

Wings Over Wendy's Tour Again

Wings Over Wendy's Visits the Yanks Air Museum July 22, 2021

It has been over eighteen months since Wings Over Wendy's group took a tour to the Reagan Library. Finally, a combination of our members receiving COVID-19 vaccinations and relaxing COVID restrictions enabled Warren Weinstein to schedule a tour to the Yanks Air Museum in Chino, CA. Council District 12 provided a bus for the tour.



Photo by Andy Kopetzky

Lee Ambers, Lee Auger, Phil Aune, Mark Ax, Ron Boggess, Richard Burns, Barry Chapman, Bob Eisenhart, David Freeman, David Greenberg, Andy Kopetzky, Gary LaPook, Frank Lopez, Chuck Mathews, Ed Reynolds, Rosalie Rifkin, Chip Stevens, Howard Swerdlick, Karen Velarde, Tony Velarde, Warren Weinstein, and Jimmy Weldon attended.



Photo by Andy Kopetzky

Following the museum tour, the group had lunch at Flo's Airport Café.

Wings Over Wendy's Resume Monday Lunch at Wendy's Restaurant



Photo by Howard Swerdlick

As we have settled into the Monday meeting routine at the Auditorium, Howard Swerdlick has reassembled the Monday lunch group at Wendy's Restaurant on Ventura Boulevard in Woodland Hills.

July 2021 Meetings July 5, 2021



YouTube

The Star Spangled Banner As You've Never Heard it

On July 5, we watched videos to celebrate Independence Day.

The first video we watched was about Francis Scott Key, a lawyer from Washington, DC that was sent to negotiate with the British to release American prisoners in a British ship outside Fort McHenry in September 1814.

The fort was defending Baltimore Harbor. A negotiation was reached to release the prisoners however, the British Vice Admiral Cochrane told Key that it would not matter. The entire British fleet was set to bombard Fort McHenry in a matter of hours unless the giant flag located at the fort was lowered, marking their surrender. Key watched as gunfire violently hit the fort, lighting up the sky.

The stars and stripes still stood. In the morning he would find out brave American fighters held up the flag until their dying death, as to let it hit the ground would mean to surrender to the British. Francis Scott Key would then go on to write the Star Spangled Banner, inspired by the incredible resilience shown on this night.



Youtube.com

4th Of July – Independence Day Documentary

The next video we watched was about the celebration of the Fourth of July.

A Declaration of Independence was accepted by the Continental Congress on the Fourth of July. Thus, began the start of a new nation.

However, the nation did not reach true independence until they triumphantly defeated the British in 1783. On that day, bells rang in all cities across the United States. (Except in Charleston, South Carolina- where all of their bells had been taken by the British.)

Over the years, the Fourth of July turned from a somber remembrance of the Revolution to a day of celebration.

On July 4th, slave masters would barbeque a feast for their slaves to have one day of feasting and celebration. Eventually, African-Americans would receive an independence day of their own when Lincoln rode to Texas to free slaves on June 19, 1865, also known as Juneteenth.

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Now, the Fourth of July is not only a day of celebration but a day of relaxation and enjoyment. When industrialization swept the country, the Fourth of July signaled a long weekend for hard-working Americans to relax with friends and family.

Not all Fourth of July celebrations have been too relaxing, especially when it comes to fireworks. In 1866, a July 4th fireworks show almost resulted in the entire city burning to the ground. Also, small toy cannons were known to explode and send shards of metal into the skin of people nearby. Incurable tetanus infections were common in the early 1900s, right after the Fourth of July. In 1976, Washington D.C. hosted a huge Fourth of July celebration. However, they would be met with protests against industrial policy.

Now, the Fourth of July is a joyous holiday to remember and thank the men who fought for our freedom, as well as a day to take a step back and enjoy the United States of America.

July 12, 2021



Photo by Larry Kushner

Warren Weinstein Awarded the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award

Dating back to 1962, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recognizes the efforts of pilots who have followed and continue to follow the precaution and awareness of safe flight operations. Most of all, the FAA recognizes pilots who have contributed and maintained safe flight operations for 50 or more consecutive years of piloting aircraft. Therefore, the FAA has a program to recognize those pilots who have 50 or more consecutive years of safe flight operations: the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award Program.

On June 12, 2021, Brian Ashton from the FAA

attended our meeting to present The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award to Warren Weinstein. Brian recapped Warren's long history as a pilot starting in 1948 when he obtained his license flying float planes out of Long Island, NY.

Warren went on to earn his USAF Pilot Wings, flying multi-engine aircraft in USAF Air Rescue units.

Following his USAF Active Duty assignments, Warren became a commercial airline pilot with a long career with American Airlines.



Federal Aviation Administration

Following Warren's award presentation, we watched a video of the FAA. The FAA, or Federal Aviation Administration, oversees the safe flying of over 44,000 flights daily, counting up to more than 2.6 million passengers per day and 9.7 million scheduled flights per year. The FAA consists of several divisions:

- The ATO, or Air Traffic Organization, ensures the safe movement of aircraft in our airspace with over 14,000 air traffic controllers. The ATO also certifies and maintains aircraft equipment.
- The ARP, or Office of Airports, plans and develops our airport network around the world.
- The ASH, or Airport Security and Hazardous Materials office, oversees airport security and safe handling of hazardous materials.
- The AST, or Commercial Space Transportation, protects public property, national security, and foreign policy during commercial space flight.

A newer division, the Unmanned Aviation Safety office, handles the safe flying of drones in public airspace.

These divisions are what keep us safe as we fly around the world.



International Air Transport Association

Following the video on the FAA we watched a video on the history of the International Air Transport Association, or IATA.

Nearing the end of World War II, passenger and cargo flights were booming due to former WWII planes converted for use in civil aviation.

In 1944, the International Civil Aviation Organization, or ICAO, was created to develop rules and guidelines on civil aviation. The International Air Transport Association, or IATA, was formed as a subsidiary of the ICAO to handle aviation's commercial flying more technical side. IATA set guidelines on activities such as ticket pricing, revenue allocation, baggage, and ticket design. Standards set by IATA are still in use for civil aviation to this day.

There are 290 airlines from 120 countries that are part of IATA, or 82% of all scheduled air traffic. However, airlines not part of IATA still abide by IATA rules due to the strong integration of IATA codes such as airline designator codes, prefix codes, baggage codes, and location codes. When it comes down to it, IATA sets the necessary guidelines for all airlines to follow around the world.



An Unbreakable Code Navajo Code Talkers

The last video we watched on July 12 was about Navajo code talkers in WWII. Navajo code talkers sent coded messages to men miles away in a matter of seconds.

During the Battle of Iwo Jima, the 5th Marine Division was pinned down badly by gunfire. A company commander handed over a message to a Navajo code talker, who would speak the following sequence of words in Navajo: "Sheep, eyes, nose, deer, destroyer, tea, mouse, turkey, onion, sick horse, three, six, two, bear."

A code talker at a beach command post wrote down the code in English: "Send demolition team to hill 362 B."

The code was sent and deciphered in a matter of 20 seconds. If English code was used, this would have taken a total of 30 minutes. Navajo code talkers were a big help in sticky situations like this during World War II.

July 19, 2021



Photo by Larry Kushner

Ron and Diane Ross Honored

On July 19th we honored Ron and Diane Ross for the eighteen years they allowed and supported Wings Over Wendy's meetings in their Wendy's Reservents. We presented them with dinner gift certificates to Arnie Morton's The Steakhouse, Woodland Hills. The letter read: Dear Ron and Diane:

*How can we ever begin to thank you for hosting our organization for **eighteen and a half years - that is 970 Monday meetings**. Your servers have treated us like royalty. Words seem inadequate to express our appreciation for all you have done, including purchasing 20 folding chairs, buying banners for our parade floats, and treating us to so many expensive charity dinners.*

Now, because of your generosity, we have outgrown your facility and are sad that we are forced to move on to a larger one.

We pray the Lord rewards your kindness tenfold, and we salute you.

Midway Atoll



Naval Heritage | Jonathan Parshall: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway

On July 19, 2021, Bob Eisenhart provided a video from his friend Jonathan Parshall the author of numerous Pacific war articles. He is an adjunct lecturer for the U.S. Naval War College and a frequent speaker at the National WWII Museum and other venues. Last year we saw several of his presentations, and it was a pleasure to listen to his story on the battle of Midway.

Jonathan's presentation started with the context of the battle. Then, he reviewed the events leading up to the battle, the key commanders, and a battle recap.

The good, the bad, and the ugly.

July 26, 2021



Unforgettable: The Korean War

On July 26, 2021 we tested our hybrid meeting. Ed Reynolds was facilitating the meeting via Zoom from Welches, Oregon, while Alan Hill and Howard Swerdlick conducted the physical meeting in the Auditorium.

July 27, marked the anniversary of the Korean War armistice. To honor the date we watched a video of the war produced by PBS.

Unforgettable: The Korean War used historical movies and personal photos combined with emotional remembrances to reveal the individual stories, the pride, the patriotism, the gallantry, the sacrifice and heartache behind "the Forgotten War."

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Wings Over Wendy's **in the News**

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Los Angeles Daily News

Sunday, July 4, 2021

Veterans, assemble! **‘Wings Over Wendy’** **team signs off Zoom** **and meets in person** **Veterans of all ages, all branches, any** **town are welcome to join the Wings** **Over Wendy's meetings in-person and** **online**

By DENNIS MCCARTHY |

PUBLISHED: July 4, 2021



Wings Over Wendy's veterans group goodbye photo at the Wendy's restaurant on Platt Avenue in West Hills. The group then met in a Wendy's in Woodland Hills before they outgrew that location. They still meet on Mondays, on Zoom and in-person, at a location on Shoup Avenue in West Hills. (Courtesy)

(Continued page 6)

You can't replace a handshake and a hug. If we learned anything about independence this past year, we learned that.

A little over a month ago, on Memorial Day, 60 older veterans who self quarantined in their Valley homes and apartments for over a year finally got to see each other in the flesh again.

It was like old home week, said Ed Reynolds, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, who had set up weekly Zoom meetings for some of them to stay in touch. Ed's a tech savvy guy, but trying to teach the typewriter generation how to Zoom on a computer they can barely operate was a challenge, but most of them learned.

Now, they were back in the same room, shaking hands, hugging and back slapping each other – carrying on like it was one, big, family reunion, which it was.

“So many characters with so many stories to tell,” is the way Ed put it.

Many of the vets had been meeting for more than 15 years every Monday morning at a Wendy's in West Hills for a cup of coffee and a few hours of camaraderie.

They remember the group's co-founder Fred "Crash" Blechman, a Navy Corsair pilot, who earned his nickname for crashing four of our fighter planes while never shooting down one on the other side.

They remember Ed “Bomber” Koscinski, who walked in one day and asked if he could join. When Poland was captured, he was forced to become a German MIG pilot. He spent the war trying to shoot these guys down. Didn’t matter, he was a veteran. C’mon in.

“I would sit out in my car in the parking lot watching the guys arrive,” the late Art Sherman, a B-24 Bombardier in World War II and former leader of the group, told me. “They’d get their walkers out of the trunk and slowly make their way across the parking lot. You could tell they were in pain.

“By the time they got to the door, though, they were already smiling. They knew what was waiting inside for them.”

Camaraderie, and the thing they needed most growing old, laughter. Many of these vets were widowers with sons and daughters who begged their lonely fathers to get out of the house and join the group. Don't give up.

Others had wives who couldn't stand to see their once vibrant husbands just sit in front of a TV set from morning to night. They twisted their arms to go to one of the meetings, just to see how they'd like it. They loved it. So did their wives. They dropped their husbands off and went shopping for a few hours.

From half a dozen World War II flyboys meeting for the first time over lunch in 2002, the group had grown to more than 100, encompassing every branch of service, and the spouses and children of its members, if they wanted to come to the meetings.



Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Ed Reynolds File photo

It's a wonderful story, but the truth is, they're only scratching the surface. There are thousands more older veterans sitting in their homes in the Valley today fighting the same enemy and losing – giving in to the loneliness and depression.

If you have a retired neighbor living alone or know someone who was in the service, and might be battling their own demons, let them know there's a big, family reunion of veterans meeting every Monday morning and they're welcome to join in.

They'll be plenty of handshakes and hugs, and don't worry about feeling out of place, because you won't be. That special bond veterans have of taking care of each other has no expiration date on it.

On Monday, a 45-minute film on the history of the Fourth of July will be shown. There's a meet and greet from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. then the meeting and film begins.

The group outgrew its space at Wendy's, and now meets in a former synagogue located on the El Camino High north campus, 7401 Shoup Ave. in West Hills. Parking is available in the school lot on Variel Avenue.

For more information, give Ed Reynolds a call at 818-884-4013.

Dennis McCarthy's column runs on Sunday. He can be reached at dmccarthynews@gmail.com.

JOHN LEE

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER • DISTRICT 12



JULY 9, 2021



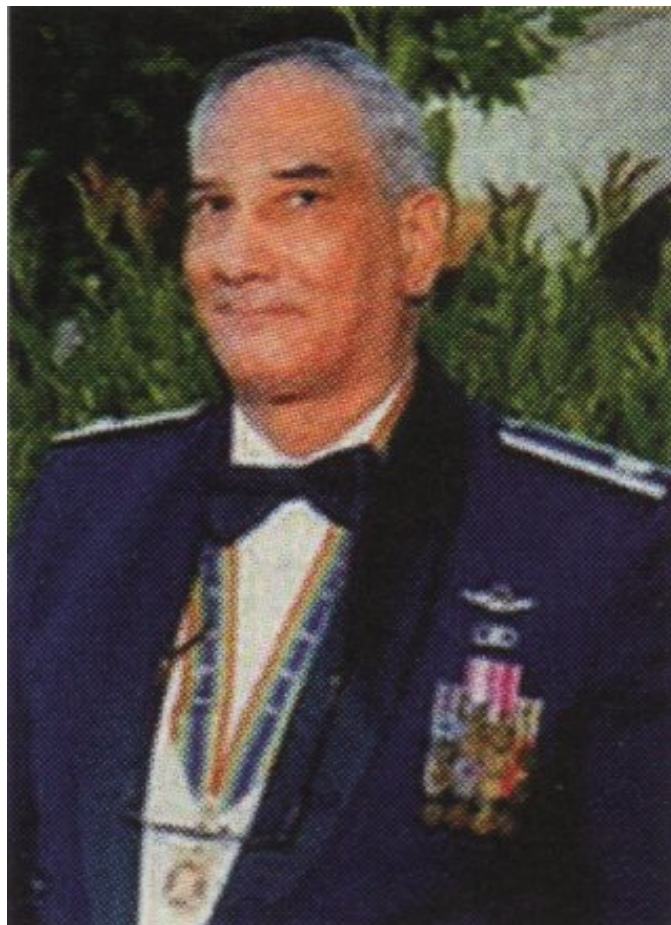
Last week, Dennis McCarthy published a wonderful article about Wings Over Wendy's in the Daily News, which really captures the essence of this unique organization and serves as yet another reminder of why I consider this amazing gathering of mostly WWII veterans both personal friends and such an important and vital presence in our community.

My relationship with this eclectic collection of members of the “greatest generation” began almost a decade ago. From the minute I walked into that first meeting, held in the humble confines of a Wendy’s fast food restaurant in West Hills, packed to the gills with men and women in blue, it was evident that these folks were far more than just a collection of fascinating war stories, even though those were always engaging, and, in the words of WOW founder Art Sherman, “almost always true.”

These members and the experiences they share represent what makes us a great country. It is that selfless, humble commitment to a cause greater than oneself that brought all of them together from all walks of life to the beaches of Normandy and the islands in the Pacific, united around the common cause of defeating fascism and preserving democracy. I hope we never forget their sacrifice.

MOWW National Officer Candidates For OY 2021

Two members of Wings Over Wendy’s are candidates for offices in the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW).



Lt Col Marlon Ruiz, USAF (Ret) for Region XIII

Biography. During Lt Col Ruiz's 27-year Air Force career, he initially served for two years in the enlisted corps as a wideband field communications technician. He then served for an additional 25 years as a commissioned officer. As an officer, he was a military aviator, but he also served as a service academy instructor (USMA and USAFA), a diplomatic liaison officer, a Foreign Area Officer, and he provided security assistance in the interagency world. After retirement, he served as an AFJROTC Senior Academic Instructor and as a distance learning program instructor (defense contractor) with C2 Technologies, Inc.

(Continued page 8)

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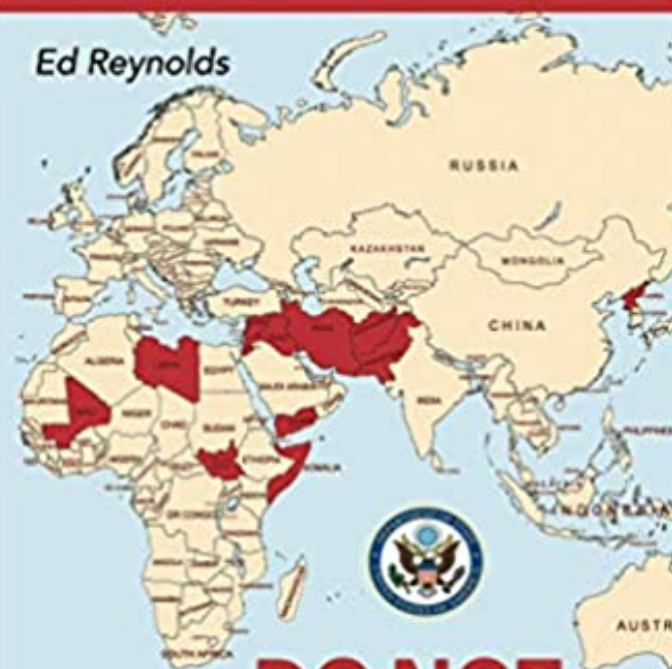


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