



STRAIGHT SCOOP

PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM

Summer 2023

President's Message

Greetings,

It has been a very busy first half of the year around PCAM. Multiple aircraft have been getting prepared for painting restorations starting with our F-4. We have set record numbers in attendance at Hot Dog Thursdays. Heavy clean up inside and out of the Butler Hangar in preparations for preservation work. Private events have been steady, and things are gearing up for our Wheels & Wings Car Show on Sept, 16. Changing to Open Cockpit on Saturdays only has worked out great. Not only are the scheduled aircraft being opened, but other crew members have opened up their aircraft to offer more for our guests. Another recent change has been mailing membership renewal notices out instead of sending emails. If you have moved please notify the office so we can update your address. I thank everyone for their hard work and dedication. We are of course always looking for more volunteers. We always seek a few extra people to serve in the gift shop or to volunteer as docents, if you're unsure what to do or say, no worries! We will teach you. The last half of the year is shaping up to be a busy one with more record numbers, construction progress, and events. What an exciting time to be at PCAM!

Chris Brown
President

Museum Operations

Building Updates

By Chris Brown

After a very long and tiresome endeavor with PRMD we finally got our design review approved for our new gift shop in the former Dragon Fly building. Next step is a building permit and grading permit to enlarge the parking lot with a separate exit driveway. We still have some forms to submit to the FAA as part of the construction documents needed to satisfy the airport construction requirements.



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PCAM Value Statements

Integrity: Demonstrate daily the highest levels of honesty and strong moral principles.

Accountability: Be accountable to our members, our patrons and our community.

Customer Service: Strive to achieve the highest levels of service and satisfaction.

Achievement: Become a recognized and valued asset to our community.

Education: Complement local institutions with unique learning opportunities.

Innovation: Constantly evolve the museum, the stories it tells and how it tells them.

Diversity: Create a climate of respect that is supportive of a diverse organization.

PCAM Mission Statement

"To educate and inspire both young and old about our aviation heritage and aerospace technology, to preserve historic aircraft and artifacts, and to honor veterans."

Butler Hangar Update

By Chris Brown

Work has been very productive in and around the Butler Hangar. We have made numerous dump runs and recycle runs with nearly 10,000 pounds of metal recycled. Most things have been removed from inside the Butler except for a few aircraft and Hot Dog Thursday items for the time being. We hired ZFA under the guidance of David Cooper to perform an engineering study of the load characteristics and hangar condition. We need to know wind loads with future plans of closing both ends up, and what kind of loads it can handle for electrical and fire suppression.

The main question on everyone's mind is what condition is the steel in? The answer is "Very Good" considering that it's 80 years old and has been exposed to the elements. David Cooper braved the windy elements to climb in the man lift to inspect the steel, fasteners, bolts and rivets. He took measurements of the thickness of the steel to run calculations for any potential faults and weak spots. A recent work party to remove asphalt around all the footings to inspect the steel's condition at ground level was very promising. Still more inspections are needed, and we are waiting on a few bids to replace the roof, electrical and fire suppression. We have received a few quotes for concrete work that we have postponed to finish our inspections to make sure we have a safe building for years to come. We are hoping to have these quotes to us very soon. Stay tuned!

Car Show

By Chris Brown

September 16 is fast upon us, and we plan for another record setting car show. Last year we had 210 cars. We are taking the necessary steps to enlarge our show area to accept 250 cars along with some guest display aircraft. We have attended two major car shows – Peggy Sue and Show 'n Shine on Father's Day – and we handed out nearly 950 registration forms. Folks have been mailing in and registering online ever since. Of course we'll be at a few more car shows before then. We have a few new locations to place car show banners this year. We are working on raffle prizes and, of course, there's that P-51 Mustang ride that everyone wants. You'll have two chances to win. If you or a friend would like to register for the Wheels & Wings, visit our website to download a registration form or pay online. Registration forms are also available at the front counter in the giftshop.

www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org/events/wheels-wings-car-show



Hot Dog Thursday: From One Galaxy to Another

By Dana Hunt

Hot Dog Thursday has become one of our most popular events at PCAM. From its early humble beginnings to its projected outcome of juggernaut status, one thing has remained the same: the incredible atmosphere. Nowhere in Sonoma County can one enjoy a well-crafted inexpensive lunch amongst the extraordinary sight of aviation history. PCAM certainly has something going for it, and the massive numbers of volunteers that help put this on surely make the atmosphere a most pleasant one indeed. Add to that the ever-changing lineup of guest aircraft offering something new and wondrous to behold. They widen the eyes of any youngster who passes by their glistening wings and stop others in their tracks to gaze upon the machines of their dreams made real before their very eyes.

The numbers have been steadily increasing every month, leading to absolute sellouts of hot dogs, chips, and drinks. More and more smiling faces enter our gift shop each month to take it all in and enjoy the – you guessed it – atmosphere. (A third-time use of a particular word must mean I'm going somewhere with it!)

Back in May, our beloved HDT happened to fall on May 4th. For those not in the know, this day is referred to as Star Wars Day, or "May the Fourth be with you". It is very popular and celebrated all over the world. Can you spell opportunity? We called the Golden Gate Garrison, based in San Francisco, for any available Star Wars characters to come out and join us for HDT. A division of The 501st Legion, these volunteers create film-accurate costumes of various Star Wars characters and devote their time to charities, non-profits, and other community events spreading the love of Star Wars. They answered our request in the affirmative and, on the day, entered our "atmosphere" with their invisible Star Destroyer, beaming down to spring a worthwhile surprise upon our unsuspecting patrons.

Hot Dog Thursday: From One Galaxy to Another (continued)

People arose with shocking excitement when Darth Vader entered the Butler Hangar flanked by a Storm Trooper and a Tie Fighter Pilot. Kids who had dressed up in costume stood in awe as they came face to face with "the real deal." For the next couple of hours, Darth and company gladly posed for photos with anyone who wanted one, shook hands with and waved at every youngster they passed, and made sure to inspect our operation and ask people if they were enjoying their food.

We received high marks all around! We also took the opportunity to give the Tie Fighter Pilot some extra pilot training. All in all, it was a very successful HDT that offered something special. If we keep this up, the stars are the limit! We thank the Golden Gate Garrison for their support, and we understand they would like to return again.



Safety Officer Gary Greenough made sure everything was on the up and up.



Star Wars characters taking pictures with our lovely patrons!



Tie Fighter Pilot gets some extra pilot training!



Darth Vader approves of our F-4 Phantom repaint!

Hot Dog Thursday To-Go

The Butler Hangar is to receive some much-anticipated, much-needed work, and the Hot Dog Thursday crew will be adjusting our venue as needed. Not quite sure what adjustments will need to be made, but we do know that the cost of the famous hot dog lunch adjusted to \$8 and double dogs remain at \$10. This is a fun and profitable event for the museum. Throughout the years this has grown from a small airport event to a much larger event. At times we've had up to 600 people for our hot dog lunch. Beginning on July 6, PCAM will be offering HDT To-Go orders. Minimum order is 5 lunches, which will be packed with chips and a drink. Pick-up will be on Laughlin Road at the old Dragon Fly parking area. Orders will be taken at the gift shop and need to be ordered and paid by 4:00pm the Wednesday before Hot Dog Thursday.

If you want to volunteer for Hot Dog Thursday, call Paul Heck at 707/479-4479 or email paulh@sonic.net.

Fresh New Camouflage: F-4 Phantom Repaint

By Chris Brown and Dana Hunt

Each year, we aim to revive the look of some of our display aircraft. Our Tuesday/Thursday crew has done a tremendous job in prepping the aircraft, dealing with the various corrosion areas, and properly sanding down the paint, as per the rules we have agreed to with the airport office. Aircraft that have benefitted from this process include our F/A-18 Hornet, T-38 Talon, F-8 Crusader, and T-37 Tweet. Last year we received a very generous donation made specifically for the purpose of repainting our F-4 Phantom, so naturally it was next on the list. The crew was challenged in early April to see if we could accomplish repainting the F-4 in time for the May Hot Dog Thursday. In case the Star Wars characters didn't show up, we could call the event "May the F-4 be with you." The challenge was accepted and the crew got to work.

After weeks of dealing with the corrosion and other prep, the aircraft was towed over to "Area 52" to be painted. With the aid of Justin Rains, the superhero painting duo of Chris Brown and Billy Kerkhof took time out from their day jobs to accomplish this herculean task. It took an entire day to just mask off the aircraft. Each morning they had to wipe down the F-4 with an estimated 1000 rags to remove the morning dew from its surface and then the waiting began. The temperature needed to rise to a certain level for the painting to be efficient. When the clock struck noon it was game-on! Chris and Billy were able prime the Phantom in one day. The next day, they painted the tan color. The day after that they painted the light green. On the final day they finished off with the dark green and were able to unmask the whole aircraft and tow it back over just in time for May 4. It was a big hit and people were excited to see the progress that had been accomplished. Some thought we had acquired a new aircraft.

However, the boys aren't done yet. They still plan to paint the underside of the aircraft which shouldn't be as much of an endeavor. The markings also have yet to be put in place, and they await the list of names to be put on the cockpit. There's a little bit more to do, but the aircraft is looking fantastic. Special thanks to Jim Cook for acquiring the paint supplies and inspecting the quality of the work daily. Everyone did a great job! Stay tuned for more updates!



Billy and Chris begin the primer operation on the phantom



Fully primed and ready for paint



The paint crew: Chris Brown, Billy Kerkhof, Justin Rains



The finished product! Looking Good!

Member Meetings

General Meeting Round-Up: Locals Take Center Stage

By Dana Hunt

The past three general meetings have featured guest speakers with a local connection to Sonoma County Airport. For those of you who missed out on these wonderful and captivating presentations, here's the rundown:



Henry 1 on station and ready to go.

In April, Sonoma County Sheriff's Deputy Larry Matelli stopped by to give a presentation on "Henry 1," a Bell 407 GXP, highly maneuverable, four-bladed, single turbine engine powered helicopter. It can be flown with a single pilot and configured for up to five passengers or - in the EMS role - three crew members and a patient. This amazing machine offers many tools for safely navigating any emergency and catching the bad guys. It can be used for Law Enforcement, Medical, Search and Rescue, and Firefighting Operations. As the Tactical Flight Officer (TFO), Deputy Matelli is responsible for overseeing and accomplishing the assigned requirements of each particular flight and is the authority in all matters concerning law enforcement and mission related decisions. He communicates with ground forces and uses an amazing camera system that can locate any subject in just about any weather conditions. Being able to get to an incident within a matter of minutes makes this helicopter a vital asset to Sonoma County. It was a relief to hear they have upgraded their ropes and no longer have to rely on tying them together with a "trusty" knot to get the desired length. Keep up the good work!

In May, we were treated with a presentation from the two founding members of Aerocrafters Inc., Lynn Hunt and Steve Penning. With a love for restoring vintage aircraft, and having completed several projects between the two of them already, these two combined forces and set out on an adventure that many would claim as the best job they've ever had. Having knowledge of the famed Grumman Albatross caused the phone to begin ringing and they were off and running. Setting up operations in what is now the Kaiser Hangar on the north end of the airport, customers far and wide flocked to Aerocrafters where they knew their aircraft was in good hands. The hangar offered plentiful space for the various shops they set up including an engine shop, machine shop, avionics shop, and fabric shop. A wide variety of projects came through their doors including a Yak-11, P-51 Mustang, L-39 Albatross, a couple Hawker Sea Furies, many Mig-15s and Mig 17s, a bundle of Grumman Albatrosses, and countless others. Their skills and knowledge took them outside the United States as Aerocrafters was known internationally, allowing them to visit six out of seven continents. Notable adventures include flying a PBY Catalina all the way from Santa Rosa to Italy and then from Italy to South Africa and ferrying a Grumman Albatross from Brazil to Santa Rosa. A big takeaway was how much fun they had and the many memories they were able to capture. It cannot be understated how vital their relationship with PCAM has been over the years as many of our display aircraft stopped there first.



Lynn and Steve retrieving another Albatross



Aerocrafters employee photo 1998



A busy hangar!

In June, we were dazzled with stories from our friendly, calm, and soothing voice in the Air Traffic Control Tower, Dave Sheber. Growing up near the 2-mile final mark of runway 30 in Long Beach, Dave knew he wanted to be a pilot - or astronaut - without leaving the comforts of home. Listening in on the radio, he got used to the lingo and many call-signs that frequented the airport and finally decided to become an Air Traffic Controller. What followed was 12 years, 4 months, and 13 days of training, re-training, moving around, and arguments with the FAA, who proved their motto, "We're not happy until you're not happy" correct. Finally breaking from the tree line in forest of hell, Dave reported for duty in Santa Rosa on Jan. 12, 2002. Sonoma County Airport provides a great variety of arrivals and departures including airliners, military aircraft, private jets, the many warbirds, and local pilots that always keeps controllers on their toes. Being up in that Tower offers extraordinary views that both amaze and scare. Our Wings Over Wine Country Air Show has always delighted Dave and presented many picture-taking opportunities. Wildfires in 2017, 2019, and 2020 brought a sense of uneasiness and haunting photos along with it.

General Meeting Round-Up: Locals Take Center Stage (continued)

Dave talked about the many relationships he's made throughout the years. The community is a very friendly one, allowing him to just take a stroll up to Knob Hill to speak with a pilot about a miscommunication. He always loves to see what's behind the hangar door and keep up with the many projects of the field. Showing visible tears, Dave spoke about his proudest moment, which was being in the tower when his own daughter took to the skies for her first solo flight. He said there was no way to describe the feeling of pride he felt when he cleared her to land on runway 14. Dave is retiring at the end of June to pursue other adventures. We thank Dave Sheber for his many years of service and for allowing some very memorable low passes!



Tower Dave in his natural habitat



A beautiful view of Sonoma County Tower!

Our General Meetings occur on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and aim to offer something new and inspiring each time. If you have an idea for a guest speaker, please email Dana Hunt at albaviper44@yahoo.com.

Acquisitions

Air Dropped In! Beechcraft Model 18

By Dana Hunt

One early foggy morning, a mysterious object rolled down the roads of Santa Rosa, bound for its new home at the Pacific Coast Air Museum. With great care, it was maneuvered into position next to the Dragonfly building awaiting one last flight. Throughout the day passersby slowed to view its majestic shell of a fuselage, wondering what stories lay buried between its rivets. It wasn't long before a crane arrived to hoist this beauty up and over the fence to take its rightful place among the rest of the displays. The aircraft in question: A Beechcraft Model 18, a classic in the world of aviation. Built as early as the late 1930s as a passenger/cargo carrier, it was used practically everywhere in the world. With its twin Pratt & Whitney R-985-AN-1 "Wasp Junior" radial engines, this Beechcraft has a sound all its own. Many examples exist to this day. This particular Beech 18 was built in 1944 and spent most of its life in Grass Valley. This is where it was found by Jimmy Long, who wanted to restore the aircraft to flying status. It was disassembled and shipped to his house in Santa Rosa. Upon further inspection, it was determined that the main spar caps were too far gone with corrosion, resulting in a project that needed a lot more work than previously thought. The decision was made to donate the aircraft to PCAM, as it would serve better as a display.

This presented a wonderful opportunity. Knowing the history of our Butler Hangar and its involvement in the 1963 film "It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World," we naturally concluded that PCAM must have a Beech 18 in its collection! As of this writing, no final decision has been made on what to do with the aircraft, but there are a few ideas kicking around. One idea is to restore it to display status, leaving the aircraft on its gear amongst the rest of the fleet, allowing visitors to get a closer look inside. Another is to restore it to flying status, giving the aircraft a chance to be an ambassador to PCAM and possibly give rides for those interested. The most popular idea is to mount the aircraft on a pole as if it had just flown through the Butler Hangar. This would certainly give our museum a fresh new look and make it a can't-miss attraction in Sonoma County! No matter what is finally decided, the most important thing is...we've got a Beech 18! Many thanks to our friends at Precision Crane for the lift!

Air Dropped In! Beechcraft Model 18 (continued)



Air Dropped! Special Delivery!



Careful maneuvering into position.



Guy Smith, Jimmy Long, Larry Rengstorf.

Member Stories

Jim Cook – Past President

By Kathie Morgan

PCAM's volunteers overflow with talent, and it's not all takeoffs and landings. Jim Cook has just completed his first book. Titled *Two Tickets to Paradise*, the novel runs some 50 or 60 pages. Cook says it took him four months to write, snatching time during lunches and other breaks in his routine.

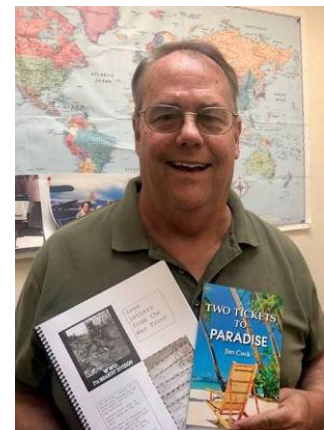
That finished, Cook began a totally different book. *Love Letters from the War Front, Sent Home from the Pacific to my Wife* tells the story of Cook's parents and how they coped during World War II. Sgt. Henry Leonard Cook (everybody called him Leonard) sent over 300 letters to his new wife Elsa Christine Cook, the girl he married in February 1942, just weeks after the U.S. entered the war. In a letter sent from the Aleutians, Leonard asked Elsa to send him something to eat and a carton of cigarettes "about every two week." He also requested some fishing equipment.

A little over a year later, Len sent Elsa a very brief note referring to censorship: "I can't think of much to write and what I can think of to write they won't let me write." And in December 1943 he writes that he will send back to her the fishing gear she sent two years earlier. "I never did use it."

Cook says he spent about three months writing this book, reading through the letters so as to show the personal side of the war. "People make assumptions about the way things were based on what they know now. But folks were making assumptions during the war too," he says. For instance, Len Cook wrote from the Marshall Islands: "Am afraid someone has misinformed you about the Marshall Island Natives. They do wear clothes."

Jim Cook joined PCAM in 1998. He has served in many capacities over the years, including three terms on the board and two rotations as president. For a long time he handled acquisitions, and he says his proudest acquisition was the F-15 that was the first responder on 9/11. His volunteer hours these days are spent on more mundane tasks, mainly sanding and painting airplanes.

Cook is retired from his career as owner of Hawley's Paint Store in Santa Rosa. His books are available from the author himself.



Herding Chickens While Juggling Swords

Sarah Kerkhof – Master Chief

If someone who knew nothing of our organization were to ask me what it's like to be the Master Crew Chief, I would simply tell them it's like herding chickens while juggling swords. It's about guiding a bunch of moving parts into a seamless stream of harmonious production. Consider, if you will, the conductor of an orchestra. He is surrounded by varying degrees of talent and different sounding instruments. As all anxiously await the baton drop, the intensity grows with every passing second, but once the music starts, a certain magic fills the air.

The inspiration to become the Master Crew Chief came from my past experiences with those who came before. I joined PCAM in 2001 after a chance encounter with the crew of the A-26 Invader at the annual Air Show. My husband and I were fascinated by this ancient relic being brought back to life, one rivet at a time. The crew was working on the Bombay doors and very kindly answered all of our questions. The camaraderie was instantly noticeable and once we found out we could become members, the rest was history. Jim Cook was the Master Crew Chief back then, and he brought a great sense of family to the whole operation. Many BBQs were enjoyed in those days. Each crew was proud of their aircraft and always excited to show off their newest addition. Friendly competition filled the air throughout the year. My favorite was when we were challenged to decorate our aircraft for Christmas season. The winner would earn bragging rights for the rest of the year. I believe it was Jim Mattison who came out victorious in the end.

Jim Cook was also instrumental in the beloved "Crew Dawg" shirts that made you feel like you were a part of the team. The best team. Then there was Ron Stout. Ron was one of those people who were always there to help. It didn't matter if he was on the crew or not. He was a wealth of knowledge and offered his advice wherever needed. He made you feel like you could conquer any project that came your way, no matter your skill level. With Ron Stout, you felt invincible.



These are some of the qualities I would like to bring back to the Master Crew Chief position. I very much enjoy working with our volunteers and feel that we can tackle any challenge put in front of us. I've seen the proof when we knock out three to four aircraft on the washing schedule in one weekend. People seem to come out of the woodwork to help and it's truly amazing to see. Our Open Cockpit Saturdays have already begun to show promise with more people coming out to visit and less strain on our volunteers. I would like to bring back crew BBQs in the summertime so that we can enjoy each other's company without having to move six airplanes in an afternoon and as a way to say thank you for all your hard work. I hope I can do a good job of filling the big shoes of my predecessors. There's a certain magic that fills the air when we all work together.

Chance Encounters

By Jim Mattison

Every museum visitor has a story.

A recent visitor – a tall gaunt older man wearing a US Navy hat – seemed to be looking for something so I asked if I could help him. He said he was looking for specific Navy airplanes. He added that he was a member of the NAS Alameda Museum and wanted to take pictures of the Navy planes he sought. I was happy to help, as our crew was just breaking for lunch.

As we wandered the field, I asked him what he did in the Navy. He responded that he was a Gun Director on one of the USS *New Jersey's* 5- inch guns. When I asked where he was deployed, he responded that he was off the coast of Vietnam 1968-69. I told him how impressed I was, meeting a former battleship crewman, a rarity these days. He reeled back a bit when I said that I had watched him work.

Further conversation revealed that I had been flying in Vietnam during the same time frame that he was deployed aboard the *New Jersey*. One night we had finished our mission and we were returning to our base at Phan Rang, on the coast of Vietnam. One of the officers on the flight deck announced on the intercom that something was going on up the coast. We all figured it was a weather event, as it looked like thunder and lightning mixed with bright flashes of light. While it was quite a show, all aboard expressed pleasure that we were at our home base and not caught up in the extreme weather.

Chance Encounters (continued)

After we landed, as we waited in the Operations building for our ride back to our quarters, one of our Navigators asked the Ops Officer about the weather event. The Ops Officer just chuckled, saying, "That wasn't weather. That was the *New Jersey* conducting a coastal bombardment fire mission. That 'weather event' wasn't very pleasant for the enemy."

The visitor and I exchanged pleasantries as he continued his visit and I rejoined the crew for lunch.

As a PCAM member I am always amazed at the visitors we encounter.

Sometimes all it takes is asking a visitor, "May I help you?"

Dan Widger – Safety Officer

Dan Widger is a familiar name with many at PCAM as he's PCAM's Safety and Security Officer. He's well suited for this position as he has an extensive military and National Guard background in security. He recently shared many of these stories with the Oral History Team.

Dan was born on a US Air Force Base in London, England in 1956, the son of a career US Air Force veteran. Because of his father's career, he lived in 18 different locations by the time he was 17.

Dan joined the US Army and did his basic training at Fort Ord, CA where he was assigned to the Infantry as a Mortar Specialist. He did more training at Fort Polk, LA before being sent to West Berlin during the Cold War. Because he travelled to West Berlin via ground transportation, he had to pass through the DDR security zone to get to his base. From his room in the McNair Barracks he could see the Russian-occupied East Germany guard towers.

While in West Berlin Dan served as a driver which meant that he often had to cross through "Checkpoint Charlie." After two years of active service in Berlin, he became "inactive reserves" stateside for four more years. He attended SRJC, majoring in Administration of Justice while also working law enforcement in Sonoma County. Then he went to the Police Academy and worked for the police in Marin County. Eventually, he decided to join the National Guard Company D 579th Engineers, where his duties involved building (and blowing up) bridges, roads, clearing mine fields, etc. In Oct 1989, after the Loma Prieta earthquake, his California National Guard Armory Unit helped the State of California with emergency response efforts near the earthquake epicenter area.

Seeking a change in duties, Dan joined the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion of the San Rafael National Guard (later changed to the 223rd). He trained in intelligence for two years and earned an Army Top Secret security clearance. Then he began working counterintelligence and espionage cases stateside while training with the 223rd to go to Bosnia to perform "human intelligence" against war criminals. According to Dan, they were basically "plain clothes spies for the Army." He served in Bosnia for seven months, then went home for three months before being called back to service overseas. He was promoted to E-6 Counterintelligence Officer and was sent to Kuwait and then Fallujah, Iraq.

In Iraq he served on an Interrogation Team and was eventually attached to the First Marine Division to perform intelligence duties. From there he went to Camp Kalsu, 20 miles south of Bagdad, and was attached to the MS National Guard, providing instructions to new recruits on interrogation techniques. He was later assigned to investigate the Army Corp of Engineers project funding concerns for over 1,000 projects in Iraq. Bribes were determined to be contributory to the considerable cost overruns since this was a common practice in Iraq.

Dan remained in the National Guard until 2011, serving as a Platoon Sergeant. He continues to work in law enforcement to this day.



Veterans and Oral History

RODNEY HEDGEPEETH - Korean War veteran

Rodney Hedgepeth was raised and schooled in San Francisco, the son of a 30-year career Army veteran stationed at the Presidio and the brother of a Vietnam veteran. Rodney served as a US Air Force 1st Class Munitions Specialist in the US Air Force. He enlisted in the USAF hoping to become an airplane mechanic because of his love of fixing things. However, the USAF had other ideas for Rodney because he scored so highly on the munitions tests. He served with the Fourteenth Ammunitions Group, Bomb Disposal, and Tactical Air Command in both Guam and Okinawa.

In his four years of service, Rodney worked on disarming and disposing of all types of bombs from both WWII and the Korean War. Using techniques and equipment considered primitive by today's standards, he relied on his excellent training and intellect while working with TNT, nitro glycerin, and other explosives. He also travelled to Korea to load unexploded bombs and take them to Guam, where they were disarmed and disposed.

One of Rod's more humorous stories described how he fulfilled a request from officers on Guam to build a "swimming pool in the coral reef." The coral was otherwise too sharp and dangerous for swimming. To create the pool, he exploded a 4,000-pound bomb, thereby clearing a sizable section of coral. It worked so well that he later participated in the construction of a second pool for the non-officers using the same technique. However, since this wasn't sanctioned, it came with consequences.

In addition to Rod's overseas duty, he also served at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. For his four years of service, he received the United Nations Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

After leaving the military, Rodney worked for DuPont as a paint color specialist. He was able to perform the lost art of visually matching paint, now done by computer. He continues to work today in the paint industry, maintaining that staying active and working hard is a significant factor in staying healthy and young. Rod epitomizes both.

Thank you, Rod, for sharing your experiences. Rod will be attending the July HDT, and PCAM will be celebrating his 88th birthday along with two WWII veterans. Please feel free to go up and meet Rod if you see him.

Photos courtesy of John Nelson



FRED PTUCHA

Fred Ptucha served as a Lieutenant in the US Navy from 1965 until 1970. This included three deployments to Vietnam, in 1965, 1966, and 1967. He initially served on the USS *Joseph Strauss* (DDG-16), including duty time in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Fred's primary function on the USS *Strauss* was as a Communications Officer with Secret and Top Secret clearances, making him privy to classified documents dating back to 1963. He also served as a traffic controller and provided navigation aid to Navy fighter bombers that were on bombing runs over North Vietnam. The USS *Strauss* had TACAN (Tactical Air Navigation System) electronic warfare gear used to tell when SAMs (Surface to Air Missiles) were incoming toward the bombers. In his Communications Officer function he was able to monitor ship-to-aircraft transmissions.

Fred later served as a Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer. In this function he maintained relations with "free world" military forces such as Military Assistance Advisors (MACV), civilian militia Vietnamese forces, etc. He also participated in three reconnaissance flights per week as a "back seat" observer. On one occasion his plane was shot down as it flew over a "secret zone." Because they were flying at 3,000 feet, the pilot was able to glide to a safe landing zone where they were quickly rescued. The rescue involved a Sikorsky helicopter that picked up the entire plane with a sling and flew them to safety.

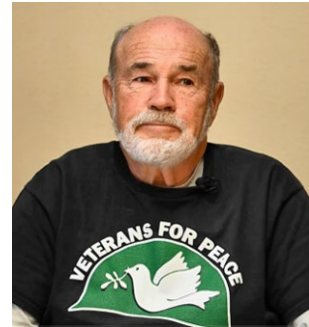
Years later, Fred was one of the founding members of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 223 (VVA #223). One of their early projects was to bring a portion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall to Santa Rosa. Subsequently, he became involved with the Veteran Vietnam Restoration Project whose mission was to do restoration work in Vietnam. According to Fred, these activities served to "help heal his moral injury PTSD."

FRED PTUCHA (continued)

In 2001 he travelled to Vietnam to construct houses for disabled Vietnamese veterans, and later built an addition to a school. When he didn't observe any bitterness among the disabled Vietnamese veterans receiving assistance, and they expressed their "forgiveness," Fred began to stop feeling his sense of guilt for the negative experiences he encountered while serving in Vietnam. He rationalized that if the Vietnamese soldiers were able to forgive him, it was time to forgive himself.

Fred is now a peace activist and was a cofounder of the Climbers for Peace. He also belongs to the Veterans for Peace. Over the years he has climbed "sacred" mountains in several countries, and has also hosted climbers from other countries, including Ukraine, the country of his heritage. The Veterans for Peace visit schools throughout the county presenting "peace bowls." For these efforts, Fred was honored by having his name etched in the "Living Peace Wall" in Sebastopol.

Photos courtesy of John Nelson



IN MEMORY OF ALBERT "AL" MAGGINI

The Pacific Coast Air Museum was saddened to learn of the death of Sonoma County's oldest WWII veteran, 107-year-old Albert Maggini, on Wed., April 20. Al was a beloved philanthropist in Sonoma County for decades, helping to raise over \$2M for worthy charities and educational causes. Maggini Hall, on the Santa Rosa Junior College campus, is named in honor of Al's extensive contributions to the school.

Al was born in San Francisco, CA, and was a third generation San Franciscan. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 and at age 27 was accepted three months before reaching the maximum age permitted by the Air Corps. His initial duty station was the Santa Ana Air Base, where he did his "boot camp." He later reported to Tulare where he learned to fly in a Stearman. While he enjoyed flying, he admittedly didn't do well with aerobatic maneuvers. From there he moved on to Chico where he flew the BT-13 Vultee low-wing monoplane but still couldn't master aerobatics. This precluded his becoming a fighter pilot. His instructor recommended that he become a navigator since there was an abundance of pilots but a shortage of navigators, and Al had scored equally well on the navigator test. He was sent back to the Santa Ana Air Base where he studied navigation. Then he was relocated to Las Vegas to attend gunnery school although he never shot a gun while serving in the war. From there, Al went to Hondo Air Base, TX, where he learned celestial navigation. His final domestic duty station was MacDill Air Base in Florida where he was assigned to a B-17 crew. They picked up their B-17 in Georgia and departed the US at Bangor, Maine, en route to Wales. He was finally assigned to the 351st Bomb Group in Polebrook, England in 1944.

Al flew 34 bombing missions over Germany that included railroad marshaling yards, airfields, industrial yards, factories, ordnance depots, oil refineries, enemy positions, fuel supply yards, and bridges. Among his target locations were Gaggenau, Politz, Lutzendorf, Cologne, Soest, Mannheim, Hannover, Munster, Frankfurt, Madgeburg, Merseburg, Hamburg, Misburg, Bohlen, Kall, Bullay, München-Gladbach, Kassel, Koblenz, Bonn, Euskirchen, Paderborn, Sterkrade, and Ludwigshafen. He also flew one bombing mission over Metz, France, where they destroyed an enemy fortress.

When Al returned to the States after his 35th mission, he and his wife Helen eventually relocated from San Francisco to Sonoma County where he worked in the investment banking field, serving on the board of directors of a New York "member firm" and as a principal on the New York Stock Exchange. He established the Merrill Lynch brokerage office in Santa Rosa. He also served on the board of directors of numerous organizations in Sonoma County, including Memorial Hospital and Hanna Boys Center. Over the years he formed a friendship with cartoonist Charles "Sparky" Schulz who served in the 20th Armored Division (US Army), and Santa Rosa native Bob Trombetta who was a P-47 pilot in the US Army Air Corps, both during WWII. They often played golf together. Al was the last survivor of this trio.

IN MEMORY OF ALBERT "AL" MAGGINI (continued)

On Nov. 16, 2016, the PCAM Oral History Team had the honor of interviewing Al for the Library of Congress Veteran History Program. Al was also a VIP guest at the Wings Over Wine Country airshows. PCAM also saluted Al's extensive service to our nation and the community by coordinating with former US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund to acquire a flag flown over the US Capitol in his honor. They also organized parties celebrating his last three birthdays. Local pilots performed vintage aircraft flybys, and a local military vehicle group saluted Al as they paraded past him on his 105th and 106th birthdays. For his 107th birthday, several volunteers and a local swing band (including PCAM member John Whitehouse) entertained Al, several other WWII veterans, and family and friends at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building. The Sonoma Jet Center also helped sponsor Al's 106th and 107th birthday. Al's final birthday party was featured by Da Lin on KPIX and that report can be viewed at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/107-year-old-sonoma-county-war-hero-and-philanthropist-celebrated/>

Those of us who had the honor of knowing Al are richer for their time spent with this social-minded and patriotic gentleman, in the true sense of the word.



LARRY SCOTT - USAF PILOT

PCAM was honored to help celebrate the 93rd birthday of Korean War and Cold War era veteran Larry Scott at the June Hot Dog Thursday on June 1. Larry served in the US Air Force as a B-47 and B-52 pilot, flying with the Strategic Air Command. He flew strategic defense missions over the Defense Early Warning (DEW) Line during the 1950s. He later earned his dentistry degree and worked for decades as a dentist. Larry was accompanied to the luncheon by his son Murray.

PCAM wishes Larry a very happy birthday and hopes for many more to come. Thank you for allowing us to share in your celebration!
Photos courtesy of John Nelson



Education and Youth News

Tyler West

By Kathie Morgan

We watched him grow up, and on Thurs, June 8, we watched 15-year-old Tyler West graduate from Pivot Charter School in Santa Rosa. It all started with an Experimental Aircraft Ass'n event, where Carol Lawson offered Ty West a free ride in her airplane. Ty was hooked.

Seeing the young man's enthusiasm, Kevin Quirk began to teach him about flight and to introduce him around. C.J. Stephens stepped in for additional mentoring, soon teaching Ty how to operate the flight simulator and eventually stepping up to real flight.

It was Stephens who introduced Ty to the Civil Air Patrol 3-1/2 years ago. Ty presently serves as a Cadet Second Lieutenant, having earned Billy Mitchell status. This will make him eligible to enter the US Air Force as an E-3 Airman First Class. He is checking off the requirements for joining the Tactical Air Control Party.

Ty's energy and ambition are also displayed in his job at Snoopy's Ice Arena, where he is a skating instructor and character actor. And he has just been hired by Sonoma Jet Center to work in airline ground services.

He has for years volunteered at PCAM, running the simulator, providing golf cart taxi rides for Hot Dog Thursday guests, playing Santa's elf at the Santa Fly-In, and much more.

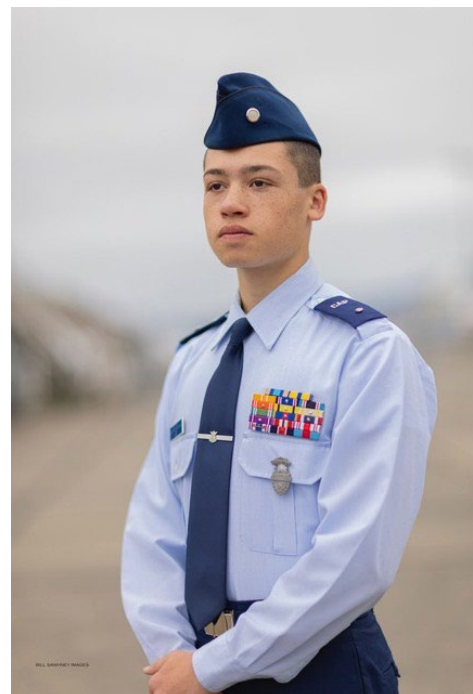
What's next? Ty will head to college to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. By the time he does, he may be old enough to join the Air Force, his ultimate goal.

At the graduation ceremony, Ty recognized three people who had been especially helpful in his journey toward graduation: Kevin Quirk, teacher Tim Mayhew, and - of course - his mother Holly West.

Congratulations, Ty, and best wishes for the future.



Kevin Quirk, Tim Mayhew, Ty West, CJ Stephens, Betty Stephens



Upcoming Events

Open Cockpit Saturdays

Open Cockpit Saturdays at the Pacific Coast Air Museum are a great activity for kids and family. We raise the canopies and open the doors to give you an unobstructed view inside a genuine fighter plane, attack plane, transport, or helicopter.

You can even sit inside some of our planes and see what it was like to be the pilot or crew! On some planes, the controls are still hooked up to the control surfaces. So if you move the stick or wheel, you can see the ailerons or elevator move! It's a great way to learn about how a plane is controlled.

Some of the docents who guide you into the planes actually flew these very same aircraft. They'll be happy to tell you all about it.

July 15: Vietnam: A-4, A-6, A-7, C-1, EA-6, F-4, F-105, RF-8 cockpit, UH-1. UH-34

August 19: Open House: All aircraft open

September: Car Show No open cockpit

October 21: Round Motors: A-26, DC-6, IL, S-2, T-28, Albatross

November: No open cockpit

December: Santa Fly-In (?) No open cockpit

Upcoming Airshows 2024

Sept 13-17	National Championship Air Races, Reno, NV	(Last one)
Sept. 23-24	MCAS Miramar A/S, San Diego, CA	(Blue Angels)
Sept. 23-24	Cal Capital A/S-Mather Airport, CA	(Thunder Birds)
Sept. 29-Oct. 1	Great Pacific A/S, Huntington Beach, CA	(Thunder Birds)
Oct. 2-10	US Navy Fleet Week, San Francisco, CA	(Blue Angels)
Oct. 7-8	Cal International A/S, Salinas, CA	(Thunder Birds)
Oct. 14-15	Wings Over Houston A/S, Ellington A/P, TX	(Thunder Birds)

Compiled by Ed and Bonnie Davis

Dates to Remember

Member Meetings

July 19, 2023
August 16, 2023
September 20, 2023

*Hangar 2 Third Wednesday of the month
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.*

Entrance is near the old Dragonfly building. The first portion of the meeting is informational. Get the scoop on the latest happenings at the museum. Catch up with fellow members during the break, followed by a guest speaker presentation.

HOT DOG THURSDAY



On the **FIRST Thursday of the Month**
APRIL 6, MAY 4, JUNE 1, JULY 6, AUG 3, SEPT 7, OCT 5



Hot Dog or Polish Dog with buns from Costeaux
Chips and Soda
all for **\$8.00** or Double Dogs for **\$10.00**
Condiments for the dog are free
Ice cream available at additional cost.

11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Mark your Calendar

Join us in our Historic Butler Aircraft Hangar
PACIFIC COAST AIR MUSEUM
One Air Museum Way, off Becker Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA

The Pacific Coast Air Museum's Platinum Sponsors

The Pacific Coast Air Museum thanks its Platinum Level Sponsors whose contributions help make our museum the thriving community resource it is! If you would like to find out about sponsorship opportunities with the Pacific Coast Air Museum, contact Doug Clay, PCAM Development Chair, 925-997-2774 or dougclay@gmail.com.



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Pacific Coast Air Museum

Location

One Air Museum Way, Santa Rosa, CA, 95403 www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org 707-575-7900

Directions

Hwy 101 north to Airport Blvd. and go west. Turn left on North Laughlin Rd, right on Becker Blvd., then right on Air Museum Way.

Hours

Visit our web site at www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org or call 707-575-7900 for more information.

Open Cockpit Saturdays

One or more aircraft are open for close examination on the third Saturday of each month (weather permitting) and you can climb aboard some of them! For more info, phone 707-575-7900 or visit www.pacificcoastairmuseum.org.

Member Meetings

Third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at Hangar 2 on museum property.

“Straight Scoop” Newsletter

The PCAM newsletter, “Straight Scoop,” is published quarterly and is available online on the museum’s web site. Members are encouraged to submit articles for possible publication. Deadline for article submission is the 10th 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 Dave Carlson at pcamnewsletter@gmail.com or 707-575-7900.

Be sure to advise the museum of any updates to your contact information by calling 707-575-7900 or email admin@pacificcoastairmuseum.org

Membership Renewals

 Send renewals to Pacific Coast Air Museum, One Air Museum Way, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

\$50	Individual	\$250	Silver
\$100	Family	\$500	Gold
\$40	Seniors, Teachers, Students	\$750	Platinum
\$25	Veterans and Active Duty Military	\$1,000	Lifetime

The Pacific Coast Air Museum hosts many family-friendly and child-friendly events all year 'round. We host monthly member meetings, monthly Hot Dog Thursday lunches from April through October, and special events like car shows, guest lecturers and more!

Most events focus upon aviation and our collection of over 35 historic aircraft including military jets, helicopters, and other classic airplanes.

Members are encouraged to read the “Red Baron Flyer,” the quarterly newsletter of the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport:
<http://www.sonomacountyairport.org/red-baron-flyer>





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