



SERVING THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY SHERIFF SINCE 1941

# Sacramento County Sheriff's Air Squadron Newsletter

JUNE MEETING

## Herb Hooper: Profile of a WWII veteran

Long time Air Squadron member Herb Hooper, is from that generation of few words and big deeds, often referred to as the Greatest Generation.

Born in Akron, Ohio, Herb lost his dad at an early age and was raised by a single mom of four in the "Tar Hills" of western North Carolina. After graduating from high school, Herb followed in the footsteps of most single men of his generation – he joined the Navy as WWII was winding down.

His first taste of aviation began with an assignment to NAS Pensacola, where he was assistant to the Company Commander. To remain on flight status, the CO needed to fly a certain number of hours each month, so after heavy drinking and partying on Saturday night, come Sunday morning the CO would climb into an SNJ with Herb buckled in the back seat.

After takeoff, the severely hung over CO would say, "OK, sailor, keep it straight and level – fly north for an hour, then south for an hour – then wake me up." That's how this CO met his currency requirements.

After discharge, Herb's jobs included tunnel blasting in the Feather River Canyon, logging

redwood outside Eureka, and then purchasing five gas stations. He also met his wife of 60 years, Darlene.

With his wife and three kids in tow, Herb sold his stations and moved to Seattle where he was accepted into the University of Washington Dental School. Graduating in 1962, Herb, Darlene and now four kids moved to Sacramento to open an office.

It wasn't long after opening his dental practice that the flying-bug was back.

Herb started his flying career in a Piper Apache – picked up his private license and multi-engine rating. Local CFII **Doyle Carroll** helped him obtain his instrument rating in a Piper Aztec. "Doc" Hooper's first owned airplane was a pristine Cessna 195. From former Air Squadron member **George Steiner** (now passed) Herb picked up George's old Cessna 320, followed by a Cessna 414.

Later, Herb purchased a P210 and needed to reacquaint himself with SEL aircraft after his years of twins. Over the following years, Herb spent time flying a King Air F-90

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Next meeting, June 17<sup>th</sup>

**Aviators Restaurant**

**Executive Airport**

**5:30 pm**

**Jill Brigham**, Executive Director, Sustainable Wine & Food Processing Center, University of California, Davis will be our June speaker.

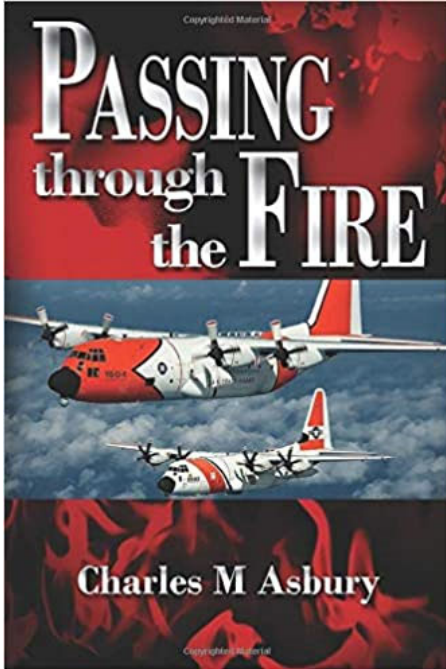
At SmartFarm, Jill is actively involved in using aviation UAVs to improve farm efficiency and crop yields.

In her previous career with NASA, Jill worked at the Johnson Space Center, supporting numerous aircraft and spacecraft projects for 25 years as an engineer and project manager.

She is a FAA Part 61 private pilot and drone pilot.

SQUADRON NEWS

An author in our Squadron



While most of us were trying to avoid the refrigerator when passing through our kitchens during COVID-19, Air Squadron member **Chuck Asbury** was putting the finishing touches on a multi-year writing project – **Passing through the Fire**.

Chuck's new novel, available at Amazon in paperback or as a Kindle e-book tackles a top-secret drug operation hidden deep in Colombian jungles with connections to Southeast Asian ports and eventually big-city streets in the U.S.

Along the way, a German-trained logistical mastermind, armed with unlimited cash, attempts to outfox the U.S. Coast Guard, the FBI and drug enforcement agencies across the country.

Air Squadron member, Lt. Col, Ulich Luenemann, German Air Force, Retired and now Communication Studies Lecturer at CSU Sacramento, provides a promotional note on the book's back cover.



**Hooper continued...**

and finished off his airplane ownership with a couple of very nice Cessna P-337's.

SQUADRON LEADERSHIP



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**Ken Lux – Vice Commander**

**Ron Lamb – Secretary**

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**6293 Freeport Blvd.**

**Sacramento, CA 95822**

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When son, **Mike Hooper**, was involved with development of the super-fast Epic LT Project, Herb was a documented member of the Builder Assist program during the application for this very fast amateur-built turboprop.

Mike reports that Herb has slowed down a bit since retiring in 2002. Today, Herb has twenty-one grandkids and can be found happily driving up and down the west coast in his Prevost land yacht – err – motor home.

**Article by Ron Richey**

## AROUND THE SQUADRON – BY RON RICHEY



### A true story about being in the right place at the right time ...

Recently my wife **Pam** and I were having dinner with **Chuck** and **Reggie Asbury** on their outside patio (yes...maintaining the proper social distancing) when Chuck received a cell call from Alan Rockey, Flight Department Director and Chief Pilot for Charles Somers' SBM Corporation, asking him if he had any interest in a P-51 ride the following day.

Since Chuck used to have ownership in the P-51 Straw Boss and 150 plus hours flying time....he looked over at me and said....."Hey Ron, would you have any interest in going for a P-51 ride tomorrow morning?" I asked if I could get back to them....are you kidding.....sign me up.

Chuck made the arrangements with Alan for us to meet out at their hangar on KMCC.

The following morning we arrived at SBM's corporate hangar and were greeted by Alan and Trevor. Alan has been flying for/with Charles Somers for 20 plus years, flying everything from vintage piston power airplanes to the

PC-7 turboprop acro trainer to corporate jets.

Needless to say.....he is the 'real deal', very passionate about aviation of any kind with skill sets to match. Trevor has been with SBM for 12 plus years managing hangar operations.



Alan gave me two choices....leave the controls in the back seat so I would have an opportunity to actually fly **Daddy's Girl**, or remove the controls so there would be more control stick deflection for aggressive aerobatics. (the real estate in the backseat area is quite limited). It was an easy decision....how often does one get a chance to actually fly a P-51? Besides, I figured there must be a way to slip in a couple of girly-man....errr...gentleman acro maneuvers like a rolls and loops.

Alan very patiently explained everything he was doing during the pre-start and pre-taxi procedures and after waiting for temps to come up to normal range.....it was usual mag and systems check before takeoff. For anyone who has ever heard a Merlin engine at full power, you know it's the sweetest, most unforgettable sound out there and having the chance to sit behind that engine on takeoff is an experience to remember.



Shortly after takeoff I heard the magic words over the Bose headsets....."**you have the controls!**" We flew out towards Folsom Lake and while getting a feel for the airplane, we climbed to 9,500 feet where Alan demonstrated a very sweet roll followed by the command of....now you do it!

With a combination of good instruction and luck, I managed to complete a pretty acceptable roll, by roll number three, I was ready for combat. Alan also demonstrated a really nice big loop! What a fine flying machine. Back in the KMCC pattern, since the traffic was very light, we did a nice low pass down the runway.....pulled up to downwind and Alan greased Daddy's Girl back onto the runway.



Thanks to Charles and Alan for an opportunity to check off one more major 'bucket-list' item.





## Commander's Column:

### Environmental art by Christo

**Christo**, conceptual and environment artist, who died last month (May 31), made a big impression on me when, in 1991, he covered Southern California hills with large yellow umbrellas. Working with his artist wife and partner, **Jeanne-Claude**, the project was one of a number of memorable environment art installations, including, The Gates in New York's Central Park.

Installed by over 2,000 workers at the Tejon Ranch area surrounding the Grapevine, over three million people saw the umbrellas – placed in all directions on the ranch's vast uncultivated land.

Along with my aircraft partner at that time, past Air Squadron member, **George Moore**, we flew to SoCal and marveled at the sight. Over 1,700 umbrellas were installed. Flying low and slow in our C182 they looked like huge poppies covering the hills.

Complementing Christo's SoCal installation was a separate umbrella work in Japan. There, over 1,300 blue umbrellas were placed in a tighter formation due to limited space.

The overall art project cost \$26 million and was completely funded by the artists themselves. Lasting only three

weeks, the art work, when viewed from the air made a fantastic impression.

While their visual work often was controversial as a result of its scale, the works evoked joy and beauty in creating new ways to experience familiar landscapes.

