



UN-SCRAMBLE



The Official Newsletter of the Valiant Air Command, Inc.
6600 Tico Road, Titusville, FL 32780 - (321) 268-1941
website: <http://www.valiantaircommand.com>
email: warbirds@valiantaircommand.com

2nd Quarter Review - April, May and June 2019

STEM HAS COME TO THE VALIANT AIR COMMAND



Stem Meeting. l to r: Bill Teixeira, Rosalie Teixeira, Fran Cottle and Bruce Neale



Stem display at the April Fly-in Breakfast



5/11/2019 • The first Stem Class



Stem Class group photo

"To Honor the Past, Educate the Future and Preserve Our Heritage"

MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP - OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK - 9AM TO 5PM

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

Adults \$20.00 - Senior 60+ or Military \$18.00 - Students 13 to 18 years old \$10.00

Children 5 to 12 years old \$5.00 - Children under 5 years old FREE - Special Group Tour Rates Available

Statement of Purpose

The Valiant Air Command was formed to perpetuate the history of aviation, to encourage gathering of men and women in camaraderie, research and Warbird restoration, to serve as an educational tool for young and old alike; and to assure that the memory of those who gave their lives in service to their country shall not perish.

501 (c) (3) Non-Profit Organization Museum Recognized by the Internal Revenue Service

Future Events • 3rd Quarter • 2019

| | | | |
|---------|--|------------|---|
| July 13 | Fly-in / Drive-in 8:00 to 10:30 | Sept 14 | 1st 2020 Warbird AirShow Team Leader and Volunteer Organizational Meeting |
| July 16 | VAC BOD meeting - Noon | | Noon in the Museum Library, lunch provided. |
| July 21 | C-47 to EAA Airventure Oshkosh, Return July 27 | Sept 17 | VAC BOD meeting - Noon |
| Aug 10 | Fly-in / Drive-in 8:00 to 10:30 | Sept 20-22 | C-47 to Zephyrhills for Parachute Contest |
| Aug 20 | VAC BOD meeting - Noon | | Check the VAC website for last minute changes and/or additions (www.valiantaircommand.com) |
| Sept 14 | Fly-in / Drive-in 8:00 to 10:30 | | |



Commander's Report

Norm Daniels, Commander
 Email: Commander@valiantaircommand.com
 (321) 268-1941 ext. 4101

April, May and June were busy months for your museum. Numerous events took place and one special event on D-Day the 6th of June when the museum was open to all Veterans at no charge and a reduced charge for general public visitors that day as well as free hot dogs and sodas at no charge for all attending. Thanks to all the volunteers who manned the grill and serving line.

Some time late August and early September the Discovery Channel's Expedition Unknown series will be documenting the story of the "Lost Squadron Flight 19" when on December 5, 1945 all 5 Avenger Torpedo Bombers were mysteriously lost on a training mission. The Discovery Channel will be featuring our TBM Avenger in the filming.

We introduced a STEM program this year. Bill Teixeira, our STEM coordinator has found and orchestrated a group of volunteer educators and experts in fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math to engage middle and high school students in hands on learning experiences. Classes are held here at the Museum. An agenda is being set for the next sessions going into 2020. The museum is providing these classes at no charge. Bill took us from zero

to a functioning successful STEM program.

Those of you who visit the museum on a regular basis will notice that many exhibits have been moved and enhanced. Jem Golden, Curator and his volunteer team have spent many hours researching and documenting our artifacts and making sure that they are historically correct including being displayed in chronological order.

As mentioned in the last Unscramble we have a planned expansion program that will include an Event Center, a large pad for aircraft display and aircraft parking as well as a new hangar and space for additional hangars. The TICO Airport Board of Directors has approved our concept expansion plan. With approvals in hand we are beginning a funding program that will be reaching out to you as well as corporations to help support this project. Michael Baker International has completed the required surveys and initial budgets.

The Gift Shop crew continues to grow sales by buying smart, managing inventory and modifying displays.

As always, thanks to the Museum Guides for engaging visitors. The emails and letters we receive are most complementary.



Lt. Col. Richard "Dick" Cole

April 9, 2019 - We are sad to report that the last of the Doolittle Raiders, Lt. Col. Richard "Dick" Cole, passed on to reunite with his brothers in arms. Cole was 103, and flew in the lead B-25 as Jimmy Doolittle's Co-pilot during the raid. LT. Col. Cole has visited our Airshow a number of times, the last time being 2018. Godspeed Sir.



The Official Newsletter of the Valiant Air Command

1st Quarter - Jan, Feb & Mar
 Submission deadline - Mar 25th NL Published - April 1st
 2nd Quarter - April, May & June
 Submission deadline - June 24th NL Published - June 30th
 3rd Quarter - July, Aug & Sept
 Submission deadline - Sept 24th NL Published - Sept 30th
 4th Quarter - Oct, Nov & Dec
 Submission deadline Dec 22th NL Published - Dec 30st

Please note:
 Items submitted after the submission deadline will not be published or will be published the next month if applicable.
 The Editor reserves the right to not publish submitted items.

Would you like to be part of the volunteer restoration crew or how about becoming a Tour Guide? Fill out an application on our website or stop at the Gift Shop and get an application.



Facilities Officer's Report

Tom Etter, Facilities Officer

Email: FacilitiesDirector@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4105

The ending of the air show season allowed many small projects to occur at the start of the quarter while we still had our northern volunteers present.

We covered air show fencing and flooring with tarps to protect them for next year's air show.

Used our big forklift to move heavy engine stands, recover missile rails and a fuel tank from the weeds in back of the restoration hangar.

We moved a UH-1 hulk from our ramp into the storage area behind the restoration hangar.

Stopped the North West container roof leak and made a number of patches on the main hangar roof.

Pete Peterson built storage racks in the back of the restoration hangar.

Moved air show guest's aircraft from our hangars (P-51, F4U, AD-1) and hope to see them again for next year's air show.

Worked on the C-47; getting it ready for the Sun and Fun Air Show.

Held the Porsche Club's 3rd Annual Picnic in the Vietnam Hangar.

We created some space in the back of the Vietnam Hangar for a STEM Lab and also for some additional storage.

Most of our tugs are now stored in the back of the Vietnam Hangar along with Joe's Half-track.

We fixed the main wheel on the F-11 (leak due to corrosion).

Added adapters to the DR-1 tires to allow putting air in them making it easier to move the aircraft.

Placed F-14 into the restoration hangar backward to allow painting.

Worked on urinals and toilet issues with Roger Johnson.

We moved aircraft in and out the hangars for a number of parties and the monthly fly-in.

Dan McAlexander and John Zeleniak changed out more lights in the hangars.

Joel McGinley and crew worked on the big forklift, the crane and the box golf cart among other items.

Low Boy tug was repaired but has failed again.

We removed an oil tank on the C-47, replaced

it and cleaned the bilges on the C-47.

Dan McAlexander, Jerry Kerr and Patti Champion parked 150 cars for the Titusville Senior Prom. Patti Champion was point person setting up the car parking by catching the incoming cars out front.

Our Ladies helped Virginia set up for the Titusville Prom. 358 meals were served. Our facilities were stretched to the limit. I can't say enough how lucky we are to have such volunteers. In fact, we could not operate these venue functions if we did not have volunteers such as Patti Champion, Lorraine Juhl, Violet Rice, Jodi Tomarchio, Jerry Kerr, Joanne Baxter, Jim Arruda, Dan McAlexander and many others.

The second month of the quarter found our northern volunteers heading back North. Terry Nies fell and broke a rib. All of the C-47/Facilities Crew were sick or on vacation at some point this month so Marvin Juhl backed up all of us, including me. Thank you.

We have done extensive work on the C-47 spending much of our time pulling an oil tank a second time, changing a tire, paint scraping and sanding. John Makinson has been teaching the crew how to do a better job on the C-47 and the TBM.

Joel McGinley and Jim Bowers fixed a new problem on the big forklift and Joel made the attic stairs safer.

We helped Dan McAlexander and John Zeleniak repair some more lights.

We patched some more holes on the main hangar roof. Roger Johnson and Len Blondell backed me up on ground support with the man lift.

We have had a series of false alarms at night; three were after 11 PM, that issue is now fixed.

The F-86 blew a tire while towing. We replaced it with a non-certified tire, patched the tube, and lost brake pressure; Marvin red-tagged the aircraft.

Most of my time in the third month of this quarter was taken up working on the C-47 and TBM; the C-47 now has a new carburetor and TBM engine was run up a few days ago.

We supported four June 6th D-Day flights and helped create a live video

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Facilities Officer's Report

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on the internet about the C-47.

Commercial roofers are being hired to fix the few leaks left on the main hangar roof.

Harry and Mimi McNamara are still sick, Joel McGinley is laid up from surgery and Terry Nies is still healing up. Charlie Meyer came back from NY to help on aircraft but was in a car accident and will return to NY soon. We have some new Volunteers coming online and some FIT students helping out. Roger Tonovitz is covering the Motor Pool for Joel McGinley. Tom Wilke is maintaining the VAC grounds with the help of Gene Gorrell who is killing the weeds.

I shall miss working with Lynn and Bob Foraker who moved a little further North in Florida. I will also miss working with Louise Kleba (especially on the B-25) and wish her luck in her new adventure.

Norm and Barb Rathborne are taking on a

most important morale booster from Bob "Hot Dog" Foraker...The Hot Dog Day feed.

I am encouraged by the enthusiasm of our new people such as Frank Manion and Jerry Rush.

I look forward to working with the VAC Curator Jem Golden. I see significant improvements with the changes he has already made.

I can't tell you how important and how much I appreciate the efforts of the people I have mentioned and of the people I may have missed, who contribute to the operation of this facility and its attendant activities. Most all of them are very quiet, seek no reward or notice and just motor on getting the job at hand done; they should have medals. Of course, we have many more deserving volunteers who operate our museum but the Facility Officer has the direct help daily from the people I did mention and I want to recognize. The Board of Directors, Staff and Docents are more visible and known on a day to day basis by all who come in contact with them.



How many people does it take to install a new flag pole rope? Three by my count...Tom Etter in the cage, Roger Johnson giving direction and Terry Nies tying off the rope.



Maintenance Officer's Report

Marvin Juhl, Maintenance Officer
Email: MaintenanceDirector@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4108

It's surprising to see how many volunteers head north this time of the year, they must think the weather is much cooler than the good old Florida weather. When this takes place our priorities change to meet our current manpower.

So that means, as always, the number one priority is our Flag Ship the TICO BELLE; more work, more TLC. The interior panel with its insulation blankets were all removed for interior corrosion inspection where we found minor surface blemishes. This will take time and manpower to clean and we will need to take off the old flaking paint and address the corrosion blemishes, it takes manpower and time and in no way does this ground the aircraft. We installed a new radio and navigation system by adding the Garmin GNS 530W and 430W comm/nav. We also installed a Garmin transponder that ties in with the installed ADS-B (Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast), an FAA requirement for all aircraft that must be installed by 02 Jan 2020. Also, we have installed a new intercom system that ties into the pilot and co-pilot stations. Shortly we will be wiring up intercom in the Flight Engineer's and Jump Master's stations. We removed the cargo door and stripped the multiple layers of paint before priming and painting, replaced the right main tire, left main installed on rim ready for installation. Upon completion the existing spare rim will be mounted with a new tire for a spare, ready to install if needed. That's partially what's going on with the C-47 right now. The TICO BELLE is always ready to handle any flight requirements when tasked.

TBM continues to be worked

on, but its work is secondary to the C-47. The engine is 100 percent complete, in fact, it's even better than if it came off the assembly line. It looks brand new and even runs better, it's in excellent running condition. We have done the gear retraction, wing extensions and bomb bay doors operational tests. Our work on the TBM has shifted to the airframe. We removed the main wheels to grease and inspected the brakes, all is well in that area. A complete thorough airframe inspection is in progress.

The M.A.S.H. helicopter Bell 47 (we call it the military designation, H-13). We are currently working on the main rotor head assembly, working our way down to the pitch control assembly. The rotor blades along with the stabilizer bar have been sent out to be inspected, repaired if needed and painted. We expect return shipment the week of 01 July. The goal on the H-13 is for it to be completed and ready for flight this year.

In our restoration hangar, we have volunteers that endlessly perform their outstanding skills in getting the aircraft in shape for display. They are without a doubt a "can do operation", when something needs to be repaired or made, we call upon the Volunteer Restoration Crew. There is a lot of work taking place in that hangar and their work is never-ending, that's because we have projects waiting their turn to get in the restoration hangar.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who come in taking time from their personal time in making VAC aircraft outstanding exhibits for all to admire. THANK YOU!!!

MISSED YOU LAST MONTH

FLY-IN / DRIVE-IN BREAKFAST

2nd Saturday Every** Month
Warbird Air Museum

You can now fly-in or drive-in, pay \$12 for each person*, have a Chef prepared breakfast and then see the Museum FREE

Offer good day of the breakfast between 8 am & 10 am ONLY
Cannot be combined with other discounts.



MENU

- Omeletes made to order • Pancakes •
- Bacon • Sausage • Fresh Fruit •
- Danish • Orange Juice • Coffee •

• Drive-in •

Warbird Air Museum, 6600 Tico Rd, Titusville, FL
(321) 268-1941 • www.valiantaircommand.com

• Fly-in •

Warbird Air Museum • Space Coast Regional Airport • KTIK

* Children (5-12): breakfast \$12, no breakfast \$5 - no sharing food • Whitboards will be issued
** Check the Valiant Air Command's official website or call the day before to check for any cancellation
www.valiantaircommand.com • (321) 268-1941



Chef Matt and Sous Chef Linda



l to r: Barb Rathbone and Patti Champion

front row l to r: pancakes, french toast, scrambled eggs and bacon/sausage/kielbasa



An assortment of fresh fruit



Executive Officer's Report

Bob Boswell, Executive Officer
Email: ExecutiveOfficer@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4104

The weather was good for the Warbird Air Museum's 75th D-Day Celebration. Free admission was provided for all Veterans to participate in the special program to specifically recognize WW II Veterans. Four WW II Veterans were in attendance; they were interviewed by the media and were given a Certificate of Appreciation and Recognition for their service and participating in our event. Flights were provided to numerous Veterans and VAC volunteers in the C-47 Tico Belle piloted by John Makinson and Mike McCann. Additional flights were provided in Tom Reilly's B-25 Killer Bee. An "All American Lunch" was provided by our volunteers to all attendees. Special thanks to Norm "The Chef" and Barb Rathborne, Sandy Boswell, Joann Baxter, Jody Tomarchio, Patti Champion and Lorraine Juhl who manned the hot dog and beverage serving line. There was a Media Reception starting at 8:00 am and the Museum event received good radio, TV and newspaper coverage. Overall attendance for the event was good. I overheard many comments as to how well the aircraft had been restored and maintained and what a great facility they were housed in. Many of the visitors were surprised at the variety of aircraft on display and the well-done memorabilia areas. A big thank to John and Pat Zeleniak, Patti Champion and Lorraine Juhl for setting everything up. Thanks also to Tom Etter and his team for all the aircraft movements. Later in the afternoon John Makinson and crew flew the C-47 down to Ft. Pierce in

support of their D-Day celebration.

The C-47 will be flying to and participating in the 2019 EAA AirVenture 2019 Oshkosh, WI. Plans are to depart early on Sunday morning, July 21st and return late on Sunday, July 28th. Mike McCann and Rob Varner are scheduled to pilot the Tico Belle for the trip. A PX will be taken to provide sales of souvenir items and tours of the aircraft for donations will be offered.

We will continue with the Fly-In/Drive-In Breakfast at the Warbird Museum on the second Saturday of each month. The hours are 8-10:30 am. The next breakfast is set for Saturday, July 13th. Visitors can pay a reduced museum admission from 8-10:00 am that covers the cost of the breakfast. Any member who has a book for sale is welcome to hold a sales and signing at this event.

Our next major event is the Veterans Open House at the Warbird Air Museum, Saturday and Sunday, 9 and 10th of November. This annual event provides the VAC an opportunity to showcase our Warbird Air Museum and to thank the residents for their community support. We will have many different displays to see planes, trains, cars and food will be available. This event will be free to all Military, active and retired, and to all Florida Residents with an ID Card. Bring a family member or friend and enjoy your museum. We are asking all attendees to bring a non-perishable food donation for a local food bank. We will need additional Tour Guides, Aircraft

Marshallers and Yellow Shirt Volunteers to help the Marshallers with crowd control and golf cart drivers to take visitors from their parked car to and from the front door. We will also need volunteers for the food and beverage service. If you can help, please sign-up early.

Looking forward, plans are underway for the 43rd Annual Warbird AirShow, Friday-Sunday, March 13-15, 2020. The first Space Coast Warbird AirShow 2020 Team Leader and Volunteer Organizational Meeting will be held at noon, Saturday, September 14th in the museum library; lunch will be provided. This initial organizational meeting is very important as the primary team leaders, key workers and their areas of responsibility will be established. If you are interested in working one or more days please take a few minutes right now and go to our VAC Web Site and sign-up, indicating your area of interest and availability. This early sign-up will help establish the initial teams. The success of the Warbird AirShow is only possible through the outstanding support of our volunteers. Please consider supporting the event and attend the kickoff meeting. All volunteers must attend one of the AirShow's general meetings to be assigned to a specific team and trained for their assigned task. There was considerable confusion last year when we allowed last-minute volunteers to work who had not been trained for the assigned job. Lesson learned and we will not do that this coming show. Deep discounted show tickets will be available online shortly after the September meeting. Go to the VAC web site and select Warbird AirShow.

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Executive Officer's Report

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Planning continues with the museum expansion plans the Commander talked about previously. We have begun to recruit Founding Sponsors at all levels to support the worthy undertaking of expanding the museum ramp and providing a much-needed conference center hangar. Funding Sponsors will be recognized at the dedication ceremony and will be prominently listed on a permanent scroll at the conference center entrance. There are matching grant funds available, but we must act quickly. Expect to hear more about the immediate needs of the campaign funding committee. If you are interested, or you know someone that may want to make a major donation as a Funding Sponsor, please contact the Commander or the Executive Officer.



Bob Boswell awarding a Certificate Of Appreciation And Recognition to WWII Veteran Joe Reus

Jem Golden, VAC Curator, and crew have been working overtime rearranging and sprucing up the Memorabilia Room in the Vietnam hangar. Make sure you check it out the next time you visit.



Visit The VAC Gift Shop

The second order of 2019 Warbird AirShow Tee-shirts is in; get yours now.



The Gift Shop just received C-47 patches. Get your while the supply lasts.

75th Anniversary D-Day Commemoration at the VAC Warbird Museum

*by Dr. F. J. Erik Kramer, VAC Historian
Based on research by Jack Reid, former museum guide*

Thursday, June 6th, 2019

Role of Valiant Air Command's own Douglas C-47 Skytrain (s/n 42-100591 "Tico Belle") in the Normandy Invasion of 6th June 1944 and beyond.

Background: D-Day

Operation Overlord, the Allied Invasion of Normandy, was a tremendously complex military operation, whose ultimate objective was the liberation of Western Europe from the German occupation.

The battle started on the 6th of June 1944 with operation Neptune (usually referred to as "D-Day"), amphibious landings preceded by extensive aerial and naval bombardment together with an airborne assault. This was the largest combined naval, air and land battle in the history of mankind. This operation incorporated multiple code-named "missions" such as Mission Detroit, a pre-dawn glider-borne combat assault.

Planning for D-Day began more than two years prior to its execution when the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved the plans for the ground invasion that would ultimately be carried out by General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the supreme commander of the European theater.

The participants to this battle were the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, but also contingents from occupied territories such as Poland, France, Norway, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands — and of course the enemy, Nazi Germany.

The tremendous valor and sacrifice of our Army Air Force and allied aircrews in the weeks prior to Operation Overlord resulted in only marginal Luftwaffe presence over Normandy on D-Day. Between February 1944 and June 1, the Luftwaffe lost 8,445 fighters, resulting in pilot losses of 25% each month, representing a staggering turnover of crews. This was achieved with Allied losses of 12,000 men and 2,000 aircraft.

The combined naval operations and airborne assault have been regarded as a masterpiece of planning. Nearly 160,000 troops crossed the Channel from England on D-Day. The sacrifices of the military were enormous: allied casualties on the first day were some 10,000, with 4,414 confirmed dead; total Operation Overlord allied casualties reach 200,000, including 37,000 ground forces and 17,000 aircrews.

On D-Day US Air Forces flew 8,722 sorties, losing 71 aircraft. During June 1944 US aviation losses amounted to 904 aircraft: 284 in air combat, 400 planes due to flak, and 220 due to various operational problems.

Forensic analysts studied the odds of survival for allied airborne troops (such as the ones brought in on glider-borne combat assault Mission Detroit by the VAC's Tico Belle) on the first day of the invasion. 2,000 paratroopers faced about 345,000 bullets across an area covering 9 square miles! The chances of not being hit amounted to only one in four.

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75th Anniversary D-Day Commemoration

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The VAC's C-47 42-100591 "Tico Belle" was an active combatant In WW2:

Douglas C-47 Skytrain 42-100591 Tico Belle's service during World War II (1943-1945)

- Assigned to: 53rd Troop Carrier ("TC") Wing, 437th TC Group, 84th TC Squadron.
- The 437th Troop Carrier Group was essentially a glider tow group; they towed one aircraft and sometimes two aircraft simultaneously. They primarily towed American CG-4A gliders made by Waco but also towed British-built Horsa glider aircraft.

Contribution of 42-100591 to the liberation of Europe included the following airborne operations/combat assaults:

- June 1944 – Operation Overlord, the allied invasion of Normandy. Missions including: 6th June 1944 – D-Day and Mission Detroit (pre-dawn glider-borne combat assault).
- July 1944 – Southern France, Operation Dragoon.
- September 1944 – Holland, Operation Market-Garden ("A Bridge Too Far").
- March 1945 – Germany, Operation Varsity.
- Relief of Bastogne ("Battle of the Bulge").
- Transportation of military personnel, including wounded soldiers and cargo.
- After WW-II ended, 42-100591 was assigned to the Berlin Airlift operation 1948-1949.

42-100591 fought in three well-documented Operation Overlord missions:

1. Mission Detroit, D-Day (6th June 1944). Glider-borne combat assault. Towed a glider, Airborne Division Serial #28, position #50, Landing Zone "O", near the French city of Sainte-Mère-Église (which became the first city in Europe liberated from the Germans). Arrival time over LZ: 0407. The crew was — Pilot: 1st Lt Jay E Bloch, from Oregon, 26 years old; co-pilot: Lt. Hill from New York, 25 years old; Crew Chief: S/Sgt John A Quinn, from New Jersey, 21 years old; Radio Operator: Pfc. J.D Calhoun, from Ohio, 20 years old. The CG-4A Glider being towed was serial #42-79198 built by Waco Aircraft Co. of Troy, Ohio, flown by F/O John L. V. Murphy, from Maryland, 30 years old. The co-pilot was Louis L. Hiti from Minnesota, 24 years old. The glider towed on the early morning of 6th June 1944 carried members of the 82nd Airborne Division.

2. Mission Galveston, D-Day+1 (07 June 1944). Glider-borne combat assault. Towed a glider again transporting elements of the 82nd Airborne Division; position #50, Landing Zone "W" near Les Forges (Normandy). Arrival time over the LZ: 0700. The flight crew for this mission was the same as for Operation Detroit the previous day. The glider pilots on this mission were: F/O James H. Schuessler, and co-pilot John H. Hampton from Texas. F/O Schuessler was killed in March of 1945 during Operation Varsity.

3. Mission #7, (24th June 1944). Air evacuation and re-supply. In addition to the regular crew, a nurse and a medical technician to care for the wounded were on board. The nurse on board was 2nd Lt Mary L. Worthington and the technician was Francis B. Campbell.

Valiant Air Command is privileged to feature this unique historic warbird in its collection. Our Douglas C-47 Skytrain, s/n 42-100591, was built in 1942. 77 years later, due to its excellent maintenance status, the Tico Belle is still in flying condition and participates in air-shows across the United States. The VAC is fortunate to be supported by a group of maintenance specialists who take care of Tico Belle on a daily basis. These experienced people are dedicated volunteers who can boast great technical skills.



Operation Lam Son 719 in Laos

By Larry Champion

I flew several reconnaissance missions during Operation Lam Son 719 which was an attempt to have the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) conduct a ground operation without any American troops alongside. The Operation consisted of an incursion into Laos by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in early 1971. A major objective of the operation was to capture the town of Tchepone, Laos, which was about 40 miles from the South Vietnamese border.

Although American ground forces were prohibited by law from entering Laotian territory by an act of Congress, there was significant air support by the US Army and Air Force. On December 22, 1970, the Cooper-Church amendment to the U.S. defense appropriations bill forbade the use of any U.S. ground forces in Laos or Cambodia.

The Army provided helicopter and artillery support and the Air Force provided bombing, forward air control, as well as pre-strike and post-strike reconnaissance photography. This large combat assault was carried out in what was considered to be the most hostile air defense environment encountered in the entire war up to this time.

It was during this operation that I saw my first (and only) episode of what's now called "psychological trauma" in the Vietnam War. During WWI and WWII, it was known as "Shell Shock" or "Combat Fatigue".

During the first few days of the Operation, we received some frightening intelligence reports about enemy capabilities regarding Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) and

missiles. Intelligence was reporting that the North Vietnamese had every type of AAA from 12.7mm to 57mm as well as SA-2 Missiles and some unguided Anti-Aircraft rockets. The Intelligence briefing officer for our aircrews told us on several occasions that we could expect to see more AAA than the B-17 crews saw over Berlin in WWII. They said that even the Forward Air Controllers were flying at 4,000 feet to avoid all the fire from the ground. Yes, they laid it on pretty thick.

On the day of the "psychological trauma" incident, we were briefed that there had been a large tank battle on Route 9, the road from KheSanh to Tchepone, and our primary mission was to get pictures of the carnage. The pre-mission intelligence briefing stated that more than a hundred enemy tanks were destroyed. Our mission orders were to fly at 3,000 feet and get some Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) photos. The Intelligence briefer again gave us the usual "extremely hostile anti-aircraft environment" information.

The aircraft flown during the



Lam Son 719 missions was the RB-57E which was a specially modified reconnaissance version of the Martin B-57.

I was the backup Navigator on that particular day and when I arrived at the mission planning room, the primary Navigator was sitting over in the corner, crying and refusing to fly the mission. He hadn't even started to do the planning. As backup, that was now my job. My pilot helped me prepare the maps and charts and get the timing figured out, so we got the planning done in time for scheduled takeoff.

We flew the mission and, as usual, the intelligence briefing officer was completely wrong. I think they thought that their job was to scare the aircrews. To me, this is kind of reminiscent of the national weather forecasters in the US, forecasting "gloom and doom" before hurricanes or snow storms. During the photo run, we saw some light AAA, nothing bigger than 37mm, and no sign of SA-2 Missiles. Even the Forward Air Controllers were flying at very low altitudes, "down in the weeds" as we liked to say.

Our route took us up to KheSanh and then west along Route 9 to Tchepone. We did count about 30-40 Russian T-54 and PT-76 tanks and armored personnel carriers that had been destroyed. Route 9 is a relatively straight "main road" that was mostly dirt. Our target run along the road at 360 knots "high threat airspeed" probably lasted less than six minutes. When we returned to base, we did notice some very insignificant battle damage.

Whenever we returned with damage that had to be repaired, the ground crews would grumble to the aircrews ("Stop hurting my plane" type of grumbling). I learned much later that our ground crews would then claim 'bragging rights' when off duty comparing the amount of battle damage to their aircraft with other ground crews. *continued on pg 11*

Operation Lam

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After we finished with the “high-priority target” along Route 9, we had to photograph several more targets on the way back to base. On each mission, we were usually “fragged” (per frag orders) to get as many as 60 different targets. We only returned to base when we used all the film we carried. There were very few exceptions.

Our reconnaissance targets were described as a “strip” (usually a road or river), an “area”, which was a general search pattern where we had to photograph a large area or a “pinpoint” such as a bridge or encampment. The area target was probably the most dangerous because we had to fly several parallel paths over a relatively large area which alerted the enemy that we were there and we could be tracked by their AAA setups.

When we finally returned to base at Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, our friend who had the “psychological trauma” had already received his orders to the psychiatric ward at the hospital at Cam Ran Bay. We never saw him again, even to say “goodbye”. He went home to the States from there. We heard later that he “made Regular” and was promoted to Major.

One incident, that I considered memorable, occurred during one of the later missions we flew along Route 9. In order to understand the significance of this incident, we have to understand that the job of Forward Air Controller (FAC) was probably one of the absolutely most dangerous flying jobs you could have in the Vietnam War. They had to fly at very low altitudes in order to find and identify targets. Some of these guys flew so low that even a .45 pistol was a deadly threat. Most

of the combat crews considered the threat of a small caliber bullet could be the “golden BB” that would hit something or someone in just the right place to cause a deadly crash in the jungle. They would often, in high threat areas, fly zig-zag patterns, never on a heading for more than a few seconds. That way, an enemy with a rifle or even a pistol couldn’t get a good “lead” on his aircraft.

On this particular mission, we were working with a FAC flying an OV-10. As I said earlier, Route 9 was a fairly straight road and our high-resolution cameras looked straight down from the vertical. Well, we were “stripping” the road as normal when the FAC called us on the radio. He said, “do you (insert proper military expletive here) always fly straight and level?”. We answered “Yeah, our cameras all point straight down. We have to fly straight and level to get the entire length of the road”. The reply from the guy flying the most dangerous mission in the area was “Man, I wouldn’t have your job for anything”. That comment made this young 29-year-old Captain feel really good...ego trip...

One of the tactics that the enemy developed while I was there was to line up a large number of their 122mm unguided rockets and simultaneously fire them vertically as a kind of “wall” or “curtain” along a known path that an American jet was traveling. During Lam Son 719, this was a real threat that we were seriously watching out for and I saw it only a very few times. We never had to break off our target run. They were unguided so not accurate at all, but it was something that they tried. The timing was everything when they used this tactic, and we were particularly vulnerable with our

straight and level flight requirements when over targets.

I have been interviewed by several authors for books or magazines. A question I am always asked is “What was your most ‘hairy/scary’ mission?”. I’ve never really had an answer to that question. I guess that, from a pre-mission briefing standpoint, the Lam Son 719 missions might qualify. I don’t believe we ever took a significant ‘hit’ during these missions, but the pre-mission intelligence briefing officers tried to scare us and succeeded at least once when my friend couldn’t fly the mission.

Lam Son 719 lasted for about 6 weeks and was considered a fiasco by many American military leaders. Some sources say that as many as 450 Americans died, mostly Army helicopter crews. Reliable sources list six AF planes shot down with loss of crews.

After the ARVN returned (some say retreated) back across the border into Vietnam, both American and South Vietnamese political leaders declared victory. The North Vietnamese leadership also declared victory. Most historical reports seem to favor the North Vietnamese declaration.



The aircraft flown during the Lam Son 719 missions described in this article was the RB-57E which was a specially modified reconnaissance version of the Martin B-57. The Martin B-57 was built under license from the British English Electric Company that designed the Canberra on display in our museum.

Gift Shop News

Anita, Rich & Lorraine.
 Email: VAC-PX@valiantaircommand.com
 (321) 268-1941 ext. 4112

Can you believe it is less than 6 months before Christmas? Sooo let's have a Christmas in July sale. We have some Aviator Bears, Wooden Puzzles and if you remember the Erector set of your youth we have something similar in 2 sizes. We also have some

great stocking stuffers, Metal Earth models, LED flashlights, and our Pilot ducks.

We were sorry to see Louise leave, but she is on to bigger and better things and we wish her well in her new adventure.

We have a new supply of our 2019 Air Show Shirts; we ran out during the show. They are going fast and we have a limited supply

in all sizes... when these are gone there are no more.

All of our framed prints on the wall are 30% off and some are one of a kind.

Remember all Members get 10% off and on Fly-In Breakfast days, you get a coupon for 20% off.

Have a great Summer and see you in the Unscramble in the Fall.

Anita, Rich, Lorraine



Christmas In July At The VAC Gift Shop



You can build your own Air Force



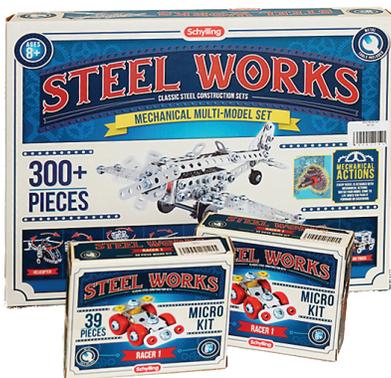
Every Body Needs A Bear



This One?



Or This One?



MODERN DAY VERSION OF THE OLD ERECTOR SET... REMEMBER?



A LARGE SELECTION OF WOOD PUZZLES ARE IN STOCK

Finished puzzle



LED Flash lights Great Stocking Stuffers

Titusville High School Prom

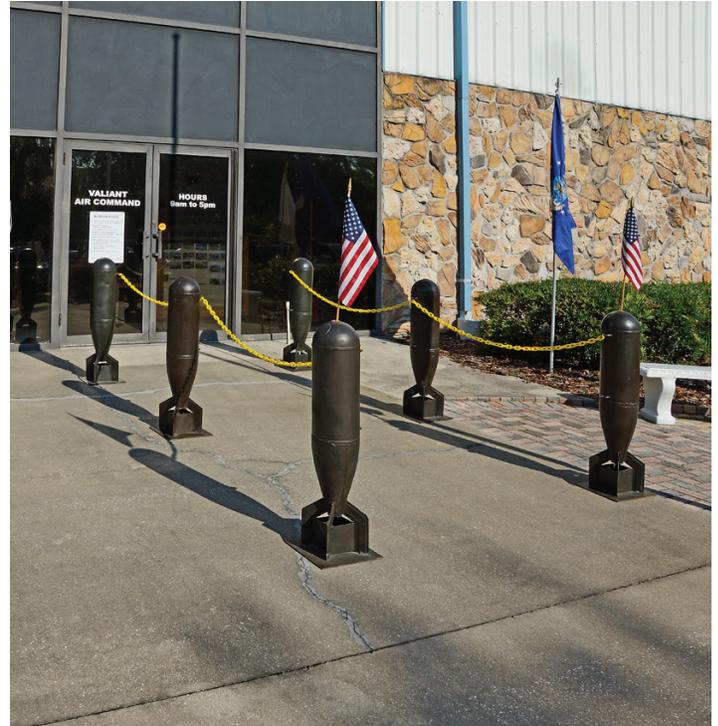


April 13, 2019, Titusville High School held their prom at The VAC in the Vietnam Hangar. The students loved the venue and had a great time. Contributing to the huge success was the large turn out of VAC Volunteers to keep everything running smoothly, the Titusville Police for security and all the well behaved students.

2nd Quarter Review - April, May and June 2019



Our Good Will Ambassadors, Lorraine Juhl and Ron Davis were spreading the word at the 24th Annual Champions Cup Golf Tournament at Cocoa Beach Country Club, sponsored by the Cocoa Beach Regional Chamber of Commerce



A new approach to the VAC Museum entrance was set-up for the D-Day festivities

May 9, Another Special Hot Dawg Day For The Volunteers



l to r...Lorraine Juhl, Patti Champion, Joann Baxter and Violet Rice

Valiant Air Command, Inc.

6600 Tico Road, Titusville, Florida 32780 - 321-268-1941

Website: www.valiantaircommand.com - Email: warbirds@valiantaircommand.com

D-Day Invasion • 75th Anniversary

6 June, 1944 • 6 June, 2019



Meet Normandy Invasion Veteran "Tico Belle". "Tico Belle" is a vintage C-47 Skytrain warbird that flew in the invasion 75 years ago on that fateful day, June 6th, 1944.

Today we commemorate and honor the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion and thank all the World War II Veterans for their service.



Once again "Tico Belle" will take to the skies as it did 75 years ago but under much better circumstances.



All eyes are on "Killer Bee", Tom Riley's World War II B-25 Mitchell Bomber as it taxis on the ramp.

D-Day Invasion • 75th Anniversary

Page 2

Some of the World War II Veterans that came...Thank You for your service



Bill Street



Cam Pelletier



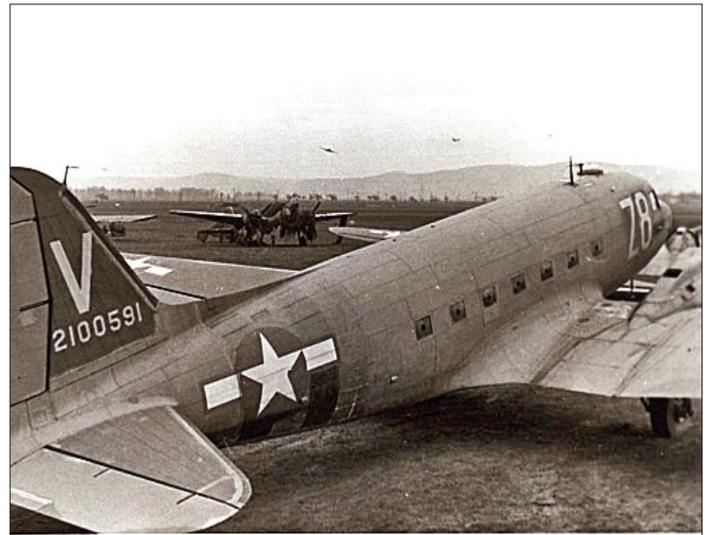
Joe Reus



George Rosenfield



A free "American" lunch was offered to all



Tico Belle - Circa 1944 - R.A.F. Ramsbury, England



Joe Reus was interviewed by TV Channel 6



Souvenir WWII dog tags were available