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CAF FRENCH WING - BULLETIN MENSUEL - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

September was a busy month for the French Wing: Cambrai airshow, Bar-sur-Seine Fly-In, visit of the Air & Space museum and its reserves with the CAF Swiss Wing, and finally a trip to Belgium for the reopening of the International Chièvres Airbase Museum. The French Wing members were very active during this period.

We are preparing the programme of our winter-time activities and will communicate the details as soon as they are available. Please let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions regarding these.

In the meantime, we will be gathering on Saturday 10 October to prepare our annual general assembly. The purpose of this meeting is to identify and list all points that our members would like to address during the general assembly proper on November 14. If you can't be present for the preparatory meeting, please let us know about your ideas and wishes.

- Stéphane Duchemin



Photo © Stéphane Duchemin



Photo © François Hébrard

**FW SORTIES: CAMBRAI, BAR SUR SEINE,
AIR & SPACE MUSEUM, BELGIUM...**



Photo © Laurent Casa

**80TH ANNIVERSARY AIRSHOW
AT CAMBRAI-NIERGNIES**

New French Wing recruit

We have the pleasure of introducing yet another recruit to the French Wing.

Paul-Eric Vezard recently joined our unit. Married and a father of two, he worked as an audiovisual technician before passing his private pilot's licence in 2006, thus achieving a childhood dream. He then went on to a professional pilot's licence in 2011 and became a flight instructor in 2013.

He is the proud owner and pilot of a de Havilland Canada Chipmunk (F-AZUU), which he displays regularly with his comrades of the Foug'Air association in Châteauroux. You probably have seen him at various airshows in company of Bruano Chauvet and his Cessna 195.

To welcome him, you can find Paul-Eric's contact information on the website, or wait until you meet him "in the flesh" at one of our gatherings.

Welcome to the French Wing, Paul-Eric ! ■



What the heck?

Some of you will have recognized a "slightly modified" P-40 on the above photo. According to some sources, Curtiss considered creating a twin-engine heavy fighter derivative of the P-40, and this mockup was the result of this unorthodox idea.

According to the book "Unkown! - Vol. 5" by J. Miranda and P. Mercado, the Curtiss-Wright Corporation worked on this heavy fighter project. The aircraft was to be a modified P-40C with two Packard Merlin engines installed over the landing gear nacelles. The engines were never installed on the mockup, and the project was rapidly abandoned.

The late Bernard Delfino, who loved the P-40, would probably have shed some light on this little-known episode of Curtiss' fighter. It appears this was a real, albeit still-born, project but one is tempted to think of it as one of the numerous hoaxes that can be found on the internet. The diminutive wingspan of the mockup is enough to raise eyebrows and questions. If you know more about this project, please share it with our readers! ■

Bar sur Seine fly-in



Standing, l. to r.: Yves Collin, Stéphane Duchemin, Jean-Pierre Touzeau, Matthieu Rinck; kneeling: Robert Collin, François Hébrard.

On September 13, the Mauboussin Aéro Collection association held its fly-in at the Bar-sur-Seine airfield.

This airfield is located on a plateau located above the Champagne vineyards. The fly-in took place in a relaxed and bucolic atmosphere.

Despite the uncertain weather, many aircraft attended as well as classic vehicles.

Several French Wing members made the trip: François Hébrard with his Acroduster II, accompanied by Matthieu Rinck. Noël Barange flew in from Melun in a Morane-Saulnier Rallye. Jean-Pierre Touzeau and Stéphane Duchemin were also present.

They were welcomed by Yves, Robert and Christophe Collin, the organizers of the fly-in and French Wing members.

Most of the aircraft arrived late morning. The volunteers had prepared a great and copious home-made lunch. There was some flying during the afternoon: an aerobatic demonstration with the CAP 10, Druine, and Chipmunk. Everyone was able to return home before the rain started to fall. ■

Cambrai Airshow

The French Wing's new "schoolyear" started on September 6 at the Cambrai airshow, which several of our members attended. Some got there by car: our Belgium friends Marilyne and Fab Courbet and our cadet Nina. Fred Debruyne, dressed in period uniform, was part of the American camp and was accompanied by his daughter Marie. Our cadet Arthur Cluzel managed to get on a ride with Adrien Picard and his mother from the CMV. The others came in flying: Jean-Yves and cadet Antoine Guyot flew in the Piper Cub, Gilles Avenel and Alexis Delefosse in Gille's Sirocco, Eric Bellebon and Stéphane Duchemin in Eric's Stearman and Antoine Szpiro and Romain Odent in Antoine's Vans RV-6.

We were warmly welcomed by our "northern" friends and wish to thank the organizers of the airshow and the volunteers whose hard work made the event a great one.

You can find out more on the airshow's program in photographer Laurent Casa's photo-report of the airshow in these pages. ■



Website news

The website is now back online with all of its functionalities. All of our members should have received their credentials to log in on the website. If you haven't received them, please contact me by email (Bertrand Brown: contact@bravobravoaviation.com). Thanks to Romain Odent for his help in getting back the website up and running! ■



CAF Swiss and French Wing members visit the Air & Space Museum

Members of the CAF Swiss Wing and French Wing met on Sunday 20 September at le Bourget to visit the Air & Space Museum and its reserves.

Roger Robert had arranged for a visit of the museum in the morning and the reserves in the afternoon. On the occasion of the *Journées Européennes du Patrimoine*, all hangars and workshops were open to the public, and the guides of the *Association des Amis du Musée de l'Air* presented the premises in English, as most CAF Swiss Wing are German-speakers and speak little or no French.

Everyone enjoyed the outing and we wish to pursue our exchange between the two units. We are hoping to travel to the US with our Swiss friends to celebrate the CAF's 60th anniversary in 2017. ■

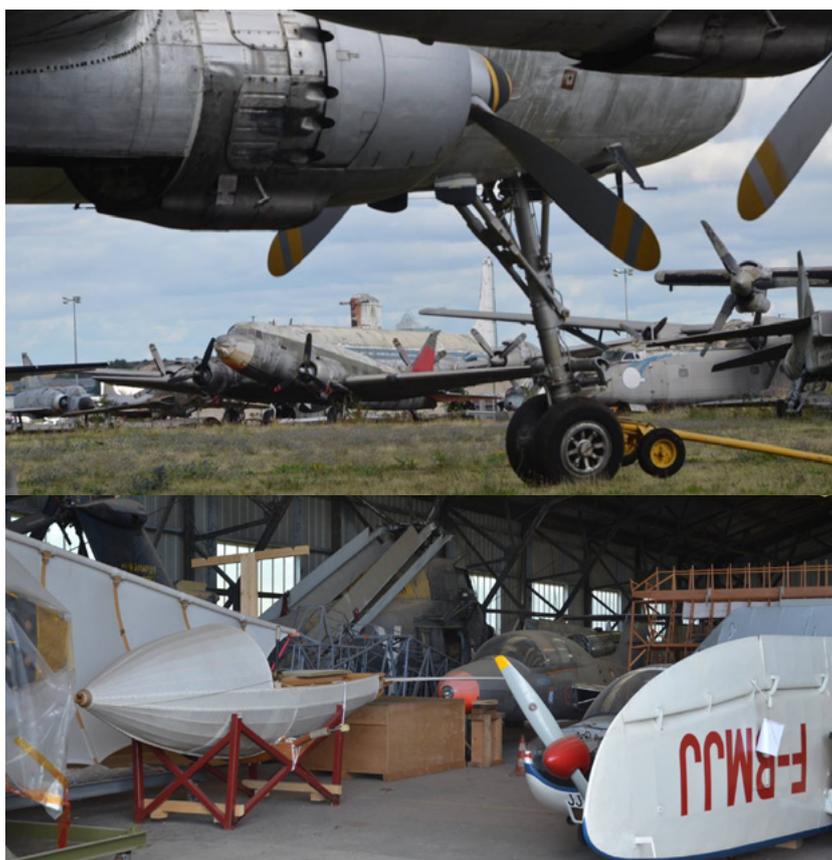


Photo © François Hébrard

Photo © François Hébrard

After the 21st-century transport, we moved back in time to the magnificent Bucker Jungmeister. This was flown in a very elegant and precise display of aerobatics. The 1930s era continued with a splendid navy-blue Staggerwing!! This magnificent aircraft, rarely seen at airshows, made a beautiful demonstration.

A nice duo now appeared: a “Coca-Cola” Cessna 195 and a Chipmunk. It is unfortunate that the sun was not with us as their demonstration would have been perfect for photos. Rain again! This is a pity, as Belgium pilot Didier Amelinckx began a superb and very dynamic and fast aerobatics demonstration in his Extra 330SC.

The rain has finally ceased! Two Stearmans of the Sierra-Whisky patrol show up, arriving straight from Saint-Dizier. One bears US Army colours, while the other one is adorned with green Tiger markings. This reminds us of another aircraft expected this afternoon. They make several spectacular passes, alone and in formation. The airshow continues with an aluminium-coloured T-6, which is based nearby in Lens.

The second highlight of the day was a very spectacular British patrol, called the Twister Aerobatics patrol. This formation





Another Solo Display pilot was present at Cambrai: Cédric “Rut” Ruet, who flew with the Swift patrol. They presented a real pylon race, just as in Reno in the US!

Another patrol shows up: this airshow is decidedly a very good one! This time, it is the REVA patrol, which came from Colmar. It uses unusual tandem-seat delta canard machines with pusher engines: two Acro-EZ and a Long-EZ. Their demonstration was spectacular, and the only thing lacking to enjoy their smoke trails fully was some blue sky.

We return to the inter-war period with one of the most famous seaplanes, the Catalina. It is majestic with its white livery, making several beautiful passes, notably with its floats down as if it were about to alight. Two Dassault Flamant from the neighbouring Amicale des Avions Anciens d’Albert presented the second Dassault type of the day.

The third highlight of the day was the Navette Bretonne, a Broussard carrying on its back an electric Cri-Cri flown by Eric Duval. After a first pass, the Cri-Cri was released and the two aircraft flew several passes together with the pilots saluting!! We return to the skies of Hawaï in December 1941 with Zeroes attacking Pearl

is equipped with Silence SA1100 Twister, whose wing planforms are reminiscent of the Spitfire. They are equipped with red and blue smoke generators and can even use pyrotechnics. They gave a splendid demonstrations, trailing blue, white and red smoke scarves.

The Twister patrol had barely landed when Colonel Bruno Nézier, former head of the Air Force’s demonstrations teams, showed up at the podium and announced the imminent arrival of the Rafale. Seconds later, Captain Benoît “Tao” Planchette tore through the sky with both M-88 engines in full afterburner. He was doing a reconnaissance of the area before heading back to Saint-Dizier. This is usually done with two aircraft during the preparation of a demonstration.





Harbor: it's operation Tora-Tora-Tora again, with four T-6 acting as Zeroes and "dropping bombs" in front of the public, with explosions going off on the ground.

With barely a break, another rarely-seen aircraft shows up: the superb Grumman Avenger "Charlie's Heavy" in the colours of the US Navy, this time against a nice blue sky background. The demonstration was superb, especially the pass with the bomb-bay doors opened, revealing a Mk 31A torpedo.

The British have obviously come in force: after the Twisters, here comes the Acrostars patrol with their Yak-50. The four aircraft give a magnificent display of combined passages, merges and tight formation flight.

No airshow would be complete without a homage to the Normandie-Niemen regiment, and the Yak-3 offered a powerful and high demonstration, imitating the young French pilots who flew Soviet fighters during the Second World War.



The evocation of their story is as moving as ever.

Another star of this anniversary meeting was the A-109 helicopter and its spectacular demonstration, complete with the launch of infrared flares. Sheer happiness!! Thank you for this moment.

A final return to the past with a famous warbird, the Curtiss P-40 and its powerful and elegant flight demonstration.



This might be the most touching moment, especially for Captain François Rallet of the Equipe de Voltige de l'Armée de l'Air (EVAA). He was crowned World Champion (Team) the previous week and chose Cambrai to make his final demonstration with the EVAA. He is to leave the institution in a few days. A former Mirage 2000 pilot in Cambrai, this decision was an obvious one for him. All that was lacking was a bit of sunshine, but "Ralloch" was once again magnificent with his magical succession of precise and beautiful figures.





Thank you for these splendid moments.

As AC/DC's music spat out of the loudspeakers, two Belgian F-16 from Florennes airbase ripped through the sky in full 'burner!! Yeah !! A small pause, during which François Rallet was paid homage by the airshow organizers and thanked the public for their fervour and friendship and introduced the new members of the EVAA: Lieutenant Victor Lalloue and Captain Caroline Paillier.

As the sky turned to grey, two Pitts took off and delivered a superb show.

The airshow is nearly over and Lieutenant-Colonel Amberg, head of the air force demonstration teams, arrived at the speaker's stand to introduce the Cartouche Doré patrol.

After this, he announced the Patrouille de France and the eight Alpha Jets appeared and began their display. The sun showed up again, as a final symbol!! After the final burst and thanks to the public, the airshow is now over!

The public was enchanted, children bore wide grins on their faces and had airplanes on their minds, as well as a few gifts and scale models received or bought from the various stands.

A big thank you to the organizers for this 80th anniversary airshow, whose program was worthy of much larger airshows, with some beautiful surprises!!! ■

Chièvres Air Base



Article: Stéphane Duchemin.

Following the invitation of our Belgian member Fab Courbet, several French Wing members travelled to Belgium to attend the reopening ceremonies of the International Chièvres Airbase Museum (MIBAC) on September 26 and 27. Fab is the curator of the museum.

The airbase has a long and rich history going back to World War I. During the second World War, after the Italian and German occupation, prestigious American and British groups were based there. From 1951 to 1967, the Belgian Air Force took over the base again. Since then, Chièvres has been a NATO base used by the Supreme Headquarters Al-

lied Powers Europe Europe (SHAPE). It is home to some helicopters and a few discreet VIP transport jets.

Saturday was the official reopening day after a long period of reconstruction. We were welcomed by a dynamic team happy to be able to receive the public again and host events.

In the morning, only Isabelle and Stéphane Duchemin, who had arrived the previous day, were present and set up the French Wing's stand in the museum's entrance.

Reenactors in wartime uniforms arrived in a convoy of vehicles and animated the event.

After an improvised lunch on the French Wing's boxes acting as tables with our Belgian friends, Maryline and Nina joined the group, followed by Laurent Cluzel with his daughter Philippe and his son Arthur, one of our cadets.

In the evening, a hundred people sat for a cheese dinner. The organizers had hired a local cheese-maker who had made a selection of thirty fine French





and Belgian cheeses, to be enjoyed with good local beers with custom-made labels depicting Belgian Air Force units. There was a very nice and warm atmosphere and animated discussions took place at the the MIBAC and French Wing's tables.

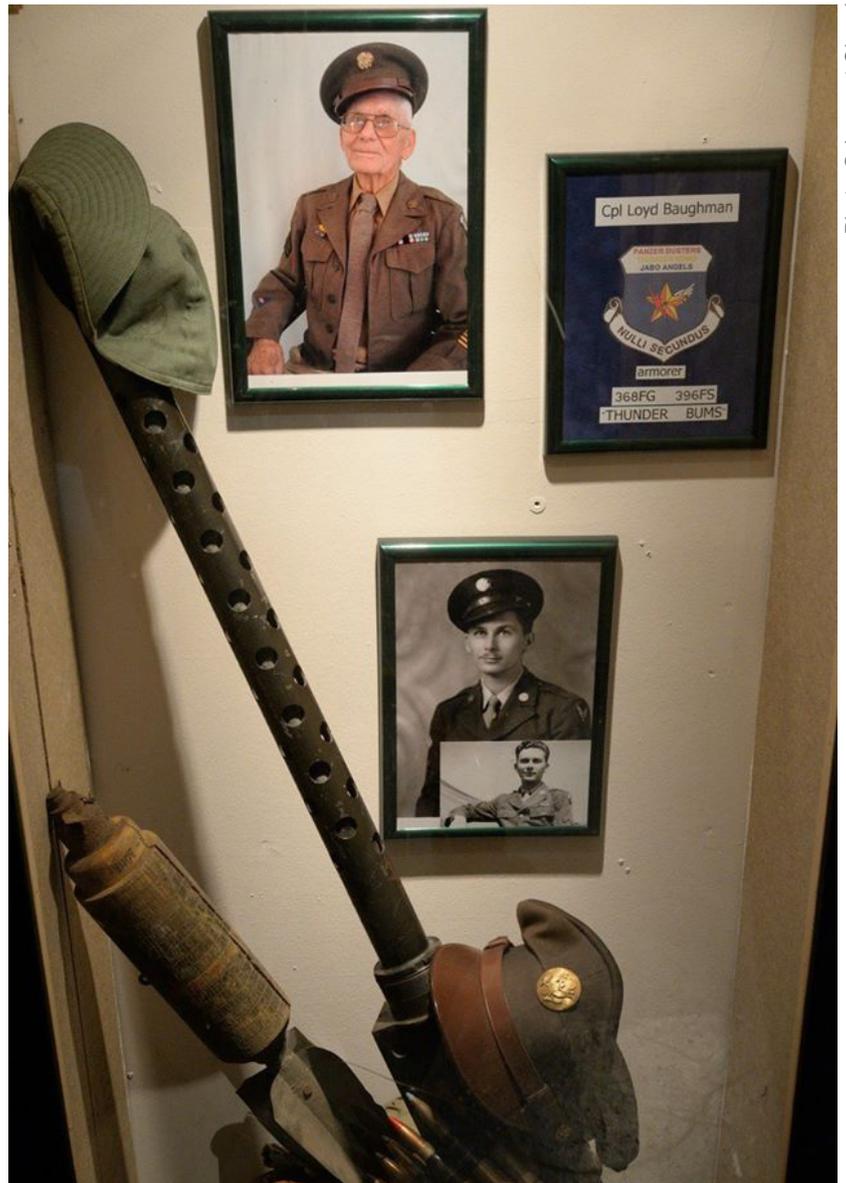
Fab had set up lodging for everyone, and we set up in a youth hostel in the pretty village of Ath, near Chièvres.

The next day, Daniel Leleu, president of the MIBAC, had prepared a copious breakfast for our members, some of which looked a bit worse for wear...

Fab took a few members on a historical guided tour of the airbase's surroundings.

Late Sunday morning, we were joined by Dominique and Roger Robert for a lunch of local specialties: French fries, *fricadelles* and various sausages and *cervelas*...

The team left for home at the end of the afternoon, with many new contacts and the hope of seeing of seeing our Belgian friends for the French Wing's 20th anniversary fly-in. ■



BATTLE COLOURS: HURRICANE ACES

Profil: Bertrand Brown (aka Gaëtan Marie)

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Douglas Bader is one of the best-known British aces. After losing his two legs in crash before the war, he managed to be reassigned as a fighter pilot at the beginning of the conflict. During the battle of Britain, he took command of No 242 Squadron, manned primarily by Canadian pilots. He was credited with 20 aerial victories before being shot down and captured in August 1941.

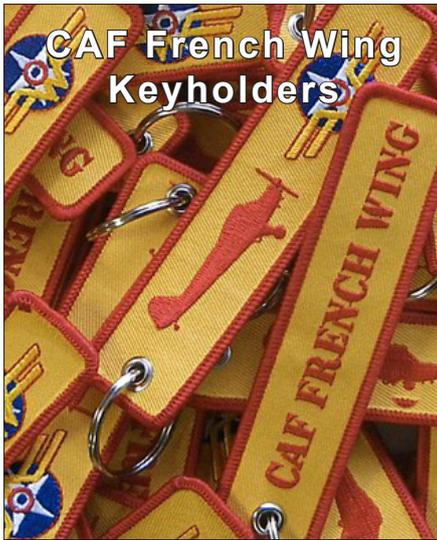


Ken Mackenzie was a Battle of Britain Hurricane ace with 501 Squadron. On October 7, 1940, he damaged a Messerschmitt Bf 109 and ran out of ammunition. Fearing the enemy pilot would make it back to base and survive to fight another day, he rammed him with the wingtip of his Hurricane (V6799), sending the German down in the Channel. He was credited with 11.5 victories before being shot down and captured in September 1941.



Although he only scored one victory and is not officially an ace, le F/L James Nicolson of No 249 Squadron deserves to be mentioned here as the only Fighter Command pilot to receive the Victoria Cross during World War Two. On August 16, 1940, his aircraft was hit by cannon fire from a Bf 110 and began to burn. As he was about to bale out, he realized his opponent had overshot him. He climbed back in his burning cockpit and shot him., suffering grievous burns in the process.

NEW PX ITEM



French Wing woven keyholders. These keyholders are of good quality and show the CAF French Wing logo and Piper Cub "Spirit of Lewis" silhouette on one side, and the CAF French Wing's name on the other side. Cost: 3€ each.

2015 FRENCH WING SUBORDINATE OFFICERS

THE FRENCH WING IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

- PX: Deputy
 - Recruiting: Officer and deputy
- Should you be interested by these jobs, please contact the French Wing!

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