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AIRSHOW

CAF FRENCH WING - BULLETIN MENSUEL - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

Spring is coming and the French Wing is slowly coming out of hibernation. As you will read here, a visit to the Great War Museum in Meaux was the occasion for some 20 French Wing members and supporters to spend some time together. Work at the hangar has resumed as well: some work has been done on the J-3, the NC's engine is running again and the auxiliary starter group donated by Gaël will soon be fully operational, thanks to Gaël, Patrick Sevestre and Roger Gouzon.

The airshow season will soon start and we will need as much help as we can get from our members. Our first event will be the Carrefour de l'Air on April 11/12 at Le Bouget. A preparatory meeting for the fly-in will be held on Sunday the 12th of April. For the first time, our Piper Cub "Spirit of Lewis" will be present in Le Bourget for the event.

New PX items will soon be available: polos, sweat shirts and caps, all in the colours of the French Wing. These will be available for purchase at the PX or online.

Last but not least: do not forget to pay your annual dues and (hopefully) your Cub sponsorship by April 30 at the latest !

- Stéphane Duchemin



Photo CAF Invader Squadron via Col. Roger Robert

CAF INVADER SQUADRON



Photo UMP Photos (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

FRENCH WING MEMBERS VISIT MEAUX'S GREAT WAR MUSEUM



Photo © Laurent Cluzel

«FLYING LEGENDS» À DUXFORD



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Photo © Alek Gault



Annual dues and Cub sponsorships

It will soon be time to pay your annual dues to the French Wing, as well as your Piper Cub sponsorship if you are so inclined. The French Wing by-laws indicate that they should be paid by April 30 at the latest, but you may do so as early as now, which will make life easier on our Finance officer Jean-Yves Cercy.

For simplicity's sake, and to avoid giving unnecessary extra work to our member and friend Irene Grinnell, foreign members are invited to pay using PayPal. You do not need to have or create a PayPal account to do so. Only a credit card is necessary, and PayPal is a very secure system. Please contact us for details and instructions on how to pay with PayPal.

Several members have already paid their annual dues, and some have already become Cub sponsorships for 2015. Dues and sponsorships run from May 1 to April 30.

Thank you for following these rules. By paying on time (or a little in advance), you will make life much easier on Jean-Yves, for this part of his commission is not agreeable indeed. ■

Photo © Bertrand Brown



Piper Cub News

On February 23, Fabien Gressier, Roger Gouzon, Patrick Sevestre and Jean-Yves Cercy repaired the broken door hinge. The Piper Cub is now fully operational and only awaits Good weather and company to go flying !

The Cub will be present at the Carrefour de l'Air gathering in Le Bourget on April 11 and 12, flown in by Jean-Yves Cercy and Noël Barange.

We are also looking for volunteers for the Cambrai airshow on Sunday the 6th of September, for the 80th anniversary of the Cambrai-Niergnies airfield and the Union Aéronautique du Cambrésis. The French Wing would like to attend, but that will depend on members' availability to man the PX and/or fly the Piper Cub there. Please contact Bertrand Brown or Stéphane Duchemin if you're interested. ■

Claude Raoul Duval Interview



An interview of Claude Raoul Duval, Compagnon de la Libération, fighter pilot and Free French Air Force veteran with the "Alsace" group from 1941 to 1945 is now available. This interview was made by Stéphane Duchemin in collaboration with the *Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération*.

The video was edited and prepared by Marc Tauran, who is the author of the well-known aviation TV show *Tripale Magazine*. Marc did a remarkable job with this interview, which is really worth watching !

Marc will also be creating a short "teaser" for our 2015 fly-in.

The interview has been uploaded to the French Wing's website as well as our YouTube account :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWgZw-8P6Kw>

Let us not forget that preserving the memories of our veterans is an integral part of the French Wing's goals and objectives. If you know veterans who are willing to talk about their experience and share it with younger generations, please contact Stéphane Duchemin as soon as possible. Time is of the essence in this matter, and we must act promptly before there are no veterans left to talk to us. ■

CAF Invader Squadron



Article: Col. Roger Robert. Photos: a26invader.com via Roger Robert unless indicated otherwise.

Above: the A-26 Invader «Texas Special» in flight.

The Invader Squadron was founded as a Commemorative Air Force Unit in February 2009 to restore the Douglas A-26B Invader N240P. This aircraft was restored to airworthiness and received the colours of a 3rd Bomb Group, 8th Bomb Squadron aircraft of the Korean War and the name “Texas Special”.

The aircraft is based at Meacham Airport in the Vintage Flying Museum’s hangar in the city of Fort Worth, Texas. Some 75 members work on the aircraft’s preservation and maintenance.



The squadron is the owner and operator of “Texas Special”, which is available for airshow appearances, special event overflights and movie shootings across the USA.

It was built in 1943 with the serial number 41-39427 and was the 328th A-26B to roll out of the Douglas Long Beach factory in California. It was delivered to the US Army Air Force on December 8, 1943.

From January 4, 1944 to March 13, 1950, it served with various military units in South Carolina, New Mexico and California before being stored for two years. In January 1952, it was bought by Alex Oser, a scrap dealer,

with 13 other Invaders. On March 19, 1952, it was one of 9 airframes sold to Houston-based Texas Railway Equipment Co. Seven of these were to later serve in the French Air Force.

The aircraft underwent major modifications in April 1953 when it was completely dismantled and all of its systems inspected and repaired as necessary. It was then converted into an executive transport, the modifications being carried out by Grand Central Aircraft Co. in Glendale, California.

The Barnwell Drilling Company in Shreveport, Louisiana, bought it on 30 December 1961 and made several modifications to improve its effectiveness as an executive transport. It is said that presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and John F. Kennedy flew in it. John Barnwell sold it on 7 February 1967, and acquired a larger Convair 240. Its registration was then changed from N75Y to N240P.

Long Beach’s Flight Test Research, Inc. purchased it on 19 April 1967 for \$ 15,000 and the aircraft returned to where it had been built 25 years earlier.

Its ownership and role is unclear, if not outright suspicious, from 1972 to 1977. An unusual event took place during this

Find more about
the Invader
Squadron from
its website:

a26invader.com

time-frame when on 10 January 1977, an A-26 landed on a single engine in Amarillo, Texas, and was abandoned by its pilot. This made the authorities suspicious of a possible link with drug smuggling. The aircraft was seized by the Potter County sheriff. The A-26 was bought from the sheriff's department by the Commemorative air Force on 21 December 1977.

The explanation to this peculiar story came a few years later, during an airshow. Two men, who seemed quite interested in the A-26 decided to question one of the crew members and asked what colours it wore before it joined the CAF.

When the crewmember answered it had been white and grey, one of the men said: *"My God it's the 'Grey Ghost! We chased that sucker up and down the Gulf Coast ! Never could catch him. He'd drop down on the deck and throttle the engines up and leave us standing there ! "*. The two men were DEA agents, and confirmed that the aircraft was a drug-runner which had been actively chased by the DEA for years.

Many members of the CAF had to go to Amarillo to prepare the A-26 to fly again. It was flown to Waco on 11 September 1980. This was quite an undertaking, given that the Ranger Squadron had only held its first meeting as a CAF unit on 23 June 1980, and had only 15 members on strength when the aircraft was assigned to it by CAF headquarters.

The initial restoration was completed in August 1982 and the aircraft was quickly sent to Redbird Airport near Dallas to get a new paint job. It emerged carrying the colours of a 13th Bomb Squadron "Grim Reapers" aircraft during the Korean War. The aircraft was overall black with red wingtips and engine cowlings (they are nowadays painted yellow). Colonel Gene Deveney, a member of the Ranger Wing, painted the "Hauco Indian Princess" nose art on it and members voted to name it "Spirit of Waco", with the name "Tee-Pee Time Gal" coming in a close second.

The aircraft remained grounded for two years after an engine failure while taking off during the "Gathering of Eagles" airshow at McCarran airport in Las Vegas in 1986. Col. Wayne Shookman was at the controls and successfully brought it down. The Ranger Squadron found many volunteers in the Las Vegas region to assist in putting "Spirit of Waco" back into the air. These volunteers formed the nucleus of the future Nevada Wing. The CAF thanked these volunteers by assigning their newly-created unit the glass-nose A-26C Invader "Vegas Vixen", which also carried the colours of a 13th Bomb Squadron aircraft. Today, both "Spirit of Waco" and "Vegas Vixen" continue to thrill crowds during airshows with low-level strafing attacks and bomb runs. ■

Below: the Squadron's A-26 in its first civilian configuration. It was used as an executive jet and carried the N75Y registration number.





Above: later on, the A-26 became N240P.

Right: the 8th BS «Liberty Squadron» insignia on the nose of the aircraft.

Below: «Texas Special» with its new colours, as seen here in Midland in 2014.



Photo Steven Martin (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Photo Roger Robert

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Great War Museum of Meaux



Article: Gaël Darquet.

Above: the French Wing members in front of the Memphis Coffee restaurant.

MUSÉE DE LA GRANDE GUERRE PAYS DE MEAUX

Below: these German helmets illustrate the evolution of warfare during the Great War. The flamboyant helmets of 1914 were soon replaced with more practical and discreet ones.

Our first group visit of the year took place last Sunday, when we visited the Great War Museum in Meaux, in the north-east suburbs of Paris. It was a great day blessed with fantastic weather.

We met at 10:00 AM to visit this splendid museum whose architecture seems to defy the laws of gravity. The 7,000 square meter building was designed by architect Christophe Lab and built on a 4.5 hectare piece of land between Meaux and Varreddes. Its cantilever façade begins next to the Frederick Mac Monnies American monument, which was donated by the American citizens in 1932 in memory of the soldiers who fell during the Battle of the Marne.

The museum's goal is to teach the pub-

lic the history of the conflict. We first go through a few rooms that explain the origins of the war through memorabilia and writings. The first military uniforms are lavishly coloured and show how much warfare was to evolve during the course of the war: red trousers, blue jackets, polished spiked helmets or helmets with feathers... This constitutes the starting point of the tour.

We then enter a gallery where we seem to be walking alongside soldiers of different nationalities. Above our heads hangs a Blériot XI. Just after, we discover the biggest room of the museum, where various vehicles are exposed, all in spotless condition: cars, a taxi, a pigeon truck, cannons and finally a Renault tank climbing steeply through an opening that lets us peek at the lower floor of the museum. A SPAD XIII fighter hangs from the ceiling here as well.

We then discover a recreated battlefield with a French trench, the no man's land and a German trench. At the end of this big hall is a showcase of soldiers marching in 1918 uniforms, which are much more discreet than earlier ones. The side rooms are dedicated to various themes: the Americans, war on sea, women, trench craft, etc. Many period



posters are also quite evocative of the conflict. Another set of wartime clothing items, weapons, shells... A few aircraft parts are also presented, such as the rudder of a SPAD, squadrons badges painted on aircraft fabric and still in their original condition... The visit comes to an end, and there are many things we've only glanced at but it is now time for lunch.

We leave the museum and head for the nearby "Memphis Coffee".

We had a nice lunch in "Happy Days" style. After this, we took a nice group picture. A sympathetic biker who was there at that moment came to the rescue of our secretary, who was struggling with the settings of his camera.

Most members then returned home, but a few decided to go to the hangar in Le Plessis and enjoy what was left of the sunny afternoon. The Cub was taken out and Michel took our cadet Antoine for a flight that lasted nearly an hour, during which Michel shared his considerable flight experience with Antoine, who has just started flight school. By the time you'll be reading these lines, Antoine will probably just have barely "landed" from his experience.

This first outing was enjoyed by everyone. We're looking forward to the next one ! ■



Photo abac077 (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)



Photo Amélien Bayle (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Top: the SPAD XIII on loan from the Paris Air & Space Museum, painted in the colours of the aircraft of René Fonck, France's ace of aces in World War I.

Centre: a Latil truck. This French manufacturer was founded in 1897 and built automobiles, trucks, vans, tractors, buses as well as farming, foresting and colonial vehicles until 1993.

Below: the Blériot XI-2, the two-seater version of the aircraft used by Blériot to cross the Channel. The Blériot XI-2 was used by several countries at the beginning of the war.



Photo Amélien Bayle (CC BY-NC 2.0)

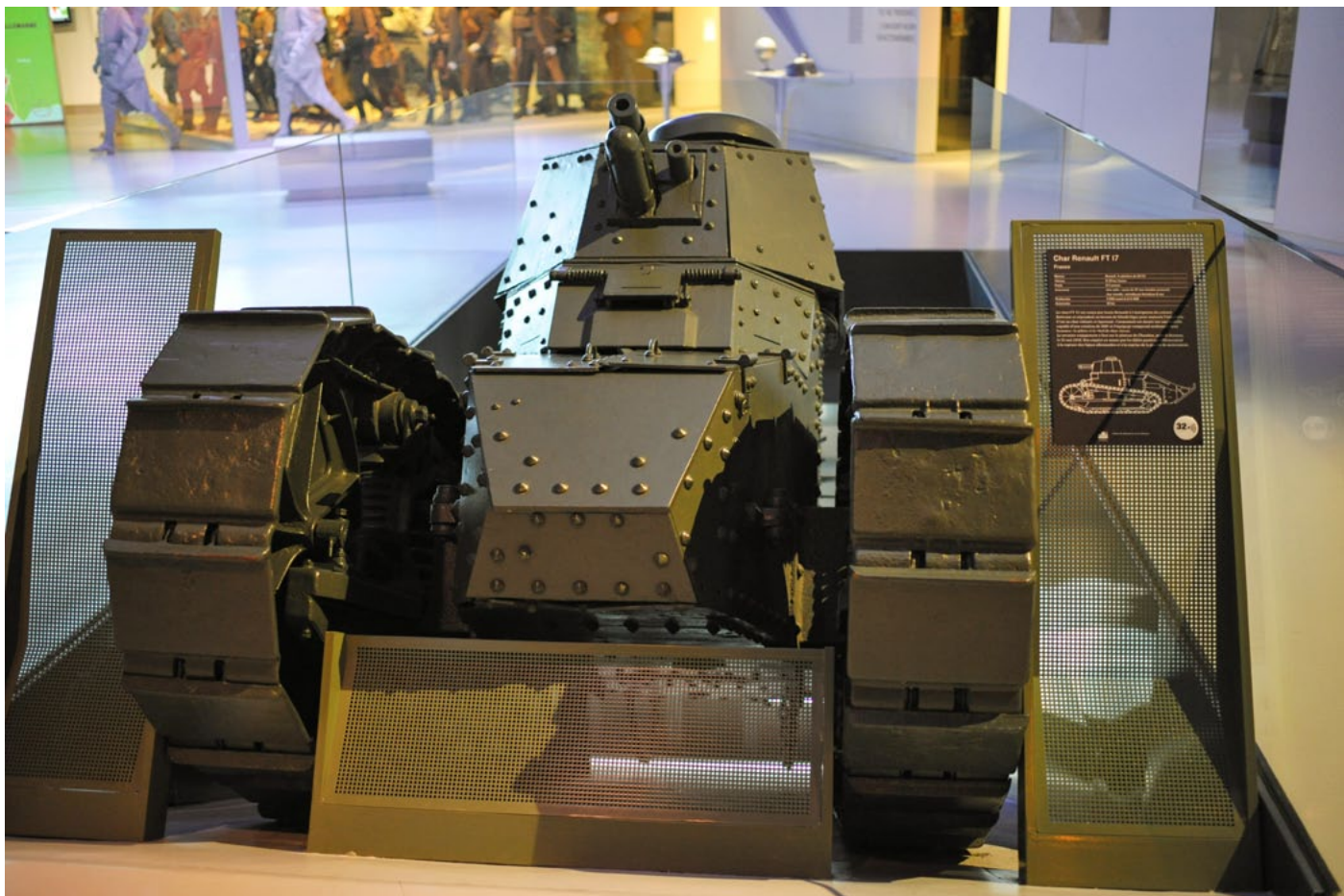


Photo Amélie Bayle (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Above: a French Renault FT tank, often considered as the finest tank of World War I. Some 3700 FT tanks were built in eighteen months, mostly by Renault but also by Berliet, SOMUA and Delaunay-Belleville. The Renault FT was to define the architecture of modern combat tanks: a main gun in a turret traversing through 360°, rear-located engine and tracks protruding in front of the vehicle.

Below: a 7.5 cm Krupp canon. This type of cannon was used by several countries during the Great War, and even saw service during World War II.



Photo Amélie Bayle (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Duxford's « Flying Legends »



Photo © Laurent Cluzel

Article: Gaël Darquet.
Photos: Laurent Cluzel

As was previously announced, we are organising a group visit to Europe's greatest warbirds airshow: the Fighter Collection's annual airshow "Flying Legends", which will take place this year on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 July.

This airshow takes place in Duxford on a former RAF and USAAF base. Duxford is a small and typically British town located in Cambridge county, with brick houses, well-groomed gardens, bed & breakfasts and the "So British" pubs.

Duxford is located about ten miles south of Cambridge, where we will be staying for the weekend. It's the

ideal place to go out, and has plenty of places where we can eat in a nice setting.

The former air base is now home to many associations, repair shops and private owners who fly some of the finest aircraft in Europe and the world. This legendary place will bring you right back to the days of the war with its World War II hangars, the museum containing the aircraft of the Imperial War Museum Duxford, the American Air Museum, the tank museum and various collections... You'll discover all the hangars and restoration shops while getting a chance to talk with mechanics and restorers. Outside, various animations are to be found: old-time music with the New York Manhattan Dolls, the madmen of Rolls-Royce running various engines on truck platforms transformed in test benches.

The flightline will give you a first taste of the airshow, which starts at 1:30 PM and last some three hours. No less than 40 warbirds are parked there, with no fences separating them from the public, making it perfect for taking pictures. Many of the participants wear pe-



Photo © Laurent Cluzel

riod uniforms and clothing, bringing you right back to the 1940s.

Duxford is also home to the world's greatest concentration of Spitfires, which generally start the show. Last year, some eleven Spitfires were present. This year being the 75th anniversary of the battle of Britain, even more should be expected. The show ends with the "Balbo", a giant formation of some 20 aircraft flying in perfect alignment. You don't want to miss this unique show, which will bring aviation enthusiasts their share of emotions.

For the upcoming 22nd edition of the "Flying Legends" airshow, we are suggesting to arrive on Friday and returning on Monday, so that we have enough time to enjoy the weekend. Depending on the number of participants, we will decide how to set up the visit, perhaps breaking up in several groups to suit everyone's needs. For economy's sake, carpooling would be a good idea, but not compulsory.

In order to start organising the visit, we will ask interested members to fill out a form and return it by March 31 at the latest. The form will be sent by email shortly. Once the participants are regrouped, we will organise everything so that you can enjoy the trip as much as possible. ■



Photo © Laurent Cluzel



Photo © Laurent Cluzel



Photo © Laurent Cluzel



Photo © Laurent Cluzel

BATTLE COLOURS: ARADO AR 234

Artwork: Bertrand Brown (aka Gaëtan Marie)

www.bravobravoaviation.com



Prototype Ar 234 S10 (Wk. Nr. 140110) was used by Erprobungskommando 234 based in Rechlin-Lärz in November 1944. This aircraft was notably used to test the Henschel HS 293 anti-ship missile and its companion radio-guidance set, the FuG 203.



This aircraft served with Kommando Sperling (sparrow) in late 1944, and was flown by Oberleutnant Werner Muffey. The «farting sparrow» artwork beneath the cockpit was the unit's insignia and was painted on all Kommando Sperling aircraft.



«Snafu I» was one of four Ar 234 sent to the US for evaluation and testing. Its Werk Nummer was probably 140148 although some sources indicate 140343. It was obtained from British troops in Sola, Norway by «Watson's Whizzers», a group of American pilots under Col. «Hal» Watson whose mission was to recuperate German jets. The aircraft was flown from Sola to Grove in the UK and then Melun in France, where it was sent by ship to the US. It was tested by the US Navy in Patuxent River but lack of spare parts limited it to ground testing and it never flew again. It was scrapped by the US Navy in the 1950s.



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