



UN - SCRAMBLE



Official Bulletin of the Valiant Air Command

December 2006 – January 2007

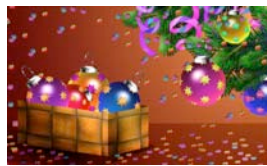
<p>VALIANT AIR COMMAND <i>Dedicated to restoring military aircraft</i> A 501c(3) Non-Profit Organization</p> <p>6600 Tico Road Titusville, Florida 32780-8009 Phone: 321-268-1941 FAX: 321-268-5969 Email: vacwarbirds@bellsouth.net Website: www.vacwarbirds.org</p>	<p>VAC WARBIRD MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP</p> <p>Open 7 days a week, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM except the day of Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Years</p> <p>Admission Adults \$12.00 Seniors/Military \$10.00 Children 5-12 years \$5.00</p> <p>Special Tour & Family Rates available</p>
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November 30, 2006

Annual “Decorate The Museum for Christmas & Volunteer Luncheon”

Everyone welcome! Begin at 10:00 – Lunch at 12:00

(Lasagna, salad & garlic bread provided) Bring a dish or dessert to share. Bring a friend and come meet your other members. This is always a fun day! (If you have extra decorations – bring them along.) Look forward to seeing you here!

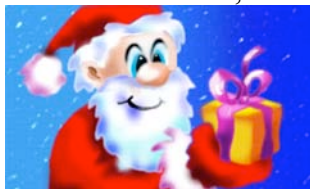


December 9, 2006 - Christmas Party

Saturday - 5:30 P.M. Happy Hour 6:30 P.M. Christmas Dinner by Pumpnickel’s (\$16.00 per person) Please call 268-1942 for reservations!! Musical entertainment by “Route Two”

Yankee Trader Gift Exchange!! Back again by popular demand! If you like to play, bring a wrapped gift – approx \$10.00 to be exchanged during this fun filled event!

Come – relax and enjoy kicking off a wonderful Christmas Season, while ending a fantastically busy year at VAC!



FROM THE FRONT COUNTER/GIFT SHOP

Ginger and Crystal

Christmas is here and we have nice items for all ages.

We have bomber jackets: green, black leather and brown with fur collars.

Military flags: Active servicemen in Iraq

"Will Fly for Food" Mugs

Cute, cuddly Piper Bears

Little Pilot Log Books for your child's flying experiences

If you haven't been here lately, come in and show us you love us!

Christmas Party December 9th, call in to reserve your spot!



*HAPPY
HOLIDAYS
to
ALL!!!*



NEXT BOARD MEETING



Days: December 12, 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

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. They charge us a substantial fee for returning it.

VALIANT AIR COMMAND 2007 AIRSHOW

Mark your calendars for the 2007 Airshow dates

March 16, 17, and 18th, 2007

Advance ticket sales- call 321-268-1942

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.

AIRSHOW SEED MONEY

The Valiant Air Command asks its members to help get the AirShow off the ground with Seed Money. There are many items to cover before the show that require money. This is where the seed money comes in. The Seed Money checks are the first checks to be returned to everyone. We appreciate your help!

CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY THIS YEAR!!



Jean Felton presents a generous check to Marilyn Bettencourt, Finance Director, for new tables. Ann James is delighted with the light weight tables and cart. These will make all the events at the Museum much easier to set up. Jean is a very active volunteer and her generosity & support is appreciated by all who move tables!! Thanks Jean!

VAC SCRAPBOOK

Thank you volunteers and staff for a wonderful 2006!



CELEBRATION TIME!
Paul Vasconi, his crew of hard workers and VAC directors Norm Lindsey, Bob James & Ken Terry raise a toast of Sparkling Cider to celebrate the pouring of the pad for the Air America C123.



A "Pad" to call Home.



Foreground - Docent Dick Withrow enjoys a Volunteer lunch in the library with fellow Volunteers each Thursday



Veterans Day Open House Volunteers
Margaret Towe, Diane Frazier, Roger Desplaines & Augie Holmquist take a break during open house. We had over 1000 Brevard County & Military visitors.



VAC directors "on duty" during Open House:
Bob Frazier, Lloyd Morris, Bud Evans & Bob James



Thank You **Ed Ehrenspeck** for all the beautiful painted rooms. The Museum looks Great!!

**UN-SCRAMBLE
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EDITORS CORNER

All news articles and officers reports are due by the 15th of the month. Please e-mail information to vacwarbirds@bellsouth.net Attention: UNSCRAMBLE article.



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OFFICERS REPORTS

**COMMANDER
LLOYD MORRIS**

Please let me know if you would not like your name, address, etc. published in the membership book, to be mailed out to other members. The reason for this is if other members are traveling by air or automobile and break down, they would like to contact fellow VAC members. That's all folks! Thank You! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Hal Larkin

TA-4J -- The tail section is ready for prime paint. Rework of the hydraulic system to use the A/C-mounted hydraulic hand pump to operate the canopy has been completed. Part of the crew is working on the canopy, cleaning up the frame and getting the inside of the frame ready for paint. We started to wet-sand the fuselage and wings. As the aircraft has a series of vortex generators on the wings, it is a time-consuming task. The nose landing gear has to be removed, as there is excess movement in the right trunion fitting. Aircraft jacks are a problem... We just don't have enough of them. Cockpits are ready to start re-assembly. Working on forward and aft instrument panels, we still need instruments. The fuselage of the TA-4J is in much better shape than the F9F-5 was. We used five gallons of bond on the F9F-5 to get the fuselage ready for paint. We should hang the tail section within the next few weeks.

R-2800 -- Rework of the 54 baffles is continuing, most of them are ready for paint. Still haven't found the missing parts for the engine. We should be painting the engine in the near future.

OPERATIONS OFFICER

Ken Terry

Hope all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day with family and friends!

I will be away during the first week of December at ICAS (International Council of Air Shows) in Las Vegas. Look forward to seeing some of our fellow pilots there and picking up some good tips for future air shows. I will be back in time for the annual Christmas Party at the Museum on Saturday, December. 9th.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all of our good friends!

MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR

Robert E. James

C47- The fuel selector valves have been reinstalled and the cable selectors adjusted after a long and arduous effort. The configuration has now been successfully verified by gas flow to ensure that the proper tank is feeding the engine selected by the pilot.

The oil line from the oil tank to the engine oil pump has been a continuing source of difficulty. The current effort revolves around obtaining new firewall fittings for the larger diameter oil lines but due to the carburetor control rod interference with same, a different type of fitting is needed for the left and right engine.

I am working with another DC3 operator to obtain the wing jig that we need to use prior to mating the wings to the center section of the aircraft. I hope to have it within a couple of weeks at a minimum cost.

TBM-Work on the canopy is ongoing. Most of the panels have been replaced with new Lexan. The canopy has a great number of fasteners holding the reinforcing strips and the “glass” (probably over 500) have been replaced. All the individual metal strips and canopy rails required individual stripping and painting.

The turret escape panel has been reworked with new “glass” and support structure including the escape control actuation control rods (four each).

The TBM will be moved over to the north bay of the main hanger.

UTVA-The aircraft will be moved into the restoration/maintenance hanger to accomplish the annual inspection. We have two new volunteers (Embry-Riddle rated A & P’s) that will conduct the inspection. Leo Kerwin will act as the IA. It is planned to have the UTVA in a flyable condition prior to the end of the year.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! The C47 restoration crew greatly appreciate your continued support.

PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR

Robert H. Frazier, Jr.

GRUMMAN F11F TIGER---Obtaining the aircraft has stalled. The Navy has reassembled and primed the replacement A4. Final painting has been put on hold until the Pensacola City Airport Director approves contracts to take the F11 down. Also he needs to set a date for the Memorial Ceremony honoring the first Navy pilot to go down in Vietnam.

I-95 BROWN DIRECTIONAL SIGNS FOR THE VAC---Have completed research of available information to submit request now that the bond issue election is over. Odds of getting approval are not very good according to Florida Department of Transportation evaluator. We will need all the political support we can get.

NMNA INVENTORY---Navy request letter for inventory of all loan items has arrived. Need to take photographs and provide documentation of all items (25) on loan from the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

OPEN HOUSES---The success of the recent OPEN HOUSES at the VAC, especially the Veteran's Day weekend is due to the hard work and extra hours put in by a very dedicated group of volunteers and Directors. The Veteran's Day Open House had over 1000 visitors, therefore a THANK-YOU is due to all those who made it successful.

AUCTION-----AUCTION-----AUCTION

Now that the planning and activities for the 16,17,18 March Air Show has started, we now must plan for the annual VAC Auction. First of all, we need aviation and historic items to put into the Auction.

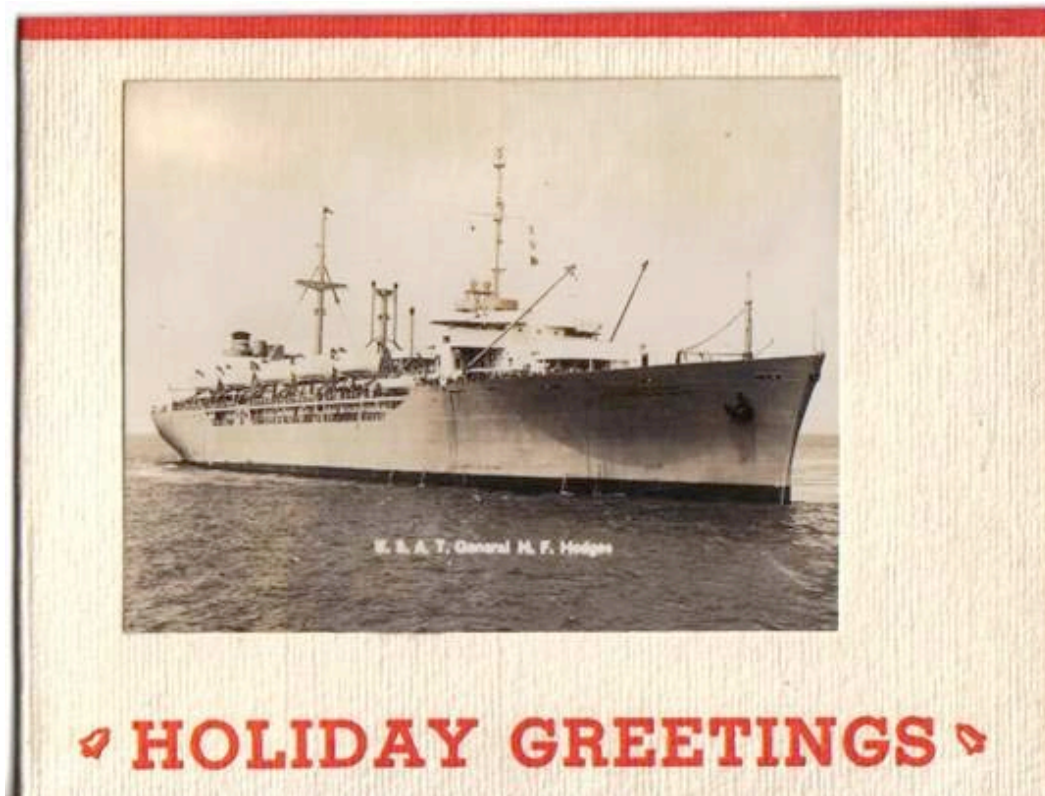
Please search your sources of material we might use. Beyond that, search your own attic or basements, talk to friends and neighbors that may have material we can use.

Direct any donations to me to be held at the Museum. Remember we are a non-profit organization and donations can be tax deductions to you.

AVIATING WITH BUD EVANS

Flying excitement was not the only memorable adventures in my life.

Ten months after my return to active duty with the newly created United States Air Force, I was transferred to Japan. I had my first introduction to the life on the open seas. I reported to the port of embarkation in San Francisco, California, where I boarded the Army ship "General Hodges." It was one of the Kaiser Liberty Ships that were built in large numbers during WW II. The ships were constructed with three differing configurations: Tanker, Cargo and Troop. The General M. F. Hodges was a Troop-configured vessel and was loaded with military troops from all Services and some military dependents who were joining their spouses in Japan. It was October 1948, and the weather in the Pacific Ocean was quite unsettled. I knew none of this. If I had known, there was very little I could have done about my scheduled travel.



My only experience with large bodies of water had been looking at the Gulf of Mexico from a beach at Galveston, Texas, on New Years Day 1933.

When I arrived at the port, I was processed and assigned to a large open deck area in the lower aft portion of the ship. When I finally found the location of the quarters I was to call "home" for the next 15 days, I was disappointed by the lack of portholes through which I would be able to see the beautiful Pacific Ocean as we journeyed across to Yokohama, Japan. They had lunch prepared, and guess what? They served us greasy pork chops. This meant nothing to me; but the old timers told me that it would add to the tendency to become seasick, and it worked on me. I had never been "air sick," so I didn't expect that the rolling motion of a ship would bother me.

We passed under the Golden Gate Bridge late in the afternoon, and we hit the ground swells that pitched and rolled the Kaiser-built ship. I was a permanent fixture, leaning over the railing for a good part of the night. The thing that I believe returned my stomach to normal was my regularly

going down to the Galley and getting oranges and soda crackers and playing "middle man" for short periods of time. By morning, I was able to sleep; and by lunch time, I was enjoying the meal. Many of my shipmates were not as fortunate.

As we traveled the "Great Circle" route from San Francisco to Tokyo, the paths of two typhoons followed us, which made the pitching and rolling motions a lot more severe than would normally be expected (at least that was what the old sailors told me). Surprisingly, my appetite did not suffer, but most of the passengers gave up trying to eat. We were a little more than two days from Tokyo when the full fury of one typhoon hit us. No one other than ship's crew had been allowed on deck for a couple of days because of the waves often making them awash. On this particular night, the ship was really pitching and rolling. The propellers were regularly coming completely out of the water causing the entire ship to vibrate violently. The bow hit another swell causing the aft of the ship to retreat back into the water. It was impossible to sleep in my bunk just ahead of the engine room, so I was sitting in the passenger salon in mid-ship. Several of us were trying to keep from being thrown from our chairs. Suddenly, the whole ship made a very wild shudder followed by a noise that sounded like the tearing apart of heavy steel plates. My immediate thought was that we had collided with another ship, and the actions of the vessel were so violent that it threw some passengers from their chairs. The motions of the ship were noticeably different and strangely erratic.

The next moment, I found myself sliding across the deck of the salon while bumping into furniture and other people. I hardly had time to be scared, as I was fighting to get myself oriented and to my feet. We were all trying to grab some solid object to help us get to our feet. My first thought was to find my life jacket that I had next to my chair prior to the "collision." There was one close by, and I wasn't concerned at that moment whether it was mine or not. I put it on and then stood up in the darkened room trying to orient myself to this suddenly confusing situation. There were several truths that were racing through my mind: I was in a monstrous ocean that was running wild; there was no way that we could survive in a life boat in this powerful storm; there was no prospect of getting help from anyone; what was the condition of the rest of the ship and of the men in the lower forward deck where my area of responsibility lay? All sorts of alarm sirens and horns were sounding, and the radio speakers were blaring advice to remain calm and prepare to abandon ship. That was the same as a death order to me, as I could not believe survival in a small lifeboat in that maelstrom all around us was possible.

Those of us in the salon soon found places where we each could hang onto some fixed object and discuss what plans were running through our minds. Our room was dark, but we were soon treated to one of the most unforgettable sights any of us had ever seen. The search lights mounted above the Bridge were playing on the foam sprays of the 30 to 40 foot waves, disclosing a huge gray metal, pointed object that was dangerously close to the port side of the ship. It disappeared as we sunk into the troughs and reappeared as we rose to the crests. It was an unbelievable sight, and my first thought as to its origin was that it was the bow of the ship with which we had collided. Each time it appeared, we seemed to get closer; and many times during the remainder of the dark night it seemed certain that we would collide with it. I can hardly find proper words to describe the fantastic job the ship's crew performed keeping the ship afloat and keeping us from colliding with our ship bow! That's right! Our ship's whole bow section! These mass-produced Liberty ships were made in sections, and then the three or four sections were welded together to form the entire ship. The bow on the General Hodges was attached to the bridge and center portion of the vessel that was torn away from the rest of the ship by the storm.

It wasn't until early morning when the Captain made the announcement over the intercom that the storm had torn our complete bow section from the rest of the ship! The storm continued to rage throughout the next day and night and eased on the following day. There were times during that period that it seemed impossible for the crew to keep us afloat. We had nothing ahead of the bridge section. We were slipping into the deep troughs, often having the heavy seas crash over the mid-ship that tore away the lifeboats from their slings. As far as I know, there were no passengers who were seriously injured during this incident. We were not given information about the crew who were moving back and forth on the decks during the whole storm.

As soon as the Captain allowed me to check on my troops, I witnessed the strangest sight I can recall ever seeing. Hugging the handrail on the superstructure of the ship, I reached the forward portion of the bridge island and was looking straight down into the sea. The wide blunt area that was now the leading portion of the ship was wallowing slowly through the calming sea. I went down the steel stairway (ladder) to the lowest deck where my troops were housed, and there was a lot of seawater in the companionway. Fortunately, the water secure hatch kept the troop area dry, but the poor guys were traumatized by their lack of knowledge about what was happening to the ship during those horrible hours after the bow of the ship was torn off. That bow section was directly ahead of their bulkhead. The place was a mess with many of the soldiers becoming violently seasick; and without even one porthole, they suffered what had to be one of the most horrifying 40 hours I could ever imagine. From my perspective of having been in hundreds of life threatening positions in the air, I don't believe I have ever had such a feeling of lonely helplessness as I knew during that short period of my life. I also learned to give a great deal of respect to sailors aboard that ship, even though those sailors were actually soldiers. The General M. Hodges was one of the large numbers of U.S. Army Transport ships that were still in service in 1948. There was another General Hodges which was a larger converted luxury ocean liner. I saw that larger ship fourteen months later when my wife arrived in Yokohama, Japan, aboard it.

N. C. "Bud" Evans [c]

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. 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.

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.