

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

August / September 2003 • Vol. 19, No. 7

Join us for the Commemoration of the Restoration of the Panther

Combat Air Museum – your museum – has completed another very large, complex artifact restoration. The **Panther** sat in Hangar 604 storage for 18 years before restoration work was started in August 2001. An event to commemorate the restoration of this aircraft and to recognize the pilots of VF-51 and the crew of the USS VALLEY FORGE (CVA 45) is scheduled at CAM.

This is a command performance – our membership should turn out en masse for this program. We need a show of support for the Korean War Vets, and others, who will be at CAM for this presentation. Mark your calendar – plan now to attend.

Saturday, 13 September 2003

1000 (10:00 a.m.)

Main Gallery, Hangar 602

Forbes Field, Topeka, Kansas

Please, if you want more information, call me at 862-3303 or 862-9899.

Dick Trupp

Wing Commander



*Restored Grumman F9F-5,
BuNo 126226*

Space Improvements

In May volunteers converted a stairwell into usable storage space and produced a by-product of more display space for hanging collection items. **Martin Moyer, Amos Page, and Gene Howerter** enclosed the space around the stairway leading up to the Museum Offices in Hangar 602. For some time, a semi-storage place under the stairs existed by placing the backs of two exhibit cases against the east side of the stairway, a third case along the south end, and a small swinging door also on the south end.

See Space, con't. on page 2

Inside This Issue

<i>2003 Events Calendar</i>	2
<i>Visitors</i>	2
<i>Wedding bells ring at CAM</i>	3
<i>August / September Calendar of Events</i>	3
<i>New and Renewing Supporters</i>	3
<i>Musical performance and swing dance</i>	4&5
<i>In the next issue</i>	5
<i>Visit to Normandy</i>	6

Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field • Hangars 602 & 604
 P.O. Box 19142
 Topeka, KS 66619-0142
 Telephone (785) 862-3303
 FAX (785) 862-3304
 www.combatairmuseum.org

Provided by
 Rossini Management Systems, Inc.
 E-mail: CAMTopeka@aol.com

Museum Curator

Danny San Romani

Office Manager

Tina Lannan

Board of Directors

Dick Trupp - *Wing Commander*
 Gene Howerter - *Vice Wing Commander*
 Kenneth C. Hollemon - *Secretary*
 Don Dawson
 Darrel Dougan
 Stu Entz
 Stephen Wanamaker

Newsletter Editing & Design

Dixon Communications
 785-235-1605

Museum Hours

Monday - Saturday
 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
 Last Admission 3:30 P.M.
 Sunday 10 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.
 Last Admission 3:30 P.M.

Plane Talk, the official newsletter
 of Combat Air Museum
 of Topeka, Kansas,
 is published bi monthly.
 Your questions and comments
 are welcomed.

Any information for **Plane Talk**
 should be submitted to CAM office.

Space, con't. from page 1

Martin, Amos, and Gene moved the cases out and framed in the east and south sides. They installed plywood under the steps and on the framework, creating a small enclosed storeroom with a regular door. **Wayne Dodson** rerouted a light switch outside the room for exhibit cases. **Jean and Bernie Wanner** funded the building materials.

Once the exterior was built, shelves were built and installed in the room. Gene also trimmed and painted the exterior. While he was doing this, we realized that the exterior wall would make a good place to hang things, and we decided not to roll the exhibit cases back to their previous position, as they would block off this wall. Instead, we turned the cases around and placed them in line with other exhibit cases along a low cinder block wall. By doing this, the backs of the two cases also became available for hanging items.

Danny San Romani painted the backs of the cases then noticed we still had space along the wall to move the Korean War case in line with the others. The result was even more space to hang items. The back of this case needs painting, and new electrical conduit has to be run to the cases' new location, but we gained a lot more with this project than originally planned.

Another improvement made in this area was the painting of the floor. Gene scraped, sanded, and vacuumed about a 200 square feet area around the stairway and rear entrance to the Gift Shop, then painted it. It took two coats, but made a marked difference in appearance of the floor. Gene used a medium gray paint where the existing color was a dark gray. The area was completed a couple of days before a May 24 wedding in 602. Two subsequent weekends of events prevented further work on the floor. Now that they are over and as time allows, Gene will prepare and paint more sections of the floor all along the west wall of Hangar 602. →

2003 Events Calendar

August

4-7 - Aviation Education Class

September

13 - Panther Dedication

20 - Swing Dance

October

25 - Model Contest

→ → →

Visitors

During **May** the Museum had
1,416 visitors from **31** states and

Australia
 Canada
 Czech Republic
 Germany
 Great Britain
 Kazakhstan
 Portugal
 Turkey

During **June** we had **1,447**
 visitors from **36** states and

Austria
 Brazil
 Canada
 China
 Czech Republic
 Germany
 Hungary
 India
 Italy
 Mexico
 New Zealand

→ → →

Wedding bells ring at CAM

On May 24, Hangar 602 served as the setting for the wedding of **Kristi Rebecca Dunn** and **Benjamin Raymond Hubbard**. They exchanged vows between the Jenny and Fairchild UC-61. We understand the newlyweds first met while attending an air show, and both are airplane buffs.

Several months prior to the wedding, Kristi and Ben contacted Board Chairman **Dick Trupp** about renting Hangar 602 for the ceremony. We think this is the first wedding performed at CAM. Having done a number of fund-raisers, dinners, and at least one retirement ceremony in 602 over the years, a wedding seemed to be a doable thing. We just needed to know the scope of the event. As it developed, Kristi and Ben not only wanted to do the ceremony in 602, but also the reception, a buffet dinner, and a dance afterwards. They also wanted a minimum number of aircraft removed from the hangar to make room for the ceremony.

After a couple of meetings with Kristi, Ben, Dick and **Danny San Romani**, and some measurements with a 100-foot tape, we agreed that removing four aircraft from the center and forward end of the hangar would provide the necessary room.

Volunteers moved aircraft out of the hangar and set up chairs and tables. The wedding party brought other items for use in the wedding. They arranged the table set-up so that the guests would pick up their chairs after the ceremony and move them to the tables, thereby opening up a space for the dance floor.

Several latticework panels trimmed with nylon netting and miniature lights were placed in the Conference Center. A similar latticework backdrop was located on risers between the Jenny and the Forwarder. Decorations with an aviation motif were on all the tables. Kristi had everything organized in a three-ring binder, so the final setup and preparations went pretty quickly.

Dick, **Ralph Knechans**, **Gene Howerter**, and **Wayne Dodson** were present for the ceremony and functions afterward. After the exchange of vows, while wedding photos were taken, Dick and Ralph took groups of the 120-130 guests around both hangars and the Super Constellation. The buffet dinner line wound through the Gift Shop, out the front door and along the sidewalk back to the Conference Center door where guests entered the Conference Center to the food serving line. They ate and visited at the tables in the hangar bay and danced afterwards to music from a DJ.

Kristi's and Ben's wedding announcement and wedding program had a unique photo on them. It showed a Curtiss Jenny with its prop turning over, the pilot with goggles in the rear cockpit, and two young people in the front cockpit. It was a genuine photo from the "barnstorming era." Dick found that the original photo was taken in Ottawa, Kansas in 1919. One of the young people in the front cockpit was then 13-year old Frances Conrad. Today, she is **Frances (Conrad) Dunn**, 96 years old, and grandmother of Kristi. Frances autographed one of the programs for the Museum. →

August / September 2003 Calendar of Events

August

Monday – Thursday

August 4-7

Aviation Education Class

JWECC

9 – 11:30 a.m.

\$30.00 per Student

Monday, August 11

Membership Luncheon

Jean Wanner Education

Conference Center (JWECC)

11:30 a.m.

This will be a potluck luncheon.

September

There is no Membership Luncheon in September. The next luncheon is

Monday, October 13th

It will be a potluck luncheon.

Saturday, September 13

Panther Dedication

10 a.m.

→ → →

New Supporters

William Crapser

Renewing Supporters

Timothy & Mindy Hill

→ → →

The Museum is the stage for a music performance and swing dancing

Hangar 602 was the scene for two excellent musical events on consecutive weekends at the end of May and beginning of June that, unfortunately, played to small audiences.

On May 30 and 31, the **Topeka Children's Show Choir**, under the direction of **Linda Blasi Bixler**, presented "A Time to Remember—a Musical Celebration of America in the 1900's." Each performance was filled with musical songs from the 20th Century and lasted about 2 hours and 40 minutes, with a 10-minute intermission.

The production was presented as a teacher taking her class on a field trip to the Combat Air Museum to continue their study of aviation and history. While at the museum the class experiences a time warp of sorts and is transported back to the early 1900's, about the time Orville and Wilbur Wright were preparing for their historical flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina 100 years ago. From there the class and other cast members presented songs and production numbers from World War I, the Roaring 20's, the Great Depression, and the period up to the beginning of World War II. The teacher briefly explained what happened in history during each period before a set of songs was sung. During Act One, the cast performed 34 songs and medleys.

As they performed, vintage photographs and images of the respective periods were projected onto a large screen suspended above the stage. Two eight-foot by forty-foot truck trailers with risers set on them made

up the stage. Other "props" for the show included a jeep and the fuselage of the Museum's Vultee BT-13 Valiant.

Act Two began with a Swing Medley of the late 1930's and early 1940's, the first of 28 songs and medleys for that act. The third song of this act took place in a church setting with a choir. As they sang a spirited gospel hymn, the sounds of engines were heard in the background, low at first, then growing louder. Soon, the engines' sound all but drowned out the singing, followed by the sound of bombs falling and loud explosions. The hangar went completely dark with the exception of special effects flashes of lights and bomb bursts to simulate explosions, and the spotlights acted as searchlights.

When the special effects ended, the spotlights focused on members of **Topeka High School's Marine Corps Junior ROTC color guard**. The color guard presented the national ensign, placing it center stage on the rear set of risers. The cast and audience then sang the Star Spangled Banner.



"Rosie the Riveter" number

CASA

Authentic Mexican Food
Topeka's Finest Margaritas

Domestic & Imported Beers * Wines & Mixed Drinks
Mexican & American Appetizers
Fine American Foods * Children's Menu
Fajitas...Our Specialty

266-4503 3320 S. Topeka Blvd.

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Major Credit Cards & Personal Checks Accepted

Noller Dealerships of Topeka

Laird Noller Ford
23rd & Topeka 785-235-9211
www.nollerford.com

Noller Lincoln-Mercury-Mazda
2946 S. Kansas 785-267-2800
www.nollersales.com

Noller Automotive on the Mall
West Ridge Mall 785-228-0812

This was followed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's declaration of war speech against Japan on December 8, 1941. As the speech was read, images of the attack on Pearl Harbor and other military installations on Oahu Island were shown on the screen. Following FDR's speech, the speech given by President George W. Bush after the suicide attacks against the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 was read. During the reading, images of the Trade Center and Pentagon destruction were shown on the screen. The cast then performed God Bless America and I Pledge Allegiance.

Following these numbers, a medley of songs of the Armed Forces of the United States was played and sung. During each service song, members of the audience who served in a respective service were asked to stand and be recognized.

A number of songs from World War II followed, including one touching song dealing with victims of the holocaust. Images of the war years were shown on the screen during these songs.

The teacher and students then returned to the present, and the last several songs were more contemporary and reflected on the heroes of the September 11 attacks. Images of the rescue efforts at the World Trade Center and Pentagon were shown. The show ended with a reprise of God Bless America.

The program was much more than recreation of a World War II-type USO show and certainly carried a patriotic theme of America through the 20th Century and today. Unfortunately, only 164 people enjoyed the two nights of the performances. We had anticipated maybe 200 people per performance, so the total attendance was disappointing, especially considering all the time and effort the cast and crew and Museum volunteers put into preparing and putting on the show. They were really two fine evenings of music.

The following Saturday night the **Kings of Swing** played the first of our two scheduled swing dances for

Coming in the next issue of Plane Talk

Normandy Visit, Part 2

Letters from Korea

New Utility Shed

→ → →

2003. This evening was possibly the best we have had for a swing dance with its mild temperatures and low humidity, and the band put on another fine performance of swing music. Over a three-hour period they played three sets of music with some 37 songs. That number varied some, as the band received a number of requests during the evening. **Herschel Stroud** and **Amy Bixler** also provided several vocals during the evening.



Swing Dance couples on the hangar floor

Although we have listed the Dance for some time in our newsletter, and mailed over 560 flyers to the Band's mailing list, the number of tickets taken that evening totaled 190. This was the lowest turnout we have had for a dance. Those who did come seemed to really enjoy their evening, and when the last dance took place at 10:30 p.m. some 35 to 40 couples were on the dance floor with a number of others seated at the tables.

The proceeds from these two events totaled \$3480.00, but not all the bills have been received yet. We want to thank our volunteers who helped set up, work the events, and do the take down and clean ups. Quite a bit of effort went into both events and we greatly appreciate the time and work the volunteers put in for these programs. →



The Kings of Swing

Take a visit to Normandy and its D-Day and WWII historical sites

June 6, 2004 is the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings at Normandy, France. **Brian Meredith** and his wife, **Rebecca Martin**, visited the area last summer and plan to return for the 60th Anniversary. The following is a report of their trip to the Normandy area that Brian provided for the newsletter.

Next summer will be the 60th anniversary of the invasion of France by British and American troops at Normandy. If you have not visited the site of the invasion, you should use the anniversary as an excuse to go. Last summer my wife, Rebecca, and I toured Normandy and we enjoyed it so much that we plan on going back next year. I know that a lot of people are upset about the lack of support from the French for the war in Iraq, but do not let the bad behavior of a few French politicians deny you the trip of a lifetime.

Our time in Normandy came towards the end of three weeks we spent in France and Germany. We spent three to four days in the region, but you could easily spend a week and still not see everything. We used Caen as our base city and we spent three nights there. There are some advantages to using Caen as a base. It is the largest city in the area close to the Normandy beaches. (Rouen is larger, but it is quite a bit north of the landing sites.) There are a lot of hotels and restaurants and it is



Arromanches, France, near the center of Gold Beach, a British landing site. The objects in the water are the remains of an artificial harbor, code-named Mulberry B, built within 10 days after D-Day.

easy to rent a car in Caen. Trains leave Caen for Paris several times a day.

Most of Caen was destroyed during the battle of Normandy, so it lacks a lot of the Old World charm you expect from a European city. We saw evidence of this destruction at St. Jean Eglise. This church leaned at such an angle that I expected it to fall over right in front of me.

Normandy Visit will be continued in the next issue of Plane Talk.



Combat Air Museum
P.O. Box 19142
Topeka, KS 66619-0142

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Topeka, KS 66603
Permit #181