



CHICO AIR MUSEUM

Winter 2009
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Chico Air Museum
170 Convair Avenue
Chico, CA 95973
(530) 345 - 6468
www.chicoairmuseum.org

Museum Hours

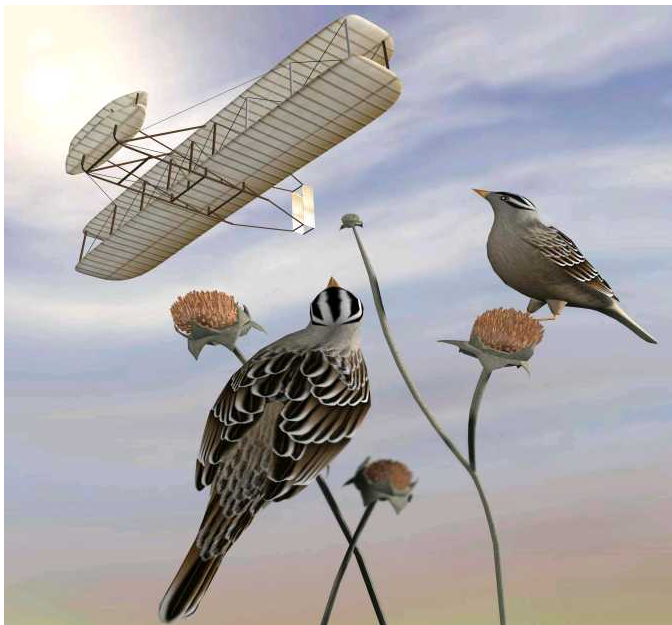
Saturdays 10:00 – 4:00

School tours available during the week –
arrangements made by request. Please contact the
museum.

Museum Board of Directors

Vic Alvistur – Chair
Norm Rosene – Vice - Chair
Noel Wheeler - Secretary
Brian Baldrige
Al Ross
* * *

Send articles, information to
newsletterCAM@hotmail.com



“The Chico Air Museum
is a non-profit institution that acquires, preserves,
exhibits, and flies classic and historical aircraft.
The museum celebrates the history, technology,
science and romance of flight.”

NEWSLETTER

Message From the President

By Vic Alvistur, Board Chair

There was a lot of Museum activity during 2008. All of it reflects the hard work of our volunteers. Some of the highlights are:

- 5,324 visitors to the Museum, an 11% increase over 2007
- An exciting Third Anniversary celebration featuring a beautifully restored BT-13 which did several flyovers for the crowd
- A successful “telephone handshake” with the owner of the new Grumman AF (see article on page 3) to allow us to start restoration in 2009
- Finished the restoration upgrade of our Lockheed PV-2 sub chaser
- A reasonably successful Annie B’s fundraiser conducted this fall which augmented our aircraft acquisition capital reserve
- A kick-off of our new Website design which should see a rollout in January
- A dramatic and spellbinding Aviation History program by Wendell Summers featuring the use of DC3’s launched from aircraft carriers (if you can believe it) to explore and settle the South Pole in the 40’s and 50’s
- And last but not least, a very well attended Museum participation in the 2008 AirFest which, itself, was record setting thanks in large part to Museum-supporters Gayle Womack and Dave Favor

All in all, 2008 was an excellent year for the Chico Air Museum. A big THANKS goes to our volunteers who made it possible.

MANY THANKS TO OUR SIGN SPONSORS

- **Aero Union Corp.**
- **Asset Management Group**
- **Bestway Painters**
- **Bidwell Consulting**
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- **Chico Sports LTD**
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- **State Farm Insurance (Normyle Agency)**
- **The UPS Stores**

MUSEUM'S P-2V UNDERGOES A TRANSFORMATION

For the majority of the three and a half years the Museum has been open, the P-2V was relegated to the far corner of the outdoor display area. While a unique and important display, it appeared weathered and tarnished. To add insult to injury, a flock of aggressive pigeons worked themselves into the aircraft and damaged much of the interior as well as parts of the exterior surfaces. A little over a year ago the appearance of and attention given to the P-2 became a higher priority. By this time the aircraft had been moved to the northeast corner of the display area and as a visitor entered the area, 200 feet ahead was the Neptune. Today museum guests see a repainted, refurbished and attractive looking P-2 Neptune with the other aircraft on display as supporting exhibits.



P-2V greets Museum visitors

The transformation which occurred over the last twelve months changed the appearance of the P-2 from an ugly duckling to a swan. Crew Chief **Bill Massey** and crew members **Robert Maggetti**, his wife **Leandria Maggetti** and children **Andria Maggetti**, **Dellorencia Maggetti**, **Marrylee Maggetti** and crew member **Bill Bunch** devoted many hours and numerous days in refurbishing the aircraft. It became a family affair, with Robert and Leandria coming out on Sundays while the Museum was closed to take care of follow-up items from the day before, along with the rest of their family. Major tasks were completed, such as cleaning the entire exterior surfaces, removing the pigeon debris, "pigeon proofing" the aircraft by sealing any openings, cleaning out and organizing the interior

of the aircraft and painting much of the exterior. Leandria, a talented seamstress, designed and made the engine plugs replicating the ones originally on the Neptune when it was in active service. Particular care was given to using original decals and original lettering.



Red engine plugs on each engine

The Museums' P-2 was donated by Aero Union and served as an antisubmarine patrol aircraft during the Cold War. It entered service in the U.S. Navy in August 1960 at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington. Of the many P-2s manufactured, approximately 40 are still flying today, all in civilian roles. The Chico Air Museum is honored to have on display this significant aircraft with its history. Through the significant efforts and hard work of the Maggetti family, Bill Massey and Bill Bunch, the aircraft is available for museum visitors to admire and enjoy.



Pv-2 Crew member Robert Maggetti

MUSEUM SPEAKER PROGRAMS

Two unique presentations were featured in the Chico Air Museum Aviation History Program series in 2008. Mr. Wendell Summers provided an excellent overview of his experiences with Admiral Richard Byrd during "Operation High Jump" in 1946-47. Mr. Summers used photographs, diagrams and video to provide the audience with a wonderful overview of what it was like to fly over and explore the hostile climates of Antarctica. His insights about Admiral Byrd and of living at "Little America" were incredibly fascinating. The Chico Air Museum is indebted to Mr. Summers for his efforts in putting on a world-class presentation in Chico.

The second Chico Air Museum program of 2008 featured Mr. Charles "Norm" Stevens. Mr. Stevens served as a B-17 bombardier in the 8th Air Force, 351st Bomb Group at Polebrook, England in 1944. He completed 34 bombing missions over Europe. Mr. Stevens presented his account of training and flying missions as a B-17 bombardier. His fascinating story was highlighted with photographs and maps. Mr. Stevens was gracious enough to sign copies of his own book about the same events, "*An Innocent at Polebrook*," for program attendees following the presentation.

The Chico Air Museum Program Committee is currently working on its first 2009 program. Museum volunteer Don Campbell will speak about his own experiences with some of the world's most exotic aircraft. If it is fast or if it is stealthy, then Don has worked on some aspect of the aircraft. This will be one that you will not want to miss. Plan on attending this program which will take place Tuesday, January 27, 2009 at 7:00 pm. The venue will be the new Matthew's Café located at 1600 Mangrove Avenue in Chico. The presentation is free and open to the public.



Brian Binne, astronaut and former CAM program speaker

THE CHICO AIR MUSEUM GRUMMAN AF GUARDIAN

Searching for a smaller air tanker in the mid sixties to replace the TBM air tanker already in service, Aero Union Corporation of Chico bought seven Guardian hulls via military surplus sales and converted two of them for firefighting service for the California Department of Forestry and utilized the five remaining aircraft as "parts-birds". The AF tankers were retired in 1974 and all but one hull were sold or traded over the following fifteen years. This last Guardian was retained by the estate of Aero Union co-founder Dale Newton over the past twelve years.

In 2008 the last Grumman AF Guardian remaining at Chico was sold to veteran Reno Air Race pilot and aviation enthusiast, Jimmy Leeward. Mr. Leeward acquired the aircraft to obtain certain parts for his own flying Grumman AF that is based at his home airport in Florida. During the course of events that surrounded the sale of the aircraft to Mr. Leeward, the Chico Air Museum Board of Directors approached him with the idea of restoring the aircraft to static condition and displaying the aircraft at the museum as part of a long term loan agreement. As a strong supporter of aviation and aviation history, Mr. Leeward was extremely gracious and supportive of the museum's efforts in this regard.

To date, the aircraft has been moved to the Chico Air Museum outdoor display area. The spare parts available to restore the aircraft have been gathered together and restoration of the major structures is about to commence. The museum is actively looking for qualified volunteers that are interested in preserving this unique and special aircraft. If you are interested in becoming part of the restoration team, please contact Don Campbell at 343-2428.



A fully restored AF by Aero Union

THE WAR AT HOME

By Ralph Tupper

I was just sitting around thinking about the museum and began wondering why we all feel so driven to work so hard to keep it operating and to help make it grow. Of course there are compelling reasons to do it: Our airport played a big part in the war effort and many veterans of that war still live in the area. Some of them even work with us. Good reasons, but there had to be more than that.

Then the answer came to me. WWII wasn't just some distant war, it was personal. Everyone was touched by it and homes across the nation had banners in their windows; each banner representing a family member serving over seas. My family's window had seven of those banners.

All Americans began to pull together to support their troops. And there were sacrifices at home. People had to keep their cars running as there were none being made. No coffee was available. Milk was in short supply or in powdered form. Gas was rationed and you could not get it without gas ration stamps. Some food items you could not get unless you had enough ration coins (red and green cardboard ones) to go with the money. There was no butter so margarine came into use; no rubber so synthetic tires were used; no metal so plastic items were made. No one complained.

In the early years of the war, a 7 year old boy was playing in his friend's back yard. There was a small grassy area separated from a dirt alley by a 3 or 4 foot fence. The alley was hard packed dirt with jagged rocks sticking up. The fence was only a wooden frame onto which a heavy metal mesh was attached. Over the years the wooden stakes had rotted so the fence was held only by the mesh and it wobbled in the wind. That day, the boy was practicing his "tight rope" walking by balancing on the top 2 by 4 when it flew from under him and he was thrown into the alley. He put his arm down to stop the fall and heard the bone snap when it curled beneath him and he rolled onto it.

He cradled the arm and cried until it began to get numb. His friend wanted him to go for help but his father, who worked for the railroad, was big and had a mean streak. They were just getting by, so if he did something to cost his father money, he would usually get beaten. He finally went home, cradling his arm but would not let his parents near it. When he woke the next day, it was swollen twice normal size and his father took him to the doctor.

The x-rays showed it broken in one place, fractured in another, and dislocated in yet another. The doctor told his father all of their pain medicine had gone to the war effort and the arm would have to be set without using any. His father promised him a dollar if he did not yell, then he held him around the waist while the doctor

began pulling on the arm. He didn't yell; he couldn't. He learned that extreme pain causes severe nausea and he was too busy being sick to be able to yell. He got his dollar after the cast was put on.

Now he is a grown man with one arm slightly longer than the other, a distant memory of what that pain felt like, and a realization that, even at that young age, he had unknowingly, and in some small way, contributed to the war effort because the anesthesia he went without went to a wounded soldier some-where who needed it more.

This is just one story. I am sure there are many more, but it shows that everyone was affected in some way by the war.

So, the museum honors the veterans who fought in it and the city that played such a big part in the effort, but more so it honors all of America, even those at home who endured without complaint their biggest suffering, which was the constant worry that their loved ones represented by those banners would not return. That is why the museum means so much to us. It honors all Americans and the patriotism that carried us through.

CHICO AIR MUSEUM VOLUNTERS

The volunteers at the Museum are the life blood of the organization. Their services include being docents, aircraft upkeep, making repairs and maintaining CAM assets and providing technical services. Their services are invaluable and the Museum Board is most grateful to the following individuals for their talents, enthusiasm, dedication and hours donated.

Rick Barton, Arnie Bredon, Curt Burkett, C.R., Don Campbell, Doug Campbell, Rick Carpio, Pete Cuming, Tracy Donner, Jimmy Forberg, John Forberg, Joyce Forberg, Jack Gaines, Irene Galvany, Pete Galvany, Doug Hagerman, Hector Hernandez, Mike Hoagland, Chuck Hull, A.J. Humble, Benita Humble, Cordy Humble, Damon Humble, Kim Humble, Kylie Humble, Wick Humble, Tom Lewis, Roy Littleton, Andria Maggetti, Delloencia Maggetti, Leandra Maggetti, Marrylee Maggetti, Robert Maggetti, Bill Massey Bob McClenethen, Karen McHenry, John Papadokis, Justin Phillipson, Dudley Pierce, David Robinson, Richard Swain, Ralph Tupper, Sam Wheeler.

Aviation Quiz: GREAT BRITAIN: THE HOME OF ARCANER AIRCRAFT NAMES!

By Wick Humble

MUSEUM DOCENTS RECOGNIZED

The Chico Air Museum's 18 current docents were recognized by the Museum's Board of Directors this past December for their invaluable service to the Museum. Current members of the docent corps include **Arnie Bredon, Bob McClenethen, Chuck Hull, C.R., David Robinson, Don Campbell, Doug Hagerman, Dudley Pierce, John Forberg, John Papadakis, Joyce Forberg, Karen McHenry, Pete Galvany, Ralph Tupper, Richard Swain, Roy Littleton, Weldon Bauman and Wick Humble.**

Length of service of the docents range from those who have been with the Museum since it opened in May 2005 to others who recently joined the ranks in 2008. The accumulated hours that the docents had contributed to the Museum at the time of the recognition event totaled an incredible 3933 hours!

Three docents, **John Forberg, Joyce Forberg and Ralph Tupper** who began their docent careers when the Museum first opened, had each exceeded 500 hours of service to the Chico Air Museum. The three were singled out and each was presented an A-2 leather flight jacket as appreciation and recognition by the Board for their 500 hour achievement.



Joyce Forberg, John Forberg and Ralph Tupper in their official A-2 jackets

We know that the Brits grabbed off some choice names for their aircraft. *Spitfire* can hardly be improved upon and the *Hawker Hurricane* and *Typhoon* are very evocative titles for warplanes, especially. Not so commonly known is the Grumman *Martlet* or Bell *Caribou* known in the USA as the *F4H Wildcat* and *P-39 Aircobra*, hardly to be improved upon titles, if not aircraft! The Royal Navy finally gave up on *Martlet* and accepted *Wildcat Mk. III* and abandoned the whole *P-39* program to the Rusksies!

The RAF, however, also liked to name their bombers after such staid non-flying things such as castles: Bristol *Blenheim* and Short *Stirling*.

Chico Air Museum has a very nice display racer in its outdoor display area whose design emanated from Jolly Olde, the *Taylor Titch*. The *Titch* apparently got its name from its rather diminutive (if brave) test pilot, a Squadron Leader who went by that nickname which means "small." Looking through the Museum's burgeoning aeronautical library, I came up with a list of other off-beat airplane names from Great Britain. Below is a list of real and bogus titles. Check your air knowledge (and perhaps your credibility) and see how many genuine names of British aircraft you can identify. Your challenge is to circle the names below of actual British aircraft.

1. Snail
2. Bandicoot
3. Basilisk
4. Dinky
5. Wot
6. Peahen
7. Autocrat
8. Bandersnatch
9. Blue Tit
10. Chummy
11. Snapper
12. Tabby
13. Wagtail
14. Bull Nose
15. Aiglet
16. Seraphim
17. Snargasher
18. Teacup
19. Vildebeeste
20. Beefeater



Answers to the quiz are found on page 6

CURRENT MUSEUM MEMBERS

*denotes lifetime members

CHICO MUNICIPAL AIRPORT HAD FIRST SKY JACKING IN U.S.A.

On July 31, 1961 the first attempted high jacking of an airliner on U. S. soil took place at Chico Municipal Airport. The skyjacker, Bruce Britt Sr., then 40, had apparently been inspired by airline highjackings from other countries to Cuba. He had no interest in Cuba, but wanted to use a San Francisco bound Pacific Airlines plane for a flight home to Smackover, Arkansas.

Britt had been working for months on a gas line project in Corning and told police he was owed back pay he couldn't collect. He planned to board the plane in Chico to get to San Francisco and then find a way to Arkansas. As he sped toward Chico a California Highway Patrol officer clocked Britt at 120 MPH. Attempts to catch up with him failed and he arrived at the Chico airport in time to make the 7:20 p.m. flight, which was a bit late.

Britt stopped his car, ran through a boarding gate and boarded the DC-3, taking a seat behind the cockpit. An airport ticket agent, Chico resident William Hicks, confronted Britt. Britt pulled a .38 caliber pistol and told Hicks, "this is my ticket", and then shot him in the back. The gunman then threatened to shoot the passengers one at a time until the airplane took off. He then turned to a passenger in the third row, a San Francisco attorney, and fired a round over the man's head.

Britt then went to the cockpit and put his gun to the head of Captain Oscar Cleal of Menlo Park and demanded to be flown to Arkansas. Cleal taxied the plane onto the runway, but reportedly told Britt they couldn't take off until the cabin door was closed. Apparently upset by the pilot's statement, Britt shot him in the head, leaving Cleal blind for life. At that time Alan Wheeler, then 29, and the co-pilot struggled with Britt and were able to knock the gun from his hand. Britt then reportedly pulled a knife, but two passengers came to Wheeler's aid and Britt was subdued. During the struggle ticket agent Hicks, who had been shot, crawled from the aircraft and was able to phone the Butte County Sheriff's Office to report the shooting. Sheriff's Deputies, CHP officers and Chico Police Chief Jim Evans rushed to the scene where Britt was arrested.

Three days after the attempted skyjacking, Britt pleaded guilty to three counts of attempted murder. Sentencing for Britt was delayed by the judge for several days to see if Captain Cleal would live. He did, and lived another 41 years. Britt was sentenced to prison and his whereabouts or if he was eventually released is unknown.

Since 1948 there have been 970 airline hijackings worldwide. When Bruce Britt attempted to commandeer the Pacific Airlines aircraft in July 1961, the crime was relatively novel and the term "skyjacking" was not yet in the English lexicon. Until terrorists hijacked four U.S. airliners on September 11, 2001, the country had gone more than 10 years without a serious attempt to commandeer a commercial flight.

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alvistur, Vic & Gayle* | Hooning, Richard |
| Baldrige, Brian | Humble, Wick |
| Bartolomei, Cecil | Jenkins, Bruce* |
| Barton, Rick | Jenvey, Courtenay |
| Bauman, Weldon | Lewis, Steve |
| Bell, Larry | Lybrook, Jerry |
| Booth, Scott | McDaniel, Leigh |
| Bredon, Arnie* | McLean, Sandra* |
| Burkett, Curt | McClenathen, Robert* |
| Burkett, Josh | Mueller, Charles |
| Campbell, Don | O'Connell, Charleen |
| Carter, Kirk | Osborn, Diana |
| Cuming, Pete & Diane | Papadakis, John |
| Dauterman, Tom* | Paull, Mike |
| Davey, Danny & family | Peery, Earl |
| Dye, Troy | Perry, John |
| Eckland, K.O. | Pierce, Dudley* |
| Fontinel, Nancy | Ray, Burke |
| Forberg, Jim | Rich, Bill |
| Forberg, John | Ritter, Frank |
| Forberg, John D. | Robinson, David |
| Forberg, Joyce | Rosene, Norm |
| Frybarger, Michael* | Ross, Al |
| Fuqua, Morey | Sos, David |
| Galloway, Bruce | Summers, Wendell |
| Gates, Clif | Thomas, Allan |
| Granicher, Bruce | Tupper, Ralph |
| Hall, Sankey | Wallace, Sally |
| Harris, David | Weber, Howard |
| Hernandez, Hector | Wescott, Bill & Grace |
| Hill, Paul | Wheeler, Noel* |
| Holden, Kenneth | Womack, Frank & Gayle |

ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 5: ALL ODD NUMBERED NAMES WERE/ARE BRITISH AIRCRAFT



CHICO AIR MUSEUM

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____ New _____ Renew _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

E-Mail Address _____

For Family Membership, please list names of members of your household:

If you wish to volunteer at the museum, please indicate your interests or talents:

Regular memberships are for a 12 month period. Your membership includes receiving the Chico Air Museum newsletter, a Museum bumper sticker, helping the Museum in its beginning phase and the opportunity to join other like-minded individuals in preserving our aviation history.

- \$20 Individual Membership
- \$40 Enhanced Individual Membership
- \$50 Family Membership (same household)
- \$75 Business or Company Membership
- \$400 Lifetime Membership

I would like to receive my Newsletter via regular mail or e-mail

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Membership \$ _____ Other Donation

Please return this completed form along with payment to:

Chico Air Museum

170 Convair Avenue

Chico, CA 95973

(530) 345-6468

www.chicoairmuseum.org

Thank you for supporting the Chico Air Museum



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