



STRAIGHT SCOOP

Volume XIV Number 3 March 2008

To promote the acquisition, restoration, safe operation, and display of historical aircraft and provide an educational venue for the community

.This article appeared on the the front page of the travel section of the San Francisco Chronicle Sunday February 17, 2008

By: Matt Villano, a freelance writer

Maverick sat there. I couldn't help but think this on a recent weekday as I stared up at a beautiful but terrifying F-14A Tomcat fighter jet - one of the planes used in "Top Gun," the 1986 classic movie with Tom Cruise. With its Hollywood connection, the plane could have been an attraction at Universal Studios.

Instead, it was in a back corner of the Charles M. Schultz Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa. The plane is one of nearly two dozen vintage aircraft on display at the nonprofit Pacific Coast Air Museum. Together with a room of modest indoor exhibits, Executive Director [Dave Pinsky](#) says these outdoor treasures comprise one of the most unheralded gems in all of Wine Country.

"Those people who come up here just to go wine tasting are missing out," Pinsky boasts. "You don't need wine to have a good time with us."

The museum experience begins in a building no larger than a standard 737. After paying the \$5 entry fee (technically it's a donation), visitors can peruse a series of exhibits that focus on aviation history throughout the Bay Area.

Many of these exhibits highlight military history. One case details a local pilot's experiences in the Battle of Midway during World War II. Another explains the science behind those spaceman-like pressure suits, outlining how most were designed so a pilot's body fluids won't expand if the pilot must eject and expose himself to low air pressure at 30,000 feet.

A third case chronicles the history of the airfield itself. Prompted in part by the attack at Pearl Harbor, the airport opened in January 1943 as a U.S. Army air base, and the Army paid Sonoma County \$1 a year for the land until the war was over, when the county resumed control.

A special exhibit, dubbed "The U-2 Shootdown: A Son's Perspective," tells the tale of Francis Gary Powers, a CIA pilot who was shot down in his U-2 spy airplane over Russian airspace in 1960, touching off an international espionage scandal that landed him in jail for 21 months.

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[See Page 7 for Member tributes to Dick Alexander](#)

[See Page 11 for a special tribute to Dick Alexander from his family](#)

The Pacific Coast Air Museum

Location: At the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport, North of Santa Rosa, West of Highway 101, at 2230 Becker Blvd, off North Laughlin Road.

Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. 10:00am—4:00pm.

“Climb Aboard”: A selected aircraft is available to “Climb Aboard” the third weekend of each month (weather permitting). Please visit our web site at www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org or call 707-575-7900 for details or further information.

Member Meetings: Normally held on the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00pm, at the Sonoma County Office of Education, near the airport at the intersection of Airport and Skylane Boulevards. Interesting speakers are featured at each meeting.

“Straight Scoop”

The museum newsletter, “Straight Scoop” is published monthly and is available on line on the museum’s web site. Members are highly encouraged to submit articles for possible publication. The deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication. All articles in the newsletter are covered by copyright. If you wish to submit articles or use any of the content, please contact:

Chris Tart, Editor
1064 Maple Drive
Windsor, Ca 95492
707-836-9226
sctartusaf@yahoo.com

Membership Renewals:

\$30 per year individual; \$45 per year for families. End renewals to the museum at the address below.

Address Corrections:

Please send to:
Pacific Coast Air Museum
2230 Becker Boulevard
Santa Rosa, Ca 95403

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Most of the artifacts in the exhibition are on loan from the Cold War Museum in Fairfax, Va. The exhibition runs until April 15. Of course, the biggest attractions at the Pacific Coast Air Museum are the planes themselves. The aircraft are parked in a giant "U" on the grass behind the museum building. On "Climb Aboard" days - the third weekend of every month - staff members open a different plane for closer inspection. The planes are open again in August for the annual Wings Over Wine Country air show, during which additional antique aircraft, war birds and modern planes are brought in to perform aerial displays. Year round, the museum is home to nearly two dozen aircraft in all, including the F-14A "TomCat", a UH-1H "Huey" helicopter and a F-106 "Delta Dart". Pinsky, who flew a F-106 in the 1970s, says it was capable of achieving speeds of more than 1,500 mph and a ceiling of close to 60,000 feet. Also on hand ; a rare Ilyushin IL-14 Crate, a twin-engine Russian personnel and cargo transport, and a HU-16E "Albatross", a portly (read: funny looking) Coast Guard transport designed to land on water. The latter will be open in today's "climb aboard". **Duane Coppock**, administrative assistance and facilities manager, flew the Albatross in 1963, and likened the experience to flying a Mack Truck. "You don't know big until you've flown one of these," he says. Still, he notes, "If the water was calm, landing the plane on water is even smoother than landing on a runway".

I might not have been talking to "Maverick", but hearing the stories of the people who've actually flown the intriguing aircraft on display is a top way to learn about flight.



Executive Director Update

This is a tough column to write. On vacation in late February with my son and his children, I learned of the untimely death in an auto accident of [Major General Bud Breckner](#), a close friend, retired USAF Major General, former Vietnam POW, former Air Force Academy Commandant of Cadets, great fighter pilot and a huge supporter and advocate of air power.

Then I learned of the passing of [Carl Thompson and Dick Alexander](#), both stalwarts of our Air Museum, especially in the early days. [Don Doherty](#) wrote of Carl: "Carl was a great "character! When we started our museum, we did everything with pencil and paper. Carl was our first computer "guru"!! He setup our membership program, worked with Seth to fine-tune the printing of our newsletter, setup our early book-keeping and inventory programs and he did it his way! We sure supported him because none of us had any idea what he was doing. But it worked! The "Crusader" was his baby and he oversaw the bulk of the restoration. It was done his way! He said many times, "Don't ask me, I'm not going to do it". Then, he'd shift his toothpick to the other side of his mouth and say, "Maybe I'll take a look at it" and it would get done. He loved the museum and he sure was one of the large bricks in our foundation! His heart was very big but his means were simple. He was generous to a fault and he'd do anything for you, even when his health was in question. He will be missed." When we lose folks such as these, it certainly makes one sit back, take stock, wonder if the little things that bother us are really that important, and it makes me focus on what is important in life.

Folks like Carl and Dick provided a very solid beginning and foundation for what has become an absolutely outstanding Pacific Coast Air Museum. And for our "Wings Over Wine Country" Air Show, now regarded by the "Pacific Flyer" as the best aerobatic and war bird Air Show in northern California. Take a look around at the group of folks who are carrying on that tradition today. Come out on a Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday or Sunday and just have lunch with or hang around this truly wonderful and amazing group of people. You will be impressed, if not amazed. They do it all with humor, hard work and a terrific regard for each other. The real "grunt" work of the museum does not get done by the Executive Director or by the Board of Directors - - it gets done by you, the members, those that care to come out and volunteer their time, talents and energies.

What can you contribute you say? How about volunteering to help with an airplane, or in the Gift Shop? What about grant research and grant writing? How about becoming one of the docents that guide our tours and give schoolchildren lectures about aviation and aviation history? Want to help with the birthday parties we host? Have you got handyman skills? - - we can sure use you. Want to help out in the office? Do you have budget skills - - we can use you? We're having a Shrimp Feed on June 7th, an Air Show August 16 and 17 and a huge WWII Swing Dance and USO Show on October 11th - - we need lots of volunteers to help bring off these events which help us raise the funds to keep our museum operating and open. Did you know that we have some aircraft that don't have a crew chief? Bet you didn't know that at least three aircraft need to be painted before the next Air Show. Got some automotive or mechanical skills? -- we have some tugs in need of some TLC. And there is a whole lot more. If you'd like to help carry on the legacy begun by the likes of [Carl Thompson](#), [Dick Alexander](#) and the late [Harrison Rued](#) (who we lost last year), the opportunity is there. Just call me at the museum or write me at director@pacificcoastairmuseum.org, contact Jim Cook at hawleyp@aol.com, or send Kathy Kumpula an e-mail at kckump@att.net.

When you step up to help our organization, you are helping to preserve historic aircraft, aviation history, the aviation history of Sonoma County and providing an important educational venue for the children and adults of Sonoma County. [Carl Thompson](#), [Dick Alexander](#), [Harrison Rued](#) and the others who worked so hard to found this organization and keep it going would say “bravo”.

Smooth Landings,

Dave

March Speaker

Bob Swan

Bob was born in Billings MT in 1918, he graduated from Pensacola as an ensign with Navy wings in Sept 1941, with orders to report to VP 44 at San Diego North Island. After the Pearl Harbor attack, he was transferred to Alameda for anti-submarine patrol of No. CA. After months of bad weather flying, he was assigned to a new PB5A, and departed to Ford Island in HI, a 21 ½ hour flight.

About mid April we flew anti sub cover for the Hornet and Enterprise on their trip with Jimmy Doolittle's squadron of planes to bomb Japan. In May the squadron was assigned to Midway and flew daily searches of 12 – 14 hours at a time. Jack Reid was PPC (Patrol Plane Commander) and Bob was titled First Pilot-Navigator and Jerry Hardeman was 2nd Pilot and asst. navigator. Bob was primary navigator most of the time out of Midway, since he had more experience and Jerry flew as co-pilot.

On June 3rd they went about 25 minutes beyond the normal patrol limits of 680 mile out leg and ran into the enemy fleet. They were able to get the message about the enemy position which gave the US fleet about 20 hours notice of the enemy. It was fortunate that they went beyond the 680-mile limit because other patrol planes had been attacked by Mitsubishi 96 planes near Wake Island. The Japanese would know what time our planes reached our turn around time and stayed just inside that point to attack as they made the turn. Bob's plane had some new ammunition and was looking to see the Japanese planes, they were disappointed about not seeing anyone to shoot at but a lot more than they bargained for. The next couple of days the patrol group was busy dogging planes and enemy ships, then were tasked to make some rescue missions. Going back to Pearl Harbor, they expected to go home, instead Bob did more training and received his PPC designation. Later the squadron was called in for a meeting with Adm. Mitchner who told them that he knew they were expecting some rest but were being sent to the Solomon Islands.

In the Solomon's they flew out of Espiritu Santos an Halavo Bay on Florida Is. and Vanikovo an island in the Santa Cruz group until August of 1943. After 30 days leave for Bob's wedding and checking out the new PV-1 Vega Ventura, he went back to Kanehoe bay in HI to train in rocket firing. The squadron was then sent to Tarawa flying to bomb Nahru Is. After receiving word that the Marines were going to take Tinian, they departed for Eniwetok. From Eniwetok, they headed for Tinian, the flight was at the maximum range of the Ventura. When landing at Tinian, his plane took a lot of rifle fire from the port side. On Tinian, they flew bombing missions to Yap, Olei, Pagan and others, as well as escort missions to Iwo Jima.

After the war, Bob went back to Florida to instrument training, and then as a reservist he flew with several squadrons and was CO of the Acorn I2-2.



After a lot of hard work by a lot of people, the new shop is now in use.

Here are the worker bees at home in their new shop. Many thanks to [Jim Long](#), [Jim Cook](#), [Larry Rengstorf](#), [Ron Stout](#), [Bill Greene](#), [Barney Hagen](#), [Ed Nelson](#), [Nick Van Kruining](#), and the others who made this long held dream come true.

And thanks to the Board of Directors for their support for the new shop."

**The Pacific Coast Air Museum
Welcomes these New Members**

Daniel Lusk Family - Rohnert Park
Nestor Nunez - So. San Francisco
Don & Barbara Wilson - Santa Rosa
Nick & Patricia Morelli - Santa Rosa
David Winterlin - Santa Rosa
Matt & Kahala Doyel - Windsor
Jerry Dodig - Petaluma

Daryl J. Anderson - Santa Rosa
Richard Hill - Santa Rosa
Don & Allison Kosta - Santa Rosa
Julius Verebely - Santa Rosa
Paris Singleton - Cazadero
Becky Greene - Windsor
Wayne Magnus - Santa Rosa

Carl Thompson

Carl was a great "character"! When we started our museum, we did everything with pencil and paper. Carl was our first computer "guru"! He setup our membership program, worked with Seth to fine-tune the printing of our newsletter, setup our early bookkeeping and inventory programs and he did it his way! We sure supported him because none of us had any idea what he was doing. But it worked! The "Crusader" was his baby and he oversaw the bulk of the restoration. It was done his way! He said many times, "Don't ask me, I'm not going to do it". Then, he'd shift his toothpick to the other side of his mouth and say, "Maybe I'll take a look at it" and it would get done. He loved the museum and he sure was one of the large bricks in our foundation! His heart was very big, but his means were simple. He was generous to a fault and he'd do anything for you, even when his health was in question. He will be missed. Keep an eye on us Carl, we may need your oversight.

Don Doherty

Carl was the ultimate curmudgeon (he could really outdo you Bill), but did have a deep love of PCAM. I'm not sure that he had a lot of the finer things in life but was willing to share what he did have, especially when it came to the Museum. I know he had some serious health issues so this might be a blessing. Rest in peace Carl.

Bill Canavan

Carl Thompson was one of the first "Life Members" of Pacific Coast Air Museum. He was well known for his work on the restoration of the F-8

Al Cathcart**Wanted**

Crew Chief for the F-86 Sabre———Crew Chief for the F-8 Crusader———Crew Chief for the F-16 Viper



Anyone interested please contact Master Crew Chief [Jim Cook](#) at 483-8811

Nostalgia

All you old aviators . . .

You guys and gals ever think back to how it all began? The first ride over the bridge to NAS Pensacola. In the old days, Marine Guards stood watch on the gate...crisp uniforms, polished white helmet liners with yellow and red stripes on the side and the large golden Globe and Anchor on the front . Even to the uninitiated, you knew you were entering a new and exciting phase of your young life. After you received your temporary pass, you drove through the Main Gate and were confronted with the gleaming Blue Angel F-9 or F-11... depending on the year... and your heart started beating just a little bit faster... and your mind immediately thought of the possibilities of your future...*maybe, just maybe... someday.*

If you took the left fork in the road and drove up the hill past the golf course, toward the BOQ, and continued past it.. As you crested the top.. Off to your right was Captains Row.. Antebellum homes overlooking the parade field, football stadium, the beautiful Base Chapel and eventually out to the bay. On the left was Chavalier Field, home of O & R or NARF as it was later called and parked on the field, depending on the year would be gleaming newly painted aircraft right out of re-work. They could have been F6Fs, F9s, SNBs, TV2s, T-28s or later even A-4s tucked way back to the left were about a dozen or so cosmoline coated old veterans.. A Corsair, Bearcat, Tigercat, AD, Panther, Banshee and others, planes that later would provide the nucleus for our future museum that was only a dream at the time.

As you approached Base Headquarters building, if you went left again, you drove by a brick wall that pre-dated the Civil War.. Continuing around it eventually turned back to the right and approached the docks. If you were lucky, you might have had your first glimpse of a real aircraft carrier (the first of many). It could have been called Saipan, or Antietam, or Lexington.. All veterans of the last "Good War", and again your mind reflected...*maybe, just maybe.. Someday.*

Just past the carrier, the road took another right turn and brought you along the sea wall and the old hangars on your left. You didn't know it at the time, but this was the *real* birthplace of Naval Aviation... where once old Curtis Triads and other long forgotten sea planes and float planes were launched and trained the first of those to go before us, sharing the bay with old square riggers still in service.

As you continued West, on your right was the old Training Command Headquarters and a large number of brick buildings which you would soon learn were barracks and training buildings...the altitude chamber, ejection seat trainer and the Navy Exchange. Platoons of Officer Candidates and Aviation Cadets were marching to class in crisp khakis under the baleful eyes of Marine Drill Instructors. Just past the hangars on the left was the indoor swimming pool where you were first introduced to the Dilbert Dunker, the 9D5, and other torture devices known only to Naval Aviators...past that was the Survival School and their small animal collection. Inside the building was a cutaway of the old PBV.

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Past that was the water tower and the dreaded obstacle course.. If you took the road to your right, here you would find NAMI Headquarters with it's centrifuge. the National cemetery and the Base Hospital, where you would sweat out your "indoc" physical... take eye and hearing tests and experience your first (and hopefully your last) EEG... needles in the head and strobe lights.. Who could ever forget It? Somewhere in here was also the "Flight Equipment Shop"... where you would receive your first flight gear, your first leather jacket and be introduced to your first real "smells" unique to Naval Aviation. I can close my eyes and still remember the smell of my first flight jacket, flight suit oxygen mask and helmet. Bet you can too.

If you had continued on the main road, you would go past the incredible Officers Club at Mustin Beach, and then on your right you came upon an awesome sight; the old Fort Barrancas.. Even more history that you expected in this short journey. Driving up the hill, you would see the light house and eventually on your right you would see Sherman Field. This is where the action was...even back then, the Blue Angels had a hangar there, but there were also the planes you hoped to fly. Depending on the generation, they were Panthers, Cougars, Banshees, T-28s, T-2s, and two seat F-0s or TA-4s. TH-57s, UH-1Ls. Whether you stayed there or went to Saufly, Whiting or Ellyson, this was the most likely the place you came back to for your first look at a carrier deck from a cockpit.

If you were like me, you probably parked near the tower and Base Ops and watched the traffic pattern where all manner of aircraft were landing and taking off; everything from T-34s to F-8s and Phantoms or they could have been SNJs, T-28s, Panthers and Bearcats; if it had been just a few years earlier. And here once again, your mind would wander and you would think...*maybe, just maybe...someday.*

Thinking back, our first experiences were so unique from our other services. Where newbies encountered "Cookie Cutter" bases, that ranged from no-where Texas to Oklahoma, to Mississippi or a beautiful but miserably hot Arizona. They all felt and looked the same, save the local climate and topography... but ours was soooo *different*. Awesome, beautiful, historical and almost overwhelming... and we all shared the same experience. Damn, we were lucky.



T-34



SNJ



T-28



F-9F Panther



F-6F Bearcat



F-8 Crusader



F-4 Phantom

The First F /A-22 Delivery to Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

These are great in-flight photos of the F/A-22 as the first aircraft delivery was being made to Langley AFB in Va. . Langley is the first operational AFB for the F/A-22. It is a very beautiful AFB, located in a picturesque location, as you can see in these photos, near Norfolk and Hampton , Va.

The aircraft flying along with the F/A-22 in the last of these photos is the F-15, which will be replaced by the F/A-22 which is several times better than the F-15. In actual In-flight (simulated) combat operations against the F-15, two F/A-22's were able to operate without detection while it went head to head against 8 F-15's. The F/A-22's scored missile hits (kills) against all the F-15 Aircraft and the F/A-22's were never detected by either the F-15's or ground based radar.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lewis said: "The Raptor operated against all adversaries with virtual impunity; ground based systems couldn't engage and NO adversary aircraft survived"!!!

F/A-22-- America 's Most Advanced Fighter Aircraft for the 21st Century!!!! They're a titanium and carbon fiber dagger. They're so advanced that if their on-board locator is switched off even our own satellites can lose track of them. They're the first military aircraft ever built that is equipped with a "black-out button". What that means is this ... the best conditioned fighter pilots are capable of maintaining consciousness up to in the vicinity of 15+ G. The Raptor is capable of making 22+ G. turns. If some day an adversary builds a missile that is capable of catching up to one of these airplanes and a Raptor pilot sees that a strike is imminent, he hits the "b.o.b." and the airplane makes a virtual U-turn, leaving the missile to pass right on by. They know that in the process he'll temporarily lose consciousness, so the Raptor then automatically comes back to straight and level flight until he wakes back up.



Joe Duggan, member and U.S. Navy pilot in WWII passed away on Feb. 3rd here in Santa Rosa. He was a long time member of PCAM as well as an active member of the local WW II Pilot's Association.

Richard Edward Alexander (1934-2008)

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Dick Alexander, husband, father, Marine, and commercial pilot, passed away on Tuesday, February 19, in Roseville, CA.

Dick's passing came after several weeks in the hospital, where, with characteristic strength and composure, he fought a courageous battle with a rare neuromuscular disease called *myasthenia gravis*. He spent his last moments with the love of his life, his wife Sybil. He was also with family and close friends. Dick was preceded in death by his father, John Alexander, and mother, Lillian Alexander (née Titzck). He is survived by his wife, Sybil Alexander of Lincoln, CA; sister Elaine West of Scottsdale, AZ; brother Jack Alexander of Lauderdale Lakes, FL; step-son Joe Leisek and daughter-in-law Tracy Leisek, both of Petaluma, CA; step-son Tom Leisek and daughter-in-law Satoko Leisek, both of Keller, TX; step-daughter Julia Beatrice of Roseville, CA; and grandchildren Will Leisek and Katie Leisek of Petaluma, CA; and Phoebe Leisek of Keller, TX.

Dick was born in Camden, NJ. He attended high school in Haddenfield, NJ, before earning a management degree from the University of Miami. After college, he entered the US Marine Corps at basic school in Quantico, VA. He rose to the rank of Captain and was one of the early F8U Crusader pilots. He flew in VMF-235. After his honorable discharge in 1964, Dick joined the commercial airline industry. He first flew for National Airlines, then moved to Pan Am and later to United Air Lines. Dick lived a full and adventurous life. He loved sailing, fishing, hunting, skiing, and tennis. He was an avid San Francisco 49ers fan. One of his best memories was piloting the team's charter jet to a couple of games during their Super Bowl years. Dick was first and foremost a U.S. Marine. He stayed in touch with his network of friends and colleagues from his years of military service and attended many reunion events.

He was also an active member of the Pacific Coast Air Museum in Santa Rosa, CA, where he helped restore an RF-8 that is now a popular public exhibit. We loved him and will miss him very much. Dick was a doting husband and a loving father. He was a man of conviction and compassion who was a big part of our lives, as he was in the lives of those who knew him. He was a man who flew at mach speed, traveled the world, raced sailboats in the Bahamas, dove in the waters off the Florida coast, and hunted in the mountains of Montana. And yet, Dick most cherished the time he spent with family and friends, and especially with his grandchildren.

A celebration of Dick's life will be held on Monday, March 17, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Orchard Creek Lodge at Sun City Lincoln Hills, 965 Orchard Creek Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you send a donation in Dick's name to the veterans organization of your choice.

A special note to Dick's friends: Please continue to send your e-mails to this address. His wife and family always enjoyed sharing these messages with Dick. Continuing to receive these e-mails will help us honor his memory. Buggunfighter@sbcglobal.net



**Visit Pacific Coast
Air Museum
March 15 and 16th
Climb Aboard weekend
Featuring The
T-37 "Tweet"**

REMEMBER THESE DATES

March 5th @ 8:30 AM Board of Director's Meeting at the Air Museum.

March 15th @ 10:00 AM New Member Orientation.

March 18th @ 12:00 PM Executive Director's Staff Meeting.

March 19th @ 6:00pm Air Show Planning Meeting at SCOE.

March 19th @ 7:00 PM Monthly Membership Meeting at SCOE.

PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM

2230 Becker Blvd.

Santa Rosa, Ca 95403