

SQUADRON NEWS

Grampaw Pettibone Squadron (Orange County, California)

story & photo submitted by David Malmad, Squadron PAO

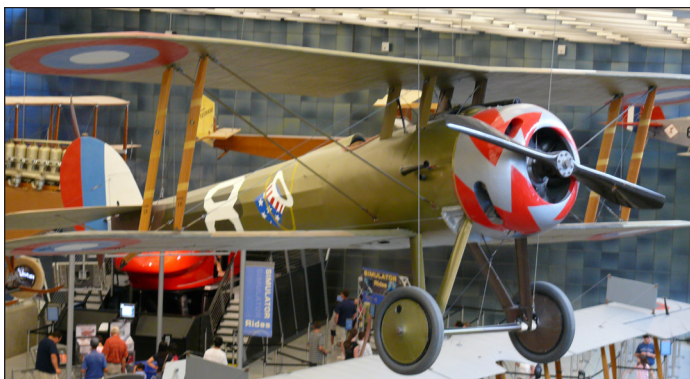
Speaker Briefings

Mr. Robert L. (Bob) Cashman

On Sept 14, 2018 the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron was honored to have one of our squadron members, Mr. Robert L. (Bob) Cashman, share his knowledge and experience in the search, research, construction and flight of a full scale Nieuport 28 aircraft. Cindy Macha, GPS Ops Officer introduced our speaker.

Mr. Cashman related interviews with World War I pilots and mechanics in 1985 during a search for the Smithsonian Institution to acquire an original Nieuport 28 aircraft, the first U.S. military fighter. Starting with Eddie Martin, an early aviation icon and looking for parts in museums all over the world, it was discovered that nearly all but three Nieuport 28's were destroyed in combat; or, in the filming of Howard Hughes' Hell's Angels movie.

The design of the aircraft appeared relatively simple and our speaker decided to build a flying full-size reproduction Nieuport 28. Mr. Cashman acquired the original plans from the French government and built an aircraft accurate to the plans. The plane flew but was a disaster! With the assistance of engineers from the Boeing Company and their computers, it became apparent that there were big problems with all of the World War I British and French aircraft. The combined talents of retired Boeing engineers and others, made it possible to develop a successful full scale Nieuport 28 and qualify it as a kit. Three copies exist today and may be seen at air shows and museums.



Nieuport 28

Bob grew up in an aviation family. His father, two brothers and a brother-in-law were all pilots. All had served in the military. His family contacts included aviation legend Eddie Rickenbacker. Bob flew as a U. S. Army artillery fire control officer during the Korean War. He was appointed by Orange County Supervisors in Southern California as a member of a committee to decide what to do

with the buildings from a local WWII, Santa Ana Army Air Base. The committee grew into the Orange County Airport Commission and carved out a small part of the base that is today John Wayne Airport. Bob served on the Commission for 24 years during all of the litigation and construction. He was appointed by President George W. Bush as a Deputy to Secretary of Transportation, Norm Mineta, working on airport improvement funding and served in this capacity for three and a half years. He helped organize and partner in two air ambulance companies and organize and partner in what grew into a major regional airline.



Liberator in flight

Mr. Bob Ruiz

The Grampaw Pettibone Squadron was honored to have guest speaker at it's October 11, 2018 meeting, Mr. Bob Ruiz share his experience as a 21 year-old, 1st Lt. Army Air Corps pilot during WWII. GPS member Bob Olds introduced our speaker.

Like tens of thousands of other young Americans in World War II, Bob Ruiz answered his nation's call by enlisting in the US Army Air Force. On completion of flight training, he was assigned to the 389th Bomb Group at Hethel Air Base near Norwich, England as a pilot flying his Consolidated B-24 Liberator in many extremely hazardous missions over the German heartland. Of his 35 missions, perhaps the most harrowing was a massed bomber attack over Berlin. While successfully completing his bomb run, his aircraft was struck multiple times by enemy anti-aircraft fire. He nursed his crippled airplane all the way back to England with only two of his four engines still functioning. Barely clearing the English coastline and with several of the aircraft's control systems malfunctioning, he executed

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a successful emergency landing. For this, and several other courageous actions, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. In addition to the DFC, Bob was awarded seven air medals for his piloting skills over the 35 missions he successfully completed.

Bob took questions at the end of his talk, the first one asking about the frequency of flying the same plane. Sometimes he flew the same plane, however, as a rule you flew whatever was available. Bob answered a question regarding aircraft model and noted that his unit only had B-24s, though adjoining units flew B-17s. A number of questions regarding comparison of B-17 v B-24. The B-24 was a faster plane, had a longer range and greater bomb load. Asked if it was easy to fly, Bob remarked, 'for me it was'.



F-86 Sabres in flight

Dr. Dave Wensley

On Nov 8, 2018, the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron was honored to have as guest speaker, Mr. Dave Wensley share his experience as a USAF, F-86D Air Defense pilot during the Cold War. Cindy Macha, GPS Ops Officer introduced our speaker.

During some of the darkest years of the Cold War, one of the most critical capabilities of the US armed forces was the ability to repel Soviet bombers armed with nuclear weapons. Before the advent of ballistic missiles, the interception of attacking manned aircraft was of paramount importance, not only for strategic deterrence, but also for public morale.

We had the privilege of hearing from one of those stalwart Cold Warriors, Captain David Wensley, who mastered the radar-equipped F-86D. Serving in continental US and in North Africa, Captain Wensley helped to hold the line through the tense period of the late 1950s.

Outstanding Sailors of the Quarter

The outstanding Sailors of the Quarter from the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station were honored at the November 8, 2018 monthly meeting of the Grampaw Pettibone Squadron. Recognition and appreciation were given to the following persons stationed at the Los Alamitos Naval Weapons Station: Senior Sailor of the Quarter was MA1 Ezra Payton; Junior SOQ was MA2 Jessica Mahon; and the Bluejacket of the Quarter was MA3 Manuel Flores. From the Navy Munitions Command CONUS, West Division Unit, Seal Beach, the honorees were: the Senior SOQ: YN1(SW/AW) Joseph Williams; the Junior SOQ was MN2(SW) Christian Quezada; and the Bluejacket of the Quarter was MN3 Adriana Ruiz.

In addition to the certificates received from Grampaw Pettibone Squadron, these outstanding Sailors receive meal certificates from more than 15 local areas restaurants, who recognize the service personnel's contribution.



Left to right: Front row. MA3 Manuel Flores, MA2 Jessica Mahon, MA1. (three Sailors of the Quarter from the Munitions Unit were absent because of duty assignments) Back row. Sel Ramsey, MACS Pascal Herring, Don Pageler, CDR John Quillinan, and MAC Jon Mantle

