

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

April / May 2009 • Vol. 25, No. 2

In Memoriam

Martin Moyer

Topeka

July 23, 1931 – March 8, 2009

31-year member, #250

It is with great sorrow that we report the passing of **Martin Moyer**, age 77, a 31-year member and volunteer of Combat Air Museum. Martin was a dear friend to many of us and will be greatly missed. His passing has left a large void in our membership and volunteer force that will be difficult to fill.

Martin joined the Museum on March 11, 1978, when it was known as Yesterday's Air Force, Kansas Wing. Ironically, his service was on March 11, 2009. At the time Martin joined, the Museum was having a membership drive at what was then White Lakes Mall in Topeka. Martin remembered the Museum brought its Messerschmitt Bf-109 mock-up to the mall for the drive. He talked with some volunteers, joined, and the rest is history.

Instead of trying to list all that Martin did over his 31-years as a member/volunteer, it is easier to list



what he did not do. We do not think he ever ran the Gift Shop or ever flew any of the Museum's planes. And that is about all there is to that list. Martin did so much for this organization.

"Martin Moyer," con't. on page 3



Inside This Issue

CAM members meet at Mulvane Art Museum 4

Photo exhibit inspires round-table discussion 6

An update on our projects 8

Help us meet our goal for the Celebrity Pancake Feed and Silent Auction 12

Combat Air Museum

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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

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Plane Talk, the official newsletter of Combat Air Museum of Topeka, Kansas, is published bi-monthly.

Your questions and comments are welcomed. Submit information for

Plane Talk to CAM office.

April / May Calendar of Events

April

Monday, April 13

Membership Luncheon

Jean Wanner Education

Conference Room

11:30 A.M.

Saturday, April 25

Annual Celebrity Pancake Feed

Hangar 602

7 A.M. - 12 P.M.

May

There is no

Membership Luncheon

in May.

The next luncheon

will be

Monday, June 8.

→ → →

Visit our website at
www.combatairmuseum.org

Visitors

During **January**
the Museum had

485 visitors

from **23** states

and

Canada

Denmark

During **February**

we had **408**

visitors

from 19 states,

and

France

Italy

→ → →

Join the fun
at the
Celebrity
Pancake Feed
April 25th



"Martin Moyer," con't. from page 1

For the first 15 years, Martin could only give volunteer time on evenings or weekends. His week-time job was in bridge construction. Martin built bridges, and these skills served often with projects at the Museum. He retired in 1993 and became a regular volunteer at CAM.

Martin was a morning person. That is to say he did his volunteer time in the mornings, five days a week. If you arrived at the museum by 8AM, you would usually find Martin opening up Hangar 604 and starting a pot of coffee. But he did not operate on a time clock. In the summer, especially, it was not uncommon to learn Martin had been at the museum since 5 or 5:30AM mowing the lawn.

Coffee breaks and lunch were always enjoyable times in the workshop. People just liked being around Martin, and it was good camaraderie for everyone. Usually, by 12:30PM, he was headed home to, as he would say, "take a nap."

About three years after Martin retired from work, he brought a new retiree, close friend, and fellow bridge builder, Amos Page, to the museum. Soon, Amos became a regular volunteer and member, and the two of them were constantly involved with projects around CAM. Primarily, their work involved buildings maintenance and grounds, but they also did many projects in support of exhibits and displays.

At one time the carpenter shop was in a storage area in Hangar 602. But Martin wanted a larger shop. So, he roughed out his ideas, and he and other volunteers built a new carpenter shop in Hangar 604, adjacent to the

workshop. Today, the former carpenter shop is an exhibit room and the library. Martin also saw a need to come up with a covered, outside storage area for the lawn mowers and various other tools used in grounds maintenance. When some old transformers were removed from their concrete foundation on the south side of Hangar 604, he saw an opportunity. Soon, he, Amos, and other volunteers were building a mower shed on the old transformer site. Dick Trupp, then Board Chairman, had a sign made for the large shed that still hangs above entrance. It reads *M & A* (for Martin and Amos) *Motor Pool*.

Martin greatly enjoyed auctions and flea markets, and he had a keen eye for bargains. He saved this museum hundreds of dollars and probably more with the lumber and building materials, tools, and equipment purchased at these sales. He even brought in obscure items that he thought could be used for projects. One day he brought in a small plastic tub filled with some ribbed metal doodads. To this day, we do not know what their original purpose was, but they make great engine cylinder heads for the scooter planes built in Hangar 604.

Martin's mind never stopped working, he was always coming up with new projects and innovations. We would often walk into Hangar 604 and could hear the sound of saws, hammers, or nail guns coming from the carpenter shop. Last summer, it was the sound of sandblasting coming from the flight line side of 604. Martin blasted and primed almost the entire DUKW over the summer. The man never stopped doing things.

Until near the end, Martin kept the humor we knew so well. When the doctor told him there was nothing more they could do for him and he had about two days left, Martin replied to the affect, "What a shame. Now I won't get that stimulus check from Obama." To another museum member who said he would miss Martin's help on a project, Martin said he would be watching from the rafters.

Martin is greatly missed, but he was a person who would not expect those of us remaining to mope along about his passing. He would expect us to adapt, adjust, fill in, and do our part to continue to improve on this great museum and bring new generations of visitors through the doors. ➔

CAM members meet at Mulvane Art Museum to see a photo exhibit of China in World War II and hear of Lee Lamar's last mission in World War II

This month's membership meeting took place at Mulvane Art Museum on the Washburn University campus. Coffee and pastries were available in the museum foyer, and the presentation took place in the gallery. The meeting was in conjunction with a new exhibit at Mulvane called *China Before Mao: Through the Lens of a Flying Tiger Photographer*. The gallery was filled with black and white and color photographs taken by Topekan **William Lyman Dibble** (1923-2004) in China during World War II. The exhibit included artifacts from the Dibble collection, artifacts and artwork loaned by Combat Air Museum, and photos and artifacts from the collection of Washburn University professor **Tony Naylor**.

Tom Ellis, a Dean of Enrollment Management, welcomed the crowd of some 75 people to Washburn and the Mulvane Art Museum on behalf of President Dr. Farley, who was in Washington, D.C. Mr. Ellis related a story of a student's transcript to the audience. This student started at Washburn in 1939 but in the Fall Semester 1941 received all incompletes. This was because he joined the service (Navy) in December 1941 after the US entry into World War II. In those days, finals were in January, and this student missed his finals. This student finished his classes the following June by correspondence and came back to Washburn after basic

training as part of the Navy's V-12 program. He completed his education after the end of World War II.

Mr. Ellis pointed to one photo taken in Shanghai, China, of a building. He said that a couple of years ago he and a group of Washburn students toured China and had their picture taken in virtually the same spot in front of the same building near Huangpu River. Mr. Ellis also related his association with members of the Dibble family.

Gene Howerter introduced a special guest in the audience. He was Mr. **Bill Templeton** from Kansas City. Mr. Templeton was a survivor of the Bataan Death March in the Philippines during World War II. Gene related that he had known two other survivors of the march.

Gene then thanked **Cindi Morrison**, Mulvane Art Museum director, and **Carol Emert**, Mulvane curator of exhibits, for allowing the Museum to have its meeting and program at Mulvane. Gene then pointed out his favorite photo in the exhibit. It was one of a Chinese Boy Scout. He spoke a little about Chinese-American relations since Mao and how they have improved. He then introduced **Mary Dibble**, William's widow, and thanked her for sharing the photos. Gene told the audience William Dibble was with the 4th Photo Group of the Fourteenth Air Force. He then spoke again about the



Left: Part of the audience at Mulvane Art Museum.

Above: Lee Lamar giving his presentation.

PHOTOS by DAVE MURRAY

Boy Scout photo and asked Mary Dibble about the story of the uniform. She replied a Flying Tiger pilot was forming a Boy Scout troop for Chinese boys and needed help with uniforms. William Dibble wrote back home for assistance and asked **Dr. Will [William] Menninger** of Topeka if he could round up some uniforms for the boys. Dr. Menninger was a leading scout master and head of the Sea Scouts in Topeka, and William Dibble had been a member of the Sea Scouts. The request produced two boxes of uniforms from Topeka Scouts that dressed 18 Chinese Boy Scouts in Kunming, China.

Gene told the audience he tried to get a chaplain to come to the meeting to give a prayer, but it did not pan out. He then told everyone he has collected various military Bibles and missals for the Museum's chapel. He had one with him titled Strength for Services to God and Country, dated 1942. It was compiled by the Chief, Chaplain Corps. He read a passage for February 8, 1942 telling the audience how everything in the passage for 1942 is appropriate for today. After the reading of the passage, Gene read an accompanying prayer.

Gene then introduced the guest speaker, Mr. **[Edgar] Lee Lamar** of Kansas City and thanked **Tad Pritchett** for driving to Kansas City to pick Mr. Lamar up. Mr. Lamar talked about his final mission flying a B-24 bomber aircraft during World War II and how he revisited the crash site and his capture site in Croatia two years ago. He used projected photos throughout his presentation.

The first image Mr. Lamar put up read:

*First Trip to Croatia
November 18, 1944
Unexpected, Unplanned
and Unappreciated*

Lee Lamar was 23 years old on November 18, 1944 when he co-piloted a B-24 Liberator bomber named *Bottoms Up* from an air base near Spinazzola, Italy over the Adriatic Sea some 380 miles to bomb a German air base near Udine, Italy. This was Lamar's 21st



combat mission, and it was expected to be a “milk run” or easy mission.

Bottoms Up dropped its bombs over the target but before the bomb bay doors could be closed Lamar felt the plane shudder and knew they had been hit badly. The bomber was hit near the number one engine (left wing) and between the number two engine (also left wing) and the fuselage. The hydraulic and oxygen systems were destroyed. Lamar later learned that a crewman on another Liberator reported at his debriefing that *Bottoms Up* was losing altitude fast and had a hole in the left wing big enough to “drive a Buick through.”

Lamar told the navigator to plot a course home that would keep them away from enemy territory, but either it was misunderstood or not heard. The B-24 made it about 85 miles south of Udine, and as it neared the town of Pola, Italy [today, Pula, Croatia] anti-aircraft artillery batteries on the Brinjuni Islands off the coast fired upon the plane. The B-24's elevators were destroyed and a piece of flak hit below Lamar's feet, destroying his rudder pedals. Lamar looked to his pilot and said, “I think this is where we get off.” All 10 crew members bailed out of the plane. Lamar was next to last and felt he had only several seconds between the time he left the B-24 until he and the aircraft both hit the ground. The bomber had made a slow, wide spiral to the ground and its right wing hit the top of a tall oak tree before careening into the ground. German soldiers arrived at the scene almost immediately and occupied it for three days.

After landing, Lamar rolled up his parachute and

"Lee Lamar," con't. on page 9

Photo exhibit inspires a round table discussion at Mulvane Art Museum

On February 24 Combat Air Museum members participated in a round table discussion at Mulvane Art Museum. The discussion focused on the collection of images from the exhibition *China Before Mao: Through the Lens of a Flying Tigers Photographer*. Curator **Danny San Romani** was invited from Combat Air Museum and **Jerry Holley**, also a Museum member, was invited on behalf of the Holley Museum of Military History. **Gene Howerter** also attended the discussion.

Others invited to take part in the discussion included Mr. **Tom Flanagan**, a C-47 flight engineer with the 322nd Troop Carrier (Headquarters) Squadron, 14th Air Force, and Mrs. **Mary Dibble**, widow of **William L. Dibble**, whose photos were on exhibit. An added bonus was the presence of Mr. **Hal Pottorf**. Hal was a “*Hump Pilot*” who flew the Curtiss C-46 Commando carrying cargo and personnel over the Himalaya Mountains.

The discussion took place in the Museum’s north gallery and was informal. Attendees sat in a large circle, and a second row of chairs was set up to accommodate everyone. After in-

troductions, Jerry and Danny gave some background history on Claire Chennault and the American Volunteer Group (AVG), commonly known as the *Flying Tigers*. They talked about when the AVG was disestablished and the 23rd Fighter Group formed on July 4, 1942 as part of the China Air Task Force, Tenth Air Force, with Chennault as Commander. The 23rd Group included planes, some pilots, and maintenance personnel from the AVG, and the Group carried on the traditions and took the nickname *Flying*

Tigers. The discussion was then turned over to Tom Flanagan and Hal Pottorf. They each shared some of their experiences and entertained questions from the audience.

Jerry and Danny provided some more background history, telling the audience that in March 1943 the Fourteenth Air Force was formed from the China Air Task Force with Chennault as its commanding general. Danny told the audience the 23rd Group still exists today, based at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. The unit flies the A-10 *Thunderbolt II*, commonly called the “*Warthog*.” The group insignia is a winged tiger riding a thunderbolt. The 74th Squadron is the *Flying Tigers*. The 75th Squadron is the *Tiger Sharks*.

The discussion turned to the photos and memorabilia on exhibit. Mary Dibble explained the color

photos. The Dibble family operated a grocery and drug store. They got in Kodak color film. Mary did not remember if it was Kodacolor or Kodachrome film. The family would periodically send rolls of the color film to William Dibble, and that is how he got the color photos. The black and white photos came out of

Mary Dibble drew attention to a photo of a Chinese Boy Scout. A Flying Tiger pilot was forming a Boy Scout troop for Chinese boys.

aircraft cameras that had not used up all their film. Dibble and other photo techs were allowed to take pictures using the film remaining in the cameras.

Washburn University professor **Tony Naylor** also provided photos and artifacts for the exhibit. He spoke a little about how he acquired the items through a friend and that he made many more negatives that were not printed for the exhibit.

Tom Flanagan and Hal Pottorf spoke more about their experiences, each after some prodding by

a friend. They both had some close moments with aircraft, and each injected humor in sharing their respective experiences.

Mary Dibble drew attention to a photo of a Chinese Boy Scout. A Flying Tiger pilot was forming a Boy Scout troop for Chinese boys and needed uniforms. William Dibble had been a member of the Sea Scouts in Topeka, under the tutelage of Dr. Will [William] Menninger. Dibble wrote Dr. Menninger about the uniforms and Topeka Boy Scouts collected two boxes of uniforms and emblems and

**The P-38 pilots felt bad
for the P-40 pilots
flying their
obsolescent aircraft
against the more nimble
Japanese fighters.**

shipped them to Kunming, China. Eighteen Chinese Boy Scouts donned their “new” uniforms and the one photo shows one of the Scouts dressed out.

The audience had more questions of the panel members. One asked about the comparison of the Curtiss P-40 *Warhawk* against the Japanese *Zero*. Jerry and Danny provided some information, and Gene Howerter spoke about his uncle who was a Lockheed P-38 *Lightning* pilot in the Pacific, and how the P-38 pilots felt bad for the P-40 pilots flying their obsolescent aircraft against the more nimble Japanese fighters. P-40s could survive with hit and run tactics, but Chennault told his pilots to not get in a dogfight with a *Zero* or *Oscar*. The P-40s were a poor match with these fighters in a one-on-one dogfight. A few more questions came from the audience for the two veterans of the China-Burma-India theater, and the meeting ended. →

New Supporters

Daniel Baker
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Marion Raper
Chris & Clarris Rundel
Harlan Sweeten
Reverend Larry Thomas
Merton Wilch
→ → →

An update on our projects

Link Trainer and Harvard

Dave Houser has finished the Link trainer to the point it will soon be moved out of the workshop for final assembly of the right wing and the canopy cover. Dave left a couple of cloth sections off the right side of the trainer near the pilot's seat, so visitors can look inside. The doors, canopy cover, and access panels will be secured to protect the interior of the trainer.

Dave finished painting the nose spinner on the Harvard and is now stripping old paint from the spinner base for repainting. This work has to be done in place on the plane, as the base is attached behind the propeller.

World War II Exhibit

Tom Witty has his paint colors selected and is ready to paint and install the first of five panels in the World War II exhibit. When that is complete, he will install shelving and select aircraft to go with that particular panel. The library is filled with model aircraft, more than we can use, but Tom will try different setups to see what the best selection of models will be.

F-111 Capsule

The F-111 capsule and exhibit case have been relocated to the southwest corner of Hangar 602. **Ken Pringle**, the capsule owner, is working with **Dick Trupp** to add more artifacts to the exhibit.

Pratt & Whitney R-2800 Radial Engine

Dick Trupp and Stu Entz recovered a cutaway of a Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine from University of Kansas (KU), Lawrence, Kansas. The engine is on its own roll around stand, and its attitude can be adjusted by use of a hand crank. The engine's propeller hub can be oriented so that it is pointing upward, or so that it is pointing parallel to the floor. Dick spent at least a few years talking with folks at KU to see if they would part with the engine. It is now part of the Museum's collection.

Tugs

Don Dawson fabricated two removable stanchions to hold amber revolving lights on the tugs. One light/motor was 12 volts, the other was six volts. Don purchased some resistors and wired them in on one of the tugs so the six volt light/motor could be used. He wired both assemblies such that the lights cannot be mixed up on the tugs. One can only use the 12 volt assembly, the other the six volt assembly. When used, the stanchions are installed behind the tugs' seat.

Hangar 602 Sheathing

Contract work on re-sheathing the west end of Hangar 602 began March 10. J.B. Turner and Sons is performing the work. So far, the west and south sides of the lean-to on Hangar 602 have been re-sheathed. The contractor attempted to drive a 65-foot lift up to the west end of the hangar in order to remove and replace the higher sheathing, but after a weekend's rain, the lift became stuck before getting close to the hangar. It was eventually extracted from the mud, and the work foreman said they would wait for the ground to dry out before bringing the lift in again.

J-65 Turbojet Engine

A J-65 turbojet engine, built by Buick, was delivered to CAM by members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard on March 17. This particular engine was flown on a Martin B-57 Canberra, currently on exhibit at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. Some assembly of engine components is required and Don will build a stand for it. The J-65 is on loan to CAM from the National Museum of the United States Air Force.





From an image projected on the screen:
Left: Lee Lamar. Right Rear: Luka Bekic.
PHOTO by DAVE MURRAY

"Lee Lamar," con't. from page 5

hid it behind a rock wall with dirt and leaves. He landed not far from his pilot, **Randall Darden**, and together they hid overnight but were captured the next day. Four of the crew were captured by the Germans. The remaining six were able to evade and escape capture with the help of local partisans and eventually returned to Allied territory. Lamar was ultimately taken to Stalag Luft I near Barth, Germany. Russian troops liberated his POW camp on April 30, 1945, and he returned home to Missouri in June 1945.

Lamar was haunted by the memories of his experience for over 60 years. He pictured in his mind's eye the location of his parachute at the intersection of two old stone walls in the countryside. The events played over and over and there seemed to be no closure.

Lee was adept with computers and researched the Internet unsuccessfully for information about the crash site. Then, on September 17, 2006 – his wedding anniversary – he received an email from a **Luka Bekic**. Bekic was an archaeologist with the Croatian restoration Institute and wrote that while excavating a Roman Villa for a proposed pipeline they had come across an aircraft crash site in a remote location near the village of Kravavici, Croatia. Luka thought the aircraft might have been Lee's B-24. Luka had researched records about WWII crash sites in the area and tracked Lee down through the Internet. Over the next several months the two exchanged emails.

Lee said that *Bottoms Up* was painted olive drab

and gray. Luka emailed photos of wreckage parts, but they appeared to not have any paint, so Lee was not sure it was his B-24. Lee explained that the plane had flown a large circle before it crashed and had gone down in a more or less flat attitude rather than diving into the ground. Luka provided more images of wreckage, and although the pieces did not show much paint, they did reveal English lettering and words. One photo was of a bomb bay door which Lee immediately recognized as coming from a B-24. A local resident used it to cover his wood. Luka also had an aerial photo of the crash area. It showed intersecting stone walls and a oblong area where crash debris was spread out. The spread of the debris was consistent with a plane crashing in a flatter attitude instead of a plane that buried itself from a diving angle.

Luka finally found some key information after reading a Maricana County (Lee's word) history book. The book had information about a bomber crash and verified the date the plane went down. Luka also found that the passage had been written by a former partisan, now a professor. Lee said he interviewed the former partisan and asked him if he was sure about the date. The partisan replied that it was correct as that was the day they lost their commander. When the plane crashed, the local partisans were activated to search for survivors and hide them from the Germans. The commander dressed in a uniform type of clothing, was captured by the Germans, sent to a concentration camp, and never returned.

During their exchange of emails, Lee attended a general meeting of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF) at New Century Air Center between Gardner and Olathe, Kansas. He told others at the meeting about his correspondence with Luka Bekic and the possibility the crash site of his B-24 was found. Mr. **Dennis Okerstrom**, a CAF member and professor at **Park University**, Parkville, Missouri, was at the meeting and felt Lee had a story to tell. Okerstrom contacted a Mr. **Ron Wright**, and they began discussing the possibility of a documentary of Lee's story. Before long, the plans for

"Lee Lamar," con't. on page 10

"Lee Lamar," con't. from page 9

the documentary were being made as well as plans for a trip to Croatia in August 2007. Park University funded the trip. Park students would film the documentary of Lee's experience, including a search for his parachute of which he had dreamed for over 60 years. Prior to the trip Lee spoke to students at the university.

Lee showed an image that this time read

Second Trip to Croatia

Expected

Planned

Most fully appreciated

Also prior to the Croatian trip, Lee had the opportunity to get up close and personal to a restored, flying B-24. The **Collings Foundation** restored a B-24J Liberator in 1989 and flies it on tours around the US. The plane came into Kansas City, and Lee was able to fly along on its next leg to Fort Collins, Colorado. He was allowed to briefly pilot the aircraft. After showing a photo of the Collings B-24J, Lee showed a photo of Parks University students as World War reenactors riding in a vintage jeep.

A group of 21 people left Kansas City for Croatia on August 3, 2007. The group included Lee and his wife, Bonnie, their daughter and her family, Ron and Sharyl Wright, Dennis and Jeanette Okerstrom, eight Park University students and a two-member film crew. Lee said it was vacation time in Pula, Croatia and many people were visiting the city. His days were busy as news media had advanced knowledge this entourage from the United States was coming. Lee had the first of several interviews and media conferences. He also met a graduate of the US Air Force Academy who was among a small group of Croatians selected to attend USAFA. The graduate gave Lee a briefing on a MiG aircraft.

Lee showed a photo of a large table filled with pieces and parts of *Bottoms Up*, none of them very large. Among the pieces and parts was a scale model of the B-24 in its full markings. Lee also had a photo of an oxygen tank that had been cut in half and used for a livestock feeder. He told the audience that Luka was walking through a grassy area one day and kicked up a piece of metal. At first, Luka thought it came from a tractor, but as he looked more closely, he saw foreign printing/stenciling on the piece of aluminum and reasoned it came from an aircraft. He asked locals about any plane

crash, and that was his introduction into the research on *Bottoms Up* and Lee Lamar. Lee showed a photo of that piece of the plane.

The entourage visited the area of the crash sight and a local land owner showed Lee the oak tree that *Bottoms Up*'s wing clipped before crashing into the ground. The land owner told Lee he was glad the tree was not destroyed. Lee also met the owner of the bomb bay door. He asked to buy it for the CAF at New Century, but the owner declined, saying he could not buy something else that good to cover his wood.

The village of Krvavici threw a large luncheon for Lee and the others. Here, he also met some of the partisans and met a man, Ivan Cetina, who as a 12 year old boy, carried Lee's parachute home. His seven year old brother found the chute, but could not move it by himself. The chute was immediately cut up to destroy its presence and some clothes were made from its silk.

Lee showed a photo of himself cutting the ham for the luncheon, considered an honor. He said he cut the ham in very thin slices. He said the ham took some 15 months to prepare/cure. Again, there was a large gathering of media and news coverage of the event. At the luncheon Lee met the son of the man (a seven year old boy at the time of the crash) who initially found the parachute. The son's name was Zlatko Cetina and Lee showed a photo of Cetina and he talking with each other.

During his stay at Krvavici Lee kept looking at topographical maps and stone walls. Although he knew the fate of his parachute, he dearly wanted to find its hiding place. Lee described to locals the intersection of two walls. He learned that two chutes had been found and determined one of them belonged to pilot Randall Darden. Zlatko Cetina took Lee and a group to the spot where the parachute had been hidden. Lee looked at the intersection of the walls, noted the vegetation and soil, and spotted some higher brush and said there should be a rocky knoll up there, and there was. Lee knew for sure he was at the site where he covered his parachute 63 years ago. His son-in-law had a GPS with him and said they were 61/100ths of a mile from the crash site. Later, Lee asked Ivan if they had kept anything of the parachute at all. Ivan replied, "If I had known you were coming, I would have saved it."

Before leaving, Lee and Luka flew in a Cessna 172 to retrace the last flight of *Bottoms Up* after its crippling damage near Lula. Lee commented that he was very

happy to be in the 172. He had a number of flight hours in a Cessna 170 and really enjoyed the plane. There was a group photo of Lee, Luka, the pilot, and plane owner by the plane. Lee showed a photo of the route of *Bottoms Up*'s last flight drawn over an area map, clearly showing the large sweeping curve the plane made before crashing. He figured the Cessna flight ran about \$400 dollars, but when he offered to pay, the plane's owner took no money. He considered it a professional courtesy.

The press was in force for this flight and there was a big news conference after the plane landed. It included some of the partisans and the mayor of the province of Marcana. The mayor presented Lee a plaque and a popular folk instrument. Lee presented the mayor a US flag and displayed a Croatian ceremonial flag that Dr. Judy Vogelsang from the honorary Council of Croatia, Kansas City had sent with him. He had a final luncheon with the partisans and knew it would be the last time he saw them, becoming emotional as he told the audience this. He also met the grandson of one of the partisans.

The last image Lee put up on the screen read, "Whatever the price of freedom, Buy it, for you will not enjoy the alternative." And that concluded Lee's presentation, to a long round of applause.

An audience member asked Lee if there were other survivors of his crew? Lee answered that at the time of the trip to Croatia there were three. Today there are only two. None of the three were healthy enough to make the trip.

Another audience member asked what happened to any large pieces of the plane. Lee answered that the Germans hauled them off to sinkholes in the area shortly after the crash and dropped them in. He said the sinkholes were reminiscent of those in Missouri. He also mentioned that the earth around sinkholes was black, and that was another indication he knew he was at the right spot for hiding his parachute as he remembered the black soil about near where he hid the chute.

A question about a book coming out about this story was asked. Lee said there was one in the works and that he reviewed the chapters for accuracy as they were given to him. He said he did not change the author's words but wrote notes as to what really happened. He thought the book may come out this year.

Another audience member asked about the markings on the vertical and horizontal stabilizers of the plane

and commented they seemed to be an inviting target. Lee said the markings identified the Bomb Wing, Bomb Group, and Bomb Squadron. Then a single letter identified the plane in squadron. He said the markings were for recognition and greatly aided in groups forming up once in the air.

An audience member asked what happened to his survival kit. Lee quietly responded, "A German officer took it, the S.O.B.," which brought a lot of laughter from the audience. He went on to say that he wore silk gloves under his heavy flight gloves and the officer took those and his military issue wristwatch.

Lee said that he and Darden hid out together overnight. Darden had a .45 caliber pistol with him and Lee told him to get rid of it. They hid it in the grass. The following morning a German patrol found the two fliers. As Lee stood up, he dropped one of his gloves and, without thinking, reached down to pick it up. The glove had fallen right by the pistol, which was visible to the Germans. Lee said for a moment the Germans were really disturbed until he picked up the glove. The presentation ended with this anecdote. Lee thanked the audience for attending and thanked them for the questions they asked. →

2009 Events Calendar

Event dates subject to change

April

25 – Celebrity Pancake Feed

June

8-11 Aviation Education Class

July

6-9 Aviation Education Class

August

3-6 Aviation Education Class

September

26 *Winged Foot* 5K Fun Run/Walk

→ → →

Help us meet our goal for the Annual Celebrity Pancake Feed

Let's sell 1,000 tickets!

The Annual Celebrity Feed is Saturday, April 25, 2009 – 7 A.M.-12 P.M.

There is still time to support our Combat Air Museum Celebrity Pancake Feed and Silent Auction.

Help us reach our goal this year: to sell 1,000 tickets!

Bob Carmichael of Perkins Family Restaurant and Bakery
has challenged CAM to increase our revenue by selling 1,000 tickets.

He will feed that many for us.

You will also note that we are having a **Silent Auction** to help increase our revenue.

For **\$5.00** you can get all the pancakes you can eat.

All of our members can help.

Buy/sell tickets to all persons you know and bring them to our event.

Donate items for the Silent Auction.

Bid on and buy items during the auction.

Place posters advertising the event wherever there is traffic
to call attention to the Museum and this fund raiser.

Tickets and posters are available at the Museum.

Remember, in addition to a great event and a fun time,
this is a major fund raiser for the Museum.

Working together we can drive this fund raiser over the top. Get involved. Now.