



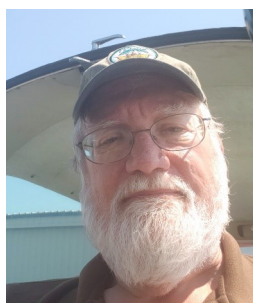
Tom "TP" Jensen takes off in his N3N-3 after Al Banholzer's memorial flyover. Photo: Stan Kasprzyk



## ❖ Cascade Warbirds Squadron Newsletter ❖

### CO's COCKPIT

By Dave "Prancer" Desmon



**I AM WRITING THIS ON** December 17, 2023, 120 years to the day since Orville and Wilbur first committed heavier-than-air flight at Kitty Hawk, NC. Colleen and I are on a cross-country sojourn that will soon see us at that very site, reflecting on our freedom to fly and hoping that we all appreciate that freedom and the blessings and responsibilities that come with it. We have just wrapped up the 30th anniversary year of Cascade Warbirds and celebrated our



Crash's F-100?? Photo: Dave Desmon

annual Christmas party and dinner with dozens of our fellow CWB members—some of whom have been involved since before Cascade Warbirds was founded and some of whom have just joined. The Hilton Garden Inn at Paine Field and the Shawn O'Donnell's restaurant catering team collaborated to provide a superb meal and a great evening. More blessings.

It was my privilege to present our highest award, Volunteer of the Year, to our Operations Officer, Chief Photographer, B-17 Tour Stop Coordinator, Puyallup Expo Coordinator, and head of this year's Nominating Committee, Dan Shoemaker. I think Dan was the only one in the room who was surprised. Congratulations, Dan, and well done! BZ! Thanks for your service.

Speaking of which, January's membership meeting will bring a new slate of officers to your Board of Directors—some new faces, some old. Please take time to thank those folks for standing up and doing the hard work to keep Cascade Warbirds running and serving you. Consider helping them out. At least let them know your desires

Congratulations (and thanks!) to the 2023 Volunteer of the Year, Dan Shoemaker. Photo: John Clark



and visions for CWB's next thirty years.

Our cross-country sojourn took us through Tucumcari, NM, where there was a New Mexico Air National Guard F-100 on outdoor display. It made me wonder if this very bird might have once been flown by our founder, R.D. "Crash" Williams. Blessings of fond memories of one who car-

ried many responsibilities and gave us what we enjoy today. It is now our responsibility to keep it and to grow it.

Our February 10 meeting is currently planned to have a special guest speaker, CDR Willie Driscoll, former TOPGUN instructor and half of the only USN ace crew to emerge from the Vietnam War. Commander Driscoll (RIO) and his pilot Randy "Duke" Cunningham shot down five MiGs in their F-4 Phantom while flying from the USS *Constellation* in 1972. Three of those were during a single mission. Make plans to come hear about that and to talk to CDR Driscoll. Bring your friends!

Until then, I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and many more blessings. ❖



### Memorial Scholarship

Applications open now! Consider making a tax-deductible donation to aviation's future. Thank you for your generosity!

[cascadewarbirds.org/youth](http://cascadewarbirds.org/youth)

## Squadron Commander Emeritus

R.D. "Crash" Williams

### Commanding Officer

Dave "Prancer" Desmon

### Executive Officer

Bob Stoney

### Operations Officer

Dan "FAGIB" Shoemaker

### Adjutant

Fred C. Smyth

### Finance Officer

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### Officer-at-Large

Pete Jackson

### Newsletter Editor

John Haug

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 email or mailing addresses below.

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## WELCOME ABOARD

It's always a pleasure to welcome new folks to our group. We are made stronger as our squadron becomes more varied. In the past several weeks, **Kelly Springer** of Edmonds has joined. He holds a private certificate and owns an L-17B (NAVion). From Bow, WA, comes **Trent Hicks**. He's also a private pilot and, with his father Carl, owns a Varga 2150A Kachina. **Alick Lee-Warner** has joined; he hails from Lake Stevens and is a commercial pilot with forty years of flying experience. From Seattle comes **Spencer Turner**, a student pilot whose father and grandfather both flew for a living. He is also nearly ready to take his A&P exams.

In October, we mentioned **Karyn King's** program to introduce more young ladies to aviation by sponsoring their membership in the squadron. The first are here! **Johnl Milhans** is a student pilot in Kirkland; she aspires to become an airline pilot. **Alaina Weideman** is a student pilot in Bremerton and hopes to become a military aviator. And **Alexandra "Alex" Szrama** obtained her private certificate in August and is currently enrolled at Embry-Riddle. We welcome these young ladies into the world of aviation and thank Karyn for her continued support.

## TIME TO RENEW

One of the better deals in the aviation community is membership in this warbird squadron. Still only US\$20 per year, you gain access to all the wisdom in our accumulated knowledge. So renew now with a check to CWB, 1066 Yates Rd, Oak Harbor, WA 98277. If you prefer electronic payment and/or credit card remittance, contact Fred. Your expiration date is noted on the newsletter envelope after your name—have a look. Don't make us ask you twice.

## GRANT RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED

The squadron's scholarship program is comprised of two parts, the second of which is the \$2,500 Continuing Aviation Education Grant awarded to one of the

current year's scholars. In addition to completing the private pilot ground school course and logging two dual instructional flights, the applicant is asked to submit an essay to the committee regarding their aviation aspirations.

Our 2023 winner is **Lauren Hoyt**, a Bothell High School student due to graduate this June. Concurrent with high school, Lauren is in the Running Start program at Cascadia College. She's a two-sport athlete, riding horse competitively and running cross-country. Lauren has been endorsed to take her FAA Knowledge Exam and plans to earn her private certificate before she heads off to college in the fall.

Lauren comes from an aviation background. Her mother is an Alaska Airlines pilot and her grandfather is, how shall we say, familiar to many in the world of aviation. We wish Lauren the very best as she follows her dream to become a pilot.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

This month kicks off our eighteenth year of granting aviation scholarships to area youth. Through the first seventeen years, we've awarded eighty-three scholarships and these scholars have responded with success stories that have impressed all of us. An extensive list of these scholars and their accomplishments can be found in our April 2022 *Warbird Flyer*, available at [cascadewarbirds.org/publications](http://cascadewarbirds.org/publications).

Our 2024 scholarship application period is now open. The deadline is February 29, 2024. Get the application at [cascadewarbirds.org/youth](http://cascadewarbirds.org/youth).

The details remain the same. Several area teens will have the opportunity to attend private pilot ground school at a partner flight school and book two instructional flights. Those who do so successfully can then compete for a \$2,500 grant to help defray the expense of continued training. If you know someone who may be interested, encourage them to apply.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

On 13 January, you'll be asked to approve your Nominating Committee's



**GREETINGS, Warbirds Enthusiasts!** I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. It was great seeing everybody at the Cascade Warbirds holiday party last month. I had a good time breaking bread, enjoying beverages, and catching up with everyone. Once again, the food was fantastic and the company was even better.

In our last event of the year, on Veterans Day of 2023, several Cascade Warbirds members flew aircraft from the Collins Historical Aircraft Foundation over Husky Stadium in a salute to veterans just before the start of the Washington–Utah football game. Roger Collins flew lead in P-51D Mustang *Lady Jo*, with Charlie Goldbach as number two in AT-28D Nomad *Lumpy*, Scott Urban as number three in T-28C Trojan *Lima Charlie*, and John “Smokey” Johnson in the slot of the diamond formation in Roger’s T-6 Texan. It was a cloudy, windy day, and Smokey had his work cut out for him keeping up and maintaining position with the three faster aircraft, but the flyover looked great and made quite an impression on the crowd.

With the typically less-than-ideal winter weather we have here in the Pacific Northwest, this is the time when many aircraft owners put their aircraft into annual inspection and when many pilots tend to let their proficiency slip a bit due to reduced flying activity. However, I encourage you to maintain proficiency to the maximum extent possible. Although this is the off-season for airshows, there is still an aspect of our mission that continues year-round: memorial and missing-man flyovers. These are important events and mean a great deal to the loved ones gathering to say final good-byes to their veterans. The call can come at any time and I ask that you be as ready as possible to help when that time arrives.

Another upcoming winter event to think about is the Northwest Aviation Conference and Trade Show, taking place at the Washington State Fair Events Center in Puyallup on 24–25 February 2024. As always, we’re looking for members to man the booth for one or more two-hour shifts over the course of the weekend. I’ll be putting out a formal call for volunteers via email soon but, in the meantime, if you’re interested in taking one or more shifts at the booth, please email me at [OpsO@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:OpsO@cascadewarbirds.org).

If you’re a new member, or a longtime member who

is interested in displaying or flying your aircraft at airshows during the upcoming 2024 airshow season, please let me know as soon as possible. We have many experienced airshow veterans in the squadron I’d like to get you in touch with to brief you on what to expect when displaying your aircraft and what the requirements are to fly your aircraft in aerial demonstrations. As airshow flying is extremely trust-intensive and often right on the razor’s edge of the FARs (with the FAA watching you, no less), you’ll also want to get some training and flying done with the regularly performing members of the squadron prior to your first show.

Of course, static displays and demonstration flying are not the only airshow activities requiring CWB member participation. The squadron is also in need of marshallers to maintain the safety and security of aircraft during ground operations. It’s not an easy job. You have to keep your eyes constantly open and will have to do some physical labor (mainly pushing airplanes), but there is great camaraderie among the marshallers and, to be honest, there are few things as exhilarating as standing among ten or more big piston engines running as they wait for you to send them off to their performance. If you’re interested in joining the marshalling team, please contact Chief Marshaller Paul Youman at [marshalling@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:marshalling@cascadewarbirds.org).

Finally, in my other role as Cascade Warbirds’ Chief Photographer, I’d like to put out a call for squadron photographers. It’s really difficult for one person to cover all the worthy shots at an airshow or other aviation event such as the formation clinic. I’d love to have more dedicated photographers who can take both ground-to-air and air-to-air photos of our squadron members’ aircraft. If you’d like to push your photography skills to the limit, all while learning new skills and perfecting your art, please contact me at [OpsO@cascadewarbirds.org](mailto:OpsO@cascadewarbirds.org). In the meantime, as with any other skill, keep practicing over the winter months. Going out to a nearby airport and just taking photos at different shutter speeds of aircraft taking off and landing will do wonders for training a steady hand and good panning technique.

As always, fly safe, exercise good decision-making, and keep your head on a swivel out there. I’ll see you at the next meeting! ✈

slate of officers and board members, sent to you last month. Our speaker is Tim Nelson, author of *Jet City Rewind*, a history of aviation in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest.

CDR Willie Driscoll (USN, Ret.) will be with us on 10 February to talk about his time as a RIO in an F-4 Phantom II in Vietnam. He was part of the single Navy fighter team to become aces during the war.

## AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE

**Joshua Weinstein** is looking for a new home for his 1947 SeaBee. See the details at [cascadewarbirds.org/for-sale](http://cascadewarbirds.org/for-sale). ✈

Photo: Joshua Weinstein



## SCHOLAR UPDATES

By Kerry Edwards

**JOE CAVANAUGH FROM PUYALLUP** has become the latest star in the galaxy that is the Cascade Warbirds “Class of 2018.” This amazing group has produced another professional pilot. The largest group of winners of Cascade Warbirds aviation scholarships has proven to be the most successful. In 2018, the squadron awarded twelve scholarships and, when the latest student checked in this month, the total soared to six who have earned their private pilot certificate, four of whom have also become commercial pilots. Others are still in training with well-deserved high hopes.

Mackenzie Rennhack, a Mill Creek senior, earned her private pilot certificate shortly after high school graduation. She earned a flight instructor certificate while in college, graduated with her commercial pilot certificate, and went to work at the country’s largest contract airline.

London Holmes of Renton was a sophomore when she won her ground school scholarship. With assistance from the LeRoy W. Homer, Jr. Foundation, she earned her private pilot certificate, then went on to the US Air Force Academy as part of the class of 2025.

Devin Graves from Des Moines earned his private in 2020 and is at the University of North Dakota, in their aviation program. Last year, he finished instrument and commercial training and was working on a multiengine rating.

Jeffrey Spaeth from Seattle earned his commercial pilot and remote pilot certificates in 2021 while a student at the University of North Dakota, pursuing Bachelor of Science degrees in Commercial Aviation and Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operation. He holds an instrument pilot rating and a flight instructor certificate with instrument rating.

Michael Zendejas of Auburn earned his private in 2019 and his commercial with single-engine, multiengine, and instrument ratings in 2021. He reports, “I graduated with a BS from Purdue and my commission as an Army officer.”

Logan Delapp pursued an alternate path, as he entered the US Air Force Academy in 2018, graduated in 2022, and began helicopter training.

Read about Joe Cavanaugh in the next article. ✪

Joe after earning his private. Photos courtesy Joe Cavanaugh



## KENT JOHNSON MEMORIAL

By Stan "Sundance" Kasprzyk

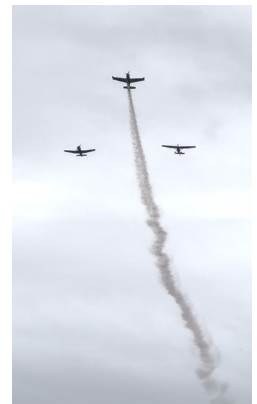
**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!** Thank you all for the time, effort, and flying skills you applied to pull off two outstanding flybys—in deteriorating weather—to honor Kent Johnson on November 1 at the Tahoma National Cemetery!

The Stearman/N3N flight was ready and called in early, providing a stirring pass with Molly and Keith Littlefield in the lead in their Stearman, George Clifton in his Stearman as #2 with smoke on, Tom “TP” Jensen

as #3 in his N3N, and Frank Hoogkamer in the #4 slot in his Stearman.

The Cascade Warbirds flight was down to three aircraft after a mechanical issue grounded the fourth and was slightly delayed by Paine Field traffic, so we arrived abeam Auburn just as the Stearman flight was leaving Lake Sawyer inbound. We followed the smoke trail and, three minutes after the Stearman flight, we flew the missing man flyby with Dave “Prancer” Desmon flying as lead in his Navion and pulling west, Bob Stoney and Bob Hill as #2 in Stoney’s Birddog, and Justin Drafts and Sundance as #3 in Justin’s Nanchang.

My wife Mary was at Tahoma and said that the second “farewell” pass by the Navion brought the attendees to tears and she heard a number of folks saying “Goodbye, Kent” and waving as it headed away. Well done! ✪



Photos: Mary and Stan Kasprzyk



## SCHOLAR SUCCESS

By Joe Cavanaugh

**HELLO! MY NAME IS JOE CAVANAUGH**, and I am a recipient of the 2018 Youth Flight Training Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship that I received from Cascade Warbirds is the best thing that has ever happened to me. I wanted to write the organization a letter to thank you for the opportunity and to give you an update on what I have accomplished during the last five years.

At that time in my life, I was a seventeen-year-old junior in high school. My senior year was coming up, and I was having a hard time deciding what to do after high school. I was looking for options until I became fascinated with the airplanes flying around the local airport. This inspired me to apply for the 2018 Youth Flight Training Memorial Scholarship. The decision was the most pivotal moment in my career in aviation.

Upon receiving the scholarship, I was able to attend the Galvin Flying ground school and get some introductory training flights for my private. At the time, I

thought planes were cool, but I never thought to take it seriously enough to make it into a career. This all changed after going to ground school at Galvin. I was able to get my feet

wet in aviation, and it motivated me more than ever. As soon as I took my discovery flight with the scholarship, I was hooked.

With the experience and knowledge that I gained from the scholarship and Galvin, I was able to get into the Central Washington University flight program, pursuing a four-year degree in professional piloting. At CWU, I was able to learn everything I needed to know about aviation and start a rewarding flying career. It was a long four years, but I would do it all over again if I could. I was able to get my private, instrument rating, and commercial alongside my B.S. in Professional Piloting. I would have never gone to college if it weren't for the scholarship setting me on the right path.

I graduated from Central in 2023. After college, I wanted to give back to the aviation world and become a certified flight instructor.

In September of this year, I went to CFI school in Bellefontaine, Ohio. It was hard work, with a lot of challenges, but I finally passed a check ride and got my certified flight instructor certificate. I have always been mentored in the aviation world, and now it is my time to teach the next generation of pilots.

This leads me to today. I have come so far on a long, rewarding journey in aviation. I was always asked in high school, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" Now I have my answer. I spent the last five years in the sky. I am currently seeking a job as a flight instructor.

I was able to do all this because I won the Cascade Warbirds scholarship five years ago, and I cannot thank you enough. Thank you for the opportunity you have provided. The scholarship was the spark that started my lifelong career and passion in aviation.

Thank you, Cascade Warbirds, and keep the blue side up. ✪

Joe after earning his CFI certificate.



## L-3 80TH BIRTHDAY

By Dan Barry

**IN EARLY DECEMBER**, longtime squadron member Dan Barry provided a birthday cake for Apex Airport (8W5) attendees at their weekly Saturday morning coffee to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the manufacture date of his L-3C. The observation aircraft was built for the US Army by the Aeronautical Corporation of America (Aeronca) and was originally designated an O-58B. However, the Army soon decided they wanted to call them liaison aircraft and the designation was changed to L-3C. His aircraft was only operated in the US and was eventually sold as surplus out of Olympia in January 1945 for \$550.

At that time, it was assigned its current tail number of N49203. Dan purchased 203 in April 1990 and flew it for a couple of years. Due to some questionable

repairs including being painted with automobile paint which was flaking off the fabric, he took it apart in 1993 and, with considerable help, returned it to service eighteen months later. The aircraft has made numerous appearances with the Cascade Warbirds and Dan tries to fly it at least a couple of times a week. ✪



Photo courtesy Joyce Barry

**THIS IS THE FIRST ARTICLE** in a series that will illustrate popular histories of aerial warfare which are considered “true” even with recent research that reveals an expanded understanding of the events. Each story will state a topic with a popular history item and why we may think of it as truthful. This will be followed by what is now known about the history as updated by researchers and historians, along with a fun fact about the topic. Spoiler alert: Hollywood movies and TV have done a lot to shape people's view of history.

## TORPEDO ATTACKS ON THE JAPANESE CARRIER FLEET AT THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

What you may know: The obsolete Douglas TBD Devastator was the only US aircraft type to conduct aerial torpedo attacks on Japanese ships during the Battle of Midway.

What is so: Three other types of aircraft attacked the Japanese fleet with torpedoes, including one type from the US Army Air Corps. A force of four US Navy PBVs launched torpedoes during the night of June 3–4 after discovering the Japanese 2nd Fleet main invasion force west of Midway. The fleet oiler *Akebono Maru* was hit and damaged by one of the torpedoes in the only successful US attack with this weapon during the battle. The US Army Air Corps used the B-26 Marauder for the first time in combat with torpedo attacks on the Japanese carrier fleet. Two of the four B-26s survived and returned to base at Midway Island. The US Navy also used the new TBF Avenger during its initial combat deployment, which staged a daring but unsuccessful torpedo attack. Only one of six Avengers from VT-8 returned to the launch point of Midway. (Source: *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway* by Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully.)

Why the impression? Much of what we learned about the Battle of Midway originated from the 1976 movie *Midway*, which focused only on the TBD Devastator torpedo attacks.

Fun fact: In the first instance of miraculous timing for the American forces during the battle, both the B-26s and TBFs found and attacked the Japanese carriers simultaneously, despite no prior coordination.

## SPEAKING OF THE B-26 MARAUDER

What you may know: The Martin B-26 Marauder was the most dangerous aircraft flown by US forces during WWII due to its high weight, high landing

speed, and short wings.

What is so: The B-26 was the safest USAAF bomber aircraft to fly in combat, with a loss rate of 0.5% per

mission. This made it more than two-and-a-half times safer to fly than the B-17 or B-24, per Jeff Ethell's *Aircraft of World War II*. The initial losses in training resulted from both flight and maintenance crews being unfamiliar with this complex and high-performance aircraft. In addition, the alternate aromatic fuel was found to damage the carburetor diaphragms, which led to significant or complete loss of engine power in flight.

Why the impression? The term “One a day in Tampa Bay” was a common and often repeated phrase to describe the results from difficulties experienced with flying the Marauder. This was a catchy rhyme but, according to J.K. Havener's *The Martin B-26 Marauder*, the rate was closer to one loss per week in the entire training command. Still, this loss rate was too high, and it took the efforts of none other than Brigadier General Jimmy Doolittle to investigate and direct action to resolve the issues. The aircraft had become a target of the Truman Committee, which was bent on cancelling the program. In a tactic familiar nowadays, the committee went to the press with negative stories to bolster their side of the argument. Doolittle's efforts were successful and resulted in a minor lengthening of the wings, a wing incidence change, and vastly improved training for aircrews and mechanics. The B-26 survived and went on to be one of the most successful bombers in the USAAF.

Fun Facts: The B-26 was the first US bomber with a powered gun turret, four-bladed props, all-Plexiglas nose, and self-sealing fuel tanks; the first Allied bomber in the ETO with single aircraft that reached both 100 and 200 mission milestones; and, finally, the last US Army bomber to carry torpedoes in combat. (See a B-26 torpedo training video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SG4207M2Kes>.)

Stay tuned for the next installment with the history you may or may not know about the Ploesti and Doolittle raids. Future topics will include more on the Battle of Midway, the F4U Corsair, the Brewster Buffalo, and the Me 262. Do you know of a popular history item which we know that just isn't so? Send an email with the topic to [monstrok@hotmail.com](mailto:monstrok@hotmail.com). ☺



VT-8's only surviving Avenger. Photo: US Navy, [history.navy.mil](http://history.navy.mil) (search “NH 102559” or “H-072-1”)



Photo: US Air Force



## IN-FLIGHT REFUELING USN CARRIER AIRCRAFT IN THE LATE 1950s

By Bob Jones

**IN-FLIGHT REFUELING OF THE FJ-4B** airplane was briefly mentioned at our Veterans Day meeting and I thought some history on the subject might be appealing to members.

It was an interesting time in US naval aviation. Many of the squadron commanders were WWII pilots and some Korean War F-4U, AD (A-1 Skyraider), and F9F-4 pilots were in the jet squadrons. Jet fighters were quite new to the fleet. When operating in FAA controlled airspace, our call sign started with "Navy Jet." There were no formal Replacement Air Groups to check out new pilots and no simulators—just read the flight manual and fly the plane. Accidents were common.

In the late 1950s, the USN did not have a practical in-flight refueling program for carrier-based aircraft. North American Aviation had developed the AJ Savage to carry a nuclear weapon. However, the AJ was too large for practical operation on carriers smaller than the *Midway* class. Some were converted to tankers. The AJ Savage was powered by two R-2800 engines and one jet engine in the tail. My NAS Miramar-based squadron, VA-146, qualified all pilots in in-flight refueling from the AJ Savage in the fall of 1958.

As the refueling probe was on the left wing, out of your normal field of vision, aligning with the refueling basket, which extended from the left wing of the buddy tanker, was not easy without a lot of practice. The recommended procedure was to set seventy mils on the gunsight and align the reticle on a painted black strip on the right wing of the tanker, then move in until the probe entered the basket to start fuel flow. Most pilots simply raised their seat to the full up position. By leaning against the canopy, you could see the probe, and by using the rudder, skid left and right until alignment was achieved. Then increase engine power to plug in. If you pushed against the outer perimeter of the basket, the hose would slacken, the basket would slip off the probe, and it could whip around and possibly hit the airplane. One of our pilots had this happen. The canopy was hit, shattered, and departed, leaving him in a "convertible" with no canopy around him. Fortunately, this was only a few miles from San Diego and he returned to NAS Miramar.

In January 1959, we deployed to the western Pacific / South China Sea on USS *Ranger* and could have made good use of in-flight refueling, as some of our tar-

gets were quite far inland. A buddy tanker package consisting of two underwing pods was perfected and we received those for our 1960 USS *Oriskany* deployment. The package weighed 1,250 pounds empty. The max fuel for landing on the carrier was, you guessed it, 1,250 pounds! What to do? The solution was to land 1,250 pounds overweight! That amount of fuel would allow four passes at the deck in VFR weather, if the landing pattern was not crowded. It was decided that the buddy tankers would be recovered last so that they had the pattern and deck to themselves. Recovering the overweight tanker aboard required careful technique. With probably no divert fields available, each squadron assigned experienced pilots who had consistently demonstrated the ability to get aboard on their first attempt to fly the tankers. The tanker pilots also had their assigned targets, and tanker duty was rotated depending on where we were located and who had the strike-ready airplane assignment. The ready airplanes were expected to launch in minutes if the war order came.

There was no doubt the plane was heavy and it handled normally but the landings were...firm. One day, I was a bit high at the ramp. There was, and probably still is, a technique to lose twelve feet or so of altitude called "tweak it and sweeten it," which is to move the stick forward slightly and immediately pull it back to a normal position to correct the slight sink rate you created. I tried that *one time* and discovered that at 1,250 pounds overweight there is no stopping the increased sink rate in time and the plane landed hard. Maintenance checked for any damage but there was none. Over time, the axles of the tankers developed a bend. This was ok until the tire almost hit the strut, then the axle assembly would be changed out.

With the buddy tanker system, the tanker and the strike airplane would be catapulted at the same time and climb to altitude. When the receiver had burned down enough, it refueled and the tanker returned to the carrier while the bomber continued to its target.

ADM Jerry Miller wrote an excellent book, *Nuclear Weapons and Aircraft Carriers*, that covers this time period that I think you would find interesting reading.

A lot of memories flood in as I write this. It was a great and intense time in my life. I am glad I had the opportunity to experience these adventures! ☼

The refueling probe is difficult for the pilot to see.



"I was trying to fly a loose formation and take photos at the same time—not easy or smart!" Photos: Bob Jones

**IT IS ON BUMPER STICKERS** and T-shirts everywhere: Life Happens. Sometimes we chuckle, because we know there's truth to it. Currently, that truth is impacting several of the folks involved with this restoration. As a result, there is not that much to report on O-2A serial number 69-7642. I often find myself wanting to get very upset about this lack of progress. Then I stand back to see what is happening and place trust back in those who are involved.

I have mentioned in previous reports how these individuals have the right passion, background, and expertise to do this right. For most of them, the restoration is a side hustle or hobby project for love of the O-2. Outside of this project, each person on the team has a life, and life happens. One good example is the lead mechanic getting a new assignment which increased his travel and reduced his spare time for the Skymaster. This fellow is emotionally committed to the project and is the right man for the job. I am happy for him, and trust his commitment to this task, waiting for his new routine to settle down.

Another example is a specialist vendor who is behind schedule because they have become the primary care person for a friend with cancer. You can't go in guns-a-blazin' saying, "Skip your friend's oncology appointment and get to work! PS: Happy holidays." This vendor has a great reputation for quality and I don't want to pull the plug to go elsewhere. Life happens. It has become more than a bumper sticker for this project. It is the motto I need to repeat as I back away from the ledge of impatience.

The current roadblock the aircraft faces is painting the remaining parts. The left wing and the tail booms are still awaiting their time in the booth. The paint shop has done a fabulous job on the first half of the plane and those parts have been returned and assem-

The control surfaces and flaps in the paint booth.



The state of the aircraft last month, sent by Jay's contact made in Reno.  
Photos courtesy Jay Borella

bled. The right wing is mounted, plumbed, rigged, and wired. The engines are on and the electronics are in. We need the other wing and tail section to advance to final rigging and engine runs. It sounds like we are quite close. Then life happens. The gentleman with the paint shop acquired a new business. He is now the proud owner of the Bellanca Aircraft brand. He has a passion for classic aircraft and I respect the work he does. The wings and booms are prepped and at his shop. We simply need to wait for his schedule to open up. It is also the holiday season. We are so close, yet so far.

Finally, some good news. The control surfaces, the flaps, and the vertical fins have been painted and delivered to the assembly hangar. The Electronic Reticle and Armament Control Panel have been added to the cockpit. The control yokes are being replaced with new old stock. The remanufactured interior panels are due this week. All of the remaining interior parts are on a pallet, standing by for installation. A new ELT was procured, which was a concession on authenticity. There simply weren't any original devices serviceable or in compliance with the 406 MHz recommendation. I looked at the military replacement models but, while they look the same as the old, they are beyond my price point and have a six-to-eight-month backlog for manufacture. For now, we will install an Artex 345 in the same location. The top windows have been replaced, which was a manpower heavy job. The O-2's roof is mostly Plexiglas, allowing better visibility for the FAC. These two windows are held in by a truckload of rivets and are notorious for leaking. All of those rivets were drilled out, new Plexiglas and sealant installed, and the rivets replaced with screws and locknuts. It was a two-man job the whole



way around both windows. It will be significantly easier to treat any leaks that may develop in the future.

More good news... The aircraft registration is currently floating through the FAA system. The original registration—when it was flown from the boneyard in Tucson—expired while it sat in storage. I am reactivating that N-number because the information for this exact aircraft resides in the FAA database. The paperwork trail to make this happen is confusing to me, but the packet has been walking the halls of the FAA for one month, so far. I am keeping my fingers crossed that it was filed correctly. Without a registration on the books, I cannot apply for the airworthiness inspection. The FAA is aware of our project and has visited the hangar. They, too, are anxious to see the final assembly, weight and balance, and engine runs. Developing a relationship with them, ahead of the physical paperwork, should prove fruitful. It certainly helps that their regional office is three hangars down from the project.

Even more good news came in an unexpected photo via email. While I was at the Reno Air Races this year with CWB, I met the owner of a 1968 O-2A on static display. We talked about airplanes and exchanged information. My son was excited to see a functional O-2 in person and to try out the left seat. This owner happened to stop by the shop in Oklahoma and snap a photo of the project last month, sent with a brief update. It is nice to have contacts in the community who are equally interested in seeing this plane's progress.

Once again, I will close by saying I hope to have pictures of the final assembly in our next newsletter. The right folks are on the job. The restoration will be great, when we get there. But for right now, life happens. Thanks for reading. Stay safe. ✪



The Electronic Reticle and Armament Control Panel were added to the cockpit. The brown paper covers the faceplates of recently installed radios, to prevent damage.



The top windows after replacement. Note the many rivets and screws involved.

**Left:** The aft bulkhead panel as it came out of 69-7642. Note the paint overspray where the USAF worked around the radio rack.

**Right:** The panel as remanufactured by North Country Aircraft Interiors at KAWO. Custom seams allow it to fit around radio rack brackets.





**THE GREAT AIR RACE** is a new book by journalist John Lancaster about a long-forgotten, but seminal, event in aviation history.

Less than one year after the end of the First World War, tireless air power promoter Brigadier General Billy Mitchell came up with a plan to convince Congress and the American public of the viability and safety of long-distance air travel, the need for an independent Air Force, and a transcontinental air mail system. Mitchell's plan? A transcontinental air race or, as they put it, "Airplane Reliability and Endurance Test" between San Francisco and New York. In open-cockpit fabric biplanes. Over every mountain range in America. In October. With flights starting both from the Presidio in San Francisco racing eastbound and from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, NY, racing westbound, Mitchell was faced with the conundrum of how to get the pilots and aircraft back to their starting points and also to account for the advantage of the prevailing westerly winds to the eastbound racers. His answer? A *round-trip* race or "Reliability Test." When racers got to the opposite coast, they would turn around, and race *back* to where they started from. In open cockpit biplanes. In October.

The race was 5,400 miles, round trip. Sixty-three airplanes started the race, nearly all war surplus. They included DH-4s, single seat S.E.5s and Fokker D.VIIs, an Ansaldo SVA, and a four-seat Martin MB-1 bomber.

Another problem Mitchell faced was the lack of airfields along the route. Not to be dissuaded, he cajoled cities and towns along the route to improve and make available landing fields—most just that, fields—in twenty-two locations along the route. Promoting the leg up it would give their towns in obtaining air mail stops and attracting air travelers, the fields were quickly prepared in the *three weeks* between the announcement of

the contest and its start on Oct 8, 1919. Each of those "control stops" was supplied with an Air Service Officer, several enlisted men, 2,000 gallons of gasoline, 300 gallons of motor oil, 300 gallons of castor oil, tool kits, fire extinguishers, fuel cans, water cans, 100 yards of rope, a blow torch, a wind cone, a medical kit, 50 pounds of limestone to mark the fields, and spares including spark plugs, wheels, tail skids, ailerons, hose connectors, propellers, linen, and dope.

In this exquisitely researched and documented and engagingly written book, Lancaster takes us right into the cockpits of the intrepid "birdmen" as they battle mountains, snowstorms, fog, mechanical failures, and sheer exhaustion. Some famous names appear—"Hap" Arnold and Carl "Tooney" Spaatz, who went on to lead the USAAC in WWII; Alexander Pearson, namesake of Pearson Field in Vancouver, WA; Billy Mitchell; and others, once famous, whose names are now shrouded in the mists of time.

One pilot, Brailey Gish, had his DH-4 catch fire and burn in the air. After pancaking it into a ravine in upstate New York, he returned to Roosevelt Field by train, procured another airplane, and once again set out westward—where he damaged it so severely upon landing at the Presidio in San Francisco that the plane was totaled. Undeterred, he talked another pilot, who had just completed the westward journey and had no desire to repeat the trip, out of his airplane and Gish completed the race back to New York in his third airplane.

One pilot flew with his mechanic and his Belgian Shepherd dog Trixie in the rear cockpit.

DH-4 mechanics routinely hopped out of their rear cockpits and sat on the fuselage back by the tail *during* the landing roll-out, to prevent nose-overs.

One pilot had his 400 hp Liberty engine break the crankshaft in flight over Nebraska while he was in the lead. Dead-sticking to a safe landing in a corn field, he heard of another contestant having crashed nearby. Appropriating a truck, he salvaged the engine from the crashed plane, and he and his mechanic transplanted it into their own overnight, using a block and tackle and a tree in the field as an engine hoist. He finished the race—rather well, in fact!



## The Great Air Race

Author: John Lancaster

Hardcover, 368 pages

Liveright Publishing



Pilot Belvin Maynard (bottom), mechanic William Kline, and Trixie won the Great Air Race. Photo: Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ggbain.29538/>



## T-28 RESTORATION UPDATE

By Jack LaBounty

*[See Jack's previous updates in the April 2021, October 2020, and July 2020 issues.—Ed.]*

**WE STOOD THE PANEL UP** to make it easier to rivet. In the fuel cell area, there are aluminum liner panels that go into the framework before installing the skin panels. I inflicted many bruises on my arms trying to reach around and through the liner panels to buck the top skin rivets. We have pretty much finished the top skin panel on the left wing outer panel.

I wish I had a photo from just last Friday showing the mostly completed top skin with a few Clecos left. Each stringer row has at least one hundred rivets. It is

just one rivet at a time. We will start on the leading edge next week. It has been too cold to work in the hangar so far this week. 🌟

One rivet (of many) at a time. Photo: Jack LaBounty



John Clark and Bob Hill model holiday spirit.

Fifty members turned out for a great annual party and dinner. Even Santa flew in!

Flying his P-51D Mustang, Roger Collins leads his two T-28s and T-6 in a Veterans Day flyover of UW's Husky Stadium.

Two dozen members enjoyed a sunny CWB 30th anniversary celebration at Harvey Field.

Photos: John Haug, John Clark, Dan Shoemaker



Twenty-nine of the sixty-three airplanes that started the race completed their first transcontinental crossing. Only eight completed the round trip. The fastest of those competitors completed the entire round-trip journey in just over forty-eight hours flying time, in fewer than seven days elapsed time. The longest took twenty-six days. There were seven fatalities during the race and two more as pilots traveled to the starting point.

The long-term political and public sentiment impacts of the "Reliability and Endurance Test" were questionable but, eventually, Billy Mitchell was proven right. Air mail service and transcontinental air travel did come to pass, mostly along the route laid out in 1919, though not right away. The USAF did become an independent service, and air power now dominates the battlefield.

Twenty-three years after the "Great Air Race," an-

other staunch promoter of aviation, Lt Col Jimmy Doolittle, took off to strike the first blow on Tokyo in bombers named for the recently deceased Billy Mitchell. This time was in full cooperation and teamwork with the US Navy, rather than as its competitor, as Mitchell had been. Doolittle then took command of the US 8th Air Force, under Generals "Tooey" Spaatz, and "Hap" Arnold, who had been participants in the 1919 race.

Lancaster's telling of this story is riveting, entertaining, colorful, and informative—reminiscent of another once-unknown writer with great researching and storytelling skills, Tom Clancy. Lancaster must be a great salesman as well. He talked his wife into letting him buy his own airplane so he could fly the route of the 1919 air race one hundred years later as "research" for the book.

All in all, a highly recommended read! 🌟

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## CHECK SIX



At Lalaghat, India, a TG-5 light glider of the 1st Air Commando Force is backed into a hangar made of bamboo.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### January

- 13 Member meeting, 10 AM  
Museum of Flight  
(Seattle, WA)

### February

- 10 Member meeting, 10 AM  
Museum of Flight  
(Seattle, WA)

### March

- 9 Member meeting, 10 AM  
Museum of Flight  
(Seattle, WA)

See [cascadewarbirds.org/events](http://cascadewarbirds.org/events) for details or contact the Ops Officer.

Aeronca attached a new front fuselage to the body of an O-58, later redesignated L-3, to create the TG-5 training glider. These TG-5s were based at Lalaghat, India, with the 1st Air Commando Group, which pioneered special air operations.

Photo: US Air Force / National Archives,  
<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/204963159>