

# COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

## → → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Topeka Regional Airport Topeka, Kansas

October / November 2014 • Vol. 30, No. 5

### USS ORISKANY Association Reunion comes to Topeka

The dedication ceremony and dinner for the **USS ORISKANY Association Reunion** held on September 23 were well attended, and the late afternoon and evening events were a resounding success.

Some ORISKANY Association members visited the Museum as early as Saturday, September 20, and others came in over the next two days. Most visited the Museum on the afternoon of the 23rd, when we had tour guides available to take folks around. Earlier in the day, the Association held their annual meeting in the Senate Chambers of the State Capitol building. Governor Sam Brownback visited with the members for about 20 minutes.

**Bob Crapser, Wes Barricklow, Paul Frantz, and Danny San Romani** moved five aircraft out of Hangar 602 early Monday afternoon and began cleaning the floor. **Jim Braun** also came in and cleaned aircraft, exhibits, and floor areas around the engines on the south side of the hangar and under aircraft. About 3 pm, a crew of volunteers including **Tom Gorrell, Ted Nolde, Stu Entz, Klio Hobbs, Wes, Jim, Paul, and Danny** gathered to move the ORISKANY aircraft carrier model from the exhibit room in the southwest corner of 602 to the 602 hangar bay. This was done by laying three 4 feet X 8 feet X 3/4 inch thick plywood panels end to end over the ground and asphalt drive to provide a cushion while rolling the model in its exhibit case from one location to the other.

**"Oriskany" con't. on Page 6**



*Top: Setting the Watch as the model of the USS ORISKANY is unveiled.*

*Bottom: ORISKANY Association members gather in the Statehouse Senate Chamber.*

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#### **Inside This Issue**

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## Combat Air Museum

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Stu Entz

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Ted Nolde

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**

#### **Layout & Design**

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**Plane Talk**, the official newsletter  
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is published bi-monthly.

Your comments are welcomed.

## From the Chairman's Desk

*Gene Howerter, Chairman, BOD*

To say we have just concluded a very busy summer at the Combat Air Museum would be at best an understatement. We recently held our 10th annual run/walk event which was a big success. This event helps us keep our doors open during the slower winter months. If you were one of the sponsors of this fund raising event, a sincere thank you is in order.

This year's event was run in honor of a wonderful member and past BOD member Lt. Col Donald Eugene Mathers (Ret.). Don served in the USAF/SAC for 24 years as a navigator. At the conclusion of his service he helped crew the famous SR-71 Blackbird. What an experience. Don entered into rest August 26th. Our sincere condolences go out to his wife Rebecca (Becky) and all of the family. Thank you, Don, for your service. Our memories will never dim.

The Sunday before the Winged Foot event, we were host to the National USS Oriskany reunion. We held a wonderful event in our museum hangar #602 for members attending the reunion. This reunion, two years in the planning, was by all accounts a success. I conclude my column with a wonderful letter from Ron Thomas who attended this event. Ron's letter says it all.

*Thursday September 25th, 2014  
Good Morning Dave,*

*Thanks for letting us come in yesterday morning, after the big event, and take pictures of the Oriskany Model. Gerry Schulte and I felt a little guilty about not jumping in sooner to help clean up, but it was the least we could do! It truly was the centerpiece of the whole event. Everyone will be talking about it for a long time. I took plenty of pictures at the commissioning ceremony, but there were always people around, and it was sometimes hard just to get a picture of the model itself. On the 'sea' separating the bow and*

*the stern on the starboard side, it is barely noticeable, but a quick fix would be to just paint the waterline (black) where the sea has separated, thus not having to worry about trying to redo it. Oriskany had a black waterline, followed by red, and then the hull. The bilge effect coming out of the sides is spot on! I have heard many great comments on that, and many other details. Or you could just touch it up with gray. As I mentioned Oriskany went into dry dock for repairs and modifications - the model could go to model dock for the same, however, I'm sure lifting that huge piece of Plexiglas is no easy task!, and requires all hands on deck.*

*The day at CAM was great! I heard many good comments back at the hotel! Gerry the gentleman who came with me, (his wife couldn't attend), we worked together on the 1970 cruise, in the print shop, had a blast looking at all the planes. We went over to the workshop hangar, and we spent a lot of time there. Also, as I mentioned, the catering company's food was delicious, and the band you hired was great. A nice touch was the ROTC girls, with the presentation of the colors. We all enjoyed that! Ted, Gerry and I were looking at the Island, through the rear screens on our digital cameras. Gerry couldn't find a hatch door on the starboard side of the Island on the 07 level, that he and I went out of all the time. I had a better camera than he, and said look again, it's there, shown closed as it should be. A nice detail.*

*I wouldn't worry about the program running over. When we had our meeting at your beautiful Capitol Building, in the legislative chambers, our Oriskany President, Don Eskesn, was so nervous, he forgot the opening prayer, but your Governor, Sam Brownback (nice guy) reminded us of it. Don is a very sensitive man, but a great guy! As you well know,*

*Don got very emotional when talking about the Oriskany, in his speech at the ceremony, that his wife had to continue. Don was onboard during the terrible fire in 1966, and that still affects him, and a lot of individuals who were there that day. Gene Lewis was onboard too, at that time, but I haven't noticed that in him. Each person is affected in a different way.*

*Tell Dick for me, that he is a very good master of ceremonies. I enjoyed what he had to say. Also, for his steadfast direction, and dedication of seeing this project through! I know that he, yourself, Larry, Ted, and Darren, and all involved in this 7 year journey had many bumps in the road, are greatly gratified with the results. I know we (ex-Oriskany crew-members) all are! Anyone who isn't, well they can take a long walk off a short bridge! The speeches of Ted, Darren, and Larry were great as well! I'm glad Ted showed the old Island and all he had to do, to create a new one, especially the story about doing the top of the Island. Plus, Darren's speech, and his efforts with all the trials and tribulations on the planes. No easy task! The flight deck layout is fantastic! Last, but not least, Larry's passionate speech earned him a standing ovation, but that holds true for Ted and Darren as well! Larry was surprised at that. Personally, I think that for three gentlemen, who never served on any ship, to reconstruct it in the manor you did, is amazing. Sometimes, marrying components together can present problems and you three did fantastic! The details on each component, the Island, the Hull, the planes, are incredible. The end result - the best model in the country! (my opinion).*

*The Oriskany model represents many things to many people! For me, it represents a unique period in my youth from when I was almost 22 to almost 25 years old. That was 43 years ago now! Seeing the model, together, completed, is something that made the hair on the back of my head stand up. That hasn't happened since 2006, when I last stepped on the actual Oriskany in Pensacola just before her reefing.*

*Gerry and I toured Topeka after leaving CAM. The Governor's mansion is beautiful, and you have many nice parks! It was a nice trip back to Omaha, since Highway 75 is now done except for a couple of underpasses, and they should be done soon. Will be in touch about February or sooner. I promised Larry I would stop by, and we could eat at Todd's in Gardner.*

*The reunion is in Lincoln Nebraska for 2015. Will have to see about borrowing the model. (JUST KIDDING GUYS). I'll keep you posted on that.*

*Thanks so much again!*

*Best Regards,*

**Ron Thomas**

**In Memoriam  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Donald E. Mathers  
US Air Force (Ret)**

#3897

1932-2014

August 26, 2014

Topeka, Kansas

Eight-year plus member

**Supporters**

**New Supporters**

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Ethan, & Kellen Ellis  
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& Isaac Peterson

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Ted & Louise Marvin  
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Eliot Potter  
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Deegan, & Keegan Ruth  
Gerry Sibley  
James Slover  
James, Marion, & Julie Taylor

→ → →

**Join the  
Combat Air  
Museum!**

## Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and 5K Walk attract 107 participants and tally 17 new records

It would have been hard to ask for a better day to celebrate our 10th Anniversary Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and 5K Walk. It was a beautiful morning for the event that saw no less than 17 Age Group records set in the runs and 107 total participants cross the finish line. Thirty runners completed the 10K course, with 55 runners in the 5K race and 22 5K walkers. The first finisher came across the line in 18 minutes 38 seconds, and the final finisher came across in 1 hour 16 minute, 40 seconds.

**Dave and Judy Murray** were in the Museum before morning twilight making final adjustments to runners packets, registration set-ups, and Dave was entering runners' data on his computer. Other volunteers arrived over the next half hour, and as the sky grew lighter, began setting up other things needed for the race. The mile markers, cones marking turns on the course, and the table for the drink station on the backstretch of the course were set out. The start/finish line and finish chute were placed along the street. Other volunteers brought our new sound system outside and set it up. Tables for the awards and for post race snacks and water were set up. Runners and walkers began coming in and soon the Conference Room and area between the Museum and the parking lot were busy with people.

**Senior Master Sergeant Fernando Adams** brought several **Cadets from Highland Park High School's Air Force Junior ROTC** to act as course monitors. They met with **Gene Howerter** to get their assignments before being driven to their respective posts on the course. **Stu Entz** was present with his vintage Army jeep with trailer to lead runners on the first lap of the course.

**Sunflowers Striders** running club provided the timing equipment, operated by **Norma Weiser**.

As the 8 am start time neared, runners, walkers, and volunteers gathered in the parking lot. Gene welcomed everyone and thanked all for coming out to support this fundraiser for the Museum. The runners and walkers then moved to the starting line for final instructions. At 8 am an air horn signaled the start of the race, and the participants were off on the run or walk.

**Klio Hobbs** rode with Stu and **Les Carlson** as far as the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority offices. Klio has photographed several of the Winged Foot events, and this year tried something new. He mounted a video camera on the jeep's trailer to see how well it would record over one circuit of the race course. The results were outstanding. The resolution of the video was great, and the camera's stabilization function belied the fact it was mounted on a two wheel trailer rolling over less than totally smooth



streets. From the MTAA offices, Klio used his vehicle to get ahead of the runners for still photography. In the meantime, Stu continued to lead the runners around the course, and Les gave out already running stopwatches to JROTC Cadets at the mile markers to call out times to the runners and walkers.

**Josiah Powell** was the first 5K runner to finish, in 18:38, and **Hannah Gloss** was the first lady finisher in the 5K run, setting an age group record in the process with a time of 23:20. After the second loop around the course, **Miguel Espinosa** was the first 10K finisher, repeating last year's win and just four seconds off his course record time of 38:50. **Theresa Baier** was the first lady to finish the 10K course and set a new age group record with a time of 55:14. **Charlie Leeper** and **Angie Millstead** were the top finishers in the 5K walk with times of 34:51 and 37:53, respectively. **Diane Otte** power-walked the 10K and set an age group record, even for the run, with 1:09:08.

This year's race shirt featured an oblique, right side, image of the Museum F-14 Tomcat's nose, taken by Klio Hobbs. **In Honor of Don Mathers, Ret.** was in the lower left of the image. We honored Don, a CAM member and retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, for his long time support of the Winged Foot event. Don unexpectedly passed away one month before this year's fun run. He and **Becky**, his wife, joined CAM in 2006 and were strong supporters of this fund raiser from the time they joined. Over the years they participated in the event or worked as volunteers, and were annual sponsors. This year, family members, friends and neighbors participated in the run/walk.

**Zona Hudkins** of **Zona's Engraved Creations** designed and produced the race shirts. The back of the shirts listed 55 race sponsors.

**"Winged Foot Results" con't. on Page 8**



Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and 5K Walk



Opposite page: The start of the 10th Anniversary Winged Foot Run/Walk.  
This page, top row: Participants stretch out a few hundred yards from the start.  
Stu Entz and Les Carlson in the pace jeep.  
Middle row: A 5K age group record for Hannah Gloss.  
The buggy rider was sound asleep.  
Bottom row: This year's trophies.  
Miguel Espinosa repeats as 10K champion.



## "Oriskany" con't. from Page 1

The plywood panels were picked up and laid down as we moved along, as someone commented, "...like building the pyramids."

The move took about 20 minutes, and once positioned inside the hangar, a deep blue cloth was draped over the exhibit. Cleaning continued in the hangar. The group then set up 25 tables and 200 chairs for dining, six more tables for food and drink service, six tables for a silent auction, a couple of tables in the Conference Room, and a dozen more chairs for a band. Paul began dusting and wiping down chairs.

Volunteers gathered again Tuesday morning. Dust mops were run over the floor one more time, and Jim finished cleaning his areas. Paul, **Don Dawson**, and Danny placed plastic coverings on the tables. **Jim Leighton** and **Gene Howerter** set up the sound system. Work continued into the afternoon up until ORISKANY Association members began arriving as well as other persons wanting to attend the dedication ceremony of the model.

**Dick Trupp** had posted two nine-foot long ship drawings from an ORISKANY Booklet of General Plans, one showing an exterior plan view [viewed from the top] of the flight deck. The second was an outboard profile view [exterior side view] of the starboard [right] side of the carrier. He also had several smaller 42 inches X 28 inches panels mounted on foam board and placed on tripods set in various places around the hangar and exhibit rooms. Each panel showed two views of the carrier, including interior plan and profile views. As soon as former ORISKANY members saw the plans, they began pointing out familiar spaces, places, and compartments.

The Museum had some excellent publicity prior to the reunion event. The Sunday, September 14 edition of The Topeka Capital-Journal ran a full page article on the front page of the Midway section about the ORISKANY model, including comments from **Larry Todd**, **Ted Nolde**, and **Darren Roberts**, the three master modelers who rebuilt the model. Reporter **Jan Biles** included four photos with the writeup, showing excellent detail of the modelers' work. The article also posted the time and place for the unveiling.

**Hal and Nice' Loney** traveled from Kentucky to Topeka and were in the Museum when ORISKANY Association members began arriving on Tuesday afternoon. Hal is a former Blue Angel pilot who flew our Grumman Tiger, solo Number 5, with the Blues. Hal's presence this trip was directly related to ORISKANY as he flew F-8 Crusader fighters from her deck in 1969 during a Vietnam tour. Hal visited with many people as he stood by The Tiger.

Dick Trupp, a former Naval Aviator, was Master of Ceremonies for the dedication ceremony. He wore a tropical set (short sleeve shirt) of aviation working greens. The ceremony began with the Presentation of Colors by four cadets from the **Shawnee Heights High School Navy**



**Junior ROTC** followed by the National Anthem. The color guard included CAM member **Rachel Naylor**. Dick then welcomed all attending the ceremony and gave opening remarks. He gave a brief history of the Revolutionary War Battle of Oriskany, New York, following with how the aircraft carrier USS ORISKANY CVA-34 was selected for the model.

Dick then introduced Ted, Darren, and Larry, and each spoke about their involvement with rebuilding the model. Ted built a new island and mast/antenna structure from scratch. Darren built 49 aircraft and put each in authentic markings for the Air Wing aboard ORISKANY at that particular time. Larry rebuilt the hull and built a new flight deck. The crowd was very appreciative of their comments and work, and gave a standing ovation after Larry's remarks.

Following naval tradition, Dick then announced "Set the Watch" accompanied by piping from a Bosun's [Boatswain] Pipe. Former ORISKANY crewmen, **Richard Painter**, **Tom Sparks**, and **Jim Davis**, all in uniform, unveiled the model. Anchors Away was played. At first, several people stood to view the model, then the flood gates opened and folks surrounded the ORISKANY, taking pictures, and getting right up to the case to look at details of the model. They circled the exhibit, many more than once, and folks moved in and out to give others an opportunity to look at the carrier.

After a period of time, folks returned to their seats, and the program resumed with **Don Eskensen**, President of the ORISKANY Reunion Association, giving his remarks. This proved to be somewhat emotional for Don as he spoke, to the point his wife helped finish his remarks. Don and



at least one other ORISKANY crewman in attendance were aboard ORISKANY when it suffered a debilitating and deadly fire on October 26, 1966. The carrier was on station, off the coast of North Vietnam, readying to launch airstrikes. Through human error, a magnesium parachute flare was accidentally triggered in the forward hangar bay. The crewman threw the burning flare back into a flare magazine containing several hundred other magnesium flares, and closed the hatch on the magazine. The resulting fire took on explosive proportions in the hangar bay, and smoke and fumes from the fire entered the forward ventilation system, flooding forward decks, compartments, and particularly the berthing areas for pilots. Magnesium fires are extremely hard to extinguish. They generate blinding, bright light, and the flares burn about 5,400 degrees Fahrenheit. Water is not a good extinguishing agent, as the heat of the fire generates explosive hydrogen gas. Sand and dry chemical fire extinguishers are among the best fire fighting agents.

The flare locker eventually exploded with a massive fireball, and successive fireballs continued to erupt from the magazine. Three hours after it began, the fire was brought under control. Forty-four lives were lost, most to asphyxiation from the smoke and fumes, and some 156 men were injured. Damage to the forward hangar bay was extensive, and helicopters and aircraft were destroyed or damaged beyond repair. Flooding from firefighting water also caused damage. ORISKANY was pulled off the battle line and initially sent to Subic Bay, Philippines, to remove dead and injured personnel. From Subic, the carrier returned to the US for repairs. It was **"Oriskany" con't on Page 8**



*Above left: Master of Ceremonies Dick Trupp with Shawnee Heights High School Navy JROTC Color Guard Cadets. Rachel Naylor is on the right.*

*Top: People getting their first look at the completed model.*

*Above: Former ORISKANY sailors. Richard Painter is on the left.*

## "Oriskany," con't. from Page 7

a very harrowing experience for those aboard, and at the time, the largest loss of life on a US carrier since World War II.

After Don Eskensen finished his remarks, there was a moment of silence followed by singing of the Navy Hymn. This completed the dedication ceremony, and the dinner soon followed. Reunion attendees numbered 156 and the remaining seats were filled by other, invited guests.

The Brickyard Barn Inn of Topeka catered the buffet dinner. The Fairlawn Road Swing Band, also of Topeka, provided music through the evening as well as during the dedication ceremony. It included a vocalist, and the band played music of the 1960s.

The silent auction ran through the dinner, and items filled all six tables. The net result was a little over \$1,500 raised for the Association.

As the evening's events came to an end, the Reverend Mr. Walter Laughlin of Topeka, an ORISKANY sailor during the 1950s, gave the Invocation. Many people circled the ORISKANY model one more time, and the hangar finally emptied. The evening was a huge success and much enjoyed by all present. Accolades continued the following day as over 80 Association members rode buses to Abilene, Kansas, to visit the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum. The letter included in From the Chairman's Desk perhaps best sums up people's feelings about CAM, its volunteers, and the visit to Topeka.

Two CAM members, both former ORISKANY crewmen, played the key role in making this Reunion happen in Topeka and the Combat Air Museum. Bill Newman and Richard Painter traveled to the 2012 ORISKANY Reunion, held in San Antonio, Texas, armed with a notebook of photographs taken of the ORISKANY model, then as a work in progress. The two actively campaigned to bring the Reunion to Topeka, and the events over September 21 – 24 attest to their success. Bill and Richard, members of CAM's Board of Directors, and other CAM members spent the next two years working to ensure the ORISKANY Association would have both a memorable and enjoyable visit to Topeka.

An excellent article by Caroline Sweeney about the unveiling appeared in Wednesday morning's Topeka Capital-Journal.

Volunteers gathered once again on Wednesday morning to start cleanups in Hangar 602. The first order of business was cleaning the case covering the ORISKANY model. There were a multitude of smudges, fingerprints, and at least a few food stains on the cover. **Ron Thomas** and **Gerry Schulte**, both former ORISKANY sailors, came in early to get clear photos of the ORISKANY model, something they had not been able to do the previous evening. They told us of some of their experiences on the "Mighty O," and when they were done taking photos, helped with the pick up. Once cleaned, the process of rolling the exhibit



*A closer view depicting ORISKANY underway.*

back to the southwest exhibit room took place. The plywood panels were laid down again in caterpillar fashion, and a crew of volunteers successfully completed the transfer.

Chairs and tables were folded up, placed on respective racks, and rolled to the storage room. Volunteers then brought out mops and brooms to go over the floor where needed. As it had rained overnight, Danny San Romani decided to hold off towing in the planes until Thursday to allow the ramp area to dry out. On Thursday morning, Don Dawson, Paul Frantz, Wes Barricklow, Bill Stumpff and Danny brought the five aircraft back into the hangar, and placed stairs, signage, and other odds and ends back in place. Before noon, things were as they were on Monday morning.

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## **2014 Events**

### **October**

13 - Membership Luncheon  
with Officers of the US Army  
Command and General Staff College

### **November**

27 - Museum closed, Thanksgiving Day

### **December**

8 - History of the Citizen  
Potawatomi Nation  
with Col. Jon Boursaw (Ret)  
25 - Museum closed, Christmas Day

→ → →



**"Winged Foot Results" con't. from Page 4**

**5K Run Results**

\*\* - denotes age group record

**Ladies**

**Overall – Hannah Gloss, 23:20 \*\* for 15-19**

- 9 and under – 1. Jocelyn Powers, 24:29 \*\*
- 10-14 – 1. Regan Dehn, 37:24; 2. Olivia Barrett, 41:32
- 15-19 – 1. Stephanie Rappard, 30:09;
  - 2. Emma Judge, 34:53
- 20-24 – 1. Joanna Powell, 24:44
- 25-29 – 1. Amanda Harris, 39:29
- 30-34 – 1. Angela Poewrs, 24:35;
  - 2. Amy Rhoads, 39:02; 3. Stefani Bevitt, 39:31
- 35-39 – 1. Megan Wagner, 26:00; 2. Tricia Dehn, 37:26;
  - 3. Leslie Gordon, 39:27
- 40-44 – 1. Lisa Davenport, 38:24
- 45-49 – 1. Michelle Jenson, 30:17;
  - 2. Susan Gunnerson, 32:05
- 50-54 – 1. Ruth McCurry, 30:31;
  - 2. Susan McCullers, 35:45
- 55-59 – 1. Anna DeBusk, 26:34\*\*; 2. Cecelia Schell, 33:45
- 60-64 – 1. Dorothy Rappard, 29:54\*\*;
  - 2. Linda McGurn, 39:00

**Men**

**Overall- Josiah Powell, 18:38**

- 20-24 – 1. Braden Childers, 21:48; 2. Timothy Powell, 22:17; 3. Justus Mollenkamp, 30:21
- 25-29 – 1. Thad Powell, 19:16\*\*; 2. Joshua Powell, 23:54;
  - 3. Garrett Gasper, 29:23
- 30-34 – 1. William Amyx, 41:04; 2. Ryan Juhnke, 49:43
- 35-39 – 1. Ben Bradshaw, 22:15; 2. Justin Gordon, 23:17;
  - 3. Brian Amborski, 26:53
- 45-49 – 1. Rick Myers, 19:50; 2. Patrick Berry, 25:11;
  - 3. Terry Rhoads, 25:56
- 50-54 – 1. Ron Childers, 24:11; 2. Jeff DeBusk, 24:46;
  - 3. Ray Fay, 34:22
- 55-59 – 1. Karl Gunnerson, 22:33; 2. Don Baker, 29:33;
  - 3. Ron Brush, 31:17
- 60-64 – 1. Jack Mollenkamp, 30:22
- 65-69 – 1. John Stambaugh, 25:51;
  - 2. Michael Robinson, 29:28
- 70-74 – 1. Monty Nelson, 28:51; 2. Wes Nicholson, 39:35
- 75-79 – 1. Clay Lang, 31:04\*\*

**10K Run Results**

\*\* - denotes age group record

**Ladies**

**Overall – Theresa Baier, 55:14\*\* for 35-39**

- 25-29 – 1. Amber Davatz, 56:57\*\*
- 30-34 – 1. Julie Shin, 1:04:05\*\*; 2. Bri Smith, 1:11:52
- 35-39 – 1. Andrea Beach, 57:31;
  - 2. Amanda Pearson, 1:12:25
- 40-44 – 1. Alicia Amborski, 1:02:22
- 45-49 – 1. Anne Lewis Smith, 1:02:18

- 50-54 – 1. Stephanie Johnson, 1:16:40
- 55-59 – 1. Rebecca Kincaid, 57:45\*\*;
- 2. Marla Rhoden, 58:45; 3. Trish Hackett, 1:06:36
- 60-64 – 1. Debbie Simeka, 59:47\*\*
- 65-69 – 1. Diane Otte, 1:09:08\*\*

**Men**

**Overall – Miguel Espinosa, 38:54**

- 15-19 – 1. Isaiah Powell, 45:31\*\*
  - 20-24 – 1. Philip Steele, 1:06:29
  - 25-29 – 1. Nick Taylor, 4:08
  - 30-34 – 1. Michael Allen, 46:58;
    - 2. Rob Voelker, 1:02:12; 3. Woo Shin, 1:04:06
  - 35-39 – 1. Brandon Walker, 49:26\*\*; 2. Trenton James, 57:45; 3. Matthew Pearson, 1:15:04
  - 45-49 – 1. John Lewis-Smith, 1:02:15\*\*
  - 50-54 – 1. Paul Wagner, 42:02\*\*
  - 55-59 – 1. Tom Arnhold, 46:29; 2. Kevin Hackett, 1:06:41
  - 60-64 – Brad Rhoden, 46:15\*\*
- → →

**Museum members** who helped run the event, cheer on participants, or were participants themselves included:

**Volunteers**

- Gene Howerter
- Jack Vaughn
- Klio Hobbs
- Dave & Judy Murray
- Patsy Rush
- Paul & Betty Frantz
- Deloris Zink
- Dick & Jeane Trupp
- Ted Nolde
- Don & Peggy Dawson
- Jim Leighton
- Tad Pritchett
- Stu Entz
- Jim Braun
- Mary Ann Kelly
- Les Carlson
- Ralph Knehans
- Wayne Dodson
- Danny San Romani

**Participants**

- Regan Dehn
  - Tricia Dehn
  - Nelson Hinman
  - Bob Kelly
- → →

**Visitors**

During **July** the Museum had **1,363 visitors from 35 states, Puerto Rico, and**

- Australia
- Brazil
- China
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Norway
- Philippines

During **August** we had **984 visitors from 36 states, Puerto Rico, and**

- Australia
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- France
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Switzerland
- Ukraine

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## Museum of Kansas National Guard provides the setting and the topic for Membership Luncheon

CAM held its August 11 Membership Luncheon in the **Museum of the Kansas National Guard**. The Museum is also located on the Topeka Regional Airport and Business Center grounds. Its building is located very near the site of the former administration building for Forbes Air Force Base that was just inside the main gate entrance. As you travel north or south on Topeka Boulevard, turn in at the KC-135 Stratotanker that sits on the east side of the Boulevard. The Museum of the Kansas National Guard is ahead and to your left a short distance after coming onto the airport grounds. An F-105 Thunderchief and EB-57 Canberra are also near the KC-135. An F-4 Phantom II is to the left of the building entrance, while an OH-6 Cayuse helicopter, M38 jeep and M151A1 jeep and trailer are in front of the entrance. An M60A-1 tank is to the right. The grounds behind the Museum, known as **Patriot Field**, have four more helicopters and a number of vehicles, armor and artillery. The outdoor exhibits represent some, but by no means all, of the equipment once flown or operated by Kansas Air and Army National Guard units.

**Retired Brigadier General Ed Gerhardt**, President of the Board of Directors, hosted the luncheon and was our speaker. He introduced board members **Paul Idol** and **Justin Gordon**. General Gerhardt's first comments were about the **Traveling Vietnam Wall** coming to the Museum during the last week of August. This is an 80% scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. It arrived August 27, escorted by the Patriot Guard, and opened for viewing from August 28 until the afternoon of August 31. General Gerhardt said it cost \$8,650 just to transport the wall to Topeka. Through fund raising efforts and several large contributions, the Museum raised some \$15,000 to cover that cost and ancillary expenses associated with exhibiting the Wall.

The Museum of the Kansas National Guard opened February 1, 1997. It took twelve years of work raising some \$700,000 to build the facility. General Gerhardt said the Kansas Adjutant General's Department pays the utilities. All other funding comes through donations and selling memorial bricks. The Museum pays its own telephone and IT services. He said there is no paid staff. Those who operate the Museum are all volunteers. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm with free admission.

Exhibits and collections inside the Museum represent the Kansas Army and Air National Guard from 1854 through today. The exhibits are laid out sequentially. General Gerhardt discussed a few of the exhibits. One special exhibit was of James Naismith, inventor of basketball and University of Kansas (KU) basketball coach from 1898-1937. Naismith was also a Captain and Chaplain

in the First Kansas Infantry Regiment, Kansas National Guard. He took a hiatus from KU from 1914-1919 due to World War I. He was stationed with the First Kansas Infantry Regiment along the Mexico border, and then was a Military and YMCA Secretary in France from 1917-1919.

General Gerhardt spoke about a controversial painting currently on exhibit. It is a life size, standing portrait of Adolf Hitler. A soldier of the 35th Infantry Division took the painting from a Russian soldier in May 1945. The soldier passed away, then his wife passed away, and their daughters fought over its possession. An Arkansas judge sent it to the Museum. The painting is exhibited in a narrow hallway, seen through the bars of a jail door.

There is a large 48-star US flag brought back to the US by Chaplain Harry Washburn. It was hand sewn by German nuns in 1945 and given to the 137th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division.

General Gerhardt spoke about the M.A.S.H. exhibit. A Florida man had it set up in his back yard. Bill Smith, a Kansas Guardsman, bought it on eBay and donated it to the Museum.

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The general mentioned a 1942 Harley-Davidson motorcycle that is part of an exhibit and a collection of World War I and World War II sheet music from Mr. Larry Wills, a music teacher in Topeka's 501 school district.

General Gerhardt then talked about Kansas native Erwin R. Bleckley, who entered the Kansas Guard in June 1917. He became an Artillery Officer, and his Guard unit arrived in France in March 1918. At that time, the fledgling overseas US Air Service was looking for Aerial Artillery Observers, and Bleckley volunteered for that service. After training, he was attached to the 50th Aero Squadron in August 1918.

During the first week of October 1918, the 50th Aero Squadron flew missions in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive searching for a "Lost Battalion" of the 308th Infantry Regiment, cut off and surrounded by German forces. Flights were made to find the battalion and then fly supplies to it. On October 6, pilot 1st Lieutenant Harold E. Goettler, and observer 2nd Lieutenant Bleckley flew over enemy lines in search of the battalion. They returned from the mission with a shot up aircraft and a rough running

engine. The aircraft was fueled up, and the pair took off for their second mission. This time, the ground fire was more accurate, killing Goettler and causing the plane to crash behind friendly lines. Bleckley was thrown from the plane and died en route to a field hospital. Both aviators were eventually awarded the Medal of Honor.

General Gerhardt said eleven Kansas Guardsmen have been awarded the Medal of Honor. The most recent was to Don Ballard, a retired Colonel in the Kansas Guard. Ballard earned his Medal of Honor when he was a US Navy Hospital Corpsman Second Class during the Vietnam War. In 1968 he was assigned to Company M, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. His company came under attack from North Vietnamese Army forces. Ballard was tending to wounded Marines when an enemy grenade landed by them. Ballard covered the grenade with his body, but it did not explode. He picked it up and threw it away, at which time it did explode. HM2 Ballard was awarded his Medal of Honor in 1970. He left the Navy and entered the US Army. He attended and graduated from Officer Candidate School. He entered the Kansas Army National Guard in 1973 and retired in 2000.

William B. Trembley was another Kansas Guardsman General Gerhardt spoke of who earned the Medal of Honor. Trembley's action took place in 1898 during the Spanish American War, at Culumpit, Luzon, Philippine Islands. He was a Corporal in Company B, 20th Regiment, Kansas Volunteer Infantry. Trembley's actions involved swimming across a river in the face of enemy fire with a line that was attached to one bank and then attaching the other end of the line to the opposite bank so US forces could use it to cross the river. The US troops did this and drove the enemy from their positions. General Gerhardt said sometime after Trembley's death in the 1950s, his Medal of Honor was lost, then found. Trembley is a member of the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame.

General Gerhardt mentioned a couple of the Air National Guard units. He said the 117th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron flew its RB-57s in support of some 30 nuclear bomb tests. The 184th Fighter Squadron was called up after the 1968 USS Pueblo incident when North Korea seized this intelligence ship and its crew.

He told us about a Captain Ray Simmons who was in Berlin, Germany, with counterintelligence when Hermann Goering turned himself in. Captain Simmons kept two plates from the facility Goering was initially held in that are now in the Museum's collection. General Gerhardt pointed out a painting of a Civil War battle that involved the Kansas Guard. He also mentioned a "Battle of the Kansas Capitol." This occurred in February 1893 when Populists occupied Representative Hall in the Statehouse, locking the Republicans out. Republicans gained entry to the Hall using a sledge hammer against the door of the House of Representatives. When it appeared a fighting war may take place, the Governor called in companies of militia. However, most militia members were Republicans

and did not obey the Populist Governor. After two days, the "war" ended and Republicans regained the hall while Populists agreed to meet in a separate Statehouse room.

General Gerhardt mentioned a five foot model of the USS TOPEKA (CLG-8) guided missile cruiser on exhibit, and also mentioned over thirty paintings donated to the Museum by Mr. James W. Mirick of Lawrence, Kansas. Thirteen of those paintings are on loan to and exhibited in the Combat Air Museum.

General Gerhardt briefly spoke about the annual Heartland Military Day held at the Museum on the first or second Saturday in June. Encampments on Patriot Field by reenactors take place as well as other activities. The theme for 2015 will be Global War on Terrorism.

The Museum holds the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame. There are currently 103 inductees. General Gerhardt was inducted in 2007.

The Kansas National Guard broke ground in 2009 for a major addition to the Museum to house the 35th Infantry Division Museum. The 35th Division was formed in World War I, and its headquarters is currently in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. It is a National Guard unit formed of personnel from Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri. The new addition opened in 2010 and includes an Educational/Conference Center and Research Library.

We presented General Gerhardt with a Certificate of Appreciation and most people stayed to tour the Museum.

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**Visit  
our website  
at [www.combatairmuseum.org](http://www.combatairmuseum.org)**

## ***Guest speakers for our next Membership Luncheon***

Our speakers for the October Membership Luncheon will be three officers currently attending the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. They include Erica D. Huston, Major, US Army; Nicholas R. Ihde, Major, US Air Force; and Jeffrey M. Mack, Major, US Air Force.

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Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and 5K Walk

## ***Calendar of Events***

### ***October***

#### **Monday October 13**

Membership Luncheon  
Jean Wanner Education Conference Room  
11:30 am

Three officers from  
the Command and General  
Staff College, Fort Leavenworth  
will be our  
guest speakers.

#### **Saturday, October 18**

Shawnee Heights Navy JROTC  
Navy Ball  
Hangar 602  
4 pm-10:00 pm

### ***November***

#### **Thursday November 27**

Thanksgiving Day  
The Museum is closed  
There is no Membership Luncheon in November.  
The next luncheon will be Monday, December 8.

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