



# AIRSHOW

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*Summer is a period normally dedicated to resting, often lying on a couch, with our feet up in the air and our face protected from the sunshine...*

*This ideal picture is far from being true for those of our members who chose to spend the good season working hard and trying to reach the goals of the CAF and our Unit. Those who participated in the organization of the "Lest We Forget" project and the air show in Epinal-Mirecourt know what I'm talking about!... Without them, the French Supporter Squadron would simply be a vague notion with no real signification. The work performed by these members for the success of these two Summer events is almost impossible to imagine for those who did not have a chance to take part in them. The difficulties to overcome were enormous and complex, the number of details to adjust so that all these mechanisms could function perfectly were innumerable, and the (good) tiredness was only revealed once these two projects were fully accomplished.*

*The leaders of the CAF recognized this spirit, and, despite the distance between Midland and France, they did feel that we were about to accomplish something that, a few months before, seemed impossible to do. This is why our Unit has received two Awards which are described hereafter, one issued by the CAF, and the other by the AAHM.*

*All our members can be very proud of these two symbols which have joined the Awards received by our Unit or by many of its members since the creation of the French Supporter Squadron.*

*I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of those who have participated in the progress of our Unit during the past 5 years. Thanks to you, whether you are part of the "veterans" of the very first days, or have joined us since, the amount of work performed is considerable. Our future is full of promises, but it will ask for a greatly increased participation from all our members, and, for this, I wish to thank everyone of you very warmly in advance.*

Bernard

## B17 "LEST WE FORGET" PROJECT: A GREAT SUCCESS!

Long months of preparation were necessary for the complete success of the visit by two veterans, crew members of the B-17 that was shot down by the flak on June 25, 1944, and by the sister of the Bombardier, Harold M. Gnesin, who lost his life in this dramatic accident.

Until the very last moment, nobody could imagine how the numerous parts of this mechanism would fit. Thanks to the kindness of our three guests who accepted with enthusiasm the very busy program



of these few days spent in the Toulouse area, and, despite an understandable tiredness, everything went as planned. Emotion, friendship, and generosity, were the three main elements of this reunion. And if tears often came to the eyes, they were tears of admiration and gratitude towards all those

who sacrificed their life, or their youth, for the liberation of our country and for the saving of Humanity.



Top: John H. WILSON (Radio), above: Merrill C. BUTIKOFER (Engineer), and left: Isabelle LESSER, sister of Bombardier Harld M. GNESIN, who was killed in the 25 June 1944 accident .

## WE DID IT!

All this seemed impossible a few months ago. Nevertheless, the willpower, the dedication, and the tenacity of a few of our members managed to turn this dream into reality. It was not easy, and called for hundreds of hours of intense work and numerous, and, sometimes difficult, meetings. Everyone put his feelings aside and adopted a common way, aimed at one single target: The success of this project. Between June 22 and June 30, the numerous parts of this giant puzzle appeared to miraculously find their location. But this was no miracle. It was the logical conclusion of this team effort, an accomplishment as valuable as the most ambitious projects performed by the CAF, and certainly one of the most beautiful successes of our French Supporter Squadron up to this date.

To tell you about this great event, and to illustrate it, I chose to give you my own impressions, mixed with the feelings of those who were kind enough to tell me about them. The choice of a few pictures, among the thousands of photos taken during this memorable week, was extremely difficult. And telling, in great details, every phase of this operation, while quoting every person who participated in its preparation or its execution, would have required a number of pages totally incompatible with the modest size of this publication. This is why I ask those who are not listed in this report to forgive me, and I beg them to wait for the publication, in a few months time, of the book that will tell this adventure. It will soon be written by our Historian, colonel Jacques Leroux, and published by our Squadron.

Bernard Delfino

## DESTINY, YOU THINK?

There are reunions of Colonels more important, more involving, more emotional, more pompous, more historical, than others. Mister De Lapalisse will not contradict me. The one in Toulouse, around June 25, was one of them. Everything was there...

Under a sun as ardent as the one of 1944, Blagnac became the converging point of lines of forces, astral and terrestrial, originating from all azimuths, USA, England, underground France. Chronological time itself was part of it, going against the flow, up to the sources of Mission 441: B-17, veterans, helmets, combat suits, jeeps, and Dad's or Grandad's *Traction Avant* cars, with the good smell of the "floating engines". Glenn Miller was missing as usual, but not "In the Mood" whose rhythm was floating in the air...

The mission in question could have gone unnoticed, like many other war exploits may have disappeared. But destiny (To keep it simple) decided otherwise. It first wanted that a few archeologists, fond of aviation, found, at their feet, a few vestiges, so that they could reconstruct this epic from a few pieces of a dismantled puzzle. Pieces of aluminium sheets, traces of munitions, buttons, logos... A task for an Egyptologist which led the searchers to the archives and the families. One can easily imagine the difficulty and the importance of this task.

Destiny (Again) wanted that not only four of the actors of this mission were still alive today, but also that witnesses of that period could confront their memories with those of the crew men. It also wanted that eight out of nine of them could bail out of the stricken B-17. When one realizes the inside intricacies of this machine, the longerons, the sharp edges, the small size of the turrets, the fire, the panic, this b...y bomb which did not want to drop, one feels goose flesh on his back.

It wanted that useless and crazy bullets of the Nazis (Who were waiting on the ground) did not reach them... That they get out of these camps, that they walk across this mad Eastern Europe (Let's read again "The 25th Hour" by Virgil Giorgiu). All this is like a miracle, since the variables were so many.

But, who knows... Destiny may have simply wanted that we never forget, including these young children who asked so many questions to a few remarkable Colonels as they walked out of the Cornebarrieu cemetery. It wanted them to learn "live" and not from books, that, without the sacrifice of these young and handsome men from Arkansas, Ohio... (There were 48 of them), we would have been lost...

Thank you, Destiny, for the gesture, and for the emotion.

Col. Jean-Claude Petit



Above: The Award received from the Confederate Air Force "for remembering the USAAF bomber crews who helped France in her fight for Freedom during World War Two".

Below, the one received from the CAF General Staff and the Board of Directors of the Airpower Museum.



"The French Supporter Squadron:

... has made a significant contribution to the Airpower Museum by donating a portion of a B-17 wing which flew in defence of allied victory during WWII.

... has demonstrated an admirable initiative to preserve cultural heritage.

... has provided the centrepiece around which a permanent exhibit may be developed which pays tribute to the men and women who preserved freedom in the skies during WWII.

... has furthered the cause of the CAF by keeping a portion of WWII airpower heritage alive for generations to come in the H.Q. Museum.

... and finally, has once more demonstrated that the strength of the Squadron rests in the passion and fortitude required to preserve history before it's lost for ever.

For preserving precious treasures of days gone by for the sake of Freedom, Duty, Honor, and Wisdom, the French Supporter Squadron is hereby recognized on this day, 25 June 2001, for efforts above and beyond the call of duty in support of the goals and objectives of the Confederate Air Force and Airpower Museum".

## Thursday 21 June

Arrived from different places, our three guests, and members of their families gathered together at the Maëva hotel that was chosen for their stay.

## Friday 22 June

For of our members, organizers of this event, this first meeting was very emotional, even though many knew each other through letters and emails. During the preceding months, a sincere friendship had been born from these preliminary contacts. George Hilliard, historian of the 398<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, had greatly facilitated this birth, thanks to his numerous and important reports. But it's when they finally met our guests that they became conscious of the importance of the project that had been adopted by our Unit several months before. These long months of continuous work, the permanent worries linked to the financing of this operation, the white nights spent checking the thousand and one details of this organization, all these efforts suddenly took a new and real dimension.

For colonel Jacques Leroux, historian of the FSS, meeting with these veterans was a very intense moment, especially when Isabelle Lesser, sister of Harold M. Gnesin, asked him, with tears in her eyes, for details about the circumstances of her brother's death.

Colonel Christian Tournemine, who came with his charming wife Maryse, was particularly sensitive about the sympathy that emanated from this group of 16 american visitors. He also appreciated the discrete but very efficient work performed by colonels Alain Quesney, Jacques Leroux, Michel Perrin, and Jean Røeder, who made this first contact very easy.

It is when he spotted the B-17 of *Association Forteresse Toujours Volante* on its final approach in the skies of Blagnac that colonel Jean Røeder felt his heart beat faster, and rightly understood, with great satisfaction, that our efforts would be totally successful.

The first of a long series of official ceremonies took place at 18:00 in the Town Hall of Blagnac. With a great simplicity, the Mayor found the right words to communicate his sincere gratitude to our guests. Those who feared that this official aspect could prevail and hide the truth were immediately reassured: A warm and friendly atmosphere surrounded everyone in the assembly which had increased with the latest arrivals: Ray Kinney (CAF Chief of Staff) and his lovely wife Bonnie, Claude Requi who flew in with the T6 of *Association Les Ailes de l'Aéro*, colonel Claude De Marco who represented the President of the *Association Les Ailes Brisées*, colonel Eric Ducreau, the entire crew of the B-17 *Pink Lady* including our friend colonel Jacques Pérageallo, colonel David Price who came from England, and my wife Fumiko and I who had just arrived from Paris.



## Saturday 23 June

The morning was dedicated to a reunion of the veterans with witnesses of the accident, in the restaurant Bier Akademy. Our friends Jacques Leroux, Alain Quesney, and Jean Røeder gave us a perfect report of the flight that ended so tragically in Cornebarrieu. The actors and the witnesses told us this story in great length, which allowed us to find out exactly what happened during this raid and the moments that followed immediately after. The model of the B17 built by colonels Christian Falentin and Didier Cardinal was a perfect complement of the display that included pieces of metal found on the crash site, and the numerous photographs that had been collected. Colonel Jacques Bonneau, together with his father, was also one of the witnesses. He told us about his memories of the accident, then, with a great emotion, he donated the binoculars that he used to watch this raid, 57 years ago, to the French Supporter Squadron.



The afternoon was spent visiting the SIDMI factory in Cornebarrieu. Its Director, mister René Toppan, told us about his firm with great simplicity, but also with great enthusiasm and legitimate pride which reflected the value of his Company. The latter, among other tasks, manufactures Airbus 320 passenger doors, parts of business jets Dassault Falcon 50 and 900 fuselages, and maintains twin-engine ATR aircraft of all types. The presence and the kindness of a member of the Parliament, Madame Françoise Imbert, turned this visit into a very special event.

But our visit was also justified by the fact that the SIDMI factory was built at the exact place where some of the B17 crew members landed after they had bailed out of their airplane. The picture printed above shows the buildings of the SIDMI, at one end of the Toulouse-Blagnac airport.

While we visited the SIDMI plant, the Ladies spent an exciting day visiting down-town Toulouse, helped by two first class guides: Anne Røeder and Régine Perrin.



**Sunday 24 June**

The Rendez-vous point was the "Ailes Anciennes" in Colomiers where the B-17, the T-6, et an O-2 Push-Pull were waiting for us. Our veterans were surprised and charmed to visit the B-17. Emotion was great, and it reached a peak when the four engines of the bomber started in a cloud of blue smoke.

After a short taxi, the three planes took-off for a display that re-enacted the path followed by our friends Merrill Butikofer et John Wilson's B-17. Fifty Seven years after this drama, the sky above Toulouse was filled with history again...

After a short formation flight for photographic purposes, the B-17 approached the airfield the same way the bomb group did at the time. It pretended to be hit by flak, did two 360° turns, losing altitude, and finished its display with a low fly-by to salute the spectators and the air traffic controllers who participated with so much kindness to the success of this commemoration. The T-6 flew over the field as low as the rules permitted, and landed to join the B-17, soon followed by the Push-Pull.

Everyone was satisfied and one could see a deep emotion on every face. The signing of the Association *Forteresse Toujours Volante* Golden Book by most of the organizers and by the veterans ended the first part of a very busy day.

A cold meal was then served by Association "Ailes Anciennes" in Colomiers. Conversations were passionate. They allowed long time friends to be reunited, or people to get acquainted. A few traditional and amiable speeches sealed this collective friendship.

This memorable day ended with a superb garden party offered by Jean and Anne Røeder in their home. This evening, in everyone's

opinion, was one of the most intense moments of this week. Jean and Anne managed to get all their numerous guests feel totally relaxed, and turned friendship into a way of life. But what a colossal amount of work to reach such a successful result!

It's during this evening that we met again with our dear Bunty Bateman. It was a perfect occasion to tell us about the sympathy we all have for her (She told us about her project to go back to England soon, but she promised to stay in contact with our Squadron). Colonel Ray Kinney gave this evening a happy and moving ending when he presented our Unit with the two Awards already mentioned at the beginning of this report, which was a thrill and a great satisfaction for all our members. He also invited the members of Association "Croix du Sud" to come to Midland for Airsho2001, and thanked the Mayor of Cornebarrieu for his warm welcome. The latter was about to be very busy the following day since the greater part of this day would almost exclusively be spent in his town...



**Monday 25 June**

This Monday was the anniversary of the B17 accident, and started with a moment of profound emotion when our two veterans placed a picture of the Anstey Window in the pretty little church of Cornebarrieu. But time was running out. Kept informed about the position of the planes which were about to participate in the biggest ceremony of this whole commemoration, we heard that they had just taken off from the airport, as it had been carefully planned.

Fortunately, it was only a short drive to the exact place where the B-17 had crashed, at the limit of the town of Cornebarrieu. Our guests and their family members were ready when we spotted the aircraft. On the ground, a ribbon marked the shape of the crashed airplane, and an american flag showed the exact place where, 57 years before, a young airman gave his life so that, today, we can be free men and women.





Claude's T-6 over flew the area, soon followed by the B-17. Very low, one wing down so that everyone was able to fully enjoy its presence, the plane flew over this blessed area several times. Emotion was on a peak, everyone deeply feeling the importance of these moments. Many had tears in their eyes and some could not contain them any longer.

Colonel Christian Tournemine suddenly remembered that, in 1944, when he was very young, he saw waves of B-17 escorted by fighters flying overhead. His mother told him one day; "Look, and remember later that you saw Freedom coming back thanks to them!". On this day of June 25, 2001, this memory struck him hard. As for me, I deeply felt the importance of this event, and I could feel, all around us, the sweet presence of our friend Lewis...

As our friends of *Forteresse Toujours Volante* and their B-17 were disappearing away on the horizon, started a ceremony that will remain engraved in everyone's memory for ever: The inauguration of a monument dedicated to Lieutenant Harold M. Gnesin. There were many people indeed.

They included representatives of official civilian and military organizations, the families, and many friends. The monument was covered with a french flag which was removed by Isabelle Lesser and the Mayor of Cornebarrieu, mister De Faletans. Then, six young pupils of a Cornebarrieu school folded this flag and gave it to Isabelle who had problems containing her emotion. It was a great moment of love, respect, and dignity.

Speeches, television interviews, and photographs followed, then everyone went to the Cornebarrieu cemetery where Harold M. Gnesin had rested until 1946, when his mother requested that his body be conveyed back home. There, floral arrangements with ribbons expressing a sweet memory, were placed.



Big emotions are often caused by small events. As we walked out of the cemetery, colonel Christian Tournemine was questioned by some kids: "Tell me monsieur, are you american? Were you in the airplane that flew over?". In a few words, Christian explained his uniform, the ceremony, why all these people and these planes in the sky... Their professor called them back, but Christian believes that they understood the meaning of all this.

The Mayor of Cornebarrieu and his wife did everything they could to welcome all their guests the best possible way, first in the Town Hall where drinks were served, and then in the gardens of their home where a meal was served. Friendly speeches, almost familiar, and gifts for our veterans concluded a moving and beautiful afternoon.

The evening started with a reception in the beautiful "Hall of Fame" of the Mairie of Toulouse. The great number of people and the ambient heat well above 30 degrees Celsius did not make things easy. The Mayor who had been urgently called by the Prefect for a reunion, had asked one of his assistants to replace him... Official speeches, television, photo-flashes, soon increased our guests' tiredness, but they were so amiable and had so much physical resistance that they never showed that they were very tired, and soon, everyone left, looking for a well-deserved rest!

A group of French Supporter Squadron members chose not to leave the city of Toulouse without enjoying a good meal in one of the restaurants that surround the beautiful Square of the Capitole. The unusual presence of these colonels, dressed in uniform, did not go unnoticed! This meal was the occasion to fully appreciate the friendship which is a rule in our Unit: Jokes that we were the only ones to appreciate and laugh at, but which were the result of a sincere friendship.

This meal was ended by an excellent surprise when the waiter, as we were about to pay our bill, announced that an anonymous guest had paid for our dessert. He refused to give us any indication, but a quick look around revealed that it was a couple of tourists, travelling on bikes, who had questioned us for the reasons of our uniform as we walked out of the Mairie, and had thanked us for the work we do in honoring those who helped us during the war. The conversation started again and it was our turn to thank so charming people for the great honor they just did to us.

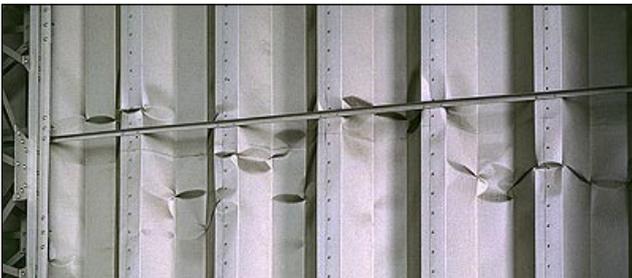
True happiness often depends on a small gesture, like the one given to us by this couple of tourists. We sincerely thank them again!



### Tuesday 26 June

As the Ladies spent the day visiting the pretty town of Albi and its cathedral, a group of guests went to the French Air Force Base 101 of Francazal. We were warmly welcomed by the base Commander who started this day with an audio and video conference that described today's French Air Force in great details, and the particular role of the base he is commanding.

This conference was followed by a visit of the control tower, then by a technical description of a Transall transport plane and a Fenec helicopter. The visit of the hangars and the work that is performed there, allowed us to see that these buildings still bear evident signs of the bombing raid that our friends Herb Wilson and Butch Butikofer had carried out. The photos printed show the extent of the damage caused by this raid. One can clearly see the bomb impacts and the distortion caused by the explosions, still present on the side of one of the hangars. The buildings that had been damaged beyond repair were taken down, others were modified or left as they were.



An excellent meal was offered in the Officers' Mess, which gave us a good occasion to thank our new friends of the Armée de l'Air for their kindness and the honor they gave us.

The afternoon was spent with the visit of a Center of Tests for aircraft structures, where airplanes are artificially aged to determine their weaknesses so that modifications can be made to extend their life.

### Wednesday 27 June

This Wednesday was to be one of the busiest days of our friends' stay. It started with the arrival of a bunch of old cars lent to us by a group of collectors, members of a Club of the Tarn & Garonne district, the *Club d'Amateurs de Véhicules d'Epoque* (C.A.V.E. 82). Driving through the Toulouse country side on board these venerable vehicles brought a charming and original touch that did not go unnoticed! The first stop of our trip took place in Villaudric where the Mayor and the Member of Parliament, Madame Françoise Imbert, were waiting for us. During the commemoration that took place at the town's War Monument happened one of those extraordinary and unexpected events which enlightened this long series of well planned official ceremonies and brought a touch of authenticity and humanity that may, sometimes, have been lacking.



This monument was a simple plaque made of marble, on the side of an old house. Engraved, was a long list of people, victims of World War Two. As mister Mayor was reading his speech, a lady appeared at the window immediately above. She was holding an american flag whose colors were so faded that it was easy to guess that it was full of history. Once the ceremony was over, we had a long and passionate conversation with this lady and her mother. The latter told us that her husband, a Resistant of the first hour, had made this flag himself in 1944, as a symbol of Liberation. She also told us about the dramatic events which caused the death of 16 people



who were shot in the village, and she thanked, with tears in her eyes, our friends Herb and Butch for what they, and their comrades, had done for the liberation of France. This pause was one of the most emotional moments of our week in the Toulouse area.



Our stay in Villaudric carried on with a meal and some wine tasting in a huge cellar that was several centuries old. The owner of the place is a retired Air Force General, mister Rougevin-Baville, who was once the Commander of the Lafayette squadron, a few years after the war. A conversion as interesting as delicious!...

We were well fed and rested when we headed towards the town of Montbartier, another target of the raid on June 25, 1944, where were located enemy fuel dumps. The entire village was waiting for us for the visit of the vestiges of this bombing: A few craters caused by the explosion of the bombs (Curiously, the grass never grew again in these craters. Probably an effect of the chemicals contained in the explosives used for these bombs).



The reception that followed, in the Town Hall of Montbartier was, no doubt, one of the biggest of this week. All the inhabitants had been invited by the Mayor! Everyone wanted to get near our three heroes and get an autograph from them. The members of the fantastic local war museum presented each one of our veterans with a small propeller that was used to arm the bombs dropped during the raid on the fuel dumps. Nicely packed, these propellers were added to the numerous presents that our friends received during their stay. Unfortunately, our veterans had become so tired after such a busy day, that we had to say good bye to our friends in Montbartier, not without a supreme honor though: The church bells sounded, for the first time since 1945, as they did to announce the end of the war!

During the same day, following a request from one of our young visitors, whose father had taken part in Operation *Carpet Bagger*, a small group went to visit some french Resistants. These very dangerous operations consisted of dropping weapons and food to these underground fighters. Many of those who visited Villaudric and Montbartier regretted not to be able to take part in this visit, especially when they heard that the qualities of the Armagnac were generously revealed during that reunion!...

#### Thursday 28 June

This Thursday was very quiet and allowed our friends to enjoy an afternoon of spare time after a lunch in the restaurant on the airfield of Lasbordes and the visit of a hangar where is built a Breguet 14 replica. The evening meal was taken in an american restaurant, the Mac Mahon, to demonstrate to our friends that the food resources of the area are not exclusively made of local cooking.



#### Friday 29 June

After they were made prisoners by the enemy, the crew members were held in a chateau not far from Blagnac. They stayed there for some time and were interrogated, then they were transferred to Toulouse, and finally left for a prisoners camp in Germany. Because of the scarce information that was available and the number of chateaux in the area of Toulouse, finding the right one was very difficult and some doubts remained until the very last moment. It's only when our two friends walked inside the cellar of the Château du Ferradou, a few kilometres away from Cornebarrieu, that they recognized the place. Memories that had been hiding in the deepest part of their mind for so many years, came back, together with extreme emotion.

The castle is now part of a private school complex, and a few students took this opportunity to get a few autographs from our heroes. The Director of this school offered a meal to these extraordinary visitors, which helped us recovering from these emotions.

We were getting near the conclusion of this week. It ended with a meal in the Manoir du Petit Prince in Francazal. A few speeches, full of emotion and friendship were given, and our three heroes were made Honorary Colonels of

the French Supporter Squadron. They received many presents from the various Associations which participated to this event, and saying good bye was difficult. But the contact that was established with our three friends will be maintained, like it will be with the two other crew members who, unfortunately, could not travel to France.



### **THANK YOU**

Such an article would not be complete without expressing our gratitude to those who made it possible. This help was given in many different ways: Financial, logistical, artistic, culinary, aeronautical, historical, administrative, municipal, from benevolent associations, and many others...

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**ROLLS ROYCE**  
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**GENERAL ELECTRIC AIRCRAFT ENGINES**  
**HAMILTON SUNDSTRAND**  
**CRÉDIT LYONNAIS**  
**SCAC AIR SERVICE**  
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**LES ASSOCIATIONS D'ANCIENS COMBATTANTS**  
**AIR AVENTURES**  
**APREMIP**  
**AÉROTHÈQUE**

With a very special mention for the main organizers of this project: The members of Associations

**CROIX DU SUD**  
and  
**FRENCH SUPPORTER SQUADRON**  
of the  
**CONFEDERATE AIR FORCE**

And, finally, we warmly thank those benevolent people, those "Unsung Heroes", who, very discreetly and anonymously, participated by giving an invaluable support through their hard work without which this project would not have been as successful as it has been, mesdames:

**Anne ROEDER**  
**Bunty BATEMAN**  
**Régine PERRIN**



# IMAGES D'ÉPINAL

21 & 22 July 2001

For the first time since the creation of the FSS, our Unit was invited to participate in this fantastic airshow on the airfield of Epinal-Mirecourt, which used to be a U.S. Air Force base. Thanks to colonel Eric Janssonne, a contact was quickly established with one of the organizers of this event, mister Jean-Jacques Lignier, who we sincerely thank for his warm welcome and for his efficiency. In everyone's opinion, the most remarkable fact of this week-end, was the extreme kindness that prevailed during this entire event. We were greeted with a multitude of kind attentions from all the departments concerned. The organizers, the Air Force personnel, the Security agents, the Firemen, the news reporters, did everything they could to make our stay a real success, and even the meteorologists who managed to get a bright sun shine for us!

Arrived on Friday afternoon, after a 400 kilometres drive, colonels Christian Frézard, Fumiko Delfino, and myself, proceeded with the building of our tent, and were soon joined by colonel Christian Tournemine and his wife Maryse, faithful friends of the P.X. since they did not miss a single event that the FSS attended this year since the start of the airshow season!

On Saturday 21 July, took place the arrival of the Tour de France of the young pilots. Although not very spectacular, this event was nevertheless interesting, thanks to the number of airplanes involved, and the celebrations that came with it. Colonels Eric et Jean-Claude Janssonne increased the number of colonels present, and numerous civilian and military planes gave us a first class display during the afternoon as they rehearsed for the real airshow the following day. The big event of the day was the arrival of colonel Gilles Avenel with his Jurka, a small plane that makes one irresistibly think it is a small size Mustang. Thanks to the cooperation of Jean-Jacques Lignier, we had the honor to park this airplane in front of our booth, which drew the public towards our P.X. and greatly increase its efficiency. We were meeting Gilles



for the very first time since he became a member of the FSS (I remind you that Gilles lives and work in London), and we had many subjects to talk about until he left the day after.



At 05:30 PM, the big star of the show arrived. The B17 of Association *Forteresse Toujours Volante* performed a low altitude fly-by and was parked only 20 meters away from our booth (Another nice gesture from the organizers, which we did appreciate since the public automatically related this WWII veterans with the goals of our Association). This way of displaying aircraft was a good omen of what the future will be, every member of the FSS imagining our own L Bird parked next to our tent...



After a good rest night, we opened the P.X. early on this Sunday morning, ready to welcome the public. But before that, colonel Gilles Avenel took colonel Fumiko Delfino, then colonel Christian Tournemine, for a flight in his Jurka. Very pleased by this early morning flight which gave them a chance to see the countryside and enjoy the comfort of this plane, our two friends worked even better during the whole day. The public arrived early and we enjoyed many friendly conversations. The P.X, thanks to colonel Fumiko Delfino, was selling steadily, and, at the end of this week-end, we



had exceeded by a few hundred Francs the high cost of travelling from Paris which included the renting of a van, the fuel, and the motorway tolls.

Because of the airfield restrictions caused by the airshow, and the long flight home, our friend Gilles had to leave early. He was replaced by colonel Jean-Claude Miniggio who flew in with his Piper Cub. He gave us the latest news about his Morane which should be ready for the 2002 season.



The airshow started at 14:00. Thanks to Eric (And to the kindness of the organizers and the authorities), three of us were given access to the taxiways, with the aim of taking better pictures... The flight displays were harmoniously arranged: Dragon Rapide, Cessna, TBM, Zlin, Flamand, Auster, Vampire, T6, B17, Mirage 2000, Mirage F1, Cricri, Fokker DR1, Pilatus of the aerobatic team *Patrouille Apache*, and many others gave us a



ballet that ended with a perfect demonstration of the *Patrouille de France*.

We all wished that such a marvellous day could last indefinitely, but, as everything must come to an end, we soon had to pack. We dismantled the tent, packed the P.X. and the furniture, loaded the van, all arduous but inevitable tasks. Maryse, Fumiko, the two Christian and myself did it in two hours, at the end of which, at around 21:00, we got on the road to Paris. We arrived home after a 5 hours drive, tired, but happy after such a nice week-end, our mind full of nice images and friendship.



Mister Jean-Jacques Lignier has already expressed his wish to see us again in Epinal next year, an invitation that we already accepted with great enthusiasm. We thank him, and all his colleagues organizers of this airshow, for their kindness and their generosity. See you all next year!

Col. Bernard Delfino



*NOTE: If the airshows that we attended in 2001 revealed, more than ever, the need for our Squadron to get an L Bird, the one in Epinal was the event that best demonstrated the extraordinary possibilities of displaying such a plane, in flight of course, but also on the ground, parked next to our booth. It will allow us to perfectly illustrate the goals of our Organization. Therefore, we must accelerate the collect of the funds required by this purchase, and we ask all our members to increase their efforts to look for Sponsors. Even the smallest donations will be welcome, like the few coins dropped in our "bomb" money-box by some kind and generous spectators. Thank you!*



### COLONEL GEORGE HILL HAS GONE WEST

We were shocked to hear about the death of colonel **George Hill** on May 28, 2001. A member of the CAF and the FSS since December 1996, George was an important element of our team. Big by his size but also by his heart and kindness, George was an aeronautical engineer. He returned to the USA a few months ago, and nothing indicated that this trip back home would end in such a tragic way. George was very modest, a quality that generally goes with kindness, and he never gave us a clue about the seriousness of his illness until the very end. This is why his many friends were so shocked to hear that he had left us. The French Supporter Squadron, on behalf of all its members, sent its collective condolences to his relatives and friends. Good bye George...



### BUNTY BATEMAN HELPS THE L BIRD PROJECT

In memory of Colonel **George Hill**, our friend **Bunty Bateman**, widow of our dear **Lewis Bateman**, has made a donation of another 500,00 Francs to the L Bird project. Like Bunty says, George was very enthusiastic about the CAF and the FSS, and, in addition, he was a very close friend of Lewis. A big Thank You Bunty! This donation is a step further towards the completion of this dream, and a perfect tribute to **George Hill**.

### WELCOME WILLIAM (BILL) KATSONES

Bill is a CAF Life Member (# 2151), and lives in Corpus Christi (Texas). He was born on September 8, 1946, and is married to lovely Jacqueline. Bill's aviation career started when he was 18, and enrolled in the USAF to become an Air Traffic Controller. He did two service tours in South-East Asia. From November 1966 till November 1967, he was stationed on the air base of Ubon Royal Thai (Thailand), then, from November 1968 till November 1969, he was based in Tan Son Nhut,



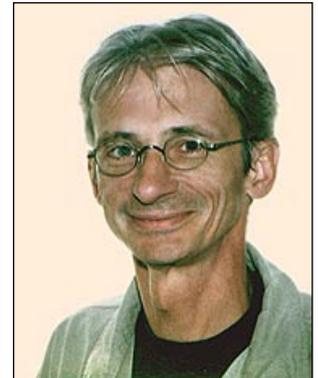
Saigon, South Vietnam. When he left the USAF, he worked for the FAA as a Los Angeles Air Traffic Controller from June 1970 till November 1979. A health problem forced him to stop and become an Aircraft Dispatcher with Continental Airlines in Houston, Texas. During the Gulf War, Bill dealt with the 747's which flew between the USA and Saudi Arabia. In January 1991, just prior

to the outbreak of this war, he had a chance to fly this trip. As he was flying over the southern part of France, Bill knew that, one day, he would come back and visit our country, which he did in May 1995 when his wife and him stayed on the Côte d'Azur (Nice, Cannes, Juan les Pins...). Today, Bill has a few problems walking but he would come back to France with great pleasure (*Ed: We hope you will Bill!*). His favorite Warbird is the Curtiss P40-B Tomahawk flown by the Flying Tigers. His main hobby is photography, and Bill is ready to help the Squadron as much as possible. Welcome to the FSS Bill!

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Corpus Christi 78418-6340  
Texas - USA  
Telephone: 1 361 949 2830  
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Email: < bkat@prodigy.net >

### WELCOME JEAN-LUC VAN CAMPENHOUT

Jean-Luc is a Regular CAF member (# 27765). He lives in Belgium, in Braine l'Alleud. He was born on November 29, 1953, and he is an Accounting Expert and Director. A Private Pilot, fond of aviation since he was a young boy, Jean-Luc currently flies a small plane FK9 Mark 3. He usually travels to the USA twice a year, and regularly visits Kissimmee to fly a T6. He loves air shows and attends as many as possible, either in the USA or Europe. He worked as a benevolent for the Air Museum in Brussels, and his favorite Warbird is the Spitfire, but he finds that the most fascinating airplane is the Me163, a replica of which is flying in Germany. You will be able to meet Jean-Luc during Airsho2001, and, we do hope, during our Squadron's General Assembly in November. Welcome to the French Supporter Squadron Jean-Luc!



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Fax: 32.2.332.28.39  
Email: < patagonie24@hotmail.com >

### 2001 ELECTIONS OF THE FSS

The renewal of two members of the FSS Board of Administration will include the positions of **Vice-President** (Executive Officer), and **Treasurer** (Finance Officer). If you wish to apply for one of these important jobs, please write to the FSS before October 31, 2001.

## A NEW NAME FOR THE CAF

The list of 4 possible new names chosen for the CAF General Assembly vote has just been published:

**HERITAGE FLYING MUSEUM  
GHOST SQUADRON  
HERITAGE AIR FORCE  
COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE**

One of these 4 names will become our Organization's name from January 01, 2002. The publication of this list, so early in August, will allow every Colonel to take his or her time to think about it and pick the one he or she believes is the best.

**If you don't intend to go to Midland, don't forget to request a ballot by contacting the CAF Director of Administration, Keith LAWRENCE:**

**PO BOX 62000  
MIDLAND  
TEXAS 79711-2000  
USA  
FAX: 00 1 915 563 80 46  
Email: < diradmin@cafhq.org >**

## FRIENDS OF THE FSS

Following a request by two people who particularly like the actions of the FSS, but who, for various reasons, cannot become CAF members, either as a Colonel or as an Associate Member, the FSS Board of Administration has decided to create a new form of "membership" with a simple subscription to our Newsletter for the amount of 250,00 Francs per year (Or € 40.00).

This subscription will not allow these **Friends of the FSS** to wear the CAF colonel uniform, to take part in the votes during the CAF annual elections, nor to enjoy the advantage reserved to CAF colonels. It will not allow them to vote during the FSS General Assemblies, but it will allow them to actively participate in the FSS activities (An individual Insurance is mandatory), and to attend any meeting or General Assembly as observers. Becoming a Friend of the French Supporter Squadron of the Confederate Air force does not, therefore, mean that one becomes a member of this Squadron. It simply means that one has a good opportunity to support its actions and its ideas while keeping a complete independence. This subscription may well become a jumping board for the most enthusiastic of these Friends who will be able to become, one day, a full member of the CAF and the FSS.

## AAHM GRAND OPENING OF THE "FRENCH AVIATION" PERMANENT DISPLAY IN MIDLAND

Tami O'Bannion, Director of the American Airpower Heritage Museum in Midland, has suggested to the Airsho Committee that this Grand Opening should be held on Thursday 04 October, 2001, at 14:00.

Every member and friend of the French Supporter Squadron who is in Midland on that day, is therefore invited to attend this big event. Any change in the date or time will be announced in due time.

## FORCED LANDING OF THE P38 "WHITE LIGHTNING"

The P38 White Lightning, owned by colonel Lefty Gardner, co-founder of the CAF with Lloyd Nolen, has suffered a fire in the left engine nacelle while his son, Ladd Gardner, was flying the aircraft home after an airshow. The fire quickly burned through the nacelle and the wing, and the cockpit filled with smoke. Blinded, unable to land on the runway of the close-by Greenwood airport, Ladd decided to belly-land the plane in a cotton field, which probably saved the aircraft from total destruction since the dust and the soil put the fire out. The airplane was lifted onto a trailer and towed to Greenwood where the landing gear was lowered without too many problems. The plane is now waiting for the result of the NTSB enquiry. The cost of the repair will, no doubt, be high, but one can congratulate Ladd Gardner for a landing in such difficult conditions (*Photos: Harlan Short, DFW Wing*).



## LAST MINUTE: TAMI O'BANNION VICTIM OF A ROAD ACCIDENT

On August 09, as she was driving to the airport at about 08:30, the Director of the AAHM Museum, Tami O'Bannion, was the victim of a car accident. Suffering from several broken ribs and liver injuries, she was taken to Midland hospital where she had a successful surgery. Tami was out of intensive care the following day and she's now resting. Already she misses her computer and her mobile phone, which is a very good sign!... The members of the French Supporter Squadron wish her a prompt recovery and hope to see her ready for Airsho2001.

## PROPELLER BLADE FOR SALE

Colonel Cédric Malhaire has donated a propeller blade to the FSS. This blade, part of a four blades assembly, was probably fitted to a Bréguet Atlantic, or a C130 Hercules. Two meters in length, it is in a perfect state and, with a stand of your choice, it will look great in your entrance hall or living-room. The selling price is 1000,00 Francs, and the product of this sale will be put entirely into the L Bird budget. Don't leave it too late!

## The FSS P.X.

The following articles are available against payment by cheque to the **French Supporter Squadron**.  
(N.B.: **Postage is extra**).

- Official Squadron patch: 60,00 F.
- "Gioux" type Squadron patch: 40,00 F.
- Central Texas Wing patch: 40,00 F.
- FSS pin, *cloisonné*, 5 colors: 60,00 F.
- Pins P38 Lightning enamelled: 20,00 F.
- Painting "Lloyd's Dream" 50x76cm: 250,00 F.
- Painting "Lloyd's Dream" 50x76cm. framed: 350,00 F.
- 100 sheets of FSS paper with your own letter head: 30,00 F.
- Color Pictures (B17, B25, etc...) 30x45cm: 80,00 F.
- Color Pictures (B17, B25, etc...) 30x45cm framed: 130,00 F.
- T shirt Piper CUB, 170 grams, Hanes, XL: 100,00 F.
- T shirt cartoon P40, 170 grams, Hanes, XL: 100,00 F.
- T shirts: Other sizes available on order.
- Color aircraft profiles 15 x 20 cm. pre-framed: *North American P51D Mustang, Republic P47 Thunderbolt, Boeing B17 Flying Fortress, B24 Liberator, DC3 Dakota, Avro Lancaster, Fairey Swordfish, T6 Harvard, Handley-Page Halifax, PBV Catalina, Hawker Hurricane, BF 109 G2, and two modern jets, the Corsair 2 and the Starfighter: 25,00 F. each.*
- Warbird cards: 25,00 F. chaque.
- Video cassette of sequences filmed in Midland (55mm) VHS PAL: 100,00 F.
- Large format paintings by Col. Eric Besançon: F4U Corsair and Messerschmitt 262 night fighter: 200,00 Francs (Limited edition of the Me262 signed by the pilot available on request).

## FSS ANNUAL DUES - YEAR 2001-2002

**Amazingly, a few members have not paid their FSS 2001-2002 Annual Dues yet. We ask them to send their payment as soon as possible and thank them in advance.**

## FSS ANNUAL DUES - YEAR 2002-2003

€€€ THE FSS AND THE EURO €€€

As everyone knows, from September 2001, the european money will enter a phase that will lead to its full use early in 2002. The FSS has to get ready and will adopt, at the end of this year, this new currency.

The Unit Annual Dues will therefore be modified as follows:

Colonel: € 50.00  
Associate Member: € 50.00  
Cadet: € 20.00  
Friends of the FSS: € 40.00

The Annual Dues for our members residing in the USA will remain unchanged at \$ 50.00.

## CODE NAME ALPHA 2001 • TOTAL ON 31/08/2001

Jean ROEDER ☸☸ (M. Perrin & J. Leroux)  
Henri BOURRASSIER ☸ (Alphonse Thiry)

## L BIRD SPONSORS - JULY 2001

### EXTERNAL SPONSORS

AVIATION CLUB DE FRANCE  
LE PUBLIC SYSTEME CINEMA  
LE FANA DE L'AVIATION  
SCHOTT NYC

### INTERNAL SPONSORS

(In chronological order)

Marcel FRANCISCI	17000.67	250000
Bernard DELFINO	11221.00	245000
Jacques PERAGALLO	3966.98	240000
Sandy & Connie SANSING	8100.00	235000
Cédric MALHAIRE	1090.00	230000
Claude REQUI	4985.00	225000
Michel CAHIEZ	2800.00	220000
Julien LEPELLETIER	1861.00	215000
Fumiko DELFINO	2045.00	210000
Jean-Jacques SAHUT	1000.00	205000
Lewis BATEMAN	4170.00	200000
Stéphane DUCHEMIN	796.00	195000
Serge CLODORE	350.00	190000
Daniel CLODORE	350.00	185000
Jean-Paul MERLIER	440.00	180000
Jean RCEDER	3450.00	175000
Roger VAUCAMP	1750.00	170000
Daniel & Lucie SAUVAGE	1335.00	165000
Patrick PIERRE-PIERRE	3875.00	160000
Marcel et Liliane RUPPERT	1210.00	155000
Christian FREZARD	500.00	150000
Jean-Christophe DEBUISSON	1300.00	145000
Michel BON	350.00	140000
Dons anonymes du PUBLIC	1275.00	135000
Paul BARLAND	1000.00	130000
Ron WESP	1000.00	125000
Christian & M-France FALENTIN	1000.00	120000
Christian TOURNEMINE	500.00	115000
Didier CARDINAL	1070.00	110000
Louis-Jean GIOUX	230.00	105000
Eric DUCREAU	350.00	100000
Eric JANSSONNE	1430.00	95000
Henri BOURRASSIER	250.00	90000
Jim LUX	1200.00	85000
Jean-Claude MINIGGIO	400.00	80000
Christophe BASTIDE	3850.00	75000
Yves DONJON	1750.00	70000
Guy ROBERT	1300.00	65000
Centex Wing	175.00	60000
Christiane HÉBERT	1000.00	55000
Yuri DELFINO	777.00	50000
Kim TOLFREE	1160.00	45000
Georges VAN HOVE	500.00	40000
Terran TIDWELL	780.00	35000
Yves HOUSSIN	1000.00	30000
Jean-Jacques VAUCHER	1200.00	25000
Bernard PIERACCI	500.00	20000
Eric BESANÇON	300.00	15000
Hervé CHERRY	300.00	10000
Bunty BATEMAN	1023.00	5000
Giovanni COMIS	605.77	0
Peter LANGRIDGE	150.00	
Jean-Claude PETIT	205.00	
Claude GASCON	1000.00	
Nicolas LIBIS	925.00	
Gilles AVENEL	1300.00	
Intérêts Bancaires Annuels	3028.06	
TOTAL	107007.98	

