



# UN - SCRAMBLE



Official Bulletin of the Valiant Air Command

August / September 2006

<p><b>VALIANT AIR COMMAND</b>  <i>Dedicated to restoring military aircraft</i>  A 501c(3) Non-Profit Organization</p> <p><b>6600 Tico Road</b>  <b>Titusville, Florida 32780-8009</b>  Phone: 321-268-1941  FAX: 321-268-5969  Email: <a href="mailto:vacwarbirds@bellsouth.net">vacwarbirds@bellsouth.net</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.vacwarbirds.org">www.vacwarbirds.org</a></p>	<p><b>VAC WARBIRD MUSEUM &amp; GIFT SHOP</b></p> <p><b>Open 7 days a week, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM</b>  except the day of  Thanksgiving, Christmas &amp; New Years</p> <p><b>Admission</b>  Adults \$12.00 Seniors/Military \$10.00  Children 5-12 years \$5.00</p> <p>Special Tour &amp; Family Rates available</p>
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## 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.

### NEXT 2 BOARD MEETINGS



**Days:** September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006

**Time:** 12:00 Noon

**Place:** VAC Board Room

### HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR UN-SCRAMBLE?



OR



We would like to know if you would like to receive your newsletter by email. If you would, then send us an email. As always a copy will be available on our website.

[www.vacwarbirds.org](http://www.vacwarbirds.org)

### ADDRESS CHANGES



**Please remember** to notify the office when you are going to be temporarily away, or if you move.

**The post office will not forward** your newsletter and charge us a substantial fee for returning it to us



## ELECTION INFORMATION

The August 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for submitting your letter of intent to run for a Board of Directors position presented us with three such letters. One submitted by the incumbent currently holding the position for each office up for election. According to the by-laws of this organization the election will be very simple. Those who submitted the letters will win and be formally assigned to their chosen position for another term at the October Board of Directors meeting. So, on behalf of the members of the VAC, I wish Marilyn Bettencourt - Finance, Frank Pound - Personnel, and Robert Frazier - Procurement; good health and a "smooth flight" during their tenure.

## V.A.C Saddened at the loss of a dedicated member and his F-86

It is always difficult for the Valiant Air Command to lose a member and especially one who has been an active supporter of our purpose in existing. We are dedicated to "The Preservation of the History of Military Aviation". That includes educating the younger generation while at the same time bringing back memories to the members of "The Greatest Generation". Wyatt Fuller was one of those people who was deeply involved in the preservation and restorations of U. S. Military aircraft. He owned a North American AT-6 WW-II Advanced Flying School Trainer, A Lockheed T-33 Korean War era jet trainer and the beautifully restored North American F-86 Sabrejet. There are never adequate words to express the sadness we feel at the loss of such a person from the ranks of Aviators. In our hearts we know that he made his contribution to that very special world of those who are blessed with the true love of flying. Those of us, who have dedicated our lives to aviation and encouraging others to follow our love of the adventure of experiencing that indescribable thrill of playing in the clouds, know that the risk is worth taking. That greater power that dictates our time and accomplishments in this lifetime has let Wyatt leave us doing what he loved.



**Wyatt Fuller displaying his F-86 at the 2006 TICO Air Show in the VAC hangar.**

Anne James was visiting her hometown of Hickory, NC, arriving two days after Fullers fatal accident. When she returned to Florida she brought the Hickory newspapers containing the articles covering the accident. From their account of what happened it appears that Wyatt was departing for the Oshkosh Fly-in and experienced an engine problem at a point during his take-off roll that caused him to abort the take-off without enough room remaining to stop before running out of runway. (An eyewitness stated the he heard two loud "Bangs" followed by the engine sound suddenly decreasing and the squealing of tires skidding down the runway as he tried to stop the aircraft). The fully fueled Sabrejet hit a ditch, the fuel tanks exploded and the burning aircraft ended up on a road off the end of the runway. It sounded very much the same type of failure that our late member Jim Rossi had shortly after taking off from an airport in The Dominican Republic. Witnesses said they saw a couple of flashes of flames blowing out of the tailpipe followed by an obvious loss of power resulting in the aircraft going down into a cane field off the end of the airport. Unfortunately we lost another dedicated member and his beautifully restored F-86. Wyatt Fuller will leave a large void in the world of Restored Military Aircraft Pilot/Owners, The Valiant Air Command and the rolls of men who loved his hobby. All of us who knew him and enjoyed his performances at the TICO Air show will miss him. The Valiant Air Command Board of Directors on behalf of the Entire Membership expresses our sincere sympathy to Wyatt's Family.

N. C. "Bud" Evans  
Director of Public Relations

**UN-SCRAMBLE  
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**EDITORS CORNER**

All news articles and officers reports are due on the Wednesday after the Board meeting by 5p.m. The date for this month will be September 13, 2006

The Un-scramble mail-out preparation is normally done on Tuesday or Thursday of the 3rd week of the month. We can always use another set of hands to help out for a couple hours. You will enjoy meeting other volunteers – come and bring a friend.

**OFFICERS REPORTS**

**COMMANDING OFFICER**

**Lloyd Morris**

Hello boys and girls. It's been a very busy month with meetings. We are gearing up for another Airshow season. We will be having our first Airshow meeting at 1:00 p.m. on SEPTEMBER 16, 2006 . The dates for this years' Airshow have been set for March 16, 17, and 18<sup>th</sup> 2007. Hope to see you all there so we can plan to have another terrific Airshow season.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Hal Larkin**

**TA-4J** The L/R flaps and L/R wing spoilers have been installed. Most of the hydraulic lines in the fuselage left access bay have been removed. We will use the existing hydraulic hand pump and a one cylinder hydraulic system for the canopy like we did on the Panther. The two cockpits are still in clean up and prep for paint. The top fiberglass fairing on the vertical fin has been removed, repaired, primed and reinstalled. The L/R speed brake wells have been painted. The center line bomb rack for special weapons has been removed and a fairing fabricated and installed to cover the area. The two bottom engine access covers have been repaired, primed and installed. All dings and dents on the fuselage are being filled with body filler to give us a smooth finish when painted. The fitting that attaches the canopy to the open /close hydraulic cylinder is in fabrication. Didn't receive one, can't find one, so we fabricated one. The inside of the canopy metal parts paint are being cleaned, ready for paint.

**F9F-5.** The right landing gear oleo was still leaking oil, so we removed the wheel, brake and lower half of the oleo and replaced the "O" rings. This should resolve that problem.

**R-2000** Many of the brackets that clamp the baffles around the cylinders are broken at one or both ends. Can't find replacements for the brackets, so innovation takes over. Using 1/6" tubing, we rolled it to the correct diameter, flattened both ends, bent the ends to the correct angle, drilled a 3/16" hole and reunited the bracket to the baffle. Still waiting for a quote on the baffles that can't be repaired or are missing. Found a dealer in Oklahoma that has the ignition leads that we need.

**F11F-1.** No date on the arrival of the F11F-1. However we have received a maintenance manual and prints for installing the landing gear and a print for paint and all markings.

Hal Larkin

Executive Officer

**MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR**

**Robert E. James**

The dog days of August are upon us and the Florida heat is ever present. Several of our maintenance volunteers are using the time to “get out of Dodge” and taking some vacation time (hopefully to some cooler parts of the country.)

**C47**-The cockpit is receiving some attention with the installation of the remote radio comm and nav frequency control heads in the overhead panels. Of course in doing these installations one always uncovers some small problems like missing hardware. Jim Owens solved one of these problems (military style dzus fasteners) while shopping at a new surplus store he found in Melbourne, Florida. It will certainly be on my list of places to visit on my next trip to Melbourne.

The adjustment of all the various engine control cables and the tedious safety wiring of the associated turnbuckles is in work. Of course the fit up of engine cowling is a continuing effort.

**TBM**-Dick Hart is one of those on vacation so repair of the canopy has slowed but not stopped as Bob Munsey is doing some detailed painting of the large number of canopy parts that Dick fabricated prior to his departure.

**L13**-The L13 project has been moved back to the museum, as Al McQueen needed his T-hangar back to work on one of his own aircraft projects. The effort on the L13 will be slow until we have more sheet metal talent availability. This project is for sale and proceeds are dedicated to the C47. If anyone is interested in this project please contact me for details.

Robert E. James

Maintenance Director

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**PERSONNEL DIRECTOR**  
**Frank Pound**

Having visited a number of aviation museums recently, I believe your VAC Museum and Museum Store compare favorably with all of them. That's because of the outstanding staff and volunteers who maintain your Museum and Store.

Crystal and Ginger are always looking for ways to improve the store. Now they're considering the possibility of an Internet catalog. If you have expertise in such a project, give them a call. They now also have a state-of-the-art computer cash register with immediate inventory information. The Missile & Space Museum in Titusville recently donated several display cases, which have improved our displays.

Your store has the most complete assortment of military ball caps I've seen. It even includes Special Forces and Marine Recon! Next time you visit the Museum, check out all the new merchandise.

The public appreciates your Museum. Here are a few comments from the Guest Register:

GREAT DISPLAY, LOVED IT	IRELAND
VERY, VERY, VERY NICE	PALM BAY
WONDERFUL, THANK YOU	SUNTREE
SUPERB, VISITED BEFORE	U.K.
OUTSTANDING	ARGENTINA
THE GREATEST	INDIAN HARBOR BEACH
IMPRESSIVE	TITUSVILLE
ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC	U.K.
BEAUTIFUL	ISRAEL
WORTH THE TRIP	CALGARY, ONTARIO
SEMPER FI	KANSAS CITY
BRILLIANT	IRELAND
SIXTH VISIT	SATELLITE BEACH
UNBELIEVABLE, LIKE A KID IN A	
CANDY STORE.	POMPANO BEACH, FL
MY SONS WILL NEVER FORGET THIS	
EXPERIENCE; THANK YOU	IND.
FANTASTIC	ST. THOMAS
GREAT WORK VOLUNTEERS	NEW SMYRNA

These comments show that the efforts of our volunteers in restoration, tour guiding, and through the Museum don't go unnoticed by our guests. Keep on keepin' on!

We can always use volunteers. There are lots of opportunities for anyone with a few hours to spare.

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**OPERATIONS OFFICER**

**Ken Terry**

Currently I am working on the Pilot Registration form for the upcoming 2007 Airshow. The Airshow dates are set for March 16, 17 & 18<sup>th</sup> of 2007, so pilots mark your calendar. I want to make the registration process smoother this year for everyone involved. I plan on making the registration form available to the pilots on our website at [www.vacwarbirds.org](http://www.vacwarbirds.org). At this time I would like to encourage the pilots to register early if they even think that there is a possibility that they might fly in the show. Early registration is not a definite commitment. It just helps us to better prepare things on this end. Early registration will ensure that we have enough pilot packets prepared and that all the necessary papers required for the FAA are in order. Every thing the pilot needs will be ready for pick up in the registration tent. You won't have to mess with filling out papers, waiting for a fax to arrive etc. You'll be able to enjoy more of the show and concentrate on doing what you love most, flying!! So, please take the time to register as soon as possible. For this years Airshow registration process to be the smoothest ever I will need your help so we can achieve this goal together.

Blue side up.

Respectfully submitted

Ken Terry

**PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR**

**Robert H. Frazier Jr.**

**Grumman F11F**---Availability of the airplane to the VAC is still in the doldrums. Timing for the airplane to be ready for the VAC pick-up is dependent on the Navy finishing the restoration of the A-4D replacement. The NMNA and the Pensacola Airport are coordinating the timing.

**Billboards**---We have completed our research on the availability of billboards for the VAC. The BOD firmed up on the poster board type, and selected 4 locations to advertise the 2007 Air Show. I have signed the contract with the LAMAR Co.

**MIG-16**---Have forwarded the FAA Restoration Application for the airplane to the Aircraft Registry office. This documents VAC ownership and confirms the N-2400X numbers with the FAA.

**UH-19**---Have completed the FAA Bill of Sale and Aircraft Restoration Application for the UH-19D/S-55 Sikorsky helicopter. This documents the VAC ownership and confirms the N-37788 number with the FAA.

NEW AND RENEWING COLONELS

<b>LAST NAME</b>	<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>SPOUSE</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>STATE</b>
<b>NEW COLONELS</b>				
<b>Emmart</b>	<b>Jeraldine (Jerry)</b>		<b>Titusville</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Myers</b>	<b>Annette</b>		<b>Titusville</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Hale</b>	<b>Gregory</b>	<b>Penny</b>	<b>Mims</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Kison</b>	<b>Robert</b>	<b>Anita</b>	<b>Titusville</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Scott-Myers</b>	<b>Cindy</b>		<b>Osteen</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>RENEWING COLONELS</b>				
<b>Leathers</b>	<b>Don</b>		<b>Dedham</b>	<b>MA</b>
<b>Foster</b>	<b>Billy B.</b>		<b>Fernandina Beach</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Lorino</b>	<b>Sam</b>		<b>Cocoa</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Munsey</b>	<b>Bob</b>		<b>Cocoa</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Olsen</b>	<b>Christopher P.</b>	<b>Carlee</b>	<b>Brooksville</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Owens</b>	<b>Jim</b>	<b>Genie</b>	<b>Cocoa</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>Lino G</b>	<b>Marina</b>	<b>North Miami</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Koss</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Joan</b>	<b>Bushnell</b>	<b>FL</b>
<b>Beddingfield</b>	<b>Sam</b>		<b>Titusville</b>	<b>FL</b>

AVIATING WITH EVANS



**Last take-off of Enforcer Proto-type PE-202**

The Piper Enforcer was one of the opportunities I experienced in my professional time as An Experimental Test Pilot to fly an aircraft for the first time it has been in the air. The Piper Enforcer PE-202 was actually the first of the two versions manufactured by Piper Aircraft Corporation in Vero Beach, Florida. The first model was a highly modified Cavalier Mustang

P-51D. It was a two-seater but the rear seat area was occupied by a TV recording photo-panel, (State-of-the-art for that 1971 period at Piper). The oil cooler scoop, which was the major identifying profile of the P-51, had been removed and the vertical and horizontal tail area had been enlarged. The real differences in the configuration were the turbo-jet engine and large C-97 four bladed prop with the tips cut off.

I had flown all of the clean performance, stability and structural/flutter tests and was beginning the flutter tests carrying six BLU-27 Napalm tanks. The real Enforcer, which was a much-streamlined version and the real design configuration of the production model, was getting close to being ready for its first flight. I was turning over the testing of the PE-202 to my back-up pilot John Hambleton. John had flown several flights in the aircraft and he was starting flying flutter tests at the higher speeds. I was flying "safety chase" in a Lockheed T-33 jet. He was performing what is known as "Shake-rattle and roll" flutter maneuvers beginning at 300 knots and continuing the test points at 5-knot increments. Everything was going smoothly with those six large tanks wobbling with the hard stick and rudder pulses. We were at 325-knot point and I was sitting comfortably on the right side just opposite the tail of the Enforcer when John performed the rudder kicks, aileron rocks and then the pitch pulses. Suddenly the tip of the elevator became a blur! Just as fast as the tip had appeared to be at least 12 inches thick it returned to its normal shape. There was no doubt in my mind that the aircraft had suffered a momentary aerodynamic flutter but had apparently recovered immediately. I had thought I saw something depart the aircraft during the incident so I immediately slid under the tail of John's aircraft and reported that the only thing I observed was the right elevator trim tab was missing. (We had increased the trim tab sizes by 50% to gain more elevator authority for three point landings with a forward center-of-gravity configuration). I pulled up close beside the Enforcer

and repeated the status report but got no reply from John. He was sitting with his head appearing to be looking down at something in the cockpit and the aircraft was picking up speed and nosing over toward the Atlantic Ocean. I made several more calls without any response and I couldn't understand why John continued to look down in the cockpit and why he was not reducing power. I had decided that he had lost pitch control but thought he would be making some response by power reduction or wing rolling to show that he had some control. Most of all his failure to acknowledge the calls really concerned me. As we were rapidly descending from the 10,000 feet where we had started, my voice (As heard later on the engineering radio tapes recorded) became more frantic as I began screaming at him to bail out! Suddenly I realized that we are in a very high speed and steep dive and I had better start my pull out or I was going to dive into the ocean beside the Enforcer. It was hard to leave his wing but I kept my eyes on his aircraft as I made my recovery graying out as I barely cleared the waves. It was extremely hard making myself watch but I had to. The sick feeling that was in my stomach while looking at the Enforcer and John through my blurred vision as they dived straight into the ocean. I was almost inverted in my modified loop looking out of the top of my canopy at the geyser of water that arose from the ocean where the aircraft had impacted the water. Then I saw a sight I will always remember. It was the happiest thing I could ever expect to see and that was a big orange and white canopy of John's parachute opening just on top of the waterspout! I watched as he gently settled into the water, which was one of the rare days when the ocean was absolutely flat. I

circled and flew just to the side of where John was floating. His “Mae west” was inflated but he was still attached to his parachute and he appeared to be incapacitated. My big fear now was that he would drown before anyone could get to him. I had just pulled up from my first pass over him when I couldn’t believe what I saw just approaching the impact area which was still very visible by the bright green area created by the high speed impact of PE-202. It was a SA-16 Grumman Albatross with the distinct markings of the U.S. Coast Guard. I switched to Guard Channel immediately and began trying to reach them by radio without success. They circled John and obviously saw him but they did not respond to my frantic calls. I finally switched back to Flight Test frequency and asked Piper to contact Flight Service see if they could reach the SA-16. I flew close in front of them wagging my wings and diving as close as I could over John and I was somewhat relieved when they dropped a survival raft near him. To my disappointment John made no effort to move towards it and I became more concerned that he might not be alive.

It seemed like forever before I finally received a call from the Coast Guard aircraft explaining they were a Reserve Coast Guard crew who were not allowed to land in the ocean without headquarters approval, which had taken almost 15 minutes to get. I watched as they landed and the outboard pontoon nearly hit John as they passed by him. They put their engines in reverse and backed towards him and then one of their rescue crewmen jumped in the water and assisted John into the aircraft. The pilot called to say that he was conscious but obviously badly injured and they would fly him to Patrick AFB Hospital. I called the Patrick tower for permission to land and they told me that my aircraft was not authorized to use their base, so I headed to Vero Beach I was almost out of fuel and asked Piper to have an aircraft ready for me and to try to get clearance for it to land at Patrick AFB.

When I parked on the Piper ramp there was a Twin Comanche sitting with both engines running. As I jumped into the cockpit I asked the Piper manager to get me a rental car reserved at Melbourne Airport in case I couldn’t land at Patrick.

I called Patrick tower as soon as I leveled off for the short hop from Vero Beach and was told that I was not authorized to land there so I landed at the Melbourne Airport. The rental car was waiting and I drove the 16 miles to the base. When I walked into the hospital and found John lying on a portable bed in the hallway. I grabbed the first person I found who was an Air Force nurse and asked why they hadn’t done anything for him. She told me they had called for civilian ambulance to take him to a civilian hospital. I don’t wish to write down the words I used in explaining in no uncertain terms the fact that John was a retired USAF Colonel and they had better get some of their best doctors to work on him NOW! It was like someone opened a free happy hour the way the doctors, nurses and corpsmen descended on the patient. They removed the torn flight suit and dressed the wounds and scratches as best they could and contacted Wuesthoff Hospital in Rockledge, Florida, the closest hospital with an Orthopedic Surgeon available. He was transferred there in an Air Force ambulance and I followed in my rental car. John had ankle and shoulder fractures that were repaired by the civilian doctors and I flew John and his wife back to their home near Eglin AFB, Florida in the first Piper Seneca built. It was still in flight test status but Piper allowed me to pick John up at Merritt Island Airport when the

doctors released him to travel. The Eglin AFB ambulance met us at Destin Airport and took John to the base hospital. Within several months John was able to get back to flying his Cessna 195 and working with the Enforcer as a flight test engineer.

The aircraft was recovered just a mile off the town of Vero Beach and revealed the cause of the "Flutter". The trim tab actuating bars on Mustangs were positioned with the left one on the bottom and the right one on the top of the horizontal stabilizers connecting to the respective trim tabs. When John executed the rapid full aft stick and full forward stick "Rap" followed immediately by releasing the stick, the loads on the enlarged elevator trim tab were so great that the trim tab actuator on the right elevator broke creating the wild oscillation of the elevator. As soon as the trim tab departed the elevator it all returned to neutral position. The problem that had occurred was that the rivets that attached the elevator control rods to the stick control bell crank had all sheared leaving John with no pitch control. When he finally decided he had better bail out he had trouble getting the large canopy to release and when it did depart the suction forces on his body were so strong that he had more trouble trying to unhook his lap belt. (There was no ejection seat in the proto-type Enforcer). When finally he managed to get the safety belt open he was violently sucked out of the aircraft at a speed estimated to be around 450 knots. They were never certain whether the wildly flailing arms and legs caused his injuries or whether he hit some part of the tail section. Maybe some of both. A few days later I began my 124-flight test program on the "Real" Enforcer. When I visited John several years ago he let me fly his Aeronca Champ into his private airstrip just North of Ocala, Florida where he and his wife live. He also still owned a Cessna 195 and a small helicopter.

©

N.C. "Bud" Evans

**FROM THE FRONT COUNTER**  
**By Ginger, Crystal and Sandi**

Items are now being inventoried in our New Computerized System to keep track of all our New Items. There is a 10% discount off for all our Members. Please come in and scout out our New Stuff. We have new Aviation books in the store as well as New Girl items. Check out our children's jumpsuits in time for Halloween, which is coming up soon. Come see our New Franklin Mint Planes! Don't forget Christmas is right around the corner so shop early and spend a lot.

**Come see us at the PX. Remember everything is 10% off for members.**

HANGAR HAPPENINGS

Ann James

FUTURE VAC EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- SEPTEMBER 16th "TICO AIRSHOW 2007" Kickoff meeting  
Saturday at 1:00 at the Museum
- OCTOBER 28th Planes -Trains - Automobile Show
- NOVEMBER 11 & 12th Veterans Day Weekend Open House  
Museum Entrance is Free  
for all  
Military & Brevard County residents
- NOVEMBER 30th ANNUAL Decorate the Museum for Christmas  
& Volunteer Luncheon  
Everyone welcome!  
Bring a dish to share - Starts at 10:00 until done!
- DECEMBER 9, 2006 VAC Members and Guests Christmas Party

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VAC Family News - Ann

Our **sympathy** goes out to Bob Boswell and his family in the recent loss of his father, Irving "Pete" Boswell of Melbourne.

Our appreciation and **Thank You's** to **Betty Desplains, Gaye Lindsay, Jean Felton and Joan Dorrell** for all their help with cookies for our soldiers at lunch on Thursdays. We have about 50 different soldiers for lunch each week and we try to provide a "touch of home" with homemade goodies for lunch. If you would like to help out, please call me. We would love to have you join us as well!

**WELCOME HOME** from Afghanistan to **Sgt Michael Garutti**. Michael is the **son of Angelo & Carol Garutti** of Merritt Island. Angelo is a dedicated volunteer each year at the Tico Airshow.



Michael was sent to Afghanistan last spring as part of the Cocoa Armory's 1st-124 Infantry Delta Co. 53rd Brigade and then assigned the most dangerous type of duty - convoy escort.

We are proud of you, Michael,  
and we are all happy to have you home safely.

Michael & happy wife Dawn!

**THANK YOU** to James Eubanks of Georgia who read of our need for umbrellas for our Tour Guides. Our summer Florida rain has arrived and we received the beautiful "Patriotic" umbrellas just in time. These help to keep all our guests dry to and from their cars and between our buildings during tours.

Thanks also to Dr. Leo Kerwin for his contribution and others who were kind enough to drop them off - but I didn't get a name. You are all **very much appreciated!**



Thank you again from all of us at the VAC!  
Ann

### **Share Your Stories or Write a Remembrance**

For veterans, the memories, images and flashbacks of war are so painful that they often have great difficulty talking about them. Yet sharing these stories can have a powerful healing effect. Below is a Questionnaire that can help veterans and their families get started on their story. It's just to get you started. Please feel free to use any format or information that you choose.

Each service member's story is a part of our nation's history and needs to be told, re-told and remembered. We invite you to share the story of a spouse, a child, a parent, another relative, or a friend who participated in one of America's conflicts. You can contribute a eulogy, a remembrance, or a prayer in their honor. Share your own story of grief over the loss of a loved one. Tell us of a funny tale that was relayed to you or that happened to you. You will have the choice of the story being published or kept private. I will randomly choose one to print each month in the newsletter if space allows.

### **How to Begin**

The following questions were developed to help start the conversation with a veteran or to jog your own memory.

1. What was your reason for enlisting, or were you drafted?
2. In which branch of the military did you serve?

3. What was basic training like?
4. What was your military specialty (infantry, artillery, airborne, armor)?
5. When you think about your war experiences, what is the thought that first comes to mind?
6. What was your best experience?
7. What was the worst experience?
8. Among your leaders and colleagues, whose story is the most compelling for you?  
What makes it so compelling?
9. How did you cope with the frustrations and horror of war?
10. What would you most like your family and friends to understand about your war experience?

Sometimes getting through the experience of sharing your story the first time is the most difficult part of all. This is all part of the healing process. Make sure that you have someone you can talk to if the memories are too painful.

The above questionnaire was compiled by Helen Fitzgerald, a certified death educator (CDE), author and lecturer, and her husband, a veteran of WWII.

This story comes from Fred & Hazel Berglund. I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoy reading these stories and hope that you will continue to send them.

### **How I became an 8th Army Corp B-17 Pilot**

I left high school as soon as I graduated; I was on the Hasting's High School 1941 undefeated football and golf team. I left for California driving with a few classmates in an older couple's car (we paid for the gas) We stopped at the Black hills in South Dakota to see Gutzon Borglum's magnificent carving of four famous American presidents - just finished in 1941. We were really impressed. We then drove west to Yellowstone Park to see the Old Faithful Geyser and nearby the famous fan dancer, Gypsy Rose Lee. Wowee! We then drove to Las Vegas to see the first casino called El Rancho Vegas. What a time three high school boys had. Wow! We then drove to Camp Haan in California to see some of our old Hastings friends who had been called for duty just before WWII started. I got a job at Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, California after a short trade school stint - (free). I would rather fly them than build them (A-20 Bombers) so I drove back to Minnesota and joined the Army air corps with my old golfing buddy, Ken E. Rickson. Ken was a navigator who was shot down over Germany and was a P.O.W. at Sagan in Germany.

I had signed up to become a pilot in the Army Air corps and was sent to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri for basic training. The U.S. Army Cadre were all tougher than nails and tried to make men out of us boys. We were then sent to three Army Air Corp flight training schools in the west. First - Santa Ana, California preflight school where we mainly marched and talked to head shrinkers. Next - Thunderbird Field Phoenix, Arizona where we flew bi-planes and "dog-fights" in the sky. Our instructors were old and some had fought in WWI and they were civilians. We flew low wing fighter plane trainers at Lancaster, California and had more civilian instructors. After a lot of "washouts" we continued on to Fort Summer, New Mexico for twin engine bomber trainers (Billy the Kid, world famous outlaw, was buried there). Graduated as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and was sad because my parents could not make the big ceremony. I was sent to a B-17 gunnery school in California. Captain Gene Raymond and his wife Jeanette McDonald sang "Shortening Bread", Captain

Raymond was my C.O. I really learned how to wrestle big B-17 Bombers there as gunners fired away at targets high and low.

My honeymoon was over and I was sent to Ardmore, Oklahoma to crew up (and screw up) with eight other "boys". Our low belly ball turret gunner was only 17 years old, and our best gunner. Our flight engineer was an old man of 26 and a veteran of the Pearl Harbor, Hawaii bombing by the Japanese. Met my future bride there at a Christmas party and was introduced to her by my radio operator, Robert Devoe, from Wisconsin. About 30 days later, including getting lost over Texas when our navigator screwed up on our first night flight, we flew to Lincoln, Nebraska to meet with all our parents before we flew on to England.

We flew through Maine to get to Goose Bay in Labrador. It was very cold and we had to leave soon after supper because our engines would not start up in extreme cold. We took off and flew to Greenland. Our navigator told us we were 300 miles south of course - if we had followed his advice we would be frozen dead near the North Pole. We continued on and hit Iceland right on the nose following a radio beam. We landed in Iceland in a giant snowstorm. We were snowed in for nine days and could not visit the city of Reykjavik, as the people were worried we would bother their girls. The Icelanders did not trust the young "Yanks".

We finally took off for England after seeing many crashes by planes trying to land in the storm. We reached Valley Wales in England where the famous Beatles were from. We learned the "Hokey Pokey" dance with some Welsh lasses - right in the middle of the day. We turned in our new "Classy Lassy" B-17 and were bussed to Mendlesham Field, 34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group near Ipswich 60 miles north of London. Veteran pilots checked us out and my crew cheered when I made perfect landings. We were assigned our first B-17 called, "Missbehavin Raven". We had watched it land after a mission to Germany. A crewman had tried to bail out and was caught in the lower nose forward escape hatch. The chute was attached to his body and all that held him together was his spine - he was dead. The hatch was repaired and we were assigned the plane days later.

We were trained by veteran pilots and flew our first mission to Germany a few days later. We bombed the big battleship, "Admiral Scheer" and were almost paralyzed by the big 155 mm Flak guns that guarded Kiel Germany. Scared the hell out of us! A British Lancaster Bomber sunk the battleship a week later with a 10,000 lb. "Blockbuster". We flew several more missions bombing war planes and aircraft factories. Our most exciting mission came later when we went to bomb Gustow about 100 miles from Berlin near the Baltic Sea. We were hit by diving German ME-109 fighter planes. They flew straight down about a thousand feet into some B-17 Bombers. All that would be left of two planes was a giant black cloud of smoke. Not one speck of wreckage could be seen! Our intelligence officer at Mendlesham thought the pilots were fanatical young "Hitler Youth". It developed that the suicide pilots were old seasoned veterans who wanted to die for Germany. They were called "Sonderkommando Elbe". The date was April 7, 1945. We flew "Missbehavin Raven" more until it was all shot up. We flew other old B-17's like "Old Pappy" and flew to Linz Austria - home of Adolph Hitler. We flew P.O.W.'s back to Paris. We flew six mercy missions to Holland dropping flour and cans of soup to the starving Dutch people. They had been eating grass and tulip bulbs. Holland was still occupied by the German Army and they were hungry too and did not shoot at us.

On May 4<sup>th</sup> we flew an old B-17 loaded with many extra crew back to the U.S.A. It was a very rough flight in terrible freezing weather on the North Atlantic. We had to go down to wave tops to melt ice on our wings as our de-icer boots were all shot up by anti-aircraft fire over Germany. Iceland was completely weathered in and we could not land there to refuel. We had to fly all the way to Greenland from England at 140 MPH and it was "hairy" flying. We landed up a hill in Greenland and climbed out, kissed the ground, and thanked God that we made it.

The highlight of my life came soon after we flew on to the U.S.A. and I got a 30 day leave to fly on to Ardmore, Oklahoma to marry my WWII sweetheart, Hazel "Honey" Davis. We were married by an Army Chaplain at the airbase there. We left for Minnesota on the Rock Island Rocket Train. We honeymooned at the Blue Goose Resort on Mille Lac Lake and spent the rest of our honeymoon at Douglas Lodge in Itasca St. Park. We have lived together (for better or for worse) for 61 years. We have three beautiful children; two boys and a girl that we left in Oklahoma. They were the light of our life!

Fred and Hazel Berglund

## **PLANES – TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES**

This is just a reminder to mark Sat. Oct.28, 2006 on your calendar.  
That is the date of the VAC's Plane--Train--Automobile show.

There will be toy train dealers and displays, antique autos for you to view and naturally the VAC's fine collection of vintage aircraft.

A great opportunity to buy a train for under the Christmas tree, get a free appraisal on your old train that has been sitting in the garage for years or maybe a new vintage auto to play with, if your wife allows.

Special pricing for all three areas of the show is as follows:

\$9.00 for Adults

\$8.00 for Seniors and Military

\$5.00 for Children

Family pricing will be available

Naturally VAC members in good standing will be admitted free of charge.

Any questions please call 321-268-1941 and ask for Norm.



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