

NEWSLETTER

October - November 2025



Squadrons view warbirds

Last month both Sacramento and San Francisco squadrons made plans to join up with the Commemorative Air Force's (CAF) Flying Legends of Victory Tour. The tour brought in CAFs B-25 "Maid in the Shade" and B-17 "Sentimental Journey" for an up-close and personal inspection of these one-of-a-kind military airplanes.

Both aircraft are part of CAFs Arizona Chapter, based in Mesa, AZ. Sacramento Squadron's tour was at McCellan Airport (photo at right), while San Francisco's tour was at Chico Airport. The Victory Tour will have visited 15 cities in the US and Canada by end of September.



Inside the B-25s bomb bay, pilots who flew "Made in the Shade" had signed their names. One name that stood out was that of R.E. Cole, the last Doolittle Raider, who passed away in 2019 at the age of 103. Cole was Doolittle's copilot in the lead airplane. The Doolittle raid included 19 B-25 bombers on a daring flight taking off from an aircraft carrier on a bombing mission to Tokyo in April 1942.



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Victory tour (cont'd)



After landing at Chico Airport, the San Francisco Squadron dined at the Foodie café before heading over to the Chico Air Museum (photo left). The museum is located near the CAL Fire Air Attack Base. Chris Lea, Squadron Captain/Adjutant,

reports: “The museum has quite an array of exhibits including actual WWII uniforms, model aircraft and model car display.”

Lea says: “One exhibit stands out – a description of the first attempted “skyjacking” of an airline (Pacific Air Lines) on American soil which occurred at Chico Municipal Airport in July 1961. The skyjacking attempt failed, but in the process two airline employees were shot, blinding one.”

“Hearing the B-17 and B-25 take off and land was thrilling.”

Sacramento’s Squadron toured “Maid in the Shade” (photo left) and followed up with a catered dinner at the Officers Club restaurant at McClellan Park.



Ken Lux, Sacramento Squadron board member, was enthusiastic about the tour. “We were really amazed at the tight quarters on board the aircraft. Not a place for tall humans.”

Aviation history buff extraordinaire



Sacramento Squadron member, Tim Pinkney, has actual time flying left seat on a B-25 – including a Bay Area scenic flight (photo above).

Tim’s involvement with aviation history includes spending time at the annual Bomber Camp held at Stockton Airport.

Pinkney, who previously served as Sacramento’s Squadron Commander, also enjoys his work as a NASA Solar System Ambassador. In this role he communicates



science and excitement of NASA’s space exploration missions and discoveries to the Greater Sacramento community.

We are looking for news articles and event dates

Is your squadron involved in an upcoming event? Is your group holding a meeting with a great speaker? Are members flying to interesting locations? We would love to put your upcoming dates on our calendar. Let us know when and where – we’ll send out information to our squadrons.



Pass on suggestions for articles and upcoming event dates to: Dale Terry, Newsletter Editor, Dale.Terry@sacairsquadron.com.

SF Squadron's Moffett Field Mission

By San Francisco Deputy Wayne Hess

In July, three San Francisco Sheriff's Air Squadron aircraft departed San Carlos flying a mission to visit the 129th Rescue Wing of the California Air National Guard, located at Moffett federal Airfield. The purpose was to fly Junior Deputies and recruits from San

Bruno – part of the Squadron's support for the Junior Deputy program – on-going activity over the past three years.



The San Francisco Sheriff's Junior Deputy Academy is a year-round program for high school age youths considering futures in public service – with emphasis placed on leadership development, STEM, and community involvement. Other program highlights include physical and mental fitness and character building. The San Francisco Squadron exposes the students to the world of aviation through presenting classes, activities and field trips.

Retired Sheriff Lt. Wayne Hess said: "Although the flight to Moffett was a brief one, and routine for Squadron aircrews, it was a thrill for youths who were experiencing flight in a small aircraft for the first time." After landing, retired Sheriff's Lieutenant Wayne Hess, escorted the group to the briefing room and was greeted by Master Sergeant Bryson Barnette. Wing Commander, Colonel Thomas Keegan, welcomed our group by saying "I encourage each of you to seriously consider law enforcement careers in your future."



Our group received a briefing on "Guardian Angels" facilities at the base. "Guardian Angels" is the term used to describe the role of Pararescue Jumpers (PJs), who are the central activity of the 129th. The "Angels" go through rigorous training equal to that of Navy SEALs – to be ready for any lifesaving challenge.

We viewed a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and toured the Security Forces facility learning about the Security Forces' role, their capabilities and their weapons systems. A few Junior Deputies had the opportunity to use the MILO firearms simulator.

Special thanks to the chain-of-command at the 129th Rescue Wing and Cary Durham, in his dual role as facilitator with both the Junior Deputy Academy and the Association of the United States Army. Without their enthusiastic support, this opportunity would not have been possible.





Watch Duty: real-time wildfire info

By Kevin McDonnell, Alameda County Squadron

Wildfires have become an unavoidable part of life in California, increasing in both frequency and destruction. Each year, fire season begins earlier, lasts longer, and brings greater risk. In fact, 19 of California's 20 largest wildfires have occurred since 2003.

To combat these growing threats, CAL FIRE operates a fleet of more than 60 aircraft, spread across 14 air tanker bases and 10 helitack bases statewide.

For aviators and residents alike, situational awareness is critical. Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) for firefighting are easy to find through aviation apps such as ForeFlight and Garmin Pilot. But when it comes to real-time details about active wildfires, information is often fragmented, delayed, or difficult to interpret. Updates may be buried in social media, scattered across government websites, or lost in conflicting news reports. Even first responders struggle with the lack of a single, reliable source.

That's where the **Watch Duty** app comes in. Founded as a nonprofit, Watch Duty consolidates real-time wildfire intelligence into one accessible platform. A team of experienced volunteers continuously monitors first responder radio communications, wildfire cameras, and satellite imagery. Verified updates on fire locations, perimeters, and evacuation orders are pushed directly to the app and website—completely free to the public.

For those who want enhanced features, a \$25 annual membership unlocks firefighting flight trackers. Pilots will find this tool especially valuable: active aircraft positions and recent flight paths are displayed on a live map, providing a clear view of aerial firefighting operations—even outside published TFR boundaries.

While Watch Duty is not an official government source, it offers a remarkably comprehensive and timely picture of wildfire activity. For aviators, it's a valuable tool for improving safety and awareness in an increasingly fire-prone world. Also, Watch Duty is powered by real people who are trained professionals, not robots. The staff is made up of active and retired firefighters, dispatchers, first responders and reporters who monitor radio scanners around the clock.

