



The Dixie Dispatch



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January 2021

Education through living history.

Keep 'em flying.

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From the Left Seat Col Jim Buckley, Wing Leader

Hoping for a Happier New Year, 2021 is off to a better start with some revenue from the film industry. The LT-6 was used to train one of the actors and the Corsair went to Savanna to support the rest of the crew. Looking forward to more events with them. We have also had some very generous year end donations which really help out from undeniably, the worst year in quite a while.

Maintenance is proceeding at a pretty slow pace with the Wing locked down. The staff has agreed to continue lockdown at least until February 15th, which means no Member meeting in February. We have had several Col's come down with Covid but none have contracted it at the Dixie Wing. The PT-19 engine has been reinstalled and the Annual Inspection should be completed shortly. The engine for the SBD has been repaired and currently being installed; and the new crew chief is doing a great job.

Tailwinds to all,

Jim Buckley



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Facility Maintenance & Rides Update

Col Steve Hoofnagle
Facility Maintenance Officer / Rides Officer



RIDES

We have had to shut down the rides program again due to COVID-19. We hope to restart in March.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

We have a new member, Richard Gallagher, who is looking at several building maintenance issues including the water damage in the walls in the Meeting Room. Please reach out to Richard or me if you can help with this and other building issues.

Contact Information:

facility@dixiewing.org / rides@dixiewing.org
770-309-5584 (new DW Business cell number)

Please feel free to contact Dave or I if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions. ➔

Hoofer

RECRUITING * ORIENTATION * RETENTION

Col Jim Dalton, Recruiting Officer



I am looking for and providing info on possible Covid-19 Vaccine procurement.

- Veterans Administration (if you are a veteran)
- Piedmont Health Care (if you are in their system)
- Ingles (has a signup wait list you can get on)

Any info available please share with entire Dixie Wing personnel.

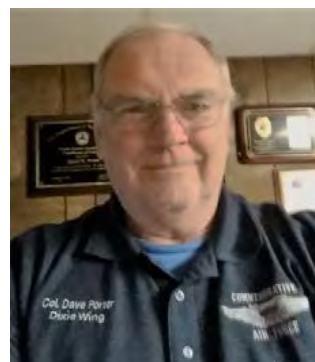
Chris, Dave & I are planning another ZOOM call for recruiting (Chris may have a date)

Last year we had 44 new Colonels (only off about 12% from prior years). At this time we do not have retention figures. ➔

Semper Fidelis!



From The Bookmaster Col Dave Porter



A series of novels

The Gathering Clouds: Following on from the acclaimed *Innocents At War* series which featured Tommy Stark, a Great War flying ace, his son, Thomas, after seeing action in Spain, joined the RAF in the long lead up to the Second World War. Young Thomas witnessed the atrocities that the Nazis had carried out in Spain and trained his pilots to show no mercy when towards the end of the book, he breached the rules to attack German planes.

The Gathering Clouds is the first of three novels in a series covering the very early days of WWII in England. The book starts in 1938 with 21 year-old Thomas Stark landing at a coastal English civil airport in a DC-2 with 14 passengers and 2 crew including Thomas as the pilot. Young Thomas Stark had commandeered the DC-2 from the Republican Spanish Air Force as the Spanish Civil War was winding down. His passengers were all foreign pilots who had volunteered to fight against the Spanish Nationalists under General Franco and the German Luftwaffe.



Polikarpov I-15 Chato

Tommy Stark, WWI hero with a Victoria Cross (VC) settled his young family in Australia after the war, moving there when Thomas Stark was still a child. His father went into the aviation business and started an airline and aircraft parts company. Young Thomas, who went by that name so as to avoid confusion with his father- who went by Tommy, started his flying lessons at age 10.

By the time young Stark reached England in his appropriated DC-2, he had about 7,000 hours in his logbook, many of which he accumulated in Spain flying the Polikarpov I-15 Chato and the Polikarpov I-16 Super Mosca...which included 12 kills of Italian and German aircraft, immediately volunteered

to fly for the RAF. Through some old friends and squadron mates of his father during WWI, Stark learned that he he could not be directly commissioned as a pilot officer without going through the entire basic flying course at the RAF flying school at Cranwell. Instead he was offered entry into the RAF as a Sergeant-Pilot with the understanding that he would report to RAF Hendon, spend one day showing them he could fly and then be immediately commissioned as a Pilot Officer and promoted to acting Flight Lieutenant.



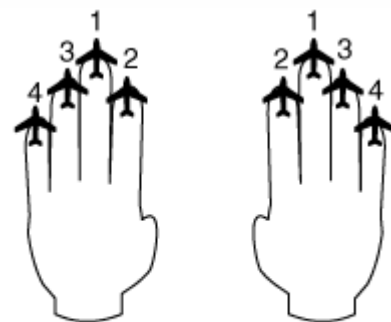
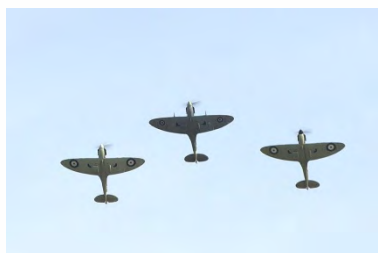
Polikarpov I-16 Super Mosca

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Bookmaster (cont.)

At the time the RAF was going through a rapid build-up since war with Germany seemed inevitable. The challenges that Stark faced were multiple: he faced a considerable amount of criticism from the RAF for flying on the Republican side since it was supported by communist Russia. He learned through his combat experience in the Spanish Civil War from fighting against the Germans that the old 3-plane "vic" combat formations, while they looked good at airshows, were worse than useless in actual combat...they were just plain dangerous since the wingmen had to spend all their time flying in tight formation with the leader and unable to look about to protect the leader's tail.

Thomas Stark advocated the German-developed "finger-four" combat formation which was more spread out than the "vic" and offered the advantage of a wingman for each element leader in the finger-four formation. Also, experience had shown that fighter pilots must use their aircraft's strong points to their advantage, meaning that to dogfight an aircraft that is more maneuverable than your's will get you killed.



None of these new, radical and against-the-grain theories sat well with the old-school RAF hierarchy because they were still using and teaching tactics that worked in WWI. They were also teaching that fighter pilots should attack the enemy plane, not the enemy pilot... since it was ungentlemanly to attack the pilot. Stark fought an uphill battle to convince the establishment that while a plane could be replaced in a matter of days, it took a year or more to train a replacement pilot.

Left-hand finger four. Right-hand finger four.

Fortunately for young Acting FLT/LT Stark, now an acting Squadron Leader, his father's old friends "had his back" and he was given free reign to develop his new Hurricane Squadron using tactics he learned in combat in the Spanish Civil War.

Gathering Clouds ends in September, 1939 as war is declared. *Breaking Storm*, Book 2 in the series, takes FLT/LT Stark and his Hurricane Squadron into Belgium and France fighting a rear-guard action during the Nazi push from Germany and Poland through the Low Countries into France toward the English Channel. *The Heat of Autumn*, Book 3, takes the squadron back to England for the Battle of Britain between August and October of 1940. We will review *The Breaking Storm* next month. ➔



***BOTM - Book of the Month** it is on our bookshelf – it's a good read; borrow it if you like but please return it!

Development Officer Update

Col Chris Madrid



As Development Officer, one of my priorities this year is to support member engagement and project success by assisting members in building plans and teams to implement and sustain their individual projects. Together we can demonstrate to the business, civic and education communities that the CAF Dixie Wing is a resource that impacts the quality of life in Fayette County. Establishing a track record and relationship building are key to all future fundraising plans.

2021 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 precautions have prevented most of our members from visiting or volunteering at the hangar for nearly a year. The good news is with a limited schedule we were able to support aircraft maintenance and pilot currency requirements and jumpstart the Stearman Restoration Project. Unfortunately, a spike in COVID-19 cases in Fayette County in November required the staff to close the hangar to non-ops activities. I am anxious to see our doors reopen to all members, but I am also extremely thankful that we have avoided a COVID-19 outbreak at the hangar. As a result, I will continue to support a schedule that cares for the health and the safety of our membership and the public.

We all joined the Commemorative Air Force because of a shared passion for aviation, history, and patriotism. Thanks to the hard work of Jim Dalton, Dave Serafin, Randy Hawkins and others we recruited 44 new members in 2020. Of our 350 members, perhaps 50 are pilots or mechanics. I know all our other members have talents, skills and connections that can help us weather our current COVID-19 challenge and ultimately help the wing become the premier World War II flying museum in Georgia.

The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine is encouraging; however, it remains to be seen when we can safely reopen the hangar for all activities, particularly education and public tours and programs, hangar rentals, aircraft rides, restoration projects and monthly membership meetings. The upcoming airshow season will be delayed and competition to book airshows will be fierce. 2021 will be another challenge.

During our COVI-19 stand down, I have learned that many organizations are eager to work with the CAF Dixie Wing, albeit in ways that are different and non-traditional for CAF units. As I have mentioned in previous reports, we are working with Fayette County Public Schools and Central Education Center to support the counties' Aviation Programs and help Social Studies educators teach World War II history. We are also working with Kennesaw State University Museum of History and Holocaust Education, University of West Georgia, and Georgia State University to increase awareness of the CAF Dixie Wing as a museum resource. We have also developed relationships with tourism and aerospace employers. These partnerships are essential in establishing credibility as an organization worthy of grants from foundations and family trusts.

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Development Officer Update (cont.)

The CAF Dixie Wing will not host a public event January-June. We have drafted preliminary plans to host a 1940s hangar dance fundraiser (Sept), WWII Heritage Days (Oct) and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (Dec). The events will be smaller than previous years, however interest and support from past partners, particularly the Peachtree City Convention and Visitors Bureau, is very encouraging. Education Officer Rick Kaczor is leading an effort to refresh the museum in anticipation of our reopening. We also need to reorganize our Docent Program as our participation in the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail will increase the number of requests for scheduled hangar tours. The next six months can be invaluable in terms of organization and prep.

Please contact me or Rick Kaczor if you are interested in assisting with fundraising or our ongoing education and museum outreach efforts.

COVID-19 CAUTION

Effective December 9, 2020, the Dixie Wing Hangar is open only to essential maintenance and aircraft operations activities until at least February 15th, 2021. The decision is based on an increase in COVID-19 cases in Fayette County and throughout Georgia and our desire to protect our members, the public and the organization. Members performing critical functions at the hangar during this period are always expected to social distance and/or wear masks.

STEARMAN RESTORATION PROJECT & 12 PLANES OF CHRISTMAS

The Stearman Restoration Project raised nearly \$10,000 from CAF 12 Planes of Christmas. Over 80 men and women donated amounts of \$10 to \$1,000 to support the project. While we did not achieve our goal of raising funds to purchase an engine, we believe the proceeds will be enough to support the restoration through 2021.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- CAF Aircraft Walkaround Series – We have struck a partnership with Central Education Center (CEC), a College & Career Academy located in Newnan, GA, to create an aircraft walk-around segments by working with one of Georgia's most respected college and career academies Broadcast Video Production Classes. The segments will be professionally produced and available for our use on an ongoing basis, i.e., posted on our website for distribution to high school aviation students, JRTOC, etc. The program kick-off has been delayed due to COVID-19.
- Georgia World War Heritage Trail - The CAF Dixie Wing is an affiliate member of the new trail that will be announced in February. The trail will be promoted throughout Georgia, increasing awareness, visitors, donations, and aircraft rides sales when we fully reopen to the public. The trail partners include the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, Museum of Aviation, National Infantry Museum and WWII Home Front Museum.
- Recruiting & Retention – The Virtual Recruiting Open House program will continue in 2021. Our next Virtual Recruiting Open House is scheduled for January 27, at 7pm. If you know a potential recruit, please contact Jim (lawdalton@aol.com) or Dave (dserafin58@comcast.net).

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Development Officer Update (cont.)

- Hangar Tours – Effective Dec 9, 2020 the hangar is closed to the public until further notice. Please refer visitors to the wing website to schedule a tour.

EDUCATION & MUSEUM OUTREACH

- Museum Refresh – Education Officer Rick Kaczor is assembling a team to reorganize the museum exhibit displays around themes that link our aircraft to state curriculum objectives. In addition, our goal is clean the display cases and update exhibit descriptions. If necessary, we will apply for grants to cover potential costs, but the first step is to develop a project plan. If you are interested in assisting, please contact Rick at richard.kaczor@und.edu.
- Website - We have added a new Education tab on dixiewing.org. The tab includes info for scheduling a tour, requesting access to the WWII Home Front lesson plan program and the Living Aviation History Day guest speaker series.
- University Partnerships - Staff and faculty from Kennesaw State University Museum of History & Holocaust Education and Georgia State University have reviewed our collection and have confirmed that it can support the needs of educators, home schoolers and the public. In addition, KSU MHHE is planning to create a video tour of the hangar, aircraft, workshop, and museum for Fall 2021. The University of West Georgia is adding a tour of the hangar to their student teacher course syllabus in March.
- Fayette County's public elementary and middle schools utilized the CAF Dixie Wing WWII Home Front lesson plans and WWII Home Front Resource Trunk in November and December. Feedback during a Jan 20 debrief was positive, particularly regarding the resource trunk. Our next steps are to share the program with high school history teachers. Our goal is to make the lesson plans available to all public-school educators across the State of Georgia by the end of 2021.
- Fayette Aviation, Medicine & Technology Career Exploration - The CAF Dixie Wing is assisting Fayette County Public Schools in connecting educators and their students with employers, experiences, and information to support preparing Georgia students for success in learning, career, and life. Our military medicine session is scheduled for Jan 27th and will be available for members via zoom recording.
- Docent Program – A visit to the hangar is a powerful recruiting tool and introduction to potential donors. Airbase Arizona has shared their docent guidelines with the Dixie Wing. Rick Kaczor is working with Willard Womack to review the guidelines and determine how we might repurpose the info for our use in the future. If you are interested in volunteering as a docent, please contact Rick at richard.kaczor@und.edu.

FUNDRAISING

- CAF Development Team – Members interested in assisting in fundraising are invited to join the CAF Dixie Wing Development Team Kick-Off Zoom Meeting on Wed, Feb 3 @ 7pm. Jane Simpson, Steve Forsyth, Philip Beegle and Jim van den Heuval have so far joined the effort. Please contact me if you are interested in joining the Development Team, chris.madrid@dixiewing.org

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Development Officer Update (cont.)

- Aircraft Rides – *Effective Dec 9th and until further notice, our rides program is suspended.*
- Hangar Rental – Dave Riesselmann is our Hangar Rental Officer. Please pass on leads to Dave at mudduckdave@gmail.com
- Airshow Sales – Airshow Sales Officer Clint Cottrell participated in the International Council of Airshows (ICAS) and Southeast Council of Airshows (SECAS) in early December.

PROGRAM COORDINATION

- Dixie Dispatch - The Dixie Dispatch is the primary communications tool for keeping members up to date. All members are encouraged to read the Dispatch. More importantly, Dispatch Editor Frank Kalinowski is seeking articles from members.
- Marketing & Fundraising Ops Team - The mission of the team is to coordinate plans for promoting the wing fundraising and education outreach programs and look for ways to encourage other members to participate in wing projects. The February monthly meeting is scheduled for Feb 8, 7pm EST.
- Planning - Explore Georgia has projected that local, outdoor events will lead the recovery of the tourism in Georgia beginning in 3Q21. As a result, our public event calendar will begin in 3Q and are planned as one-day events. We are tentatively planning to kick-off our outreach and fundraising campaign with a Warbird Formation Clinic in April, but please note that clinic will not be promoted as a public event. The final schedule is contingent on COVID-19, volunteer participation and budgeting. If you are interested in assisting in any of the projects below, please contact me. →

Marketing Operations Calendar 2021

2021 Event	Date
Hangar Refresh	Jan-June
Reorganize Docent Team for scheduled tours	Jan-June
Fayette County Public Schools AIM HIGH! Career Exploration - Military Medicine	27-Jan
Recruiting Information Night	27-Jan
Video Project: 360 Virtual Tour of Aircraft and Hangar	Feb
Fayette County Public Schools AIM HIGH! Fayette Career Exploration - Cyber Security	10-Mar
SECAS	18-21 Mar
Warbird Formation (TRARON) Clinic (Spring)	14-17 Apr
Fayette County Chamber of Commerce Community Expo	14-May
Atlanta Airshow	29-30 May
Vintage Days (Peach State Aerodrome)	5-Jun
Hangar Dance	11-Sep
WWII Heritage Days/Stearman Fly-in	9-Oct
Future Pilots of America (Warm Springs)	Oct
Warbird Formation (TRARON) Clinic (Fall)	11-14 Nov

Robert Thacker, 102, Dies; Survived Pearl Harbor to Fly in 3 Wars

By Richard Goldstein

Originally published in the New York Times, 25 December 2020

His unarmed bomber was caught in the thick of Japan's attack. He went on to fly some 80 missions in World War II and to become a record-setting test pilot.



Left: Lt. Col. Robert Thacker on the wing of his P-82 fighter plane with his co-pilot, Lt. John Ard, at La Guardia Field in Queens in February 1947. They had just completed the first nonstop flight from Hawaii to New York City. Credit...The New York Times

Robert Thacker, who found himself caught in the middle of Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor when he was piloting an unarmed B-17 bomber to Hawaii for refueling, but managed to make a hair-raising landing and went on to a distinguished flying career in war and peace, died on Nov. 25 at his home in San Clemente, Calif. He was 102.

Mr. Thacker's daughter, Barbara Thacker, confirmed his death to The New York Times on Friday. She said she had not provided confirmation

until last week to The San Clemente Times, which published an obituary on Thursday.

Lieutenant Thacker, who arrived on the island of Oahu as Japanese warplanes devastated the American naval base there, would soon be dropping bombs of his own. He flew some 80 missions during World War II, seeing action in both the Pacific and European theaters. He later became a record-setting test pilot and flew in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

But it was on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, that he faced his first test in battle.

His plane was among a flight of newly built B-17s arriving from California en route to the Philippines. As he began his descent to the Army Air Corps' Hickam Field, at first unaware of anything amiss, he was astonished to see bombers and fighters roaming the skies and black smoke rising from the American base and adjoining military installations.

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Thacker (cont.)

One of the fighters shot out the front landing gear of his Flying Fortress as he approached the runway. But he careened to a landing and led his crew to a swamp alongside the runway to escape the inferno.

In February 1947, about 18 months after Japan surrendered, he was back at Hickam Field, this time to make aviation history. Now a lieutenant colonel, he piloted a North American Aviation P-82 fighter plane on the first nonstop flight from Hawaii to New York City in what remains the longest nonstop flight, 5,051 miles, ever made by a propeller-driven fighter, according to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, near Dayton, Ohio.

Developed at the end of World War II, the twin-fuselage, twin-propeller P-82 had been envisioned as a long-range escort for the giant B-29 Superfortresses on missions to Japan. The fighter had two cockpits, one for the pilot and the other for the co-pilot/navigator, so they could take turns flying. But the war was over before the P-82 was combat ready.

Early in the Cold War, the P-82 was viewed by the Pentagon as a potential escort in the event bombers like the B-29 were called upon to attack the Soviet Union. The pioneering test flight by Colonel Thacker and his co-pilot, Lt. John Ard, provided evidence that the fighter could carry out such a mission.

During the 14½-hour flight from Hickam, a mechanical glitch prevented the plane from jettisoning three empty fuel tanks, and the P-82 fought drag from the unwanted weight and strong headwinds. By the time it touched down, it had only enough fuel left for another 30 minutes of flight.



*Colonel Thacker, left, and Lieutenant Ard with their wives after completing their record-setting 1947 flight.
Credit...The New York Times*

But Colonel Thacker handled his plane with aplomb. The P-82, named Betty Jo after his wife, landed at La Guardia Field in Queens shortly after 11 a.m. on Feb. 28, 1947, greeted by a host of reporters and news photographers and hundreds of onlookers.

Since “nothing else happened in the world that day,” he told the Arrowhead Club, a California military research organization, in a 2014 interview, “I was front-page news.” The New York Times ran its own Page 1 article on the flight and an editorial hailing the Army Air Forces’ growing readiness for postwar combat. It viewed the flight as

providing “further proof of how rapidly the globe is shrinking.”

Robert Eli Thacker was born on Feb. 21, 1918, in El Centro, Calif., one of three children of Percie and Margaret (Eadie) Thacker.

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Thacker (cont.)

When he was 8, his father, who owned a moving company, bought him a kit to build a twin-pusher model plane, a craft with two propellers that rides air currents with the aim of achieving maximum distance in competitions.

“I was hooked on aviation from that age on,” he recalled in the 2014 interview.

He attended a two-year community college in El Centro, hoping to become an aeronautical engineer. But his family did not have the money for him to complete a four-year college education, so in 1939 he joined what was then known as the Army Air Corps. He received his wings as a lieutenant in June 1940.

He flew World War II bombing missions out of New Guinea, Italy and England. He later joined the nation’s leading test pilots in experimental flights over California’s high desert at Muroc Army Air Field in California, later renamed Edwards Air Force Base.

In addition to flying B-17 Flying Fortresses in World War II, Colonel Thacker piloted Superfortresses in the Korean War and high-altitude missions in the Vietnam War.

The P-82 (renamed the F-82) flew combat missions in the Korean War, when it was given radar capability, but jet fighters soon rendered it obsolete.

Mr. Thacker retired from the Air Force as a full colonel in 1970. His awards included two Silver Stars and three Distinguished Flying Crosses.

He was later an adviser to the aviation industry and pursued his hobby of flying radio-controlled model planes.



Mr. Thacker’s plane, named after his wife, is on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Ohio. Credit...U.S. Air Force

Mr. Thacker’s daughter is his only survivor. His wife, Betty Jo (Smoot) Thacker, died in 2011.

Although the record-setting propeller fighter that Colonel Thacker flew has faded into obscurity, it has not been entirely forgotten. ➔

Thacker (cont.)

The Reason for *Texas Raiders* One-Wheel Tribute! By Kevin “K5” Michels

*Originally published in the CAF Gulf Coast Wing
“FLIGHT BRIEFING” January 2021*



Donning his distinctive flat-brim straw hat, an otherwise nondescript elderly man would leave his home for a daily 5-mile walk, telling his beloved wife that he was “going out to chase girls”. He would return four hours later. Not because he was slow, but because the gregarious extrovert socialized with literally everyone along the way.

Known to all as “the Colonel”, he was a pillar of society in this seaside community of San Clemente, CA. The New York Times has only so

much space in its newspaper, and thus holds a high bar for its obituary section. For Robert Eli Thacker, nearly a full page was dedicated. Born February 21, 1918, Robert died peacefully at home on November 25, 2020 at the age of 102, leaving a gaping hole in his community and a broken heart in the chest of everyone he touched during his incredible life. You could be forgiven for not knowing Robert Thacker by name, but we guarantee that each of you knows one or more of his exploits.

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Thacker (cont.)

Thacker grew up in the farming community of El Centro, CA as the second of three children. He attended a local Community College, earning an Associates Degree in Engineering. He signed up for the Army's Air Cadet program, eventually winning his wings in the Summer of 1940. 2nd Lieutenant Thacker was first assigned to the 88th Reconnaissance Squadron where he flew B-18 Bolos from Hamilton Field, CA and Douglas Airfield, UT.

On December 3, 1941, Lt. Thacker was ordered to go to Boeing's plant in Seattle and pick up one of the new B-17Es for the squadron. Thacker had zero training in B-17s nor any four-engine aircraft for that matter. He had not been checked out or sat in the left seat, much less flown one! But orders were orders, and Thacker managed to get the B-17E back to Douglas Airfield in one piece. Two days later the squadron was flying endurance tests with the new aircraft. Douglas got socked in by weather and as a result they had to divert to Tucson, AZ after a long day of flying. Upon landing they received odd orders to refuel immediately and report to Hamilton Field, CA where further orders awaited them. No sleep for the crews that night.

Upon arriving at Hamilton, they were given orders to fly to Clark Field, Philippines to bolster their defenses. The B-17's were to leave that night, giving them less than half a day to prepare and no time to sleep. The Fortresses were quickly modified and equipped for a long over-water flight, which is to say that they swapped as much dead weight for fuel as possible. The brand-new aircraft had never been armed, so machine guns in crates were issued, but not installed. After all, it was peace time, and the first leg of the flight was over US controlled waters nowhere near any possible danger. So the plan was to wait to take on the heavy .50 caliber ammunition at a later fuel stop. Given everything that was known at that moment, it was a very good plan. Unfortunately, the date was Dec. 6, 1941.

Fourteen B-17s were scheduled to depart. Two scratched due to mechanical issues, leaving eight B17Es and four B-17Cs to continue on the 14+ hour flight to Hickam Field. Lieutenant Thacker was in command of B-17E number 41-2432. The bedraggled crews, having already gone more than 24 hours without sleep took off into the evening sky and flew all night. The local US Army

Commander had subsidized the cost of Honolulu's KGMB radio station so that it could continue broadcasting all night and serve as a homing beacon for the B-17 navigators. As we know today, the Japanese used that broadcast for the same purpose. Unbeknownst to the B-17 crews, they were about to become unwitting participants in one of history's most notorious events. Thoroughly exhausted and with nearly empty fuel tanks, 12 crews and their B-17s arrived over Oahu at almost the same time as the first wave of Japanese attackers.

Mass confusion reigned. Hickam's air control tower initially cleared the B-17s to land, but then frantically directed them away. A6M Zero fighters and "friendly" anti-aircraft fire tore into the Flying Fortresses simultaneously. Without enough fuel to orbit and wait out the attack, all twelve B-17s attempted to land anywhere they could, as best they could, and with varying degrees of success. Only one Fortress was shot down. Lieutenant Frank Bostrom, who would later gain fame as the pilot that snuck General MacArthur out of the Philippines, landed his B-17 (41-2416) safely onto a golf course!

Today's Texas Raiders pilots can appreciate what happened next. Thacker, just 23 years old and a pilot for all of 18 months, was about to attempt just his fourth or fifth landing ever in a B-17. Now under attack with empty fuel tanks and few options, Thacker lined up his B-17 for a crosswind landing on the airfield's short runway. While on final, three Zeroes swooped in and shot the right main landing gear to pieces. Despite it all, Thacker got the plane down in one piece, ground-looped at the end of the runway and brought the plane to a halt. With his wits still about him Thacker ordered his men to take cover in the adjacent swamp rather than a nearby hangar. Over the next hour both the hangar and flight line were destroyed by Japanese attackers in a series of massive explosions. Thacker was one of only three B-17 pilots to land his plane at Hickam Field as planned.

In 1970, Hollywood released the blockbuster movie Tora Tora Tora. In that movie a B-17 is shown making a crash landing with one wheel down during the attack. Of the twelve B-17s that arrived that day, it is Thacker's landing that is best depicted by that epic scene. Since 1972 the Gulf

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Thacker (cont.)

Coast Wing's B-17 Texas Raiders has recreated that event in the Tora Tora Tora airshow, keeping history alive lest we forget the sneak attack on that fateful Sunday morning. Until now, you may not have known the name of the original pilot. And even fewer knew how young or green the pilot

was that somehow performed like a veteran professional. Of the twelve B-17 command pilots that flew into Pearl Harbor that day, half were subsequently lost during WWII. Robert Thacker, at 102 years of age, was the last one standing. Salute! ➔

PLANE CRAZY



Although the Confederate States of America were very successful with innovations such as the submarine and iron-clad warships, their attempts at designing the first *Mustang* never got off the ground.

THE DIXIE WING MEMBERS AREA

The Dixie Wing members area is located at: <https://members.dixiewing.org/login.html>. It can also be accessed through the Dixie Wing website at: <https://dixiewing.org>

Here members can update their contact info, pay dues, get the latest news, reach out to specific officers and download copies of the Dispatch and Dixie Wing forms.

Members can login using their CAF Col # (username) and their last name (Password). Once you have reached the "Dashboard" you have many options, and can navigate through the dashboard using the list on the left hand side or by clicking on the icons.

The screenshot shows the Dixie Wing members dashboard. At the top, there's a header with the Dixie Wing logo and a user profile icon labeled "Your Name". Below the header is a "Dashboard" title. On the left is a sidebar menu with links: Dashboard, News, Roster, Dispatches, Forms, Calendar, Payments, Points Of Contact, Support the Dixie Wing When Shopping, and Update my info. The main content area contains several tiles: News, Roster, Dispatches, Forms, Calendar, Payments, Points Of Contact, Support when Shopping, and an "Update my info" tile with a gear icon. At the bottom left is a blue "LOGOUT" button. Eight green callout boxes with arrows point to specific features:

- Want the latest Wing news? Click here.** (Points to the News tile)
- Need to look up a Cols address or telephone number? Find it in the online roster.** (Points to the Roster tile)
- Want to read the latest Dixie Dispatch, or one you missed? Read every issue back to April 2001.** (Points to the Dispatches tile)
- Need a Recruiting Form or a Reimbursement Form? Find it right here.** (Points to the Forms tile)
- Keep up to date with the Wing calendar.**
And keep your own information up to date with "Update my Info." (Points to the Calendar and Update my info tiles)
- Need to pay your Wing dues? Click here.** (Points to the Payments tile)
- Who ya gonna call? Find the contact names here, as well as directions to the Wing.** (Points to the Points Of Contact tile)
- You can support the Wing with your purchases through Amazon or Kroger. Find out how.** (Points to the Support when Shopping tile)



ON THE HORIZON

NO WING MEETING IN FEBRUARY DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

Other Events: None to report at this time.

PLANE CRAZY #2



Fast forwarding from the 1860s to 1942: After successfully coming up with the design for the Jeep but losing the big orders to the Ford Motor Company, the Bantam Motor Car Company toyed with collaborating with North American Aviation to produce the *Mustang*. Unfortunately, they got NAA's blueprints mixed up with their proposed 1942 model, and the results were disastrous. Once again, Bantam lost out, and Ford would be victorious 22 years later with their own *Mustang*.

And if you enjoy **PLANE CRAZY** check out: <https://performance.ford.com/enthusiasts/quick-look/2019/04/first-mustang-was-introduced-in-1948.html>