



# TUNISON FOUNDATION

Wings to Remember. Honor. Inspire.





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## 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

### **Contributors & Assistance:(this issue)**

Sherry Fuller  
Dixon Kenner  
Ben Smith

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**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.

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### **Online**

<http://www.TunisonFoundation.org>

Cover Photo:

Greetings,

Third quarter is usually the busiest part of the year for the Foundation and this year was no exception. The anchor of the year always is EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh. 10,000+ airplanes, 380 warbirds, 677,000 people proved to be a full week of excitement. In addition to Placid Lassie, Tunison members brought a T-6, C-45, Epsilon and a Navion to the show. A Tunison warbird air force. Placid Lassie had good company with fellow DC-3 Society planes including Miss Virginia, Screaming Eagle, Various Jet Sales (former Clipper Tabitha May), Legend Airways and other C-47s/DC-3s. Lassie flew in the airshow multiple times as did the other planes brought by Tunison members.

Other airshows included a major air show at Duluth, MN, a return to Land O' Lakes, WI and Conneaut, OH. Land O' Lakes turned out to be more significant than expected as the family of Ed Tunison, his kids and grandkids were in the area and came by to see their father's/grandfather's war time plane. We took them up for a flight in Placid Lassie that they will never forget. Our continued relations with the jump teams opened up another door. Every year in August re-enactors converge on Conneaut, OH for the largest D-Day re-enactment in the US. Unlike other re-enactments this one includes a storming of the beach from landing craft. This year they added a jump operation and Placid Lassie was invited to be the jump aircraft. They enjoyed it so much that we were invited back next year.

The next biggest piece of news is that we have finally completed the move project. A year ago, in November, Placid Lassie, and the Foundation, moved to a permanent home at Duchess County Airport near Poughkeepsie, NY. These are new Tradewind hangars, but some space was allotted to Tunison. That kicked off a project to move all of our parts and the PB5-5A project from Florida to NY. Must was moved in the spring and into summer. The last 3 items as was the PB5-5A fuselage which arrived safely and has been moved in side. For the first time in 5 years she is back inside. The last two items was two trailers full of spares from Puerto Rico. First the trailers had to be fixed (new tires, brakes). Then it took much longer than expected to find tractors to move them north. Arrived they have, and the project is complete. We are all in once place for the first time since 2018.

The Foundation continues to hold a hangar day every month. The purpose of which is two fold. One to get work done, such as sorting through and organizing what we have. The most important one is have the volunteers bond with each other. Build the team. Introduce new members to the group. A team that wants to hang out together wants to work together. One of the hangar days included good weather to Lassie was out training pilots (and giving rides at the same time)

Speaking of the PB5-5A, the center section is still near Houston, TX getting repaired. We are getting monthly updates and hope to see the end of the money drain (er progress) in about half a year.

Looking into Q4, this is when things slow down. After our last airshow in November Placid Lassie will move into winter maintenance. The Phase 1 check was completed at Land O' Lakes. Phase 2 and 3 are this winter. We will also be giving Lassie a complete going over as next year we need to cross the Atlantic to once again lead the D-Day Squadron to Normandy. I hope to see all of you in the hangar in the coming months getting Placid Lassie ready. And, perchance, to start the PB5 project.

Long story short, thank you.  
Eric





# Hangar Days and Facilities

There were two Hangar Days this quarter, the first on July 9<sup>th</sup>, the second on August 26<sup>th</sup>. A small group attended, given Summertime distractions.

For the first, the task of the day was to get the Tradewind PC-12s and Twin Beach out. Then to unstack the cargo in the back right corner. This was to make space to bring the PBY-5 fuselage inside and to park it in that back right corner. Mission accomplished!

We can report that the PBY is inside for the first time in five years! And once that was done, they got to put everything back inside and in place. The pallet racking obtained two weeks previously was inventoried. Plus there was some general clean up in the hangar.

Given the busy Summer schedule, the next Hangar day wasn't until August 26<sup>th</sup>. 28 people attended of which 14 were newcomers. Word got out to one of the

on-field flying clubs and they decided to check out Placid Lassie and Tunison.

It was great to have some talented new people show up. One is an A&P and others are pilots. They have local contacts with radio, library, and veterans groups. However having lots of new people was lots of introductions and teaching them about Placid Lassie and the Foundation, which took away from some of the planned work. Good in the long term at the expense of some short term goals.

We did accomplish a number of things. A combo lock was installed on the office door to protect our merchandise and records. Oil barrels were consolidated. The hangar was restacked so that Tradewind can get another plane inside. A template was cut for a large canvas patch to protect jumpers from sharp edges on the door. Seats were reinstalled in Lassie that were taken out for the last jump. The Facility Committee laid out a

grid network to identify locations in the man hangar, gallery and mezzanine/loft. Each pallet rack was assigned unique code letters and each level numbered with these marked in tape. This will help with locating items in the future. A team of four started in the mezzanine to inventory parts. The greatest impact of this is that they are determining what information needs to be in the database for all inventory. And finally, Clara set up her tool box!

A secondary mission of the weekend was that Eric gave some training to Ben on flying Lassie. The mission before lunch was three take offs and landings. The mission after lunch was steep turns, approach to clean and dirty stalls and RNAV approaches. With the first flight was had 16 volunteers as passengers. With the second flight we had about 8 passengers. Alan R, Alan W, Jake and one other each got 5 minutes sitting in Lassie's left seat flying.





# Hangar Days





# Maintenance - MX

This quarter Lassie required a few spots of maintenance, at Poughkeepsie, Oxford, and on the road.

The quarter started with one MX that Placid Lassie needed before her next trip, which was going to be Duluth - Land O Lakes - Oshkosh, was to get one of the main tires replaced as the current one was down to minimums. This was accomplished when Placid Lassie was flown over to Oxford in the morning. Clara and team got to work and swapped the tire, and then Placid Lassie was flown back in the evening.

From there, Lassie was well behaved.

However, at Oshkosh, Lassie decided to be unco-operative right at the last moment. We had loaded the flight line volunteers, fired up engine #2, then tried to start #1. No go. The boost pump had failed. Sadly we had to scratch. Clara, Billy, Barry Ennis and Ben Smith leaped into action and started pulling body panels and the pump. We carry a spare fuel pump. The new was

installed and ready to fly the next day.

At the end of Oshkosh DickO, after being on the road with Placid Lassie for two weeks, kindly gave us a list of maintenance issues on Placid Lassie that we should address. Most were deferrable and should work them down over the winter. A few were more pressing. The compass leaked out fluid again. A temporary new one was sourced while we get the original and our spare overhauled.

The other two items we have been working with for a while. The generating system for the left engine has been intermittent. Before Xenia we replaced the left generator with an overhauled unit that we have and also the reverse current relay. It worked for awhile, but then became intermittent again. The other is the cylinder head temperatures read differently left side vs right side—this has been known for years. These three issues are at the top of the MX list before Conneaut.

Unfortunately for Placid Lassie all of the volunteer mechanics were busy with their primary employers so work was delayed. Since none of the mechanics were available we reached out to other resources, both volunteer and paid.

Two members of a DC-3 based in Princeton, NJ (former Springbok) came up to POU to work on Placid Lassie for us. The items that they focused on were the left side generator system (turns out the rebuilt generator that we installed last April went bad), oil leak and some indication issues with the cylinder head temperature gauge (bad wires). Thanks to Marty and Sarah for their help!



# The Move & PBY Project

This will be the last time for this particular page to be here as “The Move” concludes and transitions into the PBY Project and all of the multi-faceted activities that will be happening over time there. But before that, the story associated with finishing off the Move.

As readers would recall, there were two trailers left in Florida after the phalanx of rented trailers came north, followed by the fuselage. The remaining two trailers, property of the Foundation, had been filled in March, but needed some repairs to make them road worthy. This happened over time, but then needed to be licensed.

Well, they were successfully registered in Maine by Bruce Fowler. The stickers for

the license plates were then sent to Ben. As soon as he got them he attached them to the plates and FedEx'd the plates down to Florida. At that point, we were able to schedule a trucking company to move them to POU.

After calling the trucking company week after week, they finally found two drivers to move the trailers north. Of course when they showed up to hook up, the storage lot hadn't attached the license plates. Nor could they find one of the trailers among the hundreds that were parked there.

It took a while, but this was eventually sorted out. They hooked up and were on the road! The trailers were coming north,

arriving on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

They are now parked on the south side of the hangar. What is planned for the next work weekend is unload at least one of them. Smaller objects will go into the hangar and a wedged create cut up. Larger items that we will rarely need (like a dozen fuel tanks) will be stacked back inside the trailer for long term storage.

Our evacuation of Florida is complete. All of our assets are located at POU other than the PBY-5A wing centre section which is undergoing repairs near Houston, Texas.

Onwards to the PBY Project!





# Duluth Minnesota, July 15<sup>th</sup>

This event was a major show with a headliner act from the Blue Angels and would be heavily attended. The organizers requested that we provide static display tours for the duration of the show in addition to the one Media flight that was scheduled for Friday morning. There was also a contingent plan in place for Lassie to receive additional monies to fly the jump missions in the case that the primary jump platform for the Leap Frog Jump Team was unable to attend. This show would also help with positioning Placid Lassie for Oshkosh.

Placid Lassie flew out to Duluth with a short stop at nearby Richard I Bong field in Superior, WI. Friday was a full VIP flight for a number of the supporters of the airshow.

The show was on Saturday and Sunday. Placid Lassie was a backup aircraft to drop a parachute team if the USAF C-17 had to scrub.

As it turns out, on Saturday one of the jumpers was injured and team decided not to jump on Sunday. To fill the gap, Lassie flew the airshow.



The crew was challenged throughout the event to keep attendees away from the aircraft, as folks were crowding around, climbing on and touching Lassie. It was a packed ramp and many were looking to take up residence under the wing to provide some relief from the sun.

Despite large crowds, overall merch sales and donations were spotty throughout the event in part due to all of the people crowded around the table and airplane at all times. The line for a tour was steady all of the days and it was difficult to crowd control with a small crew. People planted their chairs all over the place and we had to put signs up all over to keep them off

the surfaces of the airplane.

Aircraft Started: Poughkeepsie NY  
Aircraft Ended: KLNK, Land O Lakes

Crew attending:  
PICs: Richard Osborne  
SICs: Will Miton, Justin Zgoda  
Crew Chiefs: Roy Williams  
Volunteers: Gary Houghton





# Duluth Minnesota





# Land O Lakes, July 22<sup>nd</sup>

Land O' Lakes is a small local Fly-In in northern Wisconsin. Jon Helminiak has a local cabin and organized with the local town. The LNL event is a solo-aircraft "show" in a small town in northern WI. Jon Helminiak is involved with the airport and has affiliation with the Historical Society there, who sponsors the Aviation Days Event.

Lassie and only three crew members departed DLH on Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup> and arrived LNL in less than an hour. Jon Helminiak graciously offered the Tunison folks accommodations at his lake house for the week where he treated them to trips, food and drink.

Leading up to the event, Dicko was interviewed and featured on the local news channel (PBS of the North) and Lassie got some great publicity.

Last year this event drew a very large crowd and it was anticipated that given all of the media and publicity, this year would be even larger, so a reinforcement crew, Billy on Thursday evening, Clara and Ed on Friday early afternoon arrived in LNL to assist.



At this event Placid Lassie was the star of the show. She gave a VIP for some local folks on Friday and displayed on Friday and Saturday. Long lines of people came out to see Placid Lassie.

The big news for this event was that Ed Tunison, Jr., the son of the last surviving crew member of Placid Lassie was visiting the area with his entire family (including kids and grandkids) and came to visit with Lassie. The crew arranged for a Sunday evening flight for the family and they had an amazing time.

For a small event, Land O Lakes saw better sales of merchandise and donations than the far, far larger show at Duluth. And, Lassie was in position

for an arrival at the huge EAA AirVenture show in Oshkosh the next day.

Crew attending:

PICs: Richard Osborne

SICs: Billy Janus

Crew Chiefs: Clara McGee

Volunteers: Ed Bakos, Gary Houghton, Jon Helminiak





# Photos from Land o Lakes





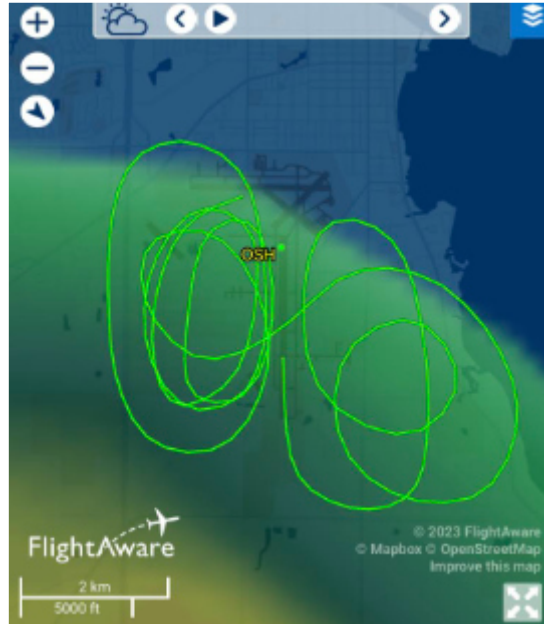
# EAA Oshkosh, July 24<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>

EAA AirVenture, or Oshkosh as it is generally known, is an unpaid / non-contracted event. It runs for a week, and best can be described as like running a marathon. It is a huge event, with unbelievable numbers of people and aircraft.

In brief, Placid Lassie arrived from LNL on Monday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and departed for KPOU on Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup>. Lassie was to fly on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday and possibly additional days as requested.

This year, three spots were reserved in Warbird Camping for Tunison volunteers. Two trailers were rented from Van Boxtel and one that is owned by Eric. In all, there would be approximately 13 distinct sleeping areas to accommodate crew / volunteers who would share the cost of the occupied beds. A small crew, Dicko, Billy, Clara and Gary repositioned Lassie from LNL and then were joined by additional Tunison crew at various times/days and via various means of transport.

Lassie flew several times during the week. There were two flights in the airshows at Oshkosh. Lassie took a selection of EAA



was Placid Lassie, Eric's Twin Beach, Eric's Epsilon, Ben's Navion and a CAF T-6 flown by Garrett. In addition to these aircraft, Ed, Max and Guillaume flew to OSH in their Cirrus aircraft.

Everyday from about 9am until they shut us down at 2 pm we had a crew out at Lassie interacting with the public, giving tours, educating, and selling merchandise. Gary Houghton ran the sales tent. Anne Albrecht-Smith acted like an East German boarder guard controlling who was allowed into Placid Lassie and when. Ben was mostly in and out of Lassie educating about Lassie and Dixon floated between the tent and Lassie. Maria helped a number of days. Steve Dybas and Isaiah Gershon helped out on one day.

flight line volunteers up for a VIP flight. The first time we attempted this a boot pump failed, resulting in some impromptu maintenance and replacement of the pump by a team of Clara, Barry and Billy. Later in the week, Placid Lassie and Vaerus took up a number of media folks for the D-Day Squadron/ DC3 Society.

Another feature of this Oshkosh was the Tunison Air Force. Flying in the airshow

## Mission Crew:

PICs: Richard Osborne, Eric Zipkin

SICs: Ben Smith, Billy Janus

Crew Chiefs: Clara McGee, Maria

Meyer and Dixon Kenner

Docents and merchandise: Gary Houghton, Anne Albrecht-Smith, Ed Bakos

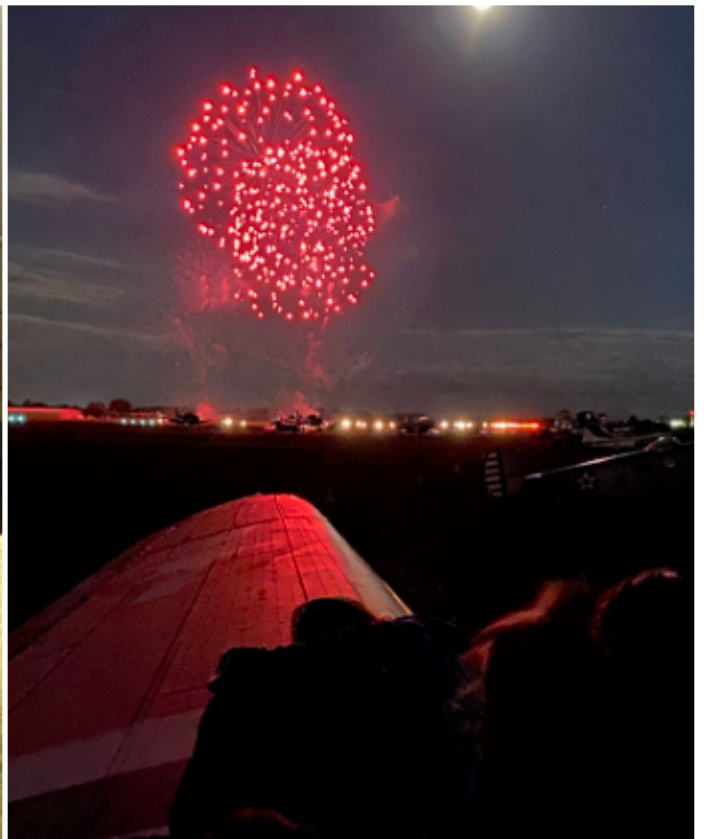
MX: Barry Enis

Volunteers: S. Dybas, I. Gershon





# Oshkosh





# Assaulting the Beaches, Conneaut, Ohio 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>

The mission was D-Day Conneaut, which is an annual WWII show involving landing craft to take the beaches via Lake Erie. Whiskey 7 attends annually but only for rides. They did not want to do a parachute drop, so the jumpers from W&R Vets (the same organizers as PeeWee) called for Placid Lassie. This was the first year of a drop at Conneaut. Lassie flew out Thursday at 5:30 and landed at Northeast Ohio Regional (KHZY) at 8pm.

The Friday plan was morning and evening drops. The morning brief was at 0615 for a 0800 wheels up with a load of 21 jumpers and a jump master. Winds didn't decrease to safe levels so Lassie had to fly over the DZ and the beaches and then return to land with a full load. The DZ was changed to the airport for the evening jumps. Two lifts (second a hot load) were successfully dropped. The first lift was 20 jumpers and one jump master. The second lift was 20 jumpers and one jump master



Saturday had morning and evening drops. Both with two lifts using a hot load were successful. We were able to talk up WWII veterans ride on three of the four drop missions. For the 4th drop the airport manager and some line crew were able to ride and watch. The morning two flights had a total of six PAX (4 WWII vets), 40

jumpers and 2 jump masters. The two evening flights had a total of six passengers, 36 jumpers and two jump masters.

Sunday was the return flight with Placid Lassie going wheels up at 11:45 am and landing back at POU at 1:45pm.

Both W&R Vets and the Conneaut D-Day organisers were very happy with how the mission unfolded and the end results. It was very popular and well received by everyone. There is a small chance that Conneaut may be on next year's calendar.

Docents: Mission Crew:

PIC: Dick Osborne

SIC: Justin Zgoda

Crew Chief: Dixon Kenner

Docents & merchandise:

Gary Houghton, Ed Bakos and Kevin Oldenburg. During the mission Dixon finished training Ed as a Crew Chief and observed him doing the mission. Congrats to Ed for getting signed off.





# Conneaut D-Day





# Please Donate

The Tunison Foundation, a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization, operates its WWII, C-47 Placid Lassie to remind and educate people about WWII. Our core goal is to inspire and educate our visitors by telling the amazing history of our aircraft. We do this in several ways:

By appearing at air show fly-overs, memorial flights and fly-in events across the nation;

By acting as a platform for paratroopers to re-enact jumps across the country, whether at commemorative events, airshows, or large re-enactments

By leading flights that commemorate significant episodes of WWII history, such as our commemorative flight to Normandy to honour the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-day in 2019 and the 80<sup>th</sup> next year..

Fewer and fewer World War II veterans remain with us. Today's youth know little about the events of 1941-1945.

Through our aircraft, the Tunison Foundation ensures that young people discover the impact of World War II upon global freedoms, and also commemorates the brave soldiers of the Greatest Generation. Your donations are crucial to these endeavours!

Tunison Foundation is a nonprofit historical organization which relies on public and private donations. Please consider making a financial contribution to help keep the restoration going and to ensure she flies for years to come fulfilling its greatest mission yet.

**TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION BY CHECK**  
Please make payable to "The Tunison Foundation"

Please mail to:

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c/o Tradewind Aviation  
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