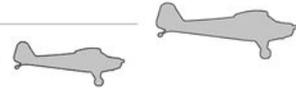




AIRSHOW



CAF FRENCH WING - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - BULLETIN MENSUEL

Volume 13 - N° 5 - May 2008

EDITORIAL

The arrival of Christine Melkonian in our Association shows, if it was needed, the prime importance that women occupy in the French Wing. That's why I had an idea of writing a (too) short article about the women who took on jobs that they weren't destined to, during WWII, those who quickly became known as "Rosie the Riveter" in the press campaign that was triggered shortly after Pearl Harbor. This phenomenon played a great part in the emancipation of the American women, since, once peace was back, the percentage of working women never went down to the level it was during the pre-war period.

Therefore, we have the immense pleasure to welcome Christine Melkonian, who is the sixteenth woman to join our group. So, the French Wing, also has it's team of Rosie the Riveter's who do not hesitate to help whenever they can. Welcome Christine!

Colonel Louis-Jean Gioux will surprize you probably as much as he surprized me when he sent in his splendid article about a "sub-marine" B-26! I had to change the whole arrangement of this issue to give it the room it deserved. I hope that you will appreciate the excellent work produced by the indefatigable colonel Gioux.

Finally, I hope that you will also like the adventure sent by the inexhaustible Michel Couthures. It shows another aspect about the life of the Aéronavale pilots, far too unknown by the general public, and even by the aviation lovers. Their life wasn't easy and included very big risks. Thanks to Michel, they are now recognized.

Do I need to say that volunteers will be welcome at the Plessis-Bellville hangar or in the Villepinte workshop? There is much work to be done yet. And if you can't participate for various reasons, you can still help by recruiting, by becoming a Sponsor of the Spirit of Lewis, by donating some money to our projects, and by sending your annual dues in due time. Thank you in advance!

Bernard



NEW FRIEND OF THE FRENCH WING: CHRISTINE MELKONIAN

(Page 2)

THE FLYING TIGERS ARE MOURNING: JOHN RICHARD "DICK" ROSSI PASSED AWAY ON APRIL 17, 2008



ROSIE THE RIVETER STORY OF THE 6 MILLIONS AMERICAN WOMEN WHO REPLACED THE MEN WHO WENT AWAY FOR FIGHTING

(Page 4)



THE SANKED B-26 COLONEL LOUIS-JEAN GIOUX TELLS US THE AMAZING ODYSSEY OF THE MARTIN B-26 MARAUDER

N° 42-96305 (Pages 4 & 5)

DIEN BIEN PHU MICHEL COUTHURES TELLS US ANOTHER WAR STORY ABOUT THE AÉRONAVALÉ GRUMMAN HELLCAT DURING THE DRAMATIC BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU



YESTERDAY SPONSORS (OR BEFORE!...) THE "SPIRIT OF LEWIS" NEEDS YOU! (Page 11)

CHRISTINE MELKONIAN NEW FRIEND OF THE FRENCH WING

Many already know Christine because she took part in various French Wing meetings and events.



Christine worked for Swissair for 21 years, and it is thanks to her former colleagues, and in particular col Michel Fleury, that she heard about the existence of our Association. The friendly feeling and the dynamism that she found within our Unit, gave her the idea of becoming a friend and it is now true.

As Christine says, she is not an aviation expert, but she is willing to learn. Let us bet that this "learning phase" will be greatly helped by her extreme kindness. Need a proof?... Christine already thinks that the P-40 is the most beautiful warbird of all times!

Welcome aboard Christine!

Christine Melkonian
39 Rue du Maréchal Foch
91700 Sainte Geneviève des Bois
France

Tél : 01 69 51 46 80

Mobile : 06 60 59 38 61

Email: christinemelkonian@hotmail.com

PARTICIPATION TO THE 2008 EVENTS

If you intend to take part in one or more events, the list of which can be found on page 11 of this Newsletter, you need to advise us as soon as possible, specifying if you wish to get there by personal transport or if you wish to fly our plane. We also need to know if you intend to help with the set up of our PX tent. Thanks in advance!

JOHN RICHARD "DICK" ROSSI PASSED AWAY ON 17 APRIL, 2008



Dick Rossi, a Flying Tigers Ace, has passed away on April 17. Dick was one of the last pilots to arrive in China. He got 6,3 victories, and, when the AVG were transferred to the regular forces, in 1942, he joined CNAC and flew transport planes over the Hump to

QUIZ QUIZ QUIZ QUIZ QUIZ

When Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the President of the USA, visited the Tuskegee Airmen when they had not received any posting, she asked to fly with one of these pilots, which was done immediately during a flight that lasted thirty minutes.

Do you know the exact type of the plane she flew aboard?...

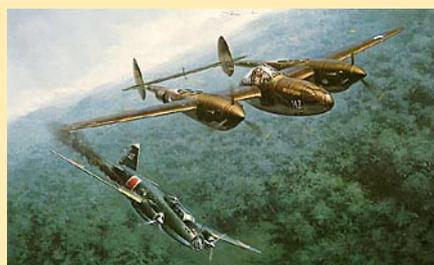
Answer on page 11

supply China during almost 750 very dangerous missions (Probably a record). He was the President of the *Flying Tigers Association* for many years.

THE "ATTACK ON YAMAMOTO!" DVD IS OUT!

Those who had the privilege to preview this documentary made by our friend col Matt Symek, during their stay in Midland for AIRSHO 2007, know the extraordinary quality of this video which tells the story of the attack, by sixteen P-38 *Lightning* of the 339th Fighter Squadron, on Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's aircraft while he was inspecting various bases.

Having left from Guadalcanal, and after a flight of more than 435 miles at 50 feet above sea level so that they wouldn't be spotted by the enemy, the P-38



Peinture: Roy Grinnell

were led by commander John W. Mitchell whose navigation was so precise that they arrived over Bougainville at the exact moment when the two *Betty* of Yamamoto and his officers appeared. Pilot Rex T. Barber is the



Isoroku Yamamoto

one who shot down Yamamoto, a loss that was crucial for Japan and the USA since the war was shortened by several months.

This documentary is only in English, but it is easy to follow. It is the best and the most faithful that we have ever seen about that raid. Exact in the most minute details, it includes several interviews of those who took part in this raid. The aerial combats are represented using animation that show exactly what took place on this 18 April 1943-. Technically perfect in its form, it is also perfect in its essence. The commentaries are precise, and the quality of the pictures is only equalled by the sound. A real Master-Piece!



Rex T. Barber

To order this DVD, send a 15€ check to the CAF French Wing (20€ for non-members).

Members of the French Wing who reside in the USA may order it through Pacific Vista Publishing, LLC, PO Box 220, Newberg, OR 97132-0220, or on the web site www.pacificvistapublishing.com specifying that they are French Wing members so that they get a rebate on the normal price of \$ 24.95 (Plus \$ 4.00 S&H).

CAF FRENCH WING ANNUAL DUES - YEAR 2008 -2009

We ask all our members who haven't paid their dues to do it as soon as possible, since the limit date is April 30. Those who have done so are:

Jim Adams, Gilles Avenel, Lil Ayars, Bunty Bateman, Henri Bourrassier, Meril Butikofer, Didier Cardinal, Jean-Yves Cercy, Jacqueline Clerc, Daniel Costelle, William Davies, Jean-Christophe Debuissou, Bernard & Fumiko Delfino, Stéphane Duchemin, Danielle Dufлот, Ken Fields, Michel Fleury, Marcel Francisci, Maurice Girard, Louis-Jean Gioux, Roy & Irene Grinnell, Aubrey & Barbara Hair, Yves Houssin, Rick & Louise Hudlow, Jean-Luc Jentel, Marie-Françoise Le Cornec, David Ledrich, Jacques Leroux, Isabelle Lesser, George Lodge, Jim Lux, Léon Manoukians, Georges Marcelin, Christine Melkonian, Christian Monier, Kim Pardon, Guy Perrin, Patrick Pierre-Pierre, Hervé Quefféléant, John Roeder, Sandy Sansing, Haruo Tanaka, Emmanuel Tonarelli, Christian Tournemine, Gilles Troussard, Regis Urschler, Stella Wilkes, et Ron Wright.

Thank you for sending your cheques in euros to the French Wing in Aulnay sous Bois. Cheques in Dollars need to be sent to Roy & Irene Grinnell and drawn to their name.

THANK YOU !

- Thanks to col **Roger Gouzon** who, working day after working day in Le Plessis-Belleville, works hard and donates various materials for the maintenance of our aircraft: Paint, tools, metal, crews, etc... Such dedication and enthusiasm are simply exceptional. Thanks Roger!
- Thanks to col **Jean-Yves Cercy** who spends all his available days at the hangar to help the annual checks of our planes. An Air France Airbus 320 pilot, he's not afraid of getting his hands dirty and accomplish the most difficult and off-putting tasks. Thanks Jean-Yves!
- Thanks to col **Patrick Pierre-Pierre** who did not hesitate to come from La Rochelle, the town where he resides, and spend a full week working hard on the aircraft annual checks. Thanks Patrick!

• Thanks to col **Fumiko Delfino** who did not hesitate to confront herself with the very low temperatures to help with the annual checks. Since the replacement of the pistons and cylinders on the Piper Cub engine she accomplished in August 2006, Fumiko helps with the practical work as much as she can. Thanks Fumiko!

• Thanks to our friend **Guy Perrin** for participating very actively to the aircraft maintenance!

• Thanks to col **Georges Marcelin** for having paid his dues and renewed his Restoration Sponsorship!

• Thanks to cols **Ron Wright, Henri Bourrassier, Stéphane Duchemin, and George Chandler** for renewing their Supporting Sponsorship! The *Spirit of Lewis* was very pleased!

CAF AWARDS

Time flies, and you have a little over two months for requesting the granting of a CAF Award for the person(s) that you think deserve one.

The criteria are simple: Each nominated person, CAF member or non-CAF member, will need to have done some really extraordinary work for the benefit of the CAF and its Units, be it spontaneous, of short length, or over some time. This work

THE NEW CAF ANNUAL DUES

As everyone knows today, and since March 1st, the CAF annual dues have changed. Here is a summary:

- **Colonel:** \$ 200.00 (About 145 €).
- **Life Member (Membre à vie):** \$ 2400.00 (About 1700 €), may be paid in one single payment or 12 monthly payments of \$ 200.00.
- **Cadet:** \$ 45.00 (About 32,00 €).
- **Supporting Member, formerly Associate Member (Membre Bienfaiteur):** \$ 55.00 (About 40 €).

Note: These prices include the subscription to the CAF monthly bulletin, Dispatch).

must be way above what one normally expects from a CAF member.

Write to the CAF Awards Committee at the usual CAF address:

Commemorative Air Force Inc.
CAF Awards Committee
PO box 62000

THE LATEST PRODUCTION BY ROY GRINNELL

Roy is in a P-38 "period" as shown by the painting below, dedicated to Ace **Jim Morris** and titled "*One for my Dad*". Alas, Jim Morris passed away during the month of April. He left without seeing this splendid painting that Roy made with all his know-how and sensitivity. Simply beautiful!



ROSIE THE RIVETER

Article: Bernard Delfino - Photos: Library of Congress.

Everyone knows to which extend the attack on Pearl Harbor found the USA unprepared for a huge conflict like WWII.

It did not take long for a reaction to take place, and the legendary American people's patriotism created a national momentum for the defence of freedom like no one had seen before. Men enlisted by tens of thousands, which left the manufacturers short handed.

A campaign was started to ask the women to replace the men who had left for fighting: "*The more women will be at work, the sooner we will win*", such was one of the efficient slogans which appeared during this campaign.

All disciplines were concerned:

Road work, armament manufacturing, naval construction, manufacture of automobiles, aircraft manufacturers, etc... All jobs were available, and the result was simply outstanding: The number of workers was multiplied by two, the racial barriers collapsed, and those who had lost their job during the great depression found a new one, often very well paid.

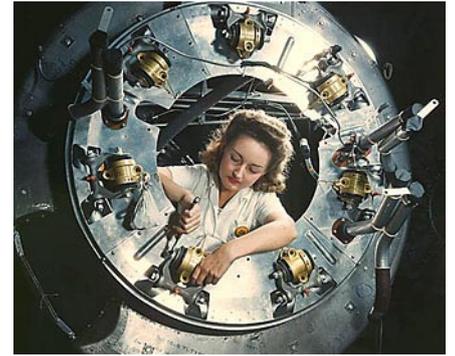
The term *Rosie the Riveter* appeared for the first time in a 1942 song. Actor

Walter Pidgeon met, during a visit of the Ford Motor Company production line, one of those workers, **Rose Will Monroe**, and, on his recommendation, she became a symbol by appearing in a government propaganda movie. Another authentic Rosie, **Rose Hicker**, who worked for the **Eastern Aircraft Company** appeared in the Press when her and her team broke a record by riveting the wings of an Avenger.

Everywhere one could read genuine stories of *Rosies* and their exploits. But as time went by and the end of the war becoming evident, their future became a real problem because the government itself was insisting on the fact that, once the war over, they were expected

to return to their home. It is generally what happened, but the imprint left during their stay in the industry was indelible.

Rosie the Riveter had allowed the women's emancipation to take place in the American community, to such a point that the number of working women never dropped to the level it was at during the pre-war period, an effect that still can be felt today.



B-26 N° 42-96305 ODYSSEY

Article: Col Louis-Jean Gioux - Photos: Aero-Relic.

Since 1945, space over the Mediterranean sea, stopped being the exclusive domain of the belligerent air forces. Murderous combats gave way to civilian planes that transport people to sun shine a dream beaches.

The damages caused by the war faded away, and memories are the only thing remaining, memories that some people are trying to revive through the search for the remains of aircraft that fell on the ground or at sea, thus, trying to recollect the details of these missions and eventually find some crew members who are still alive.

This wasn't the intention of **Raymond Perez** who was scuba diving down to a depth of about 200 feet, some distance away from the coast of Bastia (Corsica), on June 21, 1982, when he spotted the airframe of a bomber. No, he is a specialist collecting sea coral for the corsican jewellers and their customers. However, he spoke about this big wreck, its position, its state, so much that 10 years later, in February 1992, **Joël Petit**, a member of diving club **Aéro-Relic**, an anaesthetist fond of aviation, private pilot and parachutist, as well as an amateur diver, hear from one of his friends who deal with sea coral, about this sank airplane.

The description and its dimensions make him hope it could be a Martin B-26 *Marauder* that, at the age of 12, he made a model of. What a shock, and how interested he becomes in that search!

But before organizing some dives, he collects as much information as he can so that he can memorize a picture of the aircraft inside structure. In a magazine published by Editions Heimdal a long article about the *Marauder*. At the beginning of June 1992, he contacts the editor of the magazine, **George Bernage**, who advises him to contact his father, **Jean-Marie Bernage**, a former member of the *Marauder* crewmen who flew this type of plane since 1944. Jean-Marie Bernage sent some drawings and blue prints that highlighted the dangerous places and the position of the identification plates of the aircraft.

The telephone was used a lot at that time, between the various actors of this



fascinating adventure. **Jacques Debras**, President of the *French Maraudermen Association* was contacted. He, in turn, con-

tacted **John Chatel**, first french member of the then Confederate Air Force, based in Harlingen (Texas). **Hugh H. Walker**, Vice-President of the *B-26 Historical Society* in Austin (Texas), was told about this discovery by Jacques Debras, as well as some other former crew men of the French B-26.

Because it is now sure that it's a B-26 *Marauder*! During his 12 dives, Joël Petit finds the wreck, all the major points highlighted in the documents written by Jean-Marie Bernage, and those quoted by the former *Marauder* crew men. He takes many pictures and films. Here is the flight deck, with, on the right, the co-pilot half-wheel, the cockpit, the left engine with its four bladed propeller stuck deep into the sand. These are part of a *Marauder*, a statement confirmed by the shape of the tail and the vertical fin.

The French *Maraudermen* get some hope: Could that be the plane flown by colonel **Robinson** who disappeared at sea on October 4, 1944, with adjutant-**Branche** and Sargent **Essau**, during a liaison flight between Istres (France) and Villacidro (Sardinia). Nothing was heard about them since... Colonel Robinson was, in 1943-1944, the american instructor for the french crews trained on the B-26 at Tèlergma (Algeria), particularly liked by those who approached him.

The search had to go on in order to bring some proofs. Joël Petit increased the number of his dives. One day, he brought up some guns that were covered with rust and sea shells, thanks to 100 litres air balloons. Everyone worked hard to clean the weapons and print the pictures. The pieces of metal started to look like guns: These are effectively .50 guns from the Bell turret. But now we must go back down and find the identification plates. The great number of dives is explained by the difficulty in moving about at that depth of 200 feet, and the need to come back up in stages which are mandatory for the safety of the divers.

In July 1992, Jacques Debras received a reply from **Robert B. Mynn**, the English correspondent of the B-26 Historical Society, indicating that the wreck should be the one of a *Marauder* that belonged to the 37th BGM of the 12th Air Force, based



in Villacidro (Sardinia), which, coming back from a mission over the bridge of La Spezia (Italy), had been hit by Italian flak, and whose crew had bailed out, and was picked up by a British torpedo boat.

However, this possibility cannot be right. Joël Petit found some parachutes in the sank B-26. Therefore, its crew did not bail out. The plane, for sure, ditched at sea, and those who flew it know that a Marauder cannot stay afloat more than 50 seconds before sinking.

After August 15, Joël Petit finds the registration plate, which allows John Chatel, through the CAF, to confirm that the Unit the B-26 belonged to, and to contact its pilot **V. W. Krug** - still alive - to advise him of this event. One can understand his emotion. He replies with a letter that says the following:

"After ferrying a Marauder from the USA to Algeria, via New found Land, Greenland, Iceland, England, and Morocco, I was posted to Djedeida (Near Tunis), base of the 37th Squadron. In November 1943, the 37th Squadron operated from Villacidro".

On July 12, 1944, at about 7:05, V. W. Krug and his crew composed of, that day, S/Lt **A. G. Sainer** (co-pilot), S/Lt **V. Z. Walkodoff** (navigator), S/Lt **R. A. Wilcox** (bombardier), Sgt **S. Davis** (gunner), Sgt **W. L. Pike** (radio), et Sgt **J. N. Cloutier** (mechanic and tail gunner), take off to bomb communication roads in Piacenza (Italy). Position: Leader of the formation. The mission is a success, with some moderate but precise flak. The plane is hit as it leaves the Italian coast at La Spezia. The pilot is forced to shut down number one engine because of a drop in oil pressure, and

to leave the formation to try and reach Bastia, the nearest airfield. At 3000 feet, he revs up engine number 2 but soon its oil pressure falls to zero. He has to ditch the aircraft. The sea appears to be calm. V. W. Krug contacts Bastia by radio, the rescue boat, and he spots, at 20 miles from the coast, the trail of a fast boat. He flies towards it and the crew take their crash positions. The plane lands and immediately fills with water. The crew gets out, but S/Lt **R. A. Wilcox**, injured, has to be assisted by V. W. Krug and **W. L. Pike**. In less than 5 minutes, the entire crew is sitting before a hot cup of tea, on its way to Bastia. (It should be noted that the boat that saved them is a Royal Navy PT Boat armed with torpedoes, which was patrolling the area, and not the Rescue Boat that was called by radio).

R. A. Wilcox, the bomber, injured, was sent back to the USA. For him, the war



was over. V.W. Krug and his crew went back to combat. As for the Marauder, in a few moments, it sank and was forgotten.

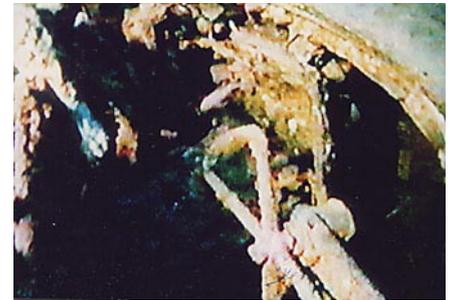
On September 17, 1944, the Squadron left Villacidro to be based in Bastia. In October 1944, V. W. Krug's tour of operation was completed, and he went back to the USA. His military career over, he became a farmer in Ocala (Florida).

This exciting enquiry was smoothly completed thanks to the chain of mutual help which spontaneously took shape between friends and aviators from France, USA, and England.

To conclude this adventure, Marauder B-26 n° 42-96305 identification plate had to be given to its pilot V. W. Krug.

Jacques Debras, on May 24, 1993, took the opportunity of a commemorative ceremony which took place at Vulpillières (Somme), and included aviation veterans of the 39th Bomb Group stationed during WWII on the airfield of Roye-Amy. He was able to give Commander **Claire I. Wilson**, this valuable plaque, and asked him to give it to the pilot V. W. Krug, as well as a piece of coral picked up on his plane. The Commander, very moved, heartily accepted this task and took these items back with him. Therefore, the story of Marauder S/N 42-96305, ended in Ocala (Florida).

As for all crews of the mythical Marauder, whether they are French, American, or British, they lived through a period which was sometimes dangerous, but so captivating and unforgettable!



STRONG THESE ENGINES!...

Article & photos: Capitaine de Vaisseau Michel Couthures

This took place early in April 1954. The battle of Dien-Bien-Phù had become very tough. The Viets, occupying the surrounding hills with their well camouflaged guns, were shooting at the camp, at the key positions which were supposed to protect it, and at the runway which had become practically unusable. To complete this portrait, one must add the numerous mobile flak guns. A flak that was irascible, angry, sometimes very dense, and often far too accurate, especially for airplanes and helicopters which dangerously attempted to evacuate the wounded soldiers that the local hospital could not take care of as well as expected. The number of victims of shells, bullets of any calibre, and grenades, and the seriousness of their wounds, were far too much for the underground hospital which lacked space and medical means. For the valid soldiers too, the supplies and reserves were now coming in more and more sporadically.



The deck of the Arromanches

The Aéronavale Flotillas 3.F and 11.F, had left their natural base, the aircraft carrier Arromanches whose radio code-name was Sapho.

The 3.F and its Helldiver had been welcomed by the Air Force on the base of Hanoi-Bach-Mai, while the 11.F and its Hellcat were based at Hai-Phong-Cat-Bi. That way, some precious minutes were saved on the time spent flying from the Arromanches to the target areas, and the ammunition left after a raid could be used for the support of Dien, around the camp, or on the supply roads used by the Viets. One must also say that the base runways had a lot less risks than the aircraft carrier landings, especially in bad weather. The

latter was often unfavorable for aviation activities: Fog and rain reduced visibility, as well as the low clouds which capped the top of the hills.

Apart from the Delta, the hilly scenery, covered with thick vegetation gave very little chances for a successful forced landing, and the rare zones that were accessible, were, for sure, inhabited by some "welcome committees" whose attitude was far from sympathetic, as we had been warned.

If my memory is correct, it was April 6.



Briefing by Commandant Decastelbajac before a mission.

Four Hellcat of the 11.F took off from Cat-Bi to "tickle" the Viet's artillery sitting on the hills that surround the valley of Dien with bombs, and then to "spray" the zones around the harassed key positions with their .50 calibre machine-guns.

The weather, for a change, is not too bad. The trip to the target area is flown at high altitude and directly. It's urgent, and high up one runs less risks to be beaten by the flak. If the "serious" flak of 37 and 40 millimetres calibre is concentrated around Dien, one must not neglect the machine-gun positions which were mobile and disseminated on the hills that overlook the supply roads leading to the camp.

The four planes, in two sections and loose formation cover each other visually. The engines run smoothly, and soon these Hellcat will make their "meowing" evident: This whistling which is so special during their dives, a demoralizing sound as anyone knows.

Serge, also known as *Popoff*, and his operational code name *Eros* (Because of the 7 officers of the 11.F, he is the only one married, and, therefore, the only one to justify this legendary name), wing man of the flight leader, checks once more the indications of his instruments like pressures and temperatures.

A quick glance outside to keep his position as a wing man, a look all around for safety. He is still followed by the other two planes.

They fly over Son-La. On the right, one can see Tuan-Giao, a bad area where our planes are not welcome. In front, the tip of the hills that surround Dien from the East.

Before they reach the hills, the leader calls Torri-Red, the Air checkpoint of the camp:



The Arromanches at the end of the fifties.

- Torri-Red, Savart Blue Leader calling, *bonjour!* 4 planes, your orders?...
 - Savart Blue, hello! Go to the East hill tops to treat, as far as possible, the artillery positions.
 - Blue leader, roger! The Blues: In line for the attack, every one chooses his target according to the smoke. Got that?
 - Blue 2 here, roger. Blue 3, Blue 4, OK!

And Ulysse while announcing "Tallyho!", starts a 30 degrees dive.

Eros dives behind him, trying to spot the first bomb. OK! Seen it! And he aims at another area from which more smoke has just come out. At the right height, he triggers the switch located at the tip of the control stick. A slight jerk. The bomb's dropped. Quick! Up again!

The two other Savart have dived behind him, and Ulysse dives again for another pass, aiming at other suspected places hiding some guns.



On a bombing mission over Vietnam.

Eros dives as his leader has already pulled up. Some small flames come out of the forest. *Hello? They're shooting!* Some small smoke trails that seem to rush towards him: The flak.

Bullets fly-by on his left and on his right. It's time to drop the second bomb and climb!

A glance at his instruments. All is OK. The four planes stay in line with plenty of space between them.

- Torri! Blue leader here, bombs dropped, do you have a target for our airborne weapons?
 - Oh...yes replies Torri. Go to Anne-Marie (Key point on the NorthEast) which is being harassed, strafe the North and East sides.
 - Roger that! The Savart, let's



Hanging a 256 pounds bomb under the wing of a Hellcat.

go! Attack from West to East on the North side, then from South to North on the East side... 2, 3, 4, acknowledge!

- Roger, reply 2, 3, and 4.

A few moments to reach a starting point West of the runway.

With the sun in our back, we will be able to see, and the flak will have the sunlight in their eyes, Eros thinks...

- Ulysse here, I'm starting my dive!

Eros can see his leader turn while diving. A few seconds and the smoke from the wings shows that the four machine-guns are working, and he dives behind him.

Four machine-guns at a time, out of the 6 that are available. This use of four guns in turns reduces the ammunition used and the heating of the weapons, especially in hot weather conditions. Using that procedure, one avoids the risks of self-igniting of the ammunition: When it overheats, the powder inside the cartridge self-ignites, the same way as if the pilot had pressed the trigger. The bullet, or



A Hellcat is catapulted.

the shell, depending on the weapon used, may then hit a friendly airplane, or, at worst, may cause a malfunction of the gun.

Two, three, four passes are flown. After the fourth one, as he climbs away, Eros notices some greasy black drops spreading over the windscreen. Their number increases. An engine oil pipe broken? But where?... Pressures and temperatures to be monitored closely, but for the moment, he takes the direction towards the East, towards the Delta, and announces:

- Eros here, oil on the windscreen, I'm heading East and climbing.

- O.K. replies Ulysse, we follow you!

- Savart Blue, Torri here. I got that. You are free to go, have a safe trip, and thank you for your precious help.

Eros doesn't dare touching the throttle lever and looks closely at the temperature and pressure of the engine oil which lubricates the moving parts of the engine, as well as the temperature of the cylinders: 243° C not to be exceeded... normally!

Any brutal cooling could cause the engine to seize, while any over-heating would cause the engine to fail. A crucial choice!

The windscreen is covered with oil and the latter now runs along the convex side windows on the left and on the right. It smells hot. How long will it run for?...

The temperature of the cylinders is going up. Eros gets ready, in case the engine stops: A crash landing? There are only a few places where he could do

that, and the only possible ones are at the bottom of valleys, near the roads used by the enemy. Bail out? Vegetation is very dense... Dilemma...

Wait and see! As long as the engine runs, he can reach the Delta.

It is now overheating: Temperatures have reached their top limits, and the oil pressure is down to zero.

Eros doesn't touch the throttle lever, and even closes the cooling louvres which normally help cooling the engine when they're open.

He doesn't climb where the temperature is cooler, and doesn't go down in case he needs to jump.

And the engine keeps on running!... These radial engines, made in the USA, are really strong!



Planes are brought up to the deck

The three other planes follow closely in order to cover his crash landing or his bailing out.

In these conditions the way home seems to be very slow, as slow as the minutes that tick away. The Delta approaches. Eros can see the top of the last hills. After them, and until Cat-Bi (Hai-Phong), it's only rice paddies, but also some friendly positions: Safety. The engine may stop at any time.



The Arromanches in the Bay of Along.

Eros doesn't wish to bail out of his sturdy airplane. Several pilots crash-landed before, and they came out all right of it. The parachute is still made of silk, and it's very old... So, as long as the engine runs...

He's now approaching Cat-Bi. One can see the runway. The air traffic control which have been advised, gives priority to the stricken aircraft.

The problem is far from simple: How can he reach the runway without changing the engine RPM's and still get the gear and flaps down?

A long approach and a smooth descent. Eros lowers the gear which slows the plane down a little. Air speed is a little high. Temptation to reduce power is

great: No! Don't touch it! He lowers the flaps a little to slow down a bit more and avoid hitting the runway too hard and run the risk of rebounding which would be a catastrophe since there is no question of going around again.

The windscreen is covered with oil and visibility is impaired. He still manages to see the runway and adjust his approach. Here's the runway. The

wheels touch down. Eros reduces the power... Phew! The engine gets solid under the effect of the cooling. The pistons melted with the cylinders!... The plane rolls down the runway, followed by the fire truck and the ambulance.

They won't be used this time.

How nice can a runway look! Eros thinks. He got hot but also felt cold sweat running down his neck. Succeeding to land in such conditions is a real exploit! Had his choice been the aircraft carrier, it's quite probable that he wouldn't have reached it since, above the water, the air is a lot cooler.

After the engine was changed, the plane flew again.

As for the reason for the oil leak, it was a simple 0.50 calibre bullet which cut the pipe that feeds the engine moving parts of the engine with oil. As the pressure kept on, the oil was thrown out of the engine. Didn't I tell you that the flak was irascible and often accurate?...

The bullet hit head on, at the bottom of the engine case. Fortunately, it didn't hit the engine pinion gears!

Eros, was, at that time, the only pilot of flotilla 11.F to be married, hence his code name, but, above all, he was Second-Maitre Pilot Serge Andries, nicknamed *Popoff* by his comrades.

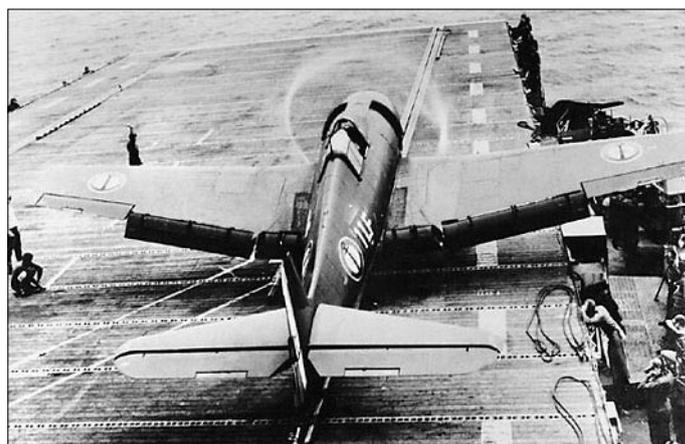
When I decided to write this adventure, my intention was to ask him to check my text and correct anything that he might consider wrong or not complete.

Unfortunately, destiny decided otherwise: *Popoff* went West on January 02, 2006...

I hope he won't be too mad at me for telling this story to those who don't know it, and reminding those who had forgotten it.

The airplane was Hellcat 11.F.31 which had suffered other aggression from the flak, but which, so far, had been able to bring his pilot back home. This is why it was the subject of a citation, and, before the flotilla's personnel, received a *Croix de Guerre* distinction.

As I was suspended from flying due to medical reasons, and "forgotten" on the carrier, I was sorry to miss these memorable moments.



Hellcat on the catapult.

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

SPIRIT OF LEWIS

As one can see on the photo on the left, the Piper Cub is almost ready for the renewal of its Certificate of Airworthiness. All is left to do is the polishing of its windows. We have the tools! All we need to find is several members to do this delicate job...

NC 856 NORVIGIE

Thanks to cols **Jean-Yves Cercy**, **Bernard and Fumiko Delfino**, **Roger Gouzou** (*Below*), **Guy Perrin**, and **Patrick Pierre-Pierre** (*Bottom picture*), this task is progressing well, but, as usual, time and volunteers are the hardest to find materials!



The photo of the NC (Bottom right), shows the plane after two days of various disassembly for the cleaning and checking of its components. The bird has lost a few feathers!

The photo just above shows the engine and propeller after Roger had taken care of them with his brushes. One must admit that it does look better!

Not a complete overhaul, this 250 hours check is, nevertheless, quite a thorough one, and it calls for a lot of work and care.

The biggest problem we had met in the past was the ignition, which forced us to re-do the ignition harness completely, to



get the coils re-wired, and to change the capacitors and the plugs. The last engine run proved to be positive and concluded a long period of investigation and hard work.

Then, the age of the flexible pipes, but above all, their connectors, called for their replacement with PTFE hoses fitted with modern and safe connectors. That wasn't easy, but thanks to a capable specialist, mister **Ferada** of **Cintrage Equipement** in Villers sous Saint Leu, it was done during April.

One must admit that the design of the connectors chosen by those who created this plane, was simply what could be the most dangerous! Today, as far as possible, one adopts crimping of the end fittings, or really positive connectors. The engineers who designed the NC 856 obviously did not have the same idea with the end result that existed a definite risk of fire with a gasoline leak over the hot parts of the engine, or the simple and complete loss of oil, and, therefore, the loss of the engine lubrication!... What seemed acceptable in 1953 is, today, a complete non-sense. We did suffer a gasoline leak located just above the exhaust pipes - fortunately detected during a ground engine run - and two oil leaks! Therefore, it is with great relief that we were able to adopt fittings which are modern and a lot more positive. We took this opportunity to change the hose for PTFE ones which are approved for life. The other problems that

we met were limited to the replacement of parts that wear out normally. They were sometimes hard to find, changed for more modern equivalent parts, or made to measure. We corrected repairs that had been done far too quickly and which did not respect the basics of aviation engineering, and we made a note of minor, less urgent problems, that will be taken care of at a later date. We also took this opportunity to change some parts of the electrical wiring like the radio power line, and the navigation lights which had a wire cut off in the rear of the airplane.

Again, a big Thank You to those who took part in this periodical and mandatory maintenance of the Piper Cub and the NC 856. Their help was greatly appreciated!

And now, let's make room for the Rearwin!



OPERATIONS

2008 OPERATIONS

The list of air shows and events that the French Wing will attend this year has been established as follows...

(Note that the green dots are confirmed events, and the orange dots are the ones to be confirmed):

- **La Ferté-Alais 30 May to June 1st:** Annual Air Show (With the Piper Cub and the PX).
- **Albert Bray 6 & 7 June:** Air Show (With PX).
- **Moret sur Loing 13 to 15 June:** Weekend Piper Club France (Local flights La Ferté-Alais, Moret sur Loing, Nangis, Moret sur Loing). No PX.
- **Cambrai Niergnies 21 & 22 June:** Piper Cub Fly-in (With the PX).
- **Le Plessis-Belleville 5 & 6 July:** French Wing Fly-in (With the PX).
- **Avord 12 & 13 July:** Meeting National de l'Air (J-3 without the PX).
- **Raid "Far West" with the Piper Cub 19 till 28 August:** Le Plessis-Belleville - Dax - Saint Girons, and back, with local flights along the raid.
- **Saint Quentin 6 & 7 September:** Air Show (With the PX).
- **Meaux 13 & 14 September:** Fly-in and static display (With the PX).

Potential pilots and passengers for all these flights are requested to make themselves known to cols. Patrick Pierre-Pierre and Bernard Delfino, giving them your detailed preferences and trips.

PIPER CLUB FRANCE G.A.

The very bad weather that stopped any flying on April 5, 2008, added to the amount of work we had to carry out on our planes, forced us to cancel our participation to this Annual General Assembly in La Ferté-Alais. We apologized to its President, mister **Guy Fourdrain** who understood the situation and who must have felt very lonely, because we weren't the only ones to take this decision...

A NEW TENT FOR THE FRENCH WING

The Board of Administration decided to change the PX tent for a more sophisticated and a more sturdy one, and, above all, of the folding type which can be set up and folded a lot easier than the previous one. Of course, this decision has a fairly high cost, but it will facilitate the task of the volunteers who take part in this activity.

This tent is smaller than the previous one (9' x 14', instead of 9' x 20'), but it is well adapted to this activity. The only difference is that our members will not be able to stay in it and rest, because the available space will need to be exclusively reserved for the "actors" of the PX. Should you need to take a rest during the day, you are welcome to do so at the back of the tent where the van will also be at your service.

The old tent, whose state needs a bit of attention, will find a new use as a sand-blasting and painting booth for the maintenance of our aircraft.

THE FRENCH WING PIPER CUB SPONSORING SYSTEM

The annual premiums and cost per hour are split as follows:

- **Flying Sponsors:** 250 Euros per year and 25 Euros per hour (Average cost per hour, over 10 hours: 50,00 €).
- **Restoration Sponsors:** 125 Euros and 40 Euros per hour (Average cost per hour, over 10 hours: 52,50 €).
- **Supporting Sponsors:** 50 Euros and 55 Euros per hour (Average cost per hour, over 10 hours: 60,00 €).
- **Non-Sponsors:** No annual premium and 80 Euros per hour.

This system, which is based on 50 flight hours for the whole year, asks for a sufficient number of Sponsors to cover the annual fixed costs of \$6800.00.

QUESTION: Can you buy your own Piper Cub and pay all the expenses related to such an ownership?... No?... Well, for a modest amount of money, you can have the pleasure to fly as much as you want on a legendary J-3, without the worries inherent to such an ownership. How?...

BECOME A SPONSOR!



Peinture: Roy Grinnell

2008 SPONSORS

Other members have renewed their support to the *Spirit of Lewis* since last month: **George Chandler, Stéphane Duchemin, Georges Marcelin, and Ron Wright**. Thanks to them, we now need to find 300 euros to insure the budget of the fixed costs, which, of course, is not a limit! We thank our members to become a Sponsor or to renew their sponsorship as soon as possible.



ELEANOR ROOSEVELT FLIGHT

Yes! It was aboard a Piper J-3 Cub that she took a flight with Chief **Alfred Anderson** at the controls, as the photo on the left shows.

Following her visit, everything went back to square, and the **Tuskegee Airmen** were soon operational.

FRENCH WING P.X.

The following articles are available with a payment by cheque to the CAF French Wing. (+ P & P).

- Wing patch: € 9,00.
- Norvigue patch: € 6,00.
- French Wing pin: € 10,00.
- Various pins "cloisonné": € 5,00.
- 100 A4 sheets with the Wing logo and your personal address: € 10,00.
- Warbirds photographs 30x45cm: € 10,00.
- T shirt Piper CUB, 170 grammes, Hanes, L or XL: € 15,00.
- T shirt cartoon P40, 170 grammes, Hanes, L or XL: € 15,00.
- T shirts other sizes on order.
- T shirt illustrated with the picture of your choice (Maximum size A5 - Warning! Only send pictures that are free from any copyrights!): € 15,00.
- Aircraft profiles 15 cm x 20 cm ready for framing: Various types: € 4,00 chaque.
- Vidéo filmed in Midland (55mn) VHS PAL: € 16,00 ©.
- Eric Besançon large size paintings: F4U Corsair and Messerschmitt 262 night fighter: € 30,00 P & P included ©.
- Poster N°1 Avions de la seconde guerre mondiale peint by Jean Bellis, 61x81cm: € 9,00 (FW Members), € 10,00 (Non Members) © + P & P.
- Greeting cards with Jean Bellis' profiles: € 4,00 each (P & P according to quantity) ©.
- Roy Grinnell prints - Normandie Niemen, F4U7, and B26 Marauder - Unsigned: € 30,00 + P & P € 10,00. Signed by veterans: € 50,00 + P & P € 10,00 ©.
- Roy Grinnell print of the Piper Cub: € 10 + P & P (FW Members), € 15 + P & P (Non members).
- Post Cards based on the same paintings (B26 Marauder and Neuneu): € 0,50 each (P & P according to quantity) ©.
- CD Rom of all FW Newsletters since January 2000, French and English, and 200 photos of warbirds taken during Airsho in Midland, by B. Delfino: € 10,00 P & P included ©.

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Unit Leader: Col. Bernard DELFINO
Tél & Fax: 01 48 69 04 57 - Mobile: 0680361717
email: bdfino26@free.fr

Executive Officer: Col. Roger GOUZON
Tél: 01 48 61 40 90 - Mobile: 0682904071
email: en attente

Finance Officer: Col. Claude GASCON
Tél: 03 29 86 71 00 - Mobile: 0675742596
email: gascon.claude@neuf.fr

Adjutant: Col. Fumiko DELFINO
Tél & Fax: 01 48 69 04 57 - Mobile: 0670362245
email: bdfino26@free.fr

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Avoir précédent	856,96
TOTAL	15869,91

Note: Ces chiffres représentent les sommes qui ont fait l'objet d'un don au French Wing depuis l'achat du Piper Cub en Mai 2003, et non pas un état des comptes en banque de notre Unité.