

# PROP WASH

COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

Rocky Mountain Wing

P.O. Box 4125 • Grand Junction, Colorado 81502

Gazette

May, 2017



HONORING AMERICAN MILITARY AVIATION THROUGH FLIGHT, EXHIBITION AND REMEMBRANCE

## What a Great Day!

By Col Tom Howe  
Editor

The day started earlier than most Saturdays around the Rocky Mountain Wing's (RMW) hangar and museum. By 8:30 preparation for the Big Event was already underway. The formal announcement of our TBM becoming a Colorado Historic Object was about to begin. A big collection of Colonels were moving in many directions – most with purpose – to position aircraft on the RMW ramp, prepare the TBM for removal from its cocoon like hangar, traversing Horizon Drive with signs leading to the museum, preparing snacks and eats in the museum and kitchen, and arranging for the 10:00 AM of the “by invitation” guests.

Safety Officer Col Robert Owen called a quick safety meeting to review the proper control and movement of

aircraft during the event and review safety awareness in general. Like a “mostly” well-oiled machine everything began to come together and by the time the first guests arrived, the Wing was ready!

As the invited guests began to arrive they were greeted at the museum door, asked to sign in, were provided name tags and offered refreshments as well as the opportunity to view the museum on their own. All the visitors also had access to the ramp area where Col Steve Woods' beautiful Beech 18 and Col Lenard Felix's sweet SNJ shared the ramp with the Wing's J-3 Cub, and Col Charlie Huff's magnificent



Kit Fox.

The TBM was pulled from the cocoon and positioned east of the hangar. Col Bob Thompson did an early TBM engine start to clear the oil and warm the engine for the TBM's grand entry later. The Grand Junction CAP color guard arrived along

with our WWII reenactors all the way from Utah. Our visiting WWII veterans were willing to climb aboard “309” and arrive in WWII style to help kick off the event.

The Color Guard adeptly presented the Colors and Mr. John Hendricks did a stunning job of singing our National Anthem acapella. An appropriately growling “309” was then led into the ramp area by the marshalling Colonels and positioned center stage. The obligatory folding of the wings before shutdown was, of course, a big hit with the crowd. Three of the five visiting WWII Veterans (Max Krey, Dr. Joe Merrill, Phil Wilmot, Dale Weldon, and Raymond Versaw) were guided to the presentation table and fascinated the crowd with their

*Continued on page 7*



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE



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# RMW AIR SHOW SCHEDULE - 2017

MONTH	DAYS	LOCATION	SHOW	TBM	CUB	STATUS
May	5-7	Aztec, NM	Wings & Wheels	T-6?		Pending
	20	Peru, IL	TBM Avenger Gathering			CONFIRMED
Jun	17	Boulder, CO	Airport 40's Dance			CONFIRMED
Jul	4	Telluride, CO	July 4th Open House		?	CONFIRMED
	16	Cheyenne, WY	WYO Air Guard TB			Pending
	22-23	Idaho Falls, ID	Extreme Blue Thunder BA			Pending
	22-23	Great Falls, MT	Flight Over The Falls TB			Pending
Aug	19	Powell, WY	Wings and Wheels			CONFIRMED
Sep	2-3	Steamboat Springs, CO	Wild West Air Fest			CONFIRMED
	9	Wendover, UT	Wendover Air Show			CONFIRMED
	16-17	Montrose, CO	Tribute to Aviation			CONFIRMED
	23-24	Telluride, CO	Fall Colors Weekend		?	CONFIRMED
	23	Durango, CO	Aviation Celebration GK			CANCELLED
	23-24	Colorado Springs, CO	Pikes Peak Air Show TB			Pending
	30-10/1	Grand Junction, CO	Airport Open House TB			CONFIRMED
Oct	7	Prescott, AZ	Airport Open House			CONFIRMED
	6-8	Dallas, TX	CAF Airsho 2017			Doubtful
	21	Alamogordo, NM	Holloman AFB O/House			Pending

The list keeps growing!  
 We have a busy summer ahead.  
 Be sure to pick one or more shows to attend.  
**Contact Col Thompson and VOLUNTEER!**  
[rvtglt38@earthlink.net](mailto:rvtglt38@earthlink.net)  
 We need your help to insure a successful season.  
**Have Some**  
 → FUN! ←

BA = Blue Angles  
 TB = Thunderbirds  
 GK = Golden Knights  
 RB = Red Birds

## CAN'T ATTEND AN AIR SHOW WITHOUT A PILOT!

Well, that is not entirely true - but without a pilot the only show we can attend is one at GJT. That would be very limiting. So, we need pilots qualified and willing to support our annual air show schedule above.

Thanks to our Operations Officer, Col Bob Thompson, we're getting closer to providing our Chief Pilot, Matt McNamara with some assistance.

With the scheduling assistance of Col Robert Owen, several Rocky Mountain Wing (RMW) Colonels gathered with Col McNamara to (finally, whew,) get new TBM pilot candidates Chris Ryan and Barry Hancock ready for their Type Certification in



Pilot Barry Hancock thinks it's just like flying a fat T-6.

Photo by Col Robert Owen

the TBM. Now, as soon as a FAA flight examiner can be scheduled into Grand Junction along with both Chris and Barry, the two will be able to complete their check rides and have "Grumman TBM" added to their list of Type Certifications. Then both of them will be able to pilot the TBM to Air shows and other appearances. Unfortunately, each

will have to get 25 hours "in type" before they will be qualified to give Air Show rides in the TBM.

Those hours will come as we work our way through the 2017 show schedule.

Col Bill Shepard is still standing in the wings to qualify for his type certification ride. Knowing Bill, he'll be right here the next time we schedule pilot flight training.

We cannot thank these Utah Colonels enough for their participation!



Pilot Chris Ryan shows a little more enthusiasm!

Photo by Col Robert Owen





# MAINTENANCE REPORT

*By Col Dick Maddock  
RMW Maintenance Officer*

April was a busy month for the Rocky Mountain Wing. We had three photo shoots, three pilot training flights, a dedication ceremony, and a flight for our WWII veterans that attended our dedication ceremony.

The plane was out of the hangar for more time than it was in. Therefore, maintenance this month was at a minimum, which is OK. That means the "wrench wrangles" are almost caught up. [Thank you for all your hours and help.]

On the first photo shoot we broke a hydraulic line on the right wing when folding the wings for the photographer.

With the help of many colonels we were back up and running in an hour or so. The photo of Col Howe working on the broken line shows he does more than write the newsletter. Thanks Tom.

We also repaired a broken spring on the right access foot door to climb up the wing.

The pilot test flight and veteran flight went well. All intercoms were working properly. We will be ready for May's air shows and more pilot test flights.

Reminder, that all people that work on the planes need to take the CAF Test 66-1 [www.cafoperations.org](http://www.cafoperations.org).



## No Photos of this Photo shoot, but...

*By Tom Howe  
Editor*

Early in April, after a short delay getting started, a collection of Colonels gathered at the Delta, Colorado Blake Field airport to begin work on flight photos of our newly

airworthy "309". Pilot Matt McNamara needed to get current (the obligatory "three bounces") after not doing much all winter and it was wisely decided that doing the aerial photo shots at Delta would be much easier than trying to work inside the Grand Junction controlled air

space.

The videos will be used to work into Moe Taylor's Rocky Mountain Wing (RMW) presentation videos for the display in the GJT Terminal Building and the promotional videos being prepared for Recruiting, Sponsor Promotion, Education, etc.

Delta airport manager Mark Husmann agreed that Col Owen could operate his drone on airport grounds (with some restrictions - like not colliding with anything) while the TBM was operating which resulted (we're

told) some great video of the TBM taxiing, taking off, landing and doing fly-bys.

Col Owen's drone was following the TBM around like a little gnat trying to keep up with an eagle.

Everyone left considering the few hours spent resulted in a task well done. The star of the show, "309" winged its way north back to GJT ready and willing to kick off another Show and presentation season.

Our thanks go out to the Delta Airport, Mark Husmann and all those that attended.

<b>WWII QUIZ</b> (SEE PAGE 5)	<b>ANSWERS</b>
<b>The Air War</b>	
They earned \$600 per month plus \$500 for each "kill."	
<b>Code Names</b>	
The Aircraft run over the Himalayas to China. The dubious distinction was a testimony to the several planes that never completed the flight.	



**COMMEMORATIVE  
AIR FORCE  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN WING**

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[www.rmwcaf.org](http://www.rmwcaf.org)

**“Keep 'em Flying”**

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Col Taylor, Jodi Doney - GJT PR, & Cols Peebles and Dutton

This covey of Colonels traveled to the Grand Junction Airport Terminal to set up the RMWCAF display in the baggage area. Soon we'll have our video completed that will run continuously on a video display above the cabinet.

### WING LEADER'S REPORT

*By Col Kent Taylor  
Wing Leader*

Another great month for the Rocky Mountain Wing! Big and increasing turnouts on most Saturdays, and an increasing number of visitors. Our publicity push appears to be working. A lot of members turned out for movie star tryouts in early April, and everyone that tried out will likely see themselves in one or more of the RMW videos that will be produced from the 2 full days of shooting. We're still waiting for multiple pilots' and the video folks' schedules, and the weather to come into synchronization before the videos can be completed, but we're hoping to see the finished products in early May.

The next big event of the month was the (non) Staff Meeting – which was dedicated to planning and preparation for the BIG EVENT on April 15. Bob Thompson, Rich Connor, Gabe Toth, and



I all had schedule conflicts and were unable to attend, so Robert Owen stepped in to chair the meeting – thank you Robert! And thank you to everyone that participated – as usual, the membership knows what to do and how to get it done with or without the help of ‘management.’

The planning and prep work paid off big time! Attendance at the morning session exceeded expectations: more than 40 attendees came out, including the Mayor, City Council Members, Airport Board members, and assorted community leaders. The event went off without a hitch. The combination of the CAP cadets posting of the colors, and the arrival of the

TBM at the end of the National Anthem created a lot of moist eyes, and not because of the prop blast. And the guests of honor – WWII veterans ranging in age from 95 to 99 were undoubtedly the highlight of the celebration.

The afternoon session for the public went equally well, with at least 200 people coming out to ogle old 309 and the other planes on display. While there were many things about the celebration that made my day, three stand out and are worthy of mention:

The number of Wing Members that pulled together to

make it happen – too many to count!

The total attendance – over 250!

The event was not intended as a fundraiser, but between the PX, Donations, and the Caskey hot dog stand, we took in just over \$2,500. Subtracting marketing and food costs (hot dogs, hamburgers, etc.) we added about \$1,200 to the RMW coffers!

My personal thanks to everyone who contributed to this spectacular success. I'm proud and honored to be a part of this Can Do Wing.



Wing Leader Col Kent Taylor and the three visiting WWII Veterans at the “Big Event”



**RMWCAF STAFF OFFICERS**

Wing Leader Kent Taylor  
 Executive Officer Rich Connor  
 Finance Officer Robert Toth  
 Adjutant Becca Walters  
 Operations Officer Bob Thompson  
 Maintenance Off. Dick Maddock  
 Museum & Mess Sergeant Dorothy Dutton  
 Safety Officer Robert Owen  
 Judge Advocate Gerald Feather  
 Marketing Officer Kathryn Bennett  
 Public Information Officer OPEN  
 PX Officers Tom / Jay Jackson  
 Newsletter Editor Tom Howe  
 TBM Aircraft Coordinator Bob Thompson  
 Cub Aircraft Coordinator Charlie Huff  
 Ambulance Coordinator Byron Huffman  
 Facilities Manager Kay Johnson  
 Recruiting Officer Keith Swinehart  
 Grants Officer Dave Shepard

**WWII QUIZ**

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 6**

**The Air War**

How much were the American volunteers in Chennault's Flying Tigers paid for their participation in China?

**Code Names**

Identify the air route nicknamed the Aluminum Trail.

Thanks to author Timothy B. Bensford



**Staff Meeting Bullets 4/8**

The April Staff Meeting was changed to the "Big Event" planning meeting hosted by Col Robert Owen in wing leader Col Kent Taylor's absence. All aspects of the Event scheduled for April 15th were discussed, changed, agreed upon, modified, explored and ratified.

Wyoming drop by. These two (both pilots) were quite amazed at our facility, our museum and especially "309". They said if they lived here (which they might one day) our wing would be at the top of their new activities.

Thanks to those that attended knowing in advance that just by attending the planning meeting would immediately require that assignment to a particular task would follow.

The results of the planning and efforts of members attending was proven by the success of the event!

Even while the planning was in full force we had visitors from



Photo by Col Dorothy Dutton

**Door Prizes that "Fly High"**

Two that attended our Colorado Historic Object Open House went home with a memory they did not expect when they arrived at our Museum/Hangar on Saturday, April 15th. Little did they know they would win a ride with Colonel Charlie Huff in the Rocky Mountain Wing Commemorative Air Force proud little J-3 Piper Cub. Neither had ever ridden in a small airplane before, much less the smallest of the Primary Trainers used by WWII recruits.

Both Laura Merrill (shown below on the left) and Lynn de Beauclair (lower right) looked like they may have broken the "you can't have more fun than Charlie" rule when flying with Col Huff.

Two new friends of the Wing with a story to tell about our Museum and airplanes.

"Keep 'em Flying!"



Photo by Col Tom Howe



Photo by Col Tom Howe

# THE FLYING LEATHERNECK OF NORWOOD

## Ed. Note

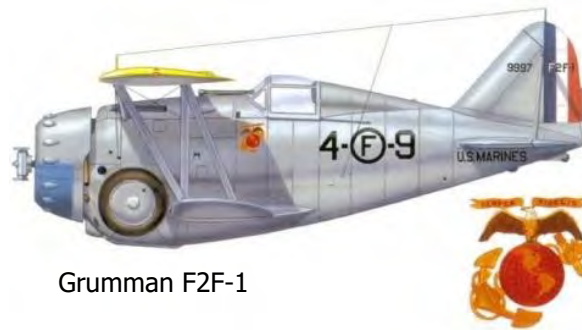
*Col Denis Godfrey is a former RMW PIO and is now the Airport Manager at the Russ McDonald Field: Heber City Municipal Airport home of the Utah Wing, CAF. Col Godfrey was a past steady contributor to the Propwash Gazette and we welcome him back with this article. Thanks to Denis for this local western Colorado reminder as we remember Memorial Day.*

*By Col Denis B Godfrey*

Norwood, CO; Saturday, May 29, 1937 – It was a typical bright and blustery spring day in southwest Colorado. 31 year old Marine Corps aviator and Naval Academy graduate, Lieutenant Glen Herndon, was en route from San Diego California back home to Norwood to visit family over the Memorial Day weekend. He was also on official business as his dress blue uniform was packed in the luggage compartment. Lt. Herndon would represent the Corps at the town Memorial Day service.

As he neared Dove Creek in his Grumman F2F-1 bi-plane fighter, the landscape became familiar with Lone Cone peak prominent in the distance; a guidepost marking the final approach to home. Below, pastures were green with spring grass and dotted with cattle, deer and elk. The aspens covering the surrounding foothills were bright with new growth after the long winter and Lt. Herndon felt the excitement of getting home to the ranch. Fond memories of family, friends, his ole' stock horse and antici-

pation of the big steak dinner with all the fixin's that mom was no doubt preparing as his ship navigated the San Juans. It would be quite a sight for the locals to see the silver fighter roar overhead and land at the sleepy little Norwood dirt airstrip. A thought and mischievous grin then came to him. Too bad he didn't have time to buzz some of the neighboring ranches, but he



Grumman F2F-1

was already *bingo fuel* with only enough to make a pass at the Herndon Ranch.

Big baldy was now visible with the ranch situated near its base. Crossing a ridgeline, a valley opens to the north as he turns to begin a descent toward Goshorn Flats. The old homestead soon came into view with the ranch house at its center. Bringing the aircraft down to treetop level he gathers speed and centers the house in his gun sight. With the airspeed pegged, he screams over the house and pulls sharply up into an arcing turn to make another pass. He slows and then opens the sliding canopy to see people coming from the house and out buildings. Approaching the house at landing speed he spots his mother coming out the back door and sure enough, she's wearing the blue apron that signals dinner will be ready when he gets home. She steps off the back stoop waving as the airplane

passes by and Glen waves back, wags his wings then departs north to the Norwood Airport.

The old Norwood Airport was northeast of town situated near the rim of the San Miguel River Canyon. Waiting there that day was Glen's father, Al Herndon. Al had pioneered the Herndon Ranch where the family business

was cattle. He could hear the growl of the Twin Wasp Junior radial engine as it approached and he stepped out of the cab of his pickup to watch with a few other locals that had gathered. The stubby little barrel shaped fighter lined up with the airstrip and then made a smart break for the landing pattern at mid-field. Some of the gathered clapped with excitement. Descending as it slowed, he could see the tucked landing gear start to emerge from the sides of the fuselage, stop for a moment and then retract back in. The airplane continued on away from the field, turned east and then north along the canyon rim, parallel with the airstrip. The airplane began to bob up and down as it slowly flew along the canyon; sometimes dipping out of view below the rim. Al's heart sank momentarily, but the airplane popped up again and then he wondered what that boy was up to.

Some folks say the engine sputtered and quit, but nobody could say for certain exactly what happened before the airplane nosed over and hit the ground in the scrub brush near the airfield. Lt. Herndon never made it home for dinner that night; killed upon impact as Al watched.

The cause of the crash was never conclusive. The Grumman F2F-1 was a superb airplane, but the manual landing gear was fiddly requiring no less than 32 cranks by the pilot to extend, all while trying to fly the airplane. The aircraft were known to sometimes porpoise up and down in rhythm with the pilot turning the landing gear hand crank. This may explain the up and down movement reported by witnesses. Add to this a possible problem with the landing gear on Lt. Herndon's airplane, wind, high elevation and low fuel; all conspiring together to link into an accident chain.



Lt. Glen Herndon left his family's Norwood ranch to graduate from the US Naval Academy and become a Marine Aviator.

*Continued on Page 7*



## THE FLYING LEATHERNECK OF NORWOOD (Continued from Page 6)

*Continued from Page 6*

The superstitious might say this particular airplane, serial number 9997 was jinxed. It was special ordered by the Navy to replace another new airplane from the original production order of F2F's that crashed while being delivered from the factory.

Thankfully Mrs. Herndon did not accompany Al to the airfield. The last time she saw Glen was in a moment of awe as the country boy she raised, now a man, an aviator, flew past in his sleek silver fighter with bright yellow wings banked toward the late afternoon sun. So close was he that his big familiar smile was visible as she instinctively, maternally reached skyward to touch his face. At that moment her boy flew among the ranks of Lucky Lindy, Roscoe Turner and Doolittle.

When the grief stricken Al brought home the news, it was a harbinger of what would soon come to other mothers in the region as World War II approached. In fact, for WWII aviators, circumstances would be similar to Lt. Herndon's fate as most fatalities were actually due to training or non-combat accidents. But that fact did not diminish their sacrifice in service to our country.

World War did come and Glen's brother Steve would enlist in the Navy and then return to Norwood after the war with a new bride. Her name was Grace but many in the region would come to know her as the late Gracie Herndon, the local firebrand newspaper columnist.



Lt. Herndon's F2F after Norwood Crash.

The townsfolk and Herndon family gathered for a belated Memorial Day remembrance where red poppy's were placed and hymns sung. Lt. Herndon was present in his dress blues that were retrieved from the wreckage and the town's favorite son was laid to rest at Norwood Cemetery on a bright, blustery Western Colorado spring day.

*Lest we forget*



## What a Day! (Continued)

*Continued from page 1*

coverage of highlights from their WWII tours. What a meaningful experience having those gentlemen as part of our celebration.

The expected representatives from History Colorado were unable to make the trip from the Front Range. So, soon to be RMW Col Grand Junction Airport Publics Relations Manager Jodi Dorny presented Wing Leader Col Kent Taylor with the official certification document honoring our "309" as the only certified flying Historic Object in the western United States and only the second in the entire

US. Col Taylor accepted the certificate, recognized the importance of the honor and commented in so many words to just watch our wing go now!!!

As the invited guests gathered in the museum for a light lunch snack, Col Taylor expanded on his view of the future of the Rocky Mountain Wing with a presentation about the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) and how the Grand Junction Wing plans to grow to become one of the most outstanding CAF organizations.

Once the Invitation Only event was past, the doors

opened (so to speak) for the general public to visit. Considering this was the day before Easter the Open House portion of The Event was a great success. The presentation of the Colors and John Hendricks repeated his stunning National Anthem. The drawing of two door prizes of free rides with Col Charlie Huff in the J-3 Cub resulted in both winners Laura Merrill and Lynn de Beauclair working hard to not have more fun than Charlie during their respective rides aloft.

The visitors kept coming in a steady stream all afternoon, touring the museum, visiting the aircraft and enjoying Col Bob Caskey's Hamburgers, Hot Dogs and Brats hot off the

grill. As usual, many didn't even know that our Wing, museum and aircraft even existed at the Grand Junction Airport – being hidden away and so secure as we are.

The turnout of RMW Colonels to support and assist this event made it truly the "BIG Event"! Way too many Colonels to list here were working hard to make this thing the success it was. All the Colonels were smiling and as we all know when we volunteer with the RMW – they were having FUN!!

*See more Photos on Page 8*



# More Photos from the Great Day Big Event

Left - Cols Peebles & Taylor present the RMW  
Below - Cols Caskey present Good Vittles



Photo by Col Rich Connor

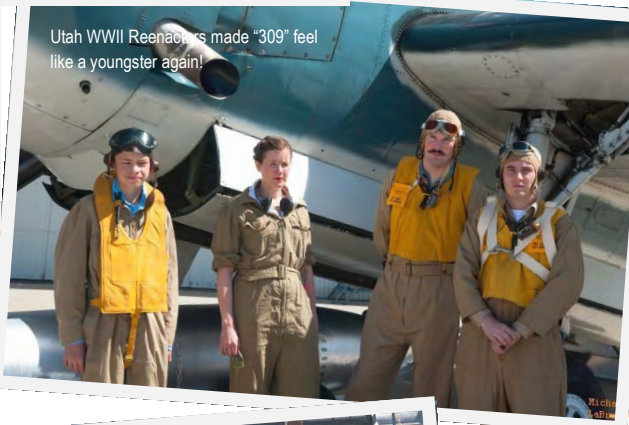


Photos by Col Kay Johnson

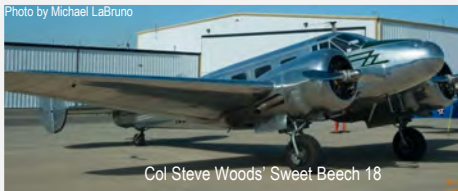


Col Lenard Felix's pretty SNJ

Photo by Michael LaBruno



Utah WWII Reenactors made "309" feel like a youngster again!



Col Steve Woods' Sweet Beech 18

Photo by Michael LaBruno

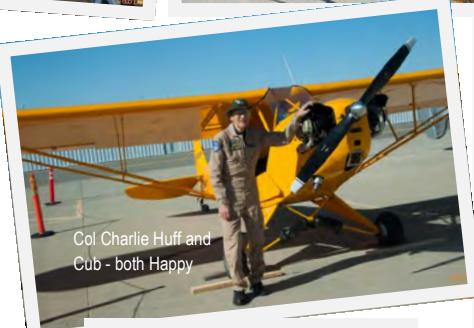


Sometimes a bottle holds a Col and sometimes a Col holds a Bottle

**What A fantastic Day!** Fantastic WWII Vererans, Fantastic Colonels, Fantastic Weather Fantastic Airplanes, Fantastic Visitors, Fantastic **FUN!**



America's Best - Three WWII Veterans



Col Charlie Huff and Cub - both Happy

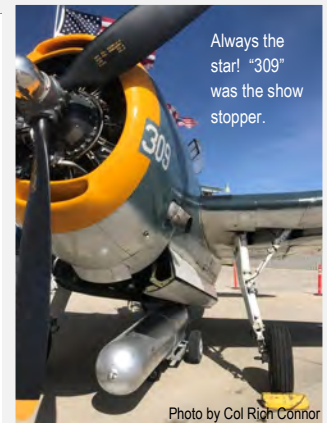


Historic Colorado didn't make it so Jodi Doney presented Wing Leader Kent Taylor the Colorado Historic



Loud & Lovely always draws a crowd

Photos by Col Kay Johnson



Always the star! "309" was the show stopper.

Photo by Col Rich Connor