



January, February March 2016

UnScramble

The Newsletter of the Valiant Air Command Warbird Museum

FROM THE COMMANDER

NORM DANIELS, COMMANDER

I am fortunate to have been elected as Commander at the March 2016 Board of Directors meeting. Filling the shoes of Lloyd Morris will not be an easy task. Under Lloyd's leadership the VAC grew from a small museum with a few planes to what we have today; this includes 3 hangars housing many aircraft of historical significance. Our volunteer tour guides take pride in explaining each one to guests from all over the USA and other countries. We have gained a reputation as a premier restoration entity. Just out of the restoration hangar a month ago is our Grumman designed and built F-11 Tiger already a popular photo opportunity. Later this year a Canberra TT-18, built by the English Electric Company will be coming out of the restoration hangar with new paint having all dents, gouges, rips, gashes and corrosion issues completely repaired.

Great news! For our 2017 air show we will have the USAF THUNDERBIRDS performing their world famous show for you and your family. As you might guess, your dedicated Board of Directors are already crafting an exciting 3-day event with some surprises. This year we have had several in hangar special events with more booked. We count on the air show to help us with funding in order to carry out the mission of the VAC. A call for air show volunteers will be coming out soon as well as requests for donations. We take pride in what we do and are proud to be part of the community we serve. I can't close without a special thanks to all the members who have donated funds and renewed their membership for 2017. More special thanks to the restoration volunteers, special events volunteers, tour guides and air show volunteers. We also thank our friends from the City of Titusville, Mr. Michael Powell and his team at the Space Coast Regional Airport (TICO) for their assistance and support. If it has been awhile since your last visit, come and see what you have missed, stop by our gift shop and see Anita, Louise or Lorraine who will be happy to show you some of our new merchandise .



FACILITIES OFFICER REPORT

So far this quarter we have had to deal with the aging issues of our rolling equipment: brakes, cylinders, tires, tubes, boosters and assorted electrical fixes. Luckily most of the repairs were able to be made in-house with volunteers performing the work. Even though we practice preventative maintenance, wear and tear with continued use is taking its toll.

Within the next weeks the burned out lighting in the lobby area of the museum will be replaced with the aid of a one man Geni Lift.

RESTORATION PROGRESS

CANBERRA TT-18: 99% of body work has been completed with final sanding and priming well under way. Some cockpit items have been removed for cleaning and the interior of the cockpit is being prepared for spot priming and repainting.

B-52 STRATOFORTRESS COCKPIT: A great deal progress has been made in the top deck of the cockpit and is now ready for priming. Many of the instruments have been restored and ready to be reinstalled once priming and painting has been completed. The exterior paint scheme will be camouflage.

F-11 TIGER: I am happy to report that Tiger has been completed and now resides in the main hangar. Hundreds of hours of volunteer labor went into this project including having to form and add metal where none existed due to corrosion and damage. The end result was worth the effort.

Norm Daniels



DOUGLAS C-47 "TICO BELLE"



HER COMBAT HISTORY – PART 1

It all began when I was reading the brochure that is kept near the Museum's flagship: the *Tico Belle*. It's a C-47A, the military version of the DC-3, Serial #42-100591. The

**D-DAY
MARKET GARDEN
BATTLE OF THE BULGE
OPERATION VARSITY
BERLIN AIRLIFT**

brochure is a simple, two page affair that gives an abbreviated history of the airplane, a map and a copy of a letter sent to the museum by Jim Rudd of Texas, a WW II veteran who was a radio operator in the 83rd

Squadron of the 437th Troop Carrier Group (TCG). He had done the research to help confirm that the *Tico Belle* was a veteran of the 84th Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS), 437th TCG, and that she was a D-Day veteran.

In Jim's letter he identified the four crewmembers that flew the first 437th D-Day mission, with their names, ranks and service numbers; on the D-day mission were:

1st Lt Jay E Bloch, O-731802, Pilot

Lt Oscar B Hill, O-745093, Co-pilot

S/Sgt John A Quinn, 12203294, Crew Chief

FC J D Calhoun, 15353761, Radio Operator

This got me thinking about the 'human component'. We spend a lot of time and energy on restoration and upkeep of the machines at the museum, and sometimes may forget that the men who flew and

maintained the aircraft were a very important part of the story. In keeping with the Museum's mission statement: "To Honor the Past, Educate the Future, and Preserve our Heritage", I felt that their history should be honored and preserved as well, so we can 'Educate the Future'.

I wanted to at least identify where they were from, and how old they were when the mission was flown. As I set about my research I began to find that there was a quite a bit of information about some, but not all the crew. **First Lieutenant Jay Bloch**, the pilot, was born on 10 May 1918 in Oklahoma, was residing in Oregon when he enlisted on 27 February 1942. He had 2 years of college and his civilian occupation was: "Buyers and department heads, stores". He was also single without dependents. Lt Bloch passed away in Oregon on 16 February 2002.

437TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

ACTIVATED - 1ST MAY 1943

DEACTIVATED - 15TH NOVEMBER 1945

The co-pilot, **Second Lieutenant Oscar Hill** was born in Poughkeepsie, New York on 13 March 1919 and enlisted in New York City on 06 April 1942. He had a high school education and his civilian occupation was as a sales clerk. Unlike the pilot, Oscar was married. Lt Hill passed away on 30 April 1996.

Staff Sergeant John A Quinn, the Crew Chief, was born in New Jersey in 1923 and had enlisted in Newark, New Jersey on 20 November 1942. He too was a high school graduate, but single without dependents and his civilian occupation was: "Skilled linemen and servicemen, telegraph, telephone, and power".

The Radio Operator, **Private First Class J D Calhoun**, was born in Kentucky on 16 November 1924. He was living in Ohio when he enlisted in the Air Corps on 20 November 1942 (the same day as Sgt Quinn!) at Camp Perry in Lacerne, Ohio. PFC Calhoun had three years of high school, was single without dependents and his civilian occupation was not recorded.

I felt pretty proud of myself for my first outing, but then I decided that I should also research the 437th TCG itself.

Constituted on 15 April 1943 and activated on 01 May 1943 in Dunnellon, FL. They trained with C-46 and C-47 aircraft for duty

overseas with the Ninth Air Force. They moved to England during January and February of 1944 and begin preparing for the Normandy invasion. Releasing gliders near Cherbourg early on June 6, 1944. They flew follow up missions on 06 and 07 June carrying reinforcements of troops, anti-aircraft pieces, ammunition, rations and other supplies for the 82nd Airborne Division; they received a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for these actions in France. A detachment was sent to Italy in July 1944 for the invasion of southern France (Operation Dragoon) in August. They dropped paratroops over the assault area on 15 August, flew a resupply mission on the following day and then hauled freight to bases in Italy until they returned to England on 24 August. During Operation (Market Garden) in September 1944 the group released gliders carrying troops and equipment and flew several missions to provide reinforcements. In December 1944 they flew supply missions in

support of the troops in Bastogne. Moved to France in February 1945 for action during the air assault across the Rhine (Operation Varsity); each aircraft towed two gliders over the east bank and released them near Wesel on 24 March 1945. They flew numerous missions in March and April to carry gasoline, food, medicine, and other supplies to ground forces pushing across Germany. When not participating in one of the major airborne operations, the organization continually transported ammunition, rations, clothing, and other supplies as well as evacuating wounded personnel to rear zone hospitals. They evacuated prisoners of war and displaced persons to relocation centers. After the V-E Day they returned to the US in August 1945. On 15 November 1945, the unit was inactivated.

Jack Reid, VAC Volunteer

Next month read Jack's research into the "Detroit Mission", TICO Belle's combat debut on 6th June,



SSgt John Quinn

Tico Belle Crew Chief.

FINANCE OFFICER REPORT

While it makes me very sad that Lloyd decided to resign, I respect his decision and I wish him the best. It was an absolute honor to work along side him week after week. And Lloyd, if you're reading this you owe me a lunch date J.

Now let me publicly Welcome Norm Daniels to the Commander position. Trust me when I say our organization is in great hands. Norm has a vision for VAC and a plan and I look forward to the many positive and exciting changes in our future. Now I want to thank you and my volunteers for letting me be a part of another great airshow!! First, I would like to thank my ticket sellers, the USAF 920th Rescue Wing, volunteers from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, friends and family. These folks worked hard in the sun and deftly handled all the challenges and questions posed by our patrons. Their work ethic and upbeat attitudes are unparalleled and I look forward to working with them again next year.

Second, I would like to thank my A Team. My ticket counters, Scott & Roberta Drummond, Ward Digney and Joan Nies. These folks worked in my hotbox trailers and were so focused on their duties they didn't get to view much of the show but they never complained. This is my second year with these four and I would be honored to work with you guys again next year.

Aside from the airshow financials, my responsibilities include overseeing the PX Gift Shop and I don't like to brag but I have some amazing staff that deserve accolades. First Ms. Anita Varela has been changing things up in the gift shop. She tried some new products and things are going very well. I truly appreciate all the hard work and thought she puts into our store. Second I would like to invite you to the gift shop to meet our newest associate Louise Kleba. Many of you know Louie from her hard work in restoration, so you will understand that when she asked to work in the gift shop we are super excited to have her. Welcome aboard Louise J.

Hugs & Kisses,

Shannon Rubin



From the Gift Shop

Well Folks, we got through another Air Show and want that night show spectacular? Now we are making notes on what to do and bring for the Gift Shop there next year. Never too early to start planning ahead. We hope to have an exciting summer here with rocket launches going every other month. This always brings a lot of people from all over the world to our wonderful Museum. Please join me in welcoming Louise, who is my new sidekick here in the Gift Shop. She also works with Tom Reily on his B-25 Killer Bee.

We have lots of new inventory including toys and vintage flight jackets so please come in and check them out.

Happy Summer! Anita & Louise.

MAINTENANCE OFFICER REPORT

Well, another air show is behind us and as the new Maintenance Director for the VAC, I am looking forward to the upcoming year. I'm sure that the job will be a challenge and I hope that in time I will learn to do the job as well as Jim Owens did it. His contributions to the museum and the job were exceptional and I am honored to be his successor. The Tico Belle (C-47), has been flying well throughout the airshow season culminating in a great 6 day showing at Sun-n-Fun in Lakeland. Scores of visitors came aboard the plane and were thrilled to learn the history of this great warbird. I was surprised to learn how many people, both military and civilian have experienced flying a C-47 or DC-3 in their past. The A-4, Skyhawk also participated in the VAC airshow "racing" with the Lamborghinis and Ferraris supplied by "Precision Exotics". Dave Dollarhide was our A-4 pilot for these events but he has decided to retire from flying the A-4. A great guy and exceptional pilot he will be missed around here. All of us at the museum wish him well in whatever he chooses to do next. We also took the Skyhawk to MacDill Air Force Base along with the C-47. She flew for 2 days then experienced a canopy problem grounding the plane. She is now back in action and ready to go flying again. We are looking forward to a great new year, participating in air shows, dropping paratroopers and educating the public on the history of military aviation. ll, another air show is behind us and as the new Maintenance Director for the VAC, I am looking

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Charle Hammer



OPERATIONS OFFICER REPORT

As we approach the Summer doldrums in Central Florida, you may see some of our flight crews and support personnel breathing a sigh of relief. As our whole Command goes through some needed changes, we also really upped our flight tempo the last few months. Please take the time to thank these people, as their hard work and travel help garner additional exposure for our Museum and future Airshows.

We closed out 2015 with a well-received Surfing Santas parachute drop on Christmas Eve Day along Cocoa Beach. This annual event raises awareness, and support for a couple of charities, the Grind For Life group, and the Florida Surf Museum. In addition, it helps get some national news coverage of our local area, and as an added bonus, our Museum. We flew 3 of our planes, Tico Belle, the SNJ, and the T-28, and were joined by another jump plane, as we did our jump run along the beach. Great fun for all involved, even with the additional coordination needed to make this happen. We hope to continue doing this event in the future, and if you're not involved in the actual jump preparation, it may be fun to see it in action by visiting the beach. We are already talking with the event organizer about doing another jump on July 4th, so keep checking back with our website, to see the latest news.

Tico Belle keeps her props turning by doing additional flying for the National Parachute Test Center over in Dunnellon. We accomplished over 100 jumps in 3 days, thanks to the hard work of the jump organizers, and our own crew who give up their time to help earn some revenue for us. We add them a huge thank you for their time and hard work. We also got in a practice static line jump with the Phantom Airborne Brigade, a group of hard charging active and former Special Forces troops, who have a tremendous amount of experience with these kind of jumps. The practice jump was in preparation for our own Airshow, since we wanted to be sure that we could accomplish what we wanted to do, in a timely and safe manner. Mission accomplished.

As many of you are aware of, we had our first Night Air Show this year. The first in Brevard County, notwithstanding the poor media coverage of this actual fact. If you saw this show, you must have been as amazed as I was, with the incredible talent and skills,

shown by our performers. You really missed something special, if you didn't come, and you need to come back next year, since we're planning on another Night Show next spring. I'll let our Air Show Director give you more details on this year's and next year's events.

Our flyers went directly from Tico's Air Show to MacDill AFB the following weekend in support of their Tampa Bay Airfest. We took our C-47 and A-4, to get more attention for our group, and had a great time. Unfortunately, our A-4 had a mechanical issue, which forced us to spend funds on maintenance over there, to get our bird back in the air. We had a lot of people come through for us, to make this happen as quickly as it did, and I'm grateful for their hard work.

Taking a weekend off was great, but then we flew right into the week long Sun 'n Fun Air Show, considered one of the top 10 shows and second largest, in the nation. Thanks to the Warbird Community support, we were able to set up Tico Belle front and center on the Warbird line, as well as bring in additional aircraft from our museum and our members. As we grow this presence, the main goal here is to generate increasing exposure for our Museum and our own Air Show. It's very disconcerting to hear so many comments from people less than 100 miles away, including many from Orlando, who had no knowledge of our whole team and Air Show. We need to do a much better job of getting word out to nearby communities, to generate greater traffic through our museum, to generate interest in our aircraft and group, as well as donations and purchases through our PX. You can help with this goal by helping get more word out. We're working hard on creating a better on-line experience with our website, as well as multi-media and aircraft exposure at other events. But if you can generate interest by one person or family, to get them to visit or even join the VAC, we can really make good things happen here. We have some very talented and hard-working people in this Command, some of whom have given many days of their lives trying to make this a better museum, and get more people interested in what we're trying to do here.

Thank you for your support and interest in our group, and please keep up the good work.

Karl Holly

PERSONNEL OFFICER'S REPORT

The 39th Annual TICO Warbird Airshow is behind us and it was another one for the record books. Joe Cross was unable to support the Airshow this year, so with about a months notice I got thrown into setting up the field side of things. This gave me a chance to see the work of our staunch team of volunteers up close and I was stunned by the commitment, dedication and sheer hard work put out by these folks.

Its not just the three days of the airshow, the hard work actually starts about 10 days before the show as the static display aircraft are prepared towed into place and the "Ground Team" starts putting in almost 5000' of snow fence to establish the perimeter of the show area. A small but dedicated team worked tirelessly from before dawn to well into the night to prepare the grounds to be comfortable and safe for the thousands of guests who come to spend time with us.

Some statistics to give you an idea of the scale of effort required to pull together this all volunteer enterprise - 5000' feet of snow fence, 200 fence posts, 50 "porta-potties", 25 tents, 15 light towers, 45 golf carts, 1500' of chain link fence, I could go on and on. The TICO Warbird Airshow has grown from small beginnings in 1977 into a large and complex event and it is **ONLY** possible due to the efforts of an amazing team of volunteers. So from me and all the Board of the Valiant Air Command a special thanks and shout out to everyone who contributed tirelessly and with great good humor to pulling off this amazing event. We hope you had a good time and we look forward to working with you next year!

In other news, membership levels at VAC are at their highest number for many years and I am particularly pleased to see a significant upswing in family memberships. It is critical for VAC's future that we attract the next generation of people inspired by aviation and welcome them into the VAC family.

Don't forget you can join or renew your membership online at <http://www.vac.clubexpress.com> - its fast and convenient so please check it out when you get your renewal reminder.

One of the programs we have been testing is family volunteering where parents and teenagers volunteer as a team and we are having great success, the parents get to enjoy volunteering at VAC and the youngsters get

valuable and inspiring experience of volunteering and service. We will be expanding this program in the future.

The departure of Lloyd as the Commander of the VAC signifies a new direction for the VAC and the Board is excited to explore new ideas and programs under Norm's leadership. We are as excited as you to see where our museum will develop over the coming months and years, great things are in store.

In closing, **THANK YOU** for your continued support tot he amazing work that goes on at VAC and if you have not visited for a while we hope to see you in the near future.

David Rees



Honor Flight Fundraiser

On April 2, 2016, VAC had the honor of hosting the Space Coast Honor Flight's 2016 Fundraiser Dinner and Auction. The funds collected by Honor Flight are used to send World War II and Korean War veterans to Washington DC to visit the memorials in their honor. The event had a fantastic turnout with 275 attendees. Special guests included Lt. General Bill Wesler, Sheriff Wayne Ivy and performer Margaret Cross. It was a fabulous evening that nature topped off with a majestic sunset on the Tico Belle. Many thanks to Christine Tate and the Honor Flight group for choosing VAC once again to honor our local heroes. It was a pleasure like always working with them. Lastly, thanks to all the VAC volunteers and members who worked so hard to make this is a success.



COCKPIT CORNER



SIKORSKY H-19 CHICKASAW

Our H-19 is a representative of the first family of helicopters to have true military utility as transports, air mobility and combat platforms. It is powered by a Pratt and Whitney 1300 series engine and to modern eyes the cockpit is unusual in having throttle and boost controls more like a fixed wing aircraft rather than the combined throttle collective controls seen in modern helicopters. Also different from fixed wing aircraft is the placement of the instruments for the right seat and an extremely simple set of instruments.

After its military service, the VAC Chickasaw was converted to a "Heli-Camper" under license from the Winnebago company before being donated to VAC and converted back to its military colors.

Grumman F-11 Tiger

F-11 TIGER. Navy Fighter 1956 - 1961 After many years of hard work in the restoration hangar, the Grumman *F-11 TIGER* was finally unveiled, and this elegant Navy fighter claimed its permanent place in Valiant Air Command's main hangar. The transfer took place on 19th January 2016. This airframe's previous role had been as gatekeeper of the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, and panhandle weather had reduced the proud warbird to an unsightly state. The US Navy needed to upgrade its jet aircraft fleet and requested Grumman to design a lightweight supersonic fighter, capable of reaching Mach "1 point 1." The origins of the F-11 design can be traced to a 1952 Grumman effort to modernize the company's F9F/F-9 Cougar. Yet, in final form the aircraft departed sharply from its predecessor. The primary goal of Grumman was to produce the nimblest possible aircraft. First flight was on July 1954.

The design featured mid-mounted thin swept folding wings and swept tail planes, (all-moving) incorporating spoilers instead of ailerons. A portion of the wings was also hinged to fold downwards for storage on the space-strapped aircraft carriers. Folding of these surfaces was accomplished manually; consequently no expensive, complicated, and heavy powered hinge systems were required. A coke-bottle shaped fuselage design enabled aircraft to exceed Mach 1, and two side-mounted air intakes fed air to the engine. The chosen power plant was a British design produced under license in the United States: the Wright J65 turbojet engine. The power plant was installed in the center-aft portion of the fuselage. The undercarriage was a tricycle arrangement. Tiger's cockpit was placed well forward on top of fuselage, in order to improve forward visibility, which was essential for safe landings aboard aircraft carriers.

The first catapult launchings and carrier landings took place aboard the USS *Forestall* on April 4, 1956. These trials uncovered various problems, which required changes in the original design. Also range and endurance of the fighter was found to be inadequate, moreover J65 engine was unreliable. A second batch of F-11's received extra fuel cells incorporated in the intake walls and vertical fin. A six feet longer nose was fitted. Unfortunately, in addition to these solvable issues, F-11 Tiger also had an inherent flaw: it suffered from stability problems. Also, the Tiger featured a less favorable gun-platform. These shortcomings explain a relatively

short service life of the F-11 with the Navy: only four years. The Navy ordered only 199 F-11's from Grumman. The Tiger served for brief periods aboard USS *Ranger*, *Intrepid*, *Saratoga* and *Bonhomme Richard*. The last Tigers were being phased out by squadrons VF-33 and VF-111 in April of 1961. Following withdrawal from fleet service, the Tiger continued in service as a training platform.

As its service lifespan took place in the Korea/Vietnam conflicts, the Tiger does not exhibit an impressive operational history. In fact, this aircraft never fired machine guns, missiles or rockets in anger! Nevertheless the F-11 became famous as the mount of the Blue-Angels flight demonstration team. Once the F-11 was stripped of all its military equipment, it became an impressive flying tool in the experienced hands of Blue Angels pilots.

An interesting anecdote: during a test flight of the F-11, a Grumman test pilot shot itself down by overtaking its bullets in a diving maneuver (a first in aviation history).

Dr. Erik Kramer



Grumman F-11 Tiger Restoration



The F-11 Tiger restoration marks a new standard for the VAC Restoration Team with incredible attention to detail, even in those areas not normally noticed by the general public. Reproduction 20mm cannons were fabricated and the hydraulics equipment of faithfully represented. Systems such as the Ram Air Turbine (RAT) were carefully restored to give visitors a view of the inner working of the aircraft. The unusual paint scheme is based on an aircraft located at the Navy Museum in Pensacola. We would like to thank our volunteers Jim Brinkerhoff, Ray Brown, Tracy Bohrmann, George Burton, Chuck Dilts, Dutch Graefe, Hana Kleinova, Don Leathers, Bruce Marshall, Larry Mathis, Joe Reus, Jim Towe and Rob Underwood, who dedicated so much of their time to this





20 years at VAC

We recently came across some old pictures of the VAC from the mid 1990's. We thought you would enjoy seeing how far we have come in the last 20 years or so.

Its amazing to see how much has been accomplished by our dedicated volunteers over the last two decades and we look forward to more progress over the years to come.

Despite a lot of inquiries, we were unable to determine the fate of the hot pink golfcart...



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MUSEUM DETAILS

OPEN 7 days a week, 0900 - 1700

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and
New Year's Day

Adults \$20.00 - Senior or Military \$18.00

Children 5 to 12 years old \$5.00 Children under 5
years old - No charge

Special Tour Rates Available

UNSCRAMBLE

Please call us if you have an email address
change. We want you to be sure to get your copy
of the Un-Scramble.

We welcome members and volunteers to submit
stories for UnScramble. **We reserve the right to
edit for content and space. Please limit to 600
words. Send by email ONLY to
vacwarbirds@bellsouth.net**

UPCOMING EVENTS

14th May - Fly In Breakfast

26th May - BoD Meeting

17th June - Patrick AFB Static Display

19th June - Fathers Day C-47 Champagne Flight
(TENTATIVE)

July 16th - Ghost Hunters Tour

*PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO JUNE FLY IN
BREAKFAST*

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