us all in a stacked hold over Mililani cemetery. I was cleared from the hold to land and made my way downwind for run-



Smokey does a low pass for the crew of USS Essex. Photo: US Navy

way 6. Midfield in the downwind, I noticed that we were starting to get bunched up all the way to the runway and, as I turned final, I saw three airplanes ahead of me, so I elected to go around and open up the pattern for the four other T-6s behind me. I went back to the hold and was sequenced to follow the F8F Bearcat for landing. I adjusted my spacing by S-turning on downwind and final. Just as the Bearcat cleared the runway, I touched down and rolled out. I had seen where the Bearcat cleared the runway to exit to the tarmac, so I kept my speed up for the airplanes landing behind me and made the same turnoff.

Just in front of me, the Bearcat unexpectedly did a 720-degree right turn on the taxiway-tarmac intersection. I braked and paused until the Bearcat was stabilized, then cautiously passed him wide on the right to my parking spot. I shut down my aircraft and was finishing up the shutdown checklist and pulling off my helmet when my GIB (guy in back), Dave Richardson, started yelling "John! Stop! John! Stop!" repeatedly as

would probably cause an explosion. I didn't have the time to do much as, one to one-and-a-half seconds later, the Bearcat collided with my T-6 on a forty-five degree angle from the right front in the engine and cowling area. Dave Richardson said I yelled out "Brace for impact!" just before we were hit.

I lowered my head, placed my helmet in front of my face and hoped and prayed for the best. The big propeller repeatedly struck my engine and cowling area, fortunately missing the fuel tank. As the noise finally stopped, my GIB jumped out and ran away to the rear of my airplane. I unbuckled and hopped out on the wing and looked back at the Bearcat. The pilot was still sitting in the cockpit dazed, so I yelled at him to turn off all the switches and fuel and get the hell out, as we were not sure if there would be a subsequent fire or explosion. I ran off the back of the wing and away to the rear and hid out behind the T-28B. We did notice that one of the Bearcat's fourteen-foot-long propeller blades had separated from the hub and was thrown about



Dave Richardson documents the aftermath of a Bearcat taxiing into a T-6. Note the Bearcat's missing propeller blade and bent tip.

he was waving his hands above his head. I turned my head to the left and asked, "What?" and he said "Not you, the Bearcat!" and then I saw the Bearcat taxiing rapidly past us, ten feet from our left wing tip and headed for a fifty gallon fire extinguisher on wheels directly in front of his airplane. A second later, to my amazement, the Bearcat's massive fourteen-foot propeller hit the fire extinguisher. It exploded and was sent flying to the left, passing very closely by the airport manager's position as he was trying to wave the Bearcat to stop.

At that moment, the fire agent swirled into the Bearcat's cockpit and the pilot added power to move away from it. Just then, I noticed him starting to turn into us as the Bearcat spun around to our front right. I yelled to my GIB, "I think he is going to hit us?" I couldn't decide whether to try and get out or stay in place and hunker down. I was still strapped in and was also worried that if he were to hit my right fuel tank, it

twenty-five to thirty feet back over towards the remains of the fire extinguisher.

Someone asked if I was alright, I said yes, and they handed me a bottle of water. I sat down on the tarmac as everyone ran up to us and asked how we were. I got out my phone and called the FAA and NTSB to advise them of what just happened. Later, we were independently escorted to Wheeler AAF Flight Operations to write down our statements. After a short debrief by the airport manager, we were free to leave.

Neither of us were in any shape to drive, so we had another friend get behind the wheel. We decided to go to Teddy's Bigger Burgers in Haliewa for dinner and watch the sunset from there. The drive back to the hotel was very quiet and we were all happy to be safe back in our rooms.

The next morning after breakfast, we had to return to Wheeler AAF to start trying to figure out how to sort out the mess after the FAA and NTSB were done. When

we arrived, we were advised that the scene had been investigated and released. They were in the process of getting tugs to move us from the tarmac to one of the hangars at the west end of the airport. Before being towed, we were able to walk around and see the debris field with the remains of the fire bottle and the broken Bearcat propeller blade and all its springs, sprockets, and ball bearings. We also noticed my airplane had moved five feet to the left from the force of the impact and that my exhaust stack had punched a large hole in the leading edge of the Bearcat's wing. We ended up being placed in the historic Amelia Earhart hangar where her Lockheed 10E was repaired in 1937 during her first around-the-world attempt. We had an informal meeting with the members of the official 75th Anniversary of V-J Day Committee on possible ways to get the airplanes back down to the carrier pier for the voyage back to San Diego and Naval Air Station North Island in just five days. If they were not at the pier in time, they would be left behind and we would have to figure

tors. We had to build a rack for the wings and package up everything else to make sure it didn't get more damaged on the trip to the pier and wherever it was going once the ship docked in San Diego. Three days later, the trucks with the lowboy trailers and a crane showed up in the late afternoon and my airplane was loaded up and driven off to Pearl Harbor.

On September 2, Dave Richardson and I watched the 75th anniversary of V-J Day flyover ceremony that we were supposed to participate in from the rear deck of the USS *Missouri*. The entire event had been reduced to various politicians speaking to very few people in the audience. There were no Pearl Harbor or WWII veterans allowed from the mainland or even the other islands. All the dinners and other forms of celebration had all been cancelled by the Governor of Hawaii.

On September 5, I watched my damaged T-6 be hoisted aboard USS *Essex* for the voyage home to the mainland. The following day, I went to a completely empty and abandoned Honolulu International Airport



Smokey's T-6 suffered a damaged cowling and propeller, among other less visible problems. Sadly, it sat disassembled for transport during the V-J Day events it was supposed to help commemorate. All photos: John Johnson and Dave Richardson

out another, more expensive, way to ship them back to the mainland.

There were all kinds of proposed methods, including using CH-47 or CH-53 helicopters to sling load them to the pier. Once I realized we were dealing with the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the FAA because of the class B airspace, I personally abandoned that path and decided we should begin to pull the wing and empennage so the airplane could be loaded onto a lowboy trailer to go down the highway to the navy base. Normally, I would not be allowed to get involved in the process, but COVID had restricted even the insurance adjuster from coming from Kona, on the big island, to look at the plane due to the fourteen-day inter-island quarantine restriction. Fortunately, several off-duty military personnel, a couple of mechanics from Honolulu, and our group mechanic pulled the ailerons, wired up the flaps, and pulled the wings, horizontal stabilizers, and eleva-

tor for my Alaska Airlines flight from PHNL to KSEA. It was good to be back home, even though it was not with the airplane I left with.

USS *Essex* arrived in San Diego on September 15 and my T-6 was loaded aboard two trucks with lowboy trailers and taken to Chino Airport in California for the insurance adjuster to evaluate. Until then, the engine cowling had not even been removed as we were afraid it would not go back on. The insurance company totaled the airplane a week later. I bought back the salvage to repair it, as most of the damage was firewall forward.

Once I learned the airplane was totaled, I started looking for a replacement. Alex Munro had been flying a 1944 SNJ-5 that his uncle owned and it was for sale. I purchased that airplane in November 2020. I fixed all the damage from the collision and sold the airplane to a couple from Philadelphia, PA in March 2021. 🍀

A TALE OF TWO L-BIRD CHICKS HATCHED ON THE SAME DAY

By David Woodcock

L-4H GRASSHOPPERS 43-30426, S/N 11717, and 43-30430, S/N 11721, were built during the first week of April 1944 at Lockhaven, PA. They were completed on April 6, test flown, accepted by the USAAF, crated, and likely shipped to England on the same vessel.

43-30426 ultimately became famous as *Rosie the Rocketeer*. As part of the D-Day build-up, *Rosie* was assembled in either England or France and assigned to the 4th Armored Division as part of General Patton's Third Army.

43-30430, my *Bear Essentials*, was assembled in England and assigned to the Ninth Air Force. She was flown to France and then transferred to the 30th Infantry Division, Ninth Army, on November 30, 1944. She flew during one of the worst winters of the century and in one of the bloodiest battles of WWII, the Battle of the Bulge, where the 30th ID was pitted against the German 1st SS Panzer Division north of Bastogne near Malmedy, Belgium. She was doing reconnaissance and artillery spotting as weather and conditions allowed.

Unfortunately, in all the research done on 43-30430 we have yet to find a photo, but key elements are seen on the L-4 in the photograph. 44 is the identifier for the 30th ID and J is for the battalion this bird was assigned to. Each

of the twelve battalions was assigned two L-4s. B was picked by the former owner as the battalion for *Bear Essentials*.

The aluminum wing root fairings (eyebrows) on many L-4s were replaced with plexiglass—evident in the photo—for better pilot visibility, especially when spotting and evading German fighters in mid-1944.

L-4 operational losses were well over 50% just due to the conditions that winter. See the July 2020 *Warbird Flyer* for a detailed record of 43-30430. After

the war, 43-30430 was purchased by a former L-4 pilot, shipped to the United States in 1947, and re-registered as J-3C-65 N9217H. The vast majority of these aircraft were surplused to European countries, as they weren't worth shipping home. Not many have survived seventy-six years.

43-30426 was moved to France sometime after D-Day and assigned to Major Charles Carpenter for reconnaissance and artillery spotting in September and October 1944. Being a true warrior, he got approval to mount three bazookas on the wing struts of each wing, which were controlled by a simple electrical panel in the wing root. He managed to kill two German Tiger tanks, four other tanks, and several armored vehicles. He earned the nickname "Bazooka Charlie."



Visible in the photos are the plexiglass eyebrows as well as the standard L-4 air box, different from the air boxes generally seen on J-3 Cubs. Carpenter even added a P-38 mirror above the windshield to watch his six. The 4th Armored Division moved into the Ardennes later in December 1944 with General Patton and the Third Army to support the Battle of the Bulge, but there is no documentation after November 1 about *Rosie*. In 2017, it was discovered that she went to Switzerland after the war and in 1956 was re-registered in Austria, where she towed gliders. She was acquired by the Österreichisches Luftfahrtmuseum at the Graz Airport and was found there by the Collings Foundation, where she was being restored as a static display.

The invasion stripes painted on for the D-Day invasion were mostly painted out within a couple months after D-Day for better camouflage from German fighters. *Rosie's* were completely removed but the museum elected to match the stripes based on the above black and white photo that had them partly painted over. During restoration, the wings still had the original spars and ribs with factory grease pencil markings here and there. A bullet hole was even found in one of the ailerons!



Working with the Port Townsend Aero Museum, my good friend, Dave Miller, and I completed the restoration of 43-30430 following structural problems discovered in the right wing last August, poor fabric work, and areas of corrosion found in stabilizers and elevators. My goal was to complete the restoration started in 2013, where just the fuselage and rudder were done and everything else just repainted. Both wings, ailerons, horizontal control surfaces, and landing gear were rebuilt, repaired, and recovered. An L-4 air box was purchased from a Cub owner in the Czech Republic and WWII air filters were purchased from Fresno Air Parts. The exhaust system was redone to L-4 standards in seam-welded stainless steel by Dawley Aviation in Wisconsin and the aluminum “eyebrows” were replaced with plexiglass formed by a shop on the east coast.

Mike Payne and Kevin Vogel supervised the project, doing a beautiful job on the fabric, with Mike doing the color matching and painting. Mike did the initial test flight on December 4, 2020, to give her his blessing to fly home here in Sequim. All the paint, markings, and stencils on 43-30430 have been researched and are authentic to the year and unit.

My thanks to Joe Scheil, who spent a lot of time with me discussing the history of both our aircraft in Europe for this article; in particular, the history of the 4th Armored Division, its commander Major General John S. Wood, and Major Carpenter’s contributions to the unit. The 4th Armored Division spearheaded General Patton’s Third Army drive across France and General Wood realized the benefit of the L-4 aircraft early in the campaign. They used the L-4s to find the Germans during the armored advance, not so much for artillery spotting. The dug-in anti-tank weapons in place at junctions designed to stop tank columns were critical to find. The army did not want static battle lines to develop into a WWI-style trench warfare which could favor a defender. The armored columns were the spearhead through France, which continued from July to December.

Joe is a warbird researcher and historian, as well as a J-3 Cub owner. He assisted in the restoration of *Rosie* and flies other warbirds, including the B-17 and B-24 as a pilot with the Collings Foundation. He initially searched records, intrigued by stories of 43-30426 and “Bazooka Charlie.” He eventually tracked her down, linking her with the Piper serial number to an aircraft stored in Austria. The Collings Foundation was looking for a combat aircraft to restore that could capture the fight through France and into Germany. What could be better! He emphasized the extreme rarity of these two L-4H aircraft with combat records and how fortunate I am to have our documentation and own this piece of history. 🍀

Left: L-4s during WWII, including Maj Charles “Bazooka Charlie” Carpenter with his L-4, *Rosie the Rocketeer*.

Upper right: David’s 43-30430 in restoration.

Lower right: David’s completed restoration of 43-30430, *Bear Essentials*.

All photos courtesy David Woodcock



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Our full list of events and their status is updated regularly on our calendar at www.cascadewarbirds.org/events. Check it for updates, which are likely.

July

- 3-4 Gig Harbor Wings & Wheels (drive-in)
- 17 Heritage Flight Museum "non-public" Fly Day (Burlington, WA)
- 26- Aug 1 EAA AirVenture (Oshkosh, WI)
- 30 Oregon International Air Show (drive-in) (McMinnville, OR)

August

- 6-8 Abbotsford International Airshow (drive-in?)
- 19-22 NW Formation Flying, LLC Clinic (Bremerton, WA)
- 21 Heritage Flight Museum Fly Day (Burlington, WA)
- 21-22 Arlington Fly-In (limited drive-in)
- 27-28 Airshow of the Cascades (Madras, OR)

September

- 11-12 WAAAM Fly-in (Hood River, OR)
- 15-19 Reno Air Races
- 18 Heritage Flight Museum Fly Day (Burlington, WA)
- 18 Port Angeles Airport Day (potential)

October

- 16 Benton Air Faire (Redding, CA)
- 16 Heritage Flight Museum Fly Day & Earthrise Gallery opening (Burlington, WA)

Bold denotes a "max effort" event for Cascade Warbirds

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CHECK SIX



Lest we forget the original purpose of these aircraft we carefully restore and show, and how their pilots lived. Major Charles "Bazooka Charlie" Carpenter stands with his L-4 in a muddy field next to, presumably, his tent and the crew of a M5 Stuart tank. Machines, both steel and fabric, and the fragile men inside risked their lives to destroy German tanks and protect the infantry. Photo: US Army