

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

The coming year of 2019 for the LSS looks to be exciting as it finishes up its move from Duluth to Superior. Events prompting the move go back many years.

Hangar 101 was constructed in 1948, decommissioned in 1982 when the Air force moved to K.I. Sawyer Air Base in Michigan, abandoned until coming under lease for the storage of the red PBV - 324FA in 1999. since the mid 90's it has had roof issues, the built up roof was replaced in 1995; the quality of the work was shoddy. The lease with the Minnesota Wing was signed with the understanding that the airport will not put any money into its rehabilitation. They declared it as too far gone.

The hanging of 324FA was a catalyst for the formation of the Lake Superior Detachment which was tasked with the maintenance of the aircraft. Over the years the Detachment did its best to rehabilitate the hangar, removing years of rubbish, interior remodeling to form decent work and meeting areas, roof and window repairs and eventually steel siding on the lower half of the building.

The coming of the blue PBV - 7179Y precipitated a new objective for the unit which then became a squadron in 2008: one was flyable, the other was in pieces. Which is to be restored? The red one had been converted to water bombing and much work would have been needed to convert it back to its WWII appearance. The blue one had been converted to its 1948 appearance before the 1998 windstorm flipped it over on its back. Knowledgeable aviation personnel and CAF people from HQs determined the blue one is the one to be restored. Both aircraft were brought here because of a lack of room in the St. Paul hangar.

As work continues on the aircraft, members were also busy with the constant repairs of the hangar and museum roofs and the interior to maintain a respectable work and meeting environment. The winds of 2016 caused a movement of the building, evidenced by the cracked roof joists in the museum and the need for bracing. The excessive rains of 2017 took its toll on the building causing the closing of the museum - one room had standing water. The Airport Authority declared the structure unsafe and closed it to the public and to be vacated as of last November 1. The cost to repair the building would be far beyond the units ability to recover.

Upon reading the 2017 revue of the squadron one becomes aware of the many meeting at which the question of separating the museum from the hangar and the relocation of



the unit was discussed at length. The Airport Authority offered a location near the terminal on which to construct a combination hangar/museum.

Extensive water damage and reconstruction work needed on the hangar and museum prompted the search for a new home. In addition there was also a security issue. Before the 9/11 event security was at a minimum. 9/11 changed everything. Fencing and security gates were installed, security badges for limited access were needed and restrictions on public access. Hosting events on the light line at anything less than at full airshow level became extremely difficult. While the Airport Authority was very accommodating the reality was that having an organization open to the public on the security perimeter of an international airport provides a host of security nightmares. If airport security found a door open or unlocked it would have resulted in a big fine. Add to that the changing nature of the airport as the area has seen large commercial growth in the form of Cirrus and other organizations. On the positive side considerable progress has been made over the past two years on the PBV and the acquisition of a small aircraft that will soon be in flyable condition. Now a suitable hangar is needed for restoration and maintenance work.

The move to the Bong Airport brings much promise with a hangar big enough for the PBV. A smaller facility but in better condition allowing for more assets and work be directed toward the restoration of the PBV. Minimum security which will allow more public access. There is a room for a modest museum. One of the key factors of a successful CAF unit is having events such as hangar dances, open houses, fly-ins, airshows, pancake breakfasts, which within the confines of an international airport with its tight security was difficult to orchestrate but fits perfectly in the sort of environment the Bong Airfield provides.

A restaurant/bar is nearby, close to a major throughfare, a pleasant conference room in the terminal in which to hold meetings and we have a win-win situation. The coming new year has excitement and a new beginning, a new chapter in the history of the Lake Superior Squadron.

Hangar Talk is a publication of the Lake Superior Squadron
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HANGAR TALK

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DeWayne Tomasek	XO
Gary Smith	Finance
Jergen Fuhr	Adjutant
Peter Prudden	Operations
Bruce Hosking	Safety
Bob Wolfe	Aircraft
Bruce Holm	Education

Meetings are first Thursday of each month,
6:30 at Upper Deck Restaurant, Superior, WI



BONG MUSEUM OPENS NEW LAKE SUPERIOR SQUADRON/CAF EXHIBIT

The Bong Museum and the Lake Superior Squadron, Commemorative Air Force, have partnered in the creation of a new exhibit. Planning and work has been going on since November of 2017 when the squadron was asked to leave hangar 101 at Duluth International Airport. The many artifacts and memorabilia from their former location has been split up between the Bong Veterans Historical Center and the Bong Airport where the WWII PBV Catalina is being restored to flying condition.

The open house begins at 6:00 p.m. October 25, 2018 with free beer and wine tasting along with d'oeuvres. Visitors will have an opportunity to taste a variety of brews from Castle Danger, Earth Rider and Canal Park Breweries. The wine will be from Keyport Liquor, Superior.

The exhibit had minimum access at its former location due to its locality in the industrial area of the Duluth airport. A Link trainer, WWII German uniforms, Hermann Goring's lap blanket and many more items will be on display.

The exhibit will be open to the public for the next 12 months in the newly renovated rotating gallery, after which items will be in a permanent display case and wall mountings.

Hangar -- a shelter for aircraft and related support equipment and supplies.

Not to be confused with hanger or Hagar, the scourge of castle owners.

Talk -- to hold converse, to converse familiarly, to speak, to use as a means of conversation.

Hangar talk -- an open forum or constructive/instructive topics by aviation enthusiasts who may discuss aviation or anything and everything.

In a Hogan's Heroes episode Germany's ace fighter pilot was in Colonel Klink's office. As Colonel Hogan enters he immediately recognizes the German ace. His photograph is on the bulletin board in the ready rooms of many allied air bases with the words: "Do not engage. Losing is inevitable." Following a brief conversation between the two Hogan gets invited to dinner for some hangar talk with Luftwaffe aviators. Hogan quips: "My airplane was shot so full of holes I was warned not to land in Switzerland. They would see as a piece of Swiss cheese."

For years the Lake Superior Squadron struggled to make something of a hangar that had been left to the elements for almost two decades. Suddenly weather conditions got the upper hand, the structure was declared a hazard, the unit was asked to vacate and began looking for new quarters.

Thus begins a new chapter in the history of the LSS - like starting from scratch. Along with the move and setting up shop at the Bong airport it was suggested a newsletter be published to keep our members up to date on what is happening. Having done newsletters in the past I said I would give it a shot. The first one was a two-pager for a labor union. It was set in type using a linotype machine; I worked at the newspaper. The second one was a multi-page newsletter for the railroad museum using cut and paste and a manual typewriter; soon graduating to a Brother W-85 word processor - a typewriter with a screen and a floppy disc. Now it is a whole new ball game with the digital age.

Hangar talk involves a group getting together and discussing things of a common interest. To help this publication succeed articles and photos of interest are needed -- what is happening in other CAF units, an experience, discussion of military, civilian and historic aircraft, the restoration process of old aircraft. Social media is the buzz word for the new era what with cell phones, I-pads, I-phones, instant connection and communication. There is still something to be said for the print media. It paid my wages and supported my family. So with this beginning, let us see how this all plays out.

Col. Jergen Fuhr, adjutant, LSS/CAF



The East side of the hangar 101 -- the flat roof area of the museum. The winds of 2016 and the excessive rains of 2017 have taken their toll on the building. For years members did their best on building repairs, taking time and finances away from the restoration of the Catalina. As conditions worsened the unit began looking for off-site facilities to move the museum to and eventually came to the point where the airport authority declared the structure as unsafe and off-limits, giving the squadron one year to vacate the premises. After much searching it became evident the best option was to keep the museum and the hangar together. The airport authority proposed constructing a hangar/museum near the terminal which would make it more visible to the public. The cost of building a new structure or repairing and rebuilding areas of the hangar and the flat-roofed annex areas would be prohibitive, leaving the only alternative is to search for a new location and a hangar large enough to house a WWII PBV Catalina. And the only facility to fit that description was the Bong Airport in Superior.

STACK BROS. TO REPLACE HANGAR DOOR RAILS MOVING WAS NOT EASY

As any one knows when they decide to move from a large home to a small one or to an apartment, downsizing does not come easy.

Children grow up and leave home to start their own lives. After years of collecting stuff parents are faced with decisions on what to save and what to discard.

When Catalina 324FA - the red one -- was brought to Duluth the Lake Superior Detachment was formed and members began collecting spare parts. A museum was formed and military memorabilia, uniforms, and other articles from past wars began to accumulate. As a veteran passes away the spouse has to decide what to do with his uniform and other souvenirs from his military service. "Give it to the museum." Good! Nice and thank you, but museums have just so much space. And so it was October 2017 when the squadron was asked to vacate hangar 101 and questions arose: "Where to find places to put all this stuff? Will the Bong Museum take some of it.?" And members then began searching for places.

The Richard I. Bong Airport, Superior, was the only logical place with a hangar large enough -- 100' x 80' -- for a WWII PBV Catalina.

But what to do with nine rooms of things -- engines, a 1940 living room, uniforms, simulators, aerial cameras and other equipment, model aircraft, etc., etc., and how to downsize to get some of it into the one room at the airport. The people at the Bong Museum were gracious enough to take as much as possible. A room on the lower level was cleared out to make room for things from hangar 101.

Hangar 101 is in an industrial area at Duluth International Airport, not all that accessible or visible to the public. Being open only two days a week prohibited the group from putting a sign near highway 53 directing tourists to the hangar. Now being open and accessible to the public seven days a week next to Superior's well-traveled highway 2/53 the squadron's collection can be viewed and appreciated by the many who visit the Bong Museum.

But back to the hangar. The Bong Museum has just so much space and many things that had no significant use or meaning were discarded -- a task given to and needed by members to decide what to save and what goes into the dumpster.

Relocating has and will be expensive, but much less than rehabbing the hangar or constructing a new facility. And so starting last October the work began of moving across the bay -- out of town and out of state -- to a new location but still making our presence known in the Twin Ports. It has taken a year to accomplish the move. Members with pick-up trucks and automobiles loaded up with museum items for trips across the bridge, borrowing trailers for the big stuff such as aircraft parts. July ninth was a big day when Cross Country Boat Transport of Hastings, MN trailered both PBV bodies to the new location and backing them into the hangar. They were moved and left outside following the Duluth air show July 7-8. PBV 324FA was painted black - the black cat squadron -- and later moved outside as a static display.

Moving was not easy attempting to find and arrange space for what goes into the smaller quarters. Aircraft parts will go on shelves on the hangar's perimeter. Plans also are to reinstall the Tikki Bar near the windows on the south side of the hangar.

The relocation has and will be costly -- big ticket items like the trailering of the PBV bodies and replacing the hangar doors and associated ground work.



THE UPPER DECK

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About forty some years ago Superior's Upper Deck Restaurant was the upper deck above a hangar near the Bong airport.

When the children were small the family was eating there when someone said: "Oh look. There is someone coming down in a parachute." And again as we were coming home from Solon Springs and passing by the Apollo Bar in South Superior: "Oh look. There's someone coming down in a parachute."

Fast forward: Charles Androski comes to Talon's aviation class at East High School and asks: "Would anyone here like to go sky-diving."

Number 1 son comes from school and asks: "Mom, dad, can I go sky diving?" "Sure" and signed the permission form.

And thus began many trips to the Apollo Bar to watch him and other beginners hang from the ceiling in a harness in the basement, pull the rip cord and drop to the floor, pack parachutes, stand next to the Cessna, hands on the strut and practice pushing away as they would when making a jump. And the time when mom and dad sat in the back of the plane on an orange crate and watched as he exits the plane, stands on the step, hands on the strut and pushes off.

Back to the restaurant -- the only fly-in eatery in Northern Wisconsin and located at the apex of runways 4/22 and 14/33 making it possible to taxi to the restaurant with hours 8 to 8 Tuesday to Sunday. The buffet is changed from breakfast to lunch to dinner with a different menu each day. Two varieties of home-made soup, chili, salad bar, a variety of entrees -- and a bar. The squadron meets in the dining/conference room the first Thursday of the month, 6:30, with some coming early to eat before the meeting and some eat during the meeting. -- J. Fuhr

The hangar had been used for cold storage of aircraft and other equipment. The hangar doors deteriorated to a condition where they became a safety hazard and were taken down to prevent any future accident. To ease the task of moving of aircraft in and out of the hangar the rails were covered with asphalt. The rail ends were visible in the door pockets at either side and showed considerable rust and pitting -- meaning considerable work was needed to excavate and remove blacktop, concrete and rails, making a trench, laying new rails and the pouring of concrete.

Stack Brothers Mechanical Contractors of Superior have been hired to do the work. They have been in business for 124 years. William and John Stack started the company in 1890 doing plumbing and heating for homes and businesses in the fast growing town of Superior. Serving Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin their work can be seen in the many building projects at area universities, hospitals, government facilities, apartments and private homes. Replacing the hangar door rails was completed this Fall. The fabricating of the hangar doors will be done next year. An estimate of \$130,000 was received from a commercial manufacturer. As a cost-saving measure the squadron plans to have the doors made locally at a cost of \$40,000.

Next year looks promising as new doors are made, the hangar floor gets cleared as things get moved to the shelves, Tikki Bar is put in place and the hangar and the small museum get ready for tourists and local visitors. Prior to being open to the public some have already been coming from far distances to see the new quarters. And plans to be made for hangar dances, pancake breakfasts, airshows and other public events without the strict security problems of an international airport. The black PBV will have its wing mounted and be tied down as a static display and ready for visitors. The fairgrounds next door, a fly-in restaurant with a conference/dining area, a breakfast, lunch and dinner buffet which varies from day to day -- the relocation promises to be the best thing that could happen as a new chapter is written in the annals of the Lake Superior Squadron, Commemorative Air Force.