

The Hangar Town News

The official newsletter of Valiant Effort LLC and the restoration of Vultee BT-13A 41-21218

May 2024



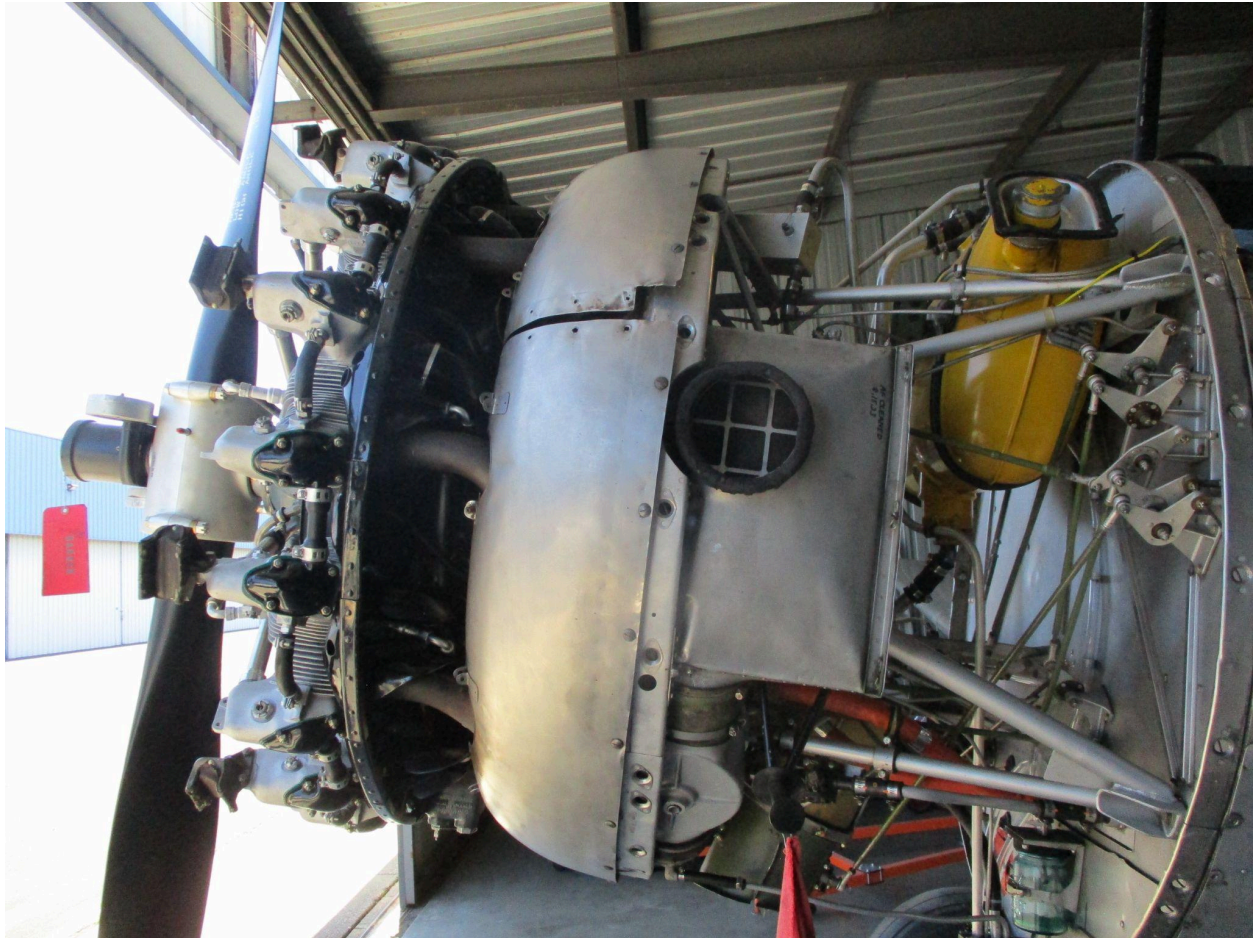
April may bring showers, but May brings.....MUD

Cheers to all BT'ers out there! Once again, weather out here on the West Coast is doing its usual wierdness! Sun, rain, snow, and wind make getting work done on Annie a challenge for sure, so things down in Hangar Town have been a bit on the quiet side. After our inspection, we started to finish off all the small things that needed to be done before the first engine starts, which I'm hoping for mid to late June. Things are looking good, and we've had a lot of help from our hangar neighbors here at LVK....lots of good people! Ya sure gotta love the aviation community!!!

OK, on with the updates.....



Here was this month's project....the inner firewall, the parts book calls it a "muff".....not gonna go there on that one! It's got 18 nuts, bolts and washers, and also has to line up with 14 Zeus fasteners on the firewall while trying to bend an 80 year old part to fit on the mounts. After working on it for a couple of hours, I decided to call it a day, visit with my hangar neighbors and go relax somewhere to figure my next move. Lo and behold, the next day, I got hold of our assistant BT-13 fixer person, Charlie, and we met to tackle the gnarly, piece of aviation history that was necessary for Annie's return to flight.



Now, here's an idea of what has to be assembled.....there was lots of bending, prying, pushing, pounding, tweaking and other choice words used to line up, and get all the hardware installed.....oh, and all during a rainstorm that hovered over the airport. This photo shows the "test fitting" the day before the storm hit the next day...one day 75 degrees, next, rain and in the 50's.....I'm sure a lot of you out there have said, "been there, done, that"!! Kudo's to all of you out there that do this stuff.....sure ain't easy being an airplane fixer!



OK, here we go on installing the “muff”.....here’s Charlie starting the Dzus fasteners while I’m gathering all the nuts, bolts & washers for the forward mounts Now, all this is happening when a HUGE rain squall comes over the airport and is dumping 5000 inches of rain on us. The lights in the hangar don’t work, so we have to open the doors to see what we’re doing, which allows all the water to come blowing in....ya gotta be tough to to be an airplane mech!

While all this fun stuff was going on, we were discussing what else we can do to Annie to get her closer to first flight status. The struts are all inflated to the correct height, fuel tanks sealed, but the brakes still need fluid and to be bled. I decided to hold that one off till my next visit to Hangar Town. There’s a bunch of small stuff that needs attention, but till I get a bigger crew down there, we can only do so much, BUT, progress is made all the time thanks to all of our friends, members and crew!



Well, rain is still roaring down, and here's Charlie installing the last of the 400,000 bolts (sure seems like that many) to the inner firewall, and now, that job is in the books!!!!

While we were feeling good about getting something done, we decided to move on to the next main issue on the maintenance list.....getting the prop nut installed. The manual says "using the appropriate socket, HSP-1088, install a 4' bar and have a 175 lb. man pull down until no movement is felt". Well, this is vague at its best, but we tried with the tool we made and only bent the bar.....back to square one on that!! Charlie made a new socket for the prop so it can accept a torque wrench, and I'm having a bar made for the original tool just in case, so during the next visit to Hangar Town, that'll be the next task. If ya notice, we used an old T-6 tire against the rear bumper of my truck to hold the prop in place.....gotta do what ya gotta do! Oh, did I mention that all this time, a raging hurricane - rainstorm is roaring across the airport? (Sorry for the embellishment, but it sucked out there!)



OK, on to the next job.....let's fill her with oil! The system is dry, and the tank holds 10 gallons of oil, and all we have are one gallon containers and 5 gal buckets. We're talking Aero Shell 120, which is SAE 60 to you car guys, and it's 50 degrees....the stuff flows SLOW! Here's Charlie working on his arm strength filling the oil tank, climbing up the ladder, and not trying to spill it all over the place.....good job bro! OH, and, it's still pouring rain, wind, flying cows, cold, wet and just plane (pun intended) crappy!



On a serious note, as a group, we've come a long way. This is a photo of Annie in her saddest days, and here we are 5 years later ready for engine runs, taxi tests, then flight tests so she can be fully operational. We are a small, but dedicated group that want to see a historic warbird return to her element.....the sky, and we couldn't do it without the help of all our supporters, friends, hangar neighbors and members of Valiant Effort. Many thanks to all of you!!!!!!!!!!

OK, fun time.....







I SEE AIRCRAFT MECHANICS

**THEY'RE GRUMPY, SMELL LIKE JET FUEL AND
BACON AND THEY KEEP CALLING ME "ASSHOLE"**

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Here's a photo of Annie taken by Tom Tessier at the March AFB Open House back in November of 1991. This was before the markings for Merced Army Airfield were applied...she looks naked!

I want to give a special “THANK YOU” to our hangar neighbors @ Livermore Airport (LVK), and to the supporters that have been at our side for all this time. We’re a small, but devoted group that wants to bring back to life a piece of American history for future generations to admire, and remember the sacrifices those men and women made to our country.

Who we are.....

Here are the members of the Valiant Effort Foundation that are restoring “Annie” to flight status, hopefully in 2024. We are based at Livermore Airport (LVK) in the San Francisco Bay Area, and we want to thank all that have supported us in this immense project!

Administration: Martin Michaud, Taurus Fey, Keith Zimbauer, Alex Esuerra

Flight Team: Martin Michaud, Taurus Fey, Bob Goodwyn, Alex Esguerra, Edgar Xiong

Ground Crew: Greg Ely, Charlie Bellinie, Taurus Fey, Keith Zimbauer, Bob Goodwyn

Support Team: Jerod Flohr - pilot, Tom Nightingale - pilot, Tim Neuharth - pilot, Nick Veronico - writer & book author, Jeff Whitney - mechanic, Mike Flagella - AP,IA, and all of our hangar neighbors @ LVK

Special thanks to our other supporters

Fagen Fighter Restorations

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You can also find us @ Valiant Effort on Google or Facebook, and contact us at:

shinyplanes @mail.com, elyavhs@gmail.com or

Our new website, “valianteffortllc.com”

We are also proud to announce that the Valiant Effort Foundation is now a 503c3 non-profit organization designed to educate everyone on the sacrifices made by both men and women that went into harm's way during WW II. The Greatest Generation!



Support your local Annie!!