Volume XXX, Issue 1 January/February 2024

# Hangar Tales

Official Newsletter of the National Warplane Museum



#### INSIDE THE HANGARS

- 2024: Greatest Show on Turf Preliminary Lineup (July 13th & 14th, 2024 -SAVE THE DATES!)
- New Audio Tours
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- The Dragon's Breath AC-119 Gunships
- Donna Walker Retires!!

- In Memoriam: Herbert CliftonThorpe
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JULY 13 & 14 2024





GENESEO NEW YORK



WHAT MAKES

GENESEQ

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE IT! TURF RUNWAY HOMETOWN FEEL

FREE ONSITE PARKING

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH PILOTS AND PLANES

**EXPANDED CONCESSIONS, VENDORS** & **EXHIBITS** 

REENACTORS AND BATTLE BRING HISTORY ALIVE

FAMILY FRIENDLY 🌣 FUTURE AVIATORS KIDS ZONE

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# 2024 "Greatest Show on Turf" July 13th and 14th Preliminary Lineup



United States Air Force F-22 Raptor
Demo Team



**Rob Holland Ultimate Airshow** 



B-17G "Yankee Lady"



Hawker Hurricane Mk XII Vintage Wings of Canada Michael U Potter Collection



Hi Flight Mustangs P-51 Demo Team "Little Witch" & "Mad Max"



Supermarine Spitfire Mk IX Vintage Wings of Canada Michael U Potter Collection

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P-40 "American Dream" Thom Richard



B-25J "Panchito"

Delaware Aviation Museum



Skipper Hyle Air Corps Aerobatics



Jason Flood Pitts



Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association Formation Team



P-51 Mustang "Quicksilver"

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Round Canopy
Parachute Team



Beechcraft Staggerwing National Warplane Museum



C-47, "Whiskey 7"
National Warplane Museum



C-47 "Placid Lassie" Tunnison Foundation

Parking will be both tailgate and general admission.

**LINEUP SUBJECT TO CHANGE** due to weather or mechanicals.

#### Also appearing:

- NWM's WACO
- Rob Gilman's BT-13 Vultee "Valiant" and Steve Nesbit's PT-26 "Cornell"
- JB Allred's Fokker Dr.I and Jeff Brook's Fokker D.VII (WWI reproductions)
- NWM's Liaison Planes (L-16A, L-16B, L-21)
- Museum collections and displays i(plus LEGOS!) n the Long Hangar
- Re-enactors, Military Vehicles, Vendors
- And more!!!

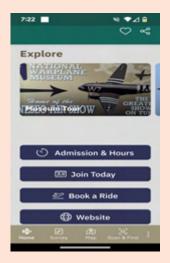
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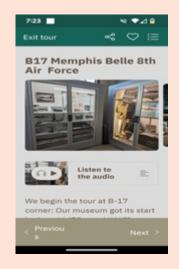
#### **New Audio Tours!**

**By Holly Stettner** 



The National Warplane Museum is pleased to announce we will have a new audio tour option this spring. We invite visitors to use this app to access our self-guided tour of our museum collection. All that is needed is a pair of earbuds and your device! Visitors will be able to download the museum app for free on both the Apple and Google platforms. Listen to the audio at each stop to hear real voices of our veterans and volunteers tell of daily life both on the homefront and overseas during WWII. Our app is ADA compliant and provides text as well as audio. The text is available in several languages. Some stops include videos as enrichment resources. We hope you enjoy this new tour option. Please consider filling out the short survey at the end to help us improve this new service. When you visit, always, remember to dress for the weather, as only a small portion of the museum is heated and the hangar is not. Instructions for use will be available at museum admission. We hope to see you soon!







Sample screens taken from the audio tour

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# American Legion National Commander Visits the National Warplane Museum

US TEGIOT

By Ruth Henry Marcia DeMinco photos

American Legion National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer visited the National Warplane Museum on Saturday Oct 14, escorted by Bee Sang, Livonia American

Legion Auxiliary President and 28 local American Legion Officers. John Snyder and Mac guided the group through the highlights of the Museum, climbed aboard W-7 and posed for pictures.

An ordained minister from Wisconsin, Seehafer served as a military chaplain in the U.S. Navy and

Navy Reserve. A member of American Legion Post 157 in Horicon, Wis., he served in American Legion offices at every level,



including National Chaplain and Commander of the Department of Wisconsin. He was elected National Commander on Aug 31.



Commander Seehafer (L), Jeff Brooks, NWM (C) and Adjutant James W. Casey (R)



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# The Dragon's Breath – AC-119 Gunships

By Kevin House

In 1942 an idea was developed to produce an aircraft lateral firing platform that would fly in a circular pattern for suppression of enemy submarines and anti-aircraft weapons.

First testing of this idea happened in 1962, and out of it came the AC-47, AC-130, and AC-119 gunship programs of the Vietnam War.

The first gunships of the war were modified C-47s known as Spooky and designated as AC-47. They were equipped with Gatling miniguns capable of firing 6,000 rounds per minute. This aircraft was not adequate for the mission, however, so the C-130 was modified to the AC – 130 and known as Spectre. It sported 2X20mm cannons and 2X40mm cannons. The demand



for cargo hauling of C-130s was so high, however, that it was decided to find another aircraft to develop as a gunship. This other aircraft was the C-119 and it was seen as an effective step to relieve pressure on the C-130 community.

# Who Knows What Evil Lurks Below the Jungle Canopy? The Shadow Knows!

G model C-119s were the first to be modified and were known as the Shadow. Pro-



duced in 1968, they incorporated 4X7.62mm miniguns, flares with launcher, an optical gunsight on the pilot's side window (the pilot did the firing), a night observation sight, an illuminator, added navigation/communication equipment, and some armored plating on the floor. 26 G models were modified and arrived in Vietnam in 1969. Originally the AC-119 was known as Creep but the squadrons raised hell over that name so it was re-

designated as Shadow.

Eventually it became necessary to upgrade the Shadow to a more potent weapon. The K model was chosen for this of which 26 were built to be known as the Stinger. The AC-119K was at first designated Charlie Brown which, understandably, was rejected by its crews. It was found that the 366 Tactical Fighter Wing had an unused call sign, and that is where the Stinger call sign came from. The Stinger had 4X7.62mm miniguns with a

(Continued next page)

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("The Dragon's Breath—AC119 Gunships" continued)

supply of 21,500 rounds, 2X20mm cannons with 3,000 rounds, a computerized fire con-



**AC-119 Interior Guns** 

trol system, 24 flares with launcher, a forward-looking radar, a FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared capable of detecting troops, trucks, tanks, etc.), an electronic countermeasures unit, an illuminator of 1.5 million candlepower, and terrain following radar. Two Wright 3350 piston engines of 3500HP powered the aircraft along with 2XGE J85 turbojets mounted under the wings of 2850 lbs thrust each. The J85s allowed for greater take off weights. Manning this airplane were a pilot, copilot, navigator, mechanic, illuminator operator, 2 gunners and a night observation sight operator.

AC-119 missions included armed recon, close air support for friendly ground forces, convoy escort, and naval escort. Mission attack altitudes were conducted at 5500ft above ground level in areas with no anti-aircraft capability, 7000 agl in areas with AA capability, and 3500 agl for close air support. Upon target ac-

quisition the 119s could not open fire until authorization was received from the controlling agency. Once authorized the aircraft would obtain its attack altitude, bank into a left orbit and open fire. During the AC-119's first 6 months in Southeast Asia 14,555,150 rounds of 7.62 ammunition were fired and 6,251 combat hours flown. The Stinger is credited with 10 Soviet made tanks destroyed. During the first quarter of 1971 Stingers demolished or damaged 1845 trucks, most of those in Laos or along the Laos/Vietnam border. In support of



Cambodian operations 609 vehicles were destroyed or damaged. During 1971 the Stingers also destroyed 237 sampans and 3,150 enemy soldiers.



Only 5 AC-119s were lost to all causes during its entire time in service in Vietnam. In 1971 the G model gunships were transferred to the South Vietnamese Air Force.

When Uninvited Guests Drop In... Call for the Shadow!

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#### **Donna Walker Retires!**

By Ruth Henry

Like Wendy in Peter Pan, Donna Walker was often heard saying, "Come on, Boys!" A familiar face at NWM, she began her service as an Air Show volunteer in 2011, then served as Part-time Operations Manager from 2013 until Dec 2023. As the only paid staff member, Donna's responsibilities extended into all areas of facilities, personnel, office management, volunteer management, hospitality, public relations and event coordination. She strengthened ties with community organizations and group leaders who continue to utilize the NWM facility and grounds for various purposes such as Rocket Clubs, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, American Legion, VFW and United Way, and coordinated parties, celebrations and weddings. One accomplishment she is most proud of during her tenure was writing and receiving a grant in 2013 to bring The Manhattan Dolls, a 1940's era ladies' quartet who performed for a NWM luncheon with 250 guests, then toured 3 local nursing homes. In 2014, The Manhattan Dolls returned for the



Return to Normandy farewell luncheon with over 600 people in attendance to bid the W-7 and crew bon voyage. Asked what her favorite memory is, Donna replied, "The Return to Normandy trip will always be my #1 highlight".

In 2022, Donna's 21-year-old grandson Andrew moved on his own to Texas to become a police officer. At the Academy, a new instructor named Del casually mentioned his membership in the Liberty Jump Team and his passion for jumping out of old airplanes. Andrew raised his hand and asked if Del had heard of the Whiskey 7 at the National Warplane Museum in Geneseo, New York. Del answered affirmative. Andrew comment-



ed, "My grandmother works there." Del looks at Andrew's name tag back to Andrew, and says, "No Way! You're Donna Walker's grandson!" He then told the class that NWM had great people. Andrew called his mom that evening and said, "I'm 1500 miles away from home and someone down here knows Nana!"

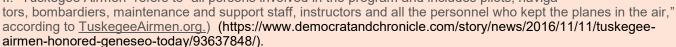
Donna had "a way with people to make them feel totally relaxed and welcome at NWM," says Austin. "She was a very good sport and could really think on her feet!"

Asked what she would miss the most in her retirement, Donna responded, "The People". She intends to continue volunteering at NWM, which makes all of us very happy.

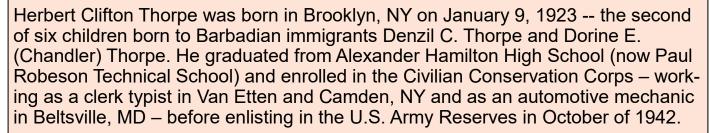
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# In Memoriam: Herbert CliftonThorpe January 9, 1923 - January 28, 2024 Tuskegee Airman

The National Warplane Museum is saddened to report the passing of Herbert C. Thorpe. Thorpe was one of five Tuskegee Airmen honored with the Congressional Gold Medal at the National Warplane Museum, back in November of 2016. (In 2007, the honor of the Congressional Gold Medal was secured for all men and women involved in the Tuskegee Experience, the Army Air Corps program to train African-Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft during World War II. "Tuskegee Airmen" refers to "all persons involved in the program and includes pilots, naviga-



The following is an excerpt from the obituary on the website of Prince-Boyd and Hyatt Home for Funerals in Rome, NY. The complete obituary can be found at: https://www.princeboydhyatt.com/obituary/herbert-thorpe





In December 1942, Mr. Thorpe enrolled in U. S. Signal Corps School in Troy, NY, and the following June began basic Air Force training at Kearns Field near Salt Lake City, UT. After completing basic training, he applied for and was accepted to cadet school. In early 1944, he traveled from Utah through California to Keesler Field in Biloxi, MS to take the Tuskegee Airman aptitude test – then on to Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to begin the first phase of pilot training.

There, he along with other novice cadets were taught to start the PT-17 single engine bi-planes manually by spinning the propeller, how to also take off, land and eventually fly solo during the first six weeks of training. At a time when there were no Black military pilots and all instructors were white, Herb excelled and was selected for navigator-bombardier training.

From Tuskegee he was sent to gunnery school in Florida – where he learned to operate the belly turret in the multi-engine B-17 plane – and then back through Tuskegee to bombardier-navigator school at Midland Airfield in Texas. Following that training he went back to Tuskegee Army Airfield he completed advanced flying training to operate multi-engine aircraft and was then qualified as a B-25 pilot.

(Continued next page)

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("In Memoriam: Herbert CliftonThorpe" continued)

Herbert C. Thorpe was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant Navigator Bombardier on December 30, 1944.

After an honorable discharge in the summer of 1946, Mr. Thorpe returned to Brooklyn. He worked for the Veterans Administration and the U.S. Postal Service before enrolling in New York University under the G.I. Bill. He earned his Bachelor of Electronic Engineering degree in 1953 and was employed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. As a radar engineer, part of his job was refurbishing old WWII Navy destroyers, cruisers, and aircraft carriers with updated radar equipment, and he would sometimes travel to other countries to pick up ships.

In 1959, he moved from Brooklyn with his wife and two children to work in the radar research department at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, NY. There he worked in the radar research department, on what was then called surveillance radar. The beacon tracking systems became the foundation of the Friend or Foe surveillance radar beacon tracking systems. "They called them IFF systems, Identification Friend from Foe," he explained. "Tracking systems are much more sophisticated now. But that was one of the main [tracking] systems they relied on, especially during the Cold War in the 60s."

Mr. Thorpe retired from Griffiss in 1983, and a year later went to work as a parttime guidance counselor at Mohawk Valley Community College until 1996.



Another February 17th shot PAGE 13 HANGAR TALES

#### CHILLY, EARLY AIR SHOW

By Jamieson R. Steele

For those who are at the museum frequently, we often have interesting aircraft visit, and most use the runway, when it is clear. However, quite often we have

hovering visitors that don't use the grass strip, they use the fields off the normal path, in any weather.

These are various military helicopters that practice here. Towards the end of January, I was leaving late in the day, and was treated to two



choppers doing touch and go's, and flying around in circles in between. These two actually landed in the light snow, stirred up a whole lot of snow to the point that they could not be seen through the haze.

Sometimes the medivac choppers actually practice rappelling down ropes, and do mock rescues. The large Chinooks have big blocks of cement out in the field that they practice picking up, and fly them around, and put them back down. I think



there is even an old truck out there that they play with. The choppers are often doing touch & go at the nearby Dansville air port, quite near my home, and they fly overhead quite low. Sometimes you can see crew actually sitting on the edge of

open doors! Nope, not for me, thanks, I'll stick to our safe, 80 year old, Whiskey 7.

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# **MORE THAN JUST** DOUGHNUTS

By Jamieson Steele

I think when people think about the American Red Cross in WWII, they think of the Club Mobile ladies handing out doughnuts and coffee. Indeed, that was a big morale booster for lonely GIs, not just for the goodies, but for the pretty faces serving



them. Well, even if not pretty, it was a female among hundreds of dirty guys, always a boost.

Serving alongside US Army Nurses, were the Red Cross Nurses, Nurses Aides,



ambulance drivers, and Red Cross Volunteers doing all sorts of critical services. Forward area aid stations were anything but safe, and many Red Cross personal were casualties. In the pic-🚐 tures are some items from a Red Cross Nurse from Hornell, NY. The veils on the hats denoted different roles of duty by color. Also shown are a Motor Services uniform, and volunteer smock, the smock is a local donation. Our own volunteer, Bevin Lynn,

Red Cross Nurse's Veil

creates her own Red Cross uniforms of all sorts, and reenacts with other ladies at WWII events. She often borrows real female uniforms from my collection to make templates for duplicates for other ladies. She even crafted her own Red Cross hat, as real ones, as shown, are quite expensive.

On the home front, Red Cross chapters led blood drives, served in the aid of the returning wounded soldiers, and many other needed chores. Red Cross Chapters all over the country made, rolled, and packaged bandages, and other medical supplies. Chapter ladies knit scarves, mittens, hats, sweaters, helmet liners, and many other items so badly needed in far



**Motor Services uniform** and volunteer smock

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("More Than Just Donuts" continued)

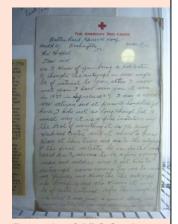
away cold battle fronts. They would sew in a small label with their individual chapter locations, as seen in the pictures. Stationary and envelopes were also provided to sick bay soldiers. Red Cross Nurses also served in WWI, and shown is my grandmother's sister & pin from WWI, serving while her husband-to-be was in France.



When you think of Red Cross doughnut girls, remember that the GI she gave a doughnut and a smile to, may be the soldier whose life she saves the next day. I am sure many of you have family that served in some of these many ways.



**Examples of ARC (American Red Cross) Pins** 



Example of ARC Stationery Supplied to Servicemen



**Locations Of Red Cross Locations in London During WWII** 

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#### OOPS! A TOOL MISSING. NO FLYING NOW.

By Jamieson R. Steele

Last year a fellow in New England offered the donation of WWII Japanese tools from a neighbor. I envisioned a box of old tools that would only end up in some dark storage

area at the museum. So, I replied that they may not be of much use to us, but thanked him anyway.

Well, he insisted, and mailed it to my home, and I had to push it through the door, as it was too heavy to lift. It cost him nearly \$70 for shipping! I opened it, and was truly amazed at what I saw. It folds open in three sections, and was just full of all sorts of tools, but I did recognize one that is to pull off a prop, much like we use on W7. So, it was aviation tools, and indeed, would have a nice home with us. I sent a thank you note, for sure, along with the donation form.

All of the slots for various tools had the outline of the tool painted in

silver, to be sure no tool is left in a plane, lest it cause

great harm. Pete Treichler, one of our top pilots, was walking by, and I pointed out that feature to him. He said they do the same thing at the airlines today, and he also thought the case was pretty neat.

It's on a table next to the Japanese Yokosuka Ohka Suicide Flying Bomb , right where it



was placed, and will stay there, as I don't want to try to lift it again. On the outside it has the address of the vet who brought it home. Next to it, is an equally heavy, US mine detector, complete, in the original trunk.

My collection policy is to pretty much accept just about everything, as you never know what else might come with it, or the item may turn out to be something really special, or perhaps, just good for a boat anchor! PAGE 17 HANGAR TALES

## **National Warplane Museum Float**

By Jay Jones



In just a few short months, town parades and festivals will begin. We here, at the National Warplane Museum, have a wonderful float in the form of a one-quarter scale Vought F4U Corsair aircraft on a trailer that could be used to inform the public about our upcoming airshow. If you have a parade or festival in your hometown, please email me at:

### tstfly@aol.com

and include the dates and if you have it, a contact person. Let's spread the word!





## 2024 Calendar of Events



3489 Big Tree Lane, PO Box 185 Geneseo, NY 14454 585-243-2100



#### www.NationalWarplaneMuseum.com

EVENT	Date	CONTACT
Safety Down Day	4/20	(585)243-2100
Rides Day	5/11	(585)243-2100
ROTC Commission-Museum closed	5/13	(585)243-2100
MARS Sport Launch	5/25-5/27	www.marsclub.org
Memorial Day Observance-Fly over	5/27	(585)243-2100
Airshow Flightline Training	6/1	(585)243-2100
Veterans One-stop Center Picnic	6/8	Bob Wolter (585) 200-9742
MARS Sport Launch	6/8 - 6/9	www.marsclub.org
Wargames Among Warbirds	TBD	wargamesw@yahoo.com
Empire State Champion Free Flight	6/14 - 6/16	Lyle Whitford (716)807-4748
Airshow Flightline Training	6/22	(585)243-2100
York Field Days W7 flyover	7/3	(585)243-2100
Whiskey 7 Independance Day Fly Overs	7/4	(585)243-2100
*GENESEO AIR SHOW	7/12-7/14	(585)243-2100
Rides Day	7/13-7-14	(585)243-2100
Flying Aces Event	7/20-7/21	David Mitchell(202)744-9345
MARS Sport Launch	7/27 - 7/28	www.marsclub.org
Rides Day	8/3	(585)243-2100
Geneseo VFW Picnic	8/3	Tony Gurak (585)489-1698
MARS Sport Launch	8/24 - 8/25	www.marsclub.org
WNY Free Flight-Yankee Air Pirate Challenge	8/16 - 8/18	Mark C. Rzadca (wnyffs@gmail.com
Veterans One-stop Center Picnic	8/31	Bob Wolter (585) 200-9742
Pancake Breakfast	9/2	(585)243-2100
Rides Day	9/2	(585)243-2100
Great Grape Gathering	TBD	Roy Smith aeronut.kos.net
Wargames Among Warbirds	TBD	wargamesw@yahoo.com
MARS Sport Launch	9/14 - 9/15	www.marsclub.org
Rides Day	9/21	(585)243-2100
Rides Day	10/5	(585)243-2100
MARS Sport Launch	10/12 - 10/13	www.marsclub.org
SUNY Geneseo Cross Country Meet	10/19	(585)243-2100
MARS Friends Gathering	11/3	www.marsclub.org
Veterans Day Observance	11/11	(585)243-2100

Dates Subject To Change -- Updated 1/31/2024



#### NATIONAL WARPLANE MUSEUM

3489 Big Tree Lane PO Box 15 Geneseo, NY 14454-0185

585-243-2100 (office) 585-245-9802 (fax)

newsletter@nationalwarplanemuseum.com

Museum Hours:
November 1 through April 30
Wed, and Sat. 10 a.m.—3 p.m.
May 1 through October 31
Wed.—Sun. 10 a.m.—3 p.m.

The National Warplane Museum is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) public corporation with a Provisional Museum Charter issued by the New York State Board of Regents. We are dedicated to the preservation and display of significant historical and military aircraft and artifacts for the benefit and education of the public. We honor all Veterans for their service and sacrifice.

The facilities and 5,000-foot grass runway are located adjacent to the picturesque village of Geneseo, NY. Founded in the 1980s, the Museum continues to promote and encourage the appreciation of military and civilian aviation, aeronautics and aviation history. It serves the community with flying events, museum displays, social functions and educational opportunities associated with these aircraft and their history. To date, we have twenty historic aircraft owned by or associated with the Museum. We are operating profitably and have increased the attendance to our annual Geneseo Airshow in each of the last five years. Plans for the future include expanded facilities and additional aircraft.

# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP (OR RENEWAL)

Mail this application with your check or money order to the address above

Name:		Phone: _		
Address:			e-Mail _	
City :	_ State	Country		ZIP:
Occupation:				
	on to <i>Hanga</i>			um, a 10% discount at the museum store or your car, and a membership card which
Membership fees (Reflects changes as of January:		Please check if New Membership □ or Renewal □		
Individual (18-59 yrs) Senior (age 60 and up) Student (22 and under) Family (2 Adults and child) Lifetime Check here if you need		•	s & dates of j	\$ 50.00 \$ 45.00 \$ 20.00 uniors) \$100.00 \$600.00