

Commander Harold G. "Swede" Carlson, USN (Ret.) February 2006 Guest Speaker

By Col. John Crump

Bridge and Dam-Busting with Swede Carlson

Harold "Swede" Carlson - -USN, TBM & AD-4 Pilot

Harold Carlson had become interested in attending Naval Academy while he was in grade school. When he came of age, he pursued his dream and ultimately found himself on missions, which are today part of the lore of United States Naval Aviation.

After a year and a half of studies at two different colleges, Harold joined the National Guard to compete for an appointment to West Point. He was accepted by both acad-

emies, and decided in favor of the U.S. Navy. Carlson and his best friend studied together for the Navy exams and both passed them, but Harold's friend decided to become a banker instead.

"I spent four years at the Naval Academy. We were the last class before the war to get four years. The subsequent classes had three-and-a-half, and then three.

"I checked in at the math department and discovered that the math text was written by a prof I had at Reed College, so I had a little help there." An incident that failed to help Carlson came while playing soccer in

his first year at Naval Academy. He broke his leg, and after being diagnosed with having "cat fever", he had to hobble around a few days before x-rays could be taken and the leg was set.

In 1938, Carlson and his classmates steamed on the WWI battleship USS Wyoming to Europe, touching ports in Madera, Portugal; Turkey; Eng-

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PROP TALK

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

OF THE GOLDEN GATE WING COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

The Mission of the Golden Gate Wing is to Promote and Preserve the History of World War II Aviation

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GOLDEN GATE WING CALENDAR 2006

April	Staff Meeting
13	Dinner Meeting
27	Half Moon Bay Dream Machines CANCELED
30	www.miramarevents.com/dreammachines/
May	Staff Meeting
11	West Coast Formation Clinic
19-21	www.goldengatewing.org/formationclinic
25	Dinner Meeting
26-28	Watsonville Fly In www.watsonvilleflyin.org
June 3-4 8 9-11 10-11 22 30-2	Beale AFB Staff Meeting Golden West, Yuba City www.goldenwestflyin.org Eagle Field www.eaglefield.net Dinner Meeting Roseburg, OR. air show
July 13 27	Staff Meeting Dinner Meeting
August 10 24	Staff Meeting Dinner Meeting
Septem l	ber
13	Staff Meeting
27	Dinner Meeting
October	
7-8	Midland Airsho www.airsho.org
14	Staff Meeting
14-15	Travis AFB air show
28	Dinner Meeting
Novemb	ber
9	Staff Meeting
16	Dinner Meeting
Decemb	er
14	Staff Meeting
TBA	Holiday party

Wing Leader Report

By Col Ross Bausone

Attention: Colonels, Friends, and guests of the Wing...As a reminder, at the April dinner meeting Retired Navy Veteran, who fought in three wars, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, **Colonel Lee Engberg, will be honored with admission to the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame in Midland, Texas**, during Airsho 2006. I hope you will contact Laureen Bausone now to reserve your place at the Airsho, and this moving event. If you have never been to this event, now is the time! Let's show our support for Colonel Engberg. He deserves it, and you will thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to visit our Headquarters.

As Wing Leader for several years, I have not formally recognized anyone in our Wing. I think that I was waiting to see who would help with this responsibility. I now feel that I have not led well enough in this area.

To remedy this situation, for the last six months, I have been considering who deserves which award. I have come up with a list of hard working members. Over the next several meetings, I plan to recognize them with a service ribbon, and certificate.

Since we have not had the pleasure of having an "all member" Wing Meeting, this appears to be the forum best to communicate who gets recognized this time.

Px Support

Here's my list of who should get a special pat on the back for going above and beyond the calls of duty...

Award Meritorius Service Medal Meritorius Service Medal Meritorius Service Medal Meritorius Service Medal **Commendation Medal Commendation Medal Commendation Medal Commendation Medal** Commendation Medal Aceivement Medal Unit Citation (Deputy Unit) Unit Citation (Px Staff Unit)

Amplyifing Remarks

Prp Tlk Ed, Webmstr, Ground Ops, Staff Px Lead, Napa Operations, Recruiting, Marketing Staff Support, Museum/ Hangar Clean Out Lead Dinner Speaker Recruiter, Wing Support. Traron, Midland Ground Ops, Staff, Px Duty Traron, Staff, Dinner Meeting **Dinner Article Writer** Staff Support, Video Prod, Leadership Staff, Px Duty Libation Wingman **Dinner Support** Traron Volunteer, Midland Organizer Libation Wingman Dinner Support, Museum (Ala) Support Libation Lead Staff, Flight Ops, Traron Support Staff, Px, Maintenance Support Staff . Px. Maintenance Support **Dinner Support Staff Lead** Prop Talk Support Px Support Px Support, Hangar Clean Out Staff, Px, Hangar Clean Out Px Support Px Support Px Support Px Support Px Support Px Support

Please commend these folks. They are keeping the Wing functioning, along with all the other dues paying members!

If you see someone's name missing, (hey I never said I was perfect), then come to the next staff meeting, and volunteer for the Recognition Officer position! We'd love to have a new member helping the Staff!

Hope I see all of you very soon! Please help "Keep 'em flyin, safely"...



Eagle Field Dinner Dance & Fly-in

The Dinner Dance will be held on June 10, 2006, 7 to 11 PM. On Sunday, June 11 the breakfast begins at 8:00 AM. The dance will be in the large hangar at Eagle Field, where we have a raised stage for the band, we set formal tables, and we serve an unbelievable steak or chicken dinner with fresh cooked veggies. Dinner will be prepared by Espania's catering. Later in the evening we have coffee and cake.

This is the Twenty Second Annual Dinner, Dance and Flyin, and it gets better every year. For a number of reasons, last year's event was limited to former Eagle Field cadets, instructors and field workers, and a lot of people were very disappointed that it was not open to the public. But, this year we are back in full swing, and we're expecting a large crowd, with LOTS of WWII airplanes, vehicles, uniforms and forty's era outfits.

The incredible thing about this event is the authentic surroundings that take you back sixty years. After dinner, as the sun is setting, you can take a walk out amongst the aircraft and restored vehicles, and listen to the wonderful music coming from the hangar. You look back into the hangar and you would swear you've jumped back in time! It really is a time machine.

For entertainment, we have the Knight Sounds, and they are sensational! They are a true big band, and they use the Miller, Dorsey, Goodman and other big band leader's original arrangements. And, PLEASE plan to compete in the very popular swing dance contest, as we have some great prizes.

Outdoors, we will have a mobile stage mounted on a 2 1/2 ton army truck, so that when the big band that is on the indoor stage takes breaks you can listen to David Alexander, the best Boogie Woogie and 50's rock & roll piano in the world. He can play just like Lux Lewis and Jerry Lee Lewis.

We have a new group doing the Sunday breakfast this year, and I think you will like the menu; Egg Soufflé, Blueberry Pancakes, Sausage, Roasted Italian Peppers and Mixed Fruit. Generally after breakfast on Sunday there are some fly-bys until around noon.

For reservations: On April 20th 2006, we will have a form that you can print out and mail in with a check. The price for the dinner and dance on Saturday, June 10 is \$65 per person, and the breakfast on Sunday, June 11 is \$10 per person.

Questions about 2006 Dinner Dance Please call: Michelle Snowden Knobbe at 925 828-9690 or email: michelle.knobbe@sbcglobal.net Or visit the web site at: www.eaglefield.net

New Members 2006 Thank You!

Welcome to **Joseph Chan**, our newest member and first new member of 2006!

2006 Contributions THANK YOU!

Commodore \$1,000-\$2,499 Col. Chas Thompson

Captain \$500-\$999

Commander \$250-\$499 Col. Phil Auger

Lt. Commander \$100-\$249 Col. Norma Baldwin Col. George Buchanan Col. Manual Calderan Col. Robert Campbell Col. Steve Kauzlarich Col. Taber Kopan Col. William Leahy

Lieutenant \$50-\$99 Col. David Nolthenius Col. Floyd Harlan Col. Larry Pirack Col. Denis Pontefract

Lt. (J. G.) \$25-\$49 Col. Joseph Shriber

Ensign \$1-\$24

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land and Kiel, Germany. After Kiel, Carlson took his first airplane ride, a Lufthansa flight from Hamburg to Copenhagen and then up to Sweden.

His next year was split between Naval Academy and that summer's cruise up and down the eastern seaboard on a WWIera four-pipe destroyer, USS *Badger*. On this trip, Harold also got to see his brother, who was in the Coast Guard Academy, and he sneaked him into a dinner at the Naval Academy in the uniform of one of Carlson's classmates.

"It was a good thing I wasn't caught," says Harold.

His broken leg mended, Carlson returned to the soccer squad and took part in defeating the Army team. Then, it was off to another cruise, this time on the battleship USS *Texas*, as a gun captain on a 5-inch battery.

Soon came graduation for 456 of the 775 men in the class who had all entered the Academy together.

"We ended up having the highest rates of losses in World War II, because we had to spend the first two years aboard a ship before we could have flight training, or go to a submarine school, or get married. So, many of my classmates were aboard ship at Pearl Harbor on December 7th."

In June of 1940, Carlson went aboard the Brooklyn class cruiser USS Nashville at Mare Island in San Francisco Bay. Swede says his first duty was as Captain of the Head, "in charge of toilet paper."

The *Nashville* was stationed at Pearl Harbor until 1941, when it was ordered, without warning, back to the East coast.

"While going through the Panama Canal, escorting battleships, we had our ship's names covered, so they couldn't tell who we were. But they still out his knife. A boatswain's mate pointed a gun at him and he (the Japanese) changed his mind."

Returning to Pearl harbor after the Doolittle raid escort role, the *Nashville* headed to Midway on a plan to shoot up Japan's fishing fleet. Carlson says the cruiser ran into a reef and returned to Pearl Harbor for re-



USS Nashville (CL-43) off New York City, 1939

welcomed us ' Hello Nashville

From Iceland, the *Nashville* took part in cruises from Bermuda to Africa, back to Iceland and then down again to Bermuda. By early 1942, the *Nashville* was joining the carrier *Hornet* on the Doolittle raid to Tokyo. About 150 miles short of the planned B-25 launch point, the convoy ran into Japanese picket boats.

"My ship, the *Nashville* shot up one of the picket boats out there, and a survivor coming aboard on a rope ladder broke pairs. Then, shortly after leaving there, the *Nashville* was diverted to the Aleutians, helping thwart a feeble Japanese invasion thrust coinciding with the Battle of Midway.

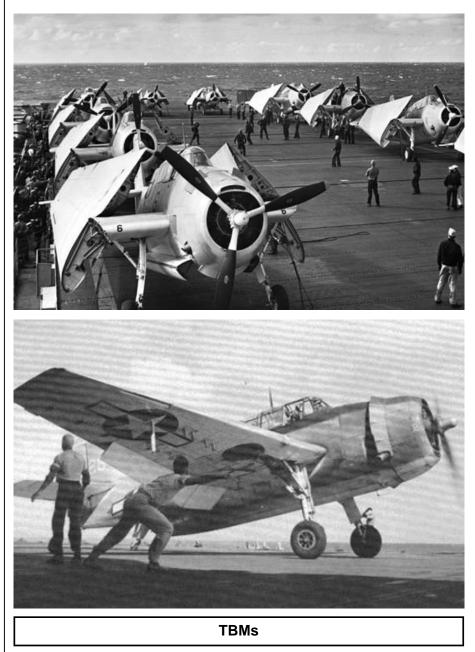
Flight training came next for Carlson, starting with his primary training in New Orleans and continuing at Pensacola, Florida. By early 1943, Harold had begin operational training in TBM Avenger torpedo planes at Ft. Lauderdale. Carrier qualifications on the USS *Sable* and *Wolverine* in Lake Michigan

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(Continued from page 5) came next.

After Carlson got his wings, he served a short time in VC-20 and then he was transferred to VC-11, a TBF/TBM squadron flying from the escort carrier CVE-74 *Nehenta Bay*. The carrier was used to transport damaged aircraft and wounded sailors form the Pacific theater back to the West coast, as well as providing antisubmarine patrols to protect supply convoys following the carrier fleets. In both squadrons, Carlson served as Executive Officer.

Harold finally saw combat in 22 combat missions over the Marianas Islands, and while covering the landings at Leyte, the Philippines, Harold says he saw, from afar, General Douglas MacArthur's return to those



islands.

As the War in the Pacific ended, Carlson recalls rough seas while steaming back in his carrier to the United States, and the sounds of crashing waves damaging the ship.

"Swede" continued his Navy career after the war, at the same time, "having the good fortune of marrying another Swede, Isabel Johanssen." The newlyweds lived at a number of Navy bases through Harold's varied assignments.

One of those assignments was VA-195, originally nicknamed the "Tigers", and Carlson's next command. In November of 1950 the squadron of AD-4 Skyraiders was aboard the USS *Princeton*, steaming off the coast of Korea. The first action the unit saw was providing coverage for Marines withdrawing from the Chosin Reservoir.

"One of the first things we did was to fly over the rescue efforts for the black pilot, Ens. Jesse Brown, who flew his aircraft into the ground. He survived, but couldn't get out of the aircraft. His shipmate, Lt.jg Thomas Hudner, Jr. took his airplane in, landed alongside and tried, unsuccessfully, to get him out. For his effort, Hudner received the Medal of Honor." (Ens. Brown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.)

Carlson himself had at least one close call while flying Skyraiders over Korea - -

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"I had almost a dead-stick landing in a shot-up airplane. The engine wasn't working very well so I climber as high as I could, and I couldn't get back to my carrier, the *Princeton*. The carrier *Boxer* turned into the wind for me, and I went down and landed on it. My captain thought that was wonderful and ordered us both aviation brandy."

One of the unique shipboard operations Swede says he recalls was named "Operation Pinwheel." It was an attempt by the carrier's skipper to use the 2000 hp engines of Skyraiders on the deck of the *Princeton* to help turn the ship. Harold has a photo of ADs on either side of the carrier's deck, all facing the ship's centerline.

"We tied down the airplanes, turned up the engines and moved the ship. It was a terrible way of doing business. The CAG and the various skippers complained, but in vain."

The remainder of Carlson's tour with VA-195 was flown on missions involving the guidance of Air Force controllers flying "mosquitos", T-6 trainers.

"We bombed and napalmed targets all over Korea, but we operated basically out of the east side, the Sea of Japan."

In March of 1951, a rail bridge was singled out as North Korea's key link for supplies. VF-195 bombed the bridge by day, and the North Koreans would repair it by night. The squadron

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Torpedo attack on the Hwachon Reservoir dam by AD "Skyraiders" of Attack Squadron 195 (VA-195) from USS Princeton (CV-37), 1 May 1951. This successful strike, and earlier bomb attacks by Navy and U.S. Air Force planes, were made to deny the enemy the tactical use of controlled flooding on the Pukhan and Han rivers. Torpedoes were used after bombs failed to achieve the desired results. They destroyed one flood gate and partially destroyed another. This was the only Korean War use of torpedoes.

(Continued from page 7)

ended up making so many missions to take out the span that UN forces named the gorge below "Carlson Canyon." James Michener's book, "The Bridges of Toko-Ri" and the movie by

that title, are largely based on the saga of Carlson's Canyon.

Swede also spoke of his Skyraider night missions. While some of these were flown against railroad bridges and tunnels, the most memorable was against the Hwachon Dam.

The North Koreans would open the dam's floodgates and raise the waters of the Han and Pukhan rivers, preventing UN forces from moving north. Closing the gates allowed the North Koreans to lower the rivers so their troops could launch attacks across them.

When bomb attacks on the dams by the Skyraiders and even by B-29s failed to shut down the floodgate operations, Carlson's squadron was given the opportunity to take them out with Mark 13 torpedoes left over from WWII.

"When the *Princeton* was decommissioned they took all the ordnance off of the ship. When she was recommissioned, they put it all back on and included the torpedoes, fortunately."

Unlike the Avenger, which carried a torpedo internally, the AD could only carry a torpedo externally. in this instance, in a makeshift arrangement. "We had to modify the airplane slightly. There were three dive brakes on the plane, two on one wing and one in the middle of the fuselage. We had to be careful so that the center one would not hit the torpedo."



At the dinner meeting: Harold Carlson (center) with his son Bob (left) and Mario Ghilotti (right)

The next morning after making the modifications, CAG-19 Commander Dick Merrick led the first strike division and Carlson led the second division.

High mountain ridges channeled the river leading up to the dam, and the aviators' planned for a specific speed and altitude to release the torpedoes so they would run effectively, just below the water's surface, and strike the floodgates.

"The plan was to drop the tor-

pedoes at about a thousand yards out, roughly a half a mile. It was a little tricky because there was a bend in the reservoir and we had to come down at fairly high speed, level out and get down to about 160-165

knots and fly about fifty feet high. We had to ensure the torpedo would not go in flat, which would break it up - - or too steep, which would make it porpoise up and down and never settle down. It had to go in at roughly a 20degree angle."

Carlson says the ADs went in two-by-two, spaced to allow the torpedo warheads to detonate before the next flight of two planes came over the dam. Swede says that of the eight torpedoes dropped by his division, six ran true and took out several floodgates. Overhead, he says, eight or ten Corsairs dropped bombs and distracted North Korean antiaircraft gunners.

As a result of this mission, VA-195 later changed its name from "Tigers" to "Dambusters".

Today, there is an Avenger aboard the USS *Yorktown* in Charleston, South Carolina, that is painted and marked as Carlson's TBM was in World War II. And there is an AD Skyraider at the Flight Factory in Suffolk, Virginia similarly commemorating the aircraft Swede flew in the Korean War.

West Coast Formation Clinic, May 19-21, 2006

The 9th annual West Coast Formation Clinic and Fly-In will be held at the former Castle AFB (MER), California on 19-21 May 2006. This year's event is again open to members of FAST (Formation And Safety Team) including CAF, NATA, Red Star, T-34 Assoc., and WOA. Formation flight training (basic and advanced) and ground school for Initial and Lead candidates will be available.





A Ground Marshaller Training program will also take place. If you'd like to get close to the action and join the fun, we encourage you try out for marshalling! A qualified Marshaller will guide you until you are able to marshall aircraft on your own. Aircraft rides are a possibility for volunteers but not a promise. And anyone riding in an aircraft during the Clinic must be a member of the Commemorative Air Force. This is due to insurance requirements for the Clinic.

We anticipate having enough fighter type aircraft in attendance (SNJ/T-6, T-28, P-51, CJ) provisions that are being made to address their specific training requirements. Training schedules permitting,

there will be a formation flying contest and a large formation graduation flight.

Saturday night will once again

feature the normal roasting of those who rightfully deserve such honors. The Great Sphincter will Return!

Friday afternoon - NuB/LEAD Ground Schools. Friday evening - mandatory Safety Clinic briefing. Saturday and Sunday -Briefings and Flying. Dinner Friday and Saturday nights. Breakfast and Lunch on Saturday and Sunday.

Registration information is online at:

www.goldengatewing.org/formationclinic



Remember the Commemorative Air Force Mission:

- 1 <u>To preserve in Flying condition</u>, a complete collection of combat aircraft which were flown by all military services of the United States in World War II.
- 2 <u>To provide museum buildings</u> for permanent protection and display of these aircraft as a tribute to the thousands of men and women who built, serviced, and flew them.
- 3 <u>To perpetuate in the memory and hearts</u> of all Americans the spirit in which these great planes were flown for the defense of our nation.
- 4 <u>To establish an organization having the dedication, enthusiasm and esprit de corps</u> necessary to operate, maintain and preserve these aircraft as symbols of our American military aviation heritage.



May 2006

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Edgar Hollingsworth	3
Philip DeGroot	6
Charles Kelsey	10
Marvin Quaid	12
Lawrence Nelson	13
Robert Burke	14
Stacey Ward Roads	15

Paul	Arenson
Steve	e Kauzlarich
LeRo	oy Engberg
Phili	p Schasker
Norn	na Baldwin
Nanc	y Williams

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B. B. B. B. B. B. B. B.

GOLDEN GATE WING AMERICAN AIRPOWER HERITAGE GROUP, CAF PRESENTS:

Bob Eustace, US NAVY Combat Photographer

- * Eight (8) Major Battles In Pacific, Aboard "USS Suwannee", CVE-27
- * Born 22 August 1925 in Stockton, CA; Graduated @ 16 from Mission H.S., San Francisco
- * Worked briefly at Eastman-Kodak, then enlisted in US Navy @ 17
- * Trained in Pensacola, Washington DC, then assigned to San Diego flying in "Hudsons"
- * Assigned to USS Suwannee, CVE-27, Escort Aircraft Carrier as a combat photographer
- * Flew first combat missions aboard SBDs, then TBMs; also flew in PBYs
- * Participated in eight (8) major battles in the Pacific, including Eniwetok, Truk, Palau, New Guinea, Saipan, Guam, Marianas & Okinawa
- * During Battle of the Philippine Seas, Suwannee code-named "Taffey 3" & took 2 Kamikaze hits on 25 & 26 October 1944; over 50% losses
- * After repairs, back in action for 87 straight days of combat
- * After A-Bomb on Nagasaki, flew first photo-recon mission over devastation; spotted POW camps & sent rescue help; 2 weeks later at "ground zero" photographing; many GIs died later of radiation
- * Took many hundreds of combat photos; selected over 100 dramatic photos for Power Point Presentation
- * After WWII left Navy as Photographers Mate First Class, at 20, then spent 44 years with Kodak

DATE: Thursday April 27, 2006

TIME: 1730 doors open

PLACE: Former Naval Air Station (NAS) Alameda Terminal Building 2151 Ferry Point, B-77, Oakland

Donation: One \$10.00 bill and enough food to serve **3-4 persons** (no food = no eat)

Your donations help us cover the O'Club, hangar fees and aircraft maintenance costs. Local CAF groups do not receive funding from CAF HQ. Your donations help "Keep 'em flying in the Bay Area". PLEASE! No frozen food. If you choose to bring a whole roasted chicken or other messy-to-prepare offering, you are expected to cut it up for serving.

DIRECTIONS TO THE NAS ALAMEDA TERMINAL BUILDING:

I-880 Northbound to Oakland:	I-880 Southbound to Oakland:
Take the BROADWAY exit toward DOWNTOWN	Take the exit toward BROADWAY/ALAMEDA
Take the ramp toward JACK LONDON SQUARE	Stay straight to go onto UNION ST.
Turn LEFT onto BROADWAY	Turn RIGHT onto 7TH ST.
	Turn RIGHT onto BROADWAY

- Turn a sharp LEFT to take the ramp toward ALAMEDA

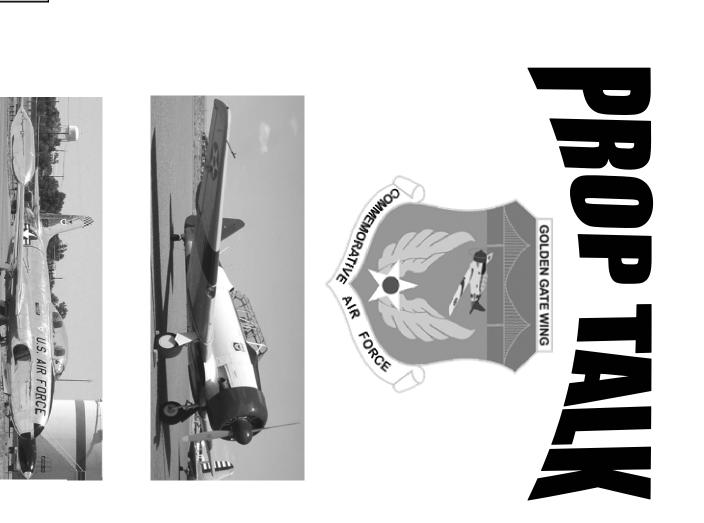
- Stay straight to go into the WEBSTER ST TUBE/CA-260 S.

- Exiting tube, continue south on Webster Street (keep right) for 0.6 mile.

- At first traffic signal (Atlantic Avenue), turn right and drive west 2.2 miles. En route, you will drive through the "Alameda Point" overhead gate structure and curve around the aircraft on the pedestal by following the broken white lane divider line.

- At stop sign (Ferry Point Street; T intersection), turn right and drive north 0.1 mile. Building 77 (also labeled "2151 Ferry Point") is on your left.

- Park on street side of Building 77. Front entrance is at "left" side of building (facing the ships). Handicapped ramp is at "right" side (back) of building. Meeting room is on second floor. Elevator accessible.



www.goldengatewing.org

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Golden Gate Wing



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