

# HEBER DISPATCH

June 2017

## Summer 2017 Events

### Bomber Week Highlights

Another successful Bomber Week is in the bag for the Utah Wing of the Commemorative Air Force! The *Maid in the Shade* brought out the crowds during her stay and went up for a total of thirteen flights throughout the week. Heber City holds the current record for booked flights on all of the Arizona Wing's nationwide tours. That record was accomplished two years ago when their B-17 *Sentimental Journey* flew in to Heber as part of the 2015 Bomber Week. This speaks volumes of the support and appreciation that the local Utah populace has for World War II and for aviation history. Members of the Arizona Wing explained that whenever they fly into Utah they can always expect a good turnout, and this year's Bomber Week of course was no exception. This event was just one among several other World War II events taking place in Utah this summer, but community support was still as strong as in years past. In addition to those who came for a sponsorship flight, countless more came to take a tour of the plane and learn about its history. Many of those who turn out to support our fundraising events do so partly out of a personal connection to the plane or to a historical event. This connection is through their parents or grandparents, who either flew in the B-25 or served elsewhere in World War II. History's lessons come close to home when your own family participated, and from this there comes a particular yearning to carry the history on for future generations. Seven World War II veterans were treated to a flight in the B-25 during the week. A few of them flew missions in the B-25, and were reunited with their plane and with the memories of their service. Their posterity was able to look on proudly as they took off, being reminded of their grandfather's sacrifice and what it means for them and for the generations to come. The veterans, likewise, were reminded of the value of their service as they were reunited with their families after touching down. Their families will share the story for those down the road, as will the Commemorative Air Force.



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Bomber Week overall was a successful event, preserving, educating, and commemorating the history of military aviation and the stories of the men and women who served. The Utah Wing is already looking forward to next year's summer event. Details of the next Bomber Week will be forthcoming through the newsletter and the official website.

### ***B-25 Flight Photos***



***Top left and top center—Two World War II veterans in the waist gunner position on Maid in the Shade***

***Top Right and Bottom Left—Views of Heber Valley from the tail gunner position***

***Bottom Right—Maid in the Shade banks steeply as it passes Park City (Rockport Reservoir visible in the distance)***

## Hangar Dance and the Maid in the Shade's 73<sup>rd</sup> Birthday



It is perhaps serendipitous that the *Maid in the Shade* made a special appearance for our hangar dance on June 9<sup>th</sup>. On this particular night she celebrated her 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday with us. All who turned out that night celebrated as if it were June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944, when she would have been due to fly out for the war. The Danny Newell Tribute Band provided the 1940's atmosphere with hits by Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Nat King Cole, Andrews Sisters, and many others. This dance featured one or two additions which enhanced the experience of previous dances. The Abbingdon Living Center in Heber City brought several World War II veterans out to the dance. A certain energy and rejuvenation was apparent as the music seemed to pick them right up and take them back to their time in service. The younger generations enjoyed the dance just as much, showing off the Jive, Swing, and Lindy Hop. The dances also now feature two dance instructions, courtesy of DF Dance Studio. This is the Utah Wing's fifth annual hangar dance, and every subsequent year the dances will grow bigger and more indelible.





## ***Upcoming Events***

### ***Planes and Horsepower Car Show and Second Hangar Dance, August 5th***



Our fundraising events will continue in August with the Planes and Horsepower Car Show, followed by our second hangar dance that same evening. It will be a full day of unique displays of history and Americana. This car show will feature a professional photo-op of patrons' cars with our aircraft, World War II reenactors from the Utah Military History Group, and an opportunity drawing for a flight in our Stearman for all car show entries. The show's headliner will be the Rocky Mountain Wing's TBM Avenger, which will be complemented by our own PT-17 Stearman, T-6 Texan, and PV-2 Harpoon. The show is intended to serve as a reminder of the shared history between the automotive and aerospace industries. This is actually a deeply

intertwined history, beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and extending to the present day. A huge portion of that history took place around World War II, as automakers shifted their efforts to wartime production. American auto manufacturers in Detroit churned out engines, planes, and other vehicles in support of the war effort. Moving into the 1950's, auto manufacturers turned back to producing cars, and this is when car culture began to take off. Many who came back from the war would end up making a career in the automotive industry as they returned to civilian life. Their new families, new cars, and a newly implemented US highway system paved the way for the family road trip, an immensely popular trope of the 1950's. Automotive design was also influenced by aerospace advancements after the war. This is apparent with the huge fins featured on various 50's-era cars, which were intended to present a sleek, aerodynamic look. This influence extended into the 1960's as the US sprinted ahead in the space race. The 1960's also introduced the Ford Mustang, which ostensibly traces its pedigree to the P-51 Mustang, the icon of the air war in World War II.

The car show will be followed in the evening by our second hangar dance, which will have a mixed 50's theme to go along with the car show. Likewise in the 50's as automotive production took off, the swing dances of the 1940's became the jive and swing dances of the 1950's. The music also changed, with Elvis, Bill Haley, Eddie Cochran, and Chuck Berry taking the stage after Glenn Miller and other 40's artists. The August dance will again feature the Danny Newell Tribute Band, who will perform many hits from both the 1940's and 1950's. Our planes will be complemented with a few classic cars for photo-ops during the dance.

### **Wendover Air Show, September 9<sup>th</sup>**

In September the wing will be making an appearance at the Historic Wendover Airfield's air show. This air field was instrumental in the war effort as a training base for bomber crews. It is most notable for its role in training the B-29 bomber crews which would drop the atomic bombs and subsequently bring an end to World War II. The Enola Gay hangar has been restored, and that is just one of many restoration projects that the organization is undertaking. This air show helps to raise funds for these projects.



### ***Stearman Update***



Progress on the Stearman remains slow but steady. Additions since the last issue include reinstalled landing gear, seats, the fuselage structures, additional control mechanisms, and various other components. Logistics continue to be a minor issue as replacement parts need to be located. There is still considerable progress to be made, but through the efforts of our dedicated volunteers, N1387V will hopefully be able to fly before the end of the season. Significant additions to the aircraft should be made within the next couple of months.

## ***Photo of the Month***

*One final salute to Maid in the Shade, silhouetted in the Heber Valley sunset*



## ***This Month in History***

***The Battle of Midway***

***June 1942***

The opening act of the Pacific War was characterized by turning tides. The US was caught unprepared, stunned, and demoralized after the December 7<sup>th</sup> attack on Pearl Harbor. In quick succession they lost Wake Island, the Marianas, and the Philippines, and their allies would also lose Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, and the Dutch East Indies. The tide was firmly in Japan's favor, until the tipping point of the Doolittle Raid. Japan was left as stunned by this as the US was by Pearl Harbor, they being under the impression that the divine wind would protect their empire. Japan was so shocked that they took drastic measures in response to the Doolittle Raid. Instead of expanding their conquest elsewhere, much of the Imperial Navy was redirected to the western Pacific to strengthen the empire's perimeter. This would ensure that the embarrassment of bombing raids over the home islands would never happen again. Japan's intent to solidify the western boundary with a stronger naval presence would also aim to lure the remaining US fleet into a final decisive battle, the US carriers being the primary objective. From the Midway atoll, Japan could launch future attacks against the Polynesian Islands and on Hawaii itself, Midway being a part of the Hawaiian island chain. The Japanese would thus spring a trap at Midway for the US Pacific Fleet. This strategy, however, carried with it a few flaws. The missteps were so grave on the Japanese side that they would never recover, and the US's momentum in the Pacific would be largely undaunted for the remainder of the war. Japan's Imperial Navy would sail away from Midway sorely beaten, remaining for the rest of the war only a shadow of its former self.

A vital element of the early war in the Pacific was psychological warfare. Both sides were caught surprised, and early defeats had an effect on the populations' willingness to fight. For Japan, it could be argued that the belief in invincibility ultimately contributed to their loss at Midway. This was the reason for such shock and

such a reaction against the Doolittle Raid. And this would prove to be a domino. The increased naval presence in the western Pacific meant a trove of new communication data for American naval code breakers, and eventually portions of the secret code were broken. The Japanese code, known as JN-25, was considered unbreakable by the Japanese. Convention in secret codes dictates that the code be modified frequently, to avoid risk of it being cracked. The Japanese, however, were so convinced that their code was unbreakable that they weren't compelled to change it on recommended intervals. The Japanese Navy continued operating with this code, and thus the Americans knew critical details of their strategy as portions of the code were broken. The newly broken correspondence revealed that Japan had an objective of "AF", but US code breakers could not pinpoint exactly where that was. This was confirmed as Midway by a clever deception. Midway sent a bogus uncoded radio message that their water filtration system was defective. Within 24 hours, the Americans picked up a coded Japanese message stating that "AF" was short on water. With Midway confirmed as the objective, the US Pacific fleet was able to spring their own trap as the Japanese were preparing theirs. They not only knew that Midway was the target, but knew the size of the Japanese fleet and its overall strategy.

Admiral Nimitz, expecting five Japanese flat tops to make an appearance, mustered every flat top he could for the engagement. This was actually what the Japanese were hoping for. The US would bring to the fight Halsey's carriers Hornet and Enterprise, along with the Yorktown, which was considered lost by the Japanese but was sailing from Hawaii after a herculean repair effort. The Japanese would bring four carriers: Kaga, Akagi, Hiryu, and Soryu. Despite an impressive force, they had several strategic shortcomings prior to the battle, including a late submarine net, disarrayed intelligence, and a spread out fleet, all of which allowed the US fleet to maneuver into position without being detected.

The battle itself had begun with largely unsuccessful strikes on both sides. The Americans launched B-17's and PB4Y's from Midway and scored only one torpedo hit on the Imperial Fleet. Partially hindering the American effort was the reputed unreliability of their torpedoes. The Japanese in turn launched 108 aircraft against Midway, which were ultimately unsuccessful in neutralizing the atoll and its airbases. In that time several American bombers had made their own attack on the Japanese fleet, taking off from Midway before the Japanese attack force arrived. This attack by the Americans was also largely unsuccessful. What happened next was a perfect storm of events which favored the Americans. Nagumo, receiving word of the American fleet being spotted, had to make a decision. His attack force was returning from Midway, and he had to make a decision to launch his vital reserve aircraft for the US fleet and compromise the returning flights, or re-arm and hold true to naval doctrine of preserving half of the aircraft for defense. He decided to allow time for aircraft to return from Midway, while arming and fueling the reserve aircraft for an attack on the fleet. While this was happening, the first attack from the US fleet appeared, and although unsuccessful against the Japanese fleet, was successful in exhausting the defending Zeros of fuel and ammo, and disarranging the fleet for counterstrikes and subsequent attacks. The subsequent attacks from the US carriers managed to score four hits on the Kaga, and a single fatal blow to Akagi. It was Nagumo's decision to arm and fuel at this critical time that played into the American hands. The decks were full of exposed fuel and fully armed aircraft, amplifying the hits that the carriers sustained. Likewise, fuel and ammo ignited aboard Soryu when she was hit three times. All three of these carriers remained afloat, but were ultimately abandoned and scuttled after becoming infernos. Within one strike, the Japanese had lost three of their precious carriers.

The sole remaining carrier, the Hiryu, wasted no time in sending a counterattack. Twenty four aircraft followed the returning American aircraft to the carrier Yorktown. In two strikes she sustained three bomb hits and two torpedo strikes. The repair work on her in between strikes was so efficient that the Japanese were convinced she was two different carriers, and two damaged carriers were reported back to Hiryu. The Americans, again dealt a good hand, spotted the Hiryu, and launched strikes from the Enterprise and Hornet. The Hiryu sustained four or five bomb hits, and like her sisters would eventually be abandoned before sinking after several hours. The Yorktown, likewise, had to be abandoned. There were hopes of saving her yet again,

but three strikes from a Japanese submarine sealed her fate.

In the end, Japan's intended invasion of Midway would never take place, their fleet compromised by the carrier engagements. Japan lost four carriers and one heavy cruiser. They would also lose several hundred precious skilled pilots from the Battle of Coral Sea to Midway. This in combination with a lapse in their new pilot training program meant that Japan would suffer from a skilled pilot shortage throughout the remainder of the war. The Japanese would put new pilots into an accelerated training program (as would Germany), and as a result a large number of their pilots would enter into combat unprepared against the better trained Americans. This advantage in the skies was further exacerbated by the timely arrival of superior US aircraft. Midway was a route, but was not without losses on the American side. The US lost the Yorktown and one destroyer. This battle is widely regarded as the first turning point in the war, the remainder of the conflict leaning heavily in America's favor after a running start by Japan. The Japanese at home were kept in the dark about the defeat at Midway, so as not to conflict with the mindset previously mentioned. It was even broadcast as a momentous victory at home. Many within the military were kept in the dark as well, some being under the impression that the fleet was still intact. Japan would never recover from this engagement, going on to further feel the tide at the Battle of Guadalcanal.

### **Recommendations**

*"The Battle of Midway (Pivotal Moments in American History)" by Craig L. Symonds*

*"Never Call Me a Hero: A Legendary American Dive-Bomber Pilot Remembers the Battle of Midway", by N. Jack "Dusty" Kleiss and Timothy Orr*

*"Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway", by Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully Midway (1976)*

## **Museum Exhibit**

### **B-25 Wreck Site on Nearby Bomber Peak**

Our museum contains many unique artifacts, each with a unique story behind it. A display in the northwest corner contains various B-25 components, mangled as if pulled from a wreck site. These parts do in fact come from a local crash site of USAF B-25 #30050, a B-25 similar to the *Maid in the Shade*. The crash occurred in 1955, on the northeast side of Mount Timpanogos on the west side of Heber Valley. To this day the wreck site rests atop its namesake, Bomber Peak, and can still be reached by a strenuous hike. What exactly caused this plane crash? The exact cause is not confirmed. What is known is that there was severe weather on the night of March 9, 1955, and that the plane's last transmission reported that they were over Salt Lake City at 9,000 feet and climbing above overcast. The plane then promptly disappeared from radar and was never heard from again.



The B-25 was on its way to March AFB, CA, from Great Falls, MT, and stopped at Hill AFB in Ogden for refueling. The plane was carrying three crewmembers and two civil servants. The storm it would be flying through before going to March AFB would deposit a foot of snow in the Wasatch Mountains. It was also known that west winds reached as high as 88 MPH on that particular night. It is possible that these crosswinds could have easily blown the plane off course while interfering with instrumentation and radio range signals. After the night of the disappearance, eighteen search planes set out to find the missing B-25 and one other plane that disappeared in the nearby Uinta Mountains that same night. The plane was



spotted that very afternoon, right below Bomber Peak. The site was actually not reached on foot first by search and rescue, but by two local hikers. Over the next few days, search and rescue teams braved avalanche danger and adverse weather conditions to recover the five bodies. All five on board were instantly killed when the plane collided with the mountain. The fifth body was not recovered until May 30th of that year. The search for the last body resulted in the closure of American Fork Canyon by the Forest Service (under persuasion by the Air Force).

The crash remains relatively preserved to this day due in part to the strenuous detour required to reach it. The impact site itself is still somewhat evident, as the plane impacted in a rock bed. Both engines are still there, and the landing gear is mostly intact in comparison to the rest of the aircraft. The pieces on display in our museum were pulled by a CAF volunteer in 2003. The smaller semicircular piece is part of the ignition harness that encircled the engine and delivered power to the 28 spark plugs on one of the bomber's two 14 cylinder radial engines. Although the wreckage can still be visited, it is recommended to pay respects, and to leave the site as it was found.



*Pictures of the crash site on Bomber Peak, as it was in 2014. Pictured left is one of the radial engines, and pictured right is the main impact site.*

## ***In Memoriam***

### ***Danny Newell***



Our hangar dances are never the same, and indeed never will be the same, again. The dedicated leader of the Danny Newell All-Star Big Band passed away this last April due to natural causes. Danny Newell was such an integral part of our hangar dances over the five years that we have been putting the show on. His leadership over the band is what helped bring that 1940's atmosphere to life. The All-Star Big Band of his namesake was just the latest work in his life-long dedication to music. He also served in the U.S. Army band and performed in countless trumpet solos and big band performances. The Commemorative Air Force mourns the loss of such a valuable member of its community. His spirit and passion for music will live on, as our future events will feature the Danny Newell Tribute Band in his honor.

## ***Special Thanks to Our Sponsors***

The Commemorative Air Force could not put on their events without the help and support of our sponsors. The organization is delighted to always receive such unyielding support from other members of the community.

<i>Redmond Real Salt</i>	<i>Lee's Market</i>	<i>Zermatt Resort</i>	<i>Heber City Corp.</i>	<i>UAMPS</i>
<i>Ridley's Market</i>	<i>Heber City Smith's</i>	<i>Heber City Walmart</i>	<i>Holiday Inn Express</i>	<i>CRC Designs</i>
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<i>Utah Division of Arts &amp; Museums</i>		<i>K.W. Robinson Construction Inc.</i>	<i>Diversify</i>	<i>Wealth Management</i>

## ***Volunteering with the Commemorative Air Force***

Although most members of the CAF are licensed pilots, no special skills are required to volunteer with us. We have volunteers from every skill set and every walk of life. All members share a passion for history and a dedication to preserving it. The only requirement for volunteering is annual membership dues to the national organization and a smaller annual due to the Utah Wing. Volunteers who pay these dues can assist with our summer events and make greater contributions! Info regarding membership can be found on our website.

## ***Commemorative Air Force-Utah Wing Information***

The CAF Utah Wing Museum is located in Hangar 38D at the Russ McDonald Airfield, Heber City, UT. The museum is open May 6--October 29, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Saturdays and Sundays only.

### Contact Information

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