



The Florida CAF Wing 20 Years and Counting



How do you condense 20 years of history into 15 minutes?



You take a sample of significant segments and encourage others to explore further

The significant segments of the Wing's history

The Beginning

The Aircraft

The Hangar

The People

The Beginning



June 29, 1996

During a meeting at the NAS DeLand Museum
the Florida Wing of the Commemorative Air Force was born

The Beginning

The Founding Staff

Dick Russell - Squadron Leader

Fred McKaig - Executive Officer

Harvey Adams - Finance Officer

David Bishop - Adjutant

Dick Kelso - Operations Officer

Arthur Perry - Maintenance Officer

Steve Moddle - Safety Officer

The Beginning

- ❖ The decision to locate in DeLand had yet to be made
- ❖ The DeLand Mayor David Riggsby made a presentation, encouraging the Wing to make DeLand its home
- ❖ Other potential locations included Daytona, Ormond Beach and New Smyrna Beach Airports
- ❖ An initial goal was to pursue the future as a flying organization rather than take on a restoration project

The Beginning

- ❖ June 29, 1996 DeLand was selected as the home of the CAF's newest unit... The Florida Wing
- ❖ CAF Col Bob Robbins became a member
- ❖ The initial Wing membership was recorded as 30 members
- ❖ The Finance Officer reported a balance of \$1,400 in the bank checking and savings account
- ❖ The search for an aircraft and a hangar began

The Aircraft

The first order of business - Find an aircraft — a damaged L-17B and
“get ‘er flying again”



The Mainstay of the Wing “Allie” Gator
1996-2013

The Aircraft

The UC-45/SNB

1999-2008



- ◆ A UC-45J/SNB twin Beech was located in Kissimmee and 12 members agreed to sponsor the aircraft for the CAF.
- ◆ The aircraft was flown to DeLand by CAF Col Gene McNeely where it underwent cleaning and a more detailed inspection.
- ◆ In March of 2000 corrosion was identified in the horizontal stabilizer and in September additional extensive corrosion discovered.
- ◆ The 12 pilot Sponsorships were ultimately transferred to the TBM "Avenger" project aircraft
- ◆ July 2005-The Aircraft was declared unserviceable and permission was obtained from the CAF HQ to disassemble and part-out the aircraft.
- ◆ Last parts sold or disposed of September 2008

The Aircraft

L-17A
"Misty Blue"



2002-2009

- ◆ Still located in the "T" hangar and preparing for the first flight in the restored L-17B ...the Wing received its second flying aircraft...another L-17 donated by Wing member Bob Cline
- ◆ With a pair of L-17's the Wing was able to take advantage of airshow appearances and augment PX sales
- ◆ In May 2009, due to funding constraints, the Wing Staff made the decision to return one of the L-17's to CAF HQ - "Misty Blue"

The Aircraft

2001 SeaRey



2006

- ◆ The Wing received the gracious donation of a 2001 Kit built SeaRey Ultralight amphibian from CAF Col Red Lewis
- ◆ The CAF HQ agreed to accept the donation and permitted the Wing to retain the funds of a sale
- ◆ Following an engine overhaul, the aircraft was sold. The funds from the sale went toward the restoration of the TBM and completing the final work on the Hangar

The TBM-3E "Avenger"
"Restoration Project
2005-2012



The Aircraft

- ◆ June 2005 - CAF HQ approved the assignment of the TBM project to the Wing
- ◆ Shipping from Texas was delayed until new hangar completed - TBM Team sent out to oversee the movement
- ◆ TBM arrives May 2006 - major parts missing
- ◆ Restoration commences in new hangar.
- ◆ April 18, 2012 Wing Staff votes to suspend restoration
- ◆ October 9, TBM-3E sold and shipped to Carson City, NV

The Aircraft

T-34A



2012-Present

- ◆ Using the funds from the sale of the TBM-3E project and augmented by CAF HQ, the Wing purchased the T-34A
- ◆ Supervised by CAF Col Pat Foley and maintained by CAF Col Curtis Boulware at George Baker Aviation, the T-34 logged well over one hundred flight hours a year.
- ◆ In addition to “Showing the Flag” the aircraft serves as the center piece of the Wing’s Community and Youth Outreach programs

The Hangar

BIZARRO By Dan Piraro

— HERE'S THE PLAN: WE'RE GOING TO DIG A REAL BIG HOLE RIGHT ABOUT THERE. THEN SOME GUYS WILL COME AND PUT A BUILDING IN IT AND PLANT SOME FLOWERS IN FRONT.... ALL WE NEED NOW IS MONEY.



The Journey to a New Hangar

- ◆ The Wing took up its residence in a single “T” Hangar on the Deland airport all the while:
 - ◆ Restoring and operating the two the L-17s
 - ◆ Parting-out the UC-45/ SNB
 - ◆ And planning, preparing, and constructing a new hangar

The Hangar

- ◆ Initial 1996 discussions with the City of DeLand included a 25/75% cost sharing plan for the construction — the Wing would get a hangar and the City would get an airport venue for community events
- ◆ In 1997 the City had reduced its share to 50% — then less-than zero
- ◆ Throughout 1998 and early 1999 the Wing explored sites other than DeLand to build a hangar
- ◆ July 2000 City of DeLand offered the Wing a land lease at \$2,500/year-Lease approved by CAF HQ on May 14, 2001
- ◆ February 2001 Initial discussions about applying for a County ECHO Grant to assist in financing a new hangar
- ◆ First application denied - CAF HQ in a “Foreign (Not Florida) Corporation”
- ◆ Aviation Airpower Historic Foundation of Florida (AAHFoF) created for the purpose of applying for a future grants

The Hangar



- ◆ Ground Breaking on December 9, 2003
- ◆ Received Certificate of Occupancy on November 9, 2005 - but much work remained — thus ended the requirement for two monthly rent payments
- ◆ The concrete apron remained to be pored before accepting the TBM-3E project
- ◆ The Hangar and Museum dedications were delayed to coincide with the arrival of the TBM

3/31/07

HANGAR DEDICATION

- ◆ After years of long nights' without sleep — the Wing Hangar was dedicated.
- ◆ In attendance as special guests were Patti Froelich and Bob Robbins Jr., children of Bob Robbins
- ◆ Speaking at the event were Wing Leader Peter Jacobs and past Leader Dick Russell

The Hangar



The Leaders

Wing Leaders

Dick Russell
1996-2000

Harold London
2000-2004

Peter Jacobs
2005-2009



John Grones
2016 -

Chuck Downey
2009-2013

Joe Maíz
2013-2014

Woodie Sprouse
2014-20016

The People

Tom Baumann

Diann Baumann

Lou Beyer

Ken Brownell

Jim Bannermann

Bill Brown

Charlie Boivin

Curtis Boulware

Ted Cary

Ralph Caruso

Chuck Chokanis

Lee Chalifour

Mary Lee Chalifour

Curt Ciancetta

Tony Crawford

Ann Conway

Joe Drach

Lou Figiuolo

Pat Foley

George Fonseca

Pamela Fonseca

Linda Jacobs

Art Harriman

Martin Hasker

Bob Hillenbrand

Tom Huntington

Don Hollingsworth

Bill Kaczmarczyk

Mike Kelly

Earl Leone

George Leone

Joel Lonky

John Makinson

Doug Mathews

Gene McNeely

Fred McKaig

Dianne Moore

Richard Moore

Patricia Mickelson

Stan Mitchell

Steve Moddle

Alexis Montague

Lou Nemeth

Billy O'Brien

Art Patstone

Jack Peck

Frank Purcell

John Perstopino

Bob Robbins

Tony Rebello

Ken Terry

Trent Smith

Butch Stevens

Diane Stevens

Ken Stewart

Jon Shay

Hugh Washington

Gone West!

Col Joseph Alfano
Chuck Downey
Col Axel Paulso
Col Ralph Davis
Col Harold Rose
Col Donald Woolworth
Col Sydney Sterchele
Col Maurice Picard
Col Robert T O'Brien
Col Robert Robbins
Col Daniel S. Gressing
Col Donald F Smith

Col Louis Figiuolo
Col Charles H Lockwood
Col Chuck Chokanis
Col Ted Cary
Col Bob Cline
Col Frank Purcell
Col George Fonseca
Col Pamela Fonseca
Col Arthur J Harrman



The Florida Wing.....
On Course for The Future

