



TUNISON FOUNDATION

Wings to Remember. Honor. Inspire.



April 2023

Spring 2023 Issue

Tunison Board and General Hangers-On

President
Eric Zipkin

Vice- President
Garrett Fleishman

Secretary
Ben Smith

Treasurer
Richard Hough

Operations Committee
Garrett Fleishman

Maintenance Committee
Steve Kelly

Facilities Committee
Ben Smith (Interim)

Events Coördinator
Sherry Fuller

Archivist
Benjamin Smith

Merchandising Co-ordinator
Sherry Fuller

Webmaster
Open

Board Members:
Guillaume de Ramel
Garrett Fleishman
John Grones
Richard Hough
Dixon Kenner
Ben Smith
Eric Zipkin

C/O Tradewind Aviation
3 Juliano Drive, Suite 1
Oxford Connecticut
06478, USA

ISSN (print)
ISSN (digital)

In accordance with the Library and Archives Act, and the Legal Deposit of Publications Regulations, all newsletters are deposited with the Library of Congress and available to the public.

The Tunison newsletter is published four times per year for the Foundation. The editor welcomes submissions of text and photographs for publication.

Submissions: Articles and photographs may be submitted to the Editor, or via post to the Foundation address. Please include photographer's name, captions, identifications of people and aircraft

Deadlines: Submissions to the Newsletter must be received by the 1st of every quarter for inclusion in that quarter's newsletter.

Editorial Policy: The Editor of the newsletter reserves the right to edit any submitted material for space and content considerations. Articles, statements and opinions appearing in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the officers, board of directors, members of the Foundation or its sponsors or advertisers. Where specific data regarding operation, safety, repairs or legislation are concerned, you are advised to obtain an independent verification. The Foundation, officers and contributors can accept no responsibilities for the result of errors or omissions given in this newsletter or by any other means.

Copyright: Pursuant to the Berne Convention, no portion of the Newsletter may be reprinted without written permission of the editor. Copyright is held by the author of articles or photographer and the balance by the Foundation. Where permission is granted, citation must include month and year of the issue.

Online

<http://www.TunisonFoundation.org>

General Information

The Tunison Foundation, a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization, operates its WWII, C-47 Placid Lassie to remind and educate people about WWII. We do this in two ways: (1) By appearing at air show events across the nation; (2) By leading flights that commemorate significant episodes of WWII history, such as our commemorative flight to Normandy to honor the 75th Anniversary of D-day in 2019.

Our Name:

Ed Tunison was the Radio Operator on our C-47, Placid Lassie, during World War II. In 2014, we discovered that Ed was the only surviving member of her wartime crew. Ed had not seen Placid Lassie since the crew flew her back to Florida from Europe in 1945.

When Placid Lassie was in the U.K. for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day celebration, we brought Ed and his son to the event. Ed flew with us on our commemorative missions, and we even gave him a turn flying the aircraft.

Ed passed in 2016. When seeking a name for our nonprofit foundation, we thought of Ed, and the Tunison Foundation was created in 2017.

The Journal

Editorial team:
Dixon Kenner, Sherry Fuller

Contributors & Assistance:

Sherry Fuller
Dixon Kenner
Ben Smith

Do Note: Higher DPI versions for printing are available upon request

Greetings,

Welcome to the revamped Tunison quarterly newsletter. I have been overwhelmed by the volunteer turnout this quarter. We started the volunteer program last year and had a few people show up. Since then it has grown to over 100 people. The January hangar day saw more than 30 people show and pitch in to help. Many hands make quick work.

I think that 2023 is the year that the Foundation will truly pick up steam. For the first time since 2018 we have a permanent home. One that we can keep tools and supplies in. One that we can gather together as a team. Better yet that home is close to a majority of the active volunteers so that it is easier for them to show up. It means that we can do most of the maintenance work ourselves instead of paying various shops to do the work.

It means that we can consolidate all our parts and projects into one location.

To that end there has been a tremendous effort by Sherry, Mark Simmons, and host of volunteers to load and unload those parts. At the time of this writing six tractor trailer loads of parts have been moved from New Smyrna Beach Airport, Florida to our Poughkeepsie hangar. What remains in Florida are two loaded box trailers that need to be repaired and the PBY-5A Catalina fuselage. We intend to get those moved north by the end of May.

PBY-5A Catalina fuselage, I hear you ask? Isn't the Tunison Foundation all about flying Placid Lassie? It is, but the success of the Foundation will be to be more than a one truck pony. When the Foundation was created, James Lyle donated both Placid Lassie and his PBY-5A Catalina project. That project has been dormant since about 2010 when it was shipped from the UK to Florida. Having a hangar means that we can get the project inside, take stock of what needs to be done, and start those work streams.

However, restoring the PBY to flight status is a very large and long project. It will require raising significant funds. It will require many hours of cataloging, cleaning, and repairing parts. It will require sourcing parts. What stopped the project a decade ago was that the wing attach angles in the center section were damaged and needed repair. The years outside from 2018 to 2023 were not kind to it. We had it evaluated, determined that it was no longer economical to repair and made a trade with another Foundation who didn't need a flight-worthy part.

We have sent the center section to an expert repair shop for repairs. This project is a marathon, not a sprint. By bringing everything together in one local place and starting on the center section, we have made our first steps.

Returning to Placid Lassie, the winter in the hangar brought together a bunch of mechanics into a team. They have gotten Placid Lassie through the Phase 2 and 3 checks and ready for the 2023 Airshow season. As we wrap of those tasks our first mission is upon us. We are flying the 102nd PeeWee Jumpfest to honor the memory of a D-Day veteran who passed last fall.

I thank all of you for your time, your energy, your donations and your passion to keep Placid Lassie flying and enabling us to continue our mission to educate the public.

Eric Zipkn



Hanger Day

We decided to have a hangar day/end of year celebration at POU on Saturday Jan 28th for the volunteers and interested parties. The tentative agenda was to start at 10am to do work in the hangar.

The chores were modest. One was to assemble shelves, then unload a pile of boxes that were filled with small trays full of fasteners and other C47 parts, &c.

A second was a review of the Crew Chief and Docent Manuals for accuracy. A training session if you will where anyone who wanted to get trained on that could do so.

A third was discussion and kicking off the Annual for Placid Lassie.

Finally, we would knock off at four for a few presentations by Ben and Eric:

- A recap of the 2019 D-Day Squadron Trip to Normandy
- Overview of 2024 plan for Normandy

- Tunison 2022 Year in Review
- Dinner in the hangar

What occurred was beyond expectations. Over thirty volunteers appeared for this inaugural Hanger Day.

While one team assembled shelving units and moved them upstairs, another was sorting through the boxes that had been stored in New Jersey for much of 2022 and readied them for movement to the "Parts Loft"

There was a need for a large table that could serve as a bar, or for putting out food. A few volunteers found a convenient tabletop, and with various tools, repurposed some pallets into supports and carried it into the Hangar.

The Annual was started, with the floors coming up within Lassie, and the cowlings coming off Idling Ada and Eager Eileen. Panels were opened, and Clara, leading the Annual got down to work.

We had a few more donations to the hangar. Neil H. and Karen M. donated a new coffee maker. Gary H. dropped off a car engine crane and a rolling cot. Thanks to all of you.

Dixon gave presentations on the new Crew Chief and Docent manuals to quite a few interested people, followed by some practical instruction on Lassie herself afterwards.

Bob Creter took measurements in Lassie's tail section for shelving. Gary Houghton and Gary Smith dropped by with a single stack roll away tool box and buckets of tools that they bought for cheap online. These were to be the basis of a hanger tool collection. After they left Gary started organizing them into the tool box.

Going forward the plan is for the 4th Saturday of the month to be hangar day for getting work done, etc.



Hanger Day







Placid Lassie's Annual

It has been a busy first quarter for Placid Lassie while we plan for upcoming events. From lining up the A&Ps to start the phase 2 and 3 work to Richard Osborne who has stepped up to be the lead IA on this project and Clara McGee being the lead local A&P. The January Hanger Day was a target for much progress, so the first couple weekends of January were lined up for work to start the MX.

On the first Ben was in the hangar to start prep for the phase 2 and 3 checks. 30+ inspection panels under the wings were removed or opened. This involved removing hundreds of 8-32 machine screws. The seats were also unmounted and then unloaded from Lassie when Eric and Ben Zipkin showed up for a few minutes and were pressed into work.

The Props were dismantled by Garrett and some volunteers from Oxford and sent off to Minnesota for servicing.

After the Hanger Day, Ben and Clara planned on a quiet day working on Placid Lassie. Clara brought her sister Amelia. Ben brought his daughter Anne. Clara tagged items to be addressed on Lassie's engines as she reviewed the completed items from the checklist.

The following weekend, Clara put in two days in the hangar working on Placid Lassie. Ben helped on Saturday. Part of the work on Saturday was spraying ACF-50 (anti-corrosion) into all of the wing openings. Tensions on the cables were checked. At that point most of the work that can be done without jacks (for gear swing tests) or the propellers (to run the engines and do checks) have been done for the airframe and engine checks.

There were delays with the prop shop getting our props back, but they got to working on them. There was no corrosion, which is good, so they were repainted and assembled and returned to Poughkeepsie

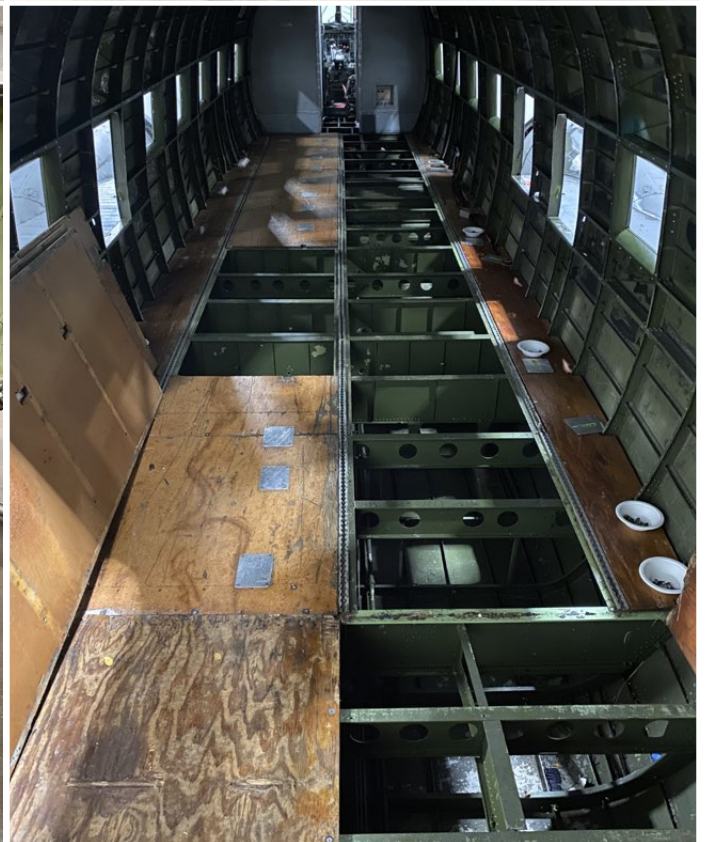
where they were remounted so the engines could be run as part of the Annual.

The jacks for Placid Lassie which had come north from Florida in a race-car trailer and delivered to Westerly, RI were picked up by Bob Creter and delivered to the POU hangar. He made the jack functional by installing new pumps. At time of writing, Lassie continued to be gated by the same items needed for the annual.

This lets us move forward with the phase check. Dick Osbourn, our Inspection Authority is arriving to look over everyone's work. But the end may be in sight for these phase checks and then we can get Lassie flying for the season.



Placid Lassie's Annual



The Move

The Foundation lost our hangar in Fort Pierce, Florida in 2018 when someone was willing to pay more than us for the space. So, we moved the PBY-5 Catalina project and DC-3 parts to an off-airport storage site near the New Smyrna Airport. We have been paying a lot in rent for this space, so there was pressure to move it to POU when we found a home.

The storage we rented was partially inside and partially outside. Inside were 3 bays piled high with crates and loose items. Outside under an awning were some damaged crates, piles of fuel tanks and elevators. Exposed to the elements were two semi box trailers, one full and one mostly unloaded, the PBY fuselage, the wing sections and other parts in rotted 2x4 structures.

In our planning and contracting to get the PBY-5A and parts of our Florida to NY we ran into an unexpected snag. NY state will not issue oversized permits during winter months, so will not accept an application before March 1. So, we pivoted to enclosed trucks for the smaller parts and would try to get that moved first.

A trucking company was found, and after discussions with the company we learned

that much of the delay was because most of our cargo was loose and not on pallets. They didn't want to schedule a truck until we were ready. We didn't want to start the work until we got trucking dates!

So, to work some volunteers went with a borrowed forklift from American Aero. The team created three rows of cargo to fill 3 box trailers on pallets or in crates outside. The remaining box trailer was loaded. Much of the loose cargo was palletized. A separate trucking company picked up our new PBY-5A centre section from American Aero in New Smyrna, FL and moved it to Houston. This is the part that grounded the PBY in 2000.

Continuing with the story, now that we were ready for cargo in New Smyrna to get picked up, the trucking company wasn't ready. Suddenly on a Friday three box trailers became available. All scheduled for Monday pickups. Once loaded they could be at POU 2 days later. Hence we expected them Wednesday or possibly Thursday. We had two hours to unload each truck before we start getting overage charges. A team of volunteers was assembled and the trailers were unloaded in record time. Would you believe they averaged one hour, almost exactly to

unload all of them? We had a pallet jack on site, donation from Gary Houghton, and had arranged to rent a fork lift.

Later, the Florida crew managed to get a fifth box trailer with a forklift, mounted tire, PBY sponsons, ailerons, rudders, and tail section. These were the remaining loose items. Load number 5 was sent on its way to POU. And finally, with a conveniently scheduled NATA clinic, volunteers were again near New Smyrna. After the clinic was done, they all moved over to the storage location and loaded another box trailer with a tail section, two main wing sections and a few other loose bits. The second pair of R1830's were loaded into a U-Haul and sent to Miami where they will sit until they get rebuilt in the future

In summary, six trucks were loaded and five unloaded this quarter. Truck 6 is to be unloaded for the next newsletter. At that point 3 major items will be left in New Smyrna. The PBY fuselage (which is waiting on a professional moving crew and oversize permits) and two box trailers full of parts that we are looking for rail options to move. After those go the position in Florida will have been abandoned.



Photos from the Move



New Merchandise

A Placid Lassie 3D Model

While at Oshkosh last Summer, we were approached by Dave and Yvonne, a couple from South Africa. They have a small electronic company and are keen aviation enthusiasts since childhood and his early Air Force days. He visited the EAA AirVenture show in Oshkosh the first time in 2017 and was hooked. During the Covid pandemic Dave designed and produced quite a few 3D aircraft models/puzzles, which are currently being sold in South Africa via model hobby shops. They thought the AirVenture show would be a perfect opportunity to engage with potential new clients in the USA, who would be interested to sell their models.

They left a DC-3 sample model with Dixon, noting that it could be customised. The model is rated easy by difficulty of assembly / skill level. The models are laser cut MDF (Medium Density Fibre) board panels and are designed to be assembled without any glue.

Some discussions happened, and we sent Yvonne some photos of Placid Lassie. A few back and forth happened, as a DC3 is a slightly different animal from the C47, and the kit that you see to the right was born.

While this could be challenging for adults, kids will have no problem assembling this wee model of Placid Lassie and putting it on their shelf of models.

It is available from Sherry, and this will be one of the items available on the merchandise table when Lassie is on a mission, whether dropping paratroops, or in static display.

Contact Sherry for more information.
sherry.tunisonc47@gmail.com

