

PROP NOISE

The Membership Newsletter for The Military Aviation Museum

Fall 2009

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Military Aviation Museum

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Veterans Bring History “Up Close and Personal”

by Ed Dillingham

The Military Aviation Museum continues to host the very popular series of “Living History” events that highlight the contributions of the men and women of aviation to our country. This is an opportunity for many to meet and greet the living persons that actually flew and fought in these exciting airplanes.



P-38 ace, Colonel Darrell Welch

In August, the museum was honored to host Lt. Col. “Slim” Summerlin USMC (ret) who discussed his experiences flying Dauntless dive bombers in the Pacific during the early years of WWII. Lt. Col. Summerlin flew many different

types of aircraft during his long career in the Corps, including the famous A-4 Skyhawk.

In September, the museum hosted a special “double feature” event. Our first guest speaker was renowned P-38 ace Col Darrell Welch. Our museum has seven such P-38 projects awaiting restoration in Australia. They were recovered from Papua New Guinea several years ago. Col Welch was the Commanding Officer of the 27th Fighter Squadron in the Mediterranean theater during the early years of WWII. He discussed his experiences flying against the German and Italian forces during the North Africa campaign, which included shooting down 5 enemy aircraft including 2 of the famous German ME-109 fighters. Our museum is restoring an ME-109E Messerschmitt in Moscow, Russia and a BE-109G in Germany. Col. Welch enthralled museum guests during his talk, and then was the special guest “co-pilot” in the museum’s SNJ-4 aircraft, flown by MAM pilot retired Navy CDR “Obie” O’Brien.

Continued on page 2

Wings and Wheels Car Show

by Dick Pensyl

Under cloudy, but rain free skies and temperatures in the low 70s, it was a perfect day for the second annual Wings and Wheels Show at the Military Aviation Museum. More than 200 antique vehicles participated along with a terrific display of vintage aircraft. Many of the aircraft were rolled out of the hangars and parked on the tarmac. Conditions were also favorable for two of the biplanes to take off and fly over the show field area, much to the delight of the crowd.

The automotive display included antique and special interest cars for AACA class judging including Hot Rods and Modified vehicles and the annual Brits on the Bay Show for British marques. The oldest



Dodge Woodie Wagon

antique cars included a 1907 Orient Surry and 1909 Oakland Touring. Many fine cars were on display built by companies that are no longer in business, along with other popular cars between 1910 and as recent as the 1980s.

Participants and patrons to the show were greeted by Tidewater Region AACA members dressed in period costumes. Door prizes and raffle prizes were awarded throughout the day to participants. Visitors enjoyed not only the cars and planes, but presentations on the history of the Model T Ford, free popcorn from a 1929 Model A Ford Cretor’s Popcorn truck, music from a period band atop the museum’s English double-decker bus, visits to a number of vendors, and good refreshments from the food tent. It

Continued on page 2

Veterans... Continued from page 1*Wing Commander Dave Brown*

The additional featured event in September was an excellent symposium on the 69th anniversary of the Battle of Britain hosted by RAF Wing Commander Dave Brown. Wing Commander Brown, who is on active

duty with the Royal Air Force, is currently attached to the NATO contingent at US Joint Forces Command in Norfolk. Wing CDR Brown reminded us of the desperate struggle against the Luftwaffe during the summer of 1940, when Britain stood alone against the German onslaught. The MAM was delighted to fly demonstrations of both of it's RAF fighter aircraft during the event, the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Hurricane.

The most common question asked by museum guests is, "Where do you find all the air-planes?" To answer that often asked question, the museum was delighted to feature its founder,

Mr. Gerald Yagen for its October event. Mr. Yagen fascinated the crowd with stories of how and where the museum's aircraft are found. Crocodiles, jungles, and raging rivers were but a few of the obstacles that Mr. Yagen's teams face in their efforts to find new aircraft for the museum. The recent television documentary, *Chasing Warbirds*, is offer for sale in our gift shop. He also discussed the museum's expansion plans, which include five new buildings to house the many aircraft that are not yet currently on display due to lack of room.

*Obie O'Brien and Col. Welch*

The Military Aviation Museum is honored to host these special guests, and looks forward to their appearances at the museum in the future. □

Car Show... Continued from page 1

was obvious that many of the attendees had a common passion for both historic airplanes and cars.

Attendance was up this year over last year and everyone agreed it was a tremendous success which can only get better in the years to come. □

*Wings and Wheels car show with the museum's sole existing Hawker Fury from the British Empire***Monitor the Winds at the Airports**

Want to find out the latest weather conditions at the Virginia Beach airport (42VA) from your cell phone. Just press in and save the new AWOS (Automated Weather Observation Systems) at (757) 204-2683. It will soon also be broadcast over the aviation VHF frequency of 119.925. You can also check out conditions at the other surrounding airports with the following list:

Virginia Beach Airport	(757) 204-2683
Norfolk International (ORF)	460-9348
Chesapeake Municipal	421-0252
Hampton Roads Airport	465-2175
Suffolk Municipal	934-3942
Franklin Municipal	562-8765
Currituck Municipal	(252) 453-8939

Check Out the Museum from Home

Do you want to see what is happening at the Military Aviation Museum from the comfort of your own home or from anywhere else in the world. You can now view inside the hangars or the front tarmac by logging into the museum webpage or going directly to www.militaryaviationmuseum.org/feed.html. There are security cameras strategically located throughout the museum. Four of the favorite locations can be accessed by webcams over the internet. Check out what's happening at midnight while wearing only your pajamas.

Different camera views include; ♦ Navy Hangar ♦ Army Air Corps Hangar
♦ Outside, Westbound view ♦ Outside, Eastbound view.

Boeing P-26D “Peashooter”

by Felix Usis

The Boeing P-26, commonly known as the Peashooter, was the first mass produced monoplane fighter aircraft built by any U.S. manufacturer. It was also the last open cockpit, fixed landing gear, externally braced pursuit aircraft to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps. The P-26 had a reasonably short operational life, only about eight and a half years, but it would become one of the best known and loved aircraft of the pre-war era.

The P-26 was the second mass-produced pursuit plane built by the Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle, Washington. Buoyed by sales of the superb P-12/F4B biplane pursuit aircraft, Boeing’s engineers set out to design and build the first monoplane pursuit aircraft for the U.S. military. Our museum is building an F4B open cockpit biplane fighter in a small town in Nevada. Boeing already had experience in the field of monoplanes with the Army XP-9 and the model 200 Monomail, both of which were

completed in the late 1920s. Although the Army was very interested in the Boeing monoplane proposals, budget constraints and military politics held up funding for the project.

The P-26 entered service with U.S. Army Air Corps units when the first P-26As were delivered to the 20th Pursuit Group at Barksdale Field, Louisiana in December of 1933. Initially three Army Air Corps groups flew the P-26 operationally – the 1st PG at Selfridge Field, Michigan; 17th PG at March Field, California; and the 20th PG. But the development of higher performance pursuits like the Seversky P-35 and Curtiss P-36, soon relegated the P-26s to second line units. In the Spring of 1937, P-26s were sent to the 3rd Pursuit Squadron at Nichols Field in The Philippine Islands. By 1940, P-26s were in service with the 37th PG protecting the Panama Canal Zone; with the 15th and 18th PGs at Wheeler Field, Hawaii; and

with the 31st PG, which had taken over both the P-26 and P-35 assets previously assigned to Selfridge Field.

Only two original Boeing P-26 “Peashooter” aircraft exist in the world today. One is at the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino, California, the other is at the National

Air and Space Museum in Washington DC. Both aircraft were obtained from the Guatemalan Air Force. Our own P-26 recreation and this Chino aircraft are the only flyable versions of this style of aircraft.

The Military Aviation Museum’s P-26D (NX26PX, s/n 32-06) was built by Mayocraft of Bolton, Massachusetts and competed in 2006. The aircraft has been painted to represent the 1st Pursuit Group, 94th Pursuit Squadron, based at Selfridge Field, Michigan, circa 1935-36.

The standard paint scheme used on the P-26 was a very bright and the aircraft would have been easily identifiable by an enemy during aerial combat. This peacetime color was blue for the fuselage with the wings and tail painted yellow. In combat areas, like the Philippines, this color was changed to olive drab, making it more difficult to be located while in the air.

The P-26 represented the state of the art for the early 1930’s in aircraft design, so we thought it was an eminently worthy subject for a tribute” Mayo said. Indeed, for a brief time, the P-26 was the Army Air Corp’s first line pursuit fighter and the fastest of its type in the world. However, rapid advances in aeronautics at that time soon rendered it forgotten, eclipsed by more powerful designs that drew heavily on the P-26’s parentage. □



Dave Morris, MAM pilot, flying the P26 “Peashooter”

Museum Looking for a Few Good Men (and Women)

Military Aviation Museum is always looking for interested volunteers to help with museum activities and tours. The next docent volunteer training is taking place on Saturday, January 23rd, at the museum.

For more information, visit the web site at www.MilitaryAviationMuseum.org or call 721-PROP.

Volunteer Docent Training includes:

- ♦ Overview: History of the Museum Collection
- ♦ Policies and Procedures for the volunteers
- ♦ Communications with Guests

Once acquiring 1000 volunteer hours, individuals qualify for free flights in a warbird. At the January training, several volunteers will have reached that milestone and be soon receiving their warbird flight. Congratulations and thank you for your continued dedication! □

Upcoming Events

November 7th – Fight Over the Desert-Come hear the story of a US Army Fighter Pilot during WW II! The Military Aviation Museum is pleased to announce: A seminar hosted by former P-40 and P-47 pilot 1Lt. Jack Pinkham. Hear the stories of flying against the Axis in North Africa and Italy. Remember our museum's Mark IX Spitfire also flew in this theatre of the war.

November 11th – Veterans Day Parade, the museum red double-decker bus will be in the parade and carrying only veterans. All veterans will be admitted free to the museum during this day.

November 27, 28, 29 – Trains and Planes-The Military Aviation Museum in association with The Tidewater Division of the National Model Railroad Association is pleased to announce its first model train show! Santa will be flying in our Red Waco biplanes on Saturday the 28th - meet and greet for kids of all ages with Santa!

December 31 – Happy Noon Year-Kids can experience the fun of New Years at the museum with games, activities and then a countdown to the New Year at 12:00 – High Noon.

February 13th – 1940's Valentine Hangar Dance, What is a Hangar Dance? During WWII, dances were held in airplane hangars and they were usually put on as fundraisers for the war effort. A hangar dance is like stepping back in time, join us for a memorable Valentines evening filled with music, romance, and history. Come dressed in your vintage clothing from the 1940's. Tickets now on sale and can be purchased on the website or in person.

March 20th – Wine Tasting and Retrospective Fashion Show, mark your calendars, this will be like no other wine tasting you have been to before!

May 22nd & 23rd - Second Annual "Warbirds over the Beach" air show will be held. Come see many of our own airplanes and visiting warbirds fly over the airport. Listen to the great entertainers from the 1940's with impersonators of the Andrews Sisters, Abbott and Costello, Frank Sinatra, and many more. View over a hundred reenactors camped out in their encampments dressed as GIs, British, Poles, Aussies, Kiwis, Ruskies and the opposing German Luftwaffe. More information will be available on our web page or at www.VBairshow.com.

To sign up for the monthly email on events go to www.MilitaryAviationMuseum.org and click on the events page.

Warbirds over the Beach by Radio

by Jim Stanton

A unique event took place September 19-20 at the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach hosted by the Tidewater Radio Control (www.FlyTRC.com) organization. More than 40 pilots displayed and flew over a hundred beautiful aircraft, including Roger Spoor's Topgun competing FW-190, powered by a Moki 5 cylinder radial, flown by Steve Peckum and Mark Ward's 148", four engine B17. Hundreds of spectators enjoyed the flying of all size warbirds. Saturday's weather was a little overcast and windy, so flying was held to a minimum, except for a few brave souls.

Sunday's weather made up for it and the flying was steady and exciting. In addition to the great flying and landing on the mile

long grass runway was the lunch provided by Zooke's Barbeque. Each pilot participating received entrance to the Military Aviation Museum as well as landing strip privileges. The Museum hosts more than 30 "regular" size warbirds including a P-51D, P40E, B25J, PBY-5A, T-28D, Peashooter, Fokker D7 and Dr1 Triplane along with many more. The Tidewater Soaring Club put on a flight demonstration with their full scale soaring planes and for an extra treat, the museum's red WACO biplane was used as the tow plane. Special thanks to Mark Ward (Contest Director) and all the Tidewater Radio Control Club volunteers for putting on a great event. Next year's event should be even bigger and better. ☐



Seeing double of Double Trouble; Mustang brought in for RC weekend (left), the museum's "larger" version (right)

Hangar Happenings

Welcome to the Military Aviation Museum, where you can find all kinds of happenings at the airport!

The museum hosted its first big, big screen Movie nights in July and August. A Virginian-Pilot photographer captured the scene, you may have seen the picture prominently featured in the Sunday's Daily Break afterward.

The *Monthly Speakers* (see front page article "Veterans Bring History...") have become very popular with an added treat of watching one or two of the museum's planes fly after the lecture. September 19th and 20th was *Radio Controlled Warbirds and Gliders* weekend. The Tidewater Radio Control Club showed off their magnificent model warbirds in flight and the Tidewater Soaring Society quietly glided in. On September 26th, what could be more fitting to take you back in time when you come to see all of the fantastic flying warbirds, but to also stroll the grounds and view hundreds of classic antique automobiles for the annual *Tidewater Wings and Wheels* (see front page article).

The pilots from Squadron Thirty Seven, based at NAS Oceana had their "*Dining Out*" at the museum. It is an event steeped in Naval tradition and the museum was a perfect place.



Last minute repairs on a radio-controlled warbird



The museum's double decker bus in the Neptune Parade

On October 3rd, Mercy Medical Airlift, had their yearly fundraiser "*Halos and Heroes*" to benefit Air Compassion for Veterans and Angel Flight. Wounded warriors were celebrated and honored for their service to our country. Shenandoah, the musical group, highlighted the evening with a concert and met with the fans afterwards to pose for pictures and sign autographs. To the delight of the guests, the museum did flight demos of the P-51, B-25, Spitfire, Corsair and Stearman. The Orphan Network also held their fundraiser at the museum the following weekend. Their "More is Less Pigfest" raised funds to help orphans in Nicaragua. The event featured entertainment by Lewis McGhee, Bouncy Castles for kids, Corn Hole Tournament, and all you can eat BBQ.

Local politicians, *Rosemary Wilson* in September and *Barry Knight* on October 27th, each had their fundraising events at the museum. This brought in record crowds for their campaigns.

Wedding Receptions and Engagement Parties

The Bock Wedding Reception was held at the museum on September 26th. On October 10th, Mederise Corinne Lake and Justin Randolph Carter celebrated their engagement with a museum party of friends and family. □

Amelia and our Fleet

Many of the readers might be going to see the new Amelia movie starring Hilary Swank and Richard Gere. However, most of you do not know that the Military Aviation Museum has an airplane piloted by Amelia Earhart. In 1937, when Amelia and her navigator, Frederick Noonan, left California for their first flight westbound to Hawaii, Paul Mantz was also along as a pilot. After they ground looped the Electra while taking off from Hawaii, they shipped the airplane back to the Lockheed plant in Los Angeles. It was at this time, while Earhart was overseeing the repairs to the Lockheed, that she occasionally flew the 1929 Fleet 2 owned by Mantz (www.AeroVintage.com/mantz-bio.htm). When Earhart and Noonan departed for their epic flight, Mantz did not accompany them. The Fleet aircraft was acquired by our museum several years ago in Hawaii and is now in storage awaiting restoration. □



Tom Selleck of Magnum PI with 1929 Fleet aircraft previously owned by Mantz

Glide-in at the Beach in 'Ought-Nine

by RR "Boom" Powell

What to call the event was the first question. Certainly not a contest. Because of the time of year "Fall into Fall" was considered, but falling has a poor implication for any flying machine. Settled on a Glide-in although the single-seat gliders arrived by road in their trailers.

The Virginia Beach Military Aviation Museum with its mile long turf runway is exactly Silver Badge distance (hmmm, maybe one of these days) from Tidewater Soaring Society's (TSS) home field at Garner. The idea was to get some flying in someplace different, without having to travel a long distance; let visitors to the Museum get a good look at soaring; and by bringing a two-place trainer over, give student fliers experience with cross-country tows and "land-out" experience by flying at a new airfield.

To ensure there was enough flight activity to keep the spectators happy, TSS joined up with the Tidewater Radio Controlled Model Club—a serendipitous arrangement. The models, many at a large enough scale to rival the sailplanes, flew frequently for short times while glider launches and recoveries were farther apart, but with more time aloft.

Saturday, 19 September, began with enough low cloud that it was questionable

whether the Citabria and SGS 2-33 could fly over from Garner. Tow pilot Sean Cushing, student Shane Webb and instructor Wally Azimi finally did make it in time for lunch from Zook's Bar-B-Q tent, but by then the wind had kicked up. CB Umphlette and his wife Marita Rhea did assemble their 1-26 which CB took for a sleigh ride while the 2-33 took a couple of guests up. The wind was bad enough that the modelers didn't do much flying either.

Sunday morning the Citabria returned under blue skies with Buz Wilson flying and Matt Takallu as the 'duty' CFIG and the air over the Virginia Beach Airport (42VA) stayed busy. Not sure if anyone kept track of how many models flew, but many of the flights were exciting to watch. Not only were the planes realistic in appearance, but so was their flying. Thrills were added by some nose-overs, wheels falling off, and one poor P-51 caught in the tree-tops. Will Harlan had a one hour training flight with Matt who later took Nathan Switzer in the 2-33 for the long tow home.

All paid admissions to the museum were given a raffle ticket for a glider ride. One gave hers to her mother who was elated as a glider flight was on her Bucket List. The other insisted her husband go. Already a pilot, the flight convinced him to join the club.

The Military Aviation Museum offers two attractions for glider pilots; first the view from aloft covers the Atlantic coast line from the Virginia Beach boardwalk down to the outer banks and second, the museum's tow plane. Half the tows Sunday were behind a very snazzy, all-red, Waco YMF open cockpit biplane. □



Gliders on museum tarmac waiting for airborne tow

Hawker Fury MK I

by Felix Usis

The Military Aviation Museum's Hawker Fury (N31FY, s/n WA6) was built by Westward Airways (Lands End) Ltd. and completed in 1982. It is considered a recreation due to the many new parts in its construction. Westward Airways was able to find and use many original parts, but the most exciting was to locate the exact engine. They managed to find a very rare original Kestrel engine in a car museum in New Zealand. This aircraft is the only airworthy example of this historic biplane fighter in the world.

After its completion it made some very rare public appearances between 1993 - 1996. At that time, it was British registered as OO-HFU. The aircraft was damaged during a slow, low level pass at a Belgian air show in 1996. The pilot, fortunately, suffered only minor injuries.

It was again restored and was next test flown again in 2000. This time it was under British registration, G-BKBB. It was airworthy and occasionally flew from the Shuttleworth Museum at Old Warden in the UK from until 2003. This Fury made it's last flight and then flew back to Belgium. It was stored, but maintained in full airworthy condition in Belgium until our museum acquired the aircraft in 2009 and had it shipped to America.

It is painted, as were most Royal Air Force aircraft of the time, in all silver with the squadron markings on the side. As painted, the Military Aviation Museum

Hawker Fury Mk I, K1930, was flown by the Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader L. H. Slatter of 43 Squadron, circa early 1932. □



The Hawker Fury with its original Rolls Royce Kestrel engine

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- **Family membership allows all related members within the household FREE admission**

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Veteran: _____ Branch: _____ Duty: _____

Please contact me to become a volunteer. Interest: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Individual - \$50 Annual Membership

Family - \$80 Annual Membership

Members of the Military Aviation Museum enjoy these benefits:

- Unlimited free admission to the Museum for one year
- 10% Gift Shop Discount
- Quarterly Newsletter Subscription
- Special Event Participation (Non-Private)
- Entrance to Maintenance Facility (Suffolk)

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Please automatically renew my annual membership for subsequent years, until I cancel.

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MAM Volunteer, Tom Manry

IN MEMORIUM

It was with deep sadness we learned that our friend, Tom Manry, passed away on September 22 with his wife and daughter by his side. Tom was a dedicated volunteer and docent and on many occasions was credited by visitors from both home and abroad for his informative and personable Museum tours. In lieu of flowers, the Manry family requested donations be made in Tom's memory to the Norview United Methodist Church or to the Military Aviation Museum. While Tom will be greatly missed, it is comforting knowing that he is probably already organizing tours in the "Big Hangar" in the sky.



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MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER FOR
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