

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

PLANE



TOPEKA REGIONAL AIRPORT, FORBES FIELD, TOPEKA, KANSAS
February - March 2018 • Vol. 34, No. 1

talk

Flying and navigating in the BUFF ...it's not what you think!

By Dennis Smirl

Our guest speaker for the December membership meeting was Brigadier General Bradley S. Link (USAF, retired), former Assistant Adjutant General-Air of the Kansas National Guard. In a very informative and entertaining hour, General Link provided several interesting facts about his years of service to the state of Kansas and the United States of America.

One of those officers who didn't come up through the United States Air Force (USAF) Academy or Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), General Link received his commission in 1980 as a second lieutenant in the Air Force through the USAF Officer Training School. He then attended and completed USAF Undergraduate Navigator Training as a Distinguished Graduate. That accomplishment led to an assignment on Boeing B-52G Stratofortress bombers at Griffis Air Force Base in upstate New York. In 1984, he moved from navigator to pilot, having completed all the requirements for USAF pilot training. He earned very high grades in pilot training, and as is usual, was offered his choice of aircraft after he completed pilot training. He told us he'd been offered a slot with an F-15 unit, but chose the B-52. Following that, his next assignment was Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington state on B-52G and B-52H bombers.

To add an historical perspective, General Link talked about problems in the development of the Convair B-58 Hustler bomber and made the point that the Air Force and Boeing developed and produced the B-52G because of the problems with the B-58. One of the problems with the B-58 was its short combat range, whereas the B-52G had a range of 7,500 miles and the B-52H had a range of 10,000 miles without aerial refueling. He also discussed the use of water injection in the B-52G's Pratt



Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Link takes a question about the B-52 (photo by Dave Murray)

& Whitney J-57 turbojet engines. Using water, each of the eight engines could produce 17,000 pounds of thrust, but only for 120 seconds before emptying the water tanks. He mentioned the difference in defensive armament: the B-52G utilized four radar-aimed .50 caliber machine guns and the B-52H employed the 20-millimeter M-61 Vulcan cannon. He finished the majority of the tech talk about the B-52G by telling

"BUFF" con't on page 10

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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.

Sun. Noon - 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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We welcome your comments.

From the Chairman's Desk

By Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors

As the Combat Air Museum enters its forty-first year of operation, we are planning major improvements in our youth aviation education programs. There has been a tremendous change in the way youth experience aviation today. Many of us remember as children building model airplanes which had to be assembled and covered or carved from balsa wood blocks. Many of us built control line airplanes or radio controlled planes which we built from scratch and then flew (and crashed) for excitement. We had to know how to measure, read prints and instructions, cut different media, paint in a proper manner, use some manual dexterity, and plan ahead for the next step. I think it is safe to say today's world of modeling is not the way it used to be. We sell model plane kits in our gift shop which only require following a few written instructions and snapping the parts together; the planes come out of the box already painted in the most beautiful colors and marked with perfect decals...not many skills needed.

Children growing up during the "Golden Age of Aviation" and before television took their aviation inspiration from films like *Wings*, *Hell's Angels* and *The Dawn Patrol* which stirred youthful thoughts and imagination with dogfighting and aerial adventures. Famous aviators like Charles Lindbergh and Bessie Coleman inspired a generation of boys and girls dreaming of taking to the air flying like birds, performing all kinds of maneuvers and envisioning themselves as aviators. Military pilots like my uncle, a P-38 pilot in the 49th Fighter Group in the South Pacific, impressed us with their accounts of flying and fighting. He gave my brothers and me a leather flying helmet which we proudly wore. Weekends one would often find us at the Wichita Municipal Airport watching Trans World Airlines Lockheed Constellations and other planes

coming and going. This activity is now a thing of the past. Fences and security deny youth access to the excitement and pleasure we enjoyed in the past. Not only did we live and love aviation, many of us went on to find employment in the aircraft manufacturing industry in Wichita. Others joined the military service and found their place in society not only flying but maintaining civilian and military aircraft.



Since the times are changing, how much should our educational thinking and teaching change as we seek to educate today's youth? What changes will need to take place now and in the future if youth are to maintain a love for aviation?

Recently, Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-Illinois) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) introduced the "Promoting Women in the Aviation Work Force Act of 2017" which urges industry to "explore all opportunities, including pilot training, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education (STEM), and mentorship programs, to encourage and support female students and aviators to pursue a career in aviation."

So what's new? We are working with two separate entities on developing new educational materials and presentations for all school youth who visit the Museum. As you may guess, this is not an easy thing to do. With all ages of kids and different grades of school, what is good for one may not work as well for the other.

"Chairman," con't on page 10

CAM Volunteer Profile

Ralph Knehans

By Kevin Drewelow

Ralph Knehans was part of the group of people who in 1977 founded the organization that has become the Combat Air Museum (CAM); forty one years later he is still actively volunteering at CAM along with two other Museum pioneers, Dave Houser and Gene Howerter.

Ralph enjoys serving as a tour guide; he is renowned for providing detailed tours that combine history and tactics with nuts-and-bolts, grease-under-your-fingernails descriptions. Ralph's encyclopedic knowledge did not come from a book, but from his 21 years spent in the Air Force as an aircraft mechanic and flight engineer.

Born on September 5, 1931 in Red Cloud, Nebraska, Ralph grew up on a farm. He remembers seeing lots of airplanes overhead: some were military aircraft on training and cross-country flights, others were B-26 Martin Marauders on test flights from the factory in Omaha. He loved anything to do with aircraft and built lots of model airplanes. Ralph earned frequent scoldings for paying more attention to airplanes than his farm chores! Shortly after the war, a local mail carrier gave 14 year old Ralph his first airplane ride in a tandem taildragger and the hook was set.

The Korean War got underway in 1950 and it became quite real for Ralph when the Army drafted one of his friends. More interested in flying than marching, Ralph enlisted in the Air Force that year. He began basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, but after only one week the Air Force sent him and many others to complete their training at Sheppard Air Force Base near Wichita Falls, Texas. Air Force aptitude testing identified Ralph as a potential aircraft mechanic, so he stayed at Sheppard for technical school, training not on old grounded aircraft but on war-wearied Boeing WB-29 Superfortress weather reconnaissance aircraft that flew daily. This unusual practice was the result of the great demand for pilots and mechanics in an Air Force hastily downsized after World War II and left unprepared for war over Korea. Upon graduation from tech school, Ralph received orders for Yokota Air Base near Yokohama, Japan. He sailed from San Francisco and encountered a typhoon that nearly capsized his ship!

Ralph arrived at Yokota just as everyone else was leaving: the Japanese government was evacuating Yokohama due to the town's proximity to the Korean peninsula. He spent the next thirty months with the 56th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron at Yokota where he inspected and repaired WB-29s and their engines. The 56th conducted weather and shipping reconnaissance during the war between Taiwan and Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula.

Right: Ralph takes a break between tours (photo by Kevin Drewelow)
Below: TSgt Knehans trains other mechanics on a new C-130 (Knehans collection)



After the war, the 56th conducted air sampling flights to check for radioactive particles after suspected Soviet atomic bomb tests. Ralph often flew aboard the aircraft as an assistant crew chief. He even learned some Japanese and enjoys speaking the language with Japanese visitors on his tours at CAM.

After his tour in Japan, the Air Force assigned Ralph to Travis Air Force Base near San Francisco. Ralph finished his four year enlistment working on Boeing C-97 Stratofreighter cargo aircraft. Ralph then wanted to transfer to jet fighters but was told he could not. Ralph completed his tour and received his discharge; later that same day, he reenlisted after being assured he would maintain jet fighters!

The Air Force sent Ralph to Selfridge Air Force Base, 20 miles northeast of Detroit on the shore of Lake St. Clair, where he received a promotion to staff sergeant. Ralph's dream job was to work on fighter aircraft, so he was happy to help maintain a squadron of North American F-86D Sabre fighters assigned to the 1st Fighter Wing.

Ralph's life changed forever at Selfridge.



"Ralph Knehans," con't. on page 4

"Ralph Knehans," con't. from page 3

A devout Christian, Ralph always went to church. While attending a service one Sunday, Ralph noticed an attractive young lady in the congregation. He quickly learned her name was Margaret, that she taught elementary school on the base, and that she shared his devotion to God. Ralph and Margaret married in 1955; two years later they welcomed their first child, Peter.

In July of 1958, the pro-American government of Lebanon, under threat of civil war between Maronite Christians and Muslims, aided by some of Lebanon's pro-Soviet Arab neighbors, asked America for military assistance in accordance with the Eisenhower doctrine. This doctrine promised American military intervention anywhere international communism threatened a pro-Western government. On July 15, President Eisenhower initiated Operation BLUE BAT, which resulted in the immediate airlift of Marines into Lebanon, where they occupied the Beirut airport. The Air Force established an air bridge across the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. SSgt Knehans quickly found himself leaving home again to serve his country.

One of the stops on the transatlantic air bridge was Lajes Air Base in the Azores Archipelago, located approximately 850 miles west of Portugal. Most of the Air Force's cargo aircraft were still powered by piston engines, and since the demands of the air bridge required more aircraft mechanics with piston engine experience than the Air Force possessed, they combed their personnel files to find jet aircraft mechanics with piston engine experience - mechanics like SSgt Knehans. Ralph had 30 days to send Margaret and Peter to Oklahoma and report to Lajes.

The United States withdrew its forces from Lebanon by October of 1958; however, American forces remained nearby and the transatlantic air bridge kept extremely busy for over two years supporting those forces. Ralph's family later joined him at Lajes, where Ralph inspected, serviced and maintained aircraft flying the route. He later transferred to an air-sea rescue unit at Lajes which operated Douglas C-47 Skytrain transports. He spent a year with that unit.

One day at Lajes, a brand new Lockheed C-130A Hercules cargo aircraft landed, the first one Ralph had ever seen. The shiny cargo plane looked and sounded like no other aircraft; four jet engines, not piston engines, turned its four propellers. It soon left but Ralph was smitten. By 1960, Ralph's enlistment was almost over; he said he would reenlist if he could work on C-130s. The Air Force agreed, and before he knew it, Staff Sergeant Knehans became Technical Sergeant Knehans and it was time for his next Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

Sewart AFB, located 25 miles southeast of Nashville, Tennessee, was the next stop for the Knehans family. Sewart hosted the first C-130As in the Air Force and Ralph



Technical Sergeant Ralph Knehans (Knehans collection)

would spend the next two years there with the 463rd Troop Carrier Wing inspecting and maintaining C-130s as they rotated between the United States and Southeast Asia where they supported our growing involvement in South Vietnam. While at Sewart, the Knehans family grew by one in 1960 with the birth of son Michael.

1961 was a very busy year for Ralph. He deployed twice to South Vietnam, well before the United States expanded its involvement there, and ended the year in Europe; this schedule allowed him to be home with his family for about a month in between each trip. Vietnam's heat, humidity, snakes and insects were overwhelming. Ralph's C-130s flew constantly and the mechanics encountered unexpected maintenance problems, but they kept the aircraft flying. His second trip to Vietnam was a bit more interesting. En route to Hawaii from California, Ralph's Hercules developed engine problems while facing extreme headwinds. At one point they were flying on only two engines! Inflight electrical system repairs got one engine going again, but the headwinds had dramatically increased their fuel consumption. The fuel gauges all indicated empty as they began their final approach to Hickam AFB in Hawaii; the C-130 landed safely but as the crew taxied the aircraft off the runway, all three engines quit due to fuel starvation! Some people said Ralph's crew was lucky; Ralph thanks divine intervention.

The next two years saw Ralph deployed often to Europe. The Air Force relocated the 463rd and the Knehans family to Langley AFB near Newport News, Virginia, near the end of 1963.

Ralph deployed again to Europe and on to Africa, Turkey and Southwest Asia. November of 1965 was bittersweet for the Knehans family. Margaret gave birth to daughter Sherry and Ralph received his flight engineer's wings... just before he departed once again for South Vietnam.

Vietnam had changed dramatically since Ralph's first visit there in 1961. When he wasn't serving as a flight engineer, TSgt Knehans was part of a small team of mechanics assigned to provide emergency daytime support of C-130s at bare-base assault landing strips in Vietnam. These remotely located sites were hastily cleared landing strips devoid of any permanent buildings or even perimeter defenses. A C-130 would deposit Ralph and his team at one of the strips early in the morning and pick them up before sundown...usually. On one occasion a C-130 blew two tires while landing near the end of the day and the pilot shut down the aircraft. Ralph's team worked through the night, shielding their flashlights while hearing gunfire nearby. After replacing the tires, the team boarded the C-130 and took off while a frightened soldier in a jeep briefly illuminated the strip. They landed at their base at 1 a.m.; they returned to the same strip at 5 a.m. for another 12 hour shift!

Ralph said of the time, "C-130 ground crews never had much time at home, and it was tough on their families." Unlike today, it was very difficult for deployed service members to call home. Ralph flew on 220 combat sorties during his time in Southeast Asia.

The Air Force moved the Knehans family to Forbes AFB in Topeka in 1966, where Ralph split his time between supervising a group of aircraft mechanics and deploying to Europe and South America. In 1969 the Knehans family picked up and moved from Topeka to Okinawa where Ralph looked after war-weary C-130A aircraft. The family returned to Forbes AFB in June of 1971 and Ralph retired from the Air Force in August, ending his 21 year career. Ralph said, "The Air Force and the C-130 took me all over the world."

Ralph stayed in Topeka and went to work for the Costelow Company as an over-the-road driver delivering microwave towers across the United States. He didn't know it at the time, but his new career would have an immense impact a few years later upon the organization that would become the Combat Air Museum.

In 1975 a group of Topekans were interested in putting on an air show and Ralph volunteered to help plan and execute it. After the air show, some members of that group wanted to do more and that led to the organization of Yesterday's Air Force-Kansas Wing, forerunner of the Combat Air Museum. As Ralph traveled across the country for the Costelow Company, he inquired about old airplanes. He got leads on airplanes in city parks, at abandoned airports, and other locations. Mark Mohan, owner of the Costelow Company, allowed Ralph to use company trucks and trailers to retrieve and transport the aircraft and artifacts he found. Some of the aircraft in our collection are here due to Ralph's efforts, including the Grumman F9F Panther, found in a farmer's silo in Austin, Minnesota; the Douglas F3D Skyknight, recovered from Holloman AFB in New

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

Winter hours continue at the Museum through the end of the month: the Museum will open at noon and remain open until 4:30 p.m., taking last entries at 3:30 p.m.

Monday, February 12

Membership Luncheon
Bob Dole Education Center, 11:30 a.m.

John Musgrave served with the Marines in Vietnam, where he was gravely injured in 1967. His accounts of his experiences during and after the war are some of the most compelling parts of "The Vietnam War" documentary that recently aired on PBS.

MARCH

1-Normal hours resume, Museum open
Mon-Sat 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.,
taking last entries at 3:30 p.m.;
Museum open Sun noon-4:30 p.m.
11-Daylight Savings Time begins
19-22 Young Aviators Class

APRIL

1-Easter, Museum closed
9-Membership Luncheon
28-Celebrity Pancake Feed

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Mexico; and the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star, rescued from a city park in Viborg, South Dakota.

Sixty-seven years after enlisting in the Air Force and 41 years after helping found the Combat Air Museum, Ralph is still volunteering. Years ago he saw the need to train tour guides on the Museum's collection, so he painstakingly assembled several three-ring binders with information on the aircraft in our collection. Those volumes are available to use in the gift shop. During CAM's flying days, Ralph served as an aircraft mechanic, safety officer and member of the board of directors.

Time and health issues have slowed but not stopped Ralph. He always answers the call for tour guides when asked, and often "sits alert" in the gift shop, ready to **"Ralph Knehans," con't. on page 9**

Museum Notes

By Kevin Drewelow

New glass for hangar doors in building 602:

Recently, while moving a hangar door in building 602, a pane of glass fell to the floor between two Museum members, narrowly missing them. When Kevin replaced the pane, he realized the caulking around all the panes was dried out and most was gone, having fallen to the floor over the decades since new in 1942. Eighty of the panes are cracked, discolored or missing a small piece of glass.

Thanks to a generous donation from longtime member and volunteer Marcella Briery prior to her passing (see page 9), building 602 will soon have all new glass - 320 panes - installed in the hangar doors. City Glass and Mirror donated \$5,000 and will provide the panes and manpower; they expect to complete the project by the end of February.

Voices in the hangars: Visitors to CAM can now enjoy listening to air traffic control while touring the Museum. After we obtained an air-band receiver, Bob Crapser connected it to a VHF antenna Danny found in our collection. Bob and Kevin Drewelow mounted the antenna outside and now we receive Billard and Forbes control tower radio traffic as well as aircraft overhead as they communicate with the Kansas City Air Route Traffic Control Center. On warmer days with the hangar doors open, visitors will be able to hear and see pilots of aircraft at Forbes communicating with the controllers in the control tower and gain an appreciation of how air traffic control and the National Airspace System work.

New exhibit stands: Longtime member and volunteer Jim Braun recently completed three new exhibit stands. Made of PVC pipe, they are much lighter than the stands constructed of lumber which they'll replace. Jim has produced several of these improved stands; he is usually busy keeping the aircraft in hangar 602 clean and taking care of many other jobs around CAM.

CAM to be featured in *Kitplanes* magazine: Dick Starks of the Kansas City Dawn Patrol wrote an article about their recent trip to CAM to deliver Dick Lemons' Fokker Triplane and L.D. Herman's immense painting *Evolution of the Spirit*. The article provides great background information about our Museum and features some photos by Klio Hobbs, along with Dick's unique and enjoyable writing style. Look for the article in the April issue of *Kitplanes*.

Aviation artist at work: CAM member and volunteer Chuck Watson is applying his artistic talents in ways that will really enhance the visitor's experience. Chuck is a retired college and high school art teacher who has been an aviation artist for over 40 years. Many Air Force, Air National Guard and Navy units, including the Thunderbirds and Blue Angels, have his paintings in their collections. Chuck painted the picture of CAM's F-4D



Chuck Watson's TA-4J Skyhawk

(photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Below: Chuck Watson's Meyers OTW

(photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Phantom II engaging the North Vietnamese MiG-21 on the day Captains John Madden and Larry Pettit chased the MiG into the ground. Chuck just completed paintings of CAM's Douglas TA-4J Skyhawk, Meyers OTW and Canadian Car and Foundry Harvard, which he'll display near the actual aircraft in our hangars.

Chuck is literally our artist-in-residence; he is painting a mural next to the south door in hangar 602 which leads to hangar 604. The mural directs visitors to hangar 604 and features some of the aircraft our visitors will see there.

Not content with those projects, Chuck is renovating and updating our art gallery. He has reviewed the Museum's extensive art holdings and has curated a collection which visitors will appreciate. Chuck has repaired and will paint 6 free standing panels where he'll hang some of the works. As soon as weather permits, members and volunteers of the CAM Capital Projects Committee will





paint the walls. When Chuck is finished, CAM's art gallery will be an attraction on its own.

Sheep Dog Impact Assistance recognizes CAM: Aryn McCoy of the Kansas Chapter of Sheep Dog Impact Assistance (SDIA) recently presented a framed certificate of appreciation to the Combat Air Museum for our support of their first annual Turkey Trot for Heroes 5K/1 mile fun run/walk and virtual 5K on Thanksgiving Day. The Turkey Trot was very successful and brought many people to CAM who had never visited our Museum before. We look forward to working with SDIA on the next Turkey Trot!

Plane Talk recognized by communications trade organization: The Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals (AMCP) awarded *Plane Talk* an Honorable Mention in the Non-Profit Newsletter Category of the 2017 MarCom International competition for marketing and communication professionals.

Toni Dixon, responsible for *Plane Talk's* layout and design, submitted your newsletter for consideration. She said, "MarCom Awards are presented annually to honor excellence in marketing and communication. It is one of



Left: Chuck Watson's Harvard
(photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Right: Gene Howerter, Aryn McCoy and Dave Murray pose for a picture (photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Below: Chuck Watson at work on his mural in hangar 602 (photo by Klio Hobbs)

the largest creative competitions in the world. This award marks the second time *Plane Talk* has received an Honorable Mention, the first being 2010." Among the platinum and gold winners in 2017 are AIG, Samsung, American Airlines, American Heart Association, Caldwell Banker, College of William and Mary, and closer to home, Kansas Health Foundation, Black and Veatch, KTWU and Cerner.

Kansas Coyote donates Forbes AFB artifacts: Master Sergeant Paul Owens is a KC-135R crew chief with the 190th Air Refueling Wing who is interested in aviation history. Paul donated a 1958 Forbes Air Force Base (AFB) telephone book and a Forbes AFB Open Officers' Mess pocket calendar for September 1953; a photo of an Air Force Beech C-45 Expeditor was in the calendar. You can see all three items in our Forbes AFB display.

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Projects Update

By Kevin Drewelow

EC-121T entrance canopy: Thanks to CAM volunteers Stu Entz and Tom Gorrell, visitors entering the Lockheed EC-121T “Warning Star” will now enjoy some protection from the elements. Stu and Tom designed and built a small enclosure at the top of the staircase which leads to the aft cabin door. This enclosure features a locking metal door which volunteers have found much easier to open and close than the aircraft door itself. The enclosure affords shelter from wind, rain and sun and will minimize precipitation getting into the Lockheed. The enclosure conforms to the fuselage contour but leaves a gap to accommodate the fuselage moving in the wind; a foam gap seal keeps out the wind and rain. Stop by CAM to see it for yourself.

Hiller OH-23 Raven helicopter: Bob Crapser recently mounted stretchers on each side of the Hiller, which really makes it look like a medevac helicopter. The stretchers feature a canvas hood with plastic windows, the only concession to inflight patient comfort!

Singer-Link GAT-1 Trainer: Don Dawson is making progress, despite the holidays and cold weather. After repairing the door hinges, Don made and installed new side windows and is now considering ways to fabricate and install a new windshield.

North American F-86H Sabre: After spending the summer cleaning and organizing artifacts and parts in hangar 604, Danny San Romani has resumed work on the Sabre’s tail surfaces. He cleaned the interior of the vertical fin, treated some corrosion he found, and installed the rudder and trim tab on the fin.

Snoopy and the Red Baron: Visitors above a certain age will enjoy our latest display, sited near the Fokker Triplane replica in hangar 602. Thanks to Danny San Romani, Snoopy and his doghouse are in their rightful position, at



Stu Entz (left) and Tom Gorrell (right) complete the EC-121 door enclosure (photo by Kevin Drewelow)

Below: Snoopy and his Sopwith Camel doghouse close on the Red Baron (photo by Dave Murray)

the Baron’s six o’clock! Danny found a Snoopy plush toy complete with helmet and goggles at K Mart and the die was cast. Using repurposed materials found around the Museum, Danny carefully researched and constructed a dog house (Snoopy’s Sopwith Camel) and mounted it on a pole. He added a red scarf around Snoopy’s neck and placed the dog on the house. Snoopy and his house are located where visitors can choose to, or not, include Snoopy in a photograph of the Fokker. Volunteer Paul Frantz observed that grandparents get the connection straightaway but have to explain the “Snoopy and the Red Baron” to their grandchildren.

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Dillon's Community Rewards Program

Have you enrolled in Dillon's Community Awards Program?

If you shop at Dillon's and have a Dillon's Plus Shopper's Card, you can help support the Combat Air Museum with just a few keystrokes. Dillon's allocates money each year to benefit local schools and non-profit organizations, and our Museum gains from our members who have registered with Dillon's Community Rewards Program. Enrolling in this program will not increase your grocery bill and will not affect your fuel points.

Visit <https://www.dillons.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> and sign in or establish an account; click "Enroll Now" and enter the Combat Air Museum's five digit NPO number 43200; select Combat Air Museum; click on "Enroll" and Dillon's does the rest.

If you're already enrolled in the Community Rewards Program, you do not need to re-enroll; Dillon's no longer requires annual re-enrollment as they used to.

Thanks to your generosity, the Museum receives a check from Dillon's each quarter. It really helps us maintain the collection and facilities and provide the classes and service our visitors enjoy. Last year, Dillon's donated over \$1000 to CAM, but the number of enrollees is down. If you haven't already enrolled, why not take a few moments to do so and help your Museum? →



Ralph's first selfie after a recent tour

"Ralph Knehans," con't. from page 5

provide tours for any visitors interested in learning from his vast aviation experience. Ralph has received fan mail from visitors; one group even insisted on having their photo taken with Ralph after their tour. One rarely has an opportunity to hear about history from someone who was there making it. This writer learned a lot from Ralph while interviewing him for this article; spend some time with Ralph and you'll find it to be time well spent.

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In Memorium Marcella I. "Peggy" Briery

June 5, 1926 - December 9, 2017
CAM #1089

We will all miss seeing Marcella's friendly face. Marcella would usually lean on the gift shop entrance counter with her head supported in her hand as her elbow rested on the counter. Her conversations were usually short and to the point, then she would be on her way. Marcella always attended the bi-monthly membership meetings, lending her support to the kitchen crew.

I think it is fair to say she and her late husband John Briery loved the Combat Air Museum almost as much as they loved KU men's and women's basketball. Because of their generosity they will always live on in our memories here at the Combat Air Museum.

"Don't grieve for me, now I am free. I'm following the path God laid for me." →

CAM seeking items for Celebrity Pancake Feed Fly-In Market

By Marlene Urban

We are currently collecting smaller, new (unused) items and estate sale type items for the 2018 Fly-In Market which will be held in conjunction with the Celebrity Pancake Feed on April 28. Take advantage of retail store sales, estate sales, etc., and purchase bargains for this event.

We welcome cash donations; however, we will not accept clothing items. All proceeds will be used to support the Museum's day-by-day operation.

You may bring items to the Museum and place them on a table in the Gift Shop office room from Monday, February 12 until the Pancake Feed. We can offer some of the items through the Gift Shop before the event, so please bring them in any time after February 12.

Questions? Call Marlene Urban, 379-5306, or email her at urban.marlene@att.net. →

"BUFF," con't. from page 1

the group that full takeoff weight for the aircraft was 488,000 pounds, but that once aloft, the aerial refueling cycle could increase the weight of the aircraft to 540,000 pounds.

For decades, the B-52 has been known as the "BUFF." The family-friendly definition of this acronym is "Big Ugly Fat Fellow."

Later in his career, General Link flew the Rockwell B-1B Lancer bomber, better known as the "Bone." He was selected as initial cadre on that aircraft with the 28th Bomb Squadron at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, Kansas. Some of the flying time he spent in the pilot's seat was at high speed and at very low levels. He talked about flying at 300-360 knots indicated air speed (KIAS) at 200-500 feet above ground level (AGL), and in some practice runs, flying at the same speed while as close to the ground as 150 feet. [Editor's note: General Link later told Plane Talk the B-1B, with its terrain following radar, would go 500-620 KIAS at 400-500 feet AGL, occasionally as low as 200 feet AGL.]

During his distinguished service to this nation, General Link held a variety of leadership positions, including command at squadron and group level, eventually assuming command of the 190th Air Refueling Wing Operations and Maintenance Groups here at Forbes between March, 2008 and June, 2010. Following that assignment, he moved to Kansas National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters, remaining there until his retirement in 2014.



Boeing B-52G Stratofortress

General Link's flying accomplishments include an accumulation of more than 5,400 flight hours in the B-52 G/H models, the B-1B, the KC-135R, the T-37B and the T-38A. At the conclusion of his talk, the question and answer session was very lively and informative.

Finally, General Link promised the group that the next time he appears, he'll relate more anecdotes from his experiences flying the Rockwell B-1B bomber.

→ → →

"Chairman," con't. from page 2

This will be the challenge we face, but we will meet it head on, keeping one goal in mind: what can we do to help students love aviation and its related fields today as much as we did in the past?

This year the Combat Air Museum, in cooperation with the Museum of the Kansas National Guard, the Northeast Kansas Chapter of the Ninety-Nines and the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education, will once again plan, develop, and present our third annual Girls in Aviation Day. Last year approximately three hundred girls and sponsors signed up to take part in this exciting activity. I would judge this program a winner based upon the before and after responses from the participants.

We will once again conduct our four Young Aviators classes here at the Museum beginning with our spring break class and then follow with three summer versions of the same class. These classes require serious planning and preparation in order to ensure their success. Thanks to a strong head instructor and other volunteers supporting him, students will leave with a better understanding of aviation and related opportunities. So spread the word and call CAM or check our website for more information.

It has been said you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. I say you can lead him there and make him thirsty! This guides our philosophy as we begin the new year. How often have I witnessed the excitement on kids' faces the minute they walk inside our Museum and see our planes? I see it many times a day here at the Combat Air Museum. It is our intention to keep this excitement alive both now and in the future. I hope to see you and all of your kids and grandkids at the Museum soon.

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Visitors

983 people from 29 states, France, Japan, Sweden and Ukraine visited the Combat Air Museum in November.

In December, 460 visitors from 23 states and China, France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia toured your Museum.

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Introduce a friend to the Combat Air Museum

2018 Calendar of Events

February

1-Winter hours continue through the end of the month
12-Membership Luncheon

March

1-Normal hours resume, Museum open
Mon-Sat 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., no visitors admitted after 3:30 p.m.;
Museum open Sun noon-4:30 p.m.
11-Daylight Savings Time begins
19-22 Young Aviators Class

April

1-Easter, Museum closed
9-Membership Luncheon
28-Celebrity Pancake Feed

June

4-7 Young Aviators Class
11-Membership Luncheon

July

9-12 Young Aviators Class

August

6-9 Young Aviators Class
13-Membership Luncheon

September

29-Kansas Chocolate Festival
Winged Foot Run

October

8-Membership Luncheon
TBA-Girls in Aviation Day
(Tentative date Oct 13)

November

4-Daylight Savings time ends
22-Thanksgiving, Museum closed
22-2nd Annual Sheep Dog Impact Assistance
Turkey Trot for Heroes
5K/1 mile fun run/walk and virtual 5K

December

10-Membership Luncheon
25-Christmas, Museum closed

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Members

New Members

Len Carlson
Thomas Crafton
Max & Nancy Fuller
Jeff & Makenzie Gunnoe & family
Leon Hayen
Philip Hotzel
Brig. Gen. (USAF, ret) Brad Link
Andrew Martin
Dr. Robert McElroy
Charlie & Janet Reichenberger
Michael & Meredith Rockefeller & family
Bryan Schaaf

Renewing Members

Ted & Cindy Berand
Les Carlson
James Cole
Rodney & Martha Duerksen
Leonard Faulconer
Justin & Leslie Gordon
Ernest Hedges
Mary Ann & Denis Hill
Dr. Howard & Marilyn Howard
Hal & Nice' Loney
Larry & Nancy Mann
Jerry & Karen Milbradt
Todd & Kim Morgenstern & family
Mary Ann Naylor
Loren Otis
Richard Painter
Tad & Dee Pritchett
Matt & Denise Sabatini & family
Dennis & Galene San Romani
Dennis & Marise Smirl
G.M. (Bud) Spencer
Chuck & Marlene Urban
Deloris Zink

→ → →

visit our website
at www.combatairmuseum.org

Young Aviators classes offered in 2018

Join the fun at our Young Aviators Classes, for youth aged nine to thirteen years. The four-day courses are held from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Classes cover a brief history of early aviation, fundamentals of flight theory, aircraft structures, including control systems and engines, weather, and how to read aviation charts and maps. There is hands-on time in the Museum's flight simulator, lessons on the phonetic alphabet used for aviation communications and control, and a guided tour of the Museum.

Visits outside the classroom include the 108th Aviation Regiment of the Kansas Army National Guard (UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters), the 190th Air Refueling Wing of the Kansas Air National Guard (KC-135 Stratotanker air refueling tankers), The Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority Fire, Rescue, and Security Station (fire trucks) and the Topeka Regional Airport air traffic control tower.

Enrollment in each four-day session is limited to 20 students per class, and the Museum will accept youth on a first-come, first-served basis.



*Recent Young Aviators pose for their class picture
(photo by Kevin Drewelow)*

The fee is \$50 per student. Class dates are March 19-22; June 4-7; July 9-12; and August 6-9.

For details, please call Nelson Hinman at 785.862.3303 between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. weekdays.

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