

# COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

## → → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Topeka Regional Airport Topeka, Kansas

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### Fate, luck or just not his time? He survived the crash of a Navy Constellation

By Dennis Smirl

Members and guests of the Combat Air Museum met for lunch and a speaker in the Bob Dole Education Center at 11:30 A.M. on June 12. The near-capacity crowd enjoyed an excellent, tasty and filling covered dish luncheon, as usual.

Chairman Gene Howerter called the more formal portion of the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. He led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and then a short prayer. After that, Gene talked about several issues of importance to the group, concentrating on the renamed Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot 5K/10K Run & 4K Walk, which will be part of the inaugural Kansas Chocolate Festival in Topeka. The Combat Air Museum needs volunteers for the museum's 12th annual run/walk and everyone who shows up will have a job to do.

Gene then introduced our speaker for the day, the Reverend Larry Thomas, who told us about surviving the crash of a U.S. Navy WV-2 Warning Star radar surveillance aircraft at Patuxent River Naval Air Station on August 8, 1962. The WV-2 was the Navy counterpart to the U.S. Air Force EC-121 Super Constellation, like the one in the museum's collection. With nineteen men aboard, the Lockheed aircraft was returning from a flight to Corpus Christi, Texas when it encountered extreme weather as the pilot was attempting a landing.

As is normal in bad weather, the WV-2 began a ground-controlled approach, but the storm was so intense that ground weather lost contact with them twice. Continuing the approach on a combination of instruments and what radar was available, visibility through the aircraft's windshield had dropped to zero.

Larry Thomas was a flight engineer at the time, and had earlier swapped out his position with another



Gene Howerter (left) presents Rev. Larry Thomas with a certificate of appreciation – photo by Dave Murray

flight engineer who wanted something to do. He told us that he had moved to the back of the fuselage and was trying to strap himself into a bunk when things started going very wrong.

The approach was too low and too short by about half a mile and the Warning Star flew into a grove of trees which caused heavy damage to the wings and partial loss of engine power. Soon, all four engines failed completely, and the aircraft stalled. As it did, it fell to

**"Fate," con't. on page 9**

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**Combat Air Museum**

Topeka Regional Airport

Hangars 602 &amp; 604

7016 SE Forbes Avenue

Topeka, KS 66619-1444

Telephone (785) 862-3303

FAX (785) 862-3304

www.combatairmuseum.org

Provided by

Rossini Management Systems, Inc.

Email: office@combatairmuseum.com

**Museum Director**

Kevin Drewelow

**Office Manager**

Deloris Zink

**Board of Directors**Gene Howerter - *Chairman*Dave Murray - *Deputy Chairman*Tad Pritchett - *Secretary*

Wes Barricklow

Les Carlson

Stu Entz

Ted Nolde

Bill Stumpff

Dick Trupp

Mike Welch

**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

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Your comments are welcomed.

# From the Chairman's Desk

*Gene Howerter, Chairman, BOD*

It is hard to believe the summer is already half over. All of us who make a second home at the Combat Air Museum have been hard at work and very busy this summer. New displays are up and our volunteers have made several changes as they have rotated, relocated and fine-tuned some displays. Our new director Kevin Drewelow is settling in and as you may expect he brings a few fresh ideas which he is working on. Our former curator Danny San Romani is busy and working harder than ever sprucing up the museum, especially in Hangar #604. He is making a lot of headway on his pet project, restoring the F-86, which will be beautiful when completed. We are all very thankful for the almost twenty years of service and hard work Danny brought to our museum. The good news is he is just as much a part of the museum as ever, but in a little different role as a valuable volunteer.

After one very successful annual fund raiser, our Celebrity Pancake Feed, the museum will now turn its attention to another annual fund raising event, our run/walk. This year's event is named the Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot 5K/10K Run & 4K Walk. The event will be held on Saturday, September 24 at 8:00 a.m. It will kick off the first annual "Kansas Chocolate Festival," a day of activities which will run from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in downtown Topeka. Visit Topeka Inc. and Mars North America will host this event and they have given the museum the privilege of being a partner which includes our run/walk at the Topeka Regional Airport at Forbes Field. What a great way to kick off our 12th annual run/walk!

As you would expect, there is a lot of work involved in making this event successful for our museum. Keep in mind that funds raised will benefit the Combat Air Mu-

seum. Here are a few ways you can help. The museum will again solicit sponsors for this event. As in the past, all sponsors who donate \$100 or more will be listed on the back of the official event shirt. You are going to love the design on this year's shirt. The museum will receive all sponsor dollars donated. Second, if you are ready, willing, and able to lend your support as a volunteer, give us a call at the museum. Third, tell all your family and friends to register and join us for the walk or run. All the information is on our web page at www.combatairmuseum.org. This would be a great way to support the museum.

The Combat Air Museum is just completing its third of four annual summer Young Aviators education classes. Each class has had almost the maximum number of students allowed. The final class, which will take place prior to students returning to school in August, is also pretty much full at this time. This is a great program for kids aged eight to twelve. For you grandparents out there, this would be a great way for you to bond with your grandchildren next summer. You can always check the dates online for future reference.

Finally, I would like to thank each of you who sent an extra donation to the museum when paying your annual dues. The museum can only make it with your membership support and many of you have been more than kind and generous when writing your dues check. It is our hope at CAM that all members will visit or volunteer at the museum as often as availability and health will allow. We do not take your membership for granted. We have so much to offer to people from all over the world who visit the museum. We can only do it with your support. Thank you for being a part of this organization and again we hope to see or hear from you soon.

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## CAM in the news and the community

CAM members have been busy on television and in the community this summer.

The long running series "Sunflower Journeys" recently completed a segment on the museum that should air in the Topeka area on KTWU and elsewhere in October. The episode takes a close look at the role of volunteers in the restoration of our Lockheed EC-121 Constellation and elsewhere in the museum. Bill Shaffer has been involved for years in producing "Sunflower Journeys" and retired shortly after shooting this feature. He has plans for the future which include CAM and we look forward to working with him.

WIBW TV sent photographer Doug Brown and reporter Tori Mason to CAM to cover our third Young Aviators class of the summer. They stayed most of the morning, shot a lot of video and interviewed some of the students. WIBW went on to air different parts of the video several times over the next few days. The coverage directly resulted in more visitors and a spike in phone calls from people seeking to enroll their children in the last class of the summer. You can view the segment on WIBW's website at <http://www.wibw.com/content/news/Kids-are-spreading-their-wings-at-the-Combat-Air-Museum-this-summer-386707701.html>

CAM volunteers staffed two community displays recently. Gene Howerter, Dave Murray and Kevin Drewelow attended the Jayhawk Area Council of Boy Scouts annual planning meeting to inform area scout leaders of opportunities at CAM for tours and to complete the aviation merit badge. While we have helped Boy Scouts complete parts of the aviation merit badge in the past, we will soon offer classes that will satisfy



*Les Carlson and Kevin Drewelow answer questions from a visitor at a recent "South Steps" event at the Kansas Statehouse – photo by Dick Trupp*

all requirements. Kevin Drewelow has completed requirements to be an aviation merit badge counselor. CAM will soon offer similar classes for Girl Scouts to earn the organization's aviation fun patch.

The Kansas Department of Administration invited CAM to participate in their twice monthly "South Steps Fridays" event at the Kansas Statehouse. As their website describes it, "Each week features live music from the Jazz Combo from the University of Kansas School of Music, provided through a partnership with Reach Out Kansas Inc. In addition, there will be a variety of informational booths and activities to learn more about attractions throughout the state - from travel, tourism, agriculture, education, health and wellness and much more." Les Carlson, Gene Howerter, Dick Trupp and Kevin Drewelow have all supported the CAM display, telling visitors about CAM, displaying some artifacts and flying rubber band airplanes. Several people who attended South Steps events later came to visit CAM.

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## Dillon's Community Rewards Program helps CAM

If you shop at Dillon's and have a Plus Shopper's Card, you can help support the Combat Air Museum with just a phone call or a few keystrokes. Dillon's has allocated \$2.0 million for this year to benefit local schools and non-profit organizations, and our museum is benefitting from our members who have registered with Dillon's Community Rewards Program.

Call 800.576.4377 and the Dillon's customer service representative will register or reenroll you in about two minutes. You'll need to provide them with the Combat Air Museum's five digit NPO number, 43200. You must reenroll in the program in January.

Online, visit <https://www.dillons.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> and sign in or establish an account; click "Enroll Now" and enter the Combat Air Museum's five digit NPO number 43200; select Combat Air Museum; click on "Enroll" and Dillon's does the rest. You'll need to reenroll in the program in January. Thanks to your generosity, the museum receives a check from Dillon's each quarter that really helps us maintain the collection and facilities and provide the classes and service our visitors enjoy. If you haven't joined or renewed this year, why not take a few moments to do so right now?

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# Perseverance prevails: B-29 "Doc" flies again after 16 year restoration

By Kevin Drewelow

Last February, Combat Air Museum members listened as Jim Murphy, manager of the restoration of the Boeing B-29 named "Doc," described how a group of people found the Superfortress in a California desert and transported it to Wichita, intending to return it to flight. That dream became a reality early in the morning on July 17 when "Doc" made its first flight since 1956.

The Kansas Aviation Museum invited enthusiasts to view the flight from their grounds adjacent McConnell Air Force Base and opened their gates at 5 a.m. for early birds. A few visitors who arrived before sunrise essentially had the museum to themselves. The Kansas Aviation Museum is housed in a wonderful art-deco era passenger terminal and has a fascinating collection of aircraft, engines, artifacts and flight simulators which make great use of the space. Most visitors gathered outside on the second floor observation deck; located on the southeast side of the museum, it afforded a great view of Doc's parking spot and the southern two-thirds of the single runway at McConnell. The wind was out of the south, almost right down the runway at 13 knots.

Two school buses hauled VIPs to a special viewing area near the departure end of the runway. We learned later that the VIPs included Congressman Mike Pompeo and Wichita Mayor Jeff Longwell, but were mostly the volunteers who had spent the last sixteen years returning "Doc" to its airworthy condition. The ground crew towed "Doc" from near the Spirit AeroSystems hangars to a position father out on the parking ramp at 6:30 a.m.

People continued to arrive at the museum throughout the morning; they filled the observation deck and were all along the security fence when the crew started engines at 8:08 a.m. Although "Doc" was some distance from the museum, we could still smell the exhaust from the four Wright R-3350 engines! A McConnell-based KC-135R Stratotanker departed to the south, giving the onlookers a bit of a show with an aggressive (for a KC-135) climbout. A small red aircraft orbiting overhead would serve as the chase plane for the bomber's flight.



*"Doc" ascends from runway 19 at McConnell AFB on its first post-restoration flight July 17, 2016 – photo by Danny San Romani*

Eleven minutes later, "Doc" started moving under its own power. The bomber traveled north on the taxiway and disappeared from view behind a nearby Air Force hangar. A few minutes later, someone listening to radio traffic stated "Doc" was returning to parking because of a mechanical problem. One bomb door had opened slightly and the crew could not close it, but they resolved the problem on the parking ramp within ten minutes without shutting down engines and were once again taxiing for takeoff.

The second time was the charm. We heard "Doc" before we saw it come into view just before it took off. It looked and sounded great and appeared to levitate from the runway. The crowd spontaneously broke out in cheers and applause. Many present had spent time working on "Doc" over the years and while they were happy to see "Doc" airborne, several recalled friends who had helped restore the bomber but had passed away before the first flight. "Doc" flew a large left hand pattern from runway 19. The bomber hadn't been out of our view for long when we heard it was turning final for a full stop. That was unusual as the crew had planned to fly for a longer span of time. But this was called a test flight for a reason and we soon learned why.

Each of the four engines is fitted with two chip detectors, which sense the presence of metal in the oil, to warn of impending failure. Three of the eight chip detectors illuminated in flight, two weakly, so the crew did the right

**"Perseverance," con't on page 8**





*Left: One of the Young Aviators Classes of Summer 2016 – photo by Kevin Drewelow*

*Above: A MTAA firefighter trains a Young Aviator on proper use of a firehose – photo by Dave Murray*

## Young Aviators Program 2016

*By Dave Murray*

The Young Aviators program featured four summer classes this year, two in June, and one each in July and August. The extra June class was to accommodate the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Boys and Girls Club which could not participate in the early June class due to the 2016 Pow Wow celebration being held by the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

The first day of class is always devoted to finding out why aircraft fly, the four aerodynamic forces exerted on a plane in flight and the structure of aircraft, including the important control surfaces developed to help control a plane in flight. A museum tour by some experienced and patient tour guides follows and then the students receive homework for learning the phonetic alphabet.

Every day a portion of the class gets to fly a plane in the CAM flight simulator, some with more success than others, but usually, with the patience of the flight instructor, they eventually master the art of taking off or landing a plane. The CAM simulator has proven to be a valuable tool for the Young Aviators program thanks to our many volunteer flight simulator instructors.

We spend days two through four on visits to the various civilian and military organizations based at Forbes Field: the Topeka Regional Airport control tower; the Kansas Army National Guard 108th Aviation Regiment; the Kansas Air National Guard 190th Air Refueling Wing; the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority Fire and Security facilities; and sometimes the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. We appreciate that all these

organizations cooperate so well with our Young Aviators program in allowing the students to find out what they do and allow the kids to crawl over their precious aircraft and fire equipment.

As Topeka Regional Airport is often a fairly quiet zone compared to busier airports, we are always hoping to see at least some aviation activity in the skies around Forbes Field. This year we have not been disappointed. We have seen a multitude of private planes land and take off, LifeStar and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters from the 108th, KC-135 Stratotankers from the 190th and T-38 Talon trainers from Whiteman AFB doing touch and goes! The young aviators learned about how air traffic controllers have to keep planes separated in the air in three dimensions and got to see how the controllers utilize all the radar and radio equipment to control these aircraft in the skies over Topeka.

At the 108th Aviation Regiment the students got to see the very newest Army versions of the Blackhawk helicopters, some with only 15 and 22 hours of flying time and yet the youngsters were still allowed to climb inside these sparkling new choppers. They learned how the Kansas Army National Guard uses them to fight wild fires in Kansas and neighboring states and how the ARNG provides medical support on rescue missions, all the time being ready and prepared to be deployed when called to do so.

There are always a few things that make each camp memorable and the July class was no exception. A group

**"Young Aviators," con't. on page 9**

## Projects update

Despite the heat, humidity and tornadoes (more on that in a moment!) our volunteers have been quite busy on a variety of displays in both hangars that you'll notice during your next visit.

### Engine collection

The Combat Air Museum has a remarkable collection of aircraft engines. Some are displayed next to the aircraft they propelled, others are situated along the south wall of Hangar 602, and a few others were randomly located throughout Hangar 604. After a brief discussion about moving the "orphan" engines from 604 to 602, Wes Barricklow armed himself with a tape measure, a roll of painter's tape and pad of paper and began planning the move. Before long, the floor along the south edge of 602 sprouted bits of blue tape with cryptic markings depicting Wes' vision of where each engine should go. Remarkably, it appeared they would all fit while allowing visitor access all around each engine. It was time to turn talk into action.

Early one July morning, Wes, aided by Danny San Romani, Don Dawson, Dick Trupp and Kevin Drewelow, removed the searchlight and generator from 602 and then began moving engines out of 604. While we could move some by pushing and pulling, others like the Pratt & Whitney R-4360 four-row radial, required Don Dawson and his fork lift to uproot and move them outside.

Once the engines were on the ramp, we removed the accumulated dust, dirt, grease and grime from the engines with mineral spirits. Wes then used a power washer on the various engine stands. A strong northerly wind provided some relief from the heat and quickly dried the engines and mounts. The searchlight and generator fit nicely in 604 between the CH-54A Skycrane and F3D Skyknight. It was then time to put Wes' plan to the test: would it all really fit as planned or were we in for a surprise?

We had to nudge the Harvard a bit and things were cozy getting past the CH-53 Sea Stallion, but it DID all fit! The only surprise was due to a flat-spotted caster wheel on the Wright R-1820; it didn't want to roll, but it was no match for our pallet jack! Now that the greater part of our engine collection has coalesced on the south side of 602, you'll soon see improved and standardized signage describing the significance of each engine, their specifications and the types of aircraft that used each engine.



*Danny San Romani, Wes Barricklow, Dick Trupp and Don Dawson prepare to move the P&W R1535 - photo by Kevin Drewelow*

### Pratt & Whitney J57 turbojet training aid

Don Dawson and Danny San Romani continue to make progress on the Pratt & Whitney J57 turbojet training aid. You may recall from an earlier edition of Plane Talk that this training aid, lacking internal components, was used to familiarize B-52 crews and maintainers with the engine. Don and Danny brought the training aid inside and rested it on the stand Don modified to support it. The two fitted a few of the parts that came with the mockups, but despite referring to photographs and some limited technical data, they were not certain of the proper location for some of the components. They needed an expert!

Kevin Drewelow called retired Senior Master Sergeant Lester Brown, former superintendent of the 190th Air Refueling Wing Propulsion Shop. SMSgt Brown worked in and ran the propulsion shop when the 190th operated J57-powered Boeing KC-135A Stratotankers. Lester was happy to visit the museum and help with a J57 again. He had never seen this type of training aid, but it was still a J57, if not an operational engine. He quickly determined where the remaining parts needed to be installed and Danny took good notes. SMSgt Brown looks forward to returning to see their progress.



*A partial view of the engine display in hangar 602 -  
photo by Kevin Drewelow  
Right: Retired SMSgt Lester Brown and Danny San  
Romani discuss a part on the J57 training aid  
- photo by Kevin Drewelow*



He'll have another reason to return to CAM soon – the Museum of the United States Air Force offered a real J57 to CAM and we have accepted it. This J57 is located at the former Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois where it was used to train prospective Air Force engine mechanics. The engine was part of the recently closed Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum and is displayed as a series of subassemblies as if in an exploded view on a number of metal stands. We are currently working on travel and transportation plans and will report on further details as they become available.

#### **"Tornado Bob" and the Hiller UH-12**

Bob Crapser could have been forgiven if he had stopped working on the Hiller UH-12 for a few weeks; after all, a tornado passed within two blocks of his Eureka home on the night of July 8. In fact, three tornadoes visited Eureka that evening; one went through a nursing home, but no one was injured! Bob and his family were fortunate as they had no damage but a lot of debris to clean up.

Bob has been plugging away on the diminutive helicopter. He has painted all of the large components in his Goldilocks-inspired "just the right size" paint booth and has a few small components remaining. He'll soon begin assembling the parts and it will begin to look like a helicopter again!

**"Projects," con't. on page 8**

Please ask your family and friends  
to walk with us  
in the Kansas Chocolate Festival  
Winged Foot 5K/10K Run  
and 4K Walk  
Saturday September 24.  
All proceeds benefit  
the Combat Air Museum.



## **"Projects," con't. from page 7**

### **F-86H Sabre**

Danny San Romani continues work inside the rear fuselage of the F-86. He cleaned the interior of dirt, grime, and leftovers from former bird occupation, and removed loose and flaking primer inside the fuselage. He has used a variety of tools including pneumatic tools with fiber discs, sanding sponges, and brass brushes; even compressed air at 90 psi has worked to remove loose primer. He has found the air only needs a small hole or crack to get under the primer and pop it off. Where these tools cannot reach, he has used a portable bead blaster to remove the loose primer and to take care of corrosion in the aluminum and steel fittings and fasteners. He then vacuums the cleaned and prepped areas and clears it with compressed air, and then applies new primer to all bare metal areas. Danny doesn't disturb any primer still binding well after so many decades. Danny is setting the bar very high for volunteers: he can often be found garbed head to toe in safety gear, respirator and coveralls, tucked in to the Sabre's aft fuselage assembly, nearly invisible in a cloud of paint flakes and all during days of very high heat indices!

### **Major Daniel Forbes display**

Dave Murray, Gene Howerter and Kevin Drewelow accomplished a bit of housekeeping on the Major Forbes display in the Bob Dole Education Center before adding some new artifacts. Pride of place goes to a superb model of the Northrop YB-49 Flying Wing that Larry Mann built, representing the aircraft Major Forbes and Captain Glen Edwards were flying when they lost their lives in a test flight mishap. We also added a few relics retrieved from the crash site.

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*Top right: "Tornado Bob" Crapser at work on the Hiller UH-12 – photo by Kevin Drewelow*

*Above: Danny San Romani removing corrosion and deteriorated paint from the interior of the F-86 aft fuselage - photo by Kevin Drewelow*



## **"Perseverance," con't. from page 4**

thing and returned to McConnell. As we went to press, no further information was available concerning the chip detectors; undoubtedly by the time you read these words more information will be available.

Doc" will not fly again until August at the earliest. They must still shake down the aircraft and train aircrew members. The Federal Aviation Administration requires "DOC" to fly 20 hours of flight testing and have a certificated flight engineer aboard for those 20 hours. There is only one certificated B-29 flight engineer in the world, and he travels with the world's only other flyable B-29, the Commemorative Air Force's "Fifi." The crew of "Fifi" flew "Doc" on its first flight and will return to Wichita for further flight testing and training after they display and fly "Fifi" at The Experimental Aircraft Association's Air-Venture airshow and convention in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in late July.

Over 300 people watched "Doc" from the Kansas Aviation Museum while many, many more watched from nearby roads and the surrounding area. Some of those spectators visited the Combat Air Museum the next day and were still talking about how time, perseverance, and money returned "Doc" to the very Kansas skies where it first flew in 1945.

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Your membership  
is important to us.  
Join the  
Combat Air Museum.

### **"Fate," con't. from page 1**

the left and crashed into a pond. On impact, equipment inside the aircraft struck both the pilot and the co-pilot, fatally injuring both men. Thomas said he survived the impact because a fellow airman held him and prevented him from being thrown forward into the mass of wreckage. When the aircraft stopped moving, Thomas moved through what was left of the fuselage, found a huge crack, escaped through it and fell into the pond.

Ground rescue responded to the crash site immediately, but they were having trouble getting there because of the trees surrounding the wreck. One of the members of the ground crew spotted a bulldozer, started and 'borrowed' it and cut a path to the wreck so the crash rescue crew could get there. With the arrival of the rescue crew, Thomas was able to depart the crash area and walk to the nearest road. He then 'thumbed' a ride to the naval air station where he checked in with his squadron and his wife.

The mishap investigation found a combination of pilot error, equipment malfunction, and extreme weather all contributed to the accident in which five men died. Fourteen others, including Larry Thomas, were fortunate enough to survive.

Sometime after his experience with the crash, Thomas was in South Vietnam. During that time he was exposed to Agent Orange when he was inside a C-123 Provider 'Ranch Hand' defoliant spray aircraft, and said that he thinks that exposure led to some of the health problems he has suffered since his exit from military service.

After his service, Thomas spent forty years as a minister and is now retired.

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Learn more about the  
Combat Air Museum and  
the Kansas Chocolate Festival  
Winged Foot Run/Walk  
at [www.combatairmuseum.org](http://www.combatairmuseum.org)

### **"Young Aviators," con't. from page 5**

of kids got lost in the stairwell at the control tower and the same class was rained out by a torrential thunder storm at the 190th ARW. One of the kids commented, "The sky is dropping water bombs on us!" Instructors and kids alike looked like drowned rats when they got to the aircraft, but other than being wet, the visit to the KC-135s went well!

In July a WIBW television crew came out to the museum to film some of the activities. A short segment about the program aired many times over several days on the local evening news. Any publicity helps and our classes have, for the most part, been full this year.

Two valuable volunteers, Paul Frantz and Bill Newman, coach each class about Kansas weather patterns and how weather balloons measure atmospheric conditions daily. The kids also get to see and touch some of the apparatus used by the National Weather Service.

Lastly, on day four we get to visit with the MTAA Police and Fire Department where the students get a grounding in fire safety guidelines and sometimes get to use a firehose to knock down orange cones, learning to be a firefighter for a few minutes. In June the last student up for this activity, Kache Hale, got to give the rest of the class a quick dowsing with the same firehose! She loved that and the kids, despite some grumbling, were able to cool down from the intense summer heat!

On the last day the students get to spend some time with radio-controlled aircraft models both inside the Bob Dole Education Center and outside in the parking lot.

After each student has diligently learned their phonetic alphabet and attended each of the four day classes, the classroom staff holds a graduation ceremony and each student receives a CAM Certificate to prove that they have successfully completed the class.

Finally, we regretfully have to say a farewell and thank you to a long-time helper with the program, member volunteer Sue Ann Seel, whose family and professional life now demand much more of her daily life – to her we owe a debt of gratitude for the years and energy she put into the program. Thankfully Sue Ann is still managing our CAM Facebook with all the interesting daily aviation entries that keep our followers coming back for more.

With that said, we are on the lookout for help from volunteers with the 2017 program, especially from those who may have teaching in their background and have the time to come and participate in a fun activity with Young Aviators. Come on folks, let's help!

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## In Memoriam Ronald "Ron" Coash

1939-2016  
May 11, 2016  
Clay Center, Kansas  
Membership Number 3702  
15-year member

## Lt Col (R) James S. Taylor

1925-2016  
July 7, 2016  
Topeka, Kansas  
Membership Number 3869  
11-year member

## Oscar Albrecht

1923-2016  
July 11, 2016  
Membership number 66  
34-year member

## In Memoriam Ronald "Ron" Coash

1939-2016  
May 11, 2016  
Clay Center, Kansas  
Membership Number 3702  
15-year Member

Ron Coash and his wife Linda joined Combat Air Museum in 2001 and began a 15-year relationship with the Museum. They had visited CAM on previous occasions and liked what they saw. Enough so that Ron spoke with then curator Danny San Romani about placing an exhibit about his father, Russell Coash, a World War I naval aviator, in the Museum. San Romani spoke with board members about the exhibit and it was agreed that Ron could build the exhibit in a case provided by the Museum.

Ron, Linda, Ron's brother Duane and his wife Alberta all took part in developing the exhibit, and Ron did the majority of the work when visiting Topeka from Manhattan, Kansas, where he then lived. His father, Russell F. Coash, was an Aviation Quartermaster Chief Petty Officer in the US Navy, and was the only US aviator to sink a German U-boat during World War I, earning him the Navy Cross, an award second only to the Medal of Honor. Ron built a diorama into the exhibit and placed a mannequin in the case with his father's uniform. He also created the face of the mannequin in the image of his father. A period photograph on exhibit shows just how well Ron created his father's image. The completed exhibit was one of the first three exhibits we placed in our newly created exhibits rooms when they opened in the summer of 2002.

Ron's work did not end with the exhibit, though. Next came a six-year effort to write the story of his father and his World War I experiences. The 383-page book, *My Navy Cross, Something I'm Not Proud Of*, published in 2012, also addresses the research and efforts Ron made to write the book, including travel to seven states and Washington, D.C., some of these multiple times. It also gives an overview of the Coash family. Whenever he and Linda came to Topeka, they would come by the Museum and Ron would talk about the progress of the book and results of his research and trips.

Chapters two through 10 relate his father's wartime experiences, and Ron wrote these chapters in first person narrative, as though his father was telling the story. The reason for the title of the book is explained early. He included many period photos, most from the Coash family album, and copies of official records. The rear cover of the book has a photo of the Museum exhibit of Russell Coash and its caption talks about Combat Air Museum.

Ron was buried in the Veterans Cemetery in Manhattan, Kansas. ➔

## 2016 Calendar of Events

### August

- 1-4 – Young Aviators Class
- 8 – Membership Luncheon

### September

- 24 Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot
- 5K/10K Run & 4K Walk

### October

- 1 Kansas Air Tour and Girls in Aviation Day
- 8 Kansas National Guard Family Fun Day
- 10 Membership Luncheon

### November

- 24 Thanksgiving: Museum is closed

### December

- 12 Membership Luncheon
- 25 Christmas Day: Museum is closed

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## Kansas Air Tour and Girls in Aviation Day at CAM

Saturday, October 1 will be a very busy day at the Combat Air Museum when aircraft participating in the Kansas Air Tour arrive and a large group of Girl Scouts participate in Girls in Aviation Day activities.

The Kansas Air Tour has taken place for several years and harkens back to 1928 and the All-Kansas Air Tour. The air tour is hosted by the Fly Kansas Foundation and visits nine cities over three days. The Combat Air Museum hosted a stop on the Air Tour several years ago and this year's visit will be even better.

Women in Aviation Inc. sponsored the first Girls in Aviation Day last year to help inform girls of the opportunities that exist in aviation. The official date for the event this year is September 24, but due to the conflict with the Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot 5K/10K Run & Walk at the museum on that date, we will combine our first Girls in Aviation Day with the Kansas Air Tour.

The Combat Air Museum is partnering with the Fly Kansas Foundation, Museum of the Kansas National Guard Museum, Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri and local aviation organizations to make this a fun and enjoyable day for all. We'll have more information as plans come together.

Learn more about these events by visiting these websites and their respective Facebook pages: <http://flykansas.org/> and <https://www.wai.org/>.

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## Upcoming Events

### August

#### Monday-Thursday, August 1-4

Young Aviators Class  
Bob Dole Education Center  
9 am – 12:30 pm

#### Monday, August 8

Membership Luncheon  
Bob Dole Education Center  
11:30 am

Topeka author Nancy Geise will tell the story of Auschwitz survivor Joe Rubenstein, from his home in Poland through the horrors of the concentration camp to his new life in America

### September

#### Saturday, September 24

Kansas Chocolate Festival Winged Foot 5K/10K Run & 4K Walk  
Hangar 602  
8 am – 12 pm

There is no Membership Luncheon in September.

The next luncheon will be Monday, October 10.

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*Become a member today*

## Visitors

During **June** the Museum had 1100 visitors from 38 states, Belgium, Brazil, Great Britain, India and Mexico

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## Guest speaker for next Membership Luncheon

Topeka author Nancy Geise will speak at the August Membership Luncheon, August 8. She takes the firsthand oral memories of Auschwitz survivor Joe Rubenstein, from his home in Radom, Poland, and weaves them into a riveting first-person narrative of his survival under the brutal SS guards to his later life in the promised land of the United States of America.

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## Supporters

### Renewing Supporters

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## Blue Angels select Wamego native as a 2017 team pilot

Navy Lt. Brandon Hempler, 32, of Wamego, Kansas, is an F/A-18 Super Hornet pilot currently assigned to Training Squadron (VT) 22, the "Golden Eagles," at NAS Kingsville, Texas. He is a 2007 graduate of Kansas St University, Salina, Kansas. Learn more at <http://www.wibw.com/content/news/Wamego-man-becomes-part-of-Blue-Angels-387886282.html> or [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=95730](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=95730)

*Lt. Brandon Hempler of Wamego, Kansas will fly as a member of the Blue Angels in 2017 – US Navy photo*