

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

February / March 2012 • Vol. 28, No. 1

New acquisitions at CAM

The Museum acquired two new aircraft in December and January. On December 16, **Mr. Robert Baslee** of Holden, Missouri, and members of the Liberty, Missouri, area Dawn Patrol arrived at the Museum with a full scale replica of a World War I *Sopwith Pup* scout fighter. Mr. Baslee donated the *Sopwith* to us, less its engine and propeller.

In November 2009 Mr. Baslee donated a 3/4 scale World War I replica of a German *Pfalz E1* scout fighter that currently hangs in Hangar 602. With the new *Pup*, we now have four home-built replicas of World War I combat aircraft.

The original *Sopwith Pup* had a wingspan of 26 feet 6 inches, length of 19 feet 3-3/4 inches, and a height of 9 feet 5 inches. It had an 80 horsepower LeRhône rotary engine and a single .303 machine gun. The Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service both flew the type. The aircraft was officially the *Sopwith Scout*. The nickname "pup" came from pilots who considered the plane to be a pup of the larger *Sopwith 1-1/2 Strutter*. Some 1770 *Pups* were built by three companies during World War I. The type served from 1916-1918.

The replica is currently in the northeast corner of Hangar 604, with its wings off. It will be suspended in Hangar 602, currently planned for April, when we move aircraft for the Pancake Feed

Don Dawson installed angle iron supports and a pipe flange to the existing engine mounts on the plane's firewall and cut and threaded a length of pipe to fit as a propeller shaft. A second pipe flange is mounted to the backside of a wooden propeller we had in storage. We will have a photo dummy of a LeRhône rotary engine that will shortly be mounted on the shaft inside the cowling.

The plan is to lower the *Pfalz E1* and hang it in a new position in the southwest sector of Hangar 602 above the *Meyers OTW*. The *Pup* will then be raised on the rig that previously held the *Pfalz*.



The Pup, before engine and propeller were removed

Our second acquisition took place January 9 when the **Kansas Army National Guard** delivered a CQ-10A *Snow Goose* to CAM. According to the Operator Manual, this aircraft - or more correctly, aerial vehicle - is a *Wind Supported Air Delivery System (WSADS)*. It is a remotely controlled, unmanned, aerial cargo delivery vehicle (UACV).

During late August of last year, **Ms. Lori Myers, Kansas/Federal Surplus Properties Manager**, contacted us and said there were three of the *Snow Goose* vehicles available to museums. They would be placed on loan from the General Services Administration, much like several of our aircraft in the collection. We Googled what this thing was, found a few images, and by the end of the day, **Gene Howerter** was on the phone with Ms. Myers

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Combat Air Museum

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Dick Trupp

Museum Hours

January 2 - February 28/29

Mon. - Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

March 1 - December 31

Mon. - Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

Closed New Year's Day, Easter,
 Thanksgiving, Christmas Day

Newsletter

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Plane Talk, the official newsletter

of Combat Air Museum

of Topeka, Kansas,

is published bi-monthly.

Your comments are welcomed.

In Memoriam

Bernie Wannier

1927-2011

November 22, 2011

Topeka

2196

21 year member

Beattie Dickson

1923-2011

November 21, 2011

Topeka

3864

6 year member

David Kruse

November 23, 2011

VA Hospital, Topeka

5216

One month member

When we speak of **Bernie Wannier**, we actually speak of **Jean and Bernie**, Jean being his wife of 63 years. She survives. This team worked together as Gift Shop volunteers for a number of years. Both were aviation enthusiasts who made the annual pilgrimage to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for the EAA AirVenture. They supported our Pancake Feed fund-raisers and especially our youth aviation education classes by providing their Cessna 150 aircraft for student flights. Bernie and Jean also made personal monetary donations to many projects undertaken by the Museum.

When Jean's health prevented her from further volunteer work at the Museum, Bernie became her caretaker. After she was placed into a care facility, Bernie continued to spend his time with his beloved Jean.

Bernie was a native Topekan and attended Topeka schools. He graduated from University of Kansas with an architecture degree and that became his vocation. He had a private practice and was at one time the Assistant State Architect for the State of Kansas prior to his retirement. Bernie served in the US Army Intelligence Corps from

1954-1955.

It was always an enjoyment to be around and visit with Jean and Bernie. They were big fans, supporters, and ambassadors of CAM.

We only got to enjoy **Beattie Dickson's** personality and presence for a seemingly short time. His volunteer work meant getting hands dirty as he helped Don Dawson work on our museum vehicles, including the 1952 Willys Jeep, 1941 Dodge Ambulance, our tugs and forklift. Engines and mechanic work/restoration were Beattie's forte.

Beattie was a native of Topeka and attended Topeka schools. He graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in mechanical engineering. He served in the US Army Air Force in England from 1943-1945 as an engineer and top turret gunner on B-17 Flying Fortresses of the 401st Bombardment Group, earning four Bronze Stars.

Just as we started seeing Beattie on a regular basis doing volunteer work, his wife, **Isla**, began having health problems, and he became her caregiver. This lasted until Beattie's own health began to fail. They were married 61 years until Isla's death six weeks prior to Beattie's.

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Learn more
 about the
Combat Air Museum at
www.combatairmuseum.org

Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge and author of a new book speak at CAM luncheon

The December Christmas potluck Membership Luncheon brought a full house to the Education Conference Room. **Gene Howerter** began the program with introductions, and several guests were introduced by various members. Gene and **Dick Trupp** also reviewed some of the exhibits works in progress and recently finished.

Gene then started the luncheon program by introducing **Tad Pritchett**, secretary of our Board of Directors and recent author of *From Farm to Field*, a book of firsthand accounts of veteran's combat experiences during the December 1944 - January 1945 Battle of the Bulge against German forces in Luxemburg and Belgium.

Tad passed out some papers that had a map of the primary battle area, including positions of the US and German forces involved. The reverse side announced the 67th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge meeting for the Northeast Kansas Chapter of the Battle of the Bulge veterans, held January 14 at American Legion Post 17 in Manhattan, Kansas. Tad had computer images fed into the big screen television. The first posting read "*Freedom - easy to lose. Hard to get back.*" He then posted a quotation from President Ronald Reagan, "*Freedom is never more than one generation from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.*"

Tad spoke about how he became involved with the Battle of the Bulge Veterans and how this, in turn, led to his book. He had read about a 65th Anniversary gathering of Battle of the Bulge Veterans in Manhattan, Kansas, in January 2010 and attended it. He said consulates from Belgium and Luxemburg were in attendance, and it was an impressive gathering. Being a Vietnam Veteran (Marines), Tad said he was not sure how he would be received by the World War II veterans as earlier memories of Vietnam Vets being shunned by those of World War II remained with him. As it turned out, he was received very warmly.

As Tad visited with the Veterans and heard their stories, he felt strongly that these stories should not die with them, so he became a member of the Chapter. As early as the first meeting, he came up with the idea of



Julian Siebert looks on as Gene Howerter (center) presents Tad Pritchett with a certificate of appreciation.

writing a book of their firsthand accounts. He initially thought it would be a couple-of-months thing where he could run off copies at the local Office Max. His project instead took 18 months and resulted in a 390 page book giving the accounts of 40 Kansas veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Tad said that some common elements came from the stories, including physical ailments and recurring nightmares among the veterans. Tad found that when the veterans returned home, people with jobs were not always happy to see them, as they represented new competition for work. It took a while for the returning veterans to assimilate into their respective post-war societies and surroundings. Another thing to come out of post-war life was that veterans did not have anyone with whom to really share their stories. Those who had not been involved in the war had little understanding of it, and because so many Americans did fight overseas, they each had their own stories to tell. So, veterans most often did not talk of their experiences.

Tad said that most of the "kids" who went to war were often fresh from high school and came from American farms. More than 227 thousand Kansans entered the military during World War II, and almost two thirds of them were from a rural setting. Hence, the name of his book, from farms to (battle)field. He said he picked the color green for the book's cover because so many military things during World War II were that color. Tad said many of the young troops were first and second generation German-Americans.

Some one million troops were involved along an 80 mile front in the Battle of the Bulge. Tad said there were an estimated 100,000 US and other Allied casualties, and a similar number of casualties for German forces and civilians caught up in the battle. He added there were some 130,000 prisoners of war taken by the opposing forces. As he was giving these numbers, Tad showed a graphic of the battle front on the big screen.

The Battle of the Bulge was a last ditch effort by

"Battle," con't. on page 4

"Battle," con't. from page 3

Adolf Hitler to bring about a positive outcome of the war for Germany. At this point in the war Hitler was personally directing plans of action for battle. Tad added that also by this time, Hitler had had 80 of his generals executed. The German attack was to come from and through the Ardennes forest with the capture of the Port of Antwerp, Belgium, as its end goal. Hitler felt capturing this vital port would physically divide US and British forces and be so demoralizing, that in his mind, the Allies would sue for peace, then join forces with Germany to attack Russia.

Hitler chose the Ardennes because, in spite of history, the Allies felt the forested terrain too dense and difficult to support a full scale attack. It had worked before, and it worked again. Hitler also felt he could capitalize on the inexperience of the US troops that were thinly stretched along the front lines. He was correct in this thinking as some of the units had only been in the line for a week. In general, the US divisions were not prepared for battle. Just prior to the attack, German forces posing as US troops were dropped behind the US lines to act as Fifth Columnists to disrupt communications, transportation, and cause general confusion among US forces.

Tad then introduced **Mr. Julian Siebert**. Mr. Siebert is a Battle of the Bulge Veteran, serving in F Company, 2nd Battalion, 328th Infantry Regiment of the 26th Infantry Division, the "Yankee Division," named such as it was made up of New England National Guard units. Mr. Siebert is a farm native from north of Westmoreland, Kansas. He told us he lives on the same farm he was born on, and his father was also born there in 1890. He was drafted in May 1944 and went through 17 weeks of training at Camp Hood, Texas. In the third week of October, he boarded a troop transport ship at Camp Shanks, New York, bound for England and France. By November 1944 he was in the front lines in north-eastern France.

His unit conducted operations in France and Germany in an area south and southeast of Luxemburg. Mr. Siebert was involved in combat at Munster, France, and Saarbrücken, Germany. He told us he remembered Munster because a good friend from St. Marys, Kansas, also in the 328th Regiment, was killed in the first attack. It was his first loss of a close friend.

Mr. Siebert celebrated his 21st birthday on November 28, 1944. They were in a small town around the Munster area, and on that day his squad came under artillery fire, and no matter where they moved, the artillery followed them. They also came under fire from a sniper in the town's church steeple. Mr. Siebert said they were told the sniper was also directing the artillery fire. Between the artillery fire and the sniper fire, the squad members were looking for suitable cover. Mr.

Siebert found a foxhole with water in it, frozen over. He broke the ice and jumped in, all the way up to his shoulders. Now wet, he stayed that way until his clothes could dry out. They had no changes of uniforms. He said, in fact, he wore the same clothes for six months. He added that they always tried to keep at least an extra pair of dry socks. Mr. Siebert was the only man in his unit who knew how to milk a cow. On those rare occasions when they came across one, he would milk it, and they would shave their D bars (Hershey chocolate) into the milk, warm it up, and make chocolate milk.

The 26th Division was on rest in Metz, France, when the German offensive began in the Ardennes on December 16. They were called into the battle and moved up to Arlon, Belgium, on the western border of Luxemburg. Their objective was Eschdorf, Luxemburg.

On early Christmas morning, 1944, Mr. Siebert's squad came under attack as they entered the town. They were initially caught in the open. Exploding shells were so close, one blew Mr. Siebert's pack off his back. The soldier next to him was killed. The survivors got into a building and continued to take fire. German soldiers found an opening in the building and threw in a hand grenade. Because of the darkness inside, the Americans could not see the grenade, so they scattered to the corners of the room. The grenade went off, and Mr. Siebert said his ears still ring from the explosion. The US soldiers continued to return fire, until a German tank arrived and trained its gun on the building. At that point they lay down their weapons and surrendered.

The Germans grouped the US soldiers together and walked them a short distance. Mr. Siebert said they knew they were going to be shot. A German vehicle drove up, and an officer got out and talked to the German soldiers. From that point, the American captives started walking, and Mr. Siebert said they walked for days, and the numbers of American prisoners grew. Food during the march was mostly a watery soup, served in helmets. The guards did not take belligerent attitudes from the prisoners. Finally, they came to a railroad car on a siding, and the prisoners were locked inside the car. It was standing room only, and he said they were in the car for several days. Prisoners began getting quite ill because of the conditions, and they were finally let out, to begin walking again. They finally arrived at a prisoner camp, Stalag XIIA. A few days later he and other prisoners moved to a work camp.

Mr. Siebert talked about the food in the camp. He used an example where the first time you had the soup and saw a worm in it, you probably threw the soup out. The next time, when you saw a worm in the soup, you picked the worm out and ate the soup. The next time you had soup and saw the worm trying to crawl out, you knocked it back into the soup. In the work camp, Mr.

"Battle," con't. on page 7

"Acquisitions," con't. from page 1

telling her we wanted one of the UACVs. Because we were the first to respond to the offer, we were given first choice of the units and the launch system, of which there was only one.

For the next few months our formal request for a *Snow Goose* worked its way through Federal bureaucracy. The *CQ-10A* is manufactured by MMIST in Nepean, Ontario, Canada. The first flight took place in 2001, and the first US operator of this delivery system was the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), who acquired five units. According to Internet sources, USSOCOM used the vehicles to deliver leaflets - where, specifically, we do not know. The *Snow Goose* can carry a payload up to 575 pounds in six cargo bins, three to a side. The bins can open at the bottom of the vehicle to dispense things like leaflets, or an entire bin can be sprung out from the vehicle with a drogue chute attached.

The "wing" of the *Snow Goose* is a parafoil parachute with a 500 square feet surface for ground launches and 725 square feet for air launches. The *CQ-10A* can be ground launched from a towed trailer or from the back of a modified Humvee vehicle. It can also be air dropped from aircraft such as a C-130 *Hercules* or C-17 *Globemaster III*. According to the operating characteristics sheet in the Operator Manual, the operating altitude with a ground launch is from 0 to 15,000 feet with 15,000 feet also being its self propelled ceiling. Operating altitude from an air launch of greater than 5,00 feet above ground level is 25,000 feet and its self propelled flight ceiling from an air launch is listed as 18,000 feet.

The vehicle flies with a 110 horsepower, four cylinder ROTAX engine. The engine runs on 91 octane no lead motor gasoline or 110 low lead aviation gasoline. The propeller is of three blades made of carbon fiber. The engine-propeller arrangement is a pusher type. The maximum speed is listed as 35 mph (30 knots) and maximum ranges, assuming zero wind and 100 pounds of cargo, are 373 miles from an air launch and 435 miles from a ground launch. We found that one or more cargo bins can be replaced by fuel cells to give additional range. Endurance, again assuming no wind and with 100 pounds of cargo, is 12 hours from an air launch and 14 hours from a ground launch.

We received a call from Ms. Myers the week of December 19 saying we could go to the Great Plains Joint Training Center, Kansas Army National Guard, at Salina, Kansas, and pick out which of the three *CQ-10As* we wanted. On December 22, **Gene, Danny San Romani, and Don Dawson** made the trip. Shortly after arriving at the Training Center, located on the former Schilling Air Force Base, the three were taken to a hangar where the three vehicles and launch system were stored. Each *Snow Goose* and the launch system were individually contain-



Above: Robert Baslee and members of the Dawn Patrol unload the Sopwith Pup replica.

Center: The Pup in its temporary location in Hangar 604.

Below: The Snow Goose on its container base.



"Acquisitions," con't. on page 6

New Supporters

Ernest Hedges
 Gerald & Jamie Meyer (**Lifetime**)
 David, Connor, & Keira Trupp
 Joe, Amy, Halee, & Peyton Wahl
 Howard & Marilyn Ward

Renewing Supporters

Gale Beal
 Les Carlson
 William Cleaver
 H. Phillip, Darlene, & Denise Elwood
 Len Faulconer
 Dr. Paul & Jane Fortin
 Bob & Mary Ann Kelly
 Jim & Ruby Leighton
 Col. Hollis Logan
 Ron & Nancy Lutz
 Roger & Lois Miller
 Mary Naylor
 Don & Nancy Nisbett
 Tad & Dee Pritchett
 Merton Wilch

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February and March Calendar of Events

February

Monday, February 13
 Membership Luncheon
 Jean Wanner Education Conference Room
 11:30 am

Our guest speaker is Mr. Roger Aeschliman, Vice President and Trust Officer of Core First Bank and Trust of Topeka. His presentation will be revealed at the luncheon.

March

Monday March 19 - Thursday March 22
 Spring Break Aviation Education Class
 9 am - 12 pm
 Jean Wanner Education Conference Room

There is no Membership Luncheon in March.
 The next luncheon will be April 9.

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"Acquisitions," con't. from page 5

erized, and the container tops were off so Gene, Don and Danny could inspect the vehicles and launch system. They settled on vehicle #41 which looked like it had little or no use. The three also decided to request the launch system. We thanked the Guardsmen for their help and before leaving Gene conveyed the same message to **Brigadier General Eric Peck**, Commander of the Training Center.

We knew the items would come sometime after the first of the new year. The Museum of the Kansas National Guard elected to also acquire one of the vehicles, so ours would come on an Army Guard transport when the Guard Museum's vehicle was delivered.

The truck arrived on January 9th, and a contingent of Museum members were present to receive the two containers. **Gene Howerter, Dave Murray, Danny San Romani, Russ Wiedle, Gary Naylor, Larry Lorentzen, Bob Crapser, Klio Hobbs, and Don Thun** were there to greet **Command Sergeant Major Greg Kober** and his load. Gary drove the fork lift and had the two containers off the flat bed in short order. We then removed the lids and began looking at the new acquisition.

The operating/technical manuals had been left in Salina, but the group started opening chests and putting pieces together. Enough of

The Snow Goose's legs will be spread like this when exhibited on the launch rail.



Our February luncheon speaker will keep you guessing

Mr. Roger Aeschliman, Vice President and Trust Officer of Core First Bank and Trust of Topeka, will be speaker at the February 13 luncheon. However, Mr. Aeschliman will not be speaking about banking or financial matters. And we are not going to tell you what he will be speaking about. It will be kind of a cross between *I've Got A Secret* and *What's My Line*. If you are too young to recognize either of those two former television shows, search the Internet.

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us had studied Internet images to have a fairly good idea of how to put the vehicle together. As we did, we found out how it worked with the ground launch bracket, which we call the launch rail.

After fitting the skids to the vehicle, we then removed them and put on a set of casters to enable us to roll the *Snow Goose* to Hangar 602. We then took on the launch rail and found that its container also included a loading ramp. Again, we pieced the puzzle together and found it interesting how the system all went together.

As we had no exhibit space to put the loading ramp, launch rail, and vehicle all together, we dismantled the loading ramp and placed it with the launch rail on a trailer for temporary stowage in Hangar 604. A few people rolled the *Snow Goose* over and into Hangar 602, and for now it is behind the right wing of the F-4 *Phantom*. We installed the propeller blades and placed an extra cargo bin by the vehicle for exhibit. We also have the skids with the vehicle. By 1:30 pm we had the *Snow Goose* on exhibit and were packing unneeded gear back into the containers and replacing their lids.

Russ Wiedle did some Internet searching and found four videos of the CG-10A being flown and one computer graphics video showing its potential shipborne use. Russ compiled these and they can be viewed on our big screen TV as a continuous video.

We plan the final exhibit of the *Snow Goose* to be on the launch rail. We first need to assemble the rail in such a manner that it includes large casters to allow us to move the exhibit as necessary. The *CQ-10A* becomes our first 21st century aerial vehicle in the collection. →



Top: Composite photo of the loading ramp and launch rail.
Center: Internet photo of Snow Goose in flight.
Left: The Snow Goose as currently exhibited.

Battle of the Bulge con't. from page 4

Siebert was put on a wood cutting detail. He said one day a guard gave them an ax and told them they may have to break down the doors of their barracks to get out and use it for their own protection. The next day, they were on wood chopping detail when they were told to pick up their gear and move out. The Russians were closing in. The prisoners began walking, and in one town Mr. Siebert said they were walking out one side as Russian troops entered the other side. By that evening, the prisoners reached American lines. The German guards turned their weapons over to the American prisoners and said they were now their prisoners. It was May 2, 1944.

Mr. Siebert said he had nightmares for 30 years after the war, waking up in the middle of the night yelling, but he could not remember any of the dreams. Then, the nightmares just quit.

The Battle of the Bulge lasted from December 16, 1944 until January 27, 1945. A closing comment on the big screen read, "If you lose freedom, it may take someone else to help you get it back." →

Due to space constraints, the Projects article could not be included in this issue, but watch for it in the next Plane Talk.

2012 Events Calendar

Dates subject to change

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Dates subject to change

March

19-22 - Spring Break
Aviation Education Class

April

28 - Celebrity Pancake Feed

June

4-7 - Aviation Education Class

July

9-12 - Aviation Education Class

August

6-9 - Aviation Education Class

September

29 - Winged Foot 5K Run/Walk

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Combat Air Museum welcomed 9,711 visitors from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and 27 countries in 2011

The following is a summary of recorded visitor attendance at Combat Air Museum for calendar year 2011.

We finished the year with 9,711 visitors, down 664 from 2010.

3,774 (38.9% of the total) were from Kansas, outside of Shawnee County.

2,775 (28.6% of the total) were from Shawnee County.

2,964 (30.5% of the total) were from the remaining 49 States, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico.

186 (1.9% of the total) were from 27 other Countries.

12 (0.1% of the total) were from residences unknown.

1st Quarter 1,644

2nd Quarter 3,067

3rd Quarter 3,234

4th Quarter 1,766

Museum tour-guides conducted 49 scheduled tours for a total of 1,011 visitors. Six of these were motor coach tours (193 people). ➔

Visitors

During **November**
the Museum had
570 visitors
from 27 states,
no foreign countries

During **December**
we had

532 visitors
from **28** states,
Washington, D.C.,
and
Belgium
Brazil
Luxemburg
Netherlands
New Zealand

➔ ➔ ➔