



# THE FLYER

Commemorative Air Force  
B-29 / B-24 Squadron

# Happy Holidays



*Photo by Crew Chief Rick*

From our Squadron to your Family

December 2014



COMMEMORATIVE  
AIR FORCE

*B-29/B-24 Squadron  
Officer & Staff Listing*

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*Pictures have mysteriously surfaced of an unknown pilot and FE in the cockpit of Diamond Lil. Are we sure Diamond Lil was in the hangar last Christmas? Was the rumor of a broken sleigh and last minute rental of Diamond Lil true?*

Photo Album:  
2014 in Pictures



# CAF AirPower History Tour

National Air Tour of Historic World War II Aircraft



**2015 Tour TBA**

**Keep checking the website**

**[www.airpowertour.org](http://www.airpowertour.org)**

**and the 2015 January issue of The Flyer.**

# Squadron Report

As I write this, the movie UNBROKEN is due to open in two days. Yesterday, *Lil* participated in a press event in connection with the movie opening. We received really strong press coverage and among our guests was our new member, Karnig Thomasian, who himself was a WWII POW of the Japanese. This is what we do. TV stations and the printed press picked up on the story. We even had one freelance reporter who flew in all the way from New York for the event. *Lil* was there in all her glory. I am very pleased to see her get her due.



*FIFI* is in the middle of winter maintenance right now. Rick reports we are on schedule. Separately, David Oliver and his crew are working feverishly on our B-29 Ground School. Please note it is scheduled for the first full weekend in February. Again, David and crew are planning a good trip to the west coast. I know we are focused on end-of-year stuff, but 2015 is right around the corner and so are a lot of Squadron activities. If you have not done so, please sign up for B-29 Ground School and think about your plans for next year to see if you can join us on tour. While you are at it, don't forget your membership renewals which occur at year end.

Finally, I want to take a moment to wish everyone a happy holiday season. Here's to 2015, may it be a happy healthy and safe-flying year.

Neils Agather  
Squadron Leader



*Squadron Flight Ops Officer, David Oliver, briefs Karnig and the press prior to the media flight*

Photos by Raymond Jeffcoat



*Karnig Thomasian being interviewed*



*Steve Brown and Karnig Thomasian with Diamond Lil in the distance*

# Executive Officer Report

On Christmas day the movie UNBROKEN comes out. If you've read the book, I'm sure you will agree it's an epic story and one that should be told. Some critics complain that the torture of American prisoners shouldn't be told because it shows the Japanese in a harsh light. Sometimes history is that way and it shouldn't be altered for political correctness.



Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks produced SAVING PRIVATE RYAN and BAND OF BROTHERS. This spring they are set to release a ten-part mini-series called MASTERS OF THE AIR. It's the story of the Eighth Air Force and the men who took the war to Germany as told by the veterans themselves. With a budget of seven times that of SAVING PRIVATE RYAN and given the experience of Hanks and Spielberg, this should be an outstanding series.

From our house to yours, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tom Travis  
Executive Officer



*Debbie Travis King and Tom Travis  
Photo by Konley Kelley*



*Tom Travis and Debbie Travis King at the controls of B-29  
Photo by Patrick Herlihy*

# Flight Operations Report

It's always good news to see any of our airplanes in the news but when our B-24 becomes the story of the Christmas holiday, I think we have succeeded. After a few conference calls with our marketing team and Steve Brown helping push to make this happen, I was privileged to fly the media in the B-24 on Monday. One of our guest riders was one of our very own CAF Colonels Mr. Karnig Thomasian. Karnig is an absolute joy to be around and his infectious laughter and spirit is contagious. What a great man considering how much he has given for our country and how he endured so much as a POW. I think as a Squadron we should be honored to have him as a member.



B-29 Ground School is moving forward with plans to roll out a great weekend of training for both our AirPower History Tour along with all the technical training for flight crew positions. I encourage everyone to attend. The weekend will be a Saturday-Sunday classroom and hands-on training located at Meacham Airport in Fort Worth, TX. If all goes well we should be completed by noon on Sunday. Plan your travel and watch for the Squadron emails announcing more information as it gets closer. Be sure to RSVP as this year we are charging \$29 which helps offset squadron costs.

ICAS this year was another success as Allen Benzing, Jon Oliver, and myself all represented the Squadron. As always a big part of ICAS is shaking hands and developing strategic relationship both inside and outside the CAF. This year we had a great time as many other CAF wings approached us wanting to be a part of our successful AirPower Tour. We are excited to be a Squadron which is in the forefront of leading other CAF units to success. We think we made significant progress towards future tour dates and locations.

Among some of the strategic locations for next year, we are still planning to head Northeast. We think there is a lot of good territory in the Northeast that *FIFI* has yet to visit. Future tour stops include Farmingdale, NY, Reading, PA and Washington, DC. The spring tour dates for the B-29 should be announced shortly after the New Year and we are excited to be headed to the Southwest for another Southern California Tour. We will most definitely partner with the CAF AZ Airbase and CAF Southern California. Watch the website and contact John Flynn if you are interested in touring.

Merry Christmas to Everyone,

David Oliver  
Flight Operations Officer



*David conducting a pre-flight briefing.*

*Photo by Angie Whitney*

# Training & Safety Report

Thanks to all who helped make 2014 another successful and safe year for our Squadron.

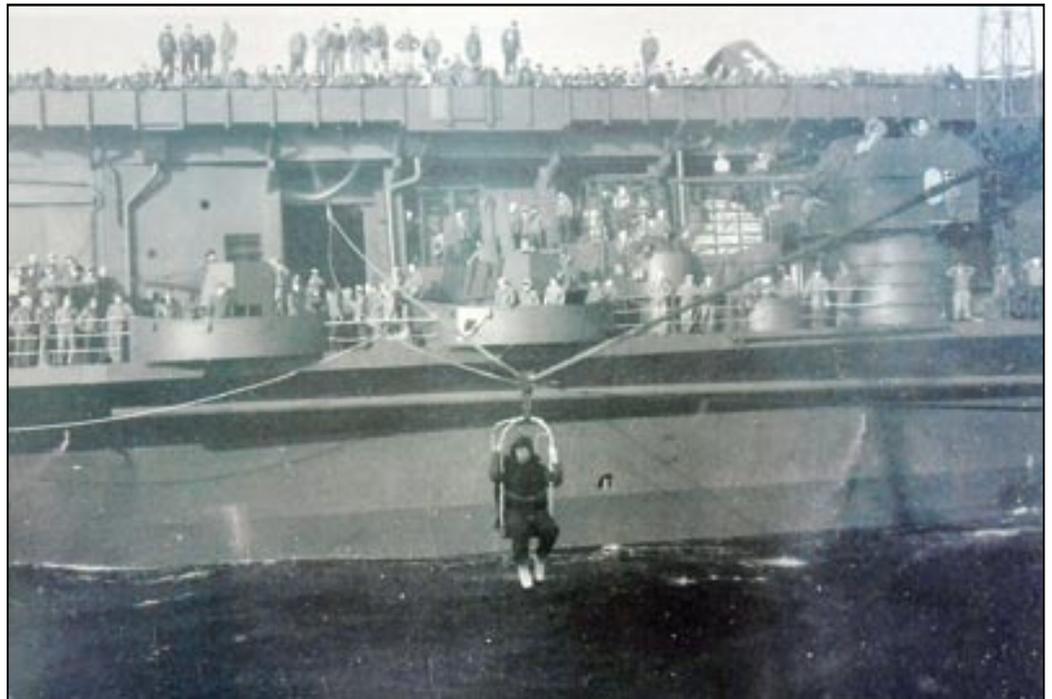
Continue to keep safety in mind as we participate in the upcoming holiday festivities with our families and also as we work on our aircraft in preparation for the 2015 tour season. There is a significant amount of work to do on both planes and a relatively short time to do it.

Rick needs all the help at the hangar that he can get. The 2015 tour season will be here before you realize it.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

**REMEMBER, IF THE JOB IS DONE RIGHT, IT IS SAFE!**

John Flynn  
Safety Officer



*After reading about B-24 ice cream in the November issue, John e-mailed me about destroyer crews being rewarded with ice cream from a carrier for rescuing and returning downed Navy pilots. I read the going rate was about 15 gallons of ice cream for a pilot.*

*The Editor*

# Financial Report

A big part of the Finance Officer's job is done by a great group of volunteers.

## Assistant Finance Officer

Cindy Kirby is our Assistant Finance Officer. Most of you may know her, but do not know of all the work she does. Cindy helps by keeping the finances orderly, paying bills and inputting all our activities into QuickBooks. Her help is invaluable in administering the Squadron's finances. Thank you for your hard work Cindy. Also thanks go to Nick Weidenkopf for his assistance in Finance.

## Tour Leaders

A huge effort in keeping our money straight is done by our Tour Leaders. They work long hours, often in the hot sun. In addition to crewing the plane, they make hotel and car arrangements, schedule the crew, solve problems and a hundred other items. But their day is not done when the gates close. They go to dinner and then head to the room to count the cash. Once that's done they have to enter all the info into our reporting system on the web. A number of us get daily reports electronically of each day's sales. It's a great system, but not any good unless our tireless Tour Leaders make it work.

So a big shout out goes to the Tour Leaders for 2014...

John Flynn  
Phil Pardon  
Curtis Wester

Greg Trobridge  
Al Benzing  
Stu and Katy Watkins

## Traveling Crew

And finally, we must always thank the crews who give of their time and money to travel with the planes on tour. This is a huge sacrifice. You have to be willing to sleep in hotels, get up early, conduct cockpit tours, wipe oil, sell rides, answer questions, and a million other mundane tasks. You rarely get a day off.

But you also get the privilege of flying these priceless bombers around the country and seeing the smiles and tears they evoke. It's worth every drop of sweat and cost and then some. Plus it's loads of fun...

We have one member who has consistently given of his time. Jon Oliver has been on every tour stop as a volunteer for the past three years. He oversees the Ride Desk operation and fly's the Bucket of Bolts C-45. He has flown more ride flights than any other CAF pilot each of the last two years. His contribution to the Squadron has been great and we all need to tell him and all the other traveling crews... *Thank You.*

Gerald Oliver  
Finance Officer



*Squadron member, Mary Green, retrieving money out of FIFI's donation bomb.*

# PIO Report

The World War II Air Expo in New Orleans was an amazing event – demonstrating even further the success we can achieve through the power of collaboration. Any of you who have not visited the National World War II museum in New Orleans should try to put it on your list of things to see. My two visits there, a few years apart, were both fabulous experiences. Most amazing to me was how much the museum changed over just a few short years. Their management team is top notch and, believe me, Adam Smith, Keegan Chetwynd and the CAF marketing team are paying close attention to how they have achieved such wonderful success. Their team exudes young, creative energy and they are very willing to share their ideas with us.

Because of their press relationships we had outstanding coverage for the Air Expo. The Associated Press team, in particular, did a fabulous job. Their print and video coverage was seen throughout the United States. It was the first time one of our events made national news. Here are links to both the video and print stories:



<http://www.fox30jax.com/videos/news/world-war-ii-airmen-fly-again-in-b-29-bomber/vCygMN/>



## World War II airmen fly again in storied B-29

The bomber best known for dropping the atomic bombs on Japan also flew countless other raids.

[View on wwlp.com](#)

Preview by Yahoo

<http://wwlp.com/2014/10/24/world-war-ii-airmen-fly-again-in-storied-b-29/>

I spent all morning one day last week putting together a list of links to 2014 news stories about the B-29 and B-24. Those links will appear shortly on the AirPower Tour website media page. Stop in there in a few days. The B-24 stories are great!

We had news coverage at almost every stop last year. Sometimes that isn't enough – people still come out and say, “We didn't know you were here. We saw the airplane fly overhead.” So, it's clear we need to do more than advertise and get press coverage. Not everyone watches the news or reads the newspaper. This year, in addition to the ads and press, we will be using more grass roots methods to reach out to communities where we plan to visit. Also, the incredible success of the CAF Red Tail Exhibit highlights our deficiency in including an educational component as part of our package. We have to develop that in order to achieve a higher level of success.

So, a new year ahead and much work to do to make us better. . .

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas, Holiday Season and New Year.

Kim Pardon  
PIO

# DIAMOND LIL

## B-24 Go Team Report

Last month's Flyer announced a plan to move the B-24 to Dallas Executive to begin a restoration period of approximately a year. No one wants to have *Lil* parked in the hangar, so this decision has been difficult. Yet, it is necessary that significant changes be made in our operation for *Lil* to be financially viable in the long term. Other options were considered, but the conclusion was that the restoration plan is the best for *Lil*, allowing her to tour for years to come.

My approach to this plan is to treat it as an opportunity to improve *Lil*. Having a real 'Home' and being located with CAF HQ are real advantages. We can promote *Lil* for local events, rides and sponsorships, and recruit volunteers at a home base. Marketing and gaining Sponsors can be a daunting task. But, I am very encouraged by the talent and enthusiasm of our volunteers and believe that an outstanding Team can develop a program to improve *Lil's* financial status.

I have been meeting with Squadron members to develop a B-24 Restoration Task Force. My goal is to create a number of Teams responsible for Maintenance, Marketing/Sponsorship and Aircraft Tours during *Lil's* time at Dallas Exec. Although we are looking at about 12 months, from July 2015 to July 2016, there is much restoration work to be done - and we will need many willing volunteers.

Among the tasks are: Reseal Fuel Tanks, Upgrade Avionics, Replace an Engine and complete an Annual Inspection. During that time, Aircraft Tours and local Events may take place, to help with funding - and to let the public see *Diamond Lil*.

In early December, David and Jonathan Oliver and I attended ICAS (International Council of Air Shows). It was an opportunity to work with many in the airshow business in one place and plan our schedule for next year. It was also useful in taking the pulse of the industry and learning what others are doing for tours.

Work continues on putting together a Spring Tour that works for us financially and that we have crewmembers to support. At deadline for this article, I'm still waiting for some responses that will affect the start date for touring, and therefore the Ground School date. Last month I mentioned Saturday, March 7, 2015 as a **tentative** B-24 Ground School date. March 7th is still a possibility, but if we start the tour later **we may move Ground School to April 11th**. Once we firm up some dates on our Tour schedule, we can confirm the actual Ground School date.



David, Al, Jonathan

Thanks for all who work hard to Keep'em Flying!

"Merry Christmas and Happy 2015!"

Al Benzing  
214-707-2726  
[albenzing@gmail.com](mailto:albenzing@gmail.com)

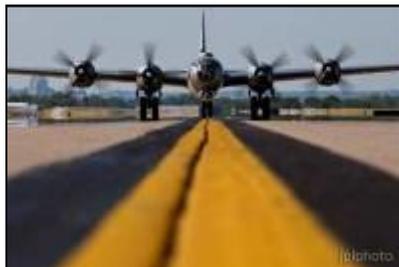


# Member News

## December, 2014



**B-29 Ground School  
Vintage Flying Museum  
Meacham Airport  
Fort Worth, TX  
Cost to attend - \$29**



### **2014 B-29 Ground School Registration**

February 7-8, 2015  
Saturday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Sunday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Click below to sign up for Ground School

[https://caf.formstack.com/forms/ground\\_school\\_reservations\\_2015](https://caf.formstack.com/forms/ground_school_reservations_2015)

You must be an active Colonel in the CAF and member of the B-29/B-24 Squadron to attend Ground School. To renew your membership and pay your dues, click below.

<http://www.cafb29b24.org/#!/book/clgh5>

Download Ground School manuals on the Squadron website

[www.cafb29b24.org](http://www.cafb29b24.org)

Go to the members only section. Password is "superfortress"

*\*please wait until January 1, 2015 for final updates*

Nearby hotels:

**Super 8 Hotel**, 4665 Gemini Place (Right off of Meacham Boulevard), Fort Worth

The Super 8 manager "Ankar" gave us a \$53.10 (CAF) rate this Fall. It is best to call and talk to him directly. His phone number is 817-222-3230. The rooms are fine. No hot breakfast, except for a waffle machine.

**Quality Inn**, 4681 Gemini Place, Fort Worth

The Quality Inn next door gave a \$58.50 (CAF) rate for the November annual Squadron meeting. It has a full hot breakfast. The phone number is 817-740-1099.

Note from Chief John Flynn:

There is a Cracker Barrel and McDonalds across the parking lot. AND...just in case you really get hungry, a Subway across the street from the hotels.

Direct questions regarding ground school to David Oliver

[b29ops@gmail.com](mailto:b29ops@gmail.com) or Kim Pardon [pardonb29@gmail.com](mailto:pardonb29@gmail.com)

Watch for a full B-29 Ground School agenda in the January 2015 issue of The Flyer.

### **Membership Info**

If you have any membership questions, please feel free to contact me at

[squadadjutant@gmail.com](mailto:squadadjutant@gmail.com)

Dues and new member applications can be mailed to:

Debbie King

13562 Braemar Drive

Dallas, Texas 75234

B29/B24 Squadron Adjutant

469-688-1709



Debbie Travis King

**If it wasn't under the tree this year, visit the Px for Squadron gear and merchandise.**



<http://www.b29b24px.org/>

Find us on 

# Volunteers Wanted

Vintage Flying Museum, Meacham Airport, Ft. Worth

MAINTENANCE IN PROGRESS



B-29 Superfortress



B-24A Liberator

- Mechanics
- General Maintenance
- Help around the Hangar

Contact Rick Garvis, Crew Chief  
rgarvis@cafhq.org



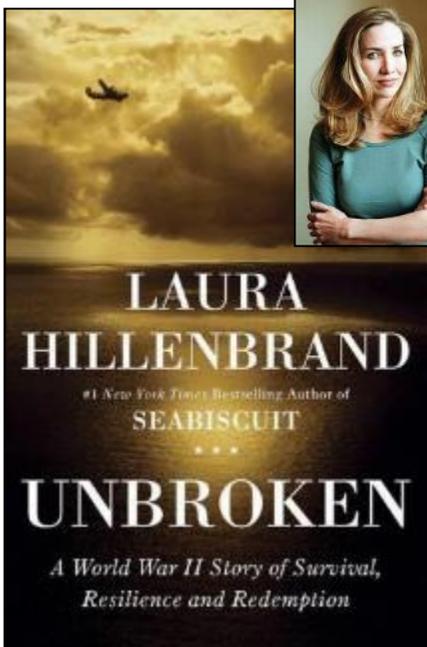
www.cafb29b24.org



## Media Event

# *Diamond Lil* and UNBROKEN

*Thank you to Angie Whitney and Raymond Jeffcoat for coverage and photos*



The Commemorative Air Force conducted a media flight showcasing the B-24 Liberator *Diamond Lil* Monday, December 22, in Dallas at Dallas Executive Field in anticipation of the release of the new movie UNBROKEN.

Louis Zamperini, the subject of the movie, was a bombardier on the B-24 *Green Hornet* a model D that was lost over the Pacific. His story of survival and experiences as a Japanese prisoner of war has inspired many people. WWII veteran, Karnig Thomasian a former WWII Japanese prisoner of war was on hand for interviews.

About 30 people from our Squadron and the CAF were present for media day with several flying over from the hangar in Ft. Worth on *Diamond Lil* and other members meeting the plane at Dallas Executive Field. The local media were there to greet the plane as was POW Karnig Thomasian.



*Karnig Thomasian, WWII B-29 gunner and POW. Author of Then There Were Six: The True Story of the 1944 Rangoon Disaster*

*Published in November, 2010, Unbroken has spent 180 weeks on the New York Times Bestseller list.*

The plane flew fully loaded with media aboard. Videographers filmed the flight and the Veteran POW as he relived many memories of his time flying during WWII.

*Diamond Lil* and our Squadron will be forever tied to the movie as there are many Texas connections. Being that there are only two B-24s left flying in the world there are few resources from which to get the details.

- In 1996, just two years before the *Green Hornet* surviving pilot, Russell Allen "Phil" Phillips died, he was photographed in *Diamond Lil*.



- The nose of our plane and the nose of the *Green Hornet* are the same “greenhouse” nose. The other model B-24s have a turret as the nose.
- Rumor has it *Diamond Lil’s* cockpit was filmed and a set was created based completely on her cockpit.
- *Diamond Lil* is a very rare B-24A, Zamperini’s *Green Hornet* was a B-24D. The movie trailers show a view of the inside tail of the plane and it looks very much like *Diamond Lil’s* as the “D” model had a turret.
- As you check out the photographs associated with the movie and photos posted alongside discussions of the movie, *Diamond Lil* shows up over and over. When people think of the B-24 they think of *Diamond Lil* as they have seen her either fly or static at an air show.



Actor Jack O'Connell as Louis Zamperini in the nose of his B-24 (clip from UNBROKEN)



*Diamond Lil’s “greenhouse” nose*



*Still image of tailgunner in action from UNBROKEN*



*Lil’s tailgun position*



We know *Diamond Lil* is a star, now at least parts of her are REAL movie stars. Regardless of the reviews, media day and the movie, UNBROKEN has once again put the B-24 front and center.

The Flyer is interested in your opinion of UNBROKEN. After you see the film, feel free to e-mail the editor at [konartist@verizon.net](mailto:konartist@verizon.net) He may print some of the reviews in the January 2015 issue.

Below are links to two of the stories that appeared as a result of media day.

*Telemundo reporter, Vanessa Abuchaibe, in Lil’s right seat.*

**Telemundo Channel 23**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-drFpykRmiQ&feature=youtu.be>

**CBS Channel 11**

<http://dfw.cbslocal.com/video/10972925-local-wwii-veteran-shares-pow-story/>



*Photo by Vanessa Abuchaibe*



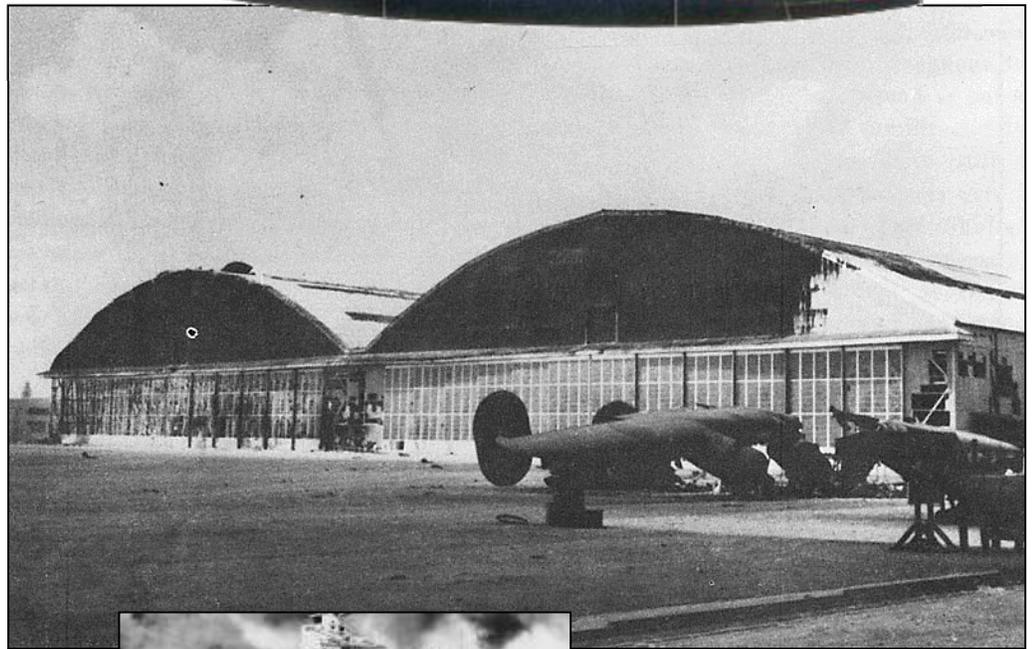
## This Month in History

# B-24 destroyed at Pearl Harbor

*By Konley Kelley*



In late October, 1941, British intelligence warned the US of increased Japanese naval activity in the Marshall islands of the South Pacific. The US military wanted photo recon of this area but sending slow, vulnerable PBV flying boats was deemed too risky. The USAAF took delivery of its first B-24A Liberators in mid-1941. In November, 1941, two B-24s from the 44<sup>th</sup> BG were ordered to Hawaii to refuel and arm before flying to the Philippines and undertaking a top secret mission to photograph Japanese naval and military installations on the islands of Truk and Jaluit.



*Wreckage of the B-24A at Hickham*

Due to mechanical failure, only one of the B-24s arrived in Hawaii at Hickam AFB on December 5, 1941. The B-24A was assigned to the 88<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron. Its pilot was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ted Faulkner. The task of arming and refitting the aircraft for its mission was delayed for the weekend. The crew enjoyed a night on the town on Saturday.



When air raid sirens alerted the B-24 crew members and men of the 22nd Material Squadron, they went out to the aircraft to move her to cover. The first bomb to strike Hickam landed by the B-24. Several men were injured or killed including the B-24's navigator.

Enemy planes in the first and second wave destroyed many aircraft on the ground at Hickam including the B-24A Liberator, Serial#40-2371.

Today, *Diamond Lil*, B-24A Liberator Serial#40-2366 bears a distinct resemblance to her sister destroyed on the December 7th.



*Photo by John Betram*



Konley Kelley



Angie Whitney



Caren Landis



Caren Landis



Bruce Granger



Caren Landis



Caren Landis



Dale Harmer



Dan Owens



Konley Kelley



Bob & Cindy Kirby



Dan Owens



Dan Owens



Gerald Oliver



Konley Kelley



Jason Crawford



Jason Crawford



Jeff Linebaugh



Jim Neill



John Mccullagh



John Mccullagh



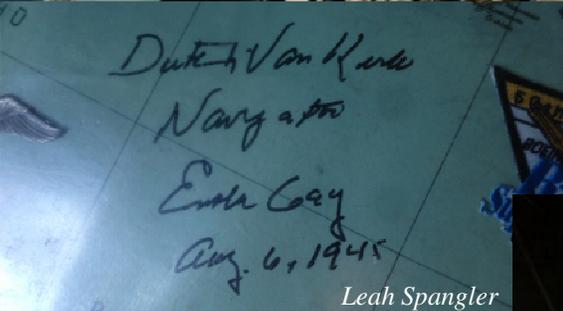
Konley Kelley



Konley Kelley



Konley Kelley



Leah Spangler



Rob Wickman



Rick Garvis



Rick Garvis



©2014 Steve Schapiro



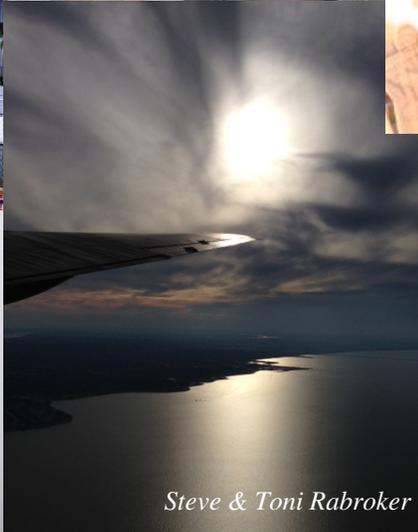
©2014 Steve Schapiro



Steve & Toni Rabroker



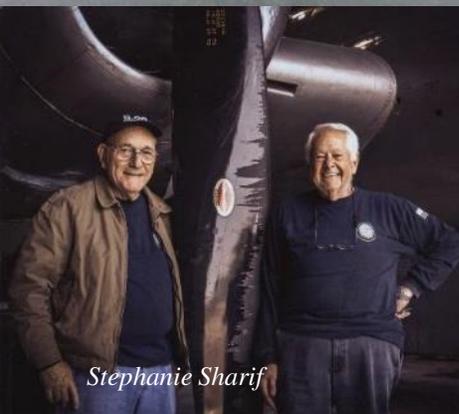
Steve & Toni Rabroker



Steve & Toni Rabroker



Leah Spangler



Stephanie Sharif



markelopez



Al Benzing



Raymond Jeffcoat



Chet Manly



Sarah Wilson



Raymond Jeffcoat



Raymond Jeffcoat



Gerald Oliver



©VINCENT GUSIANO



Gerald Oliver



Raymond Jeffcoat





# Editor's Corner

## Rosie sends a Christmas Card

I helped Rosie the Riveter (Lisa Foster) turn her polka-dot headscarf into a polka-dot Santa cap for her Christmas Card.



Lisa has joined our Squadron and is looking forward to 2015 B-29 and B-24 Ground Schools – plus other CAF events. You can follow all of Lisa's events and activities if you "like" her Facebook page at **Rosie the Riveter DFW** <https://www.facebook.com/rosietheriveterdfw>

## *The Brat III in the Tree*



Until Hallmark comes out with a line of warbird ornaments, I will be putting my scale model airplanes in our tree. This year the Cavanaugh Flight Museum's P-51D Mustang *The Brat III* has the honor.

And, if you find a 1:48 B-29 under your tree on Christmas morning, let me know if you need help. I've made one now.



# THE FLYER WANTS YOU!

You are welcome to contribute a story, photographs and artwork for this decades-old newsletter. If you are a veteran, please tell us your story. Squadron members continually meet veterans at the hangar, on tour and in everyday life – let us know their stories. We're also looking for contributors for "This Month in History" and news spotlighting our aircraft and members.

Thank you and  
"Keep 'Em Flying!"

Konley Kelley  
THE FLYER editor  
[konartist@verizon.net](mailto:konartist@verizon.net)





*Photo by Rocky Smith*

## **B-29 / B-24 Squadron**

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