

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

December 2009 / January 2010 • Vol. 25, No. 6

Wishing You Happy Holidays from the Combat Air Museum

Dear members and friends of the Combat Air Museum:

It is a pleasure to communicate with each one of you again this year and thank you for your support of the Museum. I feel that the Museum has been blessed because we have members and friends such as you. Frankly, we would not be able to keep our doors open without your support. As with all organizations the Combat Air Museum has had to cut back and pinch pennies to make ends meet. Our attendance was up about 15% for the first seven months of the year, which was good. However, that did not translate into a lot of additional revenue. It is our hope that we will sustain at least a normal flow of patrons wishing to visit and tour the Museum over the winter season. Please spread the word and ask everyone you talk with to join us with a visit to the Combat Air Museum.

This year got off to a wonderful start when over 500 people attended our annual Celebrity Pancake Feed. We were pleased to have had an all star line up of flippers again, including both US Representative Lynn Jenkins and US Senator Sam Brownback. Remember, the next version of this event will take place April 24, 2010. It will also include something added this year, a Silent Auction. Yes, we are looking for donations for the auction. Please help us out. The fifth annual Winged Foot 5K run/walk will take place September 25, 2010. This year also included many other smaller and larger happenings and special days at the Museum, such as motorcoach and school tours and our youth Aviation Education classes.

As with any organization we have had our share of ups and downs this year. The Museum was sad-

dened this spring with the passing of one of our most faithful volunteers. We have really felt the void left by Martin Moyer, who always helped keep the Museum rolling along. However, we have also had the emergence of several new volunteers who have stepped up and given great support with our computer system, cleaning aircraft, working in the Gift Shop, as well as other endeavors. Recently, the Museum was pleased to be the recipient of memorial contributions in the memory of the late Daniel L. Hall. Daniel's family, who reside in Iowa City, Iowa, agreed with us that a much needed audio visual system in our Conference Room would be something that Daniel, who was an educator, would want the Museum to have. This is something we have needed for a long time.

As I write this, the Museum is eagerly awaiting the delivery of our latest aircraft acquisition. Mr. Robert Baslee of Airdrome Aeroplanes in Holden, Missouri, is donating the replica *Pfalz E-1*. The Dawn Patrol of Liberty, Missouri is helping him get the plane prepped into museum condition. We hope to have it

see "Happy Holidays," con't. on page 2

Inside This Issue

<i>A real "German" car returns to Topeka</i>	3
<i>CAM says good-bye to Dr. Carl Fyler</i>	4
<i>Donations for Daniel Hall benefit CAM</i>	6
<i>New acquisition on the way</i>	9
<i>CAM exhibits go up around Topeka</i>	10
<i>CAM members work on projects</i>	11
<i>Guests enjoy dinner and dancing</i>	12

Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field • Hangars 602 & 604

P.O. Box 19142

Topeka, KS 66619-0142

Telephone (785) 862-3303

FAX (785) 862-3304

www.combatairmuseum.org

Provided by

Rossini Management Systems, Inc.

Email: office@combatairmuseum.com

Museum Curator

Danny San Romani

Office Manager

Lois Ecord

Board of DirectorsGene Howerter - *Chairman*Dave Murray - *Vice Chairman*Tad Pritchett - *Secretary*

Les Carlson

Don Dawson

Stu Entz

Raymond Irwin

Doug Jacobs

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**Editing & Design**

Dixon Communications

Toni Dixon

785-865-4221

Plane Talk, the official newsletter

of Combat Air Museum

of Topeka, Kansas,

is published bi-monthly.

Your comments are welcomed.

"Happy Holidays," con't. from page 2

here soon as we will be hanging it from the ceiling in Hangar 602.

Remember, our Annual Christmas Membership Meeting will start 11:30 a.m. December 14, so come out and see the new acquisition and see what else is going on at CAM. We have a great program lined up for the meeting. Don't forget, you can always check us out on the web at www.combatairmuseum.org.

Finally, let me say that the Board of Directors of CAM is still working very hard planning, organizing, and completing projects associated with our facilities upgrade and restoration. Naturally, the keys to success are found in raising funds for the work that needs to be done on our very old and historic hangars. This year we placed new siding on the west side of Hangar 602 which looks great. We also have a new concrete apron and storm drain outside the east doors of 602. For the first time ever we can tow aircraft out and in without an adventure. There is a lot to do before our hangars are restored, but we will keep working on this.

You might ask, "What can I do?" One thing that is always needed is operating money. If each member would consider giving a year-ending donation (which is tax deductible) to the Museum, it would be a blessing. I urge you to consider this. With your support we can keep the doors open another year and remain one of the best air museums in the county. Please take my word for it, operating money is always tight, and we are very good custodians of what we have.

Wishing you our very best in 2010.

Gene

Gene Howerter

Chairman BOD/CAM

2010 Events Calendar*Dates subject to change***March**

15 – 18 Aviation

Education Class

July

12 – 15 Aviation

Education Class

April

24 Pancake Feed

August

2 - 5 Aviation

Education Class

June

7 – 10 Aviation

Education Class

September25 *Winged Foot* 5K Fun
Run/Walk

A real "German" car makes a return to Topeka after its first arrival in 1947

CAM member **Marcella Briery** was on the front page of *The Topeka Capital-Journal* on October 17, 2009. The story was about a car Marcella and her late husband, John "Bill" Briery, once owned. It was a 1946 Volkswagen bug Bill and Marcella purchased in Germany after the end of World War II and had shipped to the United States in January 1947. The car is believed to be the first Volkswagen to arrive in Kansas and is one of the oldest in the United States. It arrived before the first Volkswagen was sold within the United States.

Marcella enjoyed a reunion with the car courtesy of its current owner, Mr. Mark Merrill, of northern California, who drove it to Topeka. Merrill owns more than 30 Volkswagens and began restoring this example a couple of years ago. Mr. Roy Schubert, who works full time restoring Merrill's cars, said almost all of its parts are original and have been restored to factory condition. Today, its value is estimated at \$30,000. Bill and Marcella paid \$650 for it 63 years ago.

Another CAM member, **Beattie Dixon**, of Topeka, bought the Volkswagen from the Brierys around 1956. Beattie often worked on the car when the Brierys owned it. He was also a World War II veteran, flying as a turret gunner in Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses of the Eighth Air Force.

It is not clear how many other owners the car went through before Mark Merrill acquired it. Bill Briery died February 27, 2007, but Merrill corresponded with Bill's and Marcella's daughter, Zona, about the car. He told the Capital-Journal he purposely brought the car to Topeka to learn more about its history and what it was like in Germany after the war. He was also interested in what it was like to drive "Hitler's car" around Topeka after the war.

Marcella told the paper the Volkswagen was certainly dwarfed by American cars and stood out. She said it was not uncommon when they parked the car in public that pranksters would pick it up and move it. She also said because of the origin of the car's makers and the fact

**December 2009
January 2010
Calendar of Events**

December

Monday – December 14
Membership Luncheon
Jean Wanner Education Conference Room
11:30 a.m.
Richard Falkener of the Command and
General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth,
will be our guest speaker.

Friday – December 25
Christmas Day
Museum Closed
There is no Membership Luncheon in January

January

Friday – January 1
New Year's Day
Museum Closed

➔ ➔ ➔

it came from Nazi Germany did not help it blend into the neighborhood.

Bill Briery was in Germany after World War II because he flew the Martin B-26 Marauder with the 596th Bombardment Squadron, 397th Bombardment Group, the famous "Bridge Busters" of the Ninth Air Force. He remained in Germany as part of the occupation forces. Marcella joined him there, one of the first Americans to go over after the war.

➔ ➔ ➔

CAM says good-bye to a friend, long-time member and volunteer Dr. Carl Fyler



Combat Air Museum lost another member of the Greatest Generation on November 11, 2009, when **Dr. Carl Fyler** passed away. Carl Fyler had been a long time dentist in Topeka. His obituary read that he passed away on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year, Veterans Day.

Carl was a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot during World War II serving in the 360th Bombardment Squadron, of the famous 303rd Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force, in England. He and his crew departed the United States from Bangor, Maine on May 31, 1943, flying the Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom route. They arrived at Prestwick, Scotland on June 3 and eventually to Molesworth Air Base near Molesworth, Cambridgeshire, England. Carl flew his first combat mission on June 30, 1943.

At this time of the War, strategic daylight bombing missions were flown over France and Germany and other occupied countries with limited fighter escort, particularly into Germany. Carl's eleventh mission was to ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt, Germany. Two hundred and thirty B-17s participated in the raid. Thirty-six planes and over 370 men were lost on this raid.

Between June 30 and November 26, 1943, Carl completed 24 missions. His 25th came on November 29, 1943. Twenty-five missions was the magic number for completing a combat tour and going home. Carl's flying ended on his 25th mission, but not in the way he wanted. After dropping bombs over Bremen, Germany, his B-17

was hit by flak and soon after by Focke Wulf Fw-190 fighters. The bomber was mortally wounded, and word was passed to bail out. Eleven men were on the B-17 that mission. Ten were wounded and seven parachuted from the plane. The other four died of enemy wounds.

Carl and the other six survivors were captured by Germans and spent the rest of the war in German prisons camps, he going to Stalag Luft #1 on the Baltic Sea until liberated by Russian troops on April 30, 1945. He wrote of his World War II experiences and memories in his book Staying Alive that was sold for a number of years in our Gift Shop.

Carl was a member of a number of military associations. Perhaps the one in which he was most active, and most well known in Kansas, was the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He served the Governor of Kansas as a member of the Governor's Veterans Advisory Commission for six years and served eight terms as a national officer of the American Ex-Prisoners of War Veterans organization. He rose to National Junior Vice Commander of that organization. He and his wife, **Marguerite**, formed the first chapter of the American Ex-POW organization in Kansas, and he served as its commander. Carl worked tirelessly for federal legislation in 1980-81 giving former POWs medical benefits. In 1983, he was instrumental in promoting the free issuance of license plates for former POWs residing in Kansas. This law was enacted by the Kansas Legislature effective January 1, 1984 and resulted in specially designed and marked car



In Memoriam

Carl J. Fyler, D.D.S.

#226

May 14, 1921 – November 11,
2009

Topeka, Kansas

Twenty-seven year member

*Page 4: Dr. Carl Fyler at a pancake feed.
Left: Major Carl J. Fyler in World War II.*

tags for former POWs. Carl served at Topeka's Veterans Administration Medical Center as a POW Veterans Administrative Volunteer Service representative.

Carl became a CAM member in June 1982. As Board Chairman **Gene Howerter** remembers, Carl, the late **Raymond Veesart**, and the late **Joe Higgins**, all former POWs, took an interest in the construction of the POW Barracks Room by **Gene** and the late **Ervin Surritt**. Comments and suggestions became involvement and donations of artifacts by the three. Carl and Raymond would sit by the Barracks Room on weekends, holidays, and special occasions and share their experiences with visitors. The POW information and artifacts on the wall across from the POW Barracks Room were assembled by Carl.

As mentioned earlier, Carl sold copies of his books to the Gift Shop for resale after it was published in 1995. He was a speaker at Membership Luncheons over the years and had book signings during Museum events. He

gave his last public address on August 19 of this year, at McCrite Plaza Health Center in Topeka.

One item of unfinished business for Carl was his continuing efforts to get Staff Sergeant **Joseph Sawicki** awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Sawicki was tail gunner on Carl's B-17 when it was shot down. Sgt. Sawicki's left arm was severed below the elbow and he had grave injuries to his mid section. He crawled from the tail position to the waist section of the B-17 and found both waist gunners injured and dazed. He snapped chest parachute packs on both men and got the waist door open. Sgt. Sawicki then literally booted both waist gunners out of the plane. They were able to open their chutes and survived as prisoners of war. Sgt. Sawicki never got out of the plane. Carl submitted his first recommendation for the Medal of Honor in 1945, and continued throughout his life to get this medal for Sgt. Sawicki. According to Carl's obituary, family members said they would continue to lobby on Sawicki's behalf.

→ → →

Donations in memory of Mr. Daniel Hall benefit the Museum in the form of a wonderful upgrade to our conference room

We did not have a speaker for the October Membership Luncheon. Instead, we showcased a new upgrade to the Conference Room courtesy of the family of **Mr. Daniel Hall**. The upgrade is a Panasonic 54 inch plasma HDTV.

Mr. Daniel Hall, 59, of Iowa City, Iowa, passed away on August 6, 2009. He had fallen at his home and died from the injuries. He was a pilot with an interest in aircraft, aviation and aviation history. He was also a World War II historian. Mr. Hall had visited Combat Air Museum a number of times in the past and was a fan of the Museum. His family chose CAM as a recipient for memorial donations. The family requested that the donations be used for something that would recognize Mr. Hall's interest in education and World War history. Mr. Hall was an educator, as is his wife, **Bonnie**.

The choice of how to use the memorial contributions was not difficult for us. For some time, we had talked about getting a power point projector for the conference room to support our Aviation Education Classes and presentations given during luncheons. This year, **Dave Murray** computerized segments of the Aviation Education Class, but was limited to having students gather around a lap top screen to view the contents. When Seaman High School students have presented History Day projects produced on digital video discs (DVDs), we used a 28 inch diagonal monitor on a roll around stand to show their productions. If the presentation required a power point projector, we had to borrow one.

Gene Howerter and **Bonnie Hall** began corresponding about the use of the memorial funds. When Mrs. Hall indicated the initial amount of memorial contributions coming to CAM while saying that others would come directly to the Museum, we knew the power point projector was attainable. So, Gene contacted Smith Audio-Visual Inc. of Topeka and asked for their help in choosing a system that would work best for us. Two representatives from Smith Audio-Visual came to the Museum and met with Gene, **Dave Murray**, and **Russ Wiedle**. As they listened to what we wanted to do, they suggested we get a big screen television in lieu of a power point projector. They felt the right television would provide more options and present a better picture in the Conference Room than a projector. Further discussion, questions and answers took place. The Smith Audio-Visual folks talked about where permanent connection boxes could be installed and wired in and discussed further the flexibility of a big screen TV that would support Video tape/DVD/Personal Computer hookups. When the meeting ended the CAM representatives chose to follow Smith Audio-Visual's recommendations and go with a big screen television.



*Right: The Panasonic and connection boxes installed.
Page 7: Part of the slide show on the new HDTV during
the October Membership Luncheon.*

Gene purchased the television through a brother-in-law. Once it arrived at CAM, he, Dave, and Russ installed the 54-inch television in the Conference Room above the serving window. Russ plugged in our DVD/VHS player, and we successfully ran a VHS tape, then a DVD. Russ then plugged in his lap top and ran a program on the big screen. All this was pretty impressive. Russ, Dave and Gene discussed how and where to wire in the permanent connections for the screen, and Russ began reading what other applications the television could provide.

The big screen was up and running in time for the Membership Luncheon, but the hard wiring was not yet installed. Russ set up his laptop to run a slide show of Museum aircraft as members gathered for the luncheon. The show included a slide explaining the memorial contributions and dedication by the Hall family.

Introductions were made of new members and visitors. **Ralph Knehans** introduced **Pastor Glenn** and **Denise Bitter** as new members. Gene introduced **Gene Wunder**, recently retired from Washburn University, as a new volunteer who will be helping us with a our marketing plan. **Charlotte Higgins** is also a part of the marketing team that includes Gene, Dave Murray and **Dick Trupp**. **Larry and Diane Todd** introduced their guest, **Mr. Ralph Martin**. Mr. Martin, like Larry, works with wood and was introduced as a fellow "Chipmonger."

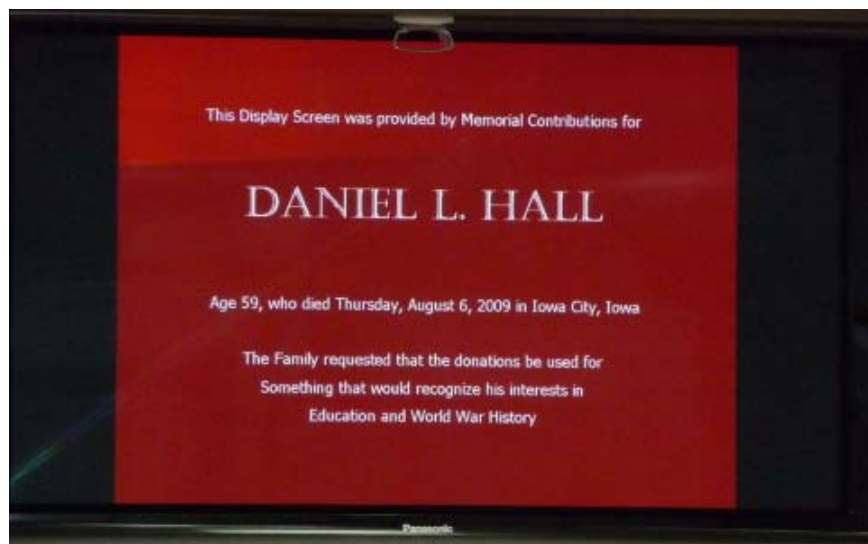
Gene spoke about the success of the 5K Run/Walk held in September and his desire to get more participants for future events.



Daniel L. Hall

Danny San Romani reported that member **Zak Amos**, 17, had soloed in September, and **Susan Naylor** reported that eldest daughter, **Desiree**, 18, is planning to enlist in the Air Force. Gene further commented about the Naylor sisters, who include **Patricia** and **Rachel**, and their volunteer work at the Museum. Gene and other long time members like him, remember when it was the

See "Conference Room," con't. on page 8



"Conference Room," con't. from page 7

sisters' dad, **Gary**, who was the young person at the Museum. The daughters are the third generation of Naylor's to volunteer at CAM.

For a program, a VHS titled *Wings of Glory: The Air Force Story 1903-1953* was shown on the big screen. The video tape covered the period 1930-1935, and its showing gave us a hint of the things we can do with this television.

Since the luncheon, Russ has wired in the connection boxes for the big screen. They are to the lower right of the screen. The television is wired to an antenna for television reception, and Russ has used it as a monitor using his laptop and our wireless Internet connection. This is such a giant step forward in terms of audio-visual capability for the Museum. But, just in case we want to go retro and show a 16mm movie, we kept the movie screen mounted above the television.

Gene mounted a memorial plaque with Daniel Hall's photo on it. The plaque reads:

*"Dan was born in Omaha, Nebraska on
September 23, 1949.*

*He spent the majority of his childhood in Iowa City,
where he graduated from City High in 1967.*

*Dan served in the Marine Corps for two years
in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.*

Following his service Dan returned to Iowa City.

*In 1975 he received a B.A. In Spanish
from the University of Iowa
and on July 5, married Bonnie L. Schnoor.*

*In 1978 he received an Associate's Degree
from Hawkeye Institute of Technology
and went on to become an*

*Instructor of Automotive Technology at
Kirkwood CCC in Cedar Rapids, IA.*

*During his tenure Kirkwood was
twice named one of the top Automotive Programs
in the nation by the Automotive Industry
Planning Council.*

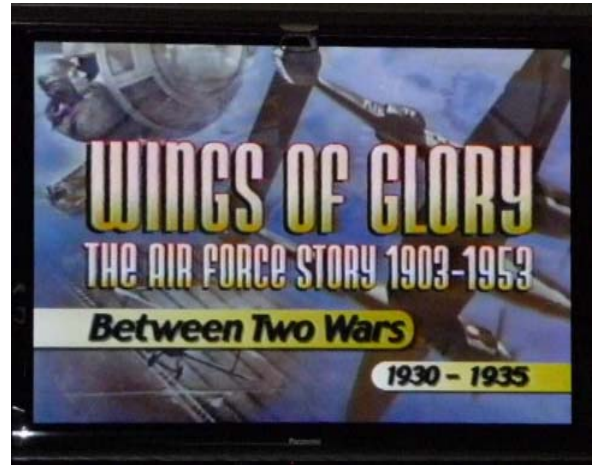
*Dan's program was part of the T-Ten Toyota
Technician Education Network.*

After teaching for 22 years Dan retired in July 2009.

He passed away on August 6, 2009.

*Dan was a collector, a WWII historian, a comedian,
a pilot, a tinkerer, an inspiring teacher and a
loyal friend, mentor and neighbor.*

He loved his wife and two children beyond measure."



Above: The video shown during the luncheon in
54 inch screen format

Below: The memorial plaque for Daniel Hall



Learn more about the
Combat Air Museum.
 Visit us on line
 at
www.combatairmuseum.org

New Supporters

Pastor Glenn & Denise Bitter
 Wayne, Paige & Gordon Marvin

Renewing Supporters

Dale & Marilyn Allen
 William Cleaver
 Rodney & Martha Duerksen
 Paul & Jane Fortin
 Jerry Holley
 Ron & Nancy Lutz
 Ray Miller
 Edward Navone
 Tad & Dee Pritchett
 Chuck & Marlene Urban

→ → →

Visitors

During **September**
 the Museum had
826 visitors
 from **34** states,
 and
 Canada
 France
 Switzerland
 During **October**
 we had
733 visitors
 from **37** states,
 and
 Australia
 Canada
 Denmark
 Germany
 Japan
 Scotland
 South Korea

→ → →

A new acquisition is on the way

As you read this edition of *Plane Talk* we expect delivery of the latest aircraft acquisition for the Museum. It is a replica German *Pfalz E-1*, a World War I fighter. **Mr. Robert Baslee** of Holden, Missouri, the aircraft's builder/owner, is donating the plane to CAM. Members of the Dawn Patrol of Liberty, Missouri are helping Mr. Baslee clean and prepare the plane for donation and will help transport it to Topeka and assemble it.

We have a rafter in Hangar 602 picked to suspend the plane. This will happen at a later date. Delivery of the *Pfalz* was scheduled for November 24. →



The CAM display at Washburn University's Memorial Student Union. Below: Dick Trupp, third from left, Gene Howerter, second from right, and Ralph Knehas, right, talk with visitors at CAM's display.

CAM exhibits go up around Topeka to tell folks about the Museum

CAM was invited to participate in a Veterans Day event held at the Memorial Student Union on Washburn University campus. **Gene Howerter, Dave Murray, and Dick Trupp** set up the Eighth Air Force panels and some artifacts in the Union and greeted and talked with visitors during the daytime event. For some people attending this veterans recognition, this was the first time they had heard of Combat Air Museum, so our volunteers established a number of new contacts, and hopefully, some new visitors.

The following week, Dick, Gene, and Dave set up a booth in a conference room at the Capitol Plaza Hotel at the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka as part of the Topeka Meeting Planning Showcase. This mini-exposition was held to showcase Topeka businesses and attractions for convention planners. Gene and Dave updated the Museum's story boards and had these and Museum brochures at the day-long event.



→ → →

CAM members continue work on projects

Office Staircase

Thanks to **Will Grinstead** and **Gene Howerter**, we have a nice, new coat of paint on the staircase and handrails leading to the Museum's offices. Will swept, vacuumed, and wiped down the steps and board behind the steps. Gene stayed after hours and painted it all.

Wing Jacks

Don Dawson is cleaning and repairing the Museum's wing jacks. He power washed six jacks and will go over each to make any repairs necessary. We decided to renew all hoses on the jacks. Don recently completed one of the 30-ton units. He used the fork lift to raise it off the floor and then removed its three wheels and wheel supports. He cleaned the springs and had to straighten one of the supports. New hoses were installed, and the jack was operated for freedom of movement. For now, this jack is back in its storage area, but Don plans to repaint the unit. A second 30-ton jack is currently in the shop.

F-86H

Bob Crapser removed the instrument panel and consoles panels from the F-86 for a much needed cleaning. The panel is missing three instruments, and Bob is researching the Internet to find replacements. He recently found one we needed. With the panels out of the cockpit, **Will Grinstead** did a preliminary cleaning of the cockpit and plans to do more detailed cleaning now that he has seen the interior condition. **Robert Johnston** delivered some work stands in October that will facilitate painting the aircraft. **Danny San Romani** and **Zak Amos** are sandblasting, prepping and priming the rails for the wing leading edge slats. They have also spot blasted and prepped corroded fasteners on the top of the right wing, with a lot more to go on both wings and the fuselage.



Our next Membership Luncheon

Our scheduled speaker for the December Membership Luncheon is **Richard Falkener** of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He will talk about mobilizing the public in World War II from the United States' point of view. The luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m., Monday, December 14 in the Jean Wanner Education Conference Room.



Join the Combat Air Museum!

Your membership and support are important to us.

Our guests from the Kansas League of Municipalities enjoy dinner and dancing in hangar 602

The Kansas League of Municipalities chose Combat Air Museum as the site for a dinner function on Sunday, October 4. To facilitate the function, we moved four aircraft out of hangar 602, the Harvard, F-84F, F-4D, and MiG-21. **Don Dawson, Danny San Romani, and Dale Allen** moved the aircraft out a few days before the event so we could clean the floor area.

Don, Danny, Dale, **Russ Wiedle, and Jack Vaughn** spent a couple of days sweeping and using a buffer to scrub the floor. The League rented its own tables and chairs, and risers for a band. Aboud's Catering catered the event. Danny and **Jim Braun** ran electrical cords and did final preparations the day of the event.

Two hundred and forty-five people attended the dinner and event that ran from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Dick Trupp, Dave Murray, and Gene Howerter were greeters for CAM, and **Bob Kelly, Dan Pulliam, and Dennis Smirl** guided attendees through both hangars. **Wayne Dodson** had the Gift Shop open during the event.

With the dinner, a five-piece band named *The Catz* played rock, reggae, rhythm and blues music. The event was considered a big success by the League sponsors. Our greeters said this was the first time many of the attendees had been to the Museum and they received a lot of comments and appreciation for what we have at CAM.

The day after, Danny, Russ, Bob Crapser, and **Chuck Urban**, took down the tables, chairs, risers and curtains and cleaned up the floor once again. After the rentals were picked up, they moved the aircraft back into the hangar. ➔

