



The Eagles' Eyrie

Leadership, Service With Honor!

*RMR-CO-179 Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, Colorado Wing (USAF Auxiliary)
Volume I, Issue 7 – 12 MAR 2010*

Important Dates:

- 13 MAR – Cadet PT and Orientation Flights, Weisbrod Aircraft Museum, beginning at 0900 hrs.
- 13 MAR – Colorado Wing Cadet Competition, Peterson Air Force Base. 0700–1600 hrs.
- 16 MAR – Pueblo Municipal Airport Advisory Committee Meeting, Airport Conference Room, 1430 hrs.
- 1 APR – Change of Command Ceremony, Weisbrod Aircraft Museum, 1900 hrs.
- 9 APR – Military Affairs Committee Meeting, Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, 1000 hrs.
- 15 APR – 26th Annual Space Symposium, The Broadmoor, 0800–noon.

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Eagles Learn About the Superfortress

Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron members were given an in-depth education about the operations of the B-29 Superfortress bomber during the squadron's aerospace education night on 11 FEB 2010, by a former Air Force technical sergeant who served on the bomber at the end of the Korean War era.

Gerald Putnam was a tail gunner and central fire control gunner between 1953 and 1955. He volunteered to teach the squadron more about the B-29 after reading newspaper accounts of tours that the Eagles give inside "Peachy", the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum's fully-restored B-29.

Based on his own research, as well as memories from serving on the bomber, Putnam was able to paint a picture of the day-to-day operations of the bomber that won the war in the Pacific Ocean at the close of World War II.

"The B-29 was developed to have the necessary range for Pacific missions," said Putnam. The B-29 had a maximum range of 5,500 miles on a full fuel load. Over 2,500 of the long-range bombers were built by the Boeing Corporation, with others built by smaller companies.

One of the largest bombers ever built, the B-29 has a wingspan of over 141 feet, and the top of the tail rudder is almost 28 feet above ground. The empty weight of the bomber was 74,500 pounds, and it routinely carried over 120,000 pounds with fuel and



Gerald Putnam explains the duties of the tailgunner and central fire control gunner on the B-29 Superfortress Bomber during the squadron's aerospace education night on 11 FEB 2010 at the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum.
Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

crew, up to a maximum load of 135,000 pounds. The B-29 was also the first U.S. bomber with pressurized compartments, although the entire aircraft was not pressurized – only the cockpit and the tail compartment. The pressurized areas were connected by a tunnel which Putnam says was used sparingly. "A crewman in the tunnel would become a cannonball if there was explosive decompression," said Putnam.

[See B-29 Superfortress, Page 3](#)

Aerospace Education, Eagle Style

Story and photos by 2LT Shad L. Brown

Squadron members assembled at the Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum on 13 FEB to assist the Pueblo Historical Aircraft Society with their popular "open cockpit" tours of the museum. The T-28C trainer was on display, and cadet flight members assisted the public climbing into and out of the T-28.

Customers ranged from the very young to the very old, and included a person that many Civil Air Pa-

trol cadets aspire to emulate in the near future – a visiting cadet from the United States Air Force Academy! Cadet Commander Miranda Abbas, C/MSgt Haelie Compton, C/Amn Matthew, Samuel, and Tadeusz Nitka, and C/AB Stephen Crandall met Fourth Class Cadet Chris Olson, from Oak Harbor, WA. Cadet Olson answered questions about academy life ("not as scary as it seems," he said) and

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CAPT Alix Brockman grins and bears it for the camera during a recent squadron meeting.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown.



Eagle In Profile

Our monthly look at an interesting squadron member... who also gets to pick next month's subject (err, victim)! Squadron beware!

The Eagles' Eyrrie

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Eyrrie: British variant of the word Aerie (Noun):

1. The nest of a bird on a cliff or a mountaintop.
2. A brood of birds of prey.
3. An elevated, often secluded dwelling, structure, or position.

Courtesy of Merriam-Webster.com online dictionary.

This month, the Eagle's Eyrrie profiles **Captain Alix Brockman**.

EE: Captain Brockman, how long have you been a Civil Air Patrol member?

AB: I have been a continuous member of the Pueblo Eagles Cadet (now Composite) Squadron since May, 1999.

EE: How did you learn about C.A.P.?

AB: I learned of Civil Air Patrol through a friend in the Pueblo West Fire Department who had a son in the unit at the time. He knew how much I enjoyed being around young people.

EE: What motivated you to join the squadron?

AB: I thoroughly enjoyed working with cadets and watching them grow in all aspects of their lives.

EE: What jobs have you held in the squadron? What was your favorite job? What was your least favorite job?

AB: There was a time when I wore around eight different hats. Fortunately, that load has lightened a bunch. I enjoy being the squadron finance and supply officer, along with assisting Captain Zordel in testing. I am a little "OCD" when it comes to wanting things in order, so these positions fit me pretty well.

EE: What is your "day job"?

AB: My "day job" before being laid off was taking care of five businesses owned by one family, one of which was a commercial construction business. I still go back and help out the owner while he gets everything reduced and re-set up. I was responsible for bookkeeping, payroll, leases, rental units, tax reporting, invoicing contracts, and basically everything necessary to run these businesses. Since my "forced" retirement, I am able to do what I really enjoy: painting, making jewelry, and carving items for sale later. When spring finally returns, I will work in the yard and garden.

EE: What advice can you offer our members about managing their own money?

AB: I learned to manage money a long time ago, while raising four children by myself. A "cooling off" period works best. Do I really need this, or can I downsize some, are a couple of questions I ask myself most of the time. However, I do splurge on occasion. You have to once in a while, just to survive!

EE: When will you finally promote to Major?

AB: I hope to promote to Major as soon as I can attend the CLC course. I'm trying to get into the next one, but there are only twenty seats open in each class.

EE: Do you have a husband or children?

AB: I have a husband (Chuck) who is not very well right now. I have a son and three daughters, thirteen grandchildren, and as unbelievable as it feels, five great-grandchildren!

[See Brockman, page 4.](#)

Open Cockpit, Eagle Style

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and the types of things that you should strive for during high school to achieve an appointment to the Air Force Academy.

The T-28 was a piston-engined military trainer built by North American Aviation between 1950 and 1957, with almost two thousand built during that time. The T-28 was used by the United

States Air Force and United States Navy for primary pilot training until the 1960s (and into the 1980s for the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard).

The model at the Weisbrod museum is the T-28C turboprop, used by the Navy for primary training (and which is still used at some naval air stations today!).

Open cockpit tours continue in May with the P-80 Shooting Star on 15 MAY from 1000 to 1600 hrs. In August, the ever-popular B-29 "Peachy" tours will continue on four days, 7-8 AUG and 14-15 AUG. The 2010 Open Cockpit series concludes on 13 NOV with tours of the C-47 "Skytrain" (Dakota) transport.



B-29 Superfortress

Continued from Page 1

Putnam added, “it was up to the aircraft commander whether the tail gunner stayed in the tail during flight. If he left the tail or had to enter the tail, the entire plane had to depressurize and go onto oxygen once the bomber was above 10,000 feet”

The Superfortress carried a crew of eleven – the bombardier, aircraft commander, pilot, flight engineer, navigator and radio operator in the cockpit (4 officers and 2 enlisted), with left and right gunners, a radar/observer, a central fire control operator, and the tail gunner (four officers and one enlisted) in the aft compartment.

Putnam said the bombardier was the critical crewmember. “The primary mission of the B-29 was aiming and dropping bombs. The crew’s mission was to get the bombardier to his target.” Once the aircraft reached its “initial point”, it was controlled by the bombardier through the bomb-sight. The B-29 routinely carried 20,000 pounds worth of bombs, which the bombardier could drop singly, alternate drops from the forward and aft bomb bays, or release “in salvo” (i.e. all bombs in a bay at once).

The central fire controller was responsible for the top gun turrets on the Superfortress, while the left and right gunner operated the aft lower and forward lower turrets. Putnam said that many people do not realize that most of the guns on the B-29 were operated by remote-control. Any gun station could assume command over any of the remote guns. Putnam proudly noted that once, when the Soviet Union was able to capture a B-29 bomber intact, they were able to duplicate the plane design but were unable to duplicate the remote control gun system. The tailgunner had direct control over his gun, and also operated auxiliary power unit during takeoff.

In addition to weapons duties, the left and right gunners also scanned the engines every fifteen minutes while in flight to make sure there was “a little oil leakage, but not too much” and to observe the exhaust smoke for signs of engine trouble. They also notified the cockpit whether the landing gear successfully deployed or retracted, and whether flaps were up or down.

The crew entered the cockpit through the nose wheel well, while the gun compartment

crew entered from the starboard side “aft main entrance.”

What did the crew eat during flight? Putnam says the crew carried packaged lunches “similar to MREs”, with some box lunches as well. They drank from three gallon jugs of coffee or water stored on board. And what happened when the crew drank too much liquid?

“You went to ‘The Can’”, said Putnam – which he explained was an unpleasant onboard toilet system that had to be emptied by hand once the aircraft landed. Since the unofficial rule of the flight crew was that the first one to use it had to empty it, “everyone had a contest to see how long they could hold it... no one wanted to be the first to use it.”

Putnam believes he served between 600 to 800 hours of flight time in the B-29, usually flying between 10 to 14 hours per day. He recalled that his last flight on the B-29 was from Topeka, Kansas to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona, where his bomber was mothballed in the airplane graveyard.

Story by 2LT Shad L. Brown



Gerald Putnam and the cadet flight at the nose gear of “Peachy”, our adopted B-29. Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

“I want to thank each and every one of you for what you’re doing, as a group and individually... you aren’t looking for recognition, but I want you to know that some of us know what you are doing and we’re proud of you.”

Gerald Putnam, former B-29 gunner, addressing the cadet flight of the Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron.

Change of Command Slated for 1 APR 2010

By 2LT Shad L. Brown
Public Affairs Officer

Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron Commander Major Stephen Heffler surprised the squadron on 18 FEB with the announcement that he will be stepping down as squadron commander effective 1 APR. Major Heffler’s work schedule with the Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Agency, has changed so that he will no longer be able to attend evening

meetings. Major Heffler was especially broken up as he notified the cadet flight of his reluctant decision to step aside. However, Major Heffler assured the squadron that he will not be “going away”, and that he plans to remain active as the squadron’s Emergency Services Officer and to conduct weekend trainings and help out with physical training on Saturdays.

Major Heffler has endorsed 2LT Shad Brown to Group 3 Com-

mander LT COL Donald Thomas, who has forwarded the recommendation to Colorado Wing Commander COL Edward Phelka. Both commanders have been invited to participate in the change of command ceremony, which is tentatively scheduled for 1900 hrs. on 1 APR 2010.

Major Heffler thanks all of you for your support of the squadron during his two tours of duty as commander!



Major Stephen Heffler giving blood, sweat, and tears for the Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron and the Civil Air Patrol!

Photo by 2LT Shad Brown

Eagle News... Briefly!

Recent Promotions:



First Lieutenant: Joseph Thorn, promoted on 23 FEB 2010 for his instrument rating as a pilot. 1LT Thorn has also recently been appointed as the squadron safety officer, assistant communications officer, and flight operations officer trainee!



Second Lieutenant: Richard Thorn, promoted on 27 FEB 2010 for his rating as a private pilot. 2LT Thorn has been tasked to learn the job of Flight Operations Officer (which will be a first for the Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron) as well as assistant emergency services officer!

Awards:



Level I: Congratulations to senior members Joseph and Richard Thorn for completing their Level I professional development and being awarded with the Membership Ribbon!

New members: Welcome to new senior member Catherine Bellew! Not only does she spoil the squadron with her fantastic cookies, but she will also be assisting the Senior Flight as an administrative officer and the cadet flight as an assistant leadership officer.

Training Leaders of Cadets: 2LT Shad Brown attended the TLC Course sponsored by Group 3 and held at Peterson AFB on 6-7 MAR. 2LT Brown hopes to put this information to good use in pushing the Cadet Flight to even greater heights.

Colorado Wing Encampment Staff News: Congratulations to C/MSGt Haelie Compton, who was selected at CESSnA to serve as flight sergeant at the 2010 Colorado Wing Encampment to be held at the United States Air Force Academy on 12-19 JUN! Compton was chosen to serve with Squadron 9, Hotel Flight. Whip those cadets into shape, Sergeant!

Brockman

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EE: If you were the squadron commander, what one thing would you change and what one thing would you leave alone?

AB: If you had asked this question when I first became a member, and for many years after, everything needed changing! Now, however, the situation in the squadron, due to a huge amount of hard work, is amazing in comparison. The difference is like night and day!

EE: Finally, which cadet member of the squadron should we interview for next month's Eagle's Eyrie?

AB: Cadet (Staff Sergeant) Brian Bissonnette!



Cadet Technical Sergeant Steven Mohan reports as ordered by Squadron Commander Major Stephen Heffler.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown



Cadet Airman Basic Megan Garcia, Cadet Staff Sergeant Christa Bissonnette, and Cadet Airman Basic Jared Miller take tests under the watchful eye of squadron Testing Control Officer Captain Richard Zordel.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown



1LT Joseph Thorn briefs the squadron on common winter safety hazards during the squadron safety meeting on 25 FEB.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown