



HONORING AMERICAN MILITARY AVIATION THROUGH FLIGHT, EXHIBITION AND REMEMBRANCE

New Year = New Staff = New Challenges

By Col Tom Howe
Editor

Saturday, Jan 10th marked the first full blown staff meeting of 2015. About 20 members (including two new members) fought their way through the GJT security gates to attend. Wing Leader Bob Caskey called the meeting to order with gavel donated by recent award winner Col Dick Maddock, shortly after the scheduled 10:00 time and opened the meeting with a review of the mission statement of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) followed by a review of the Rocky Mountain Wing (RMW) participation in that mission.



Wing Leader Col Caskey - with donated gavel - enamored by Col Toth's blurring Finance Report.

Alongside Wing Leader Col Caskey were newly appointed Wing Operations Officer Col Bob Thompson, newly elected Adjutant Col John Mummery and Executive Office Bruce Verstraete. Because Col Thompson had been the Safety Officer, Col Caskey quickly appointed Col Floyd Suites as the replacement Safety Officer. A new appointed staff position

was generated and Col Dave Shepard officially became the wing Grants Officer. All other staff positions remained the same (see complete list on Page 5.)

A review of the TBM repair project indicated that an agreement was very near being completed between a commercial aircraft repair facility at Falcon Field, AZ and the CAF/RMW. A firm owned by Joe Dawkins has agreed to assign two A&P/AI mechanics to the project to begin work on the TBM while awaiting the cumbersome completion of the necessary paperwork between his firm and the CAF. The agreement includes the ability of CAF volunteers to assist where feasible during the repair efforts. Col Jay Anderson has agreed to continue to be the RMWCAF point man on the project and continue to stay in AZ as the project continues – Thanks Jay, we couldn't do it without you!



Adjutant Col John Mummery and OPS Officer Col Bob Thompson



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RMW AIR SHOW SCHEDULE - 2015

MONTH	DAYS	LOCATION	SHOW	TBM	CUB	STATUS
May		→ → →	Could we be ready?	←		
Jun		→ → →	Let's make sure we are!	←		
Jul	22 (Wed.)	Cheyenne, WY	WYANG w/TBirds			Pending
Aug	15-16	Denver, CO	Rocky Mtn Air Show			CONFIRMED
	28-30	Midland, TX	CAF AIRSHO			Possible?
Sep	5-6	Steamboat Sprgs	Wild West Air Fest			Probable
	12	Eagle / Vial	Wings and Wheels			CONFIRMED
	25-26	Wendover, UT	Wendover Air Show			CONFIRMED
Oct	2-3	Prescott, AZ	Air Fair (?)			CONFIRMED
	9-10	Grand Junction, CO	West Star Air Show w/Tbirds			CONFIRMED

Thanks to the efforts of Col Bob Thompson (TBM Aircraft Coordinator) and others, our 2015 Air Show season is beginning to take shape.

As shown here we may be kicking off as soon as July but for sure in mid August. That allows ample time to have "309" repaired and readied for Air Show activity.

But that won't happen unless we all pitch in and get not only "309" ready but all the other things necessary to make our mission a success for 2015.

We need more venue activities to fill our plate - and our coffers - for 2015. If you have an ide - bring it to your wing staff for consideration.

One Mystery Solved - Another still A Mystery

Condensed from an article by Ken Kaye, April, 2014

The mystery of Flight 19 remains unsolved. New evidence led two aviation sleuths to believe that a TBM Avenger found in the Everglades 25 years ago might have been flown by the commander of the "Lost Patrol," the five Navy torpedo bombers that vanished after takeoff from Fort Lauderdale in 1945.

But a photo of the Avenger's bureau number instead proves the plane was flown by Ens. Ralph N. Wachob, 26, of Fort Lauderdale, a Naval Reserve officer who developed vertigo during a navigational exercise.

Marocco, head of Aeroquest.org, a volunteer

aviation organization and fellow Lost Patrol enthusiast, Jon Myhre, a former Palm Beach International Airport controller, initially were convinced Wachob's plane was the TBM-3 Avenger flown by Lt. Charles Taylor, the Flight 19 leader. Marocco found the bureau number of the Everglades plane, 53118, from one of the photos and ran it through Navy aircraft history and accident databases. It verified that Wachob, not Taylor, was the single occupant of the plane.

Wachob, the pilot of the doomed plane, encountered heavy rain while on a training flight from Miami to Tampa with two other planes. He lost sight of the flight leader, got disoriented and crashed. The other two planes returned to Miami, Marocco said.



The 2015 "Ghosts" Calendars are here. Get yours!

OLD "GHOSTS"

BRING YOUR OLD "GHOSTS" CALENDARS TO THE RMWCAF MUSEUM. THEIR PHOTOS ARE RECYCLED FOR DONATIONS!

Welcome New Member **Col Bill Shepard**

By Col Dorothy Dutton

Saturday, the 22nd of Nov. We at the hangar had a very nice surprise. We had a visitor, William (Bill) Shepard from Woodstock, Ont, Canada. Bill is a Member of the CAF and a pilot of the P 51 Mustang "Redtail" /N61429. He has flown to many air shows in the Mustang and appeared in several TV series with the P-51 Mustang. He joined the RMW and attended our first 2015 Staff Meeting January 10th.



Project Phoenix - Maintenance Report

primality maintains fire fighting aircraft. MAE has qualified A&P's with IA' on its staff. They in conjunction with select CAF volunteers are finally working on the TBM full time. Airbase

Arizona continues to host our TBM but at sometime in the future it will be moved to a MAE facility for completion.

Finally, everything TBM is back on track after a couple of months of confusion and bad information. Grant and Kevin from Mountain Aviation Enterprises began work on the TBM wing repairs last week. They have the upper stringers riveted in

place and should be working on the upper wing skin this week, 01/26... After the upper wing skin has been riveted in place, they will remove the lower skin to repair low-

er stringers and damaged skin. While they work on the wing, Jay will continue to work on the nose/gill area.

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By Col Jay Anderson and Col Bob Thompson

The CAF / RMW now has an agreement in place with Mountain Aviation Enterprises, MAE, for repair of the TBM. This company is based at Falcon Field, Mesa AZ and the owner, Joe Dawkins, is the son of Dave Dawkins former AZ Wing Leader. Joe is also a CAF member. His company



Photo by Jay Anderson

New Year = New Staff = New Challenges (cont.)

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The target is to have the TBM airworthy by May.

The meeting reinforced the fact that there's much to be done besides repairing the TBM. Col Caskey encour-

aged the member Cols to create and complete projects necessary around the museum and hangar. Col Dick Maddock agreed to tackle the LINK Trainer and has already pulled new member Randy Swanson into the

project.

Col John Mummery agreed to continue the effort started by Col Denis Godfrey to fashion a trailer to move a torpedo to nearby airshows and other venues.

We have a number of display cabinets recently acquired that need minor repair work and are ready to be put into use. Discussions regarding a Project Board ensued – Sign up!

Museum & Mess Sergeant Col Dorothy Dutton needs help with new displays (anyone have any WWI memorabil-



ia?) Any and all ideas about museum displays, hangar projects

The staff encouraged all members to participate in more Saturday morning work sessions – there are always things to be done – and the company is pretty good too.



PX Officer Col Georgia Thompson and XO/Facilities Manager Col Bruce Verstraete ponder important things during the meeting.



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"Keep 'em Flying"

WING LEADER'S REPORT

By Col Bob Caskey

Thank you for the vote of confidence you gave me in the recent election. I am honored to be your Rocky Mountain Wing Leader and pledge to you that while in this position, while in the position I will remain focused on the goals and objectives of our organization. I also want to thank all of the staff members, both elected and appointed, for stepping up to serve our organization. This next year brings unique challenges to us but I believe we have assembled the team that can and will carry us forward.

As all of you know, our primary goal for 2015 is to get our beloved TBM back in the air and going to airshows throughout the West. I'm happy to say that effort is moving forward and is gather-



ing steam. We recently approved a contract with Joe Dawkins, owner of Mountain Aviation Services LTD (MAS) at Mesa, Arizona, to provide a full-time team to complete the repair job on our TBM. Jay Anderson will be part of the team through completion. Jay has done a yeoman's job of packing up and moving to Arizona to get our airplane back in the air. Also, thank you to many of you who travelled to Arizona in this effort. The Arizona Air Base continues to be gracious host during this time. Santa needs to put a little something

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Airbase AZ's B-25 "Maid in the Shade" in Cut Bank, MT with ride competition from the Rocky Mtn Model T Club's Two Medicine Tour. Photo is from Nov/Dec issue of Vintage Ford magazine.

extra in their stocking this year. The good news is, if all goes as planned, our TBM should be home by late spring.

This year's Wing Staff Conference will again be held in Midland starting on February 19th going through Sunday noon on February 22nd. I encourage all staff who is interested attending the conference. Information for registering is on the Commemorative Air Forces (CAF) webpage – click on the members only tab and it will bring up the information that includes recommended hotels. If non-staff members are interested, please let me know. I encourage as many of you to attend as possible so we'll have a good showing this year.

As you know, last year was a tough year for our Rocky Mountain Wing (Wing). It started out looking very

bright with a record number of airshow engagements scheduled and quickly turned into a major TBM repair project. At the same time we had allowed ourselves to disintegrate into multiple factions of the Wing. I'm proud to say that, given these challenges, our Wing had a very successful year raising funds for the repair, rallied to help with the repair, and thought out-of-the-box to come up with creative ways to fix our bird and heal our Wing. Now 2014 is behind us and we need to move forward. We are one Wing; we all need to appreciate and celebrate the contributions of all our members. Let's keep in mind the CAF's goals and objectives and focus on achieving them.

That being said, we are fashioned after military organizations. We need to apply and respect the chain of command.

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RMWCAF STAFF OFFICERS

Wing Leader	Bob Caskey
Executive Officer	Bruce Verstraete
Finance Officer	Robert Toth
Adjutant	John Mummery
Operations Officer	Bob Thompson
Maintenance Off.	Rob Duncan
Museum & Mess Sergeant	Dorothy Dutton
Safety Officer	Floyd Suits
Judge Advocate	Gerald Feather
Public Information Officer	Bruce DeRush
PX Officer	Georgia Thompson
Newsletter Editor	Tom Howe
TBM Aircraft Coordinator	Bob Thompson
Cub Aircraft Coordinator	Charlie Huff
Facilities Manager	Bruce Verstraete
Recruiting Officer	Dick Maddock
Grants Officer	Dave Shepard

**OTHER WWII AIRCRAFT
BOTH OURS AND THEIRS**

The Barracuda was the first monoplane torpedo bomber to go into service with the UK Fleet Air Arm. The Barracuda was first used operationally in September 1941 in Norway and saw service in the Pacific later in the war. More than 2500 were built.

Lustige Blatter was a very popular satirical cartoon publication in Germany. This cover depicts the success of U boats in the Atlantic. Lustige Blatter covers probably had wider distribution than many of the government's propaganda posters.



The resurrected (from WWI) British Ministry of Information was charged with producing the internal information (propaganda) to inform and encourage the populous to not do things that might harm the war effort (i.e., this clever poster reminding you to keep information to yourself) or to do things (like the famous "Victory Gardens" so popular in WWII Great Britain.)

**January Staff Meeting Overview**

By Col John Mummery- Adjutant

The first staff meeting of the New Year began with a welcome by our new Wing Leader Bob Caskey. Bob spoke of his goal in 2015 to not only get the TBM flying again but to also get the Rocky Mountain Wing Membership motivated to work together as a coherent team. The first order of business was the resignation of Kay Johnson as Operations Officer. Volunteers were solicited to fill this position with Bob Thompson volunteering and subsequent approval of his position by staff. A further new motion was made clarifying the duty of the adjutant (newly elected John Mummery for 2015) to retain all records of vital correspondence for 2014 and future years.

Staff proceeded to complete appointed positions for 2015 by soliciting volunteers for the Safety Officer position with Floyd Suits volunteering and being approved. Bruce Derush was appointed PIO for 2015 and Dave Shepard was appointed as Grants Director to assist the wing with writing historical preservation grants.

From a financial standpoint it was reported that the RMW is in relatively good condition considering the expenditures for TBM repairs. Bob Toth provided staff an estimate that at present \$60-70,000 could be spent on TBM repairs in 2015. Current RMW membership renewal is however slow with only 30 members renewing to date. Please renew today and encourage other members to do so as well.

Kent Taylor and Bob Thompson reviewed their trip to Las Vegas in September for ICAS. There are essentially no military shows for 2015 and a limited number of shows in the west toward the back half of the year when our TBM may be flying. The Grand Junction show in October is a bright spot with Thunderbirds expected to attend.

Volunteers were solicited to take on non-flying projects. Dick Maddock volunteered to look into getting the Linc trainer serviceable. John Mummery agreed to look into a solution for trailer/display options for the torpedo. There were no volunteers for preparing museum displays using the new display cases.

PROJECT PHOENIX (CONTINUED)



SHE ANSWERED THE CALL OF A COUNTRY AT WAR
Now she needs YOUR HELP!

On March 17, 2014 the Rocky Mountain Wing of the CAF's TBM Avenger "109" suffered a collapse of the left main landing gear. Besides replacing the engine and propeller, structural repairs will also be required to the wing, bomb bay, and forward fuselage. Parts for these warbirds are scarce, not easy to find, and expensive when they are located. Many parts will need to be machined from scratch. The CAF is taking donations to help get "109" repaired. That's your chance to help get the TBM Avenger back to an airworthy condition!

TO MAKE YOUR DONATION, PLEASE VISIT:
www.rockymountainwingca.org



Photo by Jay Anderson

Every Wing Rib and Stringer contributes to the strength of the wing. It's the combination of these structural components plus the wing skin together that makes the wing so strong.



Photo by Jay Anderson

Nothing is simple. If you see a pattern similarity between this the photo above and the top photo - there is a reason. Like the pieces of a precision jig saw puzzle all the fabricated parts must come together - **exactly!** There is no room for error.

Wing Leader's Report (Continued from Page 4)

If you have an issue, bring it to the appropriate staff member for resolution. Give us an opportunity to do our job before lobbying elsewhere. If you have a conflict with another member, please resolve it and let's move on. The staff is here to serve you; use them and let's treat each other with the respect we would want others to show us. We are all volunteers and I believe we joined this organization because we believe in its goals and objectives, and to have some fun. I'm optimistic and see us headed in that direction.

Please come out on Saturdays to the hanger. We have projects that we can be working on while the TBM is gone. The museum has various projects to be completed, we have a Link Trainer that would make a great demo item and a PX trailer or trailer for our torpedo that is still in the works. Also, if you have any other projects you would like to take on, let us know.

Please call me or email me anytime you have a concern or suggestion. I look forward to a very productive year. Thank you all for your involvement.

TBM's ready for takeoff aboard the USS Monterey in June, 1944.

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Completing fabricating the accessory deck and fit the deck to the firewall. Once fit, the forward bomb door structure will be fit and drilled, removed and disassembled for priming and then riveted together before final installation. With the deck and bomb door structure in place, the oil cooler bulkhead will be fit, riveted and installed. After that, the outer skin will be fit, primed, riveted and installed. Bomb doors and belly next.

The work stated is time consuming and precise. We only get one chance to do things right. Please be patient. The TBM will fly again and return to the Rocky Mountain Wing ASAP.



Veteran Avenger Turret Gunner Tells His Experience

by Col Rob Duncan
RMW Maintenance Officer

Continued from the January 2015 Propwash Gazette. The story of Bill Haller a TBF Turret Gunner operating off the VC-14, Hoggatt Bay. The story picks up in mid-year 1944

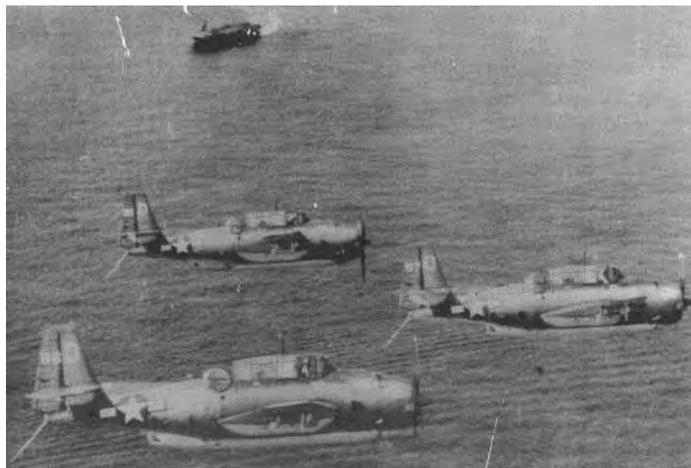
The next major battle was the Peleilu islands. Here the two cruisers *USS Houston* and *USS Canberra* were heavily damaged in this battle, and the *Hoggatt Bay* escorted them back to Ulithi Island for repairs while watching for enemy subs. It then returned to support the invasion of the Philippines, battling off the new Kamikaze aerial threats. Here it was significantly damaged, and was sent back to San Diego for two months of extensive repairs.

After a month of recuperation, Bill volunteered for a second tour of duty. This time the Navy decided Bill had had enough time watching rearward from the Avenger turret, so they placed him as the front turret gunner on the Consolidated PB4Y-2 Privateer, the four-engine bomber which looks like a B-24 but with a conventional tail and two top turrets. This is where Bill spent the rest of the war as they flew from newly captured Okinawa Island and destroyed everything they could see as prelude for the Japanese mainland invasion that never came. By this time there were few if any Japanese fighters flying, so Bill's aerial gunnery skills were mostly unused. Their PB4Y was used to check possible

Japanese islands which had been skipped, and flying the mail on long missions, including the 500 miles overwater to Shanghai as the Privateer was well qualified to do.

Bill left the navy in 1946 to pursue a career in construction and raising a family with Jean, his wife for 67 years. They have two daughters, one son, numerous grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild on the way. At a spry 90 years old, Bill says he feel like he has "had world by its ass on a downhill pull," and feels lucky in many ways.

In one of his war-time stories, it appears that luck was indeed with him. Bill had a day on Guam where he learned that his own brother, a Seabee, was also on the island. Still in his well-worn flight suit he asked a Red Cross base officer if he could have a quick leave to visit his brother, perhaps with a jeep? The officer said no. Bill noticed there were several base officers there, each with an unused jeep at their disposal. So Bill commandeered a jeep and drove to the Seabees camp where he certainly surprised his brother. Together they went to his brother's skipper who not only wrote up special passes for both, but he also assigned them a new jeep and driver. His brother said later the Seabees repainted the Red Cross jeep in Navy colors with Seabee registration codes. He wonders how the Red Cross officer handled the missing jeep under his command.



Three TBF-1's, Hooks Down , in formation ready to land on the USS Hoggatt Bay shown in the background.



Hoggatt Bay TBF-1 "Hooking" the number four wire.



Shown left - Bill in the early 40's



Shown Right - Bill today in his 90's and still "Pulling the world by it's ass!"