



# THE DISPATCH



AIRBASE GEORGIA, COMMEMORATIVE AIRFORCE, PEACHTREE CITY, GA  
WWW.AIRBASEGEORGIA.ORG WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CAFAIRBASEGEORGIA

March 2026

Educate, Inspire, Honor

Keep 'em flying

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Mandatory Fire Extinguisher Training
- Gone West: Walt Cantrell
- Annual Inspections in Photos

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Development Report
- Education Report
- New Member Sworn In
- Facility Rentals & Events
- On the Horizon

## From the left Seat

Col Mark Richards

As I walked around the hangar and maintenance shop the other day, I was reminded that we are getting very close to completing the heavy maintenance season on our aircraft. Our crew chiefs, machinists and maintenance volunteers have been working steadily to get our aircraft ready for the 2026 airshow and rides season. Their level of dedication and attention to detail in preparing the aircraft to safely take to the skies again is unparalleled in the warbird industry.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in keeping these magnificent aircraft in flight ready status in order to share our mission throughout the state & country.

The restoration of our PT-17 Stearman is nearing completion, it is one beautiful airplane. The rollout & first flight of this awesome restoration will be an exciting time at Airbase Georgia.



Plans are in the works for a special event to welcome this aircraft into the CAF and Airbase Georgia fleet.

The P-47 is coming right along and looks more and more like an airplane every day. The P47 restoration crew is bringing this historic aircraft back to life, one rivet at a time. If you haven't been here in a while, it's well worth the trip to the airbase to see these beautiful aircraft and the craftsmanship of our volunteers.

The CAF 2026 Winter Conference was held in Dallas, TX, February 26 - March 1, 2026, and we were well represented by members of Airbase Georgia. The CAF Staff and other CAF Wings & Units were all very interested

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## MEETING INFORMATION

April 4, 2026

Staff Meeting 0930 hrs.

Membership 1300 hrs,

## Staff Officers

### Airbase Leader

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### Facility Rentals

Col Bill Brown  
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in learning about our programs, and how we could work together with them to help promote their units as well as the CAF Mission. Airbase Georgia was recognized for its new education program with Fayette County Schools, and we were asked to present at next year's 2027 Conference.

In addition, Airbase Georgia was recognized for winning the 12-Planes of Christmas, receiving the most money in donations for the P-47 project. Thank you one and all who gave so generously so that we can get this historic aircraft back in the air for people to see and hear.

Also, Airbase Georgia's own Vince Garland was recognized as one of the CAF Leaders in Recruitment for 2025 – Congratulations Vince!!

Our success as an organization is measured by the strength and involvement of our volunteers, they are the glue that keeps us together, working to sustain our mission to educate, inspire and honor. As we transition into the spring the airbase will become very busy with facility rental events, rides events, and airshows. Please volunteer when you can and enjoy the comradery of other ABG volunteers and the uniqueness of these events.

This year is the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the United States of America and the CAF and Airbase Georgia has plans

to do our part to participate in the celebrations. Here are some ABG events that you can volunteer for and help support.

- **April 18<sup>th</sup> – Peachtree City Hop's & Prop's**
  - Come volunteer to be part of the event staff
  - Come as a uniformed reenactor and tell the story of our aircraft
- **April 24<sup>th</sup> – FCEF Fayette Fling**
  - Come volunteer to be part of the event staff
  - Come as a uniformed reenactor and tell the story of our aircraft
- **July 4<sup>th</sup> - Peachtree City Parade**
  - Help design, build and display an Airbase Georgia Float
  - Contact Bob Grove for more information
- **October 17<sup>th</sup> – Airbase Georgia and Peachtree City Celebrate America 250**
  - Help organize and plan a 1940's swing dance
  - Volunteer to be part of the event staff
  - Contact Mark Richards or Bob Grove for more information
- **November 21 & 22 – Fall GA Gun Shows LLLP & ABG Rides Weekend**
  - Come volunteer to be part of the event staff

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- Come as a uniformed reenactor and tell the story of our aircraft
- Come and assist the Rides Team

These are just a few of the events being planned at Airbase Georgia this year ..... we need your help to make all of the events something special for our guests to remember. Would you like to be a part of the event teams? There are many opportunities to volunteer your time and talents to help organize and participate in any or all of the events.

Contact me in person, call or text me at (517) 902-8750 or email me at [mark.richards@airbasegeorgia.org](mailto:mark.richards@airbasegeorgia.org) and I will be glad to help you find a fit with one or more of our event teams.

Thank you again for all you do to support Airbase Georgia!!!!!! 🇺🇸



**We need you!!**



## **CAF mandated annual fire extinguisher training April 4th following the monthly meeting**

The Peachtree City Fire Department will be here on April 4th to conduct fire extinguisher training following the monthly meeting. **This training is required annually by CAF regulation.** A brief classroom session will be followed by practical training on the FD's fire simulator. 🇺🇸

Dave Riesselmann  
Safety Officer, Airbase Georgia  
770-990-3643



“Members are the best ambassadors for our mission.”

Col Chris Madird, March 2026 member meeting

## Gone West: Col Walter Cantrell

Walter Collins Cantrell, was born November 16, 1941, in Los Angeles, California, and departed this life February 19, 2026, at his home in Sharpsburg, Georgia, at 84 years of age.

Walter joined the United States Air Force and honorably served his country in Korea. He graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University as an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) Mechanic and went to work for Delta Airlines in 1969, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He retired from Delta in 1996, and then worked for Aeroflot in Moscow, Russia. He was in

Russia for about six months out of the year over the next three years before he retired and returned home.

Walter had a 1937 Stake Bed Ford Half-Ton Truck that his dad bought when he was a kid. Walter and his son, Wayne, were able to restore it together in 1994, Walter was a Mason for 48 years, and he was also a Shriner for many years. He enjoyed being a Shriner Clown and his specialty was doing balloon acts for kids.

A celebration of life will be held on April 19, 1300-1600. 🌟



National Rosie the Riveter Day is celebrated annually on March 21<sup>st</sup> to honor the millions of women who supported World War II by working in factories, shipyards, and defense industries. Established to recognize their immense contribution to the war effort and the resulting cultural shifts for women in the workplace, it highlights the “We Can Do It!” legacy. Authorized by Congress in 2017.

Contributed by Col Chris Madrid

## Development Report

Col Philip Beegle

I am happy to announce we were the number one funded aircraft for 2025 12 Planes of Christmas! In fact, David Oliver presented Mark Richards with the plaque commemorating us as the top fundraiser. We were able to raise over \$110,000, all of which went to the P-47. We have been successful year after year because of our restoration team and the progress they have accomplished on the P-47. Our donors have been able to watch firsthand the aircraft being restored, parts being manufactured in our machine shop, and major parts like the leading edges coming back from Air Corps.

The Development Team, over the next year, is going to focus on two main funding events. One, WWII Fighter Pilot in a Day. This will be a national raffle where the winner will come to Airbase Georgia and go through ground school and flight training in our PT-19, T-6, and P-51. The funds raised will be divided into our new education program and operations.

Two; as you may have noticed, we are out of room in our museum, hanger, and shop. We now have an education program where all the 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Fayetteville County come to our museum. They spend 3-4 hrs. here going through different events and lessons. Simply put, we do not have room.

Mark Richards has started a committee with the sole focus of expanding our Airbase to better suit the needs of our community. What that looks like we do not exactly know but what we do know is it will be right here at Atlanta Regional Airport. The Development Team will work hand in hand with education and the Development Committee to fund raise for our future hangar and education program.

Now a plea for help, if you have an interest in development or fundraising, please contact me and let's get you involved!

Hope to see y'all around the Museum!



David Oliver, CAF President/CEO, presents Mark Richards, Airbase Georgia Leader, with 2025 12 Planes of Christmas Award at the 2026 CAF Conference in February.



# Around the Hangar

## Col Charles Burcher

**Cols Chris Buzzeo, Roy Handler, Mark Chabot, & Forest Buchanan** reinstalling the left horizontal stabilizer on the LT-6.



## Education Officer Report

Col Chris Madrid

### Education Takes Flight: Airbase Georgia Expands WWII Learning Across Communities

Airbase Georgia's Education Program reached a major milestone this winter with the successful completion of the first Fayette County 5th Grade World War II History Education Program. Developed in partnership with Fayette County Public Schools, the program brought history to life through primary sources, storytelling, and immersive learning—connecting students directly to the legacy of the Greatest Generation. For our Airbase, this represents a strong proof of concept for our role as a “living classroom,” with expansion planned for Fall 2026.

Also beginning last month, Airbase Georgia hosted *Georgia Journeys*, a traveling exhibit created by Kennesaw State University's Museum of History and Holocaust Education through its Legacy Series oral history project. The exhibit follows the lives of 12 World War II veterans, homefront workers, and Holocaust survivors who came to call Georgia home, and offers a glimpse into President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's unique Georgia journey from 1924 until his death in Warm Springs in 1945. Including a feature story on FOX 5 Atlanta, further expanding Airbase Georgia's visibility, and reinforcing the strength of our education programming.

#### FOX 5 Story:

<https://www.fox5atlanta.com/video/fmc-ctf9hxftrh2zafz>

This progress supports a broader 2026 priority: positioning Airbase Georgia as a regional hub for aviation education and public history. Two Aviation Career Days—scheduled for April and November—will welcome students from across the region to explore aviation, aerospace, and skilled trades, reinforcing our

role in workforce development and community engagement.

Recent community engagement efforts have

also driven strong public visibility. Airbase Georgia's successful participation in Super Museum Sunday introduced new audiences to our mission, attracted significant visitor traffic, and generated positive local media coverage, including a feature in *The Citizen*. These outcomes highlight the growing awareness of Airbase Georgia as both a museum and an active community education partner.

Our outreach also extends beyond Fayette County, supporting communities across Georgia working to preserve World War II history. One such connection is developing in Douglas, Georgia, where Airbase Georgia plans to support the first 2026 rides event at the Wings & Things Festival. Douglas is home to the WWII Flight Training Museum and the Liberty Belle Foundation—organizations dedicated to preserving the history of America's wartime pilot training program.

The WWII Flight Training Museum in Douglas preserves the legacy of one of the nation's largest pilot training bases during World War II. Located at the former Douglas Army Airfield, it interprets how thousands of cadets trained in South Georgia to become Army Air Forces pilots. As a fellow founding member of the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail, the museum plays a vital role in connecting communities across the state through shared history and heritage tourism.

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**These efforts are part of a growing statewide network of partners working together through the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail.**

Through partnerships like these, Airbase Georgia continues to strengthen its role as both a steward of history and a catalyst for community engagement—supporting fellow organizations committed to preserving the legacy of the Greatest Generation.

As these programs grow, so does the need for member support. Airbase Georgia is actively recruiting docents to support education programs, exhibits, and student experiences. Whether guiding students through exhibits or sharing stories on the flight line, our docents play a critical role in delivering on our mission.

The success of the Fayette County pilot—and the expansion ahead—reflects a simple idea: when history is experienced, it inspires. With the continued support of our members and Advisory Committee, Airbase Georgia is well positioned to expand its education impact across the region in 2026 and beyond.

**Get Involved**

- Volunteer as a docent or education guide
- Support Aviation Career Days (April & November 2026)
- Help expand WWII education programs across Georgia 



**Around the Hangar**

**Col Charles Burcher**



# Recruiting Officer Report Col Dave Serafin

Join me in welcoming Kosisochukwu Obidegwu to ABG. He looks forward to learning how to maintain our collection of warbirds. 🇺🇸



Photos courtesy Cols Gehard Frenz (l) and Mike Daly (r)



Cols Mel Duhon, Bob Hensel, Doug Maxwell work on the SBD during annual inspection.

Col Yvonne Haley conducts March Rides class.



Photos courtesy Col Charles Burcher

## Public Information Officer

Col Steve Forsyth

### Airbase Georgia Celebrates Five Years of the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail

**PEACHTREE CITY, GA (March 3, 2026)** – The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) Airbase Georgia joins museums and historic sites across the state as they celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail, a statewide network dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Georgia’s vital contributions to World War II.

Airbase Georgia was among the Trail’s founding partners when it launched in February 2021, united by a shared commitment to honoring the men and women of the Greatest Generation and ensuring that their stories remain accessible to future generations. The Trail has grown into a recognized platform for public history, education, and heritage tourism, preserving the stories of people, places, and events that shaped Georgia’s wartime legacy.

“Airbase Georgia joined the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail because of our mission to educate, honor, and inspire,” said Airbase Leader Mark Richards. “The Trail strengthens our ability to tell these stories collaboratively and to reach new audiences across the state.”

The Georgia WWII Heritage Trail has expanded from ten original partners to a growing network of Trail and Affiliate Partners, amplifying the impact of individual museums while presenting a more unified narrative of Georgia’s role in the war. The Trail has received statewide and national recognition for innovation in heritage tourism and public engagement, and it continues to create new opportunities for collaboration, shared visibility, and coordinated programming.

As a WWII flying museum, Airbase Georgia contributes a distinctive aviation and education perspective to the Trail. Through exhibits, aircraft restoration, living history programming and K-12 education initiatives, the Airbase helps bring Georgia’s WWII story to life while reinforcing the Trail’s broader mission of preservation and education.

Long recognized for bringing history to life through the restoration and flight of authentic WWII aircraft, Airbase Georgia has seven vintage aircraft that fly and is restoring a rare P-47N Thunderbolt fighter alongside an N2S Stearman biplane, the type used to train U.S. Navy pilots during the war. The Stearman’s first post-restoration flight is planned for later this year. These projects reflect Airbase Georgia’s long-term stewardship of historic aircraft, the depth of its all-volunteer technical expertise, and its commitment to preserving irreplaceable aviation assets for future generations.

“Airbase Georgia looks forward to continuing its role within the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail as the network enters its next chapter, expanding access to World War II history and honoring those who served,” Richards said. 



Students learn about the restoration of a WWII Stearman bi-plane pilot trainer in the maintenance shop at Commemorative Air Force (CAF) Airbase Georgia in Peachtree City, Ga., one of the stops on the Georgia WWII Heritage Trail. The Airbase is open free to the public from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. *(Photo by Charles Burcher)*

## Facility Rentals & Events Report

Col Bill Brown



We kicked off the 2026 Facility Rental season with our first hangar event on Thursday, March 19, 2026, hosting the Scouting

America Fundraising Dinner. This event was followed closely by the annual Whitewater Baseball Fund Raiser on Saturday, March 21, 2027, and closing out the weekend with the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Young Life Banquet on Sunday, March 22, 2026. A big thank you not only goes out to our event staff volunteers for manning these three events, but also to the crew chiefs the aircraft maintainers and restoration teams for assisting with getting the facility ready for these events. It is truly a total team effort to make our events happen.

You might recognize the picture at the beginning of this article, “YES”, it’s our own Vince Garland who is the face of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hop’s & Prop’s Event on Saturday, April 18, 2026. If you look at the advertising for this year’s event by Peachtree City, Vince is featured welcoming the event to Airbase Georgia and the guests. If you’d like to help at this event as a reenactor, Docent or on the event team, please contact Col Bill Brown or Col Mark Richards, we would appreciate a great showing of our volunteers for this event to represent Airbase Georgia by welcoming the guests, telling the story of our aircraft and our mission.



April is also a busy month with hangar events as we welcome the Fayette County Education Foundations third annual “Fayette Fling” on Friday evening, April 24, 2026. This is

another wonderful event dedicated to raising money to support the students, teachers, and schools in Fayette County through a variety of initiatives. Please consider volunteering for this event as a reenactor, Docent, or being part of the event team.

We are going to Celebrate America 250 in several different ways this year at Airbase Georgia.

First, we plan to fly every aircraft we can on July 4<sup>th</sup> and fly some veterans. The day will also give us an opportunity to have a day of celebration at the airbase.

Second, we’d like to participate in this year’s Peachtree City 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade.

Third, we are planning a “Celebrate America 250 Swing Dance” on Saturday October 17, 2026.

If you would like to volunteer to help plan or support these events as a volunteer, please contact Col Bob Grove, Col Bill Brown, or Col Mark Richards. 🇺🇸

SEE PAGE 12 FOR CHART OF SCHEDULED EVENTS

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Event Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
03-19	Scouting America Fundraiser Dinner	1600 – 2100	Hangar
03-21	Whitewater Baseball Fundraiser	1730 – 2330	Hangar
03-22	Young Life Banquet	1600 – 2100	Hangar
03-28	Lanier Corvette Club	1000 – 1230	Tour
04-11	Carla Reid Tuskegee PT-19 Photo sesión	1000 – 1100	Ramp
04-11	Brett Slagle Celebration of Life	0900 – 1700	Meeting Room
04-14	PTC Municipal Summit	0800 – 1400	Meeting Room
04-14	ABG Advisory Committee Meeting	1730 – 1930	Meeting Room
04-15	CEC Aviation Career Day	0900 – 1400	Hangar
04-18	PTC 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Hop's & Prop's	1600 – 2100	Hangar
04-19	Walter Contrell Celebration of Life	1300 – 1600	Hangar
04-24	FCEF 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Fayette Fling	1800 – 2200	Hangar
04-29	JD Conference	1700 – 2000	Meeting Room
05-03	Starr's Mill Families Graduation Party	1200 – 1600	Hangar
05-09	Southern Skies Magnolia Pancake Fly-In	0800 – 1100	Meeting Room
05-12	ABG Advisory Committee Meeting	1730 – 1930	Meeting Room
05-17	Delta Pilots Association Family Day	0900 – 1700	Hangar
05-30	Gwen's Graduation Party	1500 – 1900	Meeting Room



**Our Fearless Leader at work.**



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## On the horizon....

2026 Date(s)	Event	Plane(s)	Location
April 2-4	Wings Over North GA	SBD, P-63, PT-19	KRMG, Rome, GA
April 4	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
April 18	PTC CVB Hops & Props	---	P'tree City, GA
May 2	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
May 8-10	CAF Airbase AZ & Birmingham Escadrille Rides Day	TBD	Shelby County Airport, Calera, AL
May 9	Harris County Airport Open House	TBD	Pine Mountain, GA
May 9-10	ABG Rides Day	P-51, SBD, LT-6	Birmingham, AL
May 11-18	CAF Airbase AZ "Flying Legends of Victory Tour"	B-17, B-25	PDK, Atlanta, GA
May 14-17	ABG Rides Day	ALL - Rides & Static	PDK, Atlanta, GA
May 23	ABG Rides Day	P-51, SBD, LT-6, PT-19, T-34	Ben Epps Airport, Athens, GA
June 3-7	Mid-Atlantic Air Museum WWII Weekend	P-51, SBD, LT-6	Reading Regional Airport, Reading, PA
June 13	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
June 26=27	CAF Music City Wing Ride Day	TBD	Lebanon Municipal Airport, Lebanon, TN
July 11	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
July 20-26	EAA AirVenture	P-51, SBD, LT-6, PT-19, T-34	Whitman Field & Fond du Lac, Oshkosh WI
August 1	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
September 5	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
September 12	ABG Rides Day	P-51, SBD, LT-6, PT-19, T-34	Agusta Regional Airport Augusta, GA
September 19-20	Good Neighbor Day	P-51, SBD, LT-6, PT-19, T-34	PDK, Atlanta, GA
September 26	ABG Rides Day	P-51, SBD, LT-6, PT-19, T-34	Middle GA Regional Airport, Macon, GA
October 3	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
October 24	Pixel Man Airshow	TBD	Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport, Gainesville, GA
October 31-November 1	Atlanta Airshow	TBD	P'tree City, GA
November 7	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
November 14	Aviation Futures Day-Women in Aviation	---	P'tree City, GA
November 20-22	GA Gun Shows, LLLP	---	P'tree City, GA
November 21	ABG Rides Day	All	P'tree City, GA
December 5	ABG Staff & Membership meetings	---	P'tree City, GA
December 13	ABG Christmas party	---	P'tree City, GA

**KEEP 'EM FLYING!**



Articles and photos for publication in the Dispatch are welcomed and encouraged. Submissions must be received by the 10th of the month. For questions and submissions email [marsha.daly@airbasegeorgia.org](mailto:marsha.daly@airbasegeorgia.org)