

WINGS



NEWS

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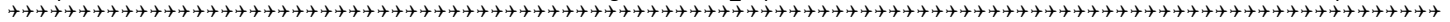
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Wings Over Wendy's Tours Autry Museum of the American West



Photo by Monica Carrillo, Autry Museum of the American West

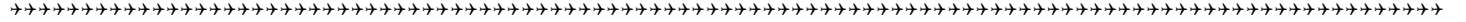
On Thursday, May 26, 2024, the members of Wings Over Wendy's toured the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, California.

The museum contains twenty exhibits on two levels. The Wings Over Wendy's members were divided into four groups and assigned a docent to guide and explain the exhibits as time permitted.

Among the permanent exhibits were the *Art of the West*, *Imagined Wests*, *Waterways*, *Art of the West*, *Cowboy Gallery*, *Western Frontiers: Stories of Fact and Fiction*, *Human Nature*, *Journeys Gallery*, *The Colt Revolver in the American West*, *The Balance of Power on the American Frontier*, and the *California Continued Ethnobotanical Garden*.

Temporary exhibits included *Reclaiming El Camino: Native Resistance in the Missions and Beyond*, *Sherman Indian School: 100+ Years of Education and Resilience*, and *Investigating Griffith Park*.

Following the tour, the group had lunch at the Pinocchio Restaurant, located in the Monte Carlo Italian Deli, Burbank. Attending the tour from Wings Over Wendy's were **Lee Ambers, Ron Boggess, Barry Chapman, Bob Donovan, Bob and Nancy Eisenhart, Bill and Delores Garland, Marilyn Hauck, Fred Kaplan, Vic Karechoff, Judy Lamppu, John Cromwell, Marion Lovelace, Chuck Mathews, Ed Reynolds, Earl and Ester Roth, Karen and Tim Velarde and Brooke Pierce.**



32nd Annual Canoga Park Memorial Day Parade

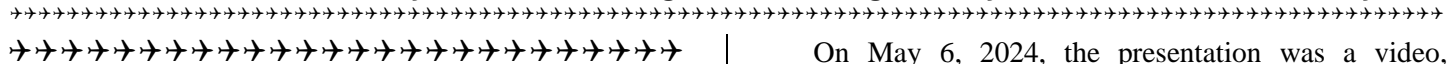


Photos by Larry Kushner

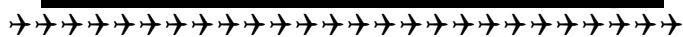
For over ten years, Wings Over Wendy's has had two trucks participating in the Canoga Park Memorial Day Parade. A key organizer of the entry is Fred Kaplan. We were saddened to learn on this year's Memorial Day that Fred was injured preparing a truck for the parade. Max Carlie stepped in to replace Fred in directing the decorations of the trucks.

(Continued page 2)

Max Carlisle and Bob Jacobi drove the trucks. Riding in the trucks were David Alvarez, Dave Anderson, Lee Auger, Peggy Jean Bassett, Ron Boggess, Richard Burns, Cindy and Emily Carlisle, Bob and Nancy Eisenhart, Jane Jacobi, Andy Kopetzky, Penny and Victor Korechoff, Erick and Jill Lace, Marion Lovelace, Chuck Mathews, Ray Rodriguez, Bruce Schultz, Maurice and Moses Vasquez, and Joe Weber. Larry Kushner worked the parade as a photographer. Bill Ratner was a Parade Director. Mary Ratner and Ron Roscoe assisted in Parade Management. Mark Reed drove the Operation Gratitude entry with Bob Donovan and Judy Lamppu. Bob and Mike Blumenfield, Jesse Gabriel, Connie Hein, Ed Reynolds, Ron and Diane Ross, Brad Sherman, and Brad Wright were in the VIP Stands. Brad Wright's daughter Melanie sang *God Bless America* at the end of the Opening Ceremony. Watching the event in the back of the VIP stands were Marilyn Hauck, Martin Light, Maria Rodriguez, Wayne Smith, and Lucie Volotzky.



May 2023 Meetings



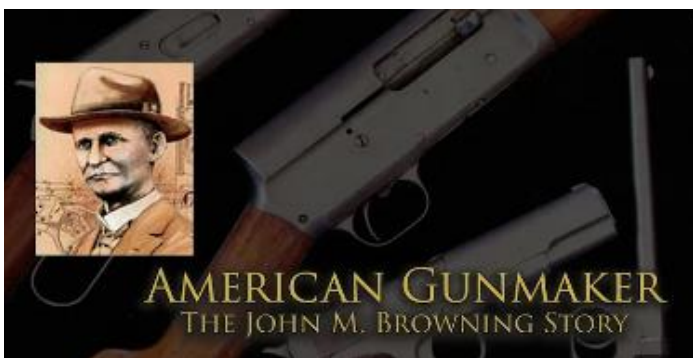
May 6, 2023



Photo by Dave Anderson

Officer Tosti visits a WOW Meeting

On May 6, 2024, Duke Dao introduced fellow officer Mitchell Tosti to the group. Officer Tosti will be working as a Senior Lead Officer in the Woodland Hills area.



American Gunmaker: The John M. Browning Story

On May 6, 2024, the presentation was a video, *American Gunmaker: The John M. Browning Story (1991) Documentary by Fess Parker and Lee Groberg.*

The video documented the remarkable life of John Moses Browning with host Fess Parker as he spans three generations of the Browning family to tell this fascinating story. With over 100 firearms patents to his credit, Browning's inventive genius spanned six decades and included many legendary pistol, rifle, and shotgun designs for Winchester, Remington, Colt, Fabrique Nationale, and others. The Browning name is still synonymous with the automatic pistols, rifles, machine guns, and cannons used by the United States and its allies through all of the major world conflicts of the last century, and several Browning designs continue to defend freedom around the globe today.

The documentary started with Fess Parker reminding the viewers that he played the role of Davy Crockett and that, in those days, rifles were just as important to an immigrant as food and water. It was this period in history that influenced the creative talents of perhaps America's greatest gun inventor, John Moses Browning, who, over 45 years, would change the course of modern firearms development. For centuries, man has used firearms in combat, self-defense, and competition.

Fess narrated an overview of the history of portable firearms and their cylinders.

By 1836, Samuel Colt and the Industrial Revolution were responsible for the first American firearm to be mass-produced.

These events greatly influenced another gun inventor, Jonathan Browning, the father of John Moses Browning. It was in this setting that a jack-of-all-trades person named Jonathan Browning became fascinated by firearms.

By age ten, John became interested in making guns, and by age 23, his first patented gun was built by his father. His father died shortly after, and John and his brother built a gun factory and manufactured 25 single-shot rifles based on his patented design.

Winchester contracted to build their Model 1885. Browning then designed the Model 87 lever-action shotgun.

After a two-year service as a Mormon Missionary in Georgia and Tennessee, he returned to Ogden in 1889 and turned out 20 new patents over the next three years. Once

John got started, there was no stopping him from age 29 to 44, a 15-year period; he turned out 52 different firearms, counting time out for two years as a missionary that averaged one every three months.

Fess Parker believed one reason John Browning's designs worked so well was that he had the gift and the craftsmanship to take his design from his mind to his shop and create in three dimensions. He could work with tools and develop his ideas without the necessity of relying on others. Today, we have some sophisticated computers that can illustrate a part from many angles and even integrate it with other parts right on the screen, but 90 years ago, John Browning's mind and his hands were accomplishing that same thing that we have to rely on computers for today the man himself was a genius there's no doubt about it he could work up designs in a remarkable time.

He also had the luxury and the benefit of working with probably the best firearm designer in the world. He worked with the people at Winchester who perfected his initial designs: Remington, Fabric Nationale, and Colt. He was fortunate in that because it allowed his products to come to fruition much quicker than they might normally have had if he had been working by himself in Ogden.

John Browning often said that the best gun is the simplest gun once it has worked out mechanically. He also said it's not so hard figuring out the essentials of a gun mechanism. The trouble is getting the essentials in the right place.

The video discussed the events that led John to design many guns. The following is a list from the internet of 30 of the guns he designed:

- U.S. M1895 Colt-Browning machine gun**
- FN Browning M1899/M1900**
- Colt Model 1900**
- Colt Model 1902**
- Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammer (.38 ACP)**
- Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammerless (.32 ACP)**
- Colt Model 1905**
- Remington Model 8 (1906)** – a long recoil semi-automatic rifle
- Colt Model 1908 Vest Pocket (.25 ACP)**
- Colt Model 1908 Pocket Hammerless (.380 ACP)**
- FN Model 1910**
- U.S. M1911 pistol (.45 ACP)**
- Colt Woodsman pistol**
- Winchester Model 1885** – a falling-block single-shot rifle
- Winchester Model 1886** – a lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1887** – a lever-action repeating shotgun
- Winchester Model 1890** – a slide-action repeating rifle (.22)
- Winchester Model 1892** – a lever-action repeating rifle

- Winchester Model 1894** – a lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1895** – a lever-action repeating rifle
- Browning Auto-5** – a long recoil semi-automatic shotgun
- U.S. M1917 water-cooled machine gun**
- U.S. M1919 air-cooled machine gun**
- U.S. M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)**
- U.S. M2 .50-caliber heavy machine gun of 1921** (the famed “Ma-Deuce” weapon)
- Remington Model 8** – a semi-auto rifle
- Remington Model 24** – a semi-auto rifle (.22), also produced by Browning Firearms as the SA-22
- Browning Hi-Power (Grand Puissance or GP)** – the standard sidearm of many military and police forces
- The Browning Superposed** – an over/under shotgun designed by John Browning in 1922 and entered production in 1931
- Ithaca Model 37** – a pump-action repeating shotgun

In addition to these guns, Browning also developed several cartridges, including the .25 ACP, .32 ACP, .38 ACP, 9mm Browning Long, .380 ACP, .45 ACP, and .50 BMG. His legacy lives on, as many of his designs are still being produced and copied today. Truly, John Browning was a genius in the world of firearms!

May 13, 2023



Fred MacDonald Revisits Wings Over Wendy's

(Continued page 5)

A member from the meetings at Platt Village, Fred's wife, discovered the Auditorium address and encouraged him to attend our meetings. We hope to see him in the future.



How The Alaskan Oil Pipeline was Built

The May 13, 2024, featured presentation was an episode from the History Channel Modern Marvels titled *How The Alaskan Oil Pipeline was Built*.

In 1973, a desperate America, starved by an OPEC embargo, began construction on an 800-mile lifeline for its insatiable oil hunger. The episode studied the technological triumph of the Alaskan oil pipeline. It provides a history of the US purchase of Alaska and describes its harsh climate. Then, it reviews the development of oil, its bi-product gasoline, and the need for gasoline, starting from Edwin Drake's discovery of oil in Pennsylvania in 1859. The discussion also covered the construction of pipelines, such as the Big Inch pipeline, which was built 60 years later to transport oil to the East Coast, and John D. Rockefeller's control over the railroads, leading to his dominance over the industry. It discusses the exploration of oil in Alaska and the discovery of the largest oil field in North America, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. At the same time, a political environment movement was formed, and the Environmental Protection Agency was established.

The development of the Alaskan oil pipeline, which faced significant environmental and financial challenges, was highlighted for its significance in reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. The discussion also addressed the environmental concerns and financial and job opportunities the industry provides.

The narrator discussed the challenges and solutions in transporting oil across icy waters and the construction of the Trans-Alaska pipeline. He highlighted the difficulties posed by the harsh Arctic environment, permafrost, wildlife, and earthquakes and the solutions devised by engineers to protect the pipeline. The narrator also addressed the concerns about animal migration and the impact of earthquakes, explaining how the pipeline was designed to withstand seismic events and remain stable during temperature fluctuations. He described the complex

construction process, which involved over 70,000 workers over two years, with only 31 fatalities. The narrator also mentioned that Alaskan residents receive an annual oil dividend and pay no state income tax. Despite the obstacles, both the Atigan and Thompson Passes were successfully completed.

The Alaskan pipeline, a massive project completed after two years and costing \$9 billion, was discussed. The pipeline, which runs 800 miles from the Prudhoe Bay oil field to Valdez, uses two Rolls-Royce turbo engines and employs pigs to maintain it. It remains the most efficient way to move oil over long distances, with up to four supertankers filled daily at the Valdez terminal. The narrator also reviewed the environmental impact of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the potential discovery of a new oil field alongside Prudhoe Bay. The psychological impact of building the pipeline and its eventual removal and restoration of land to its original condition was also addressed.

May 20, 2023



Photos by Larry Kushner

John Alford Visits Wings Over Wendy's

On May 20, 2024, John Alford, Senior Policy Deputy for Congressman Brad Sherman, attended the Wings Over Wendy's meeting to inform the group that Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA) and Congresswoman Monica De La Cruz (R-TX), along with Reps. Levin (D-CA), Carbajal (D-CA), Lieu (D-CA), Gottheimer (D-NJ), Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL), Nickel (D-NC), Budzinski (D-IL), Foster (D-IL), Brownley (D-CA), Sessions (R-TX), Meuser (R-PA), Bacon (R-NE), Mast (R-FL), and Fitzpatrick (D-PA) introduced the ***Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act (HUDVA)***, to get homeless disabled veterans into the housing built exclusively for them on veteran land.

This legislation would amend the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of annual income to exclude disability payments received by a veteran for eligibility purposes for housing built under the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

(Continued page 6)

Currently, many disabled veterans – who need that assistance most – are unable to access housing programs for veterans because of how income is defined. The more severe a disability is, the more disability benefits a veteran receives, and the less likely it is that they can access veteran housing assistance.

To address the root of the problem, the *Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act (HUDVA)* will amend the existing law that defines income eligibility for veterans housing programs like HUD-VASH.

There are many other federal programs for which veteran disability payments are not considered income, such as for income tax purposes. This legislation would address this inconsistency in existing federal law by appropriately excluding disability benefits from a veteran’s income for housing eligibility purposes.



Photo by Larry Kushner

Jim Sommer Invites Wings Over Wendy’s Members to LA Fleet Week

Also, on May 20, 2024, Jim Sommer, Captain, USCG (Retired), invited members of Wings Over Wendy’s to attend LA Fleet Week 2024. This year, Fleet Week Public Tours and EXPO was held May 24 to 27, 2024.

Ships visiting include ACTUV SEA HUNTER, World’s largest unmanned drone vessel, Aircraft carrier USS CARL VINSON (CVN-70), and US Coast Guard Fast Response Cutter TERRELL HORNE (WPC-1131)



Photo by Larry Kushner

Talk By 105-year-old WWII B-17 Pilot Irvin Poff

The featured speaker on May 20, 2023, was Irvin Poff, a 105 year old WWII B-17 pilot. Irvin spoke for over an hour without notes, recalling his life and details of his WWII flying career.

He talked about his growing up in a farm community, graduating from the University of Missouri, his enlistment in 1942 to become a USAAF pilot, his service as an enlisted soldier awaiting a pilot class assignment, his pilot training, and eventual B-17 training.

Irvin recounted his many bases along his journey to get to his WWII 15th AF base in Sicily, Italy. He told us that he volunteered to fly as many missions as possible to complete the 25 and then extended to 50 Combat Missions to be reassigned back to the United States.

The first missions he flew as a co-pilot. Once he was promoted to pilot in command of a crew, he volunteered his crew to quicken the weeks it would take to reach the 50 missions. In Italy, crews were not assigned to a specific aircraft as they were in England, so it was easier to be scheduled for missions. Irvin told us about missions he flew to bomb Polisti. He also flew a non-combat mission to Israel.

When he returned to the United States, he told of his maneuvering to avoid being assigned to B-29s, which would have had him flying combat missions in the Pacific.

After the war, he stayed in the Air Force reserves and went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

A truly amazing man!



Photo by Larry Kushner

Bob Eisenhart and Ed Reynolds present Irvin Poff with a model B-17 and a Certificate of Appreciation for his presentation.

May 27, 2023



Photo by Larry Kushner

32nd Annual Canoga Park Memorial Day Parade

On May 27, 2023, a physical meeting was not held. Rather, a Zoom-only meeting for those members who did not participate in the parade. An attempt to Zoom video the parade was a failure, but parts of the parade activities were shown on Zoom.



Photo by Larry Kushner

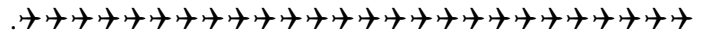
Ron and Diane Ross Awarded a Certificate of Recognition and US Flag

During the 32nd Annual Canoga Park Memorial Day Parade Opening Ceremony, Congressman Brad Sherman presented Ron and Diane Ross a US flag that has flown over the US Capitol and a Certificate of Recognition for Hosting and supporting Wings Over Wendy's since 2001.

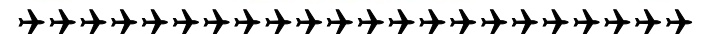
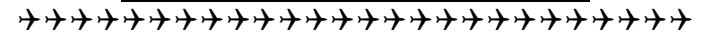


Photo by Larry Kushner

A well-deserved honor!



In Other News



World War II hero Irvin Poff flying high on his 105th birthday

Perry Van Houten, May 6, 2024



In Italy in 1945, Fifteenth Air Force pilot Irvin Poff in the cockpit of a B-17 "Flying Fortress."

(Continued page 8)

Oak View resident Irvin Poff celebrated a big milestone last week when he turned 105.

Born on April 25, 1919, on an 80-acre farm outside of Kansas City, Missouri, Poff attended a one-room country school where one teacher taught all grades. He often rode to school on horseback. “Irvin grew up poor. There were no shoes and no bathroom in the house,” said grandson Corey Avalos.

Poff graduated in the top five from the University of Missouri agriculture department and, with World War II raging, applied for and was accepted into the U.S. Army Air Corps.



Photo provided
**1st Lt. Irvin Poff in 1944,
A pilot with the U.S. Army Air Corps.**

While he was waiting for his training to start, Poff worked for 18 months as a soil scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Assigned to the crew of a B-17 “Flying Fortress,” Poff flew 50 combat missions in Italy and Romania, including missions to bomb the Ploesti oil fields, one of the most heavily protected targets with nearly 300 anti-aircraft guns deployed.

Just prior to Poff’s deployment with the Fifteenth Air Force, it had lost half its aircraft in a single day.

During one mission, an oxygen tank on Poff’s bomber was pierced by flak, starting multiple fires and severing nylon straps on his parachute. The crew put out the fires and flew on.

“They make movies about people who haven’t done half of what this guy has,” Avalos told the Ojai Valley News. “There aren’t a whole lot of these guys

left.”

After the war, Poff went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He retired at age 55 while also retiring as a lieutenant colonel from the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Poff and his wife, Zella, moved to Oak View in 1980. He refurbished and resold older cars and, over the years, owned three Model A Fords.

He also volunteered with *HELP of Ojai*, driving veterans to their doctor appointments.

In 2021, at the age of 102, Poff became one of the oldest Americans to receive a cochlear implant to improve his hearing. “Two days later, he was fine,” said Avalos. “A pretty amazing man.”



Photo by Corey Avalos

Irvin Poff of Oak View celebrates his 105th birthday with family, friends, and neighbors.

Recently, Poff passed his driver’s license exam. “And he passed it with 100% accuracy,” said Avalos. His license will expire at age 110.



Photo provided

Irvin Poff goes for a walk with Moxy, grandson Corey Avalos’s boxer-pit bull mix.

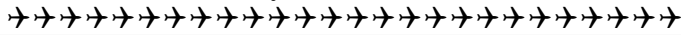
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“This man is a specimen,” said Avalos. “He’s still spry, still sharp. He can still put it together in his mind. He’s humble and takes everything with a grain of salt. Nothing really shakes him, nothing really unnerves him.”

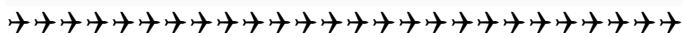
In the past, Poff’s street was shut down for a birthday celebration, but in 2023, he decided, “We’ve been doing this since I was 90,” so this year, a smaller gathering with family, friends, and neighbors took place at his home in Oak View.

“These old, durable men are going extinct,” said Avalos, himself a U.S. Army veteran, now living in Rosarito, Mexico. “They have incredible wisdom.”

Every morning, when his grandfather wakes, he makes the bed before starting his day, according to Avalos. “He still exercises every morning,” he said. “He walks around his block twice and basically humiliates all the 70-year-olds.”



Los Angeles Daily News



Memorial Day request from combat veterans, ‘Don’t call me a hero, the real heroes never made it home’

Irvin Poff, age 105, among the last of his generation of combat vets who went out and saved the world, tells it like it was

By [DENNIS MCCARTHY](#) PUBLISHED: May 25, 2024



(Photo courtesy Ed Reynolds)

105-year-old Irvin Poff, a WWII B-17 bomber pilot, shared his story with a roomful of local veterans. He was honored with a certificate of recognition from Wings Over Wendy’s.

I’ve been writing Memorial Day columns for more than 40 years. I’ve listened to hundreds of combat veterans who served in World War II and Korea tell their stories with only one request.

Please, don’t call me a hero. The real heroes never made it home.

You can’t interview them. The closest you can come is 105-year-old Irvin Poff from Ojai, who sat in his wheelchair last week with a handheld microphone close to his lips — holding a roomful of local veterans, decades his junior in age, in the palm of his hand.

If you want your kids and grandkids to really understand why they don’t have to go to school on Monday, let Irvin Poff tell them. He has only one request.

“I don’t consider myself a hero by any means, and I don’t intend to brag,” the World War II B-17 bomber pilot said. “I’m just telling you how it was. I was scared plenty.”



(Photo courtesy Ed Reynolds)

105-year-old Irvin Poff, a WWII B-17 bomber pilot, shared his story with a roomful of local veterans. He was honored with a certificate of recognition from Wings Over Wendy’s Ed Reynolds

You’re flying at 25,000 feet with the lives of your 10-man crew and the world’s freedom on your shoulders. You’re shivering because it’s zero degrees up there in the skies over southern Italy, where your job is to bomb well-guarded oil fields supplying the Axis — the bad guys.

Even the sheepskin you’re wearing doesn’t protect you from the blistering cold.

“I looked down and there were icicles on the bottom of my legs from my sweat. In front of me were puffs of smoke — flack from over 200 anti-aircraft guns trained on us from the ground. The sky was dark with it.”

Suddenly, your number three engine quits. You’ve been hit. You fight mightily to stay in tight formation with the other bombers because if you drop out, you know what’s going to happen.

(Continued page 10)

“The chances of making it home by yourself are pretty slim,” Irv said. “A single plane is a prime target.”

You activate emergency power, drop your bombs on the target, and fly home on three engines and more than 200 bullet holes underneath your B-17 — never breaking formation.

Mission accomplished. No enemy aircraft and tanks trying to kill our infantrymen on the ground will be filling up with gas from those oil refineries anymore.

It doesn't make you a hero, but it comes pretty close.

Irv was born on a farm in Missouri in 1919. The doctor who delivered him arrived in a horse and buggy. The Model T Fords couldn't make it through the muddy, dirt roads after a heavy rainstorm.

“I went to a one-room schoolhouse with one teacher for eight grades,” he said. “For two years, I was the only student in my grade. When the teacher asked a question of the class, I knew who had to answer it.”

There were a total of 43 students in his high school. In his senior year, he was the class valedictorian.

“I'm not bragging,” Irv said. “Being the valedictorian got me a Sears Roebuck scholarship of \$15 a month for nine months, my first year at the University of Missouri agriculture department.”

It paid for two squares a day in the school cafeteria, where Irv filled up on the stew for 25 cents a bowl.

“It wasn't that watery stew you eat with a spoon today,” he said. “You used a fork for this stew.”

After college, he volunteered for pilot training and was accepted on Dec. 7, 1942, in the Army Air Force, exactly one year after Pearl Harbor.

Forty-five crews were in training when five of them were pulled out for immediate deployment. Irv's crew was one of them.

He never put a beautiful woman's image on the side of his B-17, like in the movies, because he climbed into a different cockpit just about every morning.

“The squadron I was assigned to had lost half of its 24 aircraft the day before I arrived,” he said. “They needed new pilots, and we flew whatever plane was air-worthy that day.”

In three months, he had completed half of the 50 missions he would fly, destroying enemy railroad lines and refineries — saving Allied lives on the ground.

“After flying half the missions, pilots and crews were given a week off for rest and recuperation,” Irv said. “We turned it down and kept flying. I finished my 50 combat missions 10 days short of six months.”

“I've been told it's a record, but I don't know for sure.”

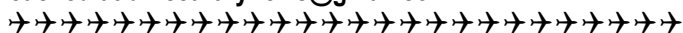
From combat, he flew for peace. He and his crew were assigned to fly seven chaplains for a tour of the holy lands.

He finished World War II and was stationed at Love Field in Dallas, where he went to work for the USDA Soil Conservation Service. He was a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

And now, at 105, he's among the last of his generation of combat veterans who went out and saved the world.

Just don't call them heroes.

Dennis McCarthy's column runs on Sunday. He can be reached at dmccarthynews@gmail.com.



2024 Duty, Honor, Country, Courage
ASIAN AMERICANS IN MILITARY SERVICE EXHIBIT

In Honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Month

May 6 to June 30
Mon to Fri
10 am to 4 pm

Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
1816 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles
Free admission

The photograph shows the interior of the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, which is being used for an exhibit. The room features high ceilings with ornate arches and murals. In the foreground, there is a display case containing military uniforms, including a green jacket and a hat, along with other artifacts. Behind the display case, several informational panels are set up on stands. One panel prominently displays the text 'ASIAN AMERICANS IN MILITARY SERVICE EXHIBIT' and 'In Honor of Asian American Pacific Islander Month'. The overall atmosphere is one of historical significance and cultural celebration.

(Continued page 11)



**Painting of B17 ball turret gunner George Chong
by his son Russell Chong**

“Ball Turret Operator – Corporal George Wayne Chong”
By Russell G. Chong

This painting is a tribute George Wayne Chong, the artist father, who served in the U.S. Army Air Forces as a B-17 Flying Fortress ball turret operator (BTO) in 1945. This painting depicts him flying one of his training missions high over Laredo Army Air Field.

Russell G. Chong was born and raised in San Francisco. Raised on a steady appetite of movies and television it soon became apparent his passion was to be conceptual artist and to work in the entertainment industry. His talents were honed at The Academy of Art in San Francisco and The Pasadena Art Center. From there he went on to work with many of the large entertainment production companies including, Warner Bros, 20th Century Fox, Universal Studios, Disney Studios, Dreamworks, Marvel Studios, and Lucasfilm Ltd.



Frank Lopez with artist Russel Chong

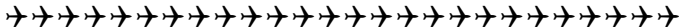


Illustration by The Epoch Times, Richard Moore/The Epoch Times, Public Domain, Uberstroker/CC)

Still Flying High, WWII Plane That Led D-Day Operation Heads to Normandy

By Allan Stein May 28, 2024

OXFORD, Conn.—High above the muddy Hudson River, the D-Day Squadron had flown nearly 100 miles in tight formation to reach the towering spires of New York City.

Straight ahead, the mirror-blue One World Trade Center—Manhattan’s tallest building at 1,776 feet—rose majestically above a drab sea of skyscrapers.

Just beyond was the Statue of Liberty, with its torch of freedom reaching toward the clouds.

The five World War II-era aircraft banked left to get a better look at Lady Liberty perched on its island pedestal in the New York Harbor just before the return flight to Connecticut.

Eighty years ago, the view from the squadron’s C-47 troop transport aircraft, named *That’s All, Brother*, looked much different as it flew into a world war raging about 3,500 miles across the Atlantic Ocean.

The massive airborne operation took place in the pre-dawn hours of June 6, 1944—D-Day. *“That’s All Brother”* was the first of hundreds of paratroop transport planes to deliver their human cargo over the heavily fortified beaches of Normandy, France.

At least 10,000 Allied soldiers (nearly 4,500 Americans) were killed or wounded during the land, air, and sea invasion on D-Day, and at least one-quarter of these casualties were airborne troops. Germany’s losses were between 4,000 and 9,000 men, either killed or wounded.

The military operation was the beginning of the end of the war in Europe.

The May 17 flight over New York City was a trial run for the D-Day Squadron’s 2024 Legacy Tour, which will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the historic invasion and the 75th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift in Wiesbaden, Germany.

On May 18, the squadron took to the skies once again from Oxford, Connecticut, this time on a transatlantic flight across the “Blue Spruce Route” used during World War II.

According to the D-Day Squadron, the Blue Spruce Route “refers to the ferry and refueling navigational path from North America to Europe that was leveraged during the war.”

“The significant undertaking aims to honor the courage and sacrifice of the Greatest Generation, promoting the enduring legacy of freedom and democracy they fought for,” it stated.

Five of the 11 aircraft in the squadron will complete the 3,000-nautical-mile journey to England and France in six days. Each plane will consume 36 gallons of oil and more than 1,600 gallons of fuel. The entire journey will require 80 crew members.

A collection of DC-3-type aircraft will lead the way with scheduled stops in Canada, Iceland, the UK, and France.

(Continued page 12)

About 60 World War II veterans will be honored with a symbolic flight of these aircraft during ground ceremonies in Normandy on D-Day, June 6.

Max Gurney, 102, of San Diego is a proud member of the small contingent of surviving veterans who will witness the historic event.

“I’m very thrilled,” he told The Epoch Times in a phone interview. “I hope to meet some of these other veterans. For the time being, I don’t know who they are. It will be a return to the past.”

Mr. Gurney was among thousands of young men who enlisted in the Army right out of high school following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

He said that at the time, anti-war sentiment in the United States had been running high. However, Pearl Harbor quickly galvanized public opinion in favor of entering the conflict in Europe.

“There was a complete change of mind, particularly with the students,” Mr. Gurney said. “It was on a Sunday morning. As of Monday and Tuesday, there was a fantastic unity in the country—particularly among the young people.

“It was a pivotal moment for the country. The reasoning changed. The necessity to support the war against the Germans and the Japanese was very sharp. There was no dissent.

“As you can imagine, my mother was particularly taken aback by the events. She always encouraged me to be as careful as all mothers today toward their sons and children.”



Max Gurney, 102, of San Diego, served in the U.S. Army in North Africa during World War II. (Courtesy of Max Gurney)

Born in Germany, Mr. Gurney grew up in New York City and served with the U.S. Army signal corps in North Africa during the war.

He considers himself a “lucky survivor.”

“The Germans had been extremely active, although we believed they couldn’t win the war,” he said. “They fought to the very end.”

After the war, Mr. Gurney spent the next 45 years working at Pan American World Airways. He said the DC-3 (the civilian version of the C-47) ranked as one of the most reliable aircraft during peacetime.

In war, it was a dependable workhorse.

Piloted by Lt. Col. John Donalson, That’s All, Brother led more than 800 C-47s that carried more than 13,000 paratroopers to drop zones on D-Day in 1944.

The airplane served in other large-scale operations, including Dragoon, Market Garden, and Varsity, before returning to the United States to be sold to the commercial market in 1945 after the war ended.

The airplane had many owners over the decades that followed, and its historical significance was lost.

Two U.S. Air Force historians eventually rescued the airplane from a scrap yard in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. A few years later, the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) acquired the airplane and restored it to its original 1944 khaki-green paint scheme and working condition.

“How do you put a price on history like this—the lead plane on the D-Day invasion?” CAF member and head of maintenance Ray Clausen of San Antonio said.

“This is physically the first [aircraft] of the actual paratroop invasion.”

Built by the Douglas Aircraft Co., the DC-3 began its long and storied career as a civilian aircraft in the 1930s. The company made more than 600 DC-3s before converting to military production of the C-47 Skytrain in the United States and the Dakota in the British Royal Air Force in 1943.

The propeller-driven airplane has two 1,200-horsepower engines and can reach a cruising speed of more than 200 miles per hour. The range of the DC-3 is nearly 1,500 miles on a single tank of fuel.



(Continued page 13)



(Top) On D-Day, a C-47 named *That's All, Brother* led the main airborne invasion of France.

The historic aircraft will join a squadron of Dakotas heading for the 80th anniversary of the World War II invasion in Normandy, France. Photo taken at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport in Oxford, Conn., on May 16, 2024. (Bottom) Lead pilot Curt Lewis (L) and his co-pilot prepare for takeoff in *That's All, Brother*. (Richard Moore/*The Epoch Times*, Allan Stein/*The Epoch Times*)

An estimated 164 DC-3s are still delivering cargo today. While the C-47 Skytrain military version carried up to 18 paratroopers at a time, *“That's All, Brother”* had more electronic equipment on board, limiting payload to a dozen paratroopers for each drop.

“For some reason, after the war, [That's All, Brother] was brought back to the United States,” Mr. Clausen told *The Epoch Times*. “They found it sitting in the boneyard over at Oshkosh airport.”

Twenty years ago, Mr. Clausen volunteered to clean aircraft parts for the CAF so he could “just be around planes.”

“I was a gearhead as a kid and showed a mechanical aptitude. They suggested I get a mechanic's license, which I did,” he said.

His work eventually brought him to *That's All, Brother* as the aircraft's lead mechanic.

“The planes were designed and built to be robust,” Mr. Clausen said. “If we stay ahead of it and do a lot of preventive maintenance, it's actually a very cooperative and easy plane to fly.”

“If you ignore things and let a problem go, it'll come back and bite you in a bad way. Parts are hard to find, and they're expensive.”

Parked near the runway at Waterbury-Oxford Airport, *“That's All, Brother”* was ready to make history once again, flying with the D-Day Squadron on the eve of the invasion's 80th anniversary.

A seasoned mechanic, Mr. Clausen, said there are no words to describe the way he feels about the plane.

“I get choked up thinking about it. It's such an honor,” he said, his arm resting on the massive left wing. “I have a

connection to it. It's really thrilling to be a part of this.”

Visitors at the Oxford Airport were able to view the five vintage aircraft up close and listen as World War II reenactors explained the crucial role each airplane played during and after D-Day.

“Boy, it's surreal sometimes—to know that we kind of fill the shoes of the veterans that didn't come home,” Scott Fischer, dressed in the World War II uniform of a 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion paratrooper, said.

“It's kind of an honor—a sense of pride. We appreciate what they went through and what we have today because of them. A lot of people have forgotten that.”

“When I put on this uniform, I'm not Scott Fischer,” the Fairfield, Connecticut, resident said. “Scott Fischer is a different guy. He owns a business. He works his tail off.

(Continued page 14)

“I play the part—I am the part. I embrace it, and I enjoy it. And I try to get everybody else to grab that magic.”



Two T-6 Texans are joined by a 1950 Ryan Navion (C) along the Hudson River in New York on May 17, 2024, as part of preparations for the 80th anniversary events to mark the invasion of Normandy, France, on D-Day in 1944.



Before a squadron of Dakotas leaves for the 80th anniversary of the World War II invasion in Normandy, France, a D-Day reenactor participates in an open day at the Waterbury-Oxford Airport in Oxford, Conn., on May 16, 2024. A D-Day reenactor takes a break. (Richard Moore/*The Epoch Times*)

(Continued page 14)

The loud, rugged C-130J transport plane is not known for comfort, but that did not stop two crews assigned to the 40th Airlift Squadron from flying more than 26 hours and 7,000 miles from their home at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, to Guam last month in an effort to prepare for potential conflict in the Pacific.

“The idea is from the home station we will conduct the max endurance mission, the 26-hour mission, to get into theater as quickly as possible, and then execute follow-on missions,” Maj. Alex Leach, mission commander and the squadron’s assistant director of operations, told Air & Space Forces Magazine.

As a part of Air Mobility Command, which oversees Air Force transport and tanker aircraft, the 40th Airlift Squadron is getting ready to help carry the rest of the military’s troops and equipment across the vast distances of the Pacific. But with a range of 1,840 miles, the turboprop C-130J would run out of gas before it reached Hawaii.

Luckily, the 40th Airlift Squadron had a secret weapon: external fuel tanks carrying 17,000 pounds of gas, roughly four extra hours of flying. The tanks powered the C-130Js all the way from west Texas to Hawaii without stopping, a previously “unheard of” feat in the Super Hercules, Leach said. The squadron is not the first to fly a C-130J with tanks, but it was the first in Air Mobility Command to use them in a maximum endurance operation (MEO), the term for very long flights meant to test the capabilities of the crew and the aircraft.

If an actual conflict took place in the Pacific, Hawaii would likely be just the first stop on the way to fighting further west. The first crew would not have time to rest, so the Dyess contingent brought along a second crew to fly the trip to Guam. Each crew was composed of three pilots and two loadmasters.

“After initial takeoff [from Dyess], we more or less banned the second crew from the flight deck,” said Leach. “We wanted them to rest mentally and physically as much as they could.”



A U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules assigned to the 40th Airlift Squadron takes off from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, in support of a Maximum Endurance Operation to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, April 18, 2024.

(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Leon Redfern)

Easier said than done: the plane’s loud engines and vibrations make getting rest a challenge, the major said. But the Airmen hung up hammocks to mitigate the rumbling and marked off a section near the back where the second crew would not be disturbed by others walking back and forth.

Improving human performance in such conditions is one of Air Mobility Command boss Gen. Mike Minihan’s

top objectives since some tanker and transport crews may find themselves flying for 72 hours or longer in a near-peer conflict. Aircrews are using biometrics and healthy habits to inform better strategies for MEOs, and medical experts from the 7th Bomb Wing rode along on the long flight, which was dubbed ‘Hazard Leap,’ to help the crew and learn from the experience.

“They recommended not being on your phones: normal, ‘go to bed’ kind of techniques. Most people tried to read a book or listen to a podcast,” Leach said. “You try not to dramatically change what you do before you go to bed and eat when you normally eat, to keep it as healthy as you possibly can.”

It seemed to do the trick; by the time Leach and the rest of the second crew took over in Hawaii, they were “ready to go,” he said. “Not 100 percent, but definitely able to operate the aircraft with no problem.”

Hazard Leap ended after the crew landed in Guam on April 20, but Hazard Spear was just beginning. In that exercise, Dyess Airmen helped transport troops and equipment for the 4th Marine Regiment during Exercise Balikatan 2024, an annual operation where U.S. and Philippine troops train together. Specifically, the crew practiced landing at blacked-out airfields, forward area refueling, and loading and off-loading High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

“While we all know how to upload these things at home, we don’t really do it too often,” Leach said. “So for the Marines, and for us, there was a moment of ‘where do we put this thing in at again?’ It was an extremely valuable experience for us.”

Rapidly moving HIMARS between islands is a key element of the U.S. battle plan for the Pacific. Leach was impressed to see the rocket artillery platform’s GPS system tie into the C-130’s so that when it arrived in a new location, the HIMARS “knows where it’s at and gets a firing solution pretty much instantaneously once it gets off the aircraft,” he said. “That was something unique that our crews got to see.”

Later, after delivering a fuel bladder to Marines on another island as a part of Balikatan, the Dyess crew was told that they were the largest aircraft to have ever landed there.

“These little islands in the north Philippines are extremely difficult for vessels to get into,” Leach said. “So for us to fly from Guam, which obviously is a big hub, offloading all the equipment, all the people, and all the fuel that they need to conduct combat operations in the Luzon Strait is very important strategically.”

Like the 26-hour flight to Guam, the external fuel tanks made it possible.

“We didn’t have to upload any fuel. In fact, we gave them fuel and were able to fly back on the same day, with literally zero ground support,” Leach said. “It was just us and the Marines. And that’s it.”

Wings Over Wendy's
Future Events:



MOAA/MOWW CHAPTER MEETING
Next meeting in September 2024



FOB Assembly Day
New Facility



June 5th Wed 5 pm - 8 pm
June 12th Wed 9 am - 12 pm
Sign up to attend @
<https://www.operationgratitude.com>

- ANA Meetings
- MOAA/MOWW Meetings
- Non WOW Events
- Operation Gratitude Events
- WOW Events/Tours
- WOW Meetings

WOW Events Calendar
Additions

Because of Wings Over Wendy's members' high participation in their events, the teamup.com WOW Events Calendar has been extended to include: ANA Meetings, MOAA/MOWW Meetings, and Operation Gratitude Events.

The key is: **kswpwdaeovnb1jans4**

Reminder

Wings Over Wendy's
monthly food drive is
Monday, June 3rd



Richie Mills
President

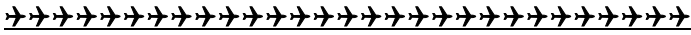
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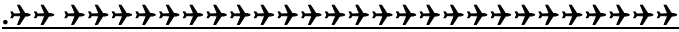
Charles has offered to help Wings Over Wendy's members with their computer problems for FREE.



Prayers

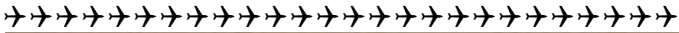
Unfortunately, one of our most active members is recuperating from a neck injury.

Our prayers are for a speedy recovery for **Fred Kaplan**



In Memoriam

Wings Over Wendy's had one reported passing during May 2024.



Donald C Eisenberg Jr 01/18/1931 to 05/12/2024

Donald C. Eisenberg, Jr. was born in Los Angeles, California, to Dorothy and Donald C. Eisenberg, Sr. Don had a younger sister and brother, Marybelle and Robert. Don grew up in Beverly Hills, California, where he attended Beverly Hills High and then attended the University of Southern California with a tennis scholarship. After college, he served as an Officer in the United States Navy.

In February 1954, Don married Patricia Ann Mayo, and they celebrated 64 years of marriage.

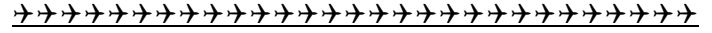
After his departure from the Navy, he went on to work for Price Waterhouse as an accountant and then on to IBM as a salesman. Don retired in 1986.

Retirement allowed Don to pursue his passion for aviation. He learned to fly and bought his first airplane, a Cessna 182. After many years and miles flown, he then upgraded to a Cessna T-210. Don and Pat flew on many adventures together throughout the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Don continued flying until age 90, where he sadly had to announce...3 in the breeze, clear of the trees, last hop, full stop.

He was a nationally ranked tennis player and an early member (join order 47) of Wings Over Wendy's, where "Crash" Blechman gave him the Call Sign "Tennis."

Don is survived by his four children, William, Linda, Douglas, and Kristina, as well as two grandchildren, Randi and Erika. He will be greatly missed.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for September 7, 2024, at La Paz, 4505 Las Virgenes Rd #101, Calabasas.



June Birthdays

Glen Schecter	June 01, 1959
Victor Korechoff	June 08, 1942
Ira Mandel	June 10, 1937
Mark Schneider	June 10, 1943
Timothy Velarde	June 14, 1992
Avi Ben-Shabat	June 16, 1970
Jan Edwards	June 19, 1931
Steve Klausner	June 20, 1938
Marlon Ruiz	June 20, 1956
Bill Ratner	June 22, 1948
Karen Velarde	June 23, 1958
Shannon Muchow	June 28, 1972
Ralph Morin	June 29, 1936

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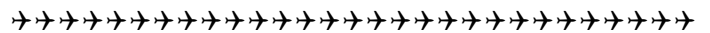
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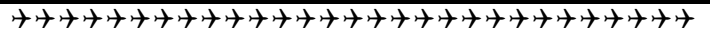
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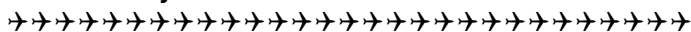
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