



# PLANES OF FAME AIR MUSEUM

NEWS

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Visiting from the Friedkin Family Warbird Collection, "Thoughts of Midnite," a new 475th Fighter Group paint scheme.

Photo By: Michael o'Leary

## Last B-17 Flying Fortress to Serve~Being Restored to Flight

By: Steve Wallace

In August 1959, only days after flying her last mission for the U.S. Air Force, B-17G #44-83684 was officially retired from active service as the last of 12,731 B-17s to serve with the USAAF / U.S. Air Force. Planes of Fame Air Museum is now restoring this B-17G known as "Piccadilly Lilly II" back to flight... This is her story.

Our B-17G #44-83684 was built in May 1945 in Long Beach, California by Douglas Aircraft under license from Boeing. She was accepted into service on May 7, 1945 and placed into storage on May 11, 1945 since the War in Europe had ended on May 8th 1945. She remained in storage through June 21, 1950 when her designation was changed from B-17G to DB-17G. She then went on to serve from 1950 through 1956 with the 3200th and 3205th Drone Group and Proof Test Wing at Elgin AFB, Holloman AFB and Eniwetok Atoll. Her mission was as a drone controller and was used to monitor the Greenhouse Series of nuclear testing at Eniwetok Atoll in the 1950's.

Her designation was changed again in November 1956 from DB-17G to DB-17P and was used as a drone controller at Holloman AFB with the 3225th Drone Squadron from 1956 through 1959.

Her last mission was on August 6, 1959 when she controlled a QB-17G 44-83717 drone as a target for a Falcon air-to-air missile fired by an F-101B Voodoo jet fighter. A few days later she was officially retired in a ceremony at Holloman AFB; the last B-17 to serve in the U.S. Air Force.

She became a part of the Planes of Fame collection on September 24, 1959 which was then located in Claremont, CA. Planes of Fame founder

Ed Maloney wasted no time and put her to work right away appearing on TV's "Dick Powell Theater" in a program about the famed 100th (The Bloody Hundredth) Bomb Group. She later became known as Piccadilly Lilly II when she was used in the popular 1960's TV series "12 O'clock High". She was flown by Planes of Fame from 1959 through 1971. During those years she starred in many Hollywood productions and has been on



Photo By: Steve Wallace

**POF volunteer, Wilbur Richardson, a B-17 Ball Turret combat veteran with "Lilly."**

display since then at Planes of Fame Air Museum in Chino CA. Sadly in 1971 she was grounded due to engine problems.

Today we have a dedicated Volunteer Restoration Team committed to returning 'Lilly' Back to Flight. The Restoration Team Leader is Museum Volunteer Bill Amend. The 'Back to Flight' volunteers include: Dean Pappas and his son Justin, Jack Hopkins, John Thomas, Gilbert Orosco, Stevan Hart, Sung Su Kim, Jim Marrone, Paul Moure, Kevin Grus, Duane Lundgren, Frank Teichrow, George Higgins, Marten Seth, Jeff Sherwood and

his son Griffin, Sharon Trerotola, Dick Roche, Paul Rosnau, Wilbur Richardson, Carl Rossman, Roy Test, Ethan Gadis and Steve Wallace. John Maloney, Dave Erickson and Ron Hackworth provide project direction from the Museum staff.

The heart and soul of the Planes of Fame restoration project is our own Wilbur Richardson. Wilbur is a highly decorated WWII 8th Air Force B-17 'Ball Turret' combat veteran. Over the years Planes of Fame Air Museum has had many WWII veterans dedicate their precious time and resources to this historic restoration effort. Serving along with Wilbur Richardson today is Carl Rossman. Carl was a B-17 top turret gunner / flight engineer with 31 missions. Additionally, we would be remiss if we failed to recognize Richard "Dick" Bowman - B-17 ball turret gunner, John Hurd - B-17 ball turret gunner, Roy Test - B-17 co-pilot with 32 missions and and Clay Westcott - B-24 ball turret gunner. Richard 'Dick' Bowman, Roy Test and Clay Westcott are no longer with us in body, but certainly are with us in spirit.

We stand on the shoulders of those who served in WWII such as Wilbur, Roy, Carl, John, Dick and Clay. Indeed much has been given to subsequent generations by those heroic men and women who served both on the field of battle and on the home front building the arsenal of democracy.

Now it is time to return the favor. We need your help and support to preserve the museum's B-17G so that future generations will never forget the sacrifices of our "Greatest Generation".

**Visit Planes of Fame Air Museum today and be a witness to this historic undertaking!**



# Our Volunteers



The Bob Reed Award presented by volunteer coordinator Jerry Wilkins to Bill Prosser, Jim Halloran, and Tom Licata.



Grant Millikan and Bruce Ritchey receiving the President's Award from Steve Hinton.



A table of rowdy Planes of Fame Air Museum volunteers refuels.



Karen Hinton, Brian Boyer, and Ed Maloney serve it up in the buffet line in recognition of our volunteers.



Bill Amend and Cindy Novak receiving the Founder's Award from Ed Maloney.

# President's Message



PoF President Steve Hinton, Navy Hellcat Ace Fred Dungan, his wife Lorraine, Navy Hellcat Ace Willis Duffy, and PoF Director of Marketing Andrea Eldridge at January's Living History Flying Day.

Looking back in our rear view mirror we see 2009 as the year Planes of Fame Air Museum accomplished a great many things due to the contributions of our volunteers, members, staff, and Board. We opened our new Hands-On Aviation center for children as well as the new lobby entrance. We hosted our 24th successful Planes of Fame Airshow at Chino and our 13th annual fly-in at Planes of Fame Grand Canyon in Valle. Our aircraft participated in more than 25 airshows around the country. The restorations of the Bell P-59, L-17, O-47 and B-17 continue to progress. We have experienced enormous growth of our volunteer cadre and our Living History Flying Day events each month were attended by more visitors than ever before. We were honored to welcome Maj. Gen. Bill Anders, who gave us a very interesting and personal account of his Apollo 8 adventures for our 3rd

Annual Taste of Flight. All in all I am sure we can agree 2009 was a success. We had new friends come on board and unfortunately saw some of our good friends go west.

We are looking forward to continuing our growth and improvement at Planes of Fame Air Museum in the New Year. Be sure to save our 2010 Schedule of Events, included in this issue, near your calendar so you won't miss a thing. Our upcoming Living History Flying Days boast some fantastic presenters you won't want to miss. And I'm happy to announce this year's Airshow 2010 theme; A Salute to the Greatest Generation! Save-the-dates May 15 – 16, 2010. Our 4th Annual Taste of Flight in October will again bring a noted guest speaker to the table enhancing our fundraising efforts.

And in that vein, we just hosted a great Volunteer Appreciation Lunch recognizing some of the hardest working volunteers around. I want to sincerely thank everyone for all they have done and in advance for all you will be doing in the future to educate and inspire the next generation to our Nation's aviation and military history.

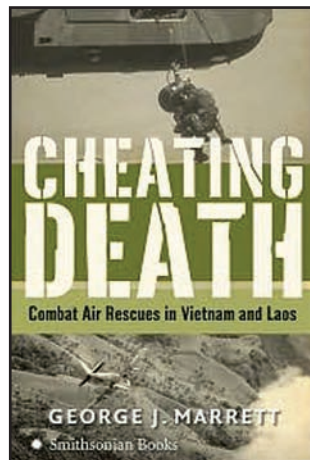
*Keep 'em flying!*

**Steve Hinton**  
President  
Planes of Fame Air Museum



**PLANES OF FAME**  
AIR MUSEUM

# 2010 'Living History Flying Day' Update



Upcoming 'Living History Flying Day' events for March and April are continuing our trend of presenting outstanding speakers to the public. In March we'll hear about an entire decade of Skyraider flying in South East Asia from 1960 – 1970 including Scott McIntosh who supplied our story and photos on the following page. In April we highlight the P-38 Lightning with pilots from both the P-38 National and 475th Fighter Groups. Check out the book by George Marrett entitled '*Cheating Death: Combat Air Rescues in Vietnam and Laos*'.





## Deck Run On The Cat Track

Story and Photos supplied by Scott McIntosh



During the USS RANGER 1962-1963 Western Pacific cruise I was aboard attached to VA95. This was my first sea tour as a boot Ensign. My turn during the A1 launch came and I was directed to the deck edge number 4 cat. The entry angle was not comfortable and hard to hold with 35 knots of wind blowing against the side of the fuselage. Because of the entry angle the cat crew was having trouble with my cat lineup. I could feel my aircraft rocking as the blue shirts pushed against its side. Hookup seemed to drag on. Finally, the cat officer gave me the run up signal followed by crossed arms within a few seconds and then the reduce power signal. He looks under my A1. Shortly he gives me the signal that I will be pushed back out of the shuttle hookup spot. After the blue shirts push me back I am again directed into the deck edge cat for the bridle hookup. It seems routine this time and very shortly I am given the run up signal by the cat officer.

This is the moment my evening takes a frightening turn. At the moment I reach max power I feel the holdback fitting break. I have not turned on my lights for launch. Now I am rolling down the deck edge cat, my closest wheel very near the edge with no lights on at full power. I consider chopping power and standing on the right brake to spin around. That option quickly passes as I look over to the right near the foul line at all the deck hands looking at me. Now back to my deck run on the cat track. I am looking down the deck into the pitch black night. I ask myself what the deck looks like. A mental picture instantly forms of the deck in day time. I catch the flap position as UP. This is normal for a light A1 cat shot. I slam the lever and stop it at 1/2 as I try to maintain my imaginary deck run lineup.

More micro seconds flash by and I wonder if I don't drift into the catwalk will I just fall over into the gun mount at the end of the cat track? Won-

derment becomes reality when I feel the main gear oleos extend as the deck ends. I grab the gear handle to the stowed position. As the seconds pass and I don't feel the bone crushing crash into the lower 5 inch gun mount I get my first glimmer of hope.

My sole flight reference is now the instrument panel in front of me. Prior to flight I always set my altimeter to 80 feet at the height of the deck above the sea. I am watching the vertical speed drift slowly downward. The only quick thought is that I should go for the deck angle for a parked A1. I go for the 10-12 degrees deck angle. The vertical speed still slowly drifts past 50 feet. My left hand goes to the throttle to confirm full power and then to the emergency store release handle. This night the ship is giving max launch wind over the deck too. I feel ground effect and the vertical speed climbs to zero and then up. Slowly at



first and then clearly the flight path assumes a positive rate.

My concentration on keeping my A1 out of the water has been so intense that my mind has ignored the continual voice calls to me from Pri Fly. I hear the Pri Fly open mike conversations and the crash alarm. I hear someone say in the background "He's crashed." There is a lot of talking going on. One more voice call to me comes in with "FORTRESS, WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?" I go from stark terror to anger. By this time I am flying and on the departure route to join up on my flight. My loud response to the tower is "THIS IS FORTRESS, THEY LAUNCHED ME BEFORE I WAS READY!" Now after all the radio calls from them the radio is silent when they hear from me. I finally get a ROGER... only.

The view of my deck launch from Pri Fly did give them grave cause for concern. They had a view I did not. The PLAT tape replay shows the dark unlighted shape of my A1 dragging the launch bridle down the deck edge in a shower of

sparks. I pick up the flashing lights of my division at the rendezvous. I remember now to turn my running lights on. They are already on squadron tactical and unaware of my major scare at launch.

Back at the ready room I had not even taken a chair for debrief before a replay of my takeoff was on the PLAT monitor. The shower of sparks as I slowly progressed down the deck fascinated me. I was amazed to be back in the ready room watching the tape. In a main passage I nodded as a captain recognized from the admiral staff walked by. As he passed he commented "nice job of flying the other night."

Long after that cruise, long after the U.S. Navy and years into my career as a Captain with American Airlines my experience instantly came back one night in a training simulator. It is now

early in the 1980's. The FAA is concerned about take off and landing crashes associated with wind shear. They mandate training for wind shear recovery. I am now flying captain on the Boeing 727. I am in a recurrent training simulator period at the first takeoff of the session. At liftoff the airspeed begins to bleed off. I look around at the engines and flight instruments and we are normal except for the climb and airspeed. I comment to the simulator instructor that I think something is wrong with the simulator computer. He tells me to just keep flying. As the speed bleeds back to 100 knots I think that this pig iron is going to end up slapping the ground. I narrowed in on the attitude indicator and my mind reverted to that dark night back on the

ship. I held 10 degrees attitude and jammed the throttles to the firewall. A short time later the aircraft climbed normally and we cleaned up the aircraft for the session. I turned around and asked what happened? The instructor said "Congratulations you just flew out of the crash scenario of Pan American at New Orleans."





# The Veteran's History Project

'The Veteran's History Project', which contributes to the permanent collections of the Library of Congress, is now in full swing thanks to PoF Volunteer **Don Baer**. If you are a veteran who would like to preserve your personal account for future generations, please schedule your videotaped interview with Don by calling tel: **909.973.2100** or e-mail: **dbaer30863@msn.com**.

## PoF Is Now Enrolled In The 'eScrip Program'!


**How the 'eScrip Program' works;** you register any one or all of your existing grocery loyalty, debit and credit cards for use in the program. Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made by you, just by using the cards you have registered. Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see just how much you are earning on your organization's behalf! Visit the web site [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and see how easy it is! For more information on how to participate in this **FREE** program to support Planes of Fame, **contact Karen Hinton at 909-597-4754**.

## NEW PoF License Plate Frames!



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