



# Airshow

CAF French Wing

Monthly Newsletter - Bulletin Mensuel



Volume 9 - N° 9 - September 2004

## EDITORIAL

I often believe that we are lucky to belong to an Association like the CAF French Wing. Very few, among the other Associations I know, have the privilege of enjoying so many active and diligent members. When I ask their leaders what is the percentage of members who truly participate in the activities of their respective Associations, their answer is often around 1 to 3%... Luckily, the results of the French Wing are far better, and this figure is always well over 30%, an exceptional result which is the product of the variety of our activities, the noble goals of our organization, and, above all, the faith shown by our members.

Among them, are our friends who reside in the South-West of France. They have, once again, proved that work, passion, and respect of the CAF goals and objectives, allow anyone to get results which are on the same scale as the entire Commemorative Air Force ambitions.

The success obtained by our friends during the ceremony in Pujaudran has exceeded all our hopes: More than three hundred people took part in this moving ceremony whose complete report is printed in this issue.

But the most important thing is that our three American friends who took the trouble to come all the way from the USA, went back with memories loaded with emotion, friendship, and love. The tears that came to their eyes when they left, are the moving proof that we reached our goal.

A big THANK YOU to the team that carried out this project so brilliantly!

Bernard

## PUJAUDRAN 12 AUGUST 1944 - 12 AUGUST 2004



Photo: M. Pedrin

MORE THAN 300 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN THE CEREMONY OF THE MONUMENT THAT HAS BEEN ERECTED JOINTLY BY THE "CAF FRENCH WING", THE "SOUVENIR FRANÇAIS", AND THE MUNICIPALITY OF PUJAUDRAN.

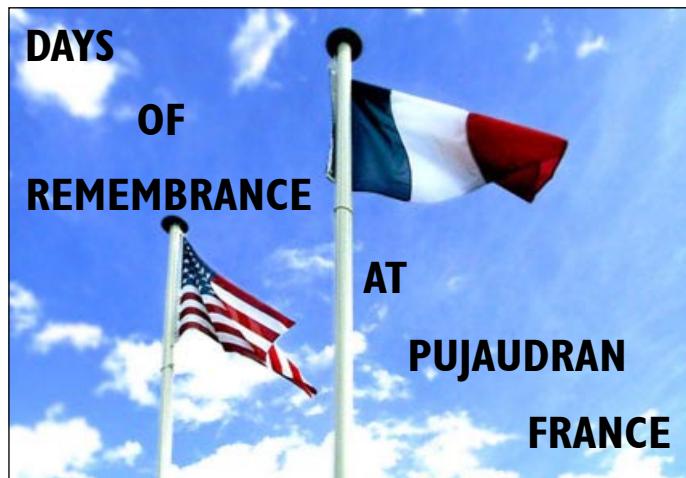
AS FOR "MISSION 441", THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROJECT IS DUE TO THE EXCELLENT WORK PRODUCED BY OUR MEMBERS IN THE TOULOUSE AREA, WHO ALLOWED OUR WING TO HONOR THE CREW OF THE MOSQUITO WHICH WAS SHOT DOWN AT PUJAUDRAN IN AUGUST 1944.



The crew of NS533: 2nd Lt. Elbert F. Harris and 1st Lt. Ronald Nichols.

# SIXTY YEARS AFTER.....

By Col. John P. Roeder.



Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> of 2004 was a memorable day for the small town of **Pujaudran** in the Southwest of France.

Some 300 people had gathered for the inauguration of a memorial to honor 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Ronald M. NICHOLS, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Elbert F. HARRIS of the 25<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, Eight Air Force, whose plane had been shot down under dramatic circumstances over their community exactly 60 years ago.

This should not be a recount of the mission which has been dealt with in the April 2002 issue of "Airshow" (Vol. 7, N° 4) in great detail.

It should be mentioned however that their "Mosquito" scoutplane was attacked and shot down by two friendly P-51 Mustangs escorting the bomber group which they supported. A tragic error, which cost Lt. Nichols his life, while Lt. Harris, who had succeeded in bailing out, could be saved by local French citizens and members of the "Roger Group" of the Maquis resistance fighters.

Nothing ever happened to remember Lt. Nichols's sacrifice and Lt. Harris's odyssey. They were in fact the only allied airmen who were never honored by a ceremony, the placing of a plaque, or the erection of a memorial, in this region of France.

This was unacceptable for the local group of the CAF/French Wing. Thanks to the tireless efforts and research by Col. Jacques Leroux, which had started many years ago, it had become possi-

ble to reconstruct the event, to clarify the circumstances under which it had happened, and to establish contact with the two airmen's relatives in the United States.

Two years ago the time appeared right to launch the erection of a monument for the two Americans near the

crash site at Pujaudran, some 14 miles west of Toulouse.

Lt. Nichols had died too young to have had the chance of founding a family and his relatives deeply regretted not to be able to make the trip for health reasons.

Lt. Harris's sister Madlyn MUENCH (81), although she was dependent on a walker or a wheelchair for moving, accepted the invitation, and she came together with her grandson Scott BOLLAR (29) and his wife Amy (30). They arrived in Paris on Wednesday morning of August 11<sup>th</sup>, coming from Washington D.C.

Following, a day by day account of the events that marked their stay in the Southwest of France...

## WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup>

At 2:20 PM, pickup of Madlyn Muench, Scott Bollar and his wife Amy at the Toulouse/Blagnac airport. Briefing on program at the Holiday Inn. Check that all provisions had been made to ensure that in particular Madlyn, would have a comfortable sojourn.

## THURSDAY, AUGUST 12<sup>TH</sup>

At precisely 10:00 AM the commemoration ceremony at Pujaudran began with a bugle call while 16 French war veterans stood guard at the memorial.

*Above: After months of efforts, the monument is ready for the commemoration ceremony.*

After a year of preparations, financing was assured. The CAF/French Wing, the "Souvenir Français" veterans organization, and the municipality of Pujaudran, would share the costs to equal parts.

The inauguration was to take place on August 12, 2004, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary





Above: Prior to the unveiling of the monument by the Mayor of Pujaudran, the American consul and the General Secretary of the Prefecture.

Then the Mayor of Pujaudran, the representative of the Prefect of the Gers district and the American Consul for the southwest of France proceeded to the unveiling of the memorial which had been covered with the American and French flags.

The inscription on the monument reads: "On August 12, 1944 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ronald NICHOLS of the United States Army Air Force died here for our liberty. His navigator 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Elbert HARRIS could, thanks to local inhabitants and the Maquis ROGER, regain his country after the liberation".

Thereafter the acting catholic priest of Pujaudran blessed the monument. In a touching short sermon followed by a prayer he pointed out that we all serve the same God who is guiding our destinies.

Then the Mayor of Pujaudran, René PERIN, welcomed the participants among whom:

- The delegates of the civil and military authorities of the district.
- The representatives of the French WWII veterans organizations and the Maquis ROGER.
- The American Consul in Toulouse.

The family of Lt. Harris.

The representative of the Mosquito Association, Eddy Rosier.

The representatives of the CAF/French Wing: Cols F. Baudin, F. Delfino. P. Ferré, R. Gouzon, J. Leroux, M. Perrin, C. Requi, J.P. Roeder and J.P. Vésine.

The representatives of the Fire Department of Isle Jourdain.

microphone, conveying the following much applauded message to the audience:

*"Our Harris family extends our thanks for this commemorative ceremony and for the remembrance of the American airmen, Lt. Elbert F. Harris, my brother, and Lt. Ron Nichols. I am deeply thankful that you saved my brother's life and the lives of others. I am also deeply thankful for the services you provided for his friend and pilot, Lt. Ron Nichols."*

*After our family was notified during August, 1944 that Elbert was missing in action and later that he was killed in action, we were in a deep state of grief. Our mother, a woman of great faith in God, refused to believe that he was dead.*

*Then because of your bravery, courage and care in September, 1944 we received that marvellous message by cable that said "AM ALIVE AND WELL from Lt. Elbert F. Harris".*

*We never forgot that day and he never forgot any of you for the rest of his life.*

*I am grateful for the opportunity to come to France, to be here today and to meet all of you".*

CAF Col. Jacques Leroux retraced impressively the events of 12/13 August 1944 that formed the background of today's commemoration, and thanked warmly all those who had made this memorial become a reality.

This was followed by an intervention of the representative of the "Souvenir Français" veterans organization.

After this, Madlyn MUENCH took the

Then Scott BOLLAR, grandson of Madlyn, spoke for the Nichols family, saying:

*Below: Blessing of the monument and sermon by the Priest of Pujaudran.*





Above: Scott and Amy Bollar place the American families flowered wreath.

*“Speaking for Karlyne Nichols Hoogenakker, sister of Lt. Ronald Nichols, ‘The Nichols family regrets very much that their health prevents them from coming for this ceremony, but they send their gratitude for your kindness in attending*

families, and one Wing.

Again the bugle sounded in tribute to those killed during the conflict, while the sixteen veterans who were standing



Above: The monument with the ten flowered wreaths.

*to Lt. Nichols burial and for your efforts to have this ceremony in remembrance of the day of his sacrifice”.*

Speaking for Jill Hoogenackker, the niece of Lt. Ronald Nichols: “I now realize how much the people of France did in their dedicated efforts to handle my uncle’s remains with love and respect and how much they did to ensure Lt. Harris’s escape. I can’t thank them enough”.

Again much applause by the audience. The ceremony went on with speeches by the President of the General Council of the Gers district, the Senator, the

regional Deputy, the Consul of the United States in Toulouse and the Secretary General of the Prefecture of the Gers.

guard at the monument lowered their flags; another moment of deep emotion.

Then the Isle Jourdain Philharmonic Society played the “Marseillaise” and the “Star-Spangled Banner” followed by the “Song of the Partisans”.



Above: Col. Jacques Leroux tells the dramatic events of August 1944

The ceremony ended with the officials shaking hands with the veterans, our American guests and the representatives of the various organizations, including the Commemorative Air Force.

Subsequently the mayor hosted a reception at the festival hall of Pujaudran, which gave those present ample opportunities for discussions and the exchanging of thoughts and ideas.

The mayor presented beautiful hand made code of arms of his community





*Madlyn points to the forest to which Elbert ran after landing.*

to the American guests, and the representatives of the various organizations and associations.

The CAF/French Wing offered to the community a model of the Mosquito in colors and markings as they were on the aircraft when it crashed. Col. Fred Baudin has to be congratulated for having built this fine model.

Then Col. Michel Perrin handed over to the Mayor a frame with an engine valve cover of the Mosquito, that had been dugged out at the crash site years ago.

Most emotional was however a gift to Madlyn which provoked tears in her eyes. It was the cap insignia of either Lt. Nichols or Lt. Harris, that Col. Jacques Leroux had found among the burned debris of the aircraft.

The reception was followed by a lunch in a local restaurant to which the CAF/French Wing had invited.

In the afternoon the party moved to the forest in which the airplane had crashed. A shallow deepening in the ground with still no vegetation marks the place of impact. Amazingly the ground is still ejecting metal parts of the aircraft of which some could be found during our visit.

#### **FRIDAY, AUGUST 13TH**

At 10:30 the Mayor and Yves Busquère, a kind man probably in his late 70s, expected us at the Pujaudran church-yard.

We were shown the emplacement where Lt. Nichols had been temporarily buried by the people of the village after his badly burned body had been found.

Yves who was our guide for the day, then took us to the rebuilt house of the Lanta family.

The story behind it is that the Germans had sent a patrol probably from Toulouse, to investigate what had happened at Pujaudran. Their car was ambushed by fighters of the

From there we were guided to the field where Elbert had landed after bailing out at about noon of August 12, and shown the nearby forest to which he ran in spite of his sprained right ankle, his burns and a bleeding long gash in his right shoulder blade.

He ran through the woods for about 1-1½ miles before emerging in an open field with a couple of farmhouses.

Hiding in a thicket until deep twilight Elbert finally decided to approach the smaller of the two houses to ask for help. There he met a boy and a woman who



*Above: The frame with an engine valve cover of the Mosquito, with the US Air Force and CAF shields.*

*Below: Handing over a valve cover of the Mosquito to the Mayor of Pujaudran.*



“Maquis”, who killed two of its occupants and captured the other two.

The next morning of the day after the crash the Germans came back in strength looking for the missing patrol.

In a house-to-house search of the village they found the cap of one of their soldiers in the Lanta house, to which they set fire in reprisal. There was apparently no harm done to anybody, but the Germans took with them the wine stock and the bicycles they had found in the house.

was trembling with fright when she saw him. She gave him a glass of wine and

*After the reception, from left to right and in the foreground: Col. Jean Roeder, the Mayor, Madlyn, coL. Jacques Leroux, Scott, Amy, and col. Michel Perrin, and, in the background, members of the Municipal Council of Pujaudran.*





*Apéritif at the Busquère's house with the sister of Yves on the right.*

water and indicated that she would sent the boy out to get help. After a tense 20 minutes the boy came back with a middle-aged man who conveyed that he was a friend and that he would take care of him. It was Bernard Busquère (†), the father of our guide.

At his house (known as the d'Auradé farm) a painful ¾ of a mile away Elbert was given to eat and shown into a bedroom. It was that of Bernard's son Yves (our guide).

Before dawn Elbert was called by his host who gave him to understand that German patrols might be in the vicinity and that he was to hide in a barn until the afternoon, when he was to be brought together with the Maquis. Bernard led him to the barn which was filled with hay.



*Madlyn, Yves Busquère, and col. Roeder at the entrance of the barn.*

He gave Elbert a bottle of water and wine and indicated that he was to remain hidden until he heard his host call "Maquis, Maquis".

Elbert burrowed into the hay pile, Bernard adjusted the surface where he had entered and went away.

After long hours he finally heard his host calling the code words. It was about 03:00 in the afternoon. Yves was present when Elbert in a stunned state crawled out of the hay pile and he showed us the place where he actually stood.



*The cap insignia found on the crash site, and presented to Madlyn.*

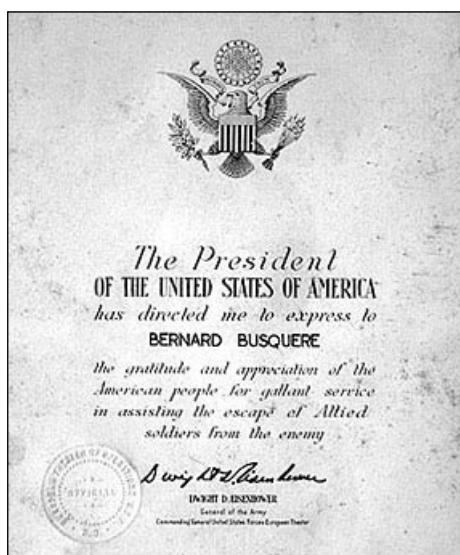
he could walk, although with difficulty. With Elbert limping the group finally disappeared in the direction of the La Laque farm, which was the headquarters of the 30 to 40 men strong "Roger Group" of the Maquis.

Yves and his sister, who were with us in the barn, are not the only people we met, who had actually been in contact with Elbert. On the day before we had already been face to face with one of the three Maquis, who had come to pick him up at the barn.

Getting together in the barn which was still exactly the same as it was 60 years ago was for us all, but in particular for Elbert's sister Madlyn a moment of profound emotion. Sitting in her wheelchair she could no longer contain the tears in her eyes, and this writer knows that she was not the only one.

After leaving the barn we were invited to the home of the Busquères, where

we were offered among others an excellent apéritif wine served with appetizers prepared with goose liver and sausage produced at the farm. At the table we had around us Yves Busquère with his wife, his sister and his daughter with her husband and their son. As a surprise we were shown with pride a framed document placed at the table which says:



*Citation by the President of the United States.*

"*The President of the United States of America has directed me to express to*

***Bernard Busquère***

*The gratitude and appreciation of the American people for gallant service in assisting the escape of Allied soldiers from the enemy".*

Signed Dwight D. Eisenhower  
General of the Army, Commanding General United States Forces European Theater.

Finally Scott Bollar was offered a fine bottle of Armagnac brandy, a specialty of the region.

The hospitality with which these lovely country people received us in their modest home was overwhelming. It was obviously for the first time since 60 years that Americans had been in their premises, and this will probably never happen again.

For lunch Madlyn invited the Busquère family and the mayor of Pujaudran for lunch at the l'Houme farmhouse which is now an excellent country restaurant.

Elbert had been lodged in the farmhouse by the Maquis, after these had to leave their bivouac on 19 August to partici-



Above and below: Arrival at the Ferme de l'Houme and the meal.

pate in the fighting for the liberation of Toulouse. This also marked the end of the German occupation of the area.

During lunch Col. John P. Roeder expressed his feelings as follows: no government since Lafayette has probably done as much for the French-American friendship as we have done together in these two days. The applause he got was proof that he had not only expressed his own feelings.

After lunch we visited the nearby village of Léguevin, where Lt. Elbert Harris had been invited as a guest of honor to a Liberation celebration on 3 September.

Thanks to a picture taken 60 years ago, we could identify the spot where he stood in front of a WW I memorial, where he had placed a wreath of flowers honoring Lt. Nichols and the French dead.

*Note: A couple of days after the celebration Lt. Harris could get on a R.A.F. Plane that took him back to England.*

*After he had been declared missing and later killed in action he now sent his "am alive and well" cable to his mother.*



Madlyn, Anne Roeder, Régine and Michel Perrin.

For the evening Col. Roeder and his wife Anne had invited to an outside dinner at their home in Cornebarrieu.

It was a nice evening with good food and although wine was flowing there was ample discussion of the events that had brought us all together.

came on the table after the main course. It was only a small but an excellent selection out of the 365 different kinds produced in France of which General de Gaulle is believed to have said 40 years ago, that they make France ungovernable.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 15

On Sunday morning we met our American guests at the Holiday Inn to say good-bye, before they left for the US at 10:30 from the Toulouse/Blagnac airport.



#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 14

On Saturday Col. Michel Perrin and Anne Roeder took the party on a all-day sight-seeing and shopping tour to Toulouse. It was a bit fatiguing as one could here, but in the evening eve-



Madlyn and Scott pose before the WWI monument of Léguevin, at the exact place where Elbert posed 60 years ago.

ryone felt again fit for a lovely dinner offered by Michel Perrin and his wife Régine at their home in L'Union.

Michel excelled in explaining the half dozen different kinds of cheese that

Together we had spent three unforgettable days which will remain engraved in our minds as well as those of the many French people who had contributed to and participated in the celebration of a nearly forgotten event. Now the Monument inaugurated at Pujaudran will ensure that Lts. Nichols and Harris will be remembered forever.

• **Lest we Forget** •

# NEWS .....

## WELCOME MADLYN MUENCH, AND SCOTT & AMY BOLLAR

As you read in the excellent report made of the ceremony of Pujaudran, made by col. John P. Roeder, our friends Scott and Amy Bollar, as well as Madlyn Muench, spent a few unforgettable days in the Toulouse area last month.



To express their gratitude for the efforts produced by our members, they offered to make a donation to our Wing. In order to help them stay in contact with us, it was proposed that they'd become *Friends of the French Wing*, a suggestion they accepted with great enthusiasm.



The reasons why our new friends accepted this offer which make them members that we are honored to welcome, are evident, and guided by gratitude.

**Scott Bollar** wished to add a few words though: *"Invited by the CAF, I participated to the inauguration of a Memorial that was erected in memory of my Uncle and Lt. Nichols who perished in the accident. From this ceremony, I became intrigued with the CAF Organization, as well as indebted to many of its members".*

**Amy** also wrote: *"The kindness and enthusiasm of the members of the CAF French Wing are traits that I will remember for the rest of my life".*

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## ANNUAL FRENCH WING DINNER IN MIDLAND

Like every year during Airsho, the French Wing will hold its annual dinner in Midland.

It's the restaurant **Taste of China** and its buffet that has been chosen, the same as last year since it gave entire satisfaction to all participants. This dinner will take place on **Thursday 30 September at 19:30**. We thank all our members who will be at Airsho 2004 to confirm whether they will attend this dinner or not.

## ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF PERSAN

On **Sunday 26 September 2004** the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of Persan and its airfield. The local authorities will be present, as well as many other officials.

The planes that have a direct link with this period will be displayed static, and a few flights will probably be organized, although this event is not a public one.

**The airport authorities have expressly asked us to display our airplane, and to make sure that members are present to explain its story and describe our Organization.**

This is a unique opportunity to get our Wing better known by personalities who may well be able to help us in the future.

Therefore, we ask all our members who can, to make themselves available for this great day and represent our Wing and the CAF.

Should this be your intention, we thank you for making yourself known as soon as possible by mail, fax, or email.

If you are among these volunteers, we ask you to be at the airfield no later than 08:30, help with the cleaning of the airplane, and position it at the spot the authorities will indicate. Wearing the CAF uniform will be a must.

## DELAY OF THE NEWSLETTER

The numerous events that took place last month were such that they delayed the issue of this Newsletter.

No less than two airshows, the ceremony in Pujaudran, and the maintenance of the *Spirit of Lewis*, combined to monopolize our Editor/Unit Leader, already quite busy with his professional activities.

We thank you for your indulgence and your patience.

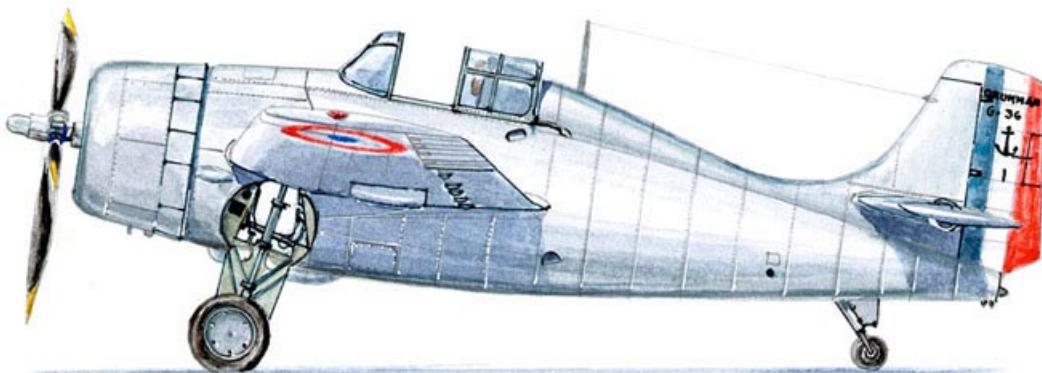
Next month issue may also be delayed because of the trip to Texas for Airsho'04 of several members of the French Wing. You can be sure that everything will be done to minimize this inconvenience.

The reports and photographs concerning the airshows in Falaise and Rennes will be published in the next issue.



## GRUMMAN G-36A

By Colonels John P. Roeder, Michel Perrin, and Frédéric Baudin - Painting by Jean Bellis



Development of the G-36A was launched by the US-Navy in July 1936. As XF4F-2 it first flew in September 1937.

Although its beginnings were quite disappointing, the tubby little mid-wing monoplane with its unorthodox landing gear was destined to become one of the outstanding Naval fighters of WWII.

About the same time when the USN placed a first contract for 78 production F4F-3s in August 1939, Grumman began offering export models of its new product.

The French government was quick in placing an order for 81 G-36As (company designation) plus components for a further 10.

The first and unique G-36A in French "Aéronavale" colors with US civil registration (NX ...) for export was flown on May 10th. 1940 at Bethpage (L.I.), while six more for France were on the production line.

On the same day the Germans began their assault in Western Europe, which led to the collapse of France after six weeks of fighting. Thus none of the G-36As ordered was ever delivered to France. This was a chance for the British, who readily took over the French contract.

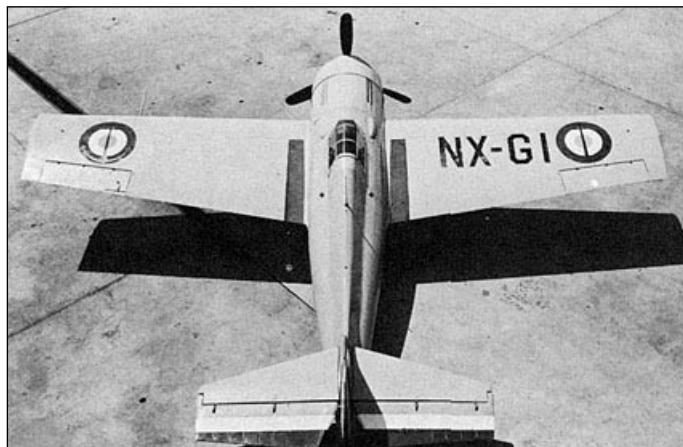


Photo: Grumman

Deliveries to Britain began in July 1940, somewhat ahead of those to the USN. As "Martlet I" the type entered service with the Fleet Air Arm in October 1940.

By that time F4F-3s were aboard the aircraft carriers USS Ranger and Wasp.

In 1941 the USN named the type Wildcat, and by the end of the year the Navy and the US Marine Corps had accepted 248 aircraft of the type.

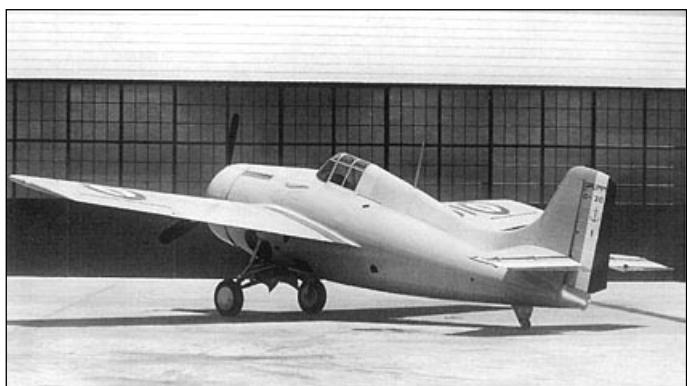


Photo: Grumman

During the Pearl Harbor attack the Marines lost nine of theirs at Ewa, and the day after, when the Japanese invaded Wake Island seven more were destroyed on the ground. The remaining five fell to the enemy attack force after having scored a number of victories over Japanese bombers and fighters.

The Wildcat's performances were inferior to those of the Japanese Zero, but its superior armament, rugged construction, its reliability, and its armor protection, definitely worked to its favor. After adequate tactics had been developed, it proved totally capable of holding its own in the hands of an alert pilot.

Throughout the Pacific War Wildcats of the USN and USMC were in constant action. From mid 1944 they continued to be used however exclusively from escort carriers.

In the RN the career of the Martlets, which were renamed Wildcats in 1944, was just as successful.

Production at Grumman totalled 1,576 aircraft of various versions, the most important being the F4F-3 and the F4F-4.

In 1942 production was transferred to General Motors with



Photo: Grumman



Photo: Grumman

the aircraft being renamed FM-1. The more powerful FM-2 had a taller fin. Some 1,360 FM-1s and 4,127 FM-2s were built, giving a grand total of about 7,400 aircraft. Of these 215 had been bought by Britain and 902 (mainly FMs) supplied under Lend-Lease.

The Wildcat and Martlet was never used by the Armée de l'Air or the Aéronavale, but the French were confronted with it on more than one occasion.

In May 1942 Martlets from the Fleet carrier HMS Illustrious supported British landings on Madagascar. In air combats they shot down 10 Vichy aircraft, most of them Moranes for the loss of one of theirs.

On November 6th, 1942 a Vichy Bloch 174 fell to the guns of two Martlets of HMS Formidable off the coast of Algeria. These were the first shots fired during the unfolding Anglo-American landings in French North Africa "Operation TORCH" on November 8th.

American troops, sailing straight from the US (Western Task Force) landed at three points on the coast of Morocco, and British and American troops coming from Britain near Oran (Center TF) and Algiers (Eastern TF).

The Western TF landings were supported by the large carrier USS Ranger and three

escort carriers, while a fourth carrier was to protect the southern flank of the armada. Of the 164 aircraft the carriers had on board, 109 were F4F-4 Wildcats, 36 SBD-3 Dauntlesses and 19 TBF-1 Avengers.

At 0500 the main ground force began to go ashore near Fedala, with subsidiary landings at Mehdia and Safi.

Hesitations among the French were such that the troops were safely ashore before meeting serious resistance. On both sides there was considerable confusion.

At around 0600 the French sent out several aircraft to see what was going on at the beaches.

About the same time USN Kingfishers were trying to locate targets to provide fire guidance for the heavy artillery of the battleship USS Massachusetts. One of these was lost to French fighters.



Photo: Grumman

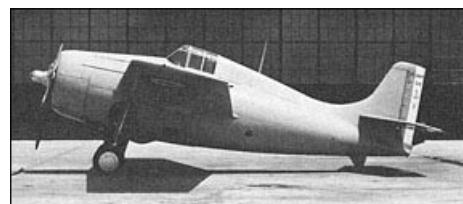


Photo: Grumman

flak, and another three that were trying to attack an observation plane, were also damaged.

From 0610 to 0645 US carriers launched 35 Wildcats and 18 SBD dive bombers to attack airfields as well as targets at Casablanca.

During the morning ground and air fighting escalated, with Wildcats continuing their attacks on French airbases and other ground targets as well as giving direct support to the US ground forces on the beaches.

In dogfights with F4F-4s the French pilots were fighting gallantly against a superior enemy whom they had taken for British.

Many of them certainly went into battle with mixed feelings, but the attack of the Royal Navy on the French fleet at Mers el-Kébir in July 1940, where 1300 French sailors had been killed, was not yet forgotten.



Photo: USAAF

Over the beaches meanwhile fighters were strafing American landing craft and troops ashore. Five of these were hit by

There are indications, that, had they known that they were fighting against Americans, things might have been different; but this is pure speculation.

After all, they had orders and their upper hierarchy was not unaware of the situation.

As to the US Army, it got into



Photo: B.Delfino

a great deal of trouble due to the inexperience and mud-slog of its shore parties.

On the second day the advance on Casablanca finally got going. It met little opposition but had to be abruptly halted due to lack of equipment, which could not be brought forward from the beaches.

Little progress was made on the third day against stiffening resistance.

In the late afternoon, fortunately for both sides, the French commander in Morocco stopped his troops fighting without having received confirmation of an order issued earlier by the French authorities at Algiers under Admiral Darlan for a cease fire.

During the three days that the US Army was trying to break French resistance, the aviators of both sides were most active. This is well shown by the losses each side suffered, which have been quoted as follows:

Of 45 aircraft that the US Navy lost, 25 were Wildcats. Most US planes were shot down in air combat.

Vichy losses totalled 119 (including three by accident, and 13 damaged). Twenty five of these were shot down (among them 13 fighters) and 78 destroyed on the ground (including 11 fighters).

Around Oran the American landings met stiffer opposition than those near Casablanca.

As none of the supporting British carri-

ers had any Wildcats/Martlets on board, no further consideration is given to this operation.

At Algiers, a sector allocated to the British, fighting was less intense. The Fleet carriers HMS Formidable and Victorious mustered together at least 36 Martlets.

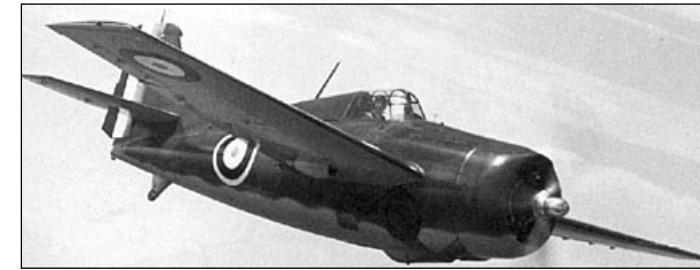


Photo: B. Delfino

A noteworthy event occurred at dawn on November 8th: While Martlets from HMS Victorious were appearing over the fighter base at Blida near Algiers, the French were showing the white flag. Thereupon one of the Martlets landed, its pilot greeted by the commander, and handed over a formal surrender!

No record about further activities of the Martlets in this sector could be found.

In Algeria, very rapidly in fact, French airfields were occupied by the Allies which allowed transfer of USAAF and Royal Air Force aircraft from Gibraltar that took over from the Royal Navy.

Fighting around Algiers had ended late on November 8th.

It was from there that the general cease fire for the



Photo: Grumman

whole of French North Africa was ordered by Admiral Darlan on November 10th after a political agreement had been reached with the Allies.

Altogether the Royal Navy had lost some 45 aircraft over Algeria, of which at least eight were Martlets.

The first and last appearance of Martlets over France occurred during the DRAGOON landings between Toulon and Cannes in Provence on 15 August 1944.

Of the nine escort carriers involved, seven were British with 177 aircraft (plus 30 in reserve) on board.

In 1673 operational sorties Martlets together with other RN-aircraft were active in attacking German coastal defenses, road and rail targets, riverine traffic and all kinds of installations and buildings occupied by the enemy.

On August 29th the carrier squadron was released from the operation.

The Royal Navy had lost 21 aircraft due to flak, but in addition more than twice that number had been lost in operational and deck-landing

## Caractéristiques

### GRUMMAN G-36A (MARTLET I)

#### Description:

Chasseur monoplace embarqué.

#### Propulsion:

1 Wright Cyclone G-205A de 1200 CV

Envergure: 11,60 m (38 ft)

Masse maximale: 2767 kg (6100 lb)

Vitesse maximale: 499 km/h (310 mph)

Vitesse de croisière: 414 km/h (257 mph)

Distance franchissable : 1770 km (1100 mls)

Plafond utile : 8530 m (28000 ft)

Armement: 4 mitrailleuses fixes de 12,7 mm

La dernière version avait une masse plus importante, des performances améliorées, et pouvait transporter 2 bombes de 250 lb (113 kg) chacune.

# SPIRIT OF LEWIS.....

## SPIRIT OF LEWIS SPONSORS

### FLYING SPONSORS

Gilles Avenel  
Hervé Cherry  
Bernard Delfino  
Fumiko Delfino  
Marcel Fransisci  
Claude Gascon  
Roger Gouzon  
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Roy Grinnell  
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Patrick Pierre-Pierre  
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Sandy Sansing  
Société SKY RUNNER

### RESTORATION SPONSORS

Didier Cardinal  
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### SUPPORTING SPONSORS

Bunty Bateman  
Christophe Bastide  
Frédéric Baudin  
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William Davies  
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Louis-Jean Gioux  
Patrick Gremez  
Barbara Hair  
Aubrey Hair  
Yves Houssin  
Rick Hudlow  
Elzéard Ligneul  
Guy Perrin  
John Röder  
Marcel Ruppert  
Jean-Jacques Vaucher

### PIPER CUB ACCESSORIES

The list of WWII items is growing ! We own, today, the following items :

- A pack of band-aid, a pouch, and a map of Normandy, donated by Patrick Pierre-Pierre.
- Two US Army jerrycans donated by Christophe Bastide.
- Two maps of Normandy and a WWII brass extinguisher, with its stand, donated by Bernard Delfino.

## LEWIS' FIREFLY

Time flies, and day after day, our aircraft gets better. Task after task, it becomes a real warbird that all our members who saw it closely, who took care of it, who washed it, who flew it, have been enchanted by its charm.

However, everyone thought that something was missing: A Nose-Art, like many world war two aircraft carried.

Bernard soon started working on it and tried to find the best way to honor colonel Lewis Bateman.

The idea to use Lewis' favorite airplane, the Fairey Firefly soon became evident.

Lewis dealt with the maintenance of these "bugs" while he was in the Royal

navy Fleet Air Arm, and he told us that it was during that time that he had met his dear Bunty, who also worked on these planes as a radio engineer, and that he had chosen her to share his entire life.

This very nice story called for a very special Nose-Art, and Bernard made sure that he kept on the right tracks by asking a few selected members their personal opinion.

Today, our airplane proudly bears this amusing "cartoon" which is an homage to our dear Lewis Bateman.

Despite the seriousness that he used to put into everything he did, Lewis knew how to keep a little bit of dream and



### CLEANING UP THE CUB

After the airshow of Falaise, our airplane was in need of some deep cleaning and minor, but indispensable, repairs like, for example, the renewal of the eyebrow fitting brackets, rather "tired" at the honorable age of 60. This work was done by our friends David Kelly, Roger Gouzon, and Bernard Delfino. The picture on the right shows Roger examining one of these deflectors, after he had removed the paint and before they were repaired.

This maintenance and deep cleaning helped our aircraft get a better look, which was highly appreciated by the public of the Rennes airshow, last September 11 and 12.



Photo: E. Ducreau

## 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.
- Pins epoxy, various: € 5,50.
- 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 (55mn) 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 Airshow in Midland, by B. Delfino: € 10,00 P & P inclusive ©.

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# SAFETY.....



## OOOOOPS !...

The passengers of an Airbus 320 belonging to an airline that will remain nameless, were surprised to see the left engine cowlings fly their own way during the climb to the plane's cruising altitude. Although there was no immediate danger for the plane and its occupants, it returned to its base

for the appropriate repairs. This incident shows how important a pre-flight check is: It includes the positive locking of the cowlings and other access panels which are used regularly, and avoid this type of problem.

## FRENCH WING ELECTIONS

The November 20, 2004, General Assembly will see the election of our Unit's **Vice-President** and **Treasurer**. The candidates should apply in writing (Mail, fax, or email) before October 15, 2004 at midnight. The minimum conditions for applying are 6 months seniority as a CAF and French Wing Colonel, either Regular or Life Member.

### Vice-President

*He assists the President, and will act as such during his absence. His specific task, in addition to all the President's ones, includes a good knowledge of the CAF regulations and the law of the land, the procedures during meetings, social activities of the Unit, and the implementation of all the other tasks that may be requested by the President.*

### Treasurer

*He is in charge of all the funds collected by the Unit, keeps an exact record of these funds, and he is responsible for the respect of all regulations and directives from the CAF concerning financial matters, as long as they are compatible with the law of the land. He will submit, in a timely manner, to the CAF HQ, all the necessary reports about the health of the Unit finances. His specific tasks include the good keeping of the members' files and the payment of their annual dues, as well as the payment of the Unit's expenses. He overlooks all Unit projects' finances for an annual audit during the annual general assembly, and liaise with the CAF Headquarters.*

## BE A SPONSOR OF THE "SPIRIT OF LEWIS" !

You always have had a definite interest for this plane. You can now become one of its Sponsors by choosing one of the three levels available, and add pleasure to usefulness by flying aboard this legendary WWII airplane. Here is the list of these levels and their price:

**...FLYING SPONSOR:** 250 Euros per year and 25 Euros per hour.

**...RESTORATION SPONSOR:** 125 Euros per year and 40 Euros per hour.

**...SUPPORTING SPONSOR:** 50 Euros per year and 55 Euros per hour.

**...NON-SPONSOR:** No annual premium and 80 Euros per hour.

A quick calculation shows that, for instance, for 50 hours per year, this system allows everyone to fly for a very modest hourly price:

- Flying Sponsor = 30 Euros,
- Restoration Sponsor = 42,50 Euros,
- Supporting Sponsor = 56 Euros,
- Non-Sponsor = 80 Euros.

This choice is wide enough to allow each one of our members to find the level he wishes to adopt.