

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

December 2002 • Vol. 18, No. 12

Aviation archeologists find missing jewel at a 1948 crash site



*The star sapphire from
Major Daniel Forbes' ring*

On October 16, Senior Master Sergeant (MSGT) **Keith Fulton** of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard came by the Museum and gave curator **Danny San Romani** an artifact to go in the Major **Daniel Forbes** case. The artifact is a star sapphire stone from a ring Major Forbes was wearing the day he and five others died in the crash of a Northrop YB-49 Flying Wing near Muroc Air Force Base, California.

The stone remained lost for almost 50 years until it was found in October 1997. The YB-49 crash occurred June 5, 1948. **Chris Sanders**, **Tony Moore** and **David Perry** found the star sapphire. They were at the crash site with **X-Hunters**, an organization that focuses on the recovery of pieces of aviation history, including the searching of crash sites.

Sanders, **Moore**, and **Perry** were digging in the YB-49 site and sifting the desert sand when the stone appeared in a shovelful of earth.

After doing further research on the YB-49 and crew, **Chris Sanders** felt that the sapphire may have belonged to Major **Daniel Forbes**. This was partly based on earlier statements that **Forbes'** ring mounting had been recovered after the crash, without its stone.

Armed with this information **Chris Sanders** eventually came into contact with officials at the 190th Air Refueling Wing. He talked with MSGT **Fulton** and Colonel **Mike O'Toole**, the 190th's Commander. They told **Sanders** that Major **Forbes'** widow, **Hazel Bartron**, lived in Topeka and that they could act as a liaison between him and Mrs. **Bartron**. **Sanders** sent them a photograph of the star sapphire. MSGT **Fulton** and COL **O'Toole** made arrangements to visit

Missing jewel, con't. on page 2

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Combat Air Museum

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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
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Your questions and comments
are welcomed.

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

Missing jewel, con't from page 1

with Hazel Bartron and talk about the stone. When they showed her the photo of the star sapphire, she excused herself from the room. When she came back in, she was carrying a ring with an identical, smaller stone. She went on to say that she and Forbes each wore a star sapphire ring before their wedding.

As the *Wings Over Topeka Family Freedom Day* was being organized, SMSGT Fulton planned and arranged for a ceremony in which the star sapphire would be returned to Hazel Bartron. She agreed to this but only if the other members of the YB-49's crew were also recognized at the ceremony. So SMSGT Fulton began a search for living relatives of the remaining crew who also died in the crash. Those other crewmen were: Major **Glenn W. Edwards** – pilot, **Clare C. Leser** – aeronautical engineer, **Charles H. La Fountain** - aeronautical engineer, 1st Lieutenant **Edward L. Swindell** – flight engineer.

SMSGT Fulton was able to contact a relative of each of the deceased crewmen. With the exception of relatives of Major Edwards, all said they could come to Topeka for the ceremony.

On Saturday afternoon, September 28, on a stage near the 190th's large maintenance hangar, the presentation ceremony took place. Officials of the 190th presented Hazel Bartron with the star sapphire in a velvet lined, wooden box. Photographs of the crew of the YB-49 and the plane itself were exhibited on the stage. In attendance were **Cheryl Dodds**, niece of Charles La Fountain, and her husband **Bill**; **George Leser**, brother of Clare Leser, and his wife **Delores**; **Jan Barclay** and **Virginia Sand**, cousins of Major Daniel Forbes; and **Carol Swindell**, daughter of 1st Lieutenant Edward Swindell, and her daughter **Natalie**. Also in attendance were Chris Sanders and David Perry, two of the finders of the sapphire. Sanders is a director with Disney and most recently directed the animated feature *Lilo and Stitch*. He also did the voice of one of the animated characters. Perry is a flight engineer with DreamWorks Aviation. The third finder, Tony Moore, is in NASA Public Relations at Edwards AFB, CA.

In interviews prior to Family Freedom Day, Hazel Bartron indicated she might pass the ring on to a museum, and later mentioned Combat Air Museum. We will place the star sapphire in the Forbes exhibit. Additionally, Danny San Romani is working with SMSGT Fulton to have a plaque made commemorating all those who died in the crash, with their names engraved on the plaque. This will also be placed in the case. ➔

Visitors

During **October**
the Museum had
832 visitors
from **40** states
and
Argentina
Canada
Czech Republic
Germany
Great Britain
Vietnam

➔ ➔ ➔

From the Wing Commander

The Panther is back! It is transformed! (See the cover article in the October 2002 *Plane Talk*). To date, my fund raising campaign for this restoration has raised \$14,200. A person who is not a member of CAM gave the largest single gift of \$5,000. All bills have been paid; F9F-5 BuNo 126226 is on exhibit in our main gallery, Hangar 602.

This note is a request to the membership for additional gifts to complete this drive. Restoration work continues on the following aircraft – F-84F, F-86H, BT-13, and UH-12. These are aircraft artifacts perfect for CAM's collection, and your gifts will go toward this effort.

Remember that 2002 income taxes are coming due. Donations to worthy causes are deductible. Help CAM's cause with a donation. If you have any questions of me regarding this request, call me, FAX me, or email me: Phone (785) 862-3303, FAX (785) 862-3304, email: camtopeka@aol.com. I will be happy to hear from you.

Dick Trupp

Wing Commander, Chairman Board of Directors

2003 Events Calendar

This is a tentative schedule of events, subject to change.

March

17-21 – Aviation Education Class

April

12 – Girl Scouts Conference

26 – Celebrity Pancake Feed

May

10-11 – Wings Over Topeka
(tentative)

17 – USO Canteen Dance

June

6-7 – USO Shows

16-19 – Aviation Education Class

July

7-10 – Aviation Education Class

August

4-7 – Aviation Education Class

September

20 – USO Canteen Dance

October

25 – Model Contest

→ → →

December Calendar of Events

Monday, December 9 Membership Luncheon

Jean Wanner Education
Conference Center 11:30 a.m.

- This is a potluck luncheon with the exception of the Main Dish.
- End of Year report by Wing Commander
- Dave Murray and Tad Pritchett will present a program on Operation Market-Garden, the 1944 airborne and land assault into Holland.

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day – Museum is closed.

Happy Holidays

→ → →

New Supporters

Lawrence Bridgewater
The Kantack Family
Ben, Fran, Mark,
Kelly & Randall

Renewing Supporters

Bill & Carol Ballentine
Dave & Ruth Houser
Bob Kelly
Lyn & Eric Walther
The Webber Family
Rees, Kathy, Karsen,
Morgan & Luke

→ → →



Luncheon speaker teaches the history of flight

Due to a last minute scheduling conflict, our guest speaker for the October Membership Luncheon was not able to attend. Board member **Stu Entz**, however, stepped up to the podium and presented an excellent talk about early efforts of manned flight, particularly those of **Orville and Wilbur Wright**. Stu chose this topic because December 17, 2003 will mark the centennial of the first powered, sustained, and controlled flight, and the whole year should prove to have celebrations throughout the United States to commemorate the event.

You may notice that we use the term "powered, sustained, and controlled flight." Claiming "first manned flight" caused decades of international criticism and debate.

In his presentation, Stu talked about man's fascination with flight since at least the beginnings of recorded time. Centuries ago, **Leonardo Da Vinci** sketched a human-powered flying machine called an ornithopter, meaning its support and propulsion were derived from flapping wings. There is no evidence Da Vinci ever tested his theory, and in studying the drawings, it appears this proposed method of flight would have been at the very least tortuous for the human providing the power to fly the craft.

The French brothers **Jacques-Etienne and Joseph-Michel Montgolfier** developed the first successful hot air balloons in the late 18th century. On October 15, 1783 Frenchman **Pilatre de Rozier** became the first human to escape the bonds of earth in a Montgolfier hot air balloon, although this first attempt was tethered. Very soon after, other aeronauts made longer and higher balloon flights, and hot air was replaced by hydrogen. Military use of balloons occurred during the American Civil War when **Thaddeus Lowe** formed an aerial reconnaissance unit for the Union Army using tethered, hydrogen-filled balloons.

Others looked at winged flight, and two areas of study included kites and birds. During the early 19th century, English baron **Sir George Cayley**, a pioneer of aerial navigation, studied various forms and shapes that sustained flight. He found that by attaching a controllable cruciform tail on a long stick to the

end of a kite, he could change the attitude, or angle of attack, of the kite into the wind and cause it to dive or climb. Stu pointed out that Cayley was controlling the pitch of the kite along its lateral axis, with the moveable tail acting as an elevator control surface.



Stu Entz

Later in the 19th century, the German brothers **Gustave and Otto Lilienthal** began their own calculations and experiments by studying the shape and structure of birds' wings. Over a period of five years, the brothers constructed and flew many gliders based on bird wing designs. These included designs capable of carrying a man. Otto Lilienthal made some 2000 manned flights before his death in a glider crash in 1896.

In the United States two brothers studied both kites and gliders and the airfoil research done by the Lilienthals. **Orville and Wilbur Wright** became convinced that a manned flying machine could be constructed. In 1899 they wrote a letter to the Smithsonian Institution stating as much and asked for information regarding the study of flight.

Stu discussed the personalities of the Wright brothers and their systematic, methodical approach to research, study, and experimentation. Although they repeatedly found errors in Otto Lilienthal's calculations, the brothers were heavily influenced by his airfoil research. In 1891 former railroad engineer **Octave Chanute** wrote a book, *Progress in Flying Machines*. This was the first effort to compile all previous studies of flight into one book. The Wright brothers were also greatly influenced by this work. Stu pointed out that Chanute had once been in Kansas because of his railroad work and that Chanute, KS is named after him.

Another person studying the concept of manned flight in the 1890s was American **Samuel Pierpont Langley**. Langley built a series of powered gliders, actually large models, one of which successfully flew some 1,000 yards. In October 1903 he was ready to test a full-scale powered glider with **Charles Manly** as the pilot. The aircraft crashed on takeoff after striking part of the launch platform. Stu stated that Langley's successes with his models and the full scale "Aerodrome" would lead to a future falling out between the Wright brothers and the Smithsonian Institution.

Stu then talked about the four-year period between 1900-1903 when the Wright brothers began constructing and testing large gliders capable of carrying a man. In 1900 they wrote the predecessor of the US Weather Bureau asking where in the United States they would find the most consistent wind sources of some 20-25 miles per hour during the fall period. The answer came back Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on the Atlantic Seaboard. The brothers crated up their glider and shipped it to the sand dunes of Kill Devil Hill, south of Kitty Hawk, in the fall of 1900.

During their first visit to Kitty Hawk, the brothers flew the glider in a tethered mode only, like a kite. They found that by tying lines to the wing tips and pulling on these lines, they caused the wings to warp, and the glider responded by rolling to one side or the other. This meant they could control the glider about its longitudinal axis. From the earlier findings of Sir Cayley and his kites with tails, the Wrights now knew they could control the motion of the glider about its lateral and longitudinal axes.

In the fall of 1901 the Wright brothers returned to Kitty Hawk with a larger glider. They conducted non-tethered, manned flights with this glider. It included an elevator control surface for controlling pitch, mounted in front of the wings on wooden spar extensions. Sir Cayley had put this control surface on the rear of his kites; the Wright brothers chose to put it on the front of their glider. The brothers experimented with the elevator and wing-warping controls during these flights and found that the front of the glider tended to sway from one side to the other. Stu told the audience this is called "yaw" and represents an aircraft's

motion about its vertical axis. It was another motion the brothers would have to learn to control. He also said that during 1901 the brothers developed and constructed a wind tunnel, the first of its kind.

The third trip to Kitty Hawk in 1902 included a glider that now had a vertical fin installed on booms behind the wings. Orville and Wilbur felt the fin would correct for the glider's yaw. However, the first flights proved them wrong. After further study, they correctly concluded the fin had to move to effectively counteract the swaying. With a controllable fin, or rudder, they overcame the yaw problem. They interlinked the wing-warping and rudder controls and were able to execute coordinated turns with the glider. Spars on the front of the glider still held a small horizontal wing to control pitch. The brothers made manned flights of up to 600 feet that fall. Octave Chanute visited them at Kill Devil Hill and encouraged them to put an engine on the glider.

Once back in Dayton, Ohio, Orville and Wilbur tackled the powerplant problem for their glider. They were unable to find an engine that they felt would give enough power to fly the glider and still be lightweight enough to use. Their solution was to build their own engine, which they did. But the engine was not the only concern. They had to build their own propellers, propeller shafts, and find suitable chain drives, all of which had to provide the necessary strength, yet be lightweight.

Stu Entz's history of flight will continue in the January 2003 issue of *Plane Talk*

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Former pilot visits our Panther

On October 15 a former member of US Navy fighter squadron VF-51 visited CAM and was reunited with a plane from his former squadron. Mr. **Herschel Gott** of Los Altos, CA, his sister, **Alice Colley**, of Kansas City, MO, and friends **Bill** and **Betsy Holloway** of Terrace Park, Ohio came to see the Museum and, specifically, the F9F-5 Panther, BuNo 126226. Herschel and the Panther were both in VF-51 and served aboard the USS VALLEY FORGE (CVA 45) with Carrier Air Group Five from November 1952 to June 1953. VALLEY FORGE deployed to the Sea of Japan from San Diego, CA and was in combat operations off Korea from January-June 1953 with Commander Task Force 77. The pilots and planes of VF-51 conducted air strikes on military and economic targets in eastern North Korea and provided close and deep air support for UN ground troops.

Ralph Knehans, who learned of the Panther's existence nearly 20 years ago, toured the visitors through the Museum. Herschel told us he had lost his flight log some years ago and could not remember when or how often he may have flown 126226. **Mr. Lee Boles** of Eugene, OR, a VF-51 squadron mate of Herschel's, has corresponded several times with CAM and donated some items to use with the Panther exhibit. Lee sent us a color photocopy of a page from his flight log covering the period 12 - 28 February 1953. He flew 10 missions during that period in nine different Panthers. Apparently, pilots in VF-51 did not have a specific plane assigned to them, so it is likely they flew every plane in the squadron during a six- to-seven month cruise.

Herschel, Allie, Bill and Betsy spent about two hours with Ralph. They really enjoyed their time and were grateful to CAM for having the Panther



(Left to right) Alice Colley, Herschel Gott, Ralph Knehans, Betsy Holloway and Bill Holloway

restored in VF-51 markings, thus preserving a piece of the Korean War. Herschel felt the restoration had turned out very well, especially after he saw photos of 126226 before it went to Texas. We will keep in touch with him to gain more information about VF-51 operations in the Sea of Japan and over Korea. ➔



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COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

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January 2003 • Vol. 19, No. 1

Pointing the Way

Working to get highway signage for the Combat Air Museum

We received a little bad news and some better news regarding the work **Dick Trupp**, Wing Commander, has been doing to increase the signage for the Museum. The bad news came in a letter from the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing, Travel and Tourism Division. The letter stated that the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will no longer erect advance attraction signs along Interstate and State highways, even if the attraction would fund the cost of building and erecting the signs. The letter did not explain the reasoning behind the decision and implied this is now a permanent situation.

Advance attraction signs are the large brown signs with white letters primarily along Interstate and other major four-lane highways. They give advance notice of an attraction(s) in a town or city further down the road. Dick had been working with the tourism division and KDOT to get an advance sign south of Emporia on the Kansas Turnpike, and was looking into a location on US Highway 75 north of Topeka.

The better news is that KDOT will begin placing "logo signs" for attractions on existing highway exit signs. The "logo signs" are the small, square signs that notify travelers of gas, food, and/or lodging available at upcoming exits. Hopefully starting in 2003, KDOT will place logo signs for attractions with the appropriate exits along the Turnpike and Interstate highways. CAM will be included with this new signage.

Related to the "logo signs" are other signs being worked on by the Topeka Tourism Alliance, of which CAM is a member. These signs will be called "wayfaring signs." When visitors exit into the greater

Topeka area, these signs will direct them to the various attractions in and around the city. Again, due to Dick's efforts, CAM will be included in this signage. Hopes are to get these signs up during 2003 also.

Dick's work with KDOT to relocate some existing signs, particularly on US Highway 75 south of the city proper and along Topeka Boulevard, is still ongoing.

Recently, the Topeka Area Heritage Alliance, separate from the Topeka Tourism Alliance, published a very nice brochure titled *The Prairie Capital: Topeka, A Map of Historic and Cultural Landmarks*. The brochure is a large foldout of a Topeka map with various historic and cultural sites listed, including Historic Topeka Districts and properties on the National or State Registers. The flip side of the map has brief comments about the historic sites listed on the map. CAM is one of these sites. →

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 should be submitted to CAM office.

**Join the
 Combat Air
 Museum!**

**January
 Calendar of Events**

Wednesday, January 1
 The Museum is closed

There will be no Membership
 Luncheon in January.

The next
 luncheon will be
 Monday,
 February 10.

It will be a
 potluck luncheon.

Happy New Year 2003

→ → →

New Supporters

Ruth Ann Bridgewater
 Grant Peterson

**Renewing
 Supporters**

Oscar Albrecht
 La Verne Bahre
 Jim & Mary Braun
 Wayne Dodson
 John Domsch
 Rodney & Martha Duerksen
 Loyd & Arlene Ellison
 Philip & Darlene Elwood
 Leonard Faulconer
 Leon Folkerts
 Paul & Jane Fortin
 Dr. Carl & Marguerite Fyler
 Roger Ginivan
 Dr. Richard & Karol Good
 L. C. Hinthier
 Roger & Lois Miller
 William Morgan
 Carl Quarnstrom
 Randy, Karoljean, & Evan Thies
 Art Toomay
 Steve Wodtke

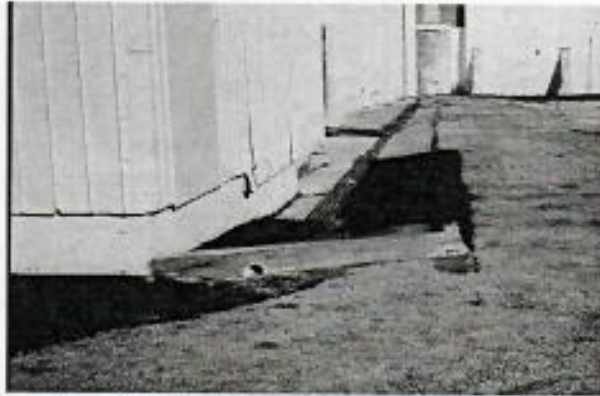
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The water diverting curb in front of Hangar 602

Fixing the hole where the rain gets in

A building and grounds project completed this fall will keep flooding out of Hangar 602. During any rains, water flows east to west from the Forbes Field runways and taxiways east of our hangars. During hard downpours, our drainage system in front of 602 could not always handle the runoff, and there were occasions when water ran into the hangar bay. Like the runways and taxiways, the hangar floor slopes east to west, and the water ran to the rear of the hangar. Complying with Murphy's Law, during one especially hard rain, the water ran from the front of the hangar right to the foyer for the chapel and field kitchen exhibits, flooding that carpet. It also branched into the storage area for our tables and chairs and traveled under the door for the small exhibit room, also flooding that carpet. Fortunately, we had a number of volunteers in the Museum that day and immediately wet-vacuumed the carpets. We were also able to watch just how and where the water was getting into the hangar.

Part of the problem was that a dirt and grass area around the southeast corner of the hangar was being eroded and flushed into the drainage trench in front of the hangar, silting in the south end of the trench. Water just flowed over the silted area, through drains under the hangar door rails, and onto the hangar floor. Also, concrete sections just outside of the hangar door rails have settled over the years, enhancing the slope for water to run into the hangar. **Dick Trupp, Gene Howerter, Martin Moyer** and **Amos Page** discussed the problem and agreed that a small curb could be built on the east side

of the drainage trench to divert water to the north or south. They also felt that the dirt and grass area around the southeast corner of the hangar should be filled in with asphalt and made into a waterway to help move the water westward along the south side of the hangar. **Don Dawson** checked the relationship of the proposed curb to aircraft parked in the hangar to ensure we would not create an obstacle for moving aircraft out of and into the hangar.

From there, Dick called **Andrews Asphalt and Construction** of Topeka and asked them for a bid to build the curb and waterway, which we approved.

One bright, sunny Friday, a small entourage of vehicles and equipment arrived at CAM and construction of the curb and waterway was accomplished. Then we waited for some wet weather to test out the work – and waited. In the meantime, we moved the CH-53 Sea Stallion out of the hangar for *Wings Over Topeka* and successfully maneuvered the big helicopter over the north end of the curb. Finally, some light rains fell, and what we saw in regards to drainage around the curb was encouraging. Martin and Amos improved on the design by adding a curb and drain hole on the south end of the existing curb. Since that time we have had some steady, hours-long rains, and the new curb and waterway have handled the run-off with no problems. We still need a hard downpour to see the ultimate effect of the work, but indications so far are that the water should stay out of 602. →

Visitors

During **November**
the Museum had
542 visitors
from **29** states
and
Brazil
Canada
France
Germany
Japan

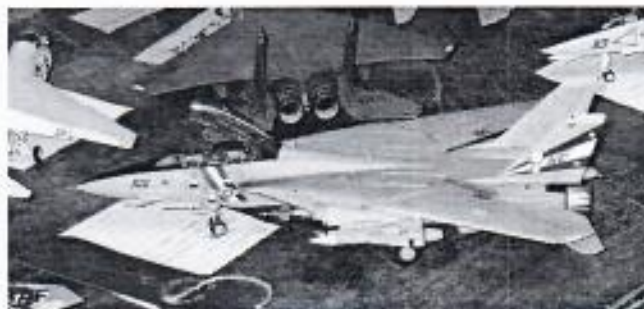
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CAM's model contest gets a big turnout

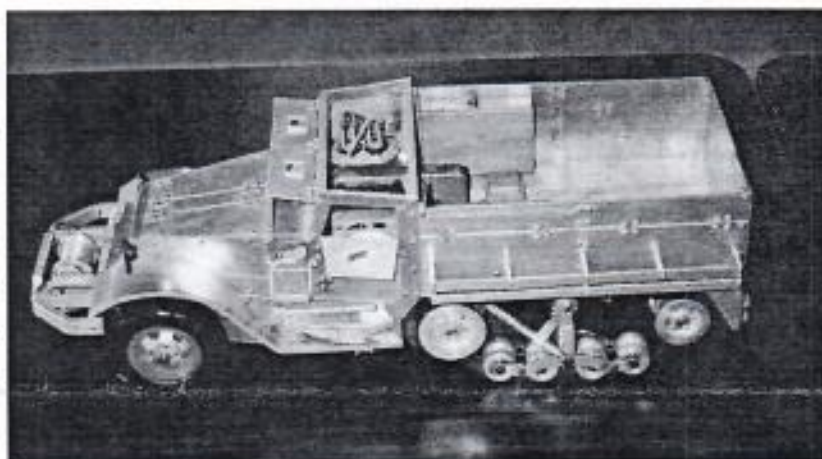
Thirty-four modelers entered 104 models in CAM's fall model contest held October 26. The modelers came from Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and one from Iowa. There were twelve trophy and 46 ribbon categories.

Three modelers were double trophy winners. **Kelly Quirk** of Liberty, MO won the Best Aircraft and Best of Contest trophies with a Grumman F-14D Tomcat jet fighter. **Frank Ciccarella** of Overland Park, KS won Best Armor and Theme trophies, the former for a Stalin II World War II tank, and the latter for an amphibious Command Post Vehicle. The theme for this contest was DUKW's and Such: Amphibious Vehicles. **Paul Kester** of Olathe, KS was the third double winner, gathering trophies for Best Automotive with a customized 1970 Dodge Coronet and for Best Out of Box kit with a Korean War era F-84E Thunderjet jet fighter.

George Redden of Trenton, MO won the trophy for best Diorama, depicting a World War II battle scene. **Craig Johnson** of Wichita, KS won the Best Naval trophy with a Vietnam era PBR River Patrol Boat. **Dan MacClymont** of Olathe won the Junior Category trophy with a Top Fuel Dragster. Judges also gave this model an Honorable Mention ribbon in the senior's competition. **Jay Chladek** of Bellevue, NE won Best Space trophy with an X-Wing fighter from the Star Wars movie series. **Paul Butler** of McClouth, KS won the Best Figure trophy with the bust of a World War II British soldier in North Africa, a Desert Rat. Modeler's Choice trophy went to **Danny Downs** of To-



ABOVE: Best of Contest Grumman F-14D Tomcat
BELOW: Scratch-built aluminum half-track

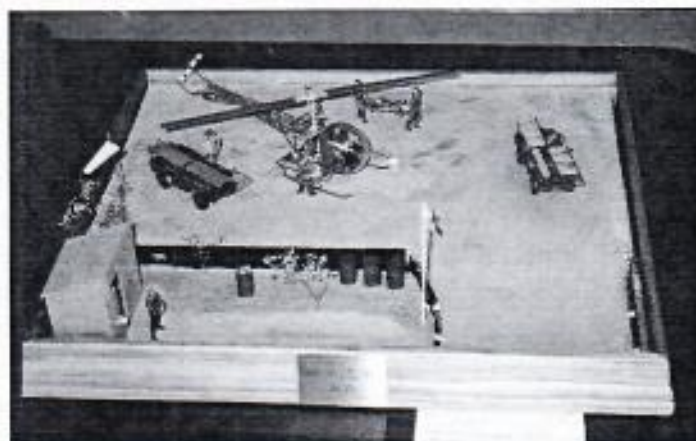


peka for his scratch-built 1939 Diamond-T Package Car. He built the panel truck out of copper sheets.

This contest brought in several first time contestants, and two of them won trophies. Hopefully, they will be back for future contests. There was also a large number of models brought in "For Show Only," filling one of the tables. One model was a large scale, scratch-

built half-track by Danny Downs. He used aluminum for his building material, and screwed all the pieces together with very small fasteners.

The next contest is scheduled for October 25, 2003. →



MASH diorama



Stu Entz

Luncheon speaker teaches the history of flight

Board member Stu Entz presented a talk at the Membership Luncheon in October on the early efforts of manned flight. This is a continuation of the report on his presentation from Plane Talk, December 2002.

The brothers returned to Kitty Hawk for the fourth time in September 1904 and assembled their powered glider over a three-week period. The Flyer, as it was called, had all the lessons from previous visits incorporated into its design, plus the new engine, propellers and drive chains. The single, forward elevator was now a bi-wing. Initially, the testing was beset with problems, almost all mechanical and involving the propellers, propeller shafts, and vibrations caused by the drive chains. As previously mentioned, Langley unsuccessfully attempted flying his powered, manned glider in October. He tried again on December 8, with the same, unsuccessful results. By December 11, after a two-week period during which Orville returned to Dayton to build new propeller shafts, the Wright brothers were ready for their first test flight. Wilbur won the honors with the toss of a coin. On December 14, the Flyer moved along its launch rail and became airborne – very briefly. Almost immediately after liftoff, it pitched up, stalled and came back down. Total flight time was about three and one-half seconds. After repairs were made, Orville made the second attempt, on December 17. This time the Flyer got airborne and flew a distance of 120 feet over a time of 12 seconds, at an altitude of about 15 feet. The flight was mechanically powered. It was manned, it was controlled, and it was sustained. But even more significant, the plane landed at the same level as that from which it had taken off. Previous manned flights of gliders had been downhill.

Before the day ended, both brothers successfully flew the Flyer a total of four flights. Wilbur had the longest flight, 59 seconds and 852 feet. A spar was damaged on landing, and while the Flyer sat for repairs, the wind caught it and flipped it several times, badly damaging the machine. The Flyer was crated and shipped back to Dayton.

Stu went on to tell how the original Flyer was never repaired after its return to Dayton. Its damaged remains

were stored in a work shed. The Wright brothers went on to design and build other Flyers over the next several years. Parts of the original Flyer were loaned out for exhibit in 1906 and never came back. In 1910, the Smithsonian approached the Wright brothers about placing the Flyer in their collection. But when the brothers learned that the Smithsonian had credited one of Langley's Aerodromes as the "first aeroplane capable of sustained free flight with a man," they refused to give the Flyer's remains to the Institution. Langley's powered gliders had never flown with a human, regardless of their capability. Eventually, Glenn Curtiss made some modifications to the Aerodrome and flew it in 1914.

Wilbur Wright died in 1912. In 1913, a flood submerged the remains of the original Flyer in water and mud for a period of time. In 1916, the remains were removed to a barn, then later to MIT. The university assembled the Flyer to what they thought was the proper configuration. The problem was that the Wright brothers had never made plans or drawings of their original Flyer. Some pieces were missing, others damaged or deteriorated so badly that they were replaced with what was thought to be proper substitutes.

When the Smithsonian continued to refuse acknowledgment that the Wright brothers were the first in powered, controlled flight, Orville allowed the Flyer to go to the Science Museum in London where it remained until 1948. In 1943, the Smithsonian finally bowed to increasing criticism and public pressures to recognize the Wright's achievement as a first in flight, and it was announced that the Flyer would return to the United States. Orville Wright died in January 1948 and the 1903 Flyer returned to the US in November. One thing that had occurred during its stay in England was that the Science Museum made drawings of the Flyer, at least as they had restored it.

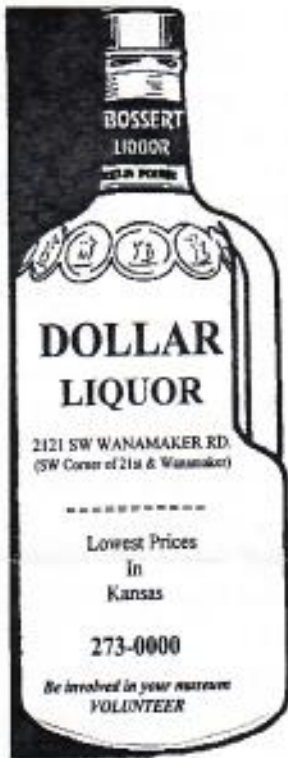
The Smithsonian did a complete restoration of the 1903 Wright Flyer in 1985-1986. Not much of the original machine remained after the ravages of over 80 years. But the restored aircraft, now called Kitty Hawk, flies once again in the main lobby of the Smithsonian Air And Space Museum in Washington, D.C., a small, fragile aircraft that represents the beginnings of a century of powered, controlled, human flight. ➔

Our Panther gets international attention in *Navy Times*

The 2 December 2002 issue of the *Navy Times* weekly newspaper carried an article on the restoration of our **Grumman F9F-5 Panther**. *Navy Times* has a worldwide circulation among US Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard units, stations and bases. It is pretty much a staple item aboard US Navy ships and submarines and US Coast Guard Cutters.

Free lance writer and aviation author **Robert F. Dorr** wrote the article for a section of the newspaper titled "Damn the Torpedoes!: A 5-Minute History Lesson." The article includes a brief history of the development and importance of the Panther jet fighter, then addresses specifically our Panther, its history with Navy Fighter Squadron VF-51, its restoration, and a bit about CAM.

Board chairman **Dick Trupp** spoke several times with Dorr about this article and the possibility of another article for *Aeroplane Magazine*. There has also been some discussion about an article in *Smithsonian Air and Space*. →



2003 Events Calendar

This is a tentative schedule of events, subject to change.

March

17-21 – Aviation Education Class

April

12 – Girl Scouts Conference

26 – Celebrity Pancake Feed

May

10-11 – Wings Over Topeka

17 – USO Canteen Dance

June

6-7 – USO Shows

16-19 – Aviation Education Class

July

7-10 – Aviation Education Class

August

4-7 – Aviation Education Class

September

20 – USO Canteen Dance

October

25 – Model Contest

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