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

## B-29 / B-24 Squadron Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B-29 Personnel Scheduling Officer</strong></td>
<td>John Flynn</td>
<td>717-632-4497</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jnaflynn@embarqmail.com">jnaflynn@embarqmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B-24 Personnel Scheduling Officer</strong></td>
<td>Jim Neill</td>
<td>214-762-5891</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jakat2@verizon.net">jakat2@verizon.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you would like to get scheduled on a Tour Stop as a Crew Member...</strong> Contact the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B-29 Personnal Scheduling Officer</strong></td>
<td>John Flynn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If you are a New Member Looking to Get Plugged In or Want to Volunteer...</strong> Contact the following:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer &amp; New Member Coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Tim Colman</td>
<td>214-708-2279</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tpcolman@gmail.com">tpcolman@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squadron Officers:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squadron Commander</td>
<td>Neils Agather</td>
<td>817-946-9950</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vnagather@agathertx.com">vnagather@agathertx.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>Tom Travis</td>
<td>214-763-0147</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tomtravis@aol.com">tomtravis@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjutant &amp; Personnel Officer</td>
<td>Debbie King</td>
<td>469-688-1709</td>
<td><a href="mailto:squadadjutant@gmail.com">squadadjutant@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Officer</td>
<td>Don Obreiter</td>
<td>580-471-3048</td>
<td><a href="mailto:obreiter@cableone.net">obreiter@cableone.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Officer</td>
<td>John Flynn</td>
<td>717-632-4497</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jnaflynn@embarqmail.com">jnaflynn@embarqmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Officer</td>
<td>Archie Taylor</td>
<td>817-944-3226</td>
<td><a href="mailto:taylor2014@tx.rr.com">taylor2014@tx.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Ops Officer</td>
<td>Al Benzing</td>
<td>214-707-2726</td>
<td><a href="mailto:albenzing@gmail.com">albenzing@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Information Officer</td>
<td>Kim Pardon</td>
<td>913-636-6250</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pardonb29@gmail.com">pardonb29@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Public Information Officer</td>
<td>Chris Madrid</td>
<td>770-655-3315</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cjmadrid@yahoo.com">cjmadrid@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Officer</td>
<td>Gerald Oliver</td>
<td>312-953-0357</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gerald.oliver@yahoo.com">gerald.oliver@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squadron Staff:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Squadron General Manager</td>
<td>Brad Pilgrim</td>
<td>843-991-3814</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bpilgrim@cafhq.org">bpilgrim@cafhq.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Manager</td>
<td>Liz Vue</td>
<td>972-387-2924</td>
<td><a href="mailto:evue@cafhq.org">evue@cafhq.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. Crew Chief</td>
<td>Rick Garvis</td>
<td>972-380-8800</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rgarvis@cafhq.org">rgarvis@cafhq.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew Chief</td>
<td>Don Thurston</td>
<td>903-714-8037</td>
<td><a href="mailto:don@donseye.info">don@donseye.info</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew Chief</td>
<td>Ben Powers</td>
<td>214-277-3150</td>
<td><a href="mailto:f14_ad@yahoo.com">f14_ad@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager</td>
<td>Jim Neill</td>
<td>214-762-5891</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jakat2@verizon.net">jakat2@verizon.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B-24 Team:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>B-24 Go Team Leader</td>
<td>Al Benzing</td>
<td>214-707-2726</td>
<td><a href="mailto:albenzing@gmail.com">albenzing@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diamond Lil</strong> Century Club Chairman</td>
<td>Toni Rabroker</td>
<td>972-740-4601</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rtabroker@hotmail.com">rtabroker@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-24 Volunteer MX Coordinator</td>
<td>Steve Rabroker</td>
<td>469-387-6439</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rtabroker@hotmail.com">rtabroker@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-24 Flight Ops Coordinator</td>
<td>Al Benzing</td>
<td>214-707-2726</td>
<td><a href="mailto:albenzing@gmail.com">albenzing@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-24 Aircraft Tours Coordinator</td>
<td>Jim Neill</td>
<td>214-762-5891</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jakat2@verizon.net">jakat2@verizon.net</a></td>
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<td>Archie Taylor</td>
<td>817-944-3226</td>
<td><a href="mailto:taylor2014@tx.rr.com">taylor2014@tx.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-29 MX Coordinator</td>
<td>Rick Garvis</td>
<td>972-380-8800</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rgarvis@cafhq.org">rgarvis@cafhq.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-29 Flight Engineer Coordinator</td>
<td>Rick Garvis</td>
<td>972-380-8800</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rgarvis@cafhq.org">rgarvis@cafhq.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stearman Team:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stearman Flight Ops Coordinator</td>
<td>Archie Taylor</td>
<td>817-944-3226</td>
<td><a href="mailto:taylor2014@tx.rr.com">taylor2014@tx.rr.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stearman MX Coordinator</td>
<td>Bill Goeken</td>
<td>817-308-1916</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wk.goeken@verizon.net">wk.goeken@verizon.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squadron Volunteer Leaders:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Docent Emeritus</td>
<td>Jack Bradshaw</td>
<td>214-987-1963</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jackbshaw@sbcglobal.net">jackbshaw@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Flyer&quot; Newsletter Editor</td>
<td>Kon Kelley</td>
<td>214-995-5184</td>
<td><a href="mailto:konartist@verizon.net">konartist@verizon.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance Captain</td>
<td>Henry Borderlon</td>
<td>972-406-0644</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pixiee@sbcglobal.net">pixiee@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PX Co-Captain</td>
<td>Rocky Smith</td>
<td>214-565-8562</td>
<td><a href="mailto:diverock@hotmail.com">diverock@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PX Co-Captain</td>
<td>Alma Smith</td>
<td>214-284-9128</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alma@b29b24px.org">alma@b29b24px.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Chairman</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tours/Ride Desk/Marketing:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Manager &amp; Scheduling</td>
<td>Jon Oliver</td>
<td>312-925-6184</td>
<td>jsptw@<a href="mailto:warbirds@gmail.com">warbirds@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride Desk Captain</td>
<td>Mary Mount</td>
<td>209-605-4313</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mgmount@aol.com">mgmount@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Marketing Coordinator</td>
<td>Kim Pardon</td>
<td>913-636-6250</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pardonb29@gmail.com">pardonb29@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
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“Lieutenant Dan, Part III”  
By Dan Owens

Special Feature: “Elinor Otto”  
by Lisa Foster

Photographer Kevin Luke knows how to get great snaps of FIFI coming into Meacham.

Kevin (right) photographed by Joseph Fischer
Summer Tour A, 2016

Birmingham, AL — May 18-22
Monmouth, NJ — May 25-29
Hagerstown, MD — May 30-Jun 1
Reading, PA — Jun 3-5
Nashua, NH — Jun 8-12
Albany, NY — Jun 15-19
Pittsburgh, PA — Jun 22-26
South Bend, IN — Jun 29-Jul 4

Fall, 2016

Branson, MO — Sep 2-4
Muskogee, OK — Sep 10-11
Fayetteville, AR — Sep 22-24
Ft. Worth Alliance Air Show — Oct 15-16
Wings Over Dallas Air Expo — Oct 27-30
New Orleans/WWII Air Expo — Nov 4-6

*Schedule subject to change
Check www.airpowertour.org
Squadron Report

We had the great pleasure and honor to have Brigadier General Paul Tibbets IV join us in Shreveport. He completed his 601 forms and flew with Bill Goeken as his PIC. It brought back fond memories of the last time he flew in FIFI with his grandfather, pilot of the Enola Gay. What a great legacy they have and I am proud FIFI is part of that legacy. Paul handled FIFI beautifully and I sincerely hope he will find a way to get more involved with our Squadron. A curious thing, Paul, like Mark Novak, has flown the B-1 and has his share of stories. Paul can add to that stories of flying the B-52 and B-2, too.

This weekend FIFI was in St. Louis on the start of her next tour. The Blue Angels and the Snow Birds were there. I can report there was great interest in FIFI. I had a Canadian F-18 pilot ask real hard for a ride. It seems our ride is better than his.

Diamond Lil’s maintenance and restoration is progressing well. And, though there is yet a bit to be done, the end is in sight. Summer tour plans are in the works and the preliminary scheduling of crews is underway. We had a fabulous B-24 Ground School - 92 attendees - a record. There is lots of interest in supporting Lil. Please sign up for the various tour stops, I sense spots will fill in quickly.

So far our new Ops Officer is doing OK. When you talk to him give him an “attaboy.” I hope to see everyone on the road.

Neils Agather
Squadron Leader

Photo by Adam Glowaski
Executive Officer
Report

A combination of factors worked against us during the spring tour in Florida. Weather and mechanical issues were the main culprits. In any case, the financial results were disappointing. Gerald’s report will give you the details but numbers don’t tell it all. Our team worked hard day in and day out. They did all the right things but the bottom line was less than we had hoped.

The B-24 Ground School was a success. We had a very nice turn out which indicates a strong interest in Diamond Lil. It’s nice to know that the old gal hasn’t been forgotten.

Tom Travis
Executive Officer
**Flight Operations Report**

*FIFI* returned back home on April 24, 2016 for maintenance prior to heading to the airshow at Barksdale AFB Thursday April 28. She will fly at that airshow with a B-17 and B-52 and return back to Meacham on Sunday May 1 for maintenance prior to heading to the St. Louis Airshow on May 13. The Stearman remained in Florida for maintenance and will join the B-29 at Birmingham on May 16 as well as the T-6.

Today 90 people showed up to B-24 Ground School at Dallas Executive Airport. Al Benzing did a great job as usual getting the material organized for todays training. Thanks to everyone who made this event a success and for making sure there was plenty to eat and drink. There were several new faces in the crowd today wanting to get involved with the future activities for the B-24.

The fuel tanks on the B-24 are open and in the process of being cleaned prior to being resealed. It is very obvious that there is a lot of work going into LIL as she is getting ready to return to flying status this summer. Help is always needed on this so make sure you volunteer and see what you can do to help this project along.

B-29 Summer Tour A pilot schedule is now on Dropbox and is available for viewing. There will still be some minor tweaks to the schedule that will be made this week. I will send a copy out to the pilots and Rick Garvis and Tour Leaders. I also have the pilots B-29 Summer tour B schedule in Excel format ready to populate with names. So if you have some spots you would like to try to be a part of make sure to let me know and I will see what I can do. The B-24 Pilot Schedule was also shown today at ground school and I will send that one out next week so I can start working with Al Benzing on how to staff the B-24 activities.

It should be a busy couple of months coming up as we get all the aircraft out on the road and populate crews to complete all the events the squadron has scheduled. Once again thanks to all who attended and helped make todays B-24 training a success.

Archie Taylor  
Flight Operations Officer
Doing a little touch up on the tail
Ben and Don installing new recaps on the nose gear for the summer tour
Steve Hay is installing the Bose Lima plugs

The new Bose Lima plug for the scanners. This will ensure we get the true Bose sound...

Performing engine runs

For some reason, we always have leftover parts after inspection...LOL.
Work continues on Lil to get her in the air by the end of July

We are working on getting the radio room restored. We got the chair and Don Obreiter is manufacturing the table and other components.

Work continues on resealing the fuel tanks. We estimate just 2-3 more weeks until we are finished!

At the pilots’ request, we have installed a new pilot cooling system.

Of course, we did not forget the co-pilot.
Training & Safety Report

In April, FIFI returned home to Meacham from the extremely challenging Spring Air Power History Tour in Florida. All of our Squadron members who were out on the tour as well as those who helped from home stepped up to the plate and did their jobs in a safe and professional manner. I’d like to once again thank everyone whose perseverance and hard work resulted in a safe tour.

We also had a successful and very well attended B-24 Ground School in April with 84 Squadron members in attendance. It was the first B-24 Ground School for several. Special thanks to all who helped make it possible.

Coming up on May 24th is a very special day for us in aviation. It’s “Aircraft Maintenance Technician Day”; the day we honor the mechanics who keep our aircraft safe and airworthy. Thank our mechanics on this special day when you see them. This day is celebrated each year on May 24th which was Charlie Taylor’s birthday. Charlie Taylor was the Wright Brothers engine mechanic. In fact, Charlie Taylor designed and built the Wright Brother’s engine which helped them make powered flight a reality. It, of course, was a “Wright engine”. Maybe you can say it was precursor to the “Wright Model 3350” engines we have on FIFI.

Now is a good time for a “Safety Pep Talk” so that it’s fresh in our minds as we continue with the restoration work on Diamond Lil and as FIFI heads out on the Summer Tour.

Please remember that ensuring the safety of our operations, the safety of our squadron members and the safety of our customers all begins with our Squadron Safety Management System (SMS). The foundation of this program is our safety culture, which strongly influences the way we operate every day. It also allows us to learn from and address the many issues that confront us before they can cause harm.

Always remember: "IF THE JOB IS DONE RIGHT, IT IS SAFE“

John Flynn
Safety Officer
Wondering what the CAF's iconic B-29 Superfortress has been up to lately?

FIFI departed Fort Worth on May 12 headed to our first event of the summer tour season -- the Spirit of St. Louis Air Show. From there she will begin a 24 city tour from May through October.

The AirPower History Summer Tour starts in Birmingham, AL Monday and then moves to the mid-Atlantic states (including WWII Weekend in Reading), the Midwest (including Oshkosh), the Rockies, and western United States before returning home to the CAF WWII Air Expo in late October. New Orleans will be our last outing the first weekend in November.

And between the spring and summer tours we did this. . .

What were we doing in between the spring and summer tours? Check out the story about maintaining FIFI at the 12 minute mark of last week's AOPA Live video. Crew Chiefs Rick Garvis and Don Thurston did a great job talking about what it really takes to keep this iconic B-29 flying.

Our trip to Barksdale AFB 2016 Defenders of Freedom Air Show

On April 28, we flew FIFI over to Barksdale AFB for their 2016 Defenders of Freedom Air Show. We had the honor of bringing two VIP passengers with us for that trip. Former World War II airmen Fred Kruse and Fiske Hanley II were excited to ride with us on that beautiful spring day. The Fort Worth Star-Telegram came out to Meacham Airport to cover the story.

Read about them and watch this great video about the trip here:

World War II vets take flight in world's only flying B-29 Superfortress.
Brigadier General Paul Tibbets IV flies with us in Shreveport

When we arrived in Shreveport we also enjoyed a short visit and flight with Brigadier General Paul Tibbets IV. Tibbets is the grandson of General Paul Tibbets Jr., pilot in command of the famous B-29 *Enola Gay* whose famous bombing mission helped end World War II. General Tibbets IV had the honor of flying *FIFI* with his grandfather in Midland back in 1998. Tibbets is a CAF Colonel and also in the midst of a successful and busy Air Force career. We are always happy to see him when our paths do cross and hope he will have more time in the future to fly the airplane.

And in the oldie but goodie department – it’s been a year since Don Obreiter and Elena Scherr from Hotrod magazine collaborated on what I think is one of the best stories I’ve ever seen about *FIFI*.

http://www.hotrod.com/features/1505-how-a-pontiac-pushrod-saved-a-b-29-bomber-with-video/

Busy summer ahead. We have such great volunteers – amazes me how dedicated we all are to keep this airplane flying. I feel so privileged to work with all of you.

Happy touring. Praying for great press and big crowds all summer long.

Kim Pardon
CAF B29/B24 Squadron
p / (913) 636-6250
pardonb29@gmail.com
It was a pleasure to see so many supporters of Diamond Lil at the B-24 Ground School in April. Much goes into the logistics of a Ground School and I am thankful for the hard work of Volunteers and Staff who put it all together. Toni, Steve, Jim, Bud, Kim, Brad and Liz are among those. Thank you!

Ground School is an opportunity for Flight Ops to provide training on the Safe operation of our B-24. There are many topics, from Systems to Human Factors, all of which are important to flying the aircraft the way the CAF and our Squadron requires. If you intend to become a Crewmember, or are already qualified, it is essential that you leverage the lessons of Ground School by reading the Flight Manual (for Pilots & FE’s), Operations Manual and Supplementary documents.

The Squadron is putting a lot of emphasis on continual improvement. This includes a focus on knowing Squadron Policies, which are detailed in the Squadron Operations Manual, understanding the responsibilities of your crew position, which are detailed in the Flight Manual, and being professional in performing your duties. It is a challenge to gain and maintain proficiency in rare aircraft, so we must make the extra effort to be as prepared as we can be when we fly.

The attendance numbers at Ground School were higher than recent years and it brings to mind that there are many among that group who we would like to see become more involved on a frequent basis. We need help with maintenance work and so many other tasks to keep Diamond Lil viable and flying.

In the last issue of The Flyer, I detailed the Fall Tour. Work will continue on details for those tour stops, and marketing is becoming the focus. Crew assignments will be through Archie Taylor (Ops Officer) for Pilots and Rick Garvis for Flight Engineers. Scanners and additional crew will be vetted and selected by Toni Rabroker, Jim Neill, John Flynn and the Tour Leader. Volunteers who can work on Lil or work in the Hangar please contact Steve Rabroker 469-387-6439 rabroker@hotmail.com

Building up our Volunteer Maintenance Team is essential to our ability to perform Lil’s Annual Inspection, which we plan to accomplish between Nov 2016 and Feb 2017. This timeframe is critical to be ready to do early touring or airshows.

As always, we are looking at how to best support Lil for the next year. One option is to do the early 2017 Spring APHT to California with FIFI, but it’s still too early to make that decision.

Thanks to all who keep Diamond Lil Flying! I enjoyed visiting with many of you at Ground School.

Al Benzing
B-24 Go Team Leader
214-707-2726
albenzing@gmail.com
B-24 Ground School 2016
Photos by Konley Kelley and Raymond Jeffcoat

April 23, 2016

TRAINING

FELLOWSHIP
An update from
Toni Rabroker
Diamond Lil Century Club Chairperson

Having just completed our annual B-24 Ground School, I was very pleased to see such a large turnout for this event. We had over 90 people participating in the pilot, flight engineer and scanner training. After early morning donuts and coffee, we got right into the general topics of procedures, safety and the daily routine of being on tour. Following lunch we separated into specific groups. While the Pilots and FE’s were getting into the bookwork, the Scanners were able to get some good hands-on training. We are so lucky to have our own “Chief”, John Flynn. With his knowledge, experience and dedication to safety, we know that we are getting the best training possible. Thank you Chief!

This was by far the largest turn out for Diamond Lil’s Ground School! Thank you to everyone who helped make this day a success and I really appreciate Kathy Neill and Francine O’Connor for giving up their entire day to serve us food and refreshments. Please give them a warm “thank you” the next time you see them.

We have several new members that joined the Diamond Lil Century Club at B-24 Ground School. I’m thrilled to say we are now over 40% towards our goal for this year! Your financial support is still so vital to this campaign. Even though Lil isn’t flying, this doesn’t mean her expenses go away. In fact, it is even more critical since she isn’t able to generate tour income. If you haven’t renewed or joined the Century Club, I urge you to do it now – go to www.DiamondLil.org. Your tax-deductible membership donation will help us keep the legacy of the greatest generation alive.

As many of you already know, Diamond Lil was commissioned in May of 1941, so with a little math, you can see she is 75 Years Old! She sure looks great for a 75 Year Old Gal! We are so proud and blessed to be the stewards of this rare and historic aircraft. To help celebrate this milestone, Kon Kelley, our Chief Editor, has designed a special anniversary logo which we will have printed on T-shirts and other items that will be available this year. We’ll keep you posted on the upcoming celebration so plan to come out to the hanger and support your Liberator!
Diamond Lil 75th Anniversary
2016 CAF AirPower History Tour

Branson, MO
Sept. 2-4

Ride on B-24 Liberator “Diamond Lil”, a B-25 Mitchell, P-51 Mustang, TBM Avenger, and more!

B-24 Liberator Diamond Lil
Americans built 18,482 B-24 Liberators between 1940-1945, the most produced aircraft in U.S. history. Today, Diamond Lil is one of only two B-24 Liberators still flying. Built in 1941, Diamond Lil is the oldest operational World War II four-engine bomber in the world.

B-25 Mitchell Show Me
P-51 Mustang Gunfighter
TBM Avenger

Branson Airport, Branson Jet Center, 130 Wright Brothers Road, Hollister, MO 65672

Friday, Sept. 2 * 2 pm to 5 pm
Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 3-4 * 9 am to 5 pm

Ramp access: $15 Adults / $5 Youth age 11-17

More info and book rides at:
www.AirPowerTour.org
New Member Spotlight

New Squadron member, Thomas Willis, flew to B-24 Ground School in his beautifully restored 1963 Bonanza. Tom did the work himself and since Nov 2005 has flown her coast to coast 4x - as far south as Key West and as far north as the backcountry of Idaho.

2016 Squadron mtgs and DEA events

Squadron meetings  6/18, 8/20, 9/17
Special Event:  Before the Belle authors/book signing, 7/16 (tentative)
CAF Air Show and Annual Meeting 10/27-30
Annual Chili Cook-off  11/19

Membership Info
If you have any membership questions, please feel free to contact me at squadadjutant@gmail.com
Dues and new member apps can be mailed to:
Debbie King
13562 Braemar Drive
Dallas, Texas 75234
B29/B24 Squadron Adjutant
469-688-1709

Member News
May, 2016

Gone West…
Thomas Hardin

The Squadron was recently notified a long time member, Tom Hardin; passed away on April 25, 2016. Tom lived in Missouri and flew with us as a lead scanner on FIFI and flight engineer on Diamond Lil.

He was one of the first Squadron members Audrey and I met when we first went to Midland in January, 2000 to help put FIFI back together after a year-long restoration process. Tom bought a second home near the Midland airport and would spend the winters in Midland helping with winter maintenance on both FIFI and Diamond Lil. He also made his Midland home available to many Squadron members who would travel from all over the country to Midland to help work on our aircraft.

Tom was the lead scanner on FIFI in November 2000 and reported her #3 engine on fire shortly after takeoff from Tulsa. Tom was a very active Squadron member and flew on tour many weeks each year as a crew member on both Diamond Lil and FIFI.

As we were about to takeoff for our air show performance at St. Louis on Sunday (May 15), Tom’s daughter, Nancy came up to the crowd line to greet our crew. She had this photo of Tom and asked that we carry it aboard FIFI during the flight. We carried the photo in the lead scanner’s position; the position Tom occupied the last time he flew on FIFI.

- John Flynn

For a Squadron shirts and gear, contact alma@B29B24px.org at the Squadron Px!
http://www.b29b24px.org/
Al Benzing has done a book review for this month's Flyer. The book is Before the Belle by Cassius Mullen and Betty Byron. Al is a voracious reader – often reading several books at a time. He has done book reviews in The Flyer before. This time Al strongly encouraged me to look into the story. He said it was right up my alley and definitely worth contacting the authors for an interview and background on the book. I spoke to author Cassius “Cash” Mullen a few weeks ago. Right after I hung up with him, I ordered the book for myself on Amazon. This is a story that needs to be told. Not only did another 8th AF bomber, Hot Stuff, beat Memphis Belle to 25 missions, it also played a part in history that, if tragedy had not struck, could have changed history as we know it.

Al’s review on the following page is very good. I’m not going to throw any spoilers here after talking to Cash. I think you should buy the book for a few good reasons. 1) A portion of the book’s proceeds will go to a memorial on the Hot Stuff’s crash site in Iceland and 2) You will meet Cash, Betty and Jim Lux, the driving force behind this book and the Iceland memorial. An event is being planned at the DEA hangar on July 16. Stand by for more news as the date draws closer. I’m assuming Cash and Betty will have books on hand but get one now. You will be armed and ready with your questions. ☺ Books are available from Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

RE: General Frank Andrews. He is the namesake for Andrews AFB. Did you know he was also the Commander of all U.S. Forces in the European Theater in WWII? His command, beginning in January, 1943, was short-lived. Andrews was also an aviator and co-pilot of Hot Stuff for the trip back to the US when they crashed on May 3, 1943.

What if Andrews had lived? How would he have prosecuted the war differently than Eisenhower? Would he have been heralded a hero after the war and possibly had political aspirations? Get your questions ready.

Jim Lux, Cash and Betty want your help telling others about this book and building a memorial for this forgotten crew who flew 31 missions without a scratch, beating Memphis Belle to the 25 mission mark by 3 ½ months. Please see www.readbyron.com You can see progress on the enormous stainless steel B-24 being created for the memorial by sculptor Terry Hinde at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGxUihUAy6U Jim Lux also maintains a website about Hot Stuff at this link http://b24hotstuff.wikispaces.com/home We will have more details firming up the July 16 event at DEA via Squadron news and The Flyer.

When I get interested in an aircraft – particularly one with this historic significance - my goal is to 3D model it. I found Hot Stuff nose art, colorized it and made texture maps for my B-24D model.
Before The Belle is an intriguing, well-written story that was cloaked in secrecy during WWII and almost forgotten to history. It is about the men of a B-24 Liberator Hot Stuff who were the first heavy bomber crew in the 8th Air Force to complete 25 Combat Missions – completing 31 missions prior to the Memphis Belle completing her 25th.

Tragically, Hot Stuff with some of the original crew crashed on a foggy mountainside in Iceland on what was to be their triumphant return to the US. Lt General Frank Andrews, Commander of all US Forces in Europe was flying as Copilot and perished in the foggy crash on May 3, 1942. It was his explicit command that the flight not stop in Prestwick, Scotland, that put the flight in peril of low fuel and inadequate weather information. It was his importance to the War effort that wrapped this crash, and the incredible story of the Hot Stuff crew, in a cloak of secrecy which paved the way for the B-17 Memphis Belle and crew to become famous as first to survive 25 missions.

I am among the fortunate few who today fly a rare airworthy B-24, Diamond Lil. It was only within the last year or so I heard “hangar talk” of a B-24 crew who beat Memphis Belle to the 25 mission mark. Having read many books on WWII Air Power, this was ‘news’ to me, and coming so many years after the War, I was skeptical. Could it be true or was this just a lot of wishful ‘facts’ that didn’t quite add up?

When I saw a book titled Before The Belle, it instantly caught my attention and made me wonder if it would really make the case of a B-24 with 25 missions before Memphis Belle. What I found was a very well-documented and engaging book that quickly laid to rest all my concerns about authenticity and provided me with the incredible story of the crew of the B-24 Hot Stuff, its 31 combat missions and its unique role in the history of WWII.

It can be risky to start a story with the end, especially a bitter end. In this case, it has to be that way, that is the point of the story. It was the bitter loss of this aircraft, crew and a prominent General that disrupted history, and ensured the role of the B-24 would forever be seen as secondary to the B-17.

Reading Chapter One, detailing the crash of Hot Stuff was a harsh beginning, but set the stage for the story. It was dispiriting to learn of the unnecessary loss of lives and aircraft, but was countered by learning how this crew accomplished so much early in the War, when bomber losses were very high.

The military can be capricious and all the more so in Wartime. The fate of crews takes many unexpected twists, and that was certainly the case of the Hot Stuff crew. They were initially assigned to England, flying several missions over occupied Europe, only to soon be ordered to fly south across the Mediterranean to North Africa.
That barren landscape was a miserable place to survive in a tent. It was difficult to operate aircraft as complex as B-24s in those windswept, sandy conditions and amazing they were able to fly any missions at all.

I was impressed with the well-written crew interactions and mission details. This made the missions interesting and was largely due to contributions from surviving B-24 crewmembers who collaborated with many details. The wide variety of missions flown added to the interest, with even ‘simple’ missions becoming fraught with difficulties and danger.

After months of missions wearing out the crew and aircraft, they finally returned to England where R & R and much needed maintenance on the aircraft brought them back to battle-ready condition. Subsequent missions over occupied Europe reintroduced them to the perils of German flak and fighters, and to the loss of squadron-mates.

One factor continually stood out – a well-trained crew, who worked in concert was far more effective and likely to survive adversity than those not so fortunate.

It is among the War’s many tragedies that Hot Stuff and her crew could not fly their final mission across the Atlantic to home and the rewards of a grateful nation.
Volunteer Spotlight
Larry Popp

It all started in Hale’s Corners, Wisconsin (where EAA headquarters used to be) when my mother took my brother and me to our first air show. We were about 11 or 12 years old. A wing walker was trying to transfer from the lower wing of one Stearman to the top wing of another when the rope ladder got tangled. He hung by his knees to try and straighten it out when he fell 400 feet to the ground. He bounced when he hit. Since that time I have always wondered what is so interesting about airplanes that people will do irrational things.

I started reading books about aviation by Robert Scott, Earnest Gahn, Neville Schute, and Wilbur Smith. My brother and I later joined the Civil Air Patrol where everybody talked about flying and I got lots of old link Trainer Time. We pooled our money and bought construction plans for a Bensen Gyro Copter and hid the plans under the girlie magazines, underneath the chemistry set, in our closet. One day the plans and magazines disappeared - not a word was said.

I went to Badger Boys State my senior year and my brother went on foreign exchange with the CAP. We took flying lessons in a Cessna 140 and soloed on our 17th birthday. Later we pooled our $300 each and bought a junker Taylor Craft BC 12D. My highlight at the CAP was flying in actual search and rescue missions in our own airplane.

After high school we went to Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma. We pumped gasoline at gas stations full time and we recovered our T-Craft. We sold the T-Craft and bought a PT-19 that used too much oil - we installed new piston rings and flew the pants off it.

After obtaining my A&P mechanics license I was hired by Delta Airlines at Houston Hobby Airport. One night there when I was 20 years old I moved two of the Texaco large executive aircraft from a large wooden hangar that was burning and got a nice $500 reward for the effort. I needed the money!
Three or four years later, I decided I wanted a degree in Aerospace engineering. My brother was flight instructing in Southern California and suggested, since I would have to put myself thru college, there were a lot of jobs in aviation there and I should consider moving to Los Angeles.

Besides towing gliders at Palm Springs and Tahachapi, I also worked as a mechanic for TWA and American Airlines at LAX and later for many years at Ontario Airport for Zantop/Universal. Zantop always had a lot of work and they let me work any hours I wanted as long as it was at least 40 hours a week. I graduated with a degree from California State Polytechnic, Pomona, in December 1966. I then hired on with the Boeing Company as a field service engineer at Renton, Washington. I worked the flight control problems Boeing operators were experiencing on their 707’s 727’s and 737-100’s.

I obtained my airline transport pilot and seaplane ratings and still had an irrational case of wanderlust. I thought I would go to some place in South America but the opportunity came to go to Ethiopian Airlines in Africa, via a TWA management contract, where I was to set up a maintenance and engineering department for Ethiopian Airlines. Seven weeks later I was in Ethiopia. I suffered a bit of culture shock for about a week and then had a short talk with myself and decided to make the best of it. This change in attitude made all the difference. I set up the department within a year and the airline then needed to train several young Ethiopian DC 3 co-pilots to become flight engineers on their four Boeing 707s and 720s so I transferred to flights operations.

I also flew several royal flights with the emperor, Haile Selassie on board. After my first royal flight, Capt. Adamu, a naturally bright man with a huge sense of humor, asked me “What do you think of our esteemed leader?” I told him I noticed how alert he was, his eyes glancing about constantly. Adamu poked me in the chest with his finger and said “that’s why he’s still alive!!” ha-ha

On a later royal flight from Addis to Nigeria for the 25th anniversary of independence, the emperor came into the cockpit. He noticed I was following the flight on both navigation charts and maps from National Geographic. He asked if he could see the map and I showed him where we were. He followed along the rest of the flight noting the towns along the junction of rivers and the occasional railroad tracks that connect several towns together, etc. One always enjoys learning.

While in Lagos, Nigeria, Abdul Gamel Nassar, President of Egypt, suddenly died of natural causes. Muslims bury their dead the next day, so it was a “throw everything together and let’s get out of here” kind of departure and we took off for Cairo.

On July 20, 1969 I listened on BBC to the Apollo landing on the moon and then flew a “red eye” flight to New Delhi, India. I was the only American on the crew and, upon arriving in New Delhi, people came over to shake hands with any American they could find. We were all happy and proud.

Ethiopian Airlines contracted its simulator training to Lufthansa in Frankfort, Germany. My favorite instructor there was a Mr. Rudy Maier. He actually flew Dornier DO-X, a 12 engine flying boat before the war, for Lufthansa. He was then a senior officer in the Luftwaffe during the war and after the war he flew Lufthansa again as a pilot and simulator instructor.
Rudy was a large ham-fisted man with a gentle nature. He once told one of our American captains who was complaining about getting fleeced at a casino in Weisbaden the night before, “Ah Captain, it is all just a game you know”

The Imperial Ethiopian Aero Club in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia had enthusiasm and an airplane. All they needed was a ground instructor, flight instructor and A&P mechanic. I stepped up to the plate and about a year later was joined by a Mr. Floyd Gering and we shared the responsibilities. We taught at least 10 different nationalities of people to fly. Since there were no VOR or ILS navigational aides in the country, I bought a manually operated simulator and wrote some approach charts myself so students could see what they looked like. We operated out of Axum Air, an air charter company owned by a Mr. Clyde Adams. Clyde is now 78 years old and still works overseas.

During this time, Ethiopian Airlines was bombed or hijacked five times. However, I was not on any of these flights. I did get a call to co-pilot a DC-6 from Addis to Karachi, Pakistan and when we arrived it was 110 degrees F but there was a nice breeze blowing! I changed two wheels and one brake and then towed the damaged airliner to the back side of the airport.

The next morning when I walked up to the airplane, I noticed a bump on the top left wing. It looked like 3 sticks of dynamite duct taped together with 2 bare wires hanging out touching the top of the wing skin. During the attack, the Ethiopian flight mechanic walking around the airplane noticed strangers coming on the ramp. Instead of running away, he confronted them. Apparently this threw their timing off and they threw the bomb so hard the detonator on the wires tore itself off.

I have never been in the military or even used dynamite to blow stumps on the farm, so I called the US embassy in Karachi and they said an expert from the US Navy will come out to help and asked for directions on how to get to the plane. He arrived, and I took him through the lower 41 E&E compartment door by the nose gear, up into the cockpit, down the cabin and through the open emergency exit door. I took a picture real quick and he reached down, picked up the bomb and said it looked like 3 sticks of dynamite as he stuffed it in his rear coverall pocket and walked off. I could have done the same thing, I guess, but he knew what he was doing and I did not.

My last royal flight was flying the emperor to a reception honoring the 25th anniversary of the UN and a couple of days later a meeting with President Nixon. On takeoff from Las Palmas, the Canary Islands, on the way to New York, the right truck levelling cylinder broke and the landing gear would not come up. We dumped fuel, landed, and I found a spare truck levelling cylinder in the fly-a-way kit. I sent the Ethiopian mechanic out with five $20 bills and told him to please not come back unless he had located a nitrogen bottle on this mostly deserted airport. He showed up with the bottle just when I finished changing the truck levelling cylinder. We took off on a maintenance test flight and the landing gear went up and came down. We landed and topped off the mains and center and took off to New York again.
On a flight from Bombay to Addis, we lost all of the oil out of #1, the left out-board engine. To prevent internal damage to the engine, we decided to land at the nearest suitable airport. This was Aden, Yemen, the old military base from the British Empire days. We landed, unloaded the passengers, and I installed the engine ferry kit built for the 707. It basically stops the engine from turning. We then started our 3-engine takeoff, pushing the two in-board engines to takeoff thrust and then, as the rudder became more effective, we pushed in more and more power from the right out-board engine. This is not an exact science and the nose tires scuffed a lot filling the cockpit with a strong smell of burnt rubber. We got airborne and proceeded on to Addis. Upon landing, I examined the nose tires and found that they were quite normal, no damage at all.

TWA also had a management contract with Saudi Arabian Airlines. They had an opening for a superintendent of engineering to train a Saudi national replacement. I joined Saudia and moved to Jeddah, a large city on the Red Sea.

Back then we used hand-held calculators to plot engine and other component data on to graph paper. (Really) I was tasked to write the detail specification on two new Lockheed-L-1011 aircraft that Saudia was purchasing. I soon realized a whole fleet of L-1011’s was likely. I had a young Saudi engineer, Mr. Adnan Dabbagh in the engineering department. He was one of those capable western educated young Saudi’s completely conversant in Arabic and English and at home in both Saudi and western cultures. I assigned Adnan a couple of projects and then got out of his way.

A year later, I transferred to Saudi flight operations and flew flight engineer on 707’s. My favorite flying was on the 707 freighter, HZ-ACF, affectionately known as “Charlie Foxtrot”. The cargo flights always got off to a slow start because maintenance squawks had to be cleared before we would accept the airplane. But once airborne, it was GREAT!! No need to be concerned about passengers, no sobbing flight attendants, just big boys in an airplane, going somewhere!

I had two exciting takeoffs in Charlie Foxtrot. One was out of London’s Heathrow Airport, when we flew through three giant flocks of small birds. We all thought we would lose at least one engine but did not. Number 3 engine was changed a few days later because it smelled so bad.

The other takeoff was out of Nice, France with a load of trees that were not accurately weighed. (Oh oh) The engines seemed to scream louder than ever the last ten seconds on the runway and we slowly got airborne. It was a very good thing the airport is at sea level and there were no vehicles on the road at the end of the runway.

I also loved the flying the B-737’s and the L-1011’s. I learned a smattering of Arabic (2,500 words) and had two small business ventures with a young Saudi couple. Adnan Dabbagh went on to become an executive at Saudia for many years.

It was about time for the children to go to school in the good old USA. I have a younger sister who was a flight attendant with American Airlines in Dallas and she also sold real estate. I had bought several small properties through her and we moved to Frisco, Texas.

My first job here was a production supervisor at Rockwell International at Love Field. The 135 sheet metal techs and avionic installers built secure communication trailers for the army in the building that now houses the Frontiers of Flight Museum. We also modified several C-130 aircraft for the navy, to harden them against atomic attack. These TACAMO aircraft circle constantly over the oceans, trailing an antenna up to 5 miles long. This allows our submerged submarines to communicate through the water with the satellites.
Nobody here had been fired for decades but I had three guys that just refused to work. So, I moved my desk out of my air-conditioned office onto the floor and documented, and documented, and documented some more, their lack of work. I got all three terminations to stick. Later Rockwell International moved to Shreveport.

I then worked (3 different times) for Associated Air Center at Love Field. We would modify new airliners and convert them into executive aircraft. It was very challenging and satisfying work.

I got married in 1989 to Pat, who is originally from Australia. She worked with CASA (for abused children) with Child Protective Services. We adopted an eight year old girl, Becky, who is now graduating from high school. Pat and Becky also worked with dog rescue (we currently have 5 dogs). It is obvious that Pat takes in unwanted children, unwanted dogs and unwanted men!

I operated my own landscape tree farm for many years.

I joined the CAF in 2010 or 2011 and went on one B-24 tour and five B-29 tours. I did a couple of side jobs with our Squadron Commander Landon Studer before he was tragically killed in his amphibian Grumman Goose taking off near Abu Dhabi, The UAE.

Larry (behind camera) was crew for Jim Cavanaugh’s flight on FIFI to Midland.

Larry pictured with Chucky from the Vintage Flying Museum
I currently work as an A&P mechanic at a small airport in McKinney, dabble in real estate, and fly my Marquart Charger open cockpit bi-plane. I still enjoy, very much, speaking to people about *Diamond Lil, FIFI* and the tremendous effort made by America during WWII.

*Larry’s plane is famous!*

One of the all-time great pics taken by Larry of FIFI flying over the Statue of Liberty.
Photo Feature

“Defenders of Liberty”

Barksdale Air Force Base
April 28-May 1, 2016

Photos by
Konley Kelley
Henry Bordelon
Neils Agather
Adam Glowaski
Photo Feature
“Defenders of Liberty”
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Dan’s next assignment is training to fly B-17’s at Roswell Army Air Field, Roswell, New Mexico. The bus ride from Oklahoma City to Roswell was not without excitement. As the bus passed by an auxiliary landing field just out of El Reno, OK, a Helldiver was coming in for a landing. The pilot overshot the runway and saw that he would hit the bus. So he tried to ground loop it and nosed over instead. He flipped right over on his back right next to the road. The driver stopped the bus and Dan and a couple of other officers pulled the pilot out of the ship. His back was hurt, and face and hands were cut up. “Personally I don’t know how it kept from killing him,” Dan wrote. His B-4 bag got left in Amarillo, TX but showed up on the 6:15 bus. Other than that the bus trip was uneventful.

Dan thinks the town of Roswell is very nice. However it is really hot in the daytime, but cools off at night and early mornings. There are several of his buddies there. Some he hasn’t seen since Primary. The mess hall is very nice. He has a meal ticket that costs $35.00 per month. They eat when they wish and the ticket gets punched for each meal. The post is “super deluxe”. There are no formations, the barracks are partitioned into rooms, and they don’t have to make their beds, or sweep the floors. There are orderlies to do all of that. “I keep thinking there is something fishy about the whole thing.” They will be kept very busy. There will be lots of ground school and lots of flying. They washout about 20% of the pilots here. Once you washout you are made a co-pilot instead of a 1st pilot. Dan is in Class 44-4-E. The extra 4 means 4 engine.

The ship “Hells Angels” is there. Dan expects to fly it while he is there. He spent a couple of hours in the cockpit familiarizing himself with the controls. “Boy of all the ‘thing-a-ma-gigs’ I ever saw. This B-17 is really full of gadgets.” “Hells Angels” is covered with autographs, several from Tinker Field and all over. One of his buddies has already flown it. Most of the guys don’t like flying it, but it has less hours than most of the other ships. “Hells Angels” was the first B-17 to complete 25 missions in the 8th Air Force.

Dan’s older brother is in the Coast Guard and participated in the Normandy Invasion. In his letter Dated June 10, 1944 he told his mother there is no doubt Don is in the thick of it. But he is sure his parents will hear from him soon enough. Dan wrote, “Now mother, don’t feel bad at anyone because Don is over there. Things just happened that way and I know they will work out for the best. They are already inland and so Don’s big battle is over. From now on he will be operating behind our lines and not on the front as they were during the landing of the troops.”

After a week of going to ground school eight hours a day Dan finally gets to fly the B-17. His first day starts at 5:30 and he is airborne by 6:30 and flies until 11:30. He shot 15 landings and his left arm felt like he had been digging a ditch all day. When he first got in the airplane it seemed like the wing went for miles on either side. There is plenty there to keep him busy but he believes he can handle it OK. He will take 2 or 3 transition rides before starting instruments. He will have to finish instruments before he can solo the airplane.
Each instructor has 2 students. The other student is a Flight Officer. His instructor is a 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant from New York. His name is Teegarden. In talking to his instructor about cross countries he said they hit Oklahoma City every time. If he can get through instruments he will probably get a cross country to Oklahoma City in about a month.

He saw the movie “The Memphis Belle” at the post theater. He doesn’t think his Dad would like it. It shows the Memphis Belle’s actual raids over Germany and some of the pictures are not a pretty sight.

The ships there are mostly new, silver B-17G’s. All rigged for combat, guns and all. On June 15, Dan flew 5 hours in formation and it was really rough. He didn’t have a dry stitch of clothes after flying. He was as tired as if he had “washed and ironed all day”. He heard about the bombing of Japan. This was the first tryout for the B-29. Some guys go from Roswell to the B-29’s.

Dan received a letter from his parents in which they sent some pictures taken when he was home on leave. He wrote, “You know it seems like it was sort of a dream that I was home. I think of a lot of things I would do if I were home again. Sure hope I get a few days when I leave here.” He has heard that there weren’t any losses in the Coast Guard during the Normandy invasion. Of course that is good news but they still have not heard from his brother Don in over two weeks since the invasion. He got $309.30 for his first 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant pay which included his time at home. Sure is quite a change from Cadet Pay.

After another 5 hours, he began Instrument training. The airplane doesn’t seem as big as it did but Dan is worried about instruments. There is a lot of new radio equipment and it makes for a lot more “complication”. Passing the instrument means the difference between being a co-pilot and a first pilot.

When he passes his instrument and begins cross countries his mother wants to know how she would know if it is him if he flies to Oklahoma City. Dan wrote, “I would circle the house a few times and wiggle a wing. And then when they land he would call her.” Hopefully, he would get to come to the house. His mother is going to bring his car to him at Roswell, but he warns her about getting cheated when putting gasoline in the car. She should only put 5 gallons at a time in the car. If she were to fill up it might only take 8 gallons then the attendant would take 2 five gallon coupons, so she would lose out on 3 gallons of gasoline.

Dan attended an orientation lecture about the duties of an “Airplane Commander”. He can see his job is just beginning. Being a pilot is just a minor detail. “If and when we get our crews, the work begins. Outside of taking care of all their needs and knowing each man’s job well enough to supervise him, we won’t have a thing to do”. After a long day of flying instruments Dan says the B-17 is a good instrument ship. There are a lot of procedures when it comes to radio orientation. He has started flying the “range”. They have been washing out pilots and all it takes is 1 unsatisfactory ride to make you a co-pilot. Dan sure hopes he can “cut the mustard”. On one flight they had to feather the number 2 engine because of some problems. The B-17 flies as good on 3 engines as it does on 4 as he flew it in from 50 miles out.

By the 23 of June Dan has 25 hours in the “old tub”. Roswell is the best instrument school in the command. If he gets through there “they don’t make weather we can’t fly thru (or around)”. They want to get 15,000 hours flying there that month. The school is already 1 month ahead of schedule. They fly anytime there is a ship on the ground, night or day. But they also have the lowest accident rate of any school in the command. He got to fly with 2 combat veterans at an auxiliary field flying practice formation landings. All they did was make passes at the field at 180 mph 15 feet off the ground. “The B-17 is a swell buzzing machine. The cattle really scattered this morning.” His parents finally heard from his older brother Don that he is doing fine. Almost 20 days after the start of the Normandy invasion.

Dan is continuing instrument training. He is hoping to get a green card which is the highest instrument rating he can get. He can pass instruments without having a green card though. The green card means he has 100 hours in “the
soup” and that is hard to get. On a day that it rained hard he had ground school and three hours of link trainer. He was kinda “Da-dit” happy after listening to the radar range for that long.

He flew until two in the morning one day, then was back flying the next afternoon. Then was scheduled to fly the next morning. He shot two and three engine landings on the afternoon flight. He thinks they are trying to fly their pants off. The next transition flight will be a check ride for four engine aircraft. A pretty good rating to have. He wrote, “Anyone can fly one with one engine.” One more instrument flight and he will get his instrument check on the next flight. It takes five hours to give two men an instrument check. Most of his upper class was gone by the first of July 1944. Several of them got B-29’s. “I wouldn’t mind having a crack at them myself.”

Dan’s letter dated July 4, 1944 had a lot of good news. On the morning of the 4th he soloed the B-17. It was really a good feeling to be checked out in it, but it doesn’t match the feeling he got the first time he soloed in Primary. The day before he got the big worry off his mind. He passed his instrument check. He now has 60 hours in the B-17 and over half way through required flying. He wrote, “I am not crazy about big ships but would like a crack at that B-29, just so I could say I had flown it.” During his solo checkout the instructor cut the two inboard engines just as he was about to leave the ground. He proceeded to do a minimum roll emergency stop. He put the tail in the air and put on the brakes as he was about to run out of runway. That 50,000 lbs. of airplane went from 100 mph to practically nothing in a few seconds and all the tread on the tires went with it. There were two spots, one on each tire worn to the tread. “When you got to stop though, you got to stop tires or no tires.”

Dan’s mother drove Dan’s car to Roswell for him to drive while he was there. She and his younger brother Dave and Don’s wife Ruth stayed for a week at the Nickson Hotel. She had brought the title to his car so he could get it registered. But when he went to register it, he was told he needed insurance before he could register it. He is not sure he will bother with insurance or not, but his car is still running good.

On the 18th of July Dan wrote that he had 100 hours in the old “Tub”. About all that is left of his flight training is a long cross country, but he still doesn’t know where that will be. He started a new phase of ground school called “Practical Maintenance”. They actually work on the airplanes and repair them. His group of 4 changed a prop and put on a new generator in the afternoon. He says it sure feels good to get a wrench in his hand again.

One of his roommates received word that his brother in law had been killed over Germany. He was a Captain and Squadron Navigator for a squadron of B-17’s.

Dan has had a couple of flights with the Major. He is sweating out having to stay on as an instructor. The instructor school starts in a couple of days. He was interviewed by the Colonel and told him he didn’t want an instructing job. He hopes his “high powered talking” did some good. He didn’t get his cross country. He is probably through flying at Roswell. More than likely he will ship out in 2-3 weeks. In the meantime more lectures and ground school. After he was told he wouldn’t be flying there anymore, they have come back and told him he has to get some more solo time. He flew 5 hours one day and is still needing 1 hour the next day. He is still sweating out the instructor deal. He tells his parents he knows they want him to take it, but Dan wants no part of it. “After all that is what he has been training for”. He says the training command is the worst you can get in. And once you are in it is almost impossible to get out. Some of his classmates are shipping out in a couple of days. He wishes he was going with them. They are all getting B-29’s and 14 day leave.

On July 28, 1944 Dan writes that he has it from a reliable source that he was going to ship out in the next group of B-29 co-pilots. He had good grades all through the course, and with the instructor recommendation, he was put into the upper bracket of his class. The students that they chose for instructors but did not keep are going to be sent to B-29’s. Dan considers it quite an honor to be on that list. He is now waiting for his official orders as to when he ships out. He is really glad he did not get the instructor job.

Dan’s orders finally came through and he is going to be training as a B-29 co-pilot. His next duty station is Harvard, Nebraska.
Special Feature
The Adventures of Living History “Rosie”
An Interview with Elinor Otto
By Lisa Foster

As a living history “Rosie the Riveter” I have been fortunate to meet so many wonderful women and men of the “Greatest Generation”. I’ve traveled with the CAF to honor the women of Henry Ford’s B-24 plant at Willow Run in Michigan, as well as to celebrate the “Baltimore Rosies” that worked in the Martin and Eastern plants in Maryland. In addition, I have given presentations to retirement communities and groups like Rotary and the WWII Round Table where I honor men and women here in the Metroplex. Most recently, as part of a series of events and lectures at the Frontiers of Flight Museum, I was asked by the CEO to lead a discussion for the public with Elinor Otto -- “America’s Longest Working Rosie the Riveter.” I was so honored!

In anticipation of interviewing Elinor, I was very excited and I must admit, somewhat star struck. This Rosie was “a celebrity”. She had been interviewed by Ellen, Joan Lunden and appeared on the Today Show. How could I stack up against these journalists? I was looking so forward to interviewing Elinor for many reasons: 1) It would allow me to tell her personally how much I appreciated everything she and the other Rosies have done to pave the way so that I could be the professional woman that I am today and 2) Through my interview with Elinor Otto, I could facilitate a conversation that would allow the audience to learn about this vibrant woman who was so important to history as well as to this generation today. Here is her story...

Elinor Otto was single mom from Los Angeles when WWII broke out in 1942. She and her young son along with her mother and 2 sisters left home for Chula Vista, California near Tijuana, Mexico. Her older sister went to work in Redmond in the shipyards as a welder, while she and her little sister stayed in Chula Vista and went to work at Rohr Aircraft. Rohr Aircraft is most notable as the plant that built the Sperry Bombsight for the Consolidated LB-30 and B-24A, as well as the cowlings that were used on the Lockheed Martin planes. When asked what planes she built during World War 2 she replied, “many”. The parts that Rohr built were found on various planes of that era. She recalled fondly her time at Rohr but said with a laugh “that was a long time ago”.

She mentioned specifically that in that day “it was about the people, not the machines.” She recounted how Fred Rohr, the owner, would come around and speak with the employees.
She added, “that is unlike today in Corporate America, where we’re all just a number”. She recalled vividly how music was piped in to the plant to boost morale. “You’ll Never Know” by Vera Lynn and “When the Lights Go On All Over the World” by Vaughn Monroe were a couple of her favorites. Elinor also shared with the audience that she would play the famous “Rosie the Riveter” song by the Four Vagabonds on her 78 phonograph when she and her sister needed a little extra motivation to go to work. After spending time with Elinor; seeing this woman full of spunk and joy for working, I imagined that those days were few and far between.

Elinor worked swing shift making 65 cents/hour, while her mom watched her young son. She would go in to work at 3pm and get off at 12am. She didn’t like that shift much because she would see everyone going out all dressed up to go dancing as she was coming in to go to bed. She preferred day shift. Many people worked swing shift because in some plants, like Consolidated in San Diego, you would get an 8 cent differential. Elinor, when asked why she went to work in the plant replied, “I went to work in the plant because it was a challenge to work with tools and because I wanted to help with the war effort, but mostly to help with the war effort”. She then continued to say that “the women didn’t think that what they were doing at the time was special and now many decades later we are getting recognition. I can’t believe it.” In its first few years, women made up almost 55% of the Rohr plant’s employee base, compared to most plants whose labor force was only 40% women. After the war ended in 1945, the majority of the women returned to work in the home as the men returned to the jobs they had held prior to the entering the war. Only a few women who held specialized roles such as welders were allowed to remain in their positions. When I asked Elinor how she felt about this she answered, “the women knew that would happen. They were glad that the war ended and the men were able to come back home to their jobs. Some men didn’t get to come home.” Elinor was one of the women that continued to work outside of the home after the war.

Elinor held several jobs such as a secretary and waitress as a car hop, but what I found most interesting was that of all those jobs she held, she found defense work to be the most rewarding and challenging. She was quoted as saying “she resisted any suggestion that she switch to clerical or administrative work that was more typical of women’s jobs.” So, in 1951 she went to work at Ryan Aeronautical as a riveter. When asked about her time at Ryan Aeronautical, she proudly said “Ryan Aeronautical made Charles Lindbergh’s plane The Spirit of St Louis.” She continued to work at Ryan until they stopped making aircraft in 1964. Something also noteworthy about Ryan Aeronautical is that In addition to making Lindbergh’s plane, Ryan also in the later years was known for its work in drone technology in the 50’s and early 60’s.

What is most amazing about the story of Elinor Otto is how she worked for McDonnel Douglas, which later was bought out by Boeing, for a total of 49 ½ years. She did not retire. She left only because the Boeing Long Beach facility closed its doors in 2015. She was 95 years old when she was let go. She talked of performing many functions during her time with Boeing, among them a bucker and a riveter on commercial airplanes like the DC10, and DC 9. But what Elinor is most proud of is that she was a Wing Spar Mechanic riveting components on the C-17 used in the US Air Force, as well as abroad, until the day she left the plant. She said “we loved those planes “, with a gleam in her eye. She riveted parts on each and every C-17 that was produced. From the first C-17 built in 1980 to the 279th which left the assembly line in 2015, she left her mark and she has her Boeing issued rivet gun to prove it. Elinor keeps her rivet gun on her kitchen counter as a memento of her contribution at Boeing. By the time she left the plant in 2015, she was making more than $40/hour. She came a long way. She said “it only took me 70 years to get there”.

Elinor Otto: A Woman at Work During WWII and Boeing’s Long Beach Assembly Line
Today, Elinor Otto is working as a spokesperson for the Spirit of 45 Campaign. As spokesperson, she not only is dedicated to promoting public awareness about the national day, celebrated the 2nd Sunday in August every year in honor of the men and women of the “Greatest Generation”, but also she performs the role of raising awareness of what the women contributed during WWII, especially those who worked in the factories as Rosie the Riveters.

Elinor participates in many Rosie Rallies around the country that are also centered around raising awareness of these woman and how their contributions helped to shape women’s roles today. The role of spokeswoman is one she takes very seriously and says she is very honored to hold and said during our interview “I hope that my example can help inspire others in some way- especially women.” In addition to all her responsibilities as spokeswoman, Elinor works with many elderly who require special care, including her younger sister, who sadly is suffering with dementia. She continues to stay in touch with her coworkers from the Boeing plant. She stays very active and at the time of the interview had “just gotten her driver’s license. “ This one’s good “til I’m 100”, she said.

There is so much to say about this vibrant woman. She is sharp, humble and positive but most of all she is a wonderful woman and role model with a great attitude and sense of humor. Before the interview, she and I were in the “Green Room” at the Frontiers of Flight Museum getting to know one another, as that we had never spoken or written to one another prior to the interview. She is quite the professional. There was one question that I needed to ask prior to going on stage. I was curious to know: What was the key to staying young and healthy in this environment where anxiety is the silent killer in so many woman (and men) today. She said: It’s all about attitude! Staying positive and staying busy, that’s what keeps you young and healthy”. She was quoted as saying “When I go to Heaven, I hope God keeps me busy”. What an amazing lady.

This Living History Rosie the Riveter is one lucky gal! Thank you Elinor for being such an inspiration to motivate me to keep telling your story and those of the many other Rosies that made so many sacrifices during World War 2! You are the reason why I do what I do!!!! Thank you also to all those in the CAF who continue to support my efforts as Rosie the Riveter!
Editor’s Corner

Doolittle Raider delivered

Back in August at a Squadron event, I asked Col. Dick Cole to sign two painted right wings for a 1:48 B-25 model kit. I told my buddy, Al Benzing, I’d make two B-25s and one would be his. At B-24 Ground School in April, I presented Al with the finished model.

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
B-29 / B-24 Squadron

Mailing Address:
PO Box 763577
Dallas, TX 75376
United States of America

Street Address:
5661 Mariner Drive
Suite 2924
Dallas Executive Airport
Dallas, TX 75237

www.cafb29b24.org
www.AirPowerTour.org
972-387-2924 (Hangar)
432-413-4100 (Ride Desk)