

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

August / September 2005 • Vol. 21, No. 5

Corsair wind vane and Japanese WWII artifacts are among the newest exhibits

Two more new exhibits opened since the last *Plane Talk*, and the first two phases of erecting a third are complete. **Tom Witty** completed an exhibit entitled Japanese Airmen WWII. The exhibit includes two Japanese flying uniforms from World War II, one for the Army Air Force and one for the Naval Air Force. Several other original artifacts include four Japanese aircraft instruments Tom mounted together in a plastic panel. A fifth instrument, an eight-day clock, hangs around a mannequin wearing the naval uniform. Tom's research revealed that airmen wore the clocks around their necks on parachute cord. As it hangs on the cord, the clock is upside down, but when the airman picked it up to read it, the face would be rightside up. The naval mannequin also wears a Type 97 parachute harness,



F4U Corsair fighter wind vane (above) and Japanese Airmen exhibit (below)

complete with an inspection card. An entry on the card is dated May 10, 1944.

How do we know that the parachute inspection card reads that date? Tom enlisted

See "Exhibits" con't. on page 6

Inside This Issue

<i>A.K. Longren left his mark on aviation</i>	2-3
<i>Aug/Sept Calendar</i>	4
<i>2005 Calendar of Events</i>	4
<i>Supporters</i>	4
<i>Museum to sponsor 5K Walk and Run</i>	5
<i>T-28 heads for Texas</i>	5
<i>Visitors</i>	5
<i>Letter and mission logs from Korea</i>	8 - 11
<i>New coat of paint for Hangar 604</i>	12

Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field • Hangars 602 & 604
 P.O. Box 19142
 Topeka, KS 66619-0142
 Telephone (785) 862-3303
 FAX (785) 862-3304
 www.combatairmuseum.org

Provided by

Rossini Management Systems, Inc.
 Email: combatairmuseum@aol.com

Museum Curator

Danny San Romani

Office Manager

Jane Weinmann

Board of Directors

Dick Trupp - *Wing Commander*

Gene Howerter - *Vice Wing Commander*

Kenneth C. Hollemon - *Secretary*

Don Dawson

Darrel Dougan

Stu Entz

Stephen Wanamaker

Newsletter Editing & Design

Toni Dixon

Dixon Communications

(785)235-1605

Museum Hours

Monday - Saturday

9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Last Admission 3:30 P.M.

Sunday Noon - 4:30 P.M.

Last Admission 3:30 P.M.

Plane Talk, the official newsletter
 of Combat Air Museum
 of Topeka, Kansas,
 is published bi-monthly.

Your questions and comments
 are welcomed.

Any information for **Plane Talk**
 should be submitted to CAM office.

A.K. Longren left his mark on aviation

Members hear about the first man to fly his own plane in Kansas

Mr. Jerry Longren of Manhattan, KS was our guest speaker for the June Membership Luncheon. He is a great-nephew of the late **Albin K. Longren** (1882-1950), the first Kansan to build and fly his own plane in Kansas. Mr. Longren's talk was about his great-uncle, his planes, and his plane-building efforts in Topeka.

Albin K. Longren made his first airplane flight on September 2, 1911, in an alfalfa field, which is now a part of present day Forbes Field. A. K. and **E. J. Longren** and **William Janicke** built this first airplane, and A. K. Longren flew it 24 times without incident or accident. And he taught himself how to fly. A newspaper account of the flights printed in the September 6, 1911 issue of *The Topeka Daily Capital* reported the plane was christened TOPEKA I after its initial series of test flights, but sometime later it became known as the "Dixie Flyer." The aircraft was similar in appearance to the Wright Flyer.

Jerry told the audience his great uncle crashed three times in his flying career. One was at Abilene, Kansas in 1915 at the Dickinson county fair. The plane hit a series of air pockets about 300 feet off the ground just after takeoff and came back down barely under control. The right wing destroyed the top of an automobile whose occupant rolled out of the car just before impact. Longren suffered a broken leg and cuts and bruises in the crash. A newspaper article reported Longren had made 1,270 successful exhibition flights up until this crash.

Another crash occurred in 1917 near Overbrook, Kansas when an engine problem caused a forced landing in a field. The plane came down hard and hit a cow in the process. Longren was knocked unconscious and suffered other injuries.

Longren also crash-landed in a field near Holton, Kansas, but we do not have details or a date on that incident.

Also, in 1913, Longren literally trimmed the top of a 100-foot cottonwood tree near what was then known as Phil Billard's aviation field near Topeka, but force-landed successfully with relatively minor damage to the aircraft and no injury to him.

Longren's second aircraft was built in 1913 for Philip Billard, who later became the first (and initially only) aviator in the Aero Corps of the Kansas National Guard. Jerry told us this is the Longren aircraft on exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka. Billard became the first person to fly "over" Topeka, using this airplane. In 1913, Longren also built his first "tractor" aircraft - meaning that the engine and propeller pulled the aircraft through the air. His other aircraft had been "pushers," where the engine and propeller combination pushed the plane through the air.

Longren built his first airplane in what was then known as Hamilton Hall on Quincy Street near downtown Topeka. Longren next built planes at the Young Aviation Com-

pany on east 10th Street, again near the downtown area of Topeka. In 1916, he was building aircraft in a building on the 400 block of Jackson Street, also in downtown Topeka. This building still stands and "A. K. Longren Aircraft Works" is still faintly visible on the outside upper story of the brick building. Perhaps his best-known and most successful factory location was in the Oakland area of Topeka. The factory was set up in a former two-story woolen mill. This building still stands and today is a successful auction house – the one we use for your auction items as a fund raiser for the Museum.

In 1916 the Kansas Air Guard began flying a biplane very much similar to the Curtiss JN "Jenny" series of aircraft. It was a Longren-built Model G. Jerry said that also in 1916-17, Longren used a wood fiber impregnated with glue under steam pressure to successfully form a composite fuselage, a very innovative method for its time. This was used in Longren's model H-2. During this time Longren not only produced aircraft, but he invented and produced patented fuselage hinge fittings.

In 1919, A. K. Longren went broke. Jerry told us that while his great-uncle was a great designer of aircraft, he was not very business minded and was not much of a people person. Longren went to Kansas City and built aluminum aircraft with stressed aluminum fuselages. The aircraft also featured side-by-side seating. Again, he went broke, and Jerry said he eventually sold his forms to the Luscombe aircraft company.

While A.K. Longren was a great designer of aircraft, he was not very business minded and was not much of a people person.

By 1920, Longren was back in Topeka with his new Longren Aircraft Corporation, settled in the old woolen mill in Oakland. By June of 1920, the first airplane built at this site was undergoing test flights. The sleek aircraft had the composite fiber body of the 1916 H-2. Newspaper accounts lauded the new airplane and reported that Longren would soon start building a smaller, commercial version with folding wings. The newspaper also stated (perhaps erroneously) that the factory was equipped for a maximum production of 20 planes a day



Jerry Longren talks to CAM members about his great-uncle Albin K. Longren, a Kansas aviator and aircraft builder

–something never realized.

The New Longren airplane appeared in August 1921. The new plane was originally patented November 11, 1919, and again on October 23, 1923 with other patents pending. It had side-by-side seating (open air) and folding wings. Pilot and passenger entered the cockpit through a side door. Maximum wingspan was just under 28 feet, and the overall length just over 19 feet. Empty weight was 550 pounds, and fully loaded weight was about 1,050 pounds. The engine was a three-cylinder Lawrance of 60 horsepower. Later aircraft used a 60 horsepower, 6 cylinder Anzani engine. Among the New Longren's early accolades was a looping contest held in Kansas City in 1922. The New Longren completed 38 consecutive loops to the next finisher who had 26 in a Laird Swallow. Soon, Americans were comparing the New Longren to the Ford Model T automobile because of the Model T's popularity and numbers owned. Owners called their Model T's "flivvers" and the press began referring to the New Longren as the "air flivver."

By 1923, the New Longren drew the attention of the U. S. Navy. The Navy wanted a two-seat trainer to put on its aircraft carriers. The lightweight New Longren with its folding wings seemed suited for the task. Navy pilots test flew the plane, and the Navy purchased three New Longrens in 1924, designating them as L-3s. The

see Aviator, con't. on page 4

"Aviator" con't. from page 3

Navy placed an order for 10 more aircraft, but Longren was unable to raise the necessary funding for the project and once again, went broke. By March 1926, the factory and machinery of the bankrupt Longren Aircraft Corporation were sold at auction.

After the bankruptcy, Longren moved to California and established the Longren Aircraft Corporation there. He developed the Longren 13, an all aluminum plane, but primarily, his company built components for the Martin, Lockheed and Consolidated aircraft companies. Longren never made another complete aircraft. Jerry said that during this time, Longren developed the cam-lock fitting, used extensively in aircraft production even today.

Longren sold his company in 1944, moved to northeast California and ventured into lumber. He died in 1950 and is buried at Leonardville, Kansas. Jerry said aviation consumed his great-uncle's life, and he made at least several lasting contributions to aircraft and aviation. His ideas and designs proved sound, and some were ahead of their times. Jerry used an example of the success of Longren's designs by telling us that the Longren Sport design was later produced by the American Eagle Aircraft Corporation (the Model A-429 Flyabout).

Before he left, Jerry gave the Museum an original Longren Aircraft Corporation aircraft decal from the 1920s. The decal would be applied to the fuselage of a Longren aircraft. Its center is the Great Seal of Kansas with wings to the right and left. A propeller blade comes out of the top and the bottom of the Seal. Interspersed between the wings and propeller blades are capital letter Ls with Longren printed on each L. While the wings and propeller blades are horizontal and vertical, respectively, the capital Ls come off the seal at 45-degree angles. At first glance, this gives the appearance of a swastika. Closer examination shows it would be a reversed swastika, but Jerry said that as Hitler and the Nazi party rose to power, the decals were discontinued on existing Longren aircraft because of their likeness to the Nazi party emblem.

We thank and greatly appreciate Jerry for coming over from Manhattan to talk with us about A. K. Longren and his association with airplanes and aviation in Kansas, and particularly in Topeka. →

**August / September
Calendar of Events****August**

**Monday, August 1 –
Thursday, August 4**

Aviation Education Class
Jean Wanner Education
Conference Center
9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Monday, August 8
Membership Potluck Luncheon**

Jean Wanner Education
Conference Center
11:30 a.m.

September

Saturday, September 24

5 K Run and Walk
Hangar 602
7:30 a.m.

There is no
Membership
Luncheon in September.
The next luncheon is
Monday, October 10.

→ → →

**New
Supporters**

Corey Dehn
Tom & Carole Rost
James Taylor

**Renewing
Supporters**

Walt & Nancy Cole
John Domsch
Richard Gates
Ralph & Margaret Knehans
Larry Morgan
Gerry Sibley

→ → →

**2005 Events
Calendar**

Events subject to change

August

1-4 Aviation Education
Class

September 24

5K Run and Walk

→ → →

Visit our website at
www.combatairmuseum.org

Museum to sponsor a 5K Run and Walk

With **Gene Howerter** and **Dick Trupp** leading the way, CAM is preparing to sponsor its first ever Fun Run and Walk. The race will be over a Five Kilometer (3.1 mile) course on Forbes Field. Tee-Shirts will be provided to all registered runners, and medals will be awarded in several age divisions.

We need volunteers to assist with registration, to help along various stages of the race course, and with post race ceremonies.

The race will start and end at Hangar 602. Start time is 7:30 a.m. We will need our volunteers on site at 6:30 a.m. If you are interested in volunteering, please give us a call. →

T-28 heads for Texas

By the time you receive this edition of *Plane Talk*, the T-28 formerly owned by CAM will be in San Antonio, Texas. The sale of this aircraft was reported in the December 2004/January 2005 newsletter.

New owner **James MacIvor** and CAM member **Bob Schneider** drove up from their respective homes in Texas on July 8 to begin preparing the T-28 for its ferry flight. The primary work done on Friday was placing the aircraft on jacks and cycling the landing gear. Saturday was a full day of work and ground run-ups and testing of the aircraft, and by early evening it flew a circuit for about 20 minutes around Forbes Field.

Bob returned July 15 and worked on a couple of gripes left over from the July 9th session. That evening he flew the T-28 from Topeka to Wichita. The following morning he flew from Wichita to Tyler, TX.

Several CAM volunteers assisted with the T-28 work. →

Visitors

During **May**
the Museum had
1,433 visitors
from **39** states
and
Belgium
Canada
China
Denmark
Germany
Great Britain
Mexico
Netherlands
Russia

During **June**
we had
1,019 visitors
from **40** states
and
Canada
Great Britain
Sweden
Turkey

→ → →

Join the Combat Air Museum!

Your membership and
support are
important to us.

"Exhibits" con't. from page 1

the help of an interpreter through Washburn University. **Akemi Takahashi** spent part of a day with Tom going through the artifacts and translating the Japanese writing and printing found on them. It was not so much a literal translation as what the writing or printing was talking about. But for some of the artifacts, Ms. Takahashi translated literally, especially if a person's name was involved.

Other artifacts in the case include naval goggles, their leather carrying case, and a lens cleaning cloth. CAM members **Chuck and Marlene Urban** loaned a Hachinaka headband that is on the naval mannequin. The broad white cloth has the rising sun and a number of Japanese characters on it. In the past, someone had the Japanese writings translated and printed the English translations under the Japanese words. Ms. Takahashi confirmed the translations when she visited with Tom. A rather compact Type 4 flight computer that was strapped to a pilot's thigh is another artifact in the case.

A partial mess kit recovered from Okinawa is on one end of a display board holding several of the artifacts. It has a stamp translated to 1943 and also has a number of Japanese characters scratched into the pans. Ms. Takahashi said they are the name of the mess kit's owner, and she gave his name to Tom. Two silk battle flags with the rising sun round out the artifacts in the case.

Tom also placed a handful of photos of Japanese airmen, both Army and Navy in the case. Of the several cases on exhibit, this one has perhaps the largest number of original artifacts. The Japanese Airmen exhibit also pretty well finishes off the available floor space in our exhibit rooms as far as exhibit cases go.

Since June 2002, when Tom installed the Everett Fager exhibit, he has put together some 13 exhibits in our two showrooms. Eight of these are large exhibits, including the 18-½ foot long case holding the Flight Uniforms exhibit. To put it another way, there are only three or four exhibits on the floor in the two rooms that Tom did not do, and he had a hand with putting together most of these.

There is some room left to put up a few stand-alone artifacts and perhaps some other wall hangings, but the floor space is essentially used up. We do have areas outside the rooms to add exhibits, and some of our existing cases can be arranged better, so we are not done with Tom's talents by any means, yet.

The second exhibit went up (literally) on June 28.

Even before the Misty Lee P-51 wind vane was hung above the art gallery in May (see the June/July issue of *Plane Talk*), **Gene Howerter** found a company named Mustangs Unlimited in the town of Hallock, MN (about 17 miles south of the border with Canada) that makes fiberglass-molded airplane wind vanes. He spoke with the company owner and soon an order was placed for an F4U Corsair fighter wind vane. Gene, **Martin Moyer**, **Stu Entz**, **Jack Vaughn**, and **Dick Trupp** pooled their money to purchase the wind vane.

A large box arrived at CAM about mid-June, and Martin, Gene, and Stu soon had the several parts of the wind vane strewn about the conference room. Once satisfied all the parts were there, they carried the assemblies to the 604 workshop and put the aircraft together. Working from photographs of a restored Goodyear FG-1D, Gene and **Ted Nolde** worked to create scale decal markings as applied on the FG-1D. These included the name SKYBOSS, the cartoon character of Yosemite Sam, and several victory markings for Japanese aircraft shot down. Once Ted created the decals, Gene put them on the Corsair.

On June 28 a small line of volunteers, including Gene with the Corsair, paraded through the Museum offices to the Art Gallery. Using a large crutch made by Gene and a tall ladder, **Martin Moyer**, **Chuck Bradshaw**, **Stu Entz**, **Dick Trupp** and **Don Dawson** worked together to get the Corsair hung on a pipe running above the Art Gallery. If that seems like a lot of people for a model airplane, you need to consider that the Corsair's wingspan is over six feet with a fuselage length of nearly five feet. Assembled, the fiberglass plane is not all that light, either. The pipe used to hang the Corsair is about 15 feet 4 inches above the Art Gallery floor and just about directly over the Gallery railing. People were needed to help steady the ladder so a volunteer would not take a header off the ladder and over the railing. Others were needed to help lift and support the Corsair with the large crutch. It all went smoothly, though, and we now have two weather vane planes flying in the Art Gallery.

On July 7, we completed the second phase of exhibiting the Ryan Firebee target drone, first reported on in the August/September 2004 *Plane Talk*. The first phase was completed in early June.

Phase I involved digging a large hole to dimensions provided by Ted Nolde, fabricating a re-bar structure for the hole, inserting a patterned form holding mounting studs for bolts, and finally pouring concrete in the hole.

Martin Moyer, and Dale Allen dug the hole about 33 feet west of the west end of Hangar 602 and fabricated the re-bar structure. Martin then built a precise form to hold 12 mounting studs in place while the concrete pad was poured. This was extremely important as the base plates for the drone's stand had to fit to these studs right on. Otherwise, there would be reaming, cutting, and/or drilling taking place on the base plates to make things fit. We did not want to do that.

All went well with Phase I except the concrete arrived about two and one-half hours later than scheduled. That made the difference of working in the shade of a hangar and working in the direct sun. But the pour took place and Martin, Dale, Don Dawson, Dick Trupp and Stu Entz leveled and finished the surface of the concrete pad. We also had a small concrete slab poured under one of our outside faucets on Hangar 604, and Don and Dale also worked that pour.

Phase II took place July 7, with the arrival and erection of the drone's stand. Local businessman Mark Hasvold had sandblasted and sealed the steel stand then primed and painted it. Basically, you can give Mark a piece of junky, rusted metal, and he will transform it into a beautiful piece of work. Mark even built a wheeled cradle to support the stand for transport.

Stu Entz and Mark loaded the cradle and stand on to Stu's trailer and brought it to the Museum. Plan A was to hopefully get the forklift out to the concrete pad, lift the stand from its cradle, and place it on the pad. Two attempts from two different directions confirmed our suspicions about driving the forklift on the grass in the area of the pad. There was just enough slope in each direction that the forklift could not hold its traction.

So, on to Plan B. Stu got a tractor with a front loading bucket. We successfully got the stand and cradle off the trailer and positioned it over the concrete pad, but the bucket did not rise high enough to lift the stand in place. We then

removed the stand from its cradle, one end at a time with the tractor's bucket, and made the final placement of the stand with manpower alone. Mark, Stu, Martin, Don and Danny San Romani lifted and scooted the stand into place over the studs. Martin's earlier form work was right on, and the foot plates slipped over their respective studs. We lifted each base plate as Martin applied a coating of sealant under them, then put washers and bolts on the studs and tightened them down. Martin applied more sealant around the edges of the base plates, and we were basically done.

Just by itself, the stand has an attractive appearance. There are many curves in its structure, giving it a pleasing appearance. Martin and Dale have placed dirt around the pad to ease mowing around it. Now on to the next phase.

That will be getting the drone to Mark's facility so it can be blasted – most likely with baking soda – then primed and painted to its original markings. Once that is done and reassembly takes place, the drone will be lifted and mounted on its stand. It should look quite impressive against the backdrop of Hangar 602.

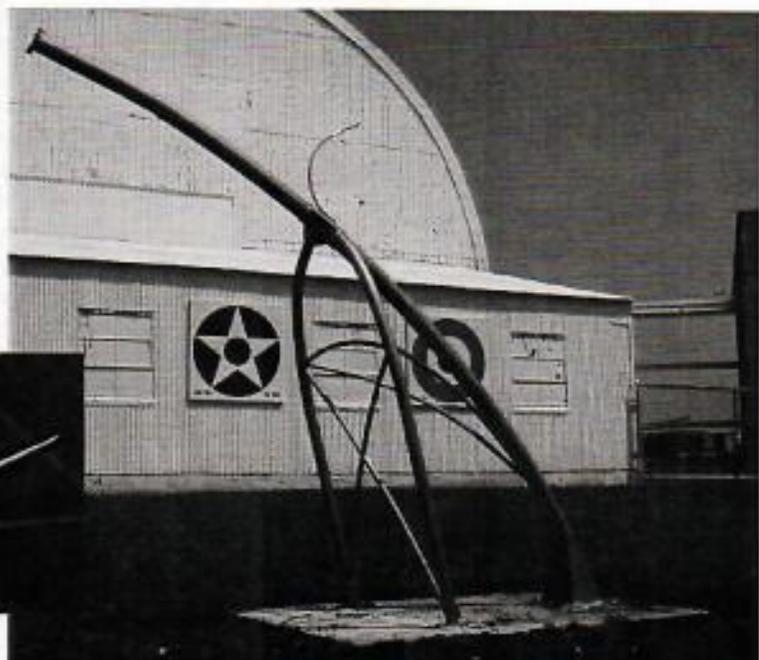
In the meantime, if someone asks you what the silver metal piece is outside 602, you can tell them:

- A) It is a modern art sculpture depicting a "launching pad into the future from the past," or
- B) It was an experimental refueling probe for a B-36 Peacemaker bomber.

That's our story, and we're sticking to it. →



Corsair (above) and drone stand (right)



Letters and mission logs from Korea

Excerpts from letters and combat mission logs written from South Korea in 1952 by USMC Second Lieutenant John Walker Hatcher, who flew Corsair fighter-bombers. Times are based on a 24-hour, military clock. USS SICILY (CVE-116) and USS BADOEING STRAIT (CVE-116) were both escort carriers commissioned during World War II. The text appears as originally written.

**Mission #69 (S.L.) [USS Sicily] 1 Oct.
TARCAP (Clarkson, Cameron,
Armstrong) Ullyul
Armament 1 x 500# GP, 8 x HVAR, 6 x
.50 cal.**

TO - 0900 BL - 0920 Land - 1100
We damaged the road bridge North of Ullyul, and reccoed the coast for Sitting Duck. Attacked a gun position near Chodo, then attacked some boats on the beach south of there. No excitement, except Bandit tracks.

**Mission #70 (Lead) [USS Sicily] (5
HOLES BY ROCKS) 2 Oct '52
TARCAP - Lead (Armstrong, Ball,
Wadsworth) near Pyong Yan
Armament 1 x 500# GP, 6 x 5" HVAR,
4 x 20mm**

TO - 1330 BL - 1400 Land - 1600
We were diverted from prebriefed target to search for Maj. Haskell, who was shot down off Amgac Peninsula. We could not find any traces. Armstrong and I dropped our center-loads on the CP west of Ullyul, and the 2nd section dropped on the road bridge N of Ullyul (both DUDS). We attacked revetments and bunkers NE of Pungchon with the remainder of our ordnance, damaged 3-5 revet. On this target, my rockets kicked up some rocks and I flew into them. Wrecked oil cooler, horiz. Stabilizer.

**Mission #71 [USS Sicily] 3 Oct. 52
TARCAP (Gentry, Porter, Ireland) near
Amgac
Armament 1 x 500#, 6 x HVARs, 4 x
20mm**

TO - 1100 BL - 1140 Land - 1345
We hit 2 coastal gun positions overlooking Chodo Island, with good coverage. I got best bomb hits, worst rocket hits (4B). We searched a while for Haskell - no joy.

**Excerpts from Letter No. 31 [USS Sicily]
Saturday, 4 Oct.
Dear Folks,**

This is about the most negligent I've

been in writing you all, and I'm sorry. We had a pretty big and fast cruise and flew more sorties than we have had for about 8 cruises. Things went pretty well, the planes were kept in better shape and repair by engineering, and things very smooth.

I'm enclosing an authenticator and some of the dope we use on a hop. Thought you might enjoy it, if you can understand it. The authenticator is used to test a party (or radio station) when you're in doubt as to their "authenticity"; it changes every day, and all pilots, FAC's, radio stations, ships, etc. get copies daily. The "shackle" code is used to code numbers. (Incidentally, FETAC means Far East Command Tactical Authenticator Code, or some such bull). Also enclosed, is a postcard of the Sicily.

We have a new Major in charge of "Operations" dep't., and it is his policy that 2nd Lt's will not lead divisions. So lately I've been leading only sections, and backing up flights. I guess at least he realizes I've some experience. Maybe now that I'm a 1st Lt. I'll lead divisions. I doubt it though, since I'll be leaving soon, and they want the new Majors to break in early, so they can lead for quite a while. Life here on the carrier is very pleasant. We, the 2nd Lieutenants, (well, 1st Lt's are still included as lieutenants - in other words, very small wheels) have our own stateroom, and there are eight of us very comfortably situated. One of the boys has a radio and a 45 rpm player, and about 100 records, so we always have plenty of music. We get along well together - just a big happy family. We also have quite a collection (and selection) of literature in the room. The music and books help pass the evenings; we're busy enough during the day...

Love, Johnny

**Excerpts from Letter No. 32
[Sasebo, Japan]
Sunday, 5 Oct.
Dear Folks,**

I've received your letters of the 21st, 23rd, 25th, and 28th, so I thought that this deserves an immediate reply for such promptness in correspondence. Wow?! Our time in port this trip has really been cut down. We will only be in Sasebo today and tomorrow, leaving tomorrow evening at 1730. And, as luck would have it, I'm the Squadron Duty Officer today. It never fails! Well, I'll get some letters written, anyway.

We will be changing carriers again soon. On 20 Oct. we will be going aboard the Badoeng Strait. All-a-time changee changee!. I doubt if I'll get to go aboard, as my time is almost here for staff duty. I would like to go aboard, though, as I feel that this carrier work is good experience, and can't be beat...

...My bank account should have reached the phenomenal sum of about \$1200 by now, and this amount should just about cover the balance on my new Oldsmobile. But just to show you I haven't been splurging, I have \$800 "on the books" here now. Of course they haven't been deducting our income tax, so when I file for '52, I'll have to pay tax for all my (monthly - \$200) pay checks. It should amount to \$200 at least.

I'll write again after a couple days of next cruise.

Love, Johnny

**Excerpts from Letter No. 33
[USS Sicily - East coast of Japan]
Wednesday, 8 Oct.**

Dear Folks, (read back letter first - 5 Oct).

I didn't get the letter mailed in port, as you can see, so I'm attaching an extra page in explanation. This won't be released for a week or so, anyway, for security reasons, so I'll tell you about the coming (past when you receive this). We are participating in an amphibious landing between Wonsan and Hungnam, on the east coast of Korea. We are at present proceeding up the east coast of Japan to rendezvous with other elements of the amphibious attack force, and then will

stage a rehearsal landing 3 days before D-Day in southern Korea. This carrier will be conducting tactical air observer and close air support missions, and CAP and naval gunfire spotting. The landing force will be army (for a change, in the history of war); marines usually conduct these things, you know. I'm afraid it might be botched up, and they can't afford to be, because the enemy has superiority in numbers in the landing area, and has about 100,000 in reserve that can be there within 3 days. I guess the primary mission of the landing is to establish a beachhead in N. Korea, which may tend to bring the truce talks to a successful conclusion. You never can tell, though. It might touch off the big one, or our force may be massacred. You have to gamble occasionally in wartime, though this one will certainly be a bold move. The troops will have a heck of a lot of fire support, though, which should counteract their inferiority in strength. I think that this will probably be the most impressive sight I'll ever see, especially since I'll have a ringside seat. I'll try to get a few pictures (in color) of the affair. (Probably won't get a chance, though).

The water temperature is going down, and it's getting chilly now, so we'll start wearing "immersion suits" very soon. I'm almost sure I'll be out of the squadron by 1 November, and shouldn't get very much of the cold weather operations. I'll probably write another letter soon.
Love, Johnny

Mission #72 [USS Sicily off E. coast Japan] 13 Oct. '52

CAP (Ball) near Kangnung

Armament 6 x .50 cal

TO - 1215 Land - 1600

Cover for Practice Landing in preparation for Amphibious Landing just south of Wonsan. We had about 5 intercepts. NBR pass.

Mission #73 [USS Sicily] 14 Oct. 52

CAP (Whitebread) over CONVOY

Armament 4 x 20mm

TO - 0915 Land - 1240

Cover for the convoy proceeding from the practice area to the attack area. About 10 intercepts.

Mission #74 [K-6 to USS Sicily] back on 28 Aug 52

ESCORT

Armament 6 x .50 ca.

TO - 1000 Land - 1230

Escorted 12 big helicopters from K-6 to USS Sicily (SW of Inchon)

Mission #75 (S. L.) [USS Sicily] 16 Oct NGF (Habash) Kojo

Armament 4 x 20mm

TO - 0600 Land - 1000

2nd section of a NGF division day after D-Day (Amphibious Landing turned out to be a fake - (a feint). We spotted for a heavy cruiser, the Helena. Spotted on 4 targets, all light AA positions. Good results - 8 inch guns.

Received small arms & 20 mm fire at all targets.

Mission #76 [USS Sicily] 16 Oct

TAO (Wads, Willis, Clee) Kojo

Armament 4 x 20mm

TO - 1500 Land - 1800

We simply flew up and down the coast looking for targets. Received light 27 mm flak over one town.

Otherwise, nothing outstanding. On both landings today, we had 35-40 knots of wind across the flight deck, with carrier just making h-w [headway].

Excerpts from Letter No. 34

[USS Badoeng Strait]

27 Oct. 52

Dear Folks,

We're back in port now, aboard the Badoeng Strait (CVE-116) which looks just like the Sicily (CVE-118). We effected the transfer on the 18th and 19th, and arrived in port on the 19th. I went on R&R the 20th, and got back on the 26th. This is the first time I've felt like (and had the opportunity for) writing.

The big amphibious landing we were all hopped-up for (and had practiced 3 days studying and briefing) did not come off, as you know. We did not find out until the last day that it was to be a mock attack. Pretty good security, I guess. I feel like a fool, though, having written all this crap about a new big landing, bigger than Inchon, etc! The only thing real about this one was that the air strikes, NGF spot,

etc. were run off, and we were getting shot at a bit with 20 mm and 37 mm. We only averaged 3 missions per pilot for the whole operation, so you can see we didn't do much flying. On D-Day, the boats approached the beach, etc., but then turned around (they were empty).

To me, the whole operation seemed like a farce, and a fabulous waste of money. I was on a couple of CAP's over the fleet and I would estimate that there were about 30-50 ships involved. Well, maybe the "big wheels" know what they're doing, but I don't think they proved a thing...

...We're leaving port here in about 2 days, to return to the line in the Yellow Sea. I think this will be my last cruise, and I doubt if we'll fly much, because of a tornado, weather, etc. We're getting a few new pilots, also.

I still don't have much of an idea when I'll get home, so all I can say is: "Don't expect me until you see me". It's all pretty variable right now...

...I'm sure looking forward to returning to the States, but the only thing I dread is carrying all my junk. I'll have a footlocker, sea bag, 2 hand-bags, parachute bag, 2 plastic clothes-bags, and a miscellaneous bag. All full of junk, too.

Well, I'll write a little more faithfully this cruise.

Love, Johnny

Mission #77 - L [USS Badoeng Strait]

31 Oct

CAP (Gillon)

Armament 1 ADSK-1 6 x .50 cal

TO - 1545 Land - 1730

First hop aboard the Badoeng Strait. Radio Call Knee-high. Average CAP. Landed with 35-40 knots but NBR pass.

Mission #78 [USS Badoeng Strait] 1 Nov

TARCAP (Wilson, Green, Wads.)

N. of Chinnampo

Armament 1 x 500# GP, 8 x 5" HVAR, 20 mm

TO - 1215 BL - 1345 Land - 1545

Went on a coastal reconnaissance up to Hunchon, about 40-50 miles north of Chinnampo. I dropped 500# on gun position and trenches, direct hit. Had

con't. on page 10

Korea, con't. from page 9

good hits with rockets on bunkers near Sokto. Sighted jet con-trails above us, started running over-water. Turned out to be F-86's. Average hop. Small arms fire at 2 places.

Mission #79 [USS Badoeng Strait] 2 Nov CAP (Rutledge)

Armament 4 x 20 mm
TO - 0615 Land - 0945
Same old stuff.

Mission #80 [USS Badoeng Strait] 2 Nov TARCAP (Smith, Holstrom, Goery, Mullins) TC

Armament 4 x 260# rag, 4 x 20 mm
TO - 1530 Land - 1730

Primary target was boat center near Amgak. Dropped 1 on supplies in Wolsari pen, direct hit. Dropped other 2 in suspicious village near Pungchon, destroyed several bldgs. Average, light small arms fire.

Mission #81 [USS Badoeng Strait] 3 Nov TARCAP (Baker, Rutledge, Armstrong)

Armament 1 x NAPALM, 6 x 5" HVAR, 20 mm
TO - 0815 BL - 0845 Land - 1030
Dropped Napalm on trenches on bluff, direct hit with good coverage. Fired 5 rockets on bridge near Changyon, 2 damaged it slightly. Returned with 1 hung rocket and oil on the windshield.

Excerpts from Letter No. 35**[USS Badoeng Strait]****Monday, 3 Nov.**

Dear Folks,

I've just heard some good rumors, and I hope they're true for a change. "They say" that the 20th draft and part of the 21st draft will be home by Christmas, so I might be leaving here in about 3-4 weeks. I'm ready to go, too.

The weather is just starting to get chilly, and we've all been decked out in anti-exposure suits, consisting of big quilted undersuit, and the rubber oversuit with boots as part of the legs. It has tight rubber around the wrists and neck, which are only 2 places water could possibly get

in, so they are virtually waterproof. As you know, they're used to keep a person alive in freezing water, etc. When the water temperature is 55°, a person can only stay alive about 20 minutes; at 40° or lower, a person can only exist about 5 minutes. With these suits, a person can stay alive as long as he can stay afloat and the suit doesn't leak.

We can see that autumn and early winter are here. As we cruise around the countryside in N. Korea, we can see the rice and wheat all ripe and ready for harvest. The trees are turning gold, red, and orange, and with the warm autumn sun - sometimes the sights are beautiful. Everything looks so warm and peaceful, but I can see the farmers and people scurrying to hide, as we roar into the valleys and across the rice paddies. I almost got homesick (or beauty-sick) today as I saw one part of the country that was really beautiful, with its different colors and peaceful scenes, and evidences of the harvest going on (rice and wheat bundled up, oxcarts and implements and people trying to hide in the fields). It seems a crime to disrupt all that peace and beauty.

Well, I'm high-mission man in the squadron now, with 81 missions, but they've gone back to the old b.s. of majors and captains leading, as soon as they have a couple of hops in the area. I guess I told you about that earlier - always that old rank. I think I'm getting out at just the right time - when the weather starts getting cold, I'm still ahead, and the flying is still fun. When it gets boring, that's really past the time to quit, but as I say, I still like it. I'm being extra careful now (not going below 20' on Napalm runs). Ha.
Love, Johnny

Mission #82 [USS Badoeng Strait] 5 Nov TARCAP (Cameron, Cawfield, Gillon) W-Changyon

Armament 1 x NAPALM, 6 x 5" HVAR, 6 x .50 cal.

TO - 0815 BL - 0845 Land - 1015

Dropped on small village on N shore of NamChae-dong Estuary, west of Changyon, reportedly 160 NKA. Weather was very poor (overcast, 700'-1500' variable), but attacks were good. After

attempting to reconnoiter, we returned and fired rockets on same target. Total 8 - 10 bldgs dest., 6 dam.

Mission #83 [USS Badoeng Strait] 8 Nov.**CAP (Hill)****Armament 6 x .50 cal.****TO - 0815 Land - 1015**

An average CAP, except about halfway through, I had a hydraulic failure. When I returned, I blew my gear down, pumped my flaps down, but made a "No hook" pass. Next pass O.K.

Excerpts from Letter No. 36**[USS Badoeng Strait] 8 Nov. '52**

Dear Folks,

... This cruise is progressing fairly well, although the weather has been pretty poor. And I actually saw this happen (and landed under these conditions): one day we had 17 1/2 knots across the deck (the wind was nil, so the carrier had to make its own wind, and could only do about 18 knots), and the next day we had 40 knots (with the ship barely moving 4 knots - maintaining steerage-way). Quite a change, eh? You really get sharp working under conditions like that. We has 58 knots across the deck (and were landing them) during our East Coast escapade. So I've landed with winds from 17 to 58 knots.

The flak is getting a little heavier lately, but nothing to really sweat, yet. We've had a few come back in the past couple of days with holes in them from 37 mm flak, but we haven't lost any yet. (I just knocked on wood).

My missions have not been mounting up as rapidly as they did in September (one of my best months). In fact, things are going slowly. I have only 83, and can expect only about 2 more. Well, 85 is a pretty good number of hops, I think. As I said, the average is now 40-45.

But you all can't very well visualize the difference between 40 and 80 - believe me, it takes a lot of time here on the carrier, as you have seen. It's a lot of difference in time, experience, thrills, luck, and close shaves, etc. Its hard to explain!

... Rumors say I'll be leaving Japan between 20 Nov.-10 Dec. I'll be leaving

the squadron here in 4-5 days. If I have time, I'll mail some more boxes home, but most of the stuff I'll buy will have to be presents, knick-knacks and gifts for the future. I might give you all a call within 2 weeks (or should I say about 25 Nov., if possible).

Love, Johnny

Mission #84 [USS Badoeng Strait]

9 Nov.

TARCAP (Cleeland, Smith, Mog) - Chinnampo

Armament 1 x 500#, 8 x 5" HVAR, 6 x .50 cal.

TO - 1145 BL - 1210 Land - 1345

Pre-briefed was warehouse in Chinnampo. We hit it and buildings in the immediate vicinity. "Tokusan" small arms fire there. North along the coast we found a crowded village with many supplies. Put about 25 rockets in, dest. 5, dam 10 bldgs. Down near X-Ray, I used my last 2 rockets on 2 large bldgs; dest. 1 (direct hit), dam. 1

Mission #85 [USS Badoeng Strait]

10 Nov.

CAP (Wadsworth)

Armament 6 x .50 cal.

TO - 1515 Land - 1715

Very poor weather. We escorted Bali Angel from Green Park to Knnchigh, then back. Gave Green Park a good buzzing. Otherwise, nothing outstanding. [NOTE: R&R - Itami, Japan from 17th-23rd Nov., K-6 on 23rd Nov.]

Excerpts from Letter No. 37 [K-6]

Tuesday, 25 Nov.

Dear Folks,

Again I must apologize for not writing sooner. I left the ship (in Sasebo) on the 16th, and arrived at Itami AFB on the 17th. From there, I took 5 days R&R, and then left from there on the 23rd for K-6, where I am now serving my staff duty. So you can see I haven't had much time for writing, and as you can see by the handwriting, I'm a little out of practice, too. It's a little cold also, which might account for the clumsiness.

Well, for the good news first. My orders say that I will depart Itami "on or about" 10 Dec., the "on or about" giving a 10 day

leeway. I have been assured it will be about 10 days early, so I should leave about 1 Dec., if my connections are good all the way. I will call you all (collect) when I arrive there and receive my orders for reassignment, and I'll be able to tell you what day to expect me home. I'll get 15 (and possibly 30) days leave, but I'll try to work it so that it encompasses the X-Mas, New Year days. It's all a little indefinite yet, but at least I'll be home for Christmas, Thank the Lord!

My "staff duty" here is a laugh. I am assigned to the headquarters Squadron at K-6, simply for reporting purposes on a fitness report (which will be "not observed" since it is such a short reporting period). I don't do a thing except drop in once a day to see if my "qual jacket" has arrived from the ship yet. A nice soft deal, a fitting finish or finale to a nice overseas tour!

I rode up to K-13 and Suwon today in a jeep (cold and bumpy), and it was fairly interesting. One thing that amused me was that some of their few buses (they don't have city buses) had signs on them saying something like: "Welcome, President-elect Eisenhower. Great expectations from your trip to Korea." What a country, what a people! The only thing that's promising is their children (a tough, chubby, uncomplaining lot), and they have quite a number of them from what I've seen. I won't go into a dissertation on Korea now, though, because there's plenty of time for that later. I took 5 or 6 interesting (possibly) pictures on the trip today, and saw many things I didn't get to photograph.

It is getting rather chilly here, and it snowed up around the front lines nearly a month ago. We have frost on the ground here, but so far no snow. The trees (scarce as they are in parts) have practically lost their leaves, and even the rice paddies and fields, etc. are turning a faded brown, in preparation for a cold winter (?).

My R&R was very quietly spent this time, with a 2 day visit to Kyoto, and the remainder of the time at Itami. I bought a few odds and ends (very few), and relaxed in general. By the way, I bought and mailed some China home before leaving Sasebo. I also mailed 2 packages to

Carolyn (a brocade lounging or evening jacket and a pair of silk pajamas), 1 or 2 packages to myself, and 1 package to Lyle (a pair of silk pajamas). I'm not going to buy another thing for anybody or myself, I'm done.

I won't write again, and it would be well if you all don't write me, as the mail will only get very fouled up. We'll call it "finis" until X-Mas.

Love, Johnny

John Hatcher did, in fact, make it home for the Christmas and New Year holidays of 1952-53. He then reported to VMF-314 in Miami, Florida where he began flying Grumman F9F Panther jets. Other assignments took him to Camp Lejune, NC and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC. His 4-year active duty commitment ended in April 1955, and soon the now Captain Hatcher began flying in two uniforms. He began flying for Trans World Airlines and he entered the US Marine Corps Reserve and continued flying Marine Corps aircraft. He flew a variety of both commercial and military aircraft with TWA and the Reserves.

When John Hatcher transferred with TWA to Kansas City in 1966, he became a member of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF-215 at Naval Air Station Olathe, KS. He first served at the squadron's Executive Officer, flying Chance-Vought F8U Crusaders and in 1968 became the squadron CO. NAS Olathe closed in 1970, and Colonel Hatcher retired from the Marine Corps Reserve. He retired (in accordance with the then age 60 ruling) from TWA in 1989 on the Boeing 747. Colonel Hatcher currently resides in Leavenworth, KS.

→ → →

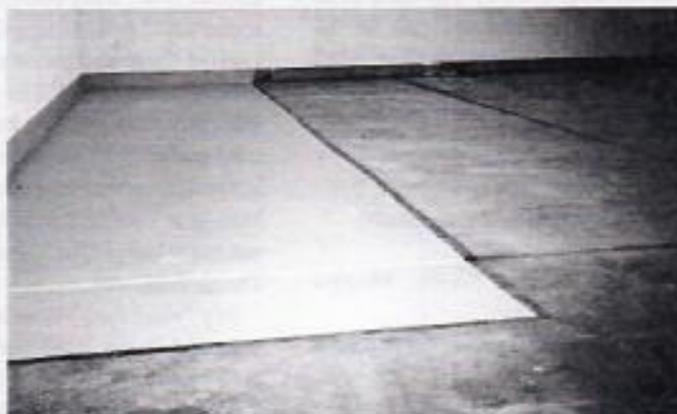
**Visit our
website at
www.
combat
air
museum.org**

New coats of paint brighten the floor of Hangar 604

With warmer weather, and warmer concrete floors, **Stu Entz** returned to preparing and painting a floor section in the northeast corner of Hangar 604. We first reported on this in the December 2004/January 2005 *Plane Talk*.

The test area was cleared of the Hiller helicopter and other items so Stu could do a cursory cleaning of the floor after the fall and winter months. He also removed old remnants of yellow floor striping in the area. He then applied a sealer coat, followed by a color coat in a test strip. The results looked good, and the color was a light enough gray that it will certainly give a brighter appearance than just the concrete floor.

Stu then prepared the remainder of the corner and applied the sealer coat on July 13. By the time this issue gets to you, the color coat will be done, and we



A test strip of floor paint in Hangar 604

will likely have the Hiller and other items placed back into that corner of 604. We will see how well the paint stands up as a work area as the Hiller restoration takes place. The paint is designed for garage floors, but not intended for commercial traffic, and it may not stand up very well to the weight of an aircraft. So, until we see how well the paint holds up in the test area, we will limit further applications to walkways around the Hangar. No matter where we apply the paint, though, it does and will approve the appearance of 604. ➔



Combat Air Museum
P.O. Box 19142
Topeka, KS 66619-0142

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Topeka, KS 66603
Permit #181