

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

# COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

# PLANE



# talk

December 2018 | January 2019 • Vol. 34, No. 6

TOPEKA REGIONAL AIRPORT, FORBES FIELD, TOPEKA, KANSAS

## Officers describe careers and combat deployments

By Dennis Smirl

Chairman Gene Howerter called the October 8, 2018 Combat Air Museum membership meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. After making a few announcements, he introduced our guest speakers for the day. Each year CAM invites some officers from the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth to speak to our members. This year our guest speakers were Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Perez-Benitez and Major John Morrison. Both officers are assigned to the CGSC where Lt Col Perez-Benitez is an instructor and Major Morrison is a student.

Major Morrison spoke first. He began with a quick overview of his educational experiences, which started with a high school aviation program. In 1985, he entered college and graduated four years later. During that time, he earned a commercial pilot's license and pursued opportunities within the Tennessee Air National Guard.

His first service with the Guard was basic training, followed by technical school, where he learned the maintenance requirements of Allison T-56s, the engines that power the legacy Lockheed C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft.

After spending time working as an engine mechanic, he accepted a pilot training slot at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Texas. After Officer Training School, he began flight training and flew the primary Air Force training aircraft, the Beechcraft T-6 Texan II – which he said was his favorite aircraft to fly. He next transitioned to the Beechcraft C-12 Huron aircraft, where he gained a multi-engine rating. Then he flew Lockheed C-130 aircraft as co-pilot and eventually as pilot in command.

service in Iraq where he flew the Fairchild Swearingen RC-26B Condor, a militarized version of the twin-turboprop-engine Metroliner aircraft used for intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance missions. He deployed several times to Iraq and Afghanistan flying Condor missions.

**"Officers," con't. on page 14**

Major Morrison and  
his daughter  
Photo by Klio  
Hobbs



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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**

**Layout & Design**

Toni Dixon

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

**From the Chairman's Desk**

*by Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors*

The Combat Air Museum will soon celebrate its 42nd anniversary. I am pleased to report that as a charter member of the Combat Air Museum I will be ushering in my 42nd year as a volunteer. I think it is fair to say the Museum has experienced numerous growing pains during its four decades of serving the public. I am sure there will be a few more in the years ahead of us. I've always said this is not our Museum - we are only shepherding and safeguarding it through the years so that future generations can take charge of the precious artifacts to continue our tribute to the men and women of the various military services who have served our nation.

As an organization dependent upon quality volunteers, our future will be in the hands of many new and younger volunteers who have a passion for what we represent to the public and are willing to step up and serve. We do have quality individuals who join our ranks of new volunteers. I think to a person all of these people would say they are enjoying the labor of love they've found while serving at the Combat Air Museum.

What can new volunteers expect? First, they will find a friendly atmosphere as they learn their way around the Museum and get acquainted with others who volunteer. After this initial stage volunteers should, in many cases, become self-starters. Even though volunteers are part of a team, once trained they will need to function and solve problems on their own. It is also customary that volunteers join the Museum by purchasing either an individual (\$30) or family (\$40)

annual Museum membership. Keep in mind we offer training for those who work in our gift shop and greet visitors. Our guests come from all over the world and often compliment our volunteers when they leave reviews on Google, TripAdvisor and other related travel sites. We also train our tour guides and are continually looking for more people to help lighten the work load. We also provide flight simulator instructors with on the job training and we always need more trainees. Of course, we don't limit volunteers to only one area of interest; they may help with numerous duties. We encourage members to let Museum leadership know what they are willing to do as volunteers and their availability. While there is always an opportunity to be around some wonderful aircraft and artifacts, the Museum is a business and we need volunteers for many tasks which businesses must perform. As the old war poster says, "We Need You".

Finally, it is important to point out that we realize not all Museum members are in a position to volunteer. We love those of you that have been loyal members and we don't take you for granted; you are very much a big part of the Combat Air Museum family. Many of you have supported the Museum in other ways and I personally would like to thank you. As a member you are entitled to visit the Museum as often as you wish at no cost and we always enjoy seeing you. As some of you live at a great distance from the Museum, we thank you for your dedicated support. We wholeheartedly thank you for your past patronage and hope you'll continue to do so in 2019!

→ → →

*Introduce a friend to  
 the Combat Air Museum.*



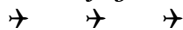
## The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

*By Gene Howerter*

Thanksgiving has passed; now we will begin celebrating what is often called “the most wonderful time of the year.” The Combat Air Museum’s gift shop is all stocked up for hassle-free Christmas shopping again this year. We have some outstanding items in our inventory which will put a smile on any family member’s face regardless of their age. When you shop at our gift shop you also support the Combat Air Museum. As you can see, it is a “win – win” situation for all of us. Please tell your friends so they can take advantage of this opportunity. We really hope to see you at our gift shop this holiday season.

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We are also supporting a fund raising project for the Kansas Honor Flight program. We are selling some beautiful hand crafted Christmas trees and all of the proceeds support honoring veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam by providing them with an all expense paid, three-day journey of honor and remembrance to their memorials in Washington, D.C. The organization also works to educate the youth and communities throughout Kansas about the impact of these historic wars and the freedoms our nation enjoys because of the service of our veterans. Don’t wait - please come out and purchase a very reasonably priced, beautiful tree which can be used year after year. Learn more about the Kansas Honor Flight program at <https://kansashonorflight.org/>



## 2019 Calendar of Events

### January

- 1-New Year’s Day, Museum closed
- 2- Winter hours begin, Museum open noon-4:30 p.m.  
no visitors admitted after 3:30 p.m.  
Museum open Sun noon to 4:30 p.m.

### February

- 1-Winter hours continue through end of month
- 11-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 to 4:30 p.m.
- 10-Daylight Savings Time begins
- 11-14 Young Aviators Class

### April

- 8-Membership Luncheon
- 21-Easter, Museum closed
- 27-Celebrity Pancake Feed

### June

- 3-6 Young Aviators Class
- 10-Membership Luncheon

### July

- 8-11 Young Aviators Class
- 29-Aug 1 Young Aviators Class

### August

- 12-Membership Luncheon

### September

- 28-Kansas Chocolate Festival  
Winged Foot Run

### October

- 5-Girls in Aviation Day
- 14-Membership Luncheon

### November

- 3-Daylight Savings time ends
- 28-Thanksgiving, Museum closed

### December

- 9-Membership Luncheon
- 25-Christmas, Museum closed



Your membership is important to us.  
Join the Combat Air Museum.  
Learn more at [www.combatairmuseum.org](http://www.combatairmuseum.org)

# Girls in Aviation

*By Kevin Drewelow*

Low clouds kept some aircraft away from Forbes Field but they couldn't keep the Girl Scouts away from Girls in Aviation Day at Forbes. Nearly 200 area Girl Scouts, accompanied by their adult leaders and parents, began their day at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard. They listened to women in the Kansas Air and Army National Guard talk about flying and maintaining military aircraft. Other women spoke about skydiving and learning to fly, and Kansas STARBASE staff demonstrated the forces of flight. The girls also tried the virtual parachute descent trainer and toured the museum.

Their next stop was the Combat Air Museum, where the girls joined the public and enjoyed free admission thanks to a generous donation from the Kansas Commission on Aerospace Education. There was a lot to see and do. After the girls ate lunch, they got to go inside a Boeing KC-135R Stratotanker and learn about maintaining and flying the jet from members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing. The 1-108th Aviation Regiment of the Kansas National Guard displayed one of their Sikorsky UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters. Captains Amanda McCleary and Lisa Ventura of the 8th Flying Training Squadron at Vance Air Force Base, Enid, Oklahoma, arrived in a Beechcraft T-6 Texan II trainer. The American Flight Museum brought "Spooky", their Douglas AC-47 gunship, and the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority displayed one of their fire trucks. Weather at Billard Airport prevented the Kansas Highway Patrol from displaying one of their aircraft as well as an aircraft from Aviation Explorer Post 8.

Inside the Museum, the girls learned about area aviation organizations. Members of the Foundation for Aeronautical Education flew small, lightweight radio controlled aircraft overhead as visitors operated a



*Top: Girls explore a KC-135 refueling aircraft*

*Left: Volunteer Chuck Watson helps a girl prepare for a photo*

**Photos by Klio Hobbs**

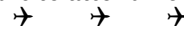
computer based radio controlled aircraft simulator. Representatives of the Atchison Amelia Earhart Foundation told visitors about Amelia Earhart and “Muriel,” their Lockheed Model 10E Electra, the type of aircraft Earhart used on her ill-fated around the world flight in 1937 and named after Amelia’s sister. Amy Magstadt, an air traffic controller at the Kansas City Air Route Traffic Control Center, represented Professional Women Controllers, Inc., and told girls about careers in the air traffic control business. CAM member Karen Waller had a display about the Federal Aviation Administration.

At 1 p.m., the girls assembled inside hangar 602 to hear several women speak about their aviation experiences. Megan Ryan, a student pilot and member of Air Explorer Post 8, served as emcee and introduced the speakers. Suzanne Germes portrayed Rosie the Riveter and explained how women stepped into the workforce during World War Two to help build the arsenal of democracy. Captain Amanda Cleary described her career progression as a pilot in the Air Force and her current assignment as an instructor in the T-6 Texan II. Megan then spoke about her aviation experience and the importance of perseverance. Amy Magstadt explained the basics of air traffic control and how she became a controller. Nicole Johnson told the girls about studying airport management at Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus at Salina. Cynthia Peterson spoke about her job as airport manager at McPherson, Kansas. Dr. Tara Harl holds an airline transport pilot license; she founded and heads the airport management at Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus. Dr. Harl compressed her accomplished careers in aviation, business and academia into a road map for determined and focused young ladies.



Many of our visitors toured the Museum and took a turn in the flight simulator. Seven lucky girls got to fly the Beechcraft T-6 Texan II on the simulator with real life T-6 pilots Captains McCleary and Ventura!

Next year the two museums and other organizations will hold our fourth Girls in Aviation Day on Saturday, October 5. We will feature more hands-on aviation activities for visitors, so make plans to attend now!



*Top: Rosie the Riveter  
Left: Amy Magstadt air traffic controller  
Right: Dr. Tara Harl  
Photos by Klio Hobbs*

# Doc Makes a House Call



*By Kevin Drewelow*

Only two Boeing B-29 Superfortresses remain airworthy in the world, and one of them visited Forbes Field in October. “Doc” is a B-29 based in Wichita that returned to flight after a 16-year restoration effort.

The American Flight Museum hosted Doc’s visit and the weather was ideal. A small but steady stream of people came out to see the rare bomber, including several Combat Air Museum members. Visitors were welcome to climb inside the aircraft for free, but a flight came with a price: \$1500 to ride in the forward section but only \$800 for passengers in the aft section.

Doc flew twice that day with passengers. The bomber’s engines started easily and the sound of the four Wright R-3350 Duplex Cyclone engines was music to the ears of the onlookers.

Several Combat Air Museum members stopped by to see Doc. To prepare for flying the Boeing KC-97 Stratofreighter, John Plumb flew 50 hours on B-29s with his pilot and flight engineer. Wes Barricklow is a member of CAM and serves on the Museum’s board of directors. He was a passenger on one of Doc’s flights. John and Wes describe their experiences on the next two pages.

Doc’s crew had two open seats available on the return leg to Wichita for no charge and Dan Pulliam jumped at the chance. Dan, a longtime member of both the Combat Air Museum and the American Flight Museum, said “I’m a lucky man. It was the thrill of a lifetime.” Dan said the flight to Wichita was also used as a training flight for a new pilot, so Dan hung on as the crew practiced turns, stalls and other maneuvers. Dan said the aircraft was very quiet

inside. He was surprised at how hot the cockpit was due to sunlight shining through the many windows. During the flight Dan even crawled through the 35-foot long tunnel above the bomb bay to the aft section

Boeing built B-29 serial number 44-69972 at Wichita and delivered it to the US Army in March of 1945. Aircraft 972 was too late to go to war but it served in several non-combat roles. In July of 1951, 972 was one of seven aircraft in a radar calibration unit. The squadron was known as the “Seven Dwarfs” and each aircraft was named for one of the characters, hence the “Doc” moniker. Five years later, Doc was one of over 100 B-29s towed into the California desert to be used as gunnery targets. In 1987, Tony Mazzolini tracked down the bomber and took possession of the aircraft in 1998. Boeing offered to support the restoration so Mazzolini trucked the disassembled bomber to Wichita. Spirit Aerospace bought the Boeing facility and continued the restoration effort. All the time and hard work paid off when Doc returned to flight in July of 2016.

The non-profit organization Doc’s Friends owns and operates the bomber, which may be in its brand new hangar at Wichita’s Eisenhower Airport by the time you read these words. Doc may return to Topeka next summer as part of a warbird gathering being planned by the American Flight Museum. You can learn more about Doc’s history and how to support its operation at <https://www.b29doc.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/DocsFriends>

→ → →

*Doc departs on its first flight from Forbes  
Photo by Kevin Drewelow*

## A Ride with Doc

*By Wes Barricklow*

On October 21, I had the opportunity of a lifetime when I experienced a ride on the restored B-29 Superfortress named “Doc.” Doc and another B-29 named “Fifi” are the only two Superfortresses currently flying. What a thrill to fly on this historic aircraft that played such a major role in World War II! The restoration of this aircraft to flying status took seventeen years.

Doc features three major configuration changes compared to a production B-29. First, all four of the gun turrets have been removed although you can easily see where they were on the original aircraft. This provides the room needed to complete the second configuration change, which now allows seating for ten passengers (six in the rear and four in the front). My seat was in the rear. The final change is to Doc’s engines; the aircraft features hybrid Wright R-3350s that are more reliable and durable than the original powerplants.

After boarding the aircraft, we taxied out and took off to the south. After banking to the east, we headed to Clinton Lake and then north over Lawrence. We then crossed over Perry Lake and turned back to the



*Wes Barricklow and Doc*  
Photo by Klio Hobbs

west. This flight path took us over downtown Topeka. Turning to the northwest, we completed a turn over Billard Airport before heading south to Forbes Field for our landing.

Three things stood out during my flight. First, the aircraft has minimum vibration. This included every operation from engine start, the takeoff run, inflight operations and landing. Secondly, the aircraft is quiet; so quiet that we did not need the headsets the crew provided. And finally, the aircraft is very maneuverable. The crew completed all turns and other maneuvers with great ease.

Doc’s crew stated that they are committed to two primary objectives. First, they want to honor all the flight crews that operated B-29s from WW II to the time that the last B-29 retired from active duty in 1965. Secondly, they are committed to keeping this aircraft flying so as many people as possible can appreciate the B-29 that is such a huge part of our nation’s history.

I was honored and so blessed to have had this great opportunity to have flown on Doc. It is a memory that I will cherish the rest of my life.

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## Training in the B-29

*By John Plumb*

In the spring of 1955 Strategic Air Command (SAC) was forming new air refueling squadrons. They were taking delivery of new Boeing KC-97G Stratofreighter air refueling tankers and needed flight crews. In most cases, veterans of World War II filled the left seat as aircraft commander. My senior pilot, Captain Jeff Donalson, had commanded Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses from England during the war. On his last mission he, his crew and airplane wound up in the North Sea! The Germans rescued them and they found themselves in a camp with other prisoners of war until the conflict ended.

He had "flown a desk" while flying the minimum four hours a month for flying pay.

As soon as I graduated from pilot training in March of 1955 the Air Force assigned me to be his copilot. Under the circumstances you might have expected some trepidation on my part, but everything was cool! He was very helpful and we served together as a crew for three years. Our first duty together was to check out in the Boeing B-29 Superfortress at Randolph Air Force Base (AFB) near San Antonio, Texas. For me, the B-29 served as a four engine transition airplane from the twin-engine North American B-25 Mitchell to the C-97. For my pilot it was transition from the B-17 to the C-97. We crewed with a flight engineer who was also with us for three years. The three of us spent several weeks at Randolph in B-29 ground school and flight training. The aircraft we flew were stripped of combat equipment. A typical training flight involved our new crew of three along with an instructor pilot, instructor flight engineer, crew chief and a scanner. The ground school was intensive. The flight training was heavy on traffic pattern work including takeoffs, landings and enough engine out work to tire our legs. We had both air work and instrument work, but the "left seater" was the one who had to pass an Air Force Regulation 60-16



*John Plumb in a B-29 copilot's seat again after 63 years*  
**Photo by Klio Hobbs**

instrument check. It all went well and our graduation prize was a solo flight in the San Antonio area.

This flight consisted of our crew of three plus a crew chief and mechanic to help out. During my time at Randolph between March and May I flew approximately 50 hours in B-29s.

Next came C-97 transition training at Palm Beach AFB, Florida in May 1955. Here we gained a boom operator, formerly a gunner during the war. Then we went on to SAC at Forbes AFB where we acquired our navigator, right out of navigation school. To check us out on the newly arriving KC-97Gs, instructor crews as well as standardization crews transferred to Forbes from Smokey Hill. Our crew of five flew together for three years.

After Doc's last flight during its visit to Topeka in October, the pilot in command was kind enough to turn the cockpit over to me. I chose to sit in the right seat, the seat I last occupied 63 years ago! I also left the pilot's seat open in honor of the man I flew with for three eventful years. As I looked around I saw some modern stuff but most of what I remember was still there! It was a truly moving experience!

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## Upcoming Events

### DECEMBER

10-Membership Luncheon  
 Joe Fives will share his experiences as a US Navy  
 F-14 Tomcat Radar Intercept Officer  
 25-Christmas, Museum closed

### JANUARY

1-New Year's Day, Museum closed  
 2- Winter hours begin, Museum open  
 noon-4:30 p.m.  
 no visitors admitted after 3:30 p.m.

### FEBRUARY

1-Winter hours continue through end of month  
 11-Membership Luncheon

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## New & Renewing Members

### New

Nathan Benfield  
 Bob & Carol Courtney  
 Micah Hawkinson & family  
 Carl & Sara Phillips  
 Ashleigh Rutherford & family  
 Bryce St. John & family

### Renewing

Ron & Nancy Bond  
 Christy Cheray  
 Michael & Wanda Dixon  
 Kevin & Susan Drewelow  
 Donald & Rebecca Duncan  
 Norman Edee  
 Dr. Paul & Jane Fortin  
 Charles & Dagmar Gorges  
 David Gurske & family  
 Paul Henson  
 David Houser  
 Henry Jones & family  
 Louise Langberg  
 Terry Love  
 Larry Madden  
 Edward Navone  
 George Orff  
 Dr. George & Linda Parkins  
 Sharon Rosenow  
 Sue Ann & Rod Seel  
 Tom & Patricia Thomas  
 Terry Wages  
 Conrad & Sharon Youngbloom

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## In Memoriam

**Harold L. "Jamie" Jameson**  
**January 7, 1929 – October 13, 2018**  
**CAM #242**

Harold joined the Combat Air Museum in January 1978.  
 He retired from the Air Force in 1973 at Forbes AFB  
 where he had flown C-130s. Harold owned and flew a  
 Cessna Skyhawk and gave over 300 introductory flights to  
 children through the Experimental Aircraft Association's  
 Young Eagles program.



Harold L.  
 "Jamie"  
 Jameson

## Visitors

1,235 people from 36 states, Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine and Zimbabwe visited the Combat Air Museum in September.  
 In October, 1,032 visitors from 30 states and Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Great Britain, India, Netherlands, Peru and South Africa toured your Museum. →

## Northrop's B-49 Program

By Dave Murray

In the previous issue of *Plane Talk*, I covered the upgrade of the Daniel Forbes display case and published the letter from Brig. Gen. Cardenas (USAF ret.) received in 1994 when we had originally received the personal military effects of the late Major Daniel Forbes. Like many others, I thought that the crash of the Flying Wing in 1948 in the desert sounded the end for the Northrop experimental program. While a huge setback for the program, the Wing's crash in June did not formally kill the program; that occurred over two years later.

The U.S. Flying Wing project was originally conceptualized during a loose partnership, from 1919 to 1927, between Jack Northrop and a Czech-born barnstormer and Lockheed engineer named Anthony Stadlman. Stadlman told Northrop about a tail-less, swept-wing aircraft that had flown in Europe. From about 1919 to 1927 the two men worked together at Lockheed (then spelled 'Loughead'). Together they built and experimented with an all-wing glider. After a bitter rift developed between the two men, Northrop continued to work on a flying wing design. In 1929 he produced a small model pilotable flying wing with a conventional tail (for balance). In 1939 Northrop opened his own plant to produce conventional aircraft for the British, Norwegian and U.S. Army air forces. In development with two of his brightest engineers, Theodore von Karman and William Sears, they designed a single piloted plane, the N-1M, the first true US-produced Flying Wing. This model did away with the tail of the 1929 flyer but added the required control surfaces into the trailing edges of the wing. The N-1M (nicknamed the "Jeep") first flew in July 1940 and it was roughly one third the size of the later YB-49.

By the time the U.S. entered the Second World War in 1941, the U.S. Army was looking for a large transcontinental bomber capable of carrying 10,000 lbs. of bombs to Germany from the US. Both Northrop and Consolidated Aircraft entered the competition and worked on developing planes for this purpose, the piston-driven Convair B-36 Peacemaker in the case of Consolidated and the piston driven B-35 Flying Wing in the case of Northrop. Both planes, while under development, fell way behind schedule and both had severe teething problems in early flight tests. After the war was over, the Army had decided to move away from piston engines for its future super bombers to jet-powered propulsion. Consolidated augmented the B-36 Peacemaker design with four turbojets outboard of its piston engines. Northrop replaced the B-35's four piston engines with eight turbojets and re-designated it YB-49. The first YB-49, aircraft "One" was readied by

October 1947 and test pilot Max Stanley took the plane up for its first test. A company press release stated, "Spewing a twin trail of black smoke, the sky monster swept into the air before the awed thousands gathered to witness the historic take-off."



When the second YB-49, aircraft "Two" was ready, Major Robert Cardenas ferried it from the factory to Muroc AFB in the California desert. Testing of the two YB-49s continued, one involving a terrifying experience for Cardenas and his co-test pilot Major Daniel Forbes. After "One" was put into a test stall, the nose of the wing pointed straight up and the aircraft went into a negative tumble, recovering only after a herculean effort by Cardenas to reach up for the controls during the tumble, managing to right the plane before impacting the ground. Cardenas then recommended that no further intentional stalls be performed in the YB.

The Air Force subsequently dispatched Cardenas to the University of Southern California to study for an engineering degree and Captain Glen Edwards joined the test team in his place, with Major Daniel Forbes as alternative chief test pilots on the two YB-49 planes. It worked out that Forbes usually commanded "Two" and Edwards "One."

On Saturday June 5th, 1948, "Two" took off at 6:44 a.m. with Forbes in the command seat and Edwards in the uncomfortable copilot's seat, not at canopy level but at wing level with a view only through the wing's leading edge. Three other crew engineers were aboard for the fateful flight. As this was a Saturday flight, no chase planes were available and the only reports from the flight came from Forbes in the pilot's seat. Despite Cardenas' recommendation, a set of managed stall tests at 15,000 feet was on

the list for the day during the stability and control portion of the program. It is surmised that Forbes experienced a critical nose up and tail slide and possible positive tumble, the G-forces making it impossible for Forbes to reach down for the controls, after which the Flying Wing went over backwards or sideways into a high-speed wing-tip spin. As Forbes eventually tried to level out and regain control, the aircraft exceeded its structural limit, later calculated to be 4.8 times the force of gravity, and the outer wings tore off. At 7:30 a.m. an observer on the ground saw the Wing tumbling in at least two pieces before it hit the desert in a fiery crash, the outer wings coming down some three miles away from the crew compartment. All aboard were killed.

By this time the Air Force recognized the Wing was not stable enough for its program and that the bomb load it could carry was far inferior to the giant B-36, the newly designed B-47 Stratofortress or even the obsolete B-29. In his autobiography "The Wind and Beyond" Theodore von Karman claimed that "Northrop had insisted that the crew, fuel and everything else had to go into the Wing. This load made the Wing thick" (at high speed, the airflow separated and...) "the plane began to shake and lose stability."

Cardenas explained, "The B-49 had gear problems, it had engine problems, it had fuel cell problems, it had all kinds of problems ... it was not an operational bird. The cockpit layout was miserable. The crew could not escape if anything happened." He further stated, "I have been accused of saying the YB-49 was unstable, and to clear the record, I never, ever said the Flying Wing was unstable. I said that the aircraft was marginally stable about all three axes and could go unstable at aft center of gravity loadings. That is why I would not sign off on the Wing.



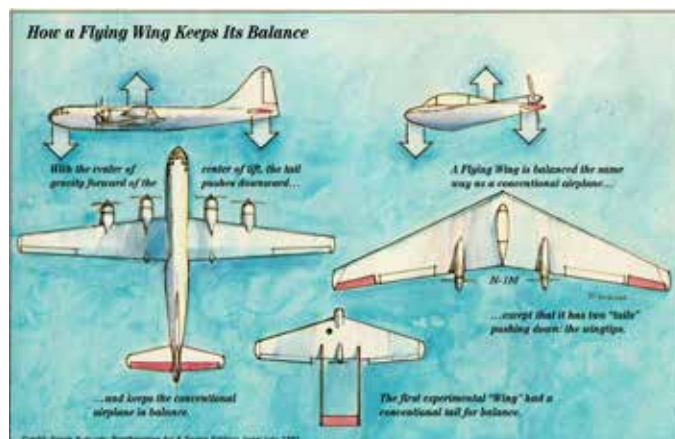
*Opposite page:  
Northrop Flying  
Wings during  
conversion from  
piston engines to  
turbojets  
Left: Northrop YB-  
49 over the Capitol  
Building*

The 49 would have to wait for technology to catch up. The YB-49 in every other respect was beautiful."

In January 1949 Cardenas flew "One" to Washington, D.C. and the aircraft achieved some amount of stealth on its high speed flight across the country – radar operators could not see the aircraft until they stepped outside and observed it with their own eyes. President Truman was impressed enough with the Wing to ask for Cardenas to conduct a high-speed flight down Pennsylvania Avenue at rooftop level. This Cardenas did at about 250 knots but he had to pull up sharply when he saw the Capitol dome looming ahead, in front of his craft.

The last operational YB-49 prototype was destroyed on 15 March 1950 during high-speed taxi trials at Muroc AFB when the nose wheel collapsed with the aircraft being destroyed in the ensuing fire. After this, the Air Force ordered all the remaining XB-35 aircraft (in process of being converted to 49s) be cut up and the Flying Wing program cancelled.

**"Northrop" con't. on page 15**





## Projects Update

*By Kevin Drewelow*

**Lockheed EC-121:** Stu Entz, Danny San Romani and Don Dawson continue to improve the interior of the Lockheed EC-121T Warning Star. Stu obtained copies of the now out of print World Aeronautical Charts for the areas of Florida and Cuba and had them spliced together and mounted on PVC board. Don, Danny and Bob Crapser recently mounted the completed chart behind the large Plexiglas plot board in the aircraft where crew members tracked airborne targets. Colored cords on the chart match colored grease pencil markings on the plot board left by the crew on the aircraft's last mission as they flew in the area. The chart provides geographic features to the otherwise cryptic markings on the Plexiglas.

**Vehicles and Weapons:** Chairman Gene Howerter took advantage of the great October weather to paint the Museum's 1944 DUKW amphibious truck and the 75mm M1897A4 cannon. GMC built the amphibious trucks; DUKW was the company's designation for the vehicle which came to be better known as a "Duck." Gene had some olive drab government issued





paint, decades past due its shelf life, stored away; he dragged it out and got to work on the Duck, the time-honored nickname applied to the DUKW. The paint performed admirably; the only problem was that it dried very quickly, requiring Gene to keep moving. Before long, Gene and Danny Downs had transformed the vehicle from an unsightly yellow and rusty ugly duckling into a dark green Duck ready for war! He later applied some white stars which really set off the new paint. Gene then turned his attention to the World War One vintage 75mm cannon at the Museum's entrance. As it did with the DUKW, the paint changed the cannon from a rusty artifact to a weapon of war.

Next up for cleaning and painting is the Museum's M56 Scorpion antitank weapon. Dick Trupp worked with Master Sergeant Jeremy Byers of the Museum of the Kansas National Guard to arrange for several Guardsmen and a large tow vehicle from the Combined Support Maintenance Shop to move the Scorpion off of its dolly and onto its treads. The soldiers quickly and professionally moved the Scorpion slightly east of its former location where students from the Washburn Institute of Technology will clean and paint the vehicle.

It's always amazing to see the difference one can make by spending a bit of time on our artifacts, whether simply cleaning them, painting them or restoring them. Be sure to see the DUKW, Scorpion and cannon for yourself on your next visit!



*Opposite page top and bottom:  
Chart mounted behind EC-121 plot board  
The newly painted DUKW*

*Above: Fresh paint on the 75mm cannon  
Left: Kansas Army Guardsmen reposition  
the Scorpion*

**Photos by Kevin Drewelow**



Lt Col Perez-Benitez  
Photo by Klio  
Hobbs

### **"Officers," con't. from page 1**

Most recently, he has transitioned to flying MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles; after he completes the CGSC course he will return to that assignment.

Lt. Col. Jorge "Burro" Perez-Benitez was our second speaker of the day. He told us that since he had military members on both sides of his family it seemed logical to carry on the tradition.

After receiving his commission in the Air Force, then-Lieutenant Perez-Benitez trained as a navigator. He continues to serve in that capacity as an instructor for electronic warfare operators (EWOs) and as an air liaison officer (ALO).

As an EWO, he flew in the Boeing B-52H Stratofortress, an eight-engine jet bomber with a long history in the Air Force. Boeing built 104 B-52H aircraft between 1961 and 1962; 75 remain in service today. The Air Force has constantly upgraded the bomber and plans to keep it in service beyond 2030.

In keeping with his service with the B-52, he told us he was assigned to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana for a period of eight years. He shared with us the fact that the Air Force reconfigured some B-52Hs for use in Iraq

and Afghanistan by changing the aircraft internally so it could carry a larger number of smaller bombs rather than a few large bombs.

Recently, Lt. Col Perez-Benitez has served as an ALO. His duties included advising the US Army in better use of air power to pursue their objectives and to counter the use of some IEDs. His final comments provided information about the Air Force's Language Enabled Airman Program (LEAP). According to the Air Force Culture and Language Center, "The goal of LEAP is to develop a core group of general-purpose force (GPF) Airmen across specialties and careers possessing the capability to communicate in one or more foreign languages." As a native Spanish speaker, Lt. Col. Perez-Benitez has traveled to several Central American countries as an adviser to other air forces and as a translator for several flag-level officers.

CAM members had many questions for the officers after they completed their presentations and the two officers provided even more information about their service and missions within the Air Force.

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**"Northrop," con't. from page 11**

In 1952, broken by the failure of his beloved Wing, Jack Northrop turned his company over to a new management team. The firm prospered during the Cold War and in time it received the Air Force contract to produce the flying wing B-2 stealth bomber.

In April 1980, Jack Northrop, then elderly and using a wheelchair, was taken back to the company he founded where he was ushered into a classified area and shown a scale model of the Air Force's forthcoming, but still highly classified Advanced Technology Bomber, which would eventually become the B-2, with a 172-foot wingspan, exactly the same dimension as the YB-49. Looking over its familiar lines, Northrop, unable to speak due to illnesses, was reported to have written on a pad: "I know why God has kept me alive for the past 25 years." Jack Northrop died ten months later in February 1981.

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*Credits: Smithsonian Air & Space magazine Vol. 12 number 2 dated June/July 1997*

*Autobiography: "The Wind and Beyond" by Theodore von Karman*

*YouTube Cardenas interview (Part Two): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PP861xs2U9I>*

*Wikipedia: Northrop YB-49: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop\\_YB-49](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_YB-49)*

Best wishes for the  
holidays and  
a happy 2019

Combat Air Museum.  
Learn more at  
[www.combatairmuseum.org](http://www.combatairmuseum.org)

## Dillon's Community Rewards Program

If you shop at Dillon's and have a Plus Shopper's Card, you can help support the Combat Air Museum with just a phone call or a few keystrokes. Dillon's Stores is giving up to \$2 million to non-profit organizations in 2018. Our Museum is benefitting from CAM 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.

Enrolling in the Community Rewards program is a one-time event and no longer requires annual registration. If you've already signed up, no further action is required. Go to <https://www.dillons.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> to create a Dillon's account before enrolling in the Community Rewards program. You can also call 800.576.4377 and the Dillon's customer service representative will register you.

You'll need to provide them with the Combat Air Museum's new five-character Non-Profit Organization (NPO) account number, GA302. Thanks to your generosity, each quarter the Museum receives a check from Dillon's that really helps us maintain the collection and facilities and provide the classes and service our visitors enjoy.

Last year, Dillon's donated \$851 to CAM; that amount is less than the previous year because we have fewer donors than before. If you haven't joined, why not take a few moments now to do so? Dillon's and CAM will do the rest!

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# I've Blessed My Wings

I've blessed my wings a thousand times  
for where they've carried me--  
high up the ladders of the wind--  
far out across the prairies of the sky  
to lands my fathers never knew  
and shores my kindred never trod--  
threading the corridors of templed cloud  
out and away beyond accustomed sights  
and sounds and creeds and breeds.

I've blessed my wings a thousand times  
because of doors they held ajar  
to aspirations of a seeking youth--  
the vistas and horizons that receded endlessly  
though I pursued them furiously--  
the ceaseless challenge to orbit beyond  
the perimeters of the antiquated  
and weary traditions and dogmas  
which anchor men to the bloody past.

I've blessed my wings because they are  
the physical evidence of the moral concept  
that to mankind nothing is impossible--

that creation is his heritage and that  
the language of God is articulate  
and intelligible in the laws of the universe.  
Time is not the measure of rising and setting suns  
but the processing of experience from which  
the truth emerges for all who run to read.

For all of this and more beside  
which points to the stars and beyond,  
I've blessed my wings a thousand times.

But there is a nearer ecstasy!  
The wings that bear one home--the song  
of the engine when the homebound leagues  
fold the homesick heart in their embrace--  
the joy of letting down to the place  
the heart has never left--the thrill  
of returning to the one spot on earth  
beloved above all others--home!

And, if it be "Home for Christmas,"  
how thrice blessed are my wings.

GILL ROBB WILSON