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EDITORIAL

would like to thank all of the members who voted. These elections were quite sad, given that the post of Unit Leader was empty following the death of our friend Bernard Delfino.

N obody will ever be able to replace Bernard but he led the way and the new board of the French Wing has a mind to pursue his work for the French Wing.

congratulate Bertrand and Jean-Yves for their election to the positions of Executive Officer and Finance Officer, and wish to thank Claude Gascon for his work on our finances during the last three years. Of course, Gaël is still the Adjutant Officer and his services will soon be required!

V e will need, now more than ever, the support and involvement of our members to keep the French Wing's activities and projects alive. You can be of service in many ways, including by contributing to the Newsletter. I would like to mention the excellent work done on the Newsletter by our XO Bertrand Brown over the past few months, requiring long hours of writing, translating and laying out.

We recently began relying more on emails, our website and Facebook to communicate about activities at the hangar, so don't hesitate to join in and give us a hand.

Jean-Yves Cercy and Michel Baloche are

AIRSHOW

CAF FRENCH WING - BULLETIN MENSUEL - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



P.4: RAYMOND DANIEL, AIR FORCE CADET

P.8: DASSAULT DIGITALLY RECREATES THE BLOCH MB-152

working on a new mode of sponsorship and other solutions to allow our Piper Cub "Spirit of Lewis" to fly more often.

W e will also be asking for your help in preparing our annual fly-in, which will take place on Saturday May 24th. You can already save the date and invite your friends and warbird or vintage aircraft owners that you may know.

We will also need you to help in attending the various airshows of the season, and in particular that of La Ferté-Alais if we are invited. The tasks involved are setting up and manning the PX as well as greeting and informing the public. Bernard and Fumiko too often found themselves doing this on their own in the past.

f we are to proceed with the restoration of the Sportster, we will also be in need of helping hands, whether you are a gifted mechanic or not, just as I am! There will always be plenty of tidy work and easy jobs to do.

y wish is also to see the M French Wing get closer to the Commemorative Air Force, even though we might be skeptical or disapproving of some of the HQ's strategic decisions. However, most of the Squadrons and Wings are still working with the original CAF goals and spirit in mind. I therefore invite all of our members who are current CAF Colonels to renew their membership, those who were Colonels in the past to sign up again, and those who never were to become so. Of course, given the state of the economy and the annual cost of \$200, this is not mandatory and will not be imposed to our members.

W e will be programming one or several outings and visits and I would like to submit the idea of a French Wing visit to the 2015 CAF Airsho in the United States.

F inally, I would like to wish you all a happy new year!

Airshow - Public Edition

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!

The new board of the French Wing began its assignment on January 1st and would like to wish all members and followers a happy new year.

The French Wing will be going through some necessary change this year, as was already pointed out in previous newsletters and during the 2013 general meeting.

You might notice changes some in the Newsletter. The "Battle colours" section, fed with aircraft profiles made by yours truly, will become permanent. You will especially note a new section: "Past times....", whose author is Roger Robert, who recently joined the French Wing. This section will b e dedicated to great (and lesser) events that made aviation history. For its first issue, you will find out that the P-51 flv for Mustang can nearly eight hours at an average speed of well over 430 mph! If you are skeptical about such figures, just as I first was, you can jump right now to page 3 to find what it was all about...

We hope other members will join in and contribute to the newsletter. We also need volunteers for the various tasks and work groups that will be set up this year to make sure the French Wing strives and survives.

Thanks in advance for those who will join us in these tasks, and see you soon at the hangar!

-Bertrand Brown

LIST OF POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR NEW CAF HEADQUARTERS NARROWED TO THREE TOWNS

The board of directors of the Commemorative Air Force has narrowed the search for the National Airbase to three locations, within the state of Texas.

Contrarily to what was indicated on the website previously, it now seems the annual meeting, AIRSHO, will also be held in the new location instead of Midland. The three towns are:

•Dallas Executive Airport, Dallas •Ellington Field Airport, Houston

•North Texas Regional Airport, Sherman/Dennison, Texas (Dallas Metropolitan)

For more information on this topic, visit <u>the CAF website</u>. ■



COLONEL CULPEPER'S FLYING CIRCUS

A 1981 BBC documentary retracing the history of the Confederate Air Force, renamed Commemorative Air Force in 2002, can be seen on YouTube.

http://youtu.be/WffpEgh3xzU

Filmed at the Headquarters in Harlingen, Texas, this documentary includes interesting historical footage showed the original CAF and its folklore.

CAF FRENCH WING ANNUAL FLY-IN TO BE HELD MAY 24

The date for the 2014 CAF French Wing fly-in has been fixed to Saturday the 24th of Ma, 2014.

We are already looking for members willing to assist in the preparation. Please contact Stéphane Duchemin if you wish to be involved.

We also appeal our members and followers to assist us in gathering as many vintage aircraft and warbirds as possible. If you know owners of such aircraft who would be interested, please let us know so we can invite them!

Past times... January 31, 1951

By Roger Robert

CHARLES BLAIR BEATS NEW YORK TO LONDON SPEED RECORD ON A P-51 MUSTANG WITH AN AVERAGE SPEED OF 446 MPH!



After the war, the P-51 Mustang NX1202 was sold to race pilot Paul Mantz, who flew it at the Bendix Air Race s in 1946 and 1947, and modified it with added fuel tanks in the wings to double its range.

In 1947, he established a new speed record for crossing the USA East-to-West and Westto-East with this aircraft, which had been baptized "Blaze of Noon".

After its last Bendix race, the mustang was then sold to Charles Blair, a Pan American World Airways pilot who renamed it to "Excalibur III". After serious preparation, Blair flew it from New York to London (a distance of 3477 miles) on January 31st, 1951 , at the amazing speed of 446 mph, thus beating the previous record by one hour and seven minutes.

One of the objectives of the flight was to study the jet stream phenomenon. Blair encountered this powerful aerial current at 37,000 ft, exactly as planned, and "rode it" to London. This record still holds for piston-powered fixedwing aircraft.



The P-51C Mustang"Excalibur III". Through Pan American, Charles Blair donated this historic aircraft to the N.A.S.M. on November 6, 1953.



Charles F. Blair, Jr

Born in 1909, Charles Blair was an Air Force Brigadier General, Navy Captain, test pilot, commercial pilot and airline owner.

During World War II, Blair flew for the Naval Air Transport Service and the Air Transport Command. In the meantime, he was also a test pilot for the F6F Hellcat, F7F Tigercat, F8F Bearcat and Martin Mars flying boat.

After the war, Blair headed the first flights and trials of the Lockheed Constellation and Boeing Stratocruiser airliners. In 1950, he became a pilot for Pan Am.

He developed a new navigation method for polar regions, where a compass is practically useless. To prove his method's effectiveness, he flew from Bardufoss in Norway to Fairbanks, Alaska on May 29, 1951, flying over the North Pole. After he departed Norway, he was left with no alternate landing spots, radio communication or available help. After 10 hours and 27 minutes, exactky as planned, "Excalibur III" arrived in Fairbanks. He married actress Maureen O'Hara in 1968.

He was killed 1978 in the crash of a Grumman Goose in the Carribean. ■

Raymond Daniel, Air Force Cadet The story of a young Frenchman at the CFPNA



1943: the French Armée ing more and more personnel for its new units equipped with American material. For this reason, the Command of what was then the Forces Aériennes d'Afrique du Nord (North African Air Forces) and the US Army Air Force created the Centre de Formation du Personnel Naviguant en Amérique (CFPNA, formation center for flying personnel in America).

In June 1943, only months after Operation Torch, the November 1942 Allied landing in North Africa, the first French detachment was sent to train in the United States.

We'll be following the training of a young Frenchman of the 5th detachment through extracts of his diary, which he wrote on a nearly daily basis. This youg man was Raymond Daniel, the maternal grandfather of our member Eric Bellebon. After reading this, you will understand why Eric chose a Stearman as his warbird.

These youths were happy to land in the US: "November 4, 1943. It is 7:30 in the morning and it is chilly. We are all awaiting for the departure for Tuscaloosa. A large bus arrives and everyone boards it. We are all very cheerful, singing out loud. We pass the base post and are headed for the unknown and a new life. We are no driving through the picturesque regions of Alabama, with very few towns. (Worthy of note are the beautiful and somewhat weird suburbs with huts). After driving 100 miles (gone is the metric system, everything here is measured in inches, feet, yards, miles, ounces and pounds), we arrive at the airfield we'd all been dreaming of.

Many of our friends who had been lucky to arrive earlier are there to greet us. We newbies naturally had endless questions for them. How does it feel like to fly? Is it difficult to pilot an airplane? What about aerobatics? The "old ones" who had already soloed gave us tips. After lunch, we go out to see the "taxis" on which we will learn to fly. They are

biplanes, obsolete but good for learning to fly as they are more forgiving of mistakes, and God knows these are common at the beginning."

After going through medical examination, reception of flight suits and gear, they discover the Boeing PT-17 Stearman, with a cockpit brief and then the first flight: "November 8th, 1943, one year after the American landing in North Africa, at 7:00 in the morning at sunrise, the 4th flight to which I have been assigned is regrouped to begin its training. We are swaddled in shearling jackets. Out in the hangars the engines are humming. We can make out the airplanes waiting for us. At 7:30 we are introduced to our instructors, 5 students for each. Mine looks amicable. He is young. He doesn't speak a word of French, and since I can barely speak English, it's going to be a problem... / ... with the parachute on my back I board the airplane, brace myself and off we go. Slowly moving forwards making S movements we reach the runway. Nothing in front of us. Throttle fully open, the ground begins to move swiftly by. God, everything is so fast, I'll never be able to make an airplane take off. I don't even notice we've left the ground. First impression: we are rapidly climbing, the hangars down below look very small. Second impression: my nose is the only exposed part of my face and feels the full effect of the wind and old air. I get a hold of myself, it's so cold! Orientation flight. We overfly successively the airfields of Rice, Foster and Moodry ¹, which are 5 or 6 miles apart. The countryside has lots of woods. A river runs between hills. We fly very close to Tuscaloosa, which looks fine from up here. I now realize the beauty of flying. To summarize, I was thrilled by my first flight in America. Except for the bitter cold. Bah! One needs to get used to it. (30 minutes of flight time)

More flights follow, with the first lessons, turns, flying a rectangular pattern around a field, stalls and, a month after their arrival, discovering America during their first leave. "I hastily get dressed and walk past the guards post feeling fresh and well. Sheriff, could you get us a cab? A few minutes later, happy to be alive, we are driving at full speed on the road to Tuscaloosa (3 miles). It's 6:30, and it's dark when we arrive. I see the lighting and illuminations, after 4 years of blackout. There is a lot going on. We get off at the bus station, get five two-way tickets to Birmingham and five minutes later I am seated next to a charming young girl in a luxurious bus. She's smoking. Almost all women smoke here. We are driving by night on a winding road. For a few minutes, my thoughts wander back to distant France. My parents must have no idea that at this moment am well seated and being driven to Birmingham. Oh! By the way there is a young and beautiful American girl next to me. After trying hard to make a decent sentence in English I begin: "Please Miss, what time we arrived to Birmingham?". The ice is broken. Here women are not as shy as they are in North Africa and the next two hours are only fun and laughter. A true English lesson!

We eventually arrive in Birmingham

1 Raymond Daniel is referring to Moody, one of Tuscaloosa's auxiliary fields.



A Stearman PT-17 "Kaydet". Over 8500 examples of this trainer were produced and used to train the majority of pilots in the US during the Second World War.

(60 miles from Tuscaloosa). There are six of us coming off the bus and there we are wandering through the large illuminated streets of this major town (400,000 souls). It is 9:30. Quick, a hotel. A nice sign lures us in. Trouble starts. We struggle to explain we want rooms, to pay for them and so on! We are back on the street. People are staring at us, especially the miss (in French in the text), which is not disagreeable. Suddenly a car stops next to us and a civilian suprises us: "Hello airmen, I'm sorry to stop you in such a way but I'm a Frenchman just like you and I'm so happy to see you." So are we! We don't know what to say. An old lady comes out of the car and happily shakes our hands. We understand what's going on: we're dealing with a French family that came to America 35 or 40 years ago. We are invited but alas it's too late: we can't come as our rooms are booked at the hotel. What a pity! And we are once again like a bunch of newcomers looking for a restaurant. Ah, here is one. We are well served. Ordering is yet another problem. We manage well enough and get a fine dinner. (whisky and soda)

A little digestive walk on the avenues. The streets are so animated! Over here women are noisier than men. They sing, smoke and sing out loud. Quite amusing! My buddy Clet suddenly finds himself surrounded by five or six shrieking women, what a situation!

Around midnight we head back to the

hotel. There are still some surprises in for us in American. I'd never seen such a hotel. Large luminous boards, rooms with central heating, fans, sinks and bathrooms but... only a sheet, shaky chairs, a lousy bed with cigarette holes, spiders and bedbugs!!! As a result, I wrap myself in a blanket and... sleep on the floor. A rather poor first impression of American hotels.

We get up early in the morning. It's cold. By day, Birmingham doesn't look nearly as nice as it does by night. An industrial town (mines, coal hills) with greyish houses (a change from Casablanca)..."

Progression on the PT-17 continues: take-offs, stalls, spins, landings with their lot of difficulties: "Saturday November 20th, bad day, I'm working in Moodry. I make an American take-off (very lousy). I botch my landings. Several booms!"

And then on Saturday December 4th, 1943 comes an important day in young Raymond Daniel's training: "We can't fly in the morning. Luckily, in the afternoon the weather clears and at 1:30 I board PT-17 #93 more worried than ever. Good take-off and departure from the traffic pattern. It seems to be working well today. After properly losing some altitude, I enter the pattern at Foster. Look out for the landing!... Boom...! There you go: it's botched with, as always, big bounces before getting firmly on the ground. At least my second land-



A few cadets in front of a Stearman. Raymond Daniel is on the right, kneeling.

ing is better! And so is the third, despite a few small bounces! "One more for solo" tells me my brave instructor. This isn't the time to lose it. Luckily, the fourth landing is decent. Will he let me solo? Ah! He's tapping his head. He has the controls. This should be good. Indeed, we turn 90° with the T. He stops the taxi, gets off and pats my shoulder with a smile: "You solo. Good luck." The long-awaited moment has come. I am finally alone, with an empty seat in front of me (weird feeling). I slowly taxi and close to the runway lights I get ready for take-off. No aircraft in sight, the runway is clear, in line with the T and may God be with me! Throttle fully open, the aircraft gathers speed, pressure on the stick and here I am in the air. At 50 feet, a first 90° turn and then full throttle again, climbing to 700 ft; another 90° turn and here I am on my trajectory. A moment of respite. Calm yourself now, Raymond. I now truly realise that I am alone. I'm so happy that I sing out loud. Let's be serious, it's nearing time to land. Throttle back, and glide at 80 miles, one last turn and here I am facing the runway. I'm a bit short, a little throttle, this is not the time to get entangled in some telephone lines. Watch out, the ground is coming up and I am alone, alone with the hope of landing properly. To remain faithful to old habits, I make a big boom! Luckily, I regain control of the aircraft and return to my instructor, happy to have made my first solo flight. Mr Larsen is as pleased as I am and indicates me to do it again. The second landing is better. The third time an aircraft makes me abort. The fourth and last time I barely avoid a ground loop. Ultimately, everything went well and no damage was done, which is the most important. My instructor gets back in his seat and this time I return to the base as a passenger. Ah! How nice it is after such a great effort to relax and admire the scenery unfolding beneath us!!

Finally, it is with a joyous heart that my comrades and myself hit the road to the many delights offered by the nice town of Birmingham..."

PT-17 flights continue and on December 28th: "I make my first flight on the PT-19 (monoplane) and what's more I fly in the front seat! What a difference compared to the PT-17. More visual marks, excellent visibility, a sweet engine sound, hard rudder pedals, very sensitive stick. There are flaps for landing. The feeling is odd. One sees the ground coming right up at you. Since the flare is quite low, it seems we're going to crash. Fortunately, it's just an impression as this aircraft lands very well..."

After 65 hours of flight, they move to another base and discover a new aircraft, the Vultee BT-13 Valiant. "January 18th, 1944:... it's a monoplane, with all-metal construction, flaps, variable-pitch propeller. What a difference with the PT-17. In comparison, this BT-13 is for us a 450 horsepower monster. The instrument panel is covered with instruments, dials and knobs, I'll never find my way around in this airplane! Our instructor attempts to explain the various functions of the instruments and how to use the radio, as for the first time we will be flying in constant contact with the ground..."

Learning to fly this new machine is hard and fraught with difficulties but on February 1st, 1944: "Today I will solo on the BT-13. After 8 hours of dual control, I am finally sent off on my own and make five landings, what joy it is to feel alone in this modern aircraft. A hint of pride makes me say: "Now you're a small pilot but soon you will be a real one." Everything



A Fairchild PT-19, another common wartime trainer.

is possible with perseverance and will.

Everything goes well and at half past noon, happier than ever, I am back with this brave instructor. Let's quickly grab some lunch, those emotions make one hungry."

More lessons, physical aptitude tests such as the depression chamber, and first instrument flights begin: "On February 15th, 1944, I pass my 20-hour check. Well, one chore down. I make my first hour of instrument flying in dual control. It's amusing to fly beneath the hood using various instruments. For the first time, I must hold my course and make 90° turns (not very difficult)."

The fear of being washed out is still there nonetheless: "In the

meantime, here and in Tuscaloosa many of us were eliminated including my old friend Clet. It's sad that after 100 hours of flying on PT-17, PT-19 and BT-13 a chief instructor comes to tell you that you will be a gunner because you can't fly. And every day, the list grows longer. If I get my pilot's wings one day, I will have truly earned them and will have had a tough time doing so."

After learning to fly by the instrument under the hood, night flying is added and then the end of the Basic Training on the BT-13: "March 17, 1944, I'm now done with the Basic Training in Gunter, having passed the 20 and 40-hour checks and instrument flying. All that is left is some aerobatics, formation flying and a 90 minute night flight. What a relief it is to leave this place where 20 have been washed out from a total of 90. We were 134 when we arrived in Tuscaloosa and we're now down to 70, which means half of us have the misfortune of having been sent to gunnery school.

We now await for the list which will decide of our fate. Craig Field or Turner as a bomber pilot. As far as I'm concerned, I like both options but have a slight preference for fighters as one can decide alone what to do in a fighter. And flying fighters, there's real aviation for you!"

End of part 1. To be continued.

The author wishes to thank Mr and Mrs Eric Bellebon and Mr Patrice Laverdet.

http://patrice.laverdet.pagesperso-orange.fr/

Regrouped in front of a Fairchild PT-19, Tuscaloosa cadets pose for the photographer. Raymond Daniel is the third from the right, crouching.



MB-152, the reinvented pioneer

From the 17th to the 19th of December 2013 at the Dassault center in Saint-Cloud near Paris, an exposition named "MB-152, le pionnier réinventé" [MB-152, the reinvented pioneer] lifted the veil on a remarkable project initiated in 2010 by the association Dassault Passion, with the support of Dassault Aviation. The goal of this project is the "retroconception" in digital form of the MB-152, the first fighter designed by Marcel Dassault and widely used during the Battle of France.

None of the 550 MB-152 fighters built from 1938 to 1940 have survived to this day, and the original plans have disappeared as well. All that is left of the aircraft are photographs, technical documents and a few parts in fairly poor shape. Based on these few elements, a team of Dassault employees decided to retro-design the aircraft.

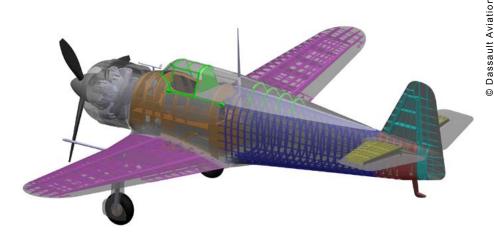
The project was kept secret but received the approval of Dassault and was allocated a room with five CA-TIA V5 workstations to enable the team to create a digital model of the MB-152.

Lacking plans and spare parts, the operative term for such a task is not restauration or reverse-engineering but retro-conception. The main source of information used by the team is a maintenance manual published in January 1940 by the French air ministry. This manual contains many high-quality illustrations with little or no measurements, but proved to be very accurate and reliable. Other documents were also used.

In addition to written sources, a few "relics" were used, many of which were provided by the "Association Normande du Souvenir Aérien 39/45" [Normandy Association of the 1939/1945 Air War]. These parts were unearthed after several decades and notably come from a MB-152 shot down by German fighters in 1940. Among the recuperated sections were a piece of the horizontal tailplane and an almost complete right wing section.

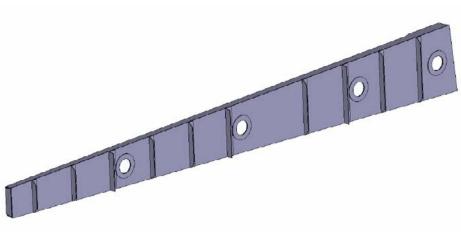
These parts made it possible to validate some of the working hypothesis and proved invaluable: the team had the pleasure of discovering that their digital model was only a few millimetres off compared to the actual parts!

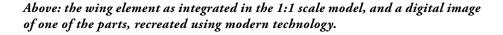
Three years after the beginning of the project, the digital model is now quite advanced: 90% of the outer shapes are done, 80% of the geometric reference models as well as 50% of the primary structure have been re-created. The goal now is to complete the model by the end of 2015.



The recreated digital model of the MB-152, with each maufacturing section represented in a specific colour.







A component based on the digital model was built by the Dassault Aviation workshop in Argenteuil: the horizontal tailplane's main longeron. This part was presented during the exposition, next to the salvaged original part.

In the Saint-Cloud center hall was a very rough 1:1 scale model, with some of the "relics" integrated to it. The remainder of the aircraft could be visualised with tablets superimposing the aircraft or its inner structure over the model. This made it possible to walk around the aircraft while observing the inner structure and components as re-created by the MB-152 team.

Beyond this retro-conception effort and the rediscovery of its exact shape and components, the project also made it possible to rediscover some of its design and construction principles. The MB-152 was designed with mass production in mind and was composed of various sections that were manufactured in the various plants of the Société de Constructions Aéronautiques du Sud-Ouest (the Bloch aircraft company was nationalised and renamed in 1937). This principle is still used nowadays on Dassault aircraft. The design was also modern and innovative, and included several modules which could be easily replaced entirely, thus facilitating maintenance and repairs.

The author would like to thank the Projet MB-152 team members and Dassault Aviation for their welcome and availability. ■

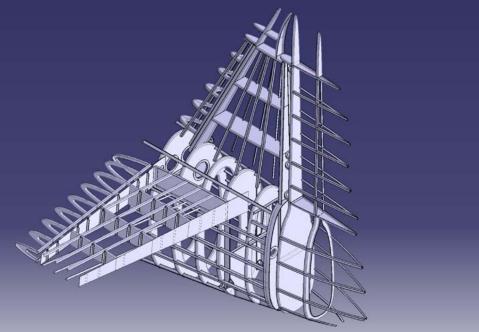
The Projet MB-152 team members would like to hear from any person or entity in possesion of precise technical data regarding the MB-152.If you can be of help, contact Bertrand Brown, who will forward your message.



Left: the main longeron of the horizontal tailplane, which spent several decades buried in Normandy, and a modern replica. Some of the material used in the new part was not available in the late '30s but the parts are otherwise identical.t

Right : Tablets were used to display the aircraft in "augmented reality". Linked to a webcam, these tablets would display the 1:1 model that can be seen in the background, and could superimpose a digital image representing the inner structure of the aircraft, or even the entire aircraft, complete with working lights, undercarriage, flaps and guns!





Left: "T5", the tail section of the MB-152. Although there are currently no plans for this, the recreation of the MB-152 would make it possible to manufacture the fighter from scratch. One can only dream about such a fantastic possibility...



Above: although damaged, the parts obtained from the ANSA 39-45 association and the Musée des Invalides made it possible for the team to compare their results with the actual parts, thus validating their methods and working hypothesis. Below: the "Projet MB-152" in front of a model lent by the Musée de l'Air.



Battle colours: Curtiss P-40 Warhawk

Illustrations: Bertrand Brown (aka Gaëtan Marie)

www.bravobravoaviation.com



The P-40 was the primary modern American fighter at the beginning of the war, but achieved fame with the "Flying Tigers" wearing Chinese markings and flown by American "civilians". This is a Hawk 81A-2 (the British designation of the P-40) of the 2nd Pursuit Squadron flown by Tex Hill, who was credited with 15 ¼ aerial victories, including 10 ¼ whilst with the Flying Tigers.



The Forces Aériennes Françaises Libres (Free French Air Forces) were one of the many user of the P-40. This is a P-40F with Merlin engine, assigned to GC II/5 "Lafayette" in North Africa in 1943. The aircraft has been nicknamed "P'tit Quinquin". Its former American markings can still be made out: remnants of a US roundel and the "ghost" of an American flag, appearing under the Lafayette's "Sioux Head" emblem.



Nicknamed "Miss Fury", this P-40F of the 65th Fighter Squadron, 57th Fighter Group, was flown by Capt. Roy Whittaker, an American ace with 7 victories. The 57th Fighter Group fought in North Africa and Italy from 1942 to 1945.



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Are you passionate about warbirds and historical aviation? Join the French Wing of the Commemorative Air Force!

The annual dues are only 50€ (approx. \$68), and newcomers will receive a free thirtyminute flight in the French Wing's Piper Cub!

You can contribute to the French Wing's activities according to your preferences, skills and availability and be part of a group of people sharing one passion.

To join the French Wing, contact us by email (see below).

The CAF French Wing is a non-profit Association ruled by the 1901 law, and registered under number 2473 of the Journal Officiel dated 10 July 1996.

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