

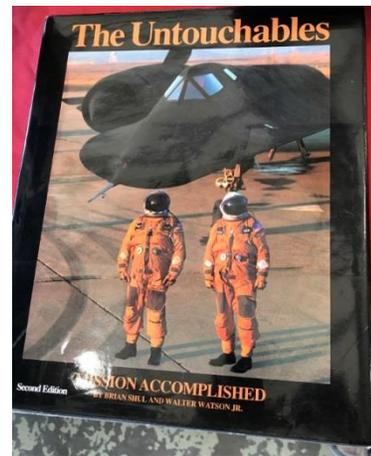


SCHAFA Newsletter for March 2026

Reminder: The next SCHAFA Open House will take place Saturday, March 14, 2026, from 10am-1pm at Hangar Y-1 Jim Hamilton/LB Owens Airport.

Foundation Happenings

For the February open house we were thrilled to have the Spann Watson Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen Association visit again. They always set up a great display. I love to stand around the table listening to their stories. The stories about the SR-71 Blackbirds depicted in the book on the right below were fascinating. .



Our next open house will celebrate women's history month. Be sure to stop by to see the clean hangar.

Restoration Progress

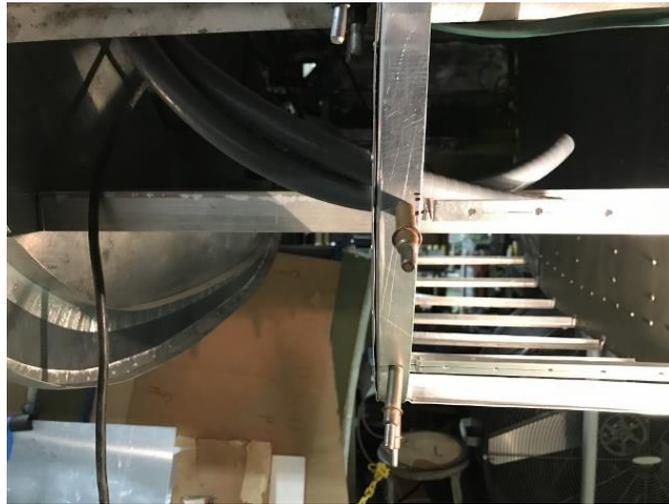
The restoration team is almost finished with the clean-up of the hangar. It is looking great for hosting future events. I should have taken "before" pictures.



The team started back working on GF2. In addition, work has restarted on the fuselage for the flight simulator. Now that the floor in the radio operator's area is complete, the area under the floor is next. The stringers running along the bottom of the plane are hand-made. So far, twenty-four have been completed. First the metal is cut then bent using the brake pictured on the left. After this the holes are drilled for attaching the skin. It is easier to drill the holes prior to installing the stringers. The picture on the right shows one side of the area with the stringers cleco'd in place. The next picture shows the twelve completed stringers ready to be drilled and placed in the area to the left of the middle rib then the riveting begins! The team is looking into using Plexiglas for part of the skin under the plane and aluminum for the other part. This will allow users to be able to look into the navigator's area.



Metal ready to be bent



Stringers placed in area to right of rib



Stringers ready to be drilled for placement

The slide mechanism for one of the cockpit window's is ready to be painted prior to installation. The clam shell handles and bracket are original B-25 parts. The steel rod has been fabricated. The small details like this really make GF2 special!



Dan Rossman

Cleaning the hangar helped rediscover some old items. We found thank you cards written by Doolittle Raider, Dick Cole. We found several WWII manuals. One of the most interesting items found is an old interview of Dan Rossman who was the student pilot when GF2 crashed in Lake Greenwood. Below is an excerpt from the newspaper, The Jerusalem Post published May 5, 2005.

“I flew PT-19s. BT-13s and twin engine AT-17s before graduating in March of 1944,” says Rossman.

With only 175 flying hours, 65 of which were in twin-engine trainers that weighed about 3,500 pounds empty, Rossman began flying North American B-25 bombers that weigh in excess of 30,000 pounds at take-off. “It was like learning to drive a Toyota and being given a tractor trailer,” says Rossman.

Rossman, now 81 years old, was involved in five B-25 crashes and emergency landings during World War II. The first one, on June 6, 1944 (D-Day in Europe) was in South Carolina during a flight practicing single engine procedures.

“The instructor pilot decided that we should also practice combat type low level flying,” explains Rossman. “Flying over Lake Greenwood, South Caroline, we got too low and the props touched the water. We had to ditch the airplane and it took 24 stitches to close the rip in my chin when the seat belt opened.” Rossman was allowed to continue with his training after a reprimand and a fine. He signed an I.O.U. for the lost B-25 and kept flying.

In August of 1944, Rossman and his crew received orders to fly to Biak, New Guinea via California and Hawaii to deliver the plane and crew to the 13th Air Force in the South

Pacific. The trip to California was uneventful, but unprecedented bad weather in Sacramento delayed the flight to Hawaii for nearly 6 weeks.

The crew was finally cleared for take-off one night at one a.m. but two hours into the trip, the weather again turned turbulent. Unable to contact any of the three surface weather ships, the crew never got the recall message given to the other aircraft in the flight. To make matters worse, two hours before sunrise, the navigator, Dick Shave, had no idea where they were. Approaching their 10-hour flight time, fuel began to run low. Rossman started using his commercial hand radio to try to pick up a signal.

“Eventually, I faintly heard what I recognized as the Coca-Cola theme song from Morton Downey’s radio show, and realized I had picked up a commercial station, which would hopefully be Honolulu,” says Rossman.

The crew made a 45 degree right turn and headed for the signal. As Diamond Head, Hawaii came into sight, the B-25 requested a straight-in approach and landed with less than 50 gallons of usable fuel after 13 hours and five minutes of flight. They were the only crew to get through that day.

Shortly after the crew made it to their destination of Biak, New Guinea, the Aussies welcomed them to jungle survival training in Nadzab. “The first thing the squadron briefer said to us was, ‘welcome to the war. You’re not going to like it. If you’ve come to this war expecting to win medals you’ve come to the wrong place, you should have gone to Europe.’”

“That was our introduction to the place,” says Rossman. And after flying only three missions, Rossman’s crash in the Philippine Islands quickly turned those words into a reality. “I was convinced that my chances of making it through the war were not very good,” Rossman remembers.

Membership Renewal Reminder

There are many projects planned for 2026. If you have not renewed your membership please send in your renewal so you can keep up with the exciting work to come this year.

Wrap Up

If you have something you would like to share in a future newsletter or if you have any questions, please send an email directly to SCHAF at info.schaf@gmail.com.

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