



Volume 10 - N° 4 - April 2005

EDITORIAL

The end of this Winter has been marked by the commemoration of two dramatic WWII events.

*The French Wing participated to both, thanks to several enthusiastic members who did not hesitate to drive several hundred miles and defy the bad weather, in order to honor these men who can only deserve our admiration and our gratitude. I wish to thank these members for their dedication, particularly colonels **Henri Bourrassier** and **Jacques Leroux** (photos opposite), without whom these two ceremonies would not have taken place. They are both major elements of our Association. Discreetly, but with terrible efficiency, they allow us to reach the CAF goals the best possible way. I thank them both very warmly.*

As opposed to what one may think, the news, during the last part of this Winter season, are numerous, and the number of pages of this monthly bulletin being limited to 12 - which is not bad, after all - I sometimes have to delay some of the articles. This was the case for the Catalina last month, and it is the case for "Those Forgotten Planes" this month. I hope their authors will forgive me. I wished the number of pages could be increased to 15 or 20 pages!... But let's stop dreaming. Days only have 24 hours, and this is, unfortunately, unchangeable.

To end this editorial, I call all our members who haven't paid their annual dues yet, and I ask them to do this as soon as possible. The administration of our Association will be greatly facilitated. Thank you everyone!

Bernard

STIRRING CEREMONIES IN COLOMBIER-SAUGNIEU AND ANDRYES/FERRIÈRES



Photo: Pascale Mathieu - Le progrès de Lyon

• **SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DRAMATIC ACCIDENT OF THE B-26 MARAUDER N° 32 OF "GROUPE BRETAGNE": COLONEL HENRI BOURRASSIER PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE TWO MEMBERS OF HIS CREW, WHO LOST THEIR LIFE IN THE EXPLOSION OF THE PLANE.**

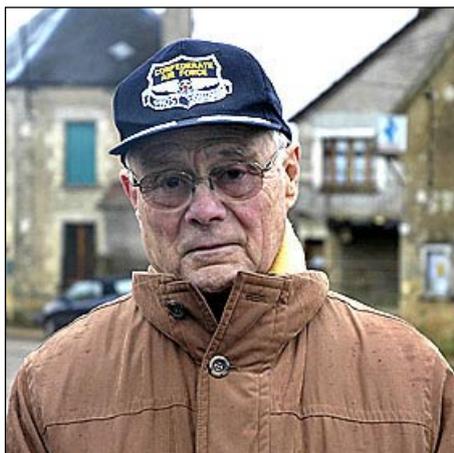


Photo: Bernard Delfino

• **COLONEL JACQUES LEROUX SEES HIS LONG AND LABORIOUS RESEARCH REWARDED DURING THE COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY OF THE ACCIDENT OF A B-24 LIBERATOR IN THE VILLAGE OF FERRIÈRES, NEAR ANDRYES.**

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCIDENT IN COLOMBIER-SAUGNIEU

By colonel Henri Bourrassier



Photo : Collection Henri Bourrassier

On February 26 took place, in Colom-bier-Saugnieu, near Lyon, a very stirring ceremony that commemorated the Groupe Bretagne B-26 Marauder number accident.

The CAF and its French Wing were well represented by colonels **Henri Bourrassier** himself, **Guy Bortolus**, and **John Francis**, the latter being accompanied by his charming wife Cécile.

Colonel Henri Bourrassier reminded everyone about the circumstances of this dramatic event that took place 60 years ago...

February 28, 1945. An important mission over Germany - briefing, identification of the target: All information on the route to follow, bombing run heading, number of flak tubes, pictures. The orders have been given, and we are ready to go.

Our airplane: The B-26 number 32 loaded with two tons of bombs. Crew: S/Lt **Hentgès** pilot, sergent **Bourrassier** co-pilot, S/L **Dravert** mechanic, S/L **Pernot** navigator, sergent **Veza** turrett gunner, sergent **Mouillard** radio.

The crew takes place and everyone has his usual checks to do, check-list for the pilots, everything is in order.

Twenty Marauders with engines running, warming them up. It's cold. The ground mechanics, wearing their ano-raks, watch the operations, making sure



Photo: Pascale Mathieu - Le progrès de Lyon

Above left: Two B-26 Marauder of the Groupe Bretagne on a bombing mission.

Above and below: Colonel Henri Bourrassier (on the left on these two pictures), together with veterans, representatives of the various organizations present, and two officers of the Groupe Bretagne currently based in Istres.

that everything is going fine before we leave the parking area.

Then it's departure time. The Leader announces over the radio "Rolling!", and,

according to a well established order, the position in the flying formation, each plane takes its turn. It's ours... Lining up, an overall look at the dash-board. All is well.



Photo: Pascale Mathieu - Le progrès de Lyon

Outside, the plane which is in front of us is about to take-off. Fifty two inches pressure, and here we go!...

Take-off, gear up, and suddenly an engine misfires with stronger and stronger "Bangs!", so strong that the engine in question was rotating on its mounts about 35° every time flames came out of the air intakes at the front of the engine. It was very impressive, "2000 angry horse-powers"!

We had emptied the fire-extinguishers, and no question of dropping the bombs: Opening the bomb bay doors would have meant losing 10 precious knots that we dearly needed. At the altitude we were flying, there was no possibility to manoeuvre.

Lieutenant Hentgès had full control over the plane, but it was about time when, before us, appeared a field, close to a village, with its bell tower that we had to avoid. "We're crashing!".

How long did we stay in the airplane wreck?... Only the witnesses on that day could tell us. We were all knocked out and hurt, and, unfortunately, two had died: S/L **Dravert** and sergent **Moulard**.



Above and on the cover page: Col. Henri Bourrassier reads an emotional speech, telling the story of the accident of his B-26 Marauder at this very place, sixty years ago.

I had lost my US wool cap, I could feel something warm running down my neck and my back, my face was covered with blood. I reached my hair and I felt a large "V" shaped cut: My scalp was cut and I had various cuts and bruises all over my body.

I shake Lt Hentgès and tell him "Hurry up, the plane's burning!". I noticed that his left foot was jammed in the rudder pedals. The emergency windows were above our heads, two sliding panels, but they were so badly damaged and jammed that I was unable to open them. Fighting for one's life is really something!

As the machine guns ammunition started to explode under the rising heat,

I made sure that Lt. Hentgès was free and ready to follow me.

As I found myself outside, I wasn't worried about my state. Suddenly I saw a woman who was looking after a few goats, and I shouted: "Madame, don't come close to the plane, the bombs are going to blow up". At the same time, sergent Vezan escaped through the gunner's position holding his arm. Then, I walked to a small wall made of rocks, and... nothing. I fell into a coma.

I woke up at the village butcher's, I was lying on a table, with people around me who were treating my wounds. I asked them a question: "What about my comrades? And the plane?". The latter had



Photo: Collection Henri Bourrassier

Photo: Collection Henri Bourrassier

Above: What is left of aircraft number 32 which had been belly-landed with maestria, after the loss of one of its engines on take-off. Relatively intact, the plane was blown up to pieces a few minutes later by the explosion of the two tons of bombs that were on board, a terrible explosion which cost their life to two of its crew members, Sergent Louis Moulard, radio, and S/L Alexandre Dravert, mechanic.

already blown up, and I had not heard the explosion.

The ambulances arrived, and I found myself in Hospital Desgenette. There was a lot of wounded people there.

After twenty days, hospital and convalescence included, I went back fighting, with my friends who, for the circumstance, had prepared some celebration party.

The meteo having improved, as compared to the month of February, the missions had started again, numerous, and we could feel the end coming.



Acknowledgments pronounced by col. Henri Bourrassier during this ceremony of February 26, 2005.

"I wish to thank the Officers of Groupe Bretagne who came especially from the air base of Istres, to honor, by their presence, today's ceremony. I want to associate my friend pilot Pierre Hentgès who could not be here because of health reasons, but who is with us in our thoughts.

I thank monsieur Vyré, District President of the National Office of War Veterans, representing the Prefect, monsieur Médinant, Mayor of Colombier, monsieur Marmonnier, President of the War Veterans of Colombier, monsieur Mathevet, President of the ARSA, the Veterans Associations, monsieur Michel Gracet President of the Vieilles Tiges Association in Lyon, the RAFA, with our British Friends and their flag, the ANORAA, the ANSORA, the SLH-DA, the AEA, the AEMA, and the firemen section of Colombier.



Peinture : Roy Grinnell

Above: B-26 Marauder number 32 immortalized by artist and French Wing member colonel Roy Grinnell.

Below: A Groupe Bretagne B-26 during one of its numerous bombardment missions.

Are represented: The Associations of the Strategic Air Forces whose President, colonel Jacques Pensec is excused and represented by commandant Jacques Béziaud and Henri Bourrassier, the former pilots and other personnel trained in the USA (APNFA) whose President, general Théodore Mahlberg, is excused and represented by Henri Bourrassier and Henri Tuloux, the Commemorative Air Force (Headquarters in Midland, Texas), its French Unit in Aulnay sous Bois whose President Bernard Delfino is excused and represented by Henri Bourrassier.

Tanks to all of you to be present today in a spirit of solidarity, dignity, remembrance, and duty of memory. I sincerely thank all



Photo: Collection Henri Bourrassier

the inhabitants of Colombier-Saugnieu who, thanks to their braveness, saved our lives. I also thank them for this magnificent monument which they paid with their own money as early as 1946, to immortalize the memory of our two friends who fell on this place and whom we commemorate today.

Thanks to all of you".



No Henri! It is us who want to thank you, as well as our friends Louis-Jean Gioux, Alphonse Thiry, Lucien Goubard, Georges Marcelin, and Sandy Sansing, all WWII veterans and members of the CAF French Wing, and the hundreds of thousands of soldiers of the same temper as yours! Pilots, mechanics, radio operators, navigators, gunners, and ground personnel, we thank you all for preserving our Freedom at the risk of your life, so that, today, we can commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of this dramatic war episode. Merci Henri!



Photo: Collection Henri Bourrassier

Above: Another "non-conventional" landing with a B-26 Marauder. Colonel Henri Bourrassier is the third one from the left.

THREE YOUNG GIRLS ON A B-24 LIBERATOR

By Maurice Lee Watson, and cols. Jacques Leroux and Bernard Delfino



Photo: Collection Jacqueline Hütler

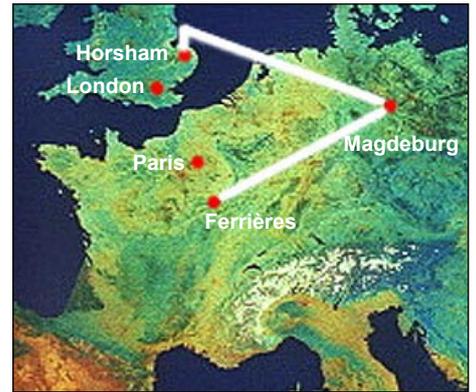
It was during the celebrations of Mission 441 that Jacques Noble, a member of the B-17 Pink Lady Association got in touch with the French Wing. A native of the area of Auxerre, he was very interested in finding the story of a B-24 Liberator which crashed near the village of Ferrières on January 16, 1945. He was advised to contact col. Jacques Leroux, our historian, and asked him for help.

The task revealed itself as much more arduous than expected because the information available about the airplane's markings was almost inexistent.

It was only after many months that a modest photograph showing three young girls posing on top of the aircraft fuselage (Above), was discovered and, thanks to a detailed examination, allowed Jacques to find that the plane had the Unit's characters "J3" painted behind the national insignia. Jacques imme-

diately contacted the organizations with which he usually corresponds in England and in the USA. He discovered that this Liberator was a B-24J, serial number 42-50954 manufactured by the Ford factory in Willow Run, near Detroit (Michigan).

It was fitted with a retractable H2X radar, replacing the traditional ball turret. It had been assigned to the 755th Bomb Squadron of the 458th Bomb Group which was based at Horsham St. Faiths since January 29, 1944. It was brand new, and was flying its very first war mission: The bombardment of the steel works Krupp in Magdeburg, as the Deputy Leader plane (Replacement for



Above: The route followed by the B-24, from Horsham to Magdeburg, and to Ferrières, near Auxerre.

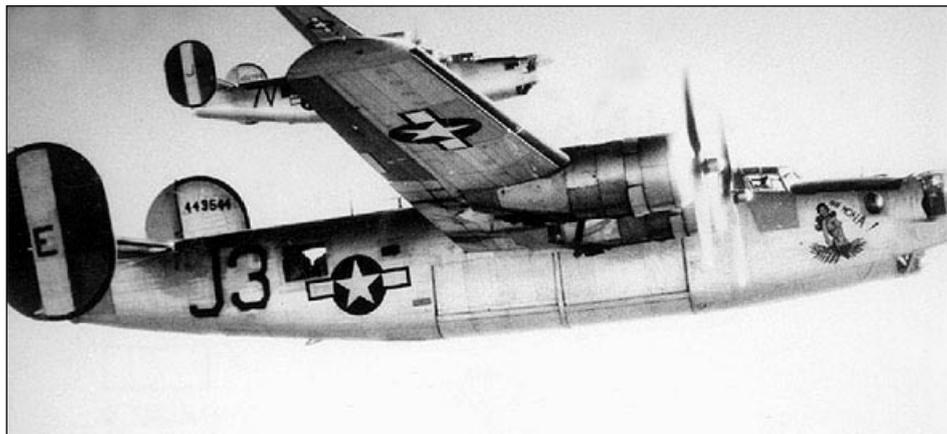
Magdeburg area, the planes immediately became the target of the flak which was terribly accurate: Flown by Lt. John W. Moran, the plane was hit between engines 3 and 4 by a flak battery of 6 inches shells. Engine number 3 caught fire, the wing structure was damaged, and shrapnels went through the wing. Flames were longer than the plane, so long that they damaged the flaps, the right hand vertical stabilizer,

burning the de-icing rubber mats. The turbo charger of engine number 4 was inoperative, the control cables for the throttle, the mixture, and the propeller pitch of engine number 3 were cut. Since it was impossible to feather this propeller, it carried on wind milling at 2300 RPM.

A piece of the right aileron was missing, and there was only 14 inches pressure on engine number 4.

The flight mechanic, S/Sgt. Theodore W. Urbano, switched the number 3 engine fuel feed line off, and the engine stopped. Four minutes later, the fire stopped. The radar, the "Gee" box, and the intercom, were all inoperative, which prevented the men at the back of the plane from knowing what was going on.

Lt. Moran stayed in formation to drop the bombs, then he left it and took a south-west heading to try and reach friendly lines.

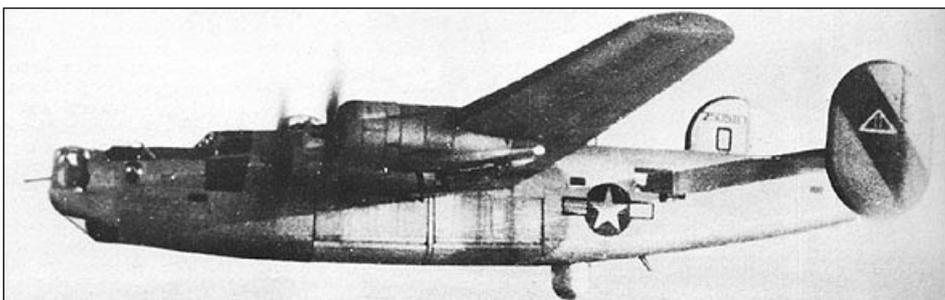


Above: two B-24 in flight. the one in the fore-ground belongs to the 755th Bomb Squadron.

Photo: Coll. G. Reynolds & D. Scorza

the Leading plane, should the latter become inoperative).

After take-off at 08:03, the group of more than 130 bombers assembled and started their flight on a heading to Magdeburg. When they reached the



Above: A B-24J-1-FO # 42-50487 of the 712th Bomb Squadron with the H2X radar in extended position.

Photo: Collection Mike Batlmeay



Photo: Collection Maurice L. Watson

Above: The original crew of Lt. Moran from August 9, 1944 (The one for the raid was different):
 Standing and from left to right: S/Sgt. Clifford Van Ness Radio, 2nd Lt. Howard A. Bradley Bombardier (Not part of the mission), 2nd Lt. Robert V. Shaw Co-pilot (Not part of the mission), 1st Lt. John W. Moran pilot, F/O Frank E. Adams Navigator, S/Sgt. Harold N. Jones Top Turret Gunner (KIA on 16/01/1945).
 Kneeling and from left to right: Sgt. David J Stodder Nose Turret Gunner (Not part of the mission), S/Sgt. Maurice Lee Watson Ball Turret Gunner (But Waist Gunner for the mission), S/Sgt. Richard B. Smith Tail Gunner (KIA on 16/01/1945), S/Sgt. Theodor W. Urbano Engineer.
 For the mission of January 16, 1945, the following modifications had been adopted: Major David H. Philips Co-Pilot, Major Fred Vacek Bombardier, Lt. Traskin Navigator, F/O Alden Radar Navigator.



Photo: Bernard Deflino

Above: Maurice Lee Watson and mister Jacques Noble, of Association B-17 Pink Lady, one of the main organizers of this ceremony.

3 saved our lives because the pilots could not see the fire. Their only reference was the loss of power displayed on the instruments. Lt. Traskin and myself retracted the radome, then we took off our anti-flak jackets and threw them over board, as well as everything that would make the plane lighter. The engines

Phillips, Ted, Armstrong, and, finally, Lt. Moran.

As soon as I got into the stream of the plane, I found myself on my back and I waited a few seconds before I opened my parachute. We had been advised to open it only when we could see the tree leaves, but in January these are pretty scarce!... My parachute opened with a big jolt which made me bite my tongue. I repeated loudly several times to myself "I'm safe! I'm OK!...". I looked up and I saw the plane, as well as three men falling. Two parachutes opened, and I saw the third body crash into a wood. I hit the ground with another jolt, and I felt dizzy for a while. My tongue was bleeding. I got rid of my parachute, and my Mae-West, and I lit up a cigarette. After a 4 miles walk, I saw Frank Adams and gave him my black shoes because one of his ankles was swelling up.

We were then looked after by the FFI (Resistants) who first thought we were Germans. After lengthy explanations, they admitted we belonged to the US Air Force. At 19:00, six MP who came from Auxerre took us to Clamecy where we got at 22:00 to eat and get some rest. On January 17 we went back to the plane to destroy secret documents and make the sensitive equipment unusable. The plane was a wreck whose right wing was lying at about 50 yards from the fuselage. Lt. Traskin joined us at that moment but S/Sgt. Richard Smith was still missing. More than 400 FFI's carried on looking for him, and found his body some time later. One believe that his parachute, like Harold Jones' did not open because they were frozen. Their two bodies were first buried in the Dijon-Varois cemetery, the Jones was transferred to Texas, and Smith to Marietta in Georgia.

The ground was hidden by a cloud cover of 9/10, making navigation very difficult. After two hours of flight, the fuel tank were dry, and the remaining three engines stopped, one after the other. At that time, the altitude was 11000 feet.

Lt. Moran calculated that he could fly about 10 minutes, and get to friendly lines. When the altitude of 3000 feet was reached, he ordered the crew to bail out. The time was 14:38. Waist Gunner S/Sgt Maurice Lee Watson tells us the rest of the story...

"The quick decision taken by S/Sgt Ur-bano to cut off the fuel feeding to engine

stopped as we flew over river Rhine.

Everyone put on his parachute and took his shoes and survival kit. When we got the order to bail out, we jumped, one after the other. I was frightened and I tried to keep a cool head. Traskin jumped, followed by Van, Major Vacek, myself, Adams, Smitty, Major



Photo: Bernard Deflino

Above: The Mayor of Andryes/Ferrières places a une bundle of flowers at the foot of the monument dedicated to the crew, and its two lost members.



Photo: Bernard Delfino

Above: After numerous months spent communicating via email, Maurice Lee Watson and Jacques Leroux fall into each other's arms, before a very happy Jacques Noble.

Back to England, we enjoyed a fifteen days rest, then, on February 15, a new mission on... Magdeburg! I was scared but the flak was inaccurate, and we flew back to Horsham without any problem. I can assure you that I will never go back there!..."

S/Sgt. Maurice Lee Watson returned to the USA on June 14, 1945, and was demobilised during Fall the same year.

ing Private Ryan", the third brother was called back to the USA and demobilised. On March 12, 2005, very moved, he was part of this group of visitors in Ferrières.



Photo: Bernard Delfino

Above: Monsieur Roger Pinon, one of the inhabitants of Ferrières, presents Maurice Lee Watson with one of the plane's windows, 60 years after it crashed. Lee promised to take it back to the USA with him.

The hard and long work done by col. Jacques Leroux, enabled him to find most of the crew members. When the invitation was made to come to France and commemorate this fact of war, Gunner Maurice Lee Watson, shaken by the emotion, immediately declared that he wanted to come over. He arrived on March 11, together with ten other people, either relatives or friends.

This group included S/Sgt. Richard B. Smith's brother who has his own anecdote: Three sons of the Smith family were enrolled in the US forces during WWII. One of the brothers had already been killed in action. Therefore, when the authorities heard about Richard's death, an anecdote similar to the one told by Steven Spielberg's movie "Sav-

The **French Wing** of the Commemorative Air Force was well represented during this moving day of March 12, 2005, since no less than 6 members defied the cold weather and the rain to get there. Fortunately, the latter stopped just before the ceremony started. We thank the following colonels: **Christophe Bastide, Bernard and Fumiko Delfino, Eric Ducreau, Jacques Leroux, and Michel Perrin** for braving the elements, and for driving, in total, almost 4000 miles(!) to take part in this emotional commemoration. Thanks to all of you!



Photo: Bernard Delfino

Above: One of the strong moments of this commemoration was the reunion of Maurice Lee Watson with Jacqueline Hytier, the young girl on the left of the photograph that enabled Jacques to retrace the whole story (Photo on page 5). The other two young girls were, center: Huguette Bigé, still alive today, and right: Ghislaine Bart, alas deceased.

There was a crowd of more than 100 persons for this ceremony. Members of the authorities included the Mayor of Andryes/Ferrières, the Town council, a Member of the Parliament, a delegation of the French Air Force, a representative of the American embassy, and, practically, the whole village of Ferrières, whose many inhabitants had been the witnesses and actors of this dramatic event. Many bits of the airplane had been collected by the villagers after the accident, and kept for 60 years. They were displayed during the drink and the excellent meal offered by the Municipality whose reception was extraordinarily warm. Many pieces of the plane were given to our American friends, and the French Wing got a panel of a respectable size for its museum.



Photo: Bernard Delfino

Above: Cols. C. Bastide, F. Delfino, M. Perrin, and J. Leroux discussing with Jacqueline Hytier.

BACK FROM THE FRONT.....

UNIT LEADER

BERNARD DELFINO

"IF I GET A COMMISSION, WHAT DO YOU GIVE ME?"

This is probably the question I hate to hear most in a conversation with the public during air shows or other aeronautical events!

Those who ask this question, have not, evidently, understood anything about Associations and the generosity they automatically require. Should you be asked this question, a hard task is waiting for you, for you need to try and make your interlocutor understand that he's on a wrong path!

Don't get nervous and start by explaining, as calmly and diplomatically as possible, that belonging to an Association does not mean "Taking" but "Giving", especially an Association like ours, for which the dedication of its members plays a role of primary importance.

Try and make this person understand that belonging to the CAF and the French Wing brings, effectively, material advantages (Contrails, Dispatch, uniform, free access to the AAHM, etc...), but, overall, that the **participation to our activities will bring him (or her) a satisfaction that no money will ever be able to buy**: The satisfaction of helping to keep intact the memory of those who sacrificed themselves for Freedom, that Freedom whose true value we only notice when we lose it.

Reaching the CAF goals is a long painstaking job, a job that is like adding a brick to the wall, day after day, month after month, year after year.

Adopting these goals will bring these new members a feeling that will transform their life by giving the latter a meaning they did not suspect a few minutes before. Try and make them understand that they can become actors, and not spectators, by putting their own talents at the service of our Association. They will soon learn that it requires a fair amount of generosity and dedication, but it will give a sense to their life which, most probably, was only made, until now, of an insipid passivity.

ADJUTANT OFFICER

DIDIER CARDINAL

BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION MONTHLY MEETING

The Board of Administration held its monthly meeting on March 08, in Aulnay sous Bois. The agenda included many points of discussion and was as follows:

- Possible purchase of the book "*T-6 and its variants*" by Editions d'Along: This purchase was rejected since it took us 2 years to sell the 20 Corsair books purchased from the same editor.

- Visit of Sandy Sansing and Jim Lux to France: Following a request from our two friends, this visit will be a private one, but it will still call for an extraordinary General Assembly and a meal whose date will be published as soon as possible.

- New members: The arrival of a new Cadet is always a great event. Guillaume is col. Christian Frézard's son, and he is now a member of the CAF and the French Wing.

- Piper Cub "*Spirit of Lewis*": After some minor maintenance, the plane will take to the sky again from the end of March. Its participation to the La Ferté-Alais air show is still uncertain. We are expecting news from Editions Lariviere...

- French Wing Web Site: the creation of the new French Wing Web Site has been given to col. Christian Frézard. It should give this project a definite boost.

- Safety Plan: The current plan still requires a considerable amount of work.

- French Wing Van: The inside lining and setup of the van should be completed by the end of April.

- Prints Stand and Plastic Pockets: The project should have been completed by now but the various events of last Winter delayed this item more than we had expected. This is a "MUST DO!" project if we want to sell as many prints as possible! Col. Philippe Dufлот is determined to find the plastic pockets and col. Roger Gouzon has taken on the job of manufacturing the stand.

FINANCE OFFICER

PHILIPPE DUFLLOT

FINANCES AND ANNUAL DUES 2005/2006

No particular problem this month.

I hope that everyone has noticed that the annual dues have to be paid before May 01, 2005?...

Send your participation to my personal address below. Thanks in advance!

Col. Philippe DUFLLOT
8 Rue Fernand Segouin
95400 ARNOUVILLE
FRANCE

Members living in Europe:

Colonels: 50,00 Euros.

Associate Members: 50,00 Euros.

Cadets 20,00 Euros.

Friends of the French Wing: 40,00 Euros

Members living in the USA:

Colonels: \$ 50,00 cash.

Friends of the French Wing: \$ 40,00 cash

Members living in Japan:

Colonels: ¥ 7000 cash.

Do not send any check if you leave abroad because the banks take up to 40% of the transaction value!...

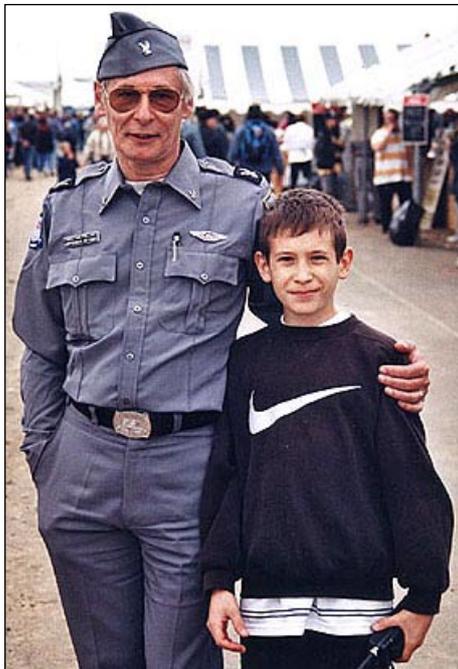
MEMBERS UP TO DATE WITH THEIR ANNUAL DUES FOR YEAR 2005/2006

Gilles Avenel, Bob Ayars, Lilian Ayars, Jean-Christophe Debuissou, Bernard Delfino, Fumiko Delfino, Philippe Dufлот, John Francis, Guillaume Frézard, Claude Gascon, Aubrey Hair, Barbara Hair, Rick Hudlow, Louise Hudlow, Yves Houssin, William Katsones, George Lodge, Jim Lux, Georges Marcelin, Patrick Pierre-Pierre, Sandy Sansing, Alphonse Thiry, Gilles Troussart, Orlan Wichman, Jean Chatel, Stella Wilkes.

IF YOU DO NOT SEE YOUR NAME ON THE LIST ABOVE, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO...

I thank you for your promptness and your support to our Wing!

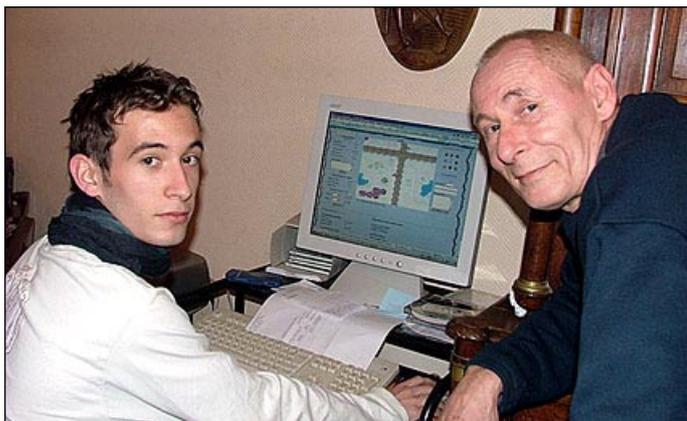
WELCOME TO CADET GUILLAUME FREZARD



Many of our members already know Guillaume Frézard since they met him during the La Ferté air show in 1999, as shown on the picture above, taken with his father, Christian Frézard. This other photograph, below, shows the same two 5 years later. They both changed a little of course, but these minor physical differences haven't altered their love for aviation and the warbirds, on the contrary!

After the return of his father, acclaimed by numerous members, here is the arrival of his son as a Commemorative Air Force and French Wing Cadet.

Let us read what he said in a sympathetic letter sent to our Leader soon after he got his new commission...



"...Effectively, I changed a little, but in all cases, my love for aviation never stopped growing since the air show in la Ferté!

So, for my life and airplanes, it is obviously hereditary... A grand-father who was a fighter pilot, then an airline pilot, and a father who is a private pilot and who did some aerobatics... necessarily, it leaves some after-effects!...

To make my dreams come true, or, rather, my dream, which is to become a fighter pilot, well, I am currently learning for my basic licence. Next year, I will get the Private Pilot Licence, and if I pass, I will learn aerobatics!

Of course, getting these licences is not indispensable to become a fighter pilot, but I believe it will be a plus. I shall already have some notions of flying.

For the moment, other than my basic licence, I am in high school learning STL Chemistry (Science and Technique of chemistry laboratory), and I wish to run for the French Air Force school next year (Baccalaureate level), but also the Air France Cadets school, even if I would prefer the Fighter School!

All this to say that the fact that I become a CAF member as a Cadet will get me closer to aviation lovers, and will allow me to know better the Warbirds that I respect for their contribution to history and their look."

Welcome to the Commemorative Air Force and to the French Wing Guillaume! We all wish you luck in your school program and we hope that your

dream of becoming a fighter pilot will soon come true.

You told us that your favorite Warbird is the Corsair (Although your Dad tried to get you to write down P-40 on your form... We wonder why???...). We will see you at the La Ferté-Alais 2005 air show!

SPIRIT OF LEWIS SPONSORS UP TO DATE FOR YEAR 2005

FLYING SPONSORS

Gilles Avenel (Pilot)
Bernard Delfino
Fumiko Delfino
Claude Gascon (Pilot)
Roger Gouzon
Irene Grinnell
Roy Grinnell
Alain Jimenez
Patrick Pierre-Pierre (Pilot)
Sandy Sansing
Société SKY RUNNER
Regis Urschler

RESTORATION SPONSORS

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"Sierra Hotel" A-26 Group
Bunty Bateman
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Stéphane Duchemin
Louis-Jean Gioux
Patrick Gremez
Barbara Hair
Aubrey Hair
Yves Houssin
Elzéard Ligneul
George Lodge
Cédric Malhaire
Guy Perrin
John Roeder

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR SANDY SANSING

Thanks for making a note of colonel Sandy Sansing's new email address:

< vsansing@satx.rr.com >

NEW POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ERIC JANSSONNE

Thanks for making a note of our friend Eric Janssonne:

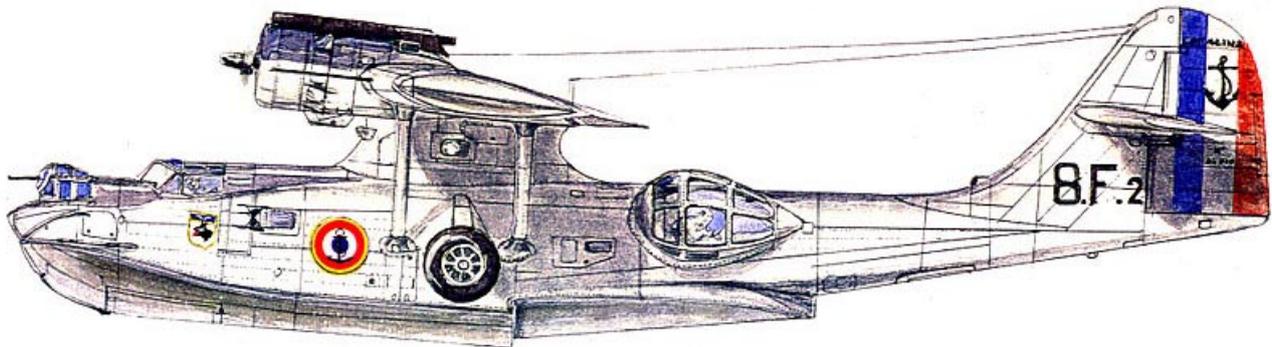
11 rue Golbery, 68000, COLMAR

Eric's phone and email are unchanged.



CONSOLIDATED PBY CATALINA

By Colonels John P. Roeder & Michel Perrin - Painting by Jean Bellis - Photos Marine Nationale



The PBY was the most built flying boat of all times. As Consolidated Model 28 it was first flown in March 1935. The first production boat was delivered to the USN in October 1936.

The PBY was an all metal, twin engine parasol monoplane with a minimum of fabric covering, taking advantage of the advanced structural design techniques developed for commercial land planes in the early 30's. The wing was mounted

on a massive pylon above the hull, which allowed bracing to be reduced to a minimum. Other notable features of the type were its well thought out two-step hull with its semi-circular cross-section, its retractable wing-tip floats and its closely spaced engines which reduced asymmetric thrust in case of engine failure.

The PBY rapidly got a reputation as a sound design with no built in vices although it was heavy on the controls. This could be disturbing when good manoeuvrability and diving were required in attack operations. The crews however learned to live with this and an alert pilot could get more out of this airplane as would generally be expected.

Admittedly the PBY was slow, but its endurance made it capable of patrol and surveillance missions of at least 17 to 18 hours or in other words it could stay on station some 7 to 8 hrs. in a search area at least 500 mls (805 km) away from base.

Carrying a reserve crew in such cases posed no problem, as there was enough room in the voluminous hull.



A crisis developed in the spring of 1938 during the Pacific War Games some 18 months after the beginning of deliveries to the Navy. During the manoeuvres ten PBYs in a squadron of 11 planes had their hulls caved when taking off in rough seas. In an exemplary cooperation between Consolidated and the Navy the problem was solved and the necessary changes made for a weight increase of only 17 pounds (7,7 kg). The modified hull gave the PBY finally the toughness required for landing on the open ocean which was largely responsible for its formidable success as a rescue plane.

Among the many derivatives of the PBY that appeared, the major production

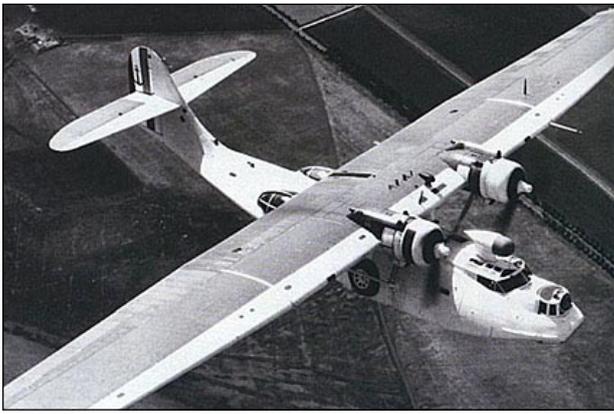
versions were the PBY-5 (684) delivered from September 1940 and the PBY-5A amphibian (803) supplied from end 1941

and with which the name Catalina was adopted. In total 2,398 Catalinas were produced by Consolidated until April 1945. A much modified version with a heightened tail was built as PBN-1 Nomad by the Naval Aircraft Factory of which 138 out of 165 delivered were supplied to Russia under Lend-Lease.

Of the similar PBY-6A (175) Russia received 48. From 1941 some 740 Catalinas of various models were also built by Canadian Vickers and Boeing Canada for the USAAF, the RCAF, the RAF, the RAAF and the RNZAF. In addition some 150 were produced in Russia as GSTs.

Beyond those already mentioned other operators of the Catalina were the air arms of Brazil, Chile, the Netherlands, Norway and France.





By far the greatest foreign user of the PBY were however the British. 656 Catalinas of various versions were supplied to the RAF from early 1941.

During WWII the PBY served all over the world, as patrol bomber, torpedo and depth charge carrier, long range reconnaissance aircraft and transport. It protected convoys and not to be underestimated its role as air-sea rescue platform. The service career of the Cat as it was nicknamed, was an outstanding one, although its exploits lacked the glamour of that of other warplanes. To pay tribute to this great plane and its crews a few examples of its achievements should be mentioned here.

On May 26th, 1941 a RAF Catalina spotted the long sought German battleship Bismarck which was the beginning of her end. On May 7th, 1945 (the last day of the war in Europe) a British Catalina was credited with what was probably the last sinking of a German U-boat.

In the Pacific on June 4th, 1942 at 0534 Catalina flight 58 from Midway after a long search sighted the Japanese invasion fleet. Its reporting resulted in further PBYs homing in, allowing a continued shadowing which was at the origin of the most decisive sea battle in history. In the initial phase of the battle of Midway all 15 torpedo planes of USS Hornets VT8 were shot down by the Japanese. The sole survivor of the squadron, Ensign George Gay, was spotted by a Catalina in his life-raft the day after the battle and rescued.



The PBYs effectiveness as a bomber and torpedo plane was demonstrated by Patrol Squadron 12, which in 1942 started night attacks on Japanese shipping in the South West Pacific. Painted in mat black the PBYs of VP12, which became known as Black Cats, sunk or damaged one ton of enemy shipping for every pound of bombs dropped. In the second month of the operation

for instance seven vessels were sunk and six damaged, a good beginning for what was to become a remarkable success story. The Black Cats enjoyed the advantage that even in clear nights they remained practically invisible for the Japanese ack-ack gunners (who had no radar at the time), while the US air crews could find and track the enemy vessels with relative ease.

France's interest in the PBY became evident already in 1937, when its purchasing commission was established in the US. 30 aircraft were ordered for the Aéronavale in early 1940, but none could be delivered due to the fall of France in the following June. The contract was taken over by the British.

A new Aéronavale of the Free French Forces under General de Gaulle was constituted in London in 1942. An agreement signed with the US foresaw the formation of two air flotillas with 15 PBYs each, targeted to work within the USN anti-submarine compound in the Atlantic. In early 1943 training of French crews was launched in Louisiana and Texas. By the end of the year the squadrons were declared fit for operations, so that their BPY-5As - now with French markings - could be prepared for the long flight to their future home base at Agadir (Morocco). From Morrison Field N.C., their last base in the US, to Agadir via the Southern ferry route required about 15 days and 7 stopovers.

Flotilla 8F was the first to arrive at Agadir in January of 1944, followed by 6F in

February. The mission of the flotillas, which were operated exclusively as land planes from Agadir consisted in covering Allied convoys in the South Atlantic and in shadowing suspicious vessels off the Canary Islands, where German U-boats used to be re-supplied.

With the coming up of the Anvil (Dragoon) landings on the Mediterranean coast of France in August of 1944 French Catalinas were to get an additional task. The 6F had been moved to Ajaccio (Corsica) in July 1944, where it was retrained in water operation and prepared for mine detection. In 48 missions the flotilla discovered 12 mine fields, which considerably helped the Allied landing forces and for which it earned a Distinguished Service Citation by the US command. Mine detection operations continued along the coast of Provence from liberated French soil for a while, after which flotilla 6F went back to its base in Morocco. In November the unit was re-equipped with Lockheed PV-1 Venturas retaining only a few Catalinas for secondary tasks. The others were transferred to flotilla 8F with maritime surveillance remaining their major task until VE-Day in May 1945 and beyond.

1945 however marked also the beginning of the Indo-China conflict between the communist led Viet-Minh and the French colonial power. Aéronavale Catalinas together with Armée de l'Air C-47s were the first aircraft to be sent to Indo-China in support of the French efforts to check the Viet-Minh forces. In October 1945 four PBY-5As of flotilla 8F arrived at Saigon, followed by eight more somewhat later. For five years they were to fly reconnaissance, close air support bombing and transport missions for the benefit of the French expeditionary corps, until they were replaced by PB4Y-2 Privateers. The PBY however lingered on in service with Aéronavale flotillas 8S, 12S, 22S and probably a few others. The last seem to have been retired from active service in 1958, but even in 1971 the type still appeared in the inventory of the Aéronavale.

Note: While it seems clear that in total 43 PBYs had been handed over to the French, these authors could find no indication in respect of procurement. Lend-Lease, donation or purchase by the French government are possibilities. Airshow would be grateful for any information its readers could provide on this subject.

DATA TABLE

PBY-5A CATALINA

Description: Patrol Bomber (amphibian) with crew of 7 - 9
 Propulsion: 2 x 1200 HP Pratt & Whitney R-1830-92
 Span: 31,7 m (104 ft)
 Gross weight: 16 066 kg (35 420 lb)
 Maximum speed: 282 km/h (175 mph)
 Cruise speed: 182 km/h (113 mph)
 Range: 3 780 km (2 350 mls)
 Service ceiling: 3 962 m (13 000 ft)
 Armament: 3 x .30 cal guns plus 2 x .50 cal guns - 4000 lb (1814 kg) of bombs, torpedoes, or depth charges.

The FW P.X.

The following articles are available against a payment by cheque to the **CAF French Wing**. (Note: **Postage is extra** unless stated otherwise).

- Official Wing patch: € 9,20.
- "Gioux" type patch: € 6,10.
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- Pins cloisonné, various: € 7.60.
- Painting "Lloyd's Dream" 50x76cm: € 40,00.
- Painting "Lloyd's Dream" 50x76cm. framed: € 55,00.
- 100 sheets of paper with your letter head: € 8,00.
- Color Photos (B17, B25, etc...) 30x45cm: € 9,00.
- T shirt Piper CUB, 170 grams, L or XL € 16,00.
- T shirt cartoon P40, 170 grams, L or XL: € 16,00.
- T shirts: Other sizes available on order.
- T shirts illustrated with the picture of your choice (Maximum size A5): Send in your picture and we will make the Tshirt of your dreams (Warning! Only send pictures that are totally free from any copyrights): € 12,00.
- Color aircraft profiles 15 x 20 cm. pre-framed: *Various*: € 4,00 each.
- Warbird cards by painter Jean Bellis: € 4,00 each.
- Video cassette of sequences filmed in Midland (55mm) VHS PAL: € 16,00 ©
- Large format paintings by Col. Eric Besançon: F4U Corsair and Messerschmitt 262 night fighter: € 31,00 ©
- Poster N°1 of WWII airplanes and N°2 of post-war era, painted by artist Jean Bellis, 61x81cm: € 9,00 (Members) € 10,00 (Non Members) ©
- Prints of the Roy Grinnell paintings - Normandie Niemen, Corsair F4U7, and B26 Marauder - Unsigned: € 40,00 + P&P € 10,00. Signed by veterans: € 60,00 + P&P € 10,00. ©
- Post Cards based on the same paintings (B26 Marauder, Corsair, and Neuneu): € 0,50 each ©
- CD Rom of 36 FSS Newsletters since January 2000, French and English, compatible PC and Macintosh, <.pdf> format readable with Adobe Acrobat Reader: € 10,00 P & P inclusive ©
- CD Rom of 200 warbird photos taken during Airsho in Midland, by B. Delfino: € 10,00 P & P inclusive ©.

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HANGAR/STEARMAN

PATRON COMPANIES SUPPORTING THE HANGAR / STEARMAN PROJECT

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THE SECRET PROJECT

As you read in the March issue of our Newsletter, the Board of Administration of the French Wing, and a few initiated rare members, had put all their energy in the preparation of a special project that was intended to help us finance the Hangar / Stearman project.

Alas, new and unexpected elements have soon shown that it would be useless to try and go forward with it.

This is why the Board of Administration has decided to cancel this project before it is too late, and to put its time and energy into the success of other targets.

We apologize to our members for giving them some false hopes. Life is made of this. And, after all, if everything was a straightforward success, it would be very monotonous!

The experience we acquired during the preparation of this project will remain as a valuable one, and it will help us enormously in our future projects.

Fortunately, we have many other exciting projects which are on the right tracks: Recruiting new Colonels, the air show season, the flights with our *Spirit of Lewis*, our participation to Airsho' 2005 in Midland, the art display of Roy Grinnell's paintings in the Aéroclub de France during May, our Web Site, etc...

