

# COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

April 2021 | May 2021  
Vol. 37, No. 2

## Celebrity Pancake Feed returns to CAM

By Kevin Drewelow

As the threat of the pandemic recedes, things are returning to normal at the Combat Air Museum. The most recent example was the resumption of the Celebrity Pancake Feed on Saturday, May 29th. It was great to once again see the hangar full of people, enjoying a great breakfast, looking for bargains in the Fly-In Market and touring the Museum.

Several area politicians, military leaders, television personalities and others took turns at the pancake grill under the watchful eyes of Bob Carmichael and Domingo Gallardo from Perkins Family Restaurant & Bakery in Topeka.

A few days before the pancake feed, numerous Museum members volunteered their time to prepare for the event. We moved aircraft, cleaned the hangar floor, set up tables and chairs and set out items for the Fly-In Market. Many of those same members continued to help on Saturday serving drinks, restocking syrup and butter stocks on the table and staffing the market.

Unlike past pancake feeds, we had no live entertainment. Two local aviation organizations were on hand to share their stories with our visitors. The Topeka Eagle Composite Squadron of the Civil



Photo by Don Thun

Bob Carmichael, Shawnee County Treasurer Larry Mah, Domingo Gallardo and Shawnee County Commissioner Bill Riphahn(l-r) prepare pancakes



Photo by Kilo Hobbs

Museum visitors enjoying pancakes

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Ted Nolde ~ Jon Boursaw ~ Mike Welch

## MUSEUM HOURS

**January 2 - February 28/29**  
Mon.-Sun. Noon - 4:30  
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.  
**March 1 - December 31**  
Mon.-Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.  
Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.  
Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

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

**PLANE TALK**  
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Plane Talk, the official newsletter  
of the Combat Air Museum  
of Topeka, Kansas, is  
published bi-monthly.  
**We welcome  
your comments.**

Your membership is  
important to us.  
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## From the Chairman's Desk

By Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors



I wanted to share with the membership some information that Dave Murray gave me which serves to bolster the encouraging news and start to the year 2021 that the Museum is experiencing in terms of paying visitors. This April was the 5th highest April month attendance in the last 16 years (2006 - 2021).

For the first four months of 2021 we are, cumulatively, only 80 visitors behind the fast pace that was set in 2019 when the Museum had over 11,000 visitors for the year. We can almost certainly attribute the reduction of 80 visitors to the 10 day closure we had to declare during the February cold snap this year.

The year-to-date attendance bodes well for the Museum and shows that, at least through the first four months, we are back up and running at pre-COVID levels.

May gives us the exposure of the Pancake Feed on the 22nd and the "Taps Across America" event on the 31st. Although attendance at these events will not count as paying visitors, the exposure will certainly drive folk to come back again or, by word of mouth, encourage friends to visit. We then have the Country Stampede at Heartland Motorsports Park and the Thunder Over the Heartland Airshow at Forbes Field in late June to bolster attendance levels at our Museum.

I wanted to relate several five-star reviews we received, on Google, a few weeks ago from a 'Nik K':

"This fantastic air museum is well worth taking a trip to. Two hangars filled to the brim with aircraft spanning all of aviation history. The epic F-14 Tomcat, Blue Angels F-11, and Hueys are must see aircraft in incredible condition. The museum staff are so friendly, you'll leave here feeling like family. I would absolutely come here again."

Another five-star review was posted from 'Tacoville MC' following a visitation of a touring group to the Museum and a glowing tribute to the resumption of formal tour guides back into the system. Our tour guides that day were Bruce Couch, Dennis Smirl and Joe Turner with Deb Lamere helping on the sidelines at her Chinook: "I cannot state how amazing of an experience this was. The staff were SO FRIENDLY, it felt sad to leave, there are a plethora of aircraft in pristine condition, all from World War 1; a German Fokker Dr.1 to an F-14 that you could TOUCH. The staff gave a wonderful tour and were fun to talk to, from the origin of various craft to the technicalities of a P-51 drop tank. There was even a Lockheed Constellation YOU COULD WALK INTO! 11/10, cannot recommend more. Oh yeah, and there's an aircraft that looks like the Pringles Man. You'll have to see it to believe it." FYI - The Pringles Man must be our Pfalz WW1 replica with a moustache painted on the front cowling.



## CAM Membership Luncheons Resume in June *By Kevin Drexelov*



Photo Provided by Rod Willis

**Captain Rod Willis**

Combat Air Museum members can look forward to attending bimonthly membership luncheons with outstanding speakers beginning this month, with one minor change. Past luncheons were a covered dish affair which resulted in a great selection of entrees and desserts. As we resume membership luncheons, we will transition to a brown bag luncheon where members bring their own lunches.

Our next luncheon will take place on Monday, June 14 at 11:30 a.m. Museum member and retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel Rod Willis will discuss his Vietnam War service as an Aeroscout, flying a Hughes OH-6 Cayuse helicopter as a spotter for a Bell AH-1 Cobra gunship helicopter in D Troop, 1st Squadron of the 4th Cavalry Regiment known as Darkhorse. After serving two tours in Vietnam, LTC Willis was wounded twice and received two Silver Stars, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts, among many others. He served 22 years in the Army before retiring. ♦

★.....★

Celebrity Pancake Feed ...continued from front page



Photo by Don Thun

**Pat Kozubek, Sharon Nolde and Judy Murray(l-r) ran the Fly-In Market**

Air Patrol explained their mission and membership information. Members of the Foundation for Aeronautical Education showed examples of radio controlled (RC) aircraft and flew a small electric powered aircraft in the hangar. The Foundation for Aeronautical Education (FAE) is a not for profit 501 (c) (3) organization in Topeka whose mission is to offer safe RC training and recreational opportunities for all. To schedule free exploratory flights, contact the club president, Greg Inkmann at 785-272-4722 or email at [g.inkmann@sbeglobal.net](mailto:g.inkmann@sbeglobal.net).

We planned for 500 visitors and received just under 400. It was not our best attendance but given the short lead time we had to prepare and advertise the event, we were very happy with the turnout and it still benefitted a very good cause! Next year the Celebrity Pancake Feed will return to its traditional date of the last Saturday in April. ♦



# 2021 Calendar of Events

## June

- 14-Membership Luncheon  
21-25-Young Aviators Class  
26-27-Thunder Over the Heartland Air Show, Topeka  
Regional Airport featuring the US Air Force F-16 Viper  
Demo Team, B-29 "Doc" and more  
[www.heartlandairshow.com](http://www.heartlandairshow.com)

## July

- 3-4-Kansas City Air Show, New Century AirCenter,  
Olathe, featuring the US Navy Blue Angels and more  
[www.kcairshow.org](http://www.kcairshow.org)  
19-23 Young Aviators Class

## August

- 9-Membership Luncheon

## September

- 25-Winged Foot 5K/10K Run & 4K Walk

## October

- 9-Girls in Aviation Day  
11-Membership Luncheon

## November

- 7-Daylight Savings time ends  
25-Thanksgiving, Museum closed

## December

- 13-Membership Luncheon  
25-Christmas, Museum closed

## Visitors

296 people from 29 states, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Mexico and Spain visited the Combat Air Museum in March.

In April, 883 visitors from 28 states, Puerto Rico, Brazil and the Phillip toured your Museum.

951 people from 37 states and India, Lithuania, New Zealand and South Africa visited the Combat Air Museum in May.

# New & Renewing Members

## New Lifetime Members:

Eric & Lyn Walther

## New:

Fred Bourne | MAJ Jordan Clark & family | Zachary Garrett & family | Cooper Hopkins & family | Charles Moore & family | Denise & Corey Robinson | Athena Schilling & Joanna Fitzgerald | JJ Schuster & family | Mike & Kimberly Stewart | Nicholas Trammell | Hannah & Denton Turley

## Renewing:

David Bainum | Bruce F. Baker | David Baker | Lynne Bourne | Chuck & Connie Bradshaw | James & Mary Frances Braun | Marty Braun & family | Debra Butz | Hector Camacho & family | John Capra | Ron Cates & Marna Walker | Michael & Tammie DeBernardin | Dennis & Mary Donahue | Leon Dultmeier | H. Philip & Darlene Elwood | Adam Fast & family | Chris Fein & family | Tom & Diane Gorrell | Tim Graham | Holly Grassy & family | Henry Hickey | Jane Holly | Col. Paul Idol & family | Mike & Pat Kozubek | Larry Madden | Mike & Karen Madden | Mike & Carol Martin | Roland Mayhew & family | Ronald Morrison | Stephen Morrison | John & Rita Moyer | MSgt Gary & Susan Naylor | Bill & Toni Newman | Ted & Sharon Nolde | Shaun O'Keeffe & family | John Plumb | Jim Pinegar & family | Rick Pribyl & family | Lt Col Thomas & Carole Rost | Chris Rundel & family | Robert Runion | David Salguero | Danny San Romani | Sterling Scales & family | Darrell Schmitz | Sue Ann & Rod Seel | Dennis & Marise Ann Smirl | William Stumpff | Rev. Larry Thomas | Joe & Peggy Turner | Mark & Elaine Washburn | Chuck Watson | William J. Welch | Joe Wulfschle & family | Doug Young & family | Dr. James L. Young & family



# Restoration Report

By Kevin Droweloz



Photo by Kevin Droweloz

Tail fairing installed on the F-86H

**North American F-86H Sabre.....** Danny San Romani and his Saturday volunteer crew of Kenny McKibben, Gary Naylor, Dennis Smirl, Gary Smith and Joe Wulfschuhle have been busy both on the jet and in the shop. In late March, the team installed the tail fairing above the engine exhaust. They then turned their attention to restoration of the two pylons that support external fuel tanks, one under each wing. They fabricated sheet metal fairings for the pylons and found a suitable rubber seal material that acts as a cushion between the pylon and lower wing skin. Joe's son Jim is an accomplished machinist who will turn a large



Photo by Kevin Droweloz

F-86H drop tank pylons

specialized pin used to connect and release the tanks.

**Boeing CH-47D Chinook.....** Deb Lamere and Danny San Romani installed netting inside the Chinook to keep out starlings. Deb continues to research the history of our CH-47D and will soon fit the engine nacelles to the helicopter.

**McDonnell Douglas F-4D Multiple Ejector Racks.....** Danny San Romani noted we had Multiple Ejector Racks (MERs) and mounting pylons for our F-4D Phantom displayed beneath our Republic F-105D Thunderchief. Before long, Don Dawson had created and painted a suitable display platform and the MERs are now displayed under our Phantom, where they belong!



Photo by Kevin Droweloz

Multiple Ejector Racks (MERs) and pylons under the Phantom

**75 gallon steel drop tank.....** The Combat Air Museum has placed a World War II steel 75 gallon external fuel tank on display. Mathew Szymoniak and his father drove from Colfax, Wisconsin in early April to donate his grandfather's drop tank to CAM. The drop tank is an early style tank used primarily on P-51

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# Museum

## CAM, Deb Lamere loan artifacts to Doc's Friends...

An upcoming display about women in aviation will feature artifacts from the Combat Air Museum and member Deb Lamere. Spirit AeroSystems and Doc's Friends, Inc. requested related artifacts and the Museum provided a framed copy of Life Magazine dated July 19, 1943 featuring stories about Women Air Service Pilots (WASPs), several photos from our WASP collection and some vintage technical manuals. Deb loaned them a variety of uniform patches she wore during her time crewing Chinook helicopters in Iraq and Afghanistan, a challenge coin and a well-traveled copy of her favorite aviation book, "West with the Night" by Beryl Markham. The display is scheduled to run for two years at the B-29 Doc Hangar, Education and Visitors Center on Eisenhower Airport at 1788 South Airport Road, Wichita, Kansas. Learn more at [www.b29doc.com](http://www.b29doc.com)

**CAM says farewell to Dick and Jeanne Trupp.....** CAM board members held a reception at CAM on April 14 in honor of longtime member and former Museum Wing Commander Dick Trupp. Dick and his wife Jeanne recently moved to North Carolina to be closer to family. Board members chose to honor Dick, a former naval aviator, by naming the room in which the large model of the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Oriskany is displayed as the "Dick Trupp Gallery" and made Dick and Jeanne lifetime members. Dick joined the Museum in 1988, served as wing commander for several years and raised thousands of dollars for CAM during his time here. After some cake and ice cream, Dick and friends toured the museum while recalling many good times.



Photo by Kevin Drewelow

Stu Entz, Ted Nolde, Dick Trupp, Gene Howerter and Les Carlson (l-r) in the Dick Trupp Gallery



Photo by Kevin Drewelow

Our tow team doing what they do best

**Volunteers making a difference...** Volunteers make the Combat Air Museum possible. Elsewhere in this issue we detailed the great work of our members who supported our Celebrity Pancake Feed; others look after the Museum on a more regular basis. Our gift shop operators are key to the Museum's successful operation and we could use some more of them. Nathan Benfield and Jim Braun have kept the Museum's lawn looking great despite all the rain! We've hosted several events that required additional space in hangar 602 and we're grateful for the members of our towing team who continue to support

these aircraft movements. We'd especially like to recognize Joe Wulkuhle, Gary Naylor, Gary Smith, Don Dawson and Danny San Romani who have devoted additional time to maintaining our aircraft tug and fork lift. Remington Stiles is spending what time he has left volunteering here before he leaves for his first year at the Air Force Academy later this month. Remington is a product of our "Young Aviators" program, and we wish him all the best as he begins his military career! Walt Frederick



Photo by Kevin Drewelow

Danny San Romani holds the ladder while Remington Stiles cleans the F-84

Continued on pg 7



# PLANE TALK

# Notes

By Kevin Drewelow

Restoration Report ...continued from page 5

Photo by Kevin Drewelow



Gary Naylor raises the Airco DH-2 replica in hangar 602 and Don Loyd of Million Air at Forbes provided us with a lift truck to enable Gary Naylor to raise our replica Airco DH-2 a bit higher in hangar 602.

This will allow us to tow our F-4D Phantom without swinging the DH-2 out of the way. Bruce Couch used a photo of his squadron commander during a Vietnam cruise to create a board where visitors can become a naval aviator in a picture. Many visitors have taken advantage of Bruce's creativity to make their time at CAM more memorable!



Bruce Couch modeling his photo board

Photo by Kevin Drewelow

**New highway signs...** The City of Topeka recently placed new wayfinding signs around town and the Combat Air Museum is one of the featured venues. You'll find one on south Highway 75/Topeka Boulevard just north of Airport Drive, formerly the main entrance to Forbes Air Force Base. ♦

\*\*\*\*\*



Alex and his father with the P-51 drop tank

Photo by Kevin Drewelow



Multiple Ejector Racks (MERs) and pylons under the Phantom Mustangs during the war. Don Dawson quickly created a wooden rack to support the tank which is now on display in hangar 604. ♦

Photo by Kevin Drewelow



# Words into Deeds

By Kevin Drewelow



Photo by Kevin Drewelow

Reece Fulcher and her poster welcome Deb Lamere into her new home

"Thank you for your service!" After twenty years of war, this phrase has been used very often. Recently, some Combat Air Museum members and friends turned these words into deeds to thank and help a deserving veteran and fellow Museum member.

Deb Lamere and her service dog Genesis, better known as "G", are fixtures at the Combat Air Museum. Deb was a door gunner and crew chief on the Museum's Boeing CH-47D Chinook, tail number 85-24346, during a deployment to Iraq in 2005-2006. During a subsequent deployment to Afghanistan in 2008, she was severely injured. She spent months in rehabilitation before medically retiring from the Army. She bought a recreational vehicle (RV) in 2012 and was living in Texas until Hurricane Harvey struck and Deb moved to Topeka in 2017. She visited CAM a few months before we acquired our Chinook and, upon learning she would be reunited with her old friend, joined the Museum and is leading its restoration.

Deb and Genesis were living at an RV park near the Museum last February when the memorable bitterly cold week froze everything in her home. Some Museum members put Deb and G in a hotel for the week; later, they were able to get things in the RV working almost normally.

A few days later, Museum members Rachel and Jacob Fulcher, daughter and son-in-law of CAM Director, Kevin Drewelow, offered to buy a house and rent it to Deb. Jacob is an Army veteran of Iraq and continues to serve in the Army Reserve. Deputy Chairman Dave Murray and Deb reviewed her budget and the search for a house was on. Museum board members Ted Nolde and Mike Welch, with their experience in structures and building, inspected several homes and approved one in the Oakland area. Mike and his grandson went to Kentucky to clear out and return Deb's items from a storage unit; other volunteers cleared a similar unit in Topeka. Museum members donated appliances, furniture, money and time to help Deb move. Deb unlocked the door to her new home on April 17. After nine years of living in her RV, Deb is delighted and grateful to be in a house again; no more trips to the laundromat and Genesis enjoys wandering around and loafing in the large yard. Museum members and friends really have transformed the words "Thank you for your service" into deeds! ♦

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# In Remembrance



## Eliot H. Potter

Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force (Retired)  
World War II – Korean War – Cold War  
Combat Air Museum Charter Member #24  
September 23, 1921–April 13, 2021

### The Museum Salutes a Longtime Friend

*By Gene Howarter*

Lt. Col. Eliot H. Potter was a charter member of the Combat Air Museum. He was one of the first to join when the Museum was chartered in January 1977 as the Combat Air Museum, Inc. Eliot remained active and supportive right up to the time of his passing at the age of 99 ½ years. He was one of the youngest looking World War Two veterans I have ever seen. From the beginning he was a major player in the life of the Museum. Eliot worked with Museum's founder, Bob Schneider, to help David Tallichet establish a Kansas Wing of his California-based

Yesterday's Air Force in Topeka. He helped pilot David Tallichet's B-24J bomber "Delectable Doris" to California for the filming of the movie "Young Joe." Eliot was a one-of-a-kind bomber pilot, flying 53 missions over Italy during World War Two and 55 missions over Korea during the Korean War. He flew B-36 bombers and RB-47H recon aircraft in the Strategic Air Command. Lt. Col. Potter commanded the 55th Organizational Maintenance Squadron when he retired from the Air Force at Forbes Air Force Base in 1964. He was Chief of Staff for the Kansas Secretary of State and belonged to many local civic organizations. He was thought to have one of the best flat top haircuts ever, keeping it his entire life. Eliot even used the name "flat top" with his e-mail address! To know Eliot was a pleasure. Rest in peace Eliot; you were a true friend of the Combat Air Museum! ♦

★ ..... ★

From the Chairman... continued from page 2

We've had 310 reviews on Google and have an accumulated 4.7 rating out of 5. Jim D. stated, "From watching planes come and go from Forbes Field to seeing an outstanding collection of planes, static displays and visuals, this is a must see!"

We did receive a 1 out of 5 score from a teenager who hated museums and was unwillingly dragged by her parents to CAM and therefore said, 'If I liked museums I would have rated this higher!' That shows you cannot please everyone.

We were also rated down to a 2 rating by a retired military officer who thought that we probably disrespected his military service by not giving him a \$1 military discount on his (at that time) \$6 entrance fee. ♦

★ ..... ★

To become a member, click on  
[www.combatairmuseum.org/membership.html](http://www.combatairmuseum.org/membership.html)

or call the Museum at  
785.862.3303



# In the Hangar:

## The Republic F-84F Thunderstreak

By Dennis Smirl

During World War II, Republic Aviation earned the reputation for hard-hitting, fast, and maneuverable ground attack aircraft with its P-47 Thunderbolt series. The fact that Thunderbolts also held their own in air-to-air combat just added to that reputation.

Toward the end of World War II, the Army Air Force and Republic engineers agreed that the future of aircraft like the Thunderbolt would depend on the development and improvement of the jet engine. And, months before the war ended, Republic already had a preliminary design for a jet powered successor to the Thunderbolt.

The design Republic engineers chose was innovative and affordable. Both Republic and the Army Air Force showed interest in the design, but the wind tunnel didn't like it. With even the most powerful engine on the drawing boards, the new aircraft would be only marginally faster than the P-47 and had no chance of adequate performance for postwar scenarios.

Planners and decision makers in the Pentagon wanted an aircraft that would reach 600 miles per hour. As the modified Thunderbolt was not going to meet those requirements, Republic engineers pulled out a clean sheet of paper and chose an engine called the J35. The prototype P-84 Thunderjet was the aircraft that could do it all.

However, there were setbacks. Some were so serious that the Air Force considered pulling the plug on the P-84, soon to be F-84 Thunderjet. Republic Aviation struggled with their problems, re-designed and innovated, and produced a real winner just in time for the action in Korea. The aircraft was the F-84E: longer, stronger, able to deliver a much harder punch, and still capable of a bit more than 600 miles per hour.

Photo Provided by USAF



Republic F-84E Thunderjet

The Air Force still wanted more. They already had the F-86 Sabre, a swept-wing, North American Aviation product that was capable of 670 miles per hour. Air Force planners and decision makers wanted an airplane as fast as the Sabre, but capable of carrying a prodigious load of weaponry. The answer, obvious at that point, was to sweep the wings.

The new aircraft, the F-84F, would be equipped with the J65 Sapphire engine, giving the F-84F a big jump in thrust and speed. The prototypes were promising, but both had the engine inlets in the wing roots which restricted the flow of intake air, diminishing performance. The F-84F would have a bifurcated inlet in the nose providing better airflow.

Then, with the development of the Sapphire engine, and its ability to process lots of air, the nose intake began to be a problem. It was restricting the amount of air to the engine. To solve the problem, the fuselage received a 'splice' from nose to tail, changing the head-on profile of the aircraft from circular to oval. Republic also developed the reconnaissance/photography RF-84F variant with a 'closed nose' and wing root air intakes with better flow patterns.

The F-84F never saw service over Korea. A newer, straight-winged version, the F-84G, instead carried the fight to the enemy in the latter stages of the Korean involvement. For some, the lettering stopped making sense. The A through E model Thunderjets were straight-winged, the F model Thunderstreaks were swept and the G model Thunderjets returned to straight wings. Add to that the emergence of the XF-91, an interceptor design based on the F-84E fuselage and the sequence became even more confusing. The big benefit of the XF-91 program was the newly designed canopy and its opening and closing mechanism.

Photo Provided by USAF



Republic F-84F Thunderstreak

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Changing times demanded changing roles and the F-84F Thunderstreak changed with the times. For a while, conventional munitions were almost ignored and nuclear delivery capability was a necessary part of the deal for the F-84F as well as for the North American Aviation F-86H Sabre. The F-84F could carry a nuclear device under one wing and a large fuel tank under the opposite wing. The manner of delivery for a nuke was called the 'toss bomb' method. The flight to deliver a nuke started with a high speed, low level run in the direction of the target. At the initial point the autopilot would take over, fly at low altitude for a short distance and then pull up sharply into a seventy degree climb. At the precise split-second, the weapon and the fuel tank would be jettisoned and the nuclear device would travel in a miles-long arc to its intended target. The autopilot in the F-84F would fly the aircraft vertically for a short distance and then reverse course before turning itself off. The pilot would have to decide to fly from the exploding nuke high and fast or low and fast, depending on terrain, etc.

Throughout its two-part service life with the Air Force the Thunderstreak had its problems. The mission was mostly nuclear when it was first employed. That accounted for the utilization of a lot of the fleet. When newer aircraft became available, such as the North American F-100 Super Sabre, most of the F-84F fleet transferred to the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard. Then, when the Cuban missile crisis arose, the F-84Fs returned to active duty and stayed active until structural problems, mainly corrosion, ended their service.

The story of the F-84F would be incomplete without mention of the RF-84F which became a useful reconnaissance platform. Fast and still carrying four guns, along with a nose full of cameras, RF-84Fs enjoyed long service with many Air Guard units. They were eventually replaced with RF-101C Voodoos and RF-4C Phantom IIs, both McDonnell products.

Out on the fringes, the Air Force ordered the GRF-84F. These were a fleet of 25 modified reconnaissance aircraft capable of air launch and recovery from specially modified B-36 bombers. The most striking modification was the steep



Photo Provided by USAF

Republic RF-84F Thunderflashes

negative dihedral of the horizontal stabilizers, a necessary change that allowed the GRF-84F to fit (mostly) into the bomb bays of the modified B-36s.

At the end of the production run, Republic built a pair of YF-84J Thunderstreaks, both powered by the General Electric J73 engine. Suddenly the Air Force had a pair of supersonic Thunderstreaks that might have extended the service life of the F-84J into use in Vietnam. The Air Force looked at the cost of conversion and purchasing an adequate number of GE J73 engines to support the anticipated fleet but decided against the project.

The Thunderstreak story also includes its service with the Thunderbirds, the Air Force's precision demonstration team. 1955 was the only year the Thunderbirds used Thunderstreaks but the team flew 100 airshows that year. Two noticeable additions intended to improve the show were smoke generators and two solo aircraft.

Some mention should be made of the XF-84H Thunderscreech, a version powered by a turboprop engine and a supersonic propeller. Ground crews hated the experimental aircraft because the sound waves made them physically sick.

The Combat Air Museum's F-84F, serial number 51-1659, entered service with the Air Force on March 28, 1955. It moved back and forth between the Air Force and Air Guard units in Ohio and Massachusetts until leaving service in 1971. 659 came to CAM in 1980. It is painted as it looked at the start of its career with the 366th Fighter Bomber Wing at England Air Force Base, Alexandria, Louisiana in 1955. ♦





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PLANE TALK

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## *Night Bombers*

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Eastward they climb, black shapes against the grey  
Of falling dusk, gone with the nodding day  
From English fields.

Not theirs the sudden glow  
Of triumph that their fighter-brothers know;  
Only to fly through cloud, through storm, through night  
Unerring, and to keep their purpose bright,  
Nor turn until, their dreadful purpose done,  
Westward they climb to race the awakened sun.

*- Anonymous*



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