

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

December 2010 - January 2011 • Vol. 26, No. 6

The making of *Amelia* from a replica-builder's point of view

The October Membership Luncheon proved to be both entertaining and informative. **Dick Starks** of Parkville, Missouri, was our speaker with assistance from the audience from his wife, **Sharon**, and **Mr. Robert Baslee** of Holden, Missouri. Dick's topic was the making of the 2009 cinema release *Amelia*, and the role they (Robert, Sharon, and he) played in it.

The movie makers used a flying replica Bleriot XI made by Robert and a flying replica Morane Saulnier "L" Parasol made by Sharon in the film. Referring to themselves as "trailer weenies," Dick said they drove 23 hours straight to Canada, spent 15 hours of filming with the planes, and got a total of 38 seconds time in the movie. He then showed us those 38 seconds of flight time segments from the movie, saying they got more air time in a news segment done by WDAF-TV FOX 4 in Kansas City, Missouri. He showed the segment from WDAF-TV and pointed out that they reported the Morane Parasol was built by a woman, instead of giving Sharon's name.

Dick spoke, in a good-natured manner, about the problems the troupe had crossing into Canada. As he put it, they had two and one-half hours of harassment from some Canadian SNBs (Shiny New Badges) in immigration in Port Huron, Michigan, trying to convince the authorities that two American pilots in the group were not taking some Canadian pilots' jobs from them. The two professional pilots, Mr. Eric Presten and Mr. Harvey Cleveland, were qualified and checked out to fly the two homebuilts carried on the trailers and would not be flying other planes in Canada. Once clear of immigration, the troupe proceeded to Toronto.

Dick said the flying in the movie was good, but in his opinion, the same could not be said about the movie's



Left to right: Robert Baslee, Gene Howerter, Sharon Starks, and Dick Starks

story. The two planes were flown from a private grass strip near the town of Uxbridge, Ontario, about 30 miles northeast of Toronto. Dick said the site was idyllic as there were no power lines, towers, or structures to spoil the view. Sharon pointed out that the movie crew actually dismantled two structures at the site to make the background even more clear of obstructions. The field was 2100 feet, cut to 1400 feet. Eric Presten flew the Bleriot and Harvey Cleveland flew the Morane.

The American contingent also toured the Cinespace Film Studios in Toronto. Cinespace operates over one million square feet of studio. Dick said they got to see the soundstage. He was amazed that the props

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Doug Jacobs

Ted Nolde

Dick Trupp

Museum Hours

January 2 - February 28/29

Mon. - Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

March 1 - December 31

Mon. - Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

Closed New Year's Day, Easter,

Thanksgiving, Christmas Day

Newsletter

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Your comments are welcomed.

Russ' behind-the-scenes work keeps us connected

Most times we write about projects or events happening at the Museum that we can include photographs. But there are other things going on out here that are difficult, if not impossible, to document with a photo. Take for example, all the things **Russ Wiedle** has done with our computer systems.

Russ retired as a Consulting Systems Manager for IBM after 42 years. He began volunteering with CAM about two years ago. Over that time, he has become, by default, our IT man. This writer will not attempt to review everything Russ has done with our computers so we get the most optimum and efficient use out of them. Russ will quietly work his magic at a vacant terminal with no one around to see just what magic is being worked, and partly because Russ will work at home on his computer trying out new applications or solving problems we experience in the office. We have no count of the hours he does Museum work at home.

Taking advantage of free applications offered by Google, Russ established a CAM Internal site for use by employees, board members, and himself. These include but are not limited to such things as viewing and updating To Do lists, internal and public calendars, review of the current membership list and when the last changes occurred, access to the Museum's Facebook and website, and other uses. Then there are sub-applications. For example, the Curator has his own calendar and To Do list in which he can make entries and updates and share this with other users.

Russ established the Museum on Facebook and maintains this social network interacting with the public. We currently have 225 friends on Facebook. He

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Visitors

During **September** the Museum had

822 visitors

from **36** states,

Puerto Rico

and

Australia

Canada

Germany

Great Britain

India

Israel

Japan

Serbia

Spain

During **October**

we had

665 visitors

from **37** states

Puerto Rico,

and

Canada

Germany

Great Britain



New Supporters

Arvid Bergtrom

Justin, Natalie, Chase, &

Madison Holstin

Don Thun

Renewing Supporters

Carol Ballentine

Leonard, Estelle, Laura, & Peter

Bass

Pastor Glenn & Denise Bitter

Norm Edee

Kent & Susan Garlinghouse

Charles & Dagmar Gorges

David & Ruth Houser

Bob and Mary Ann Kelly

Ron and Nancy Lutz

Ray Miler

Edward Navone

Tad & Dee Pritchett

Sharon Rosenow

G.M "Bud" & Muriel Spencer

Replacing the lost medal Forbes' widow receives the Distinguished Flying Cross in honor of her late husband

Four CAM members attended a private ceremony on October 24, where **Hazel Forbes Bartron**, widow of Major Daniel Forbes was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross (posthumous) on behalf of her late husband. Gene Howerter, Dave Murray, Dick Trupp and Danny San Romani attended on behalf of the museum.

The ceremony was held at the Manor Care Home in Topeka, where Hazel currently resides. Others in attendance were Hazel's son, William Bartron, his wife, Shelly, and grandchildren Robert, Grace, and Reece, a family friend, Nancy Sietz, Emily Wellman of US Senator Pat Roberts' Topeka office, Major Karl Freundt, 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, and Senior Master Sergeant (RET) Keith Fulton.

Daniel Hugh Forbes, Jr. was a native of Carbondale, Kansas. He joined the US Army as an Aviation

Cadet in 1941, and his Army flying experiences were with strategic photoreconnaissance. where he flew the photo recon equivalents of B-17, B-24, and B-29 aircraft. After World War II, he flew photo missions of the Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests. Daniel Forbes and four others died on June 5, 1948, during a test flight of a Northrop YB-49 "Flying Wing" jet bomber, the predecessor of today's B-2 *Spirit* flying wing, stealth bomber.

Topeka Air Force Base was renamed Forbes Air Force Base on July 13, 1949. **Hattie Forbes**, Daniel's mother, was presented the

Distinguished Flying Cross in recognition of his test flights of the YB-49. Over the years, the medal was lost. This year, letters were written to Kansas US Senator Pat Roberts to get a replacement medal, and the ceremony on October 24 was the fruit of those efforts.

Danny San Romani read the citation to accompany the DFC award, and **Major Freundt** presented the medal to Hazel. Family and other attendees then visited together and talked with Hazel and took some group photos. ➔



(Left) Major Karl Freundt, 190th ARW, presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to Hazel Forbes Bartron

(Top) Ceremony attendees

(Above) The Distinguished Flying Cross



Bringing Casablanca to the Combat Air Museum



We took a step into the past in October when Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman visited CAM. Actually, it was Topekans **Shannon and Alexandra Reilly** playing the famous pair in a spoof of *Casablanca* for an Awards of Excellence video for the **Community Resources Council (CRC) of Topeka** Awards of Excellence dinner held October 27, 2010. The spoof was titled *Casavisioning* and was produced by Dan Mauer and Klik Kreative LLC.

Shannon Reilly, Artistic Director of Topeka Civic Theater and Academy, acted in four different video spoofs made by CRC for their various awards categories. The videos were made specifically for each of the category winners and were shown as the winners were announced.

Casavisioning was made to recognize **Heartland Visioning**, winner of the Nonprofit of Excellence category. Heartland Visioning is a community-wide initiative to develop and implement a shared strategic vision of what the Metropolitan Topeka area and Shawnee County should be in 5 to 20 years. The “community” is defined as Shawnee County including Auburn, Rossville, Topeka, Silver Lake, Willard, and unincorporated Shawnee County. Areas of focus include Education, Quality of Life,

Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Government. Locally, some of the current discussions involve the redevelopment of downtown Topeka and establishing an arts district in North Topeka.

The dialogue between the actors in *Casavisioning* explains Heartland Visioning and its goals and initiatives. The spoof is from the scene in *Casablanca* where Bogart is telling Bergman to get on the plane and why he has to stay. In this case, Shannon Reilly says he has to stay to be part of Heartland Visioning, and in the end, Alexandra Reilly decides she has to stay, also.

The scene was shot beside our 1943 Beech SNB-5, with its passenger door open. A handful of CAM members watched the filming as well as a family visiting from Germany. **Dan Pulliam** and **Chuck Urban** assisted in the filming. A number of takes were made, and a few of these made the bloopers reel shown at the dinner. One blooper on the reel was courtesy of Dan. He was holding a boom mike and during a take, his cell phone began ringing. Shannon Reilly played right to the interruption with his dialogue. Dan took his call, and Chuck took over the

boom mike. By the time of the final take, Chuck pretty well knew the dialogue for both actors by heart. The final version was shown in black and white.

One outtake that did not make the blooper reel, but **Dave Murray** captured on his cell phone, involved a KC-135 tanker of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard. Normally, the KC-135s use runway 13/31, but the day of the filming they were using runway 3/21, whose one end is relatively close to our hangars. So, here is a scene with two people in 1940s garb, standing by a 1940s, piston engine aircraft, and the sound of four turbofan jet engines fill the hangar.

Other film spoofs included *Gone with WIBW* (*Gone with the Wind*) for WIBW-TV winning the Business of Excellence category; *The Godfather: Policing Unit* (*The Godfather*) for the Topeka Police Department’s Community Policing Unit winning the Government of Excellence category; and *When Topeka Met Sally* (*When Harry Met Sally*) for Sally Zellers of Safe Streets who won the Individual of Excellence award. All the filmings were done at Topeka establishments.

You may still be able to see the videos by going to www.crcnet.org.





CAM gets a visit and a special gift from a TO-5C

On October 1, we had a visit by a unique US Army aircraft from the 204th Military Intelligence Battalion, based at Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, Texas. The aircraft was a DeHavilland TO-5C, but most people would recognize it as a DeHavilland DHC-7 commuter aircraft. In fact, that is just what the aircraft looked like in its overall white paint scheme with two parallel red stripes along the fuselage. The aircraft even flies with a US civil registration on its tail instead of a military serial number.

Chief Warrant Office Five (CWO5) **Russell Stark** and CWO4 **Tracy Hogan** flew the aircraft in. CWO5 Stark was our guest speaker at our August 2009 Membership Luncheon when he was with the 2nd Battalion, 291st Regiment at Fort Riley and flew a CH-47D Chinook to the Museum. The two officers opened up the aircraft, and several people went inside where CWO4 Hogan gave a brief talk about the DHC-7 aircraft, its capabilities, and its role. The TO-5C is a pilot trainer. Simply put, people were sitting inside a 48-seat passenger plane.



Nothing identified it as a military aircraft. The two officers also answered a number of questions about the plane and their backgrounds. We learned that CWO4 Hogan had been promoted to that rank less than a week earlier. Understandably, there were topics about the 204th Battalion and the EO-5 recon/intelligence aircraft they could not speak about, but their general presentation of the unit's history and overall mission, and answers to questions, were very interesting.

The operational aircraft include EO-5 (RC-7) variants. They are outfitted internally with a variety of intelligence-gathering gear and equipment and support the US Army's ARL (Airborne Reconnaissance Low) program. Their exterior appearance, including paint scheme and Civil Registration numbers, are the same as the TO-5C. Because of the nature of their business, the officers could not comment on the plane's missions. The Army operates several of these aircraft.

The DeHavilland DHC-7 air frame is a four engine turboprop commuter airplane with STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) capabilities. It was first introduced into civil aviation use in 1978. Over 10 countries still operate the type. The US Army

began using the type in 1997. Its attributes of short field operations, payload, and endurance, and the Army's need for a low profile intelligence aircraft made the DHC-7 a good platform. It is coming up for augmentation and replacement, and a possible candidate is the Bombardier Dash 8/Q Series (formerly the DeHavilland DHC-8).

Earlier, CWO5 Stark had presented **Dave Murray** with a US flag and a certificate stating the flag had been carried by an aircraft during a mission over Iraq. The flag and certificate are currently exhibited in the Conference Room. The certificate reads:

"This is to certify that the accompanied American flag was flown aboard a Special Operations aircraft through the skies of Iraq during a Combat Mission in direct support of the Global War on Terrorism on 23 February 2010. This flag was flown in honor of Topeka Combat Air Museum and is being presented on behalf of the 204th MI BN, who are forward deployed supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom."

The certificate is signed by William Webb, CW5 AV, Pilot-in-Command, and Russell O. Stark, CW5 AV, Pilot. An image of an EO-5 is on the certificate.



(Top) The TO-5C/DHC-7
(Left) CWO5 Russell Stark, US Army

See "Amelia," con't. from page 1

used in the movie gave such realism. The prop for the Lockheed Electra cabin was mounted on springs, and Dick said two movie crewmen jiggled 2 X 4 boards to shake the airplane. He also said they were able to see the movie story boards.

Dick then showed us some before and after images of the Morane aircraft. In his words, "They made the Morane butt-ugly for the movie." Before the make-over, the Morane was in bright colors and markings. Starting about 4 a.m. one morning, a special effects crew transformed the plane into a plain looking, single color aircraft, void of markings. They used a sticky paper to cover the existing fabric and used a tempura-type, temporary paint in other areas. Dick, Sharon, and Robert were present for the make-over to ensure the safety and integrity of the plane was not altered. It all worked, and after the filming was complete, all the temporary alterations came off the airplane.

Flying sequences involved the use of a helicopter. Dick said the chopper flew for \$750 per hour, not including the ball turret camera mounted to the helicopter and technicians to operate it. He also showed us a raised camera trolley built in a tree line along the strip. One of the scenes is of a young "Amelia" riding a horse and racing the Bleriot as it takes off. One man pushed the camera trolley that held two other men along the rails. Dick said it took hours to set up and shoot the scene. Not only were there shots from the trolley, but the helicopter was filming, starting on one side of the plane and horse, then crossing over to the other side. Dick also showed an SUV with a gyro-stabilized camera mounted on it.

Four different horses were used during the various scenes. The rider portraying a young Amelia was selected from among Canada's top equestrians.

Dick jokingly said that he and Sharon got into trouble with about every director but one. After one flying scene, they were doing high fives and offering congratulations, not knowing that apparently you do not make noise until someone yells, "cut". Dick said that afterward an assistant director on the set would draw an imaginary circle in the grass, and he and Sharon were to stay in the circle.

The two homebuilts occasionally had problems, but the directors never found out about them. One of them involved a pesky oil leak, and another a throttle problem, but the pilots worked around them until Dick, Sharon, and Robert could work on them. Despite all the hours on the set and numerous takes and retakes, Dick said they would

do it all again and really enjoyed the experience of being behind the scenes.

Several questions came from the audience. One was in regard to the scales of the Bleriot and Morane. Both were built to 75% scale. This was followed by a question asking if the planes were built that close to full scale, why not build them full scale? The answer was because of engine choices and the resultant cost. The smaller scale planes use VW, Rotec, and generator engines that are quite reliable and suitable. If you go to full scale, you will need a larger engine to fly the plane. Robert said that last 25 per cent in scale will translate into about 100 per cent more in cost. Dick said the Morane uses a generator engine that is built to run 24 hours, seven days a week at full output. It flies the plane at 80 mph.

A question was asked if the Morane was aerobatic, and Dick replied that it was not. Robert was asked about the planes built by his company, Airdrome Aeroplanes. He said an airframe kit with all covering will run \$5,500. That does not include an engine or gauges. A 40 hp engine will run about \$5,000 and a 50 hp engine about \$6,000. So, a complete kit would run about \$11,000.

The audience was reminded that Robert and his workers built four, full scale, Nieuport 17 replicas for the 2006 cinema feature *Flyboys*. They built the four planes in 54 days, and they were sold to the movie company. Robert traveled to England as an advisor, but had no control over how the planes were used. He said that former RAF pilots were among those who were going to fly the planes, and he tried to explain to them what to expect from the biplane tail draggers. He felt that most of them felt they did not need to be told how to fly the replicas, and it soon showed with all the ground loops taking place. Robert said there was one exception, a woman pilot who took his recommendations to heart and had few problems flying the replica fighters. The other pilots started listening, and all four replicas survived the filming. Robert said the planes got about 1 hour 20 minutes time in the movie. After filming was complete, he bought all four back, and today three of them are for sale. Robert said the movie replicas used a VW engine.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Gene Howerter presented Dick, Sharon, and Robert with certificates of appreciation. Currently, you can see some behind the scenes footage of *Amelia* filmed by the Starks on YouTube. The 7-1/2 minute program can be found by entering *Airdrome Aeroplanes behind the scenes of Amelia* for your search. ➔

"Russ," con't. from page 2

moved our email to Google which allowed an expansion of email addressees at no cost, where the previous provider would have charged for the same expansion.

Russ has reworked the membership database and related files, establishing many automatic links/triggers for sending our various membership mailings in correct and timely fashion. This will eliminate many errors we have experienced in the past, such as sending reminders to people who have already renewed their memberships. Of course, we humans are still responsible for entering the data correctly, but who knows? Russ may one day create the artificial intelligence to take care of that. He volunteers with Washburn Rural High School's robotics program and has for some time.

Our Desktop Screens now have a "gadget" that includes an Agenda showing who is working the Gift Shop for the current and next day, tours coming in, or when or where a volunteer or staff person will be gone. The "gadget" also allows us to sign in with Google Docs or Gmail, perform Google Searches, and receive a synopsis of late breaking US and World news.

Russ stays current with the latest IT equipment. One of his recent trials for future use here involves cell phones with scanning ability. One day, Curator Danny San Romani noticed some odd looking, 1-1/2 inch square stickers posted on the cash register, the door frame leading from the Gift Shop to the 602 hangar bay, and on a corner of the sign board for the Jenny. He commented to Russ about the funny stickers some vandal put up, and Russ brought out his cell phone. He and Danny then started

with the "Quick Response (QR) code" as Russ explained, in the Gift Shop. He scanned it into his cell phone and the website for the Museum came up. He then scanned the bar code on the door frame, and thumbnail photos of the aircraft in Hangar 602 came up. Scanning the bar code on the sign board for the Jenny brought up information on the aircraft. Russ had made the QR codes and said people with that application on their cell phones will recognize what the stickers are and may want to bring the information up on their phones.

From this writer's perspective, one of Russ' most treasured assets is his patience - that of a saint. A few of us are somewhat IT-challenged. But when he makes changes and additions to our system and terminals, Russ takes us through what he has done and what it will do for us. And when we forget what to do for the first, second, and third time, he coaches us through it all again. It is a real pleasure and education to work with him. →

December/January Calendar of Events

December

Monday December 13

Membership Luncheon
Jean Wanner Education
Conference Room
11:30 am

There is no Membership
Luncheon in January
Saturday, December 25
Christmas Day
Museum Closed

January

Saturday, January 1
New Year's Day
Museum Closed
→ → →

Book includes photos from CAM collection

Recently, a book was donated to CAM that includes photos from our collection, Images of America Topeka by Greg A. Hoots, 2010, Arcadia Publishing. It is a pictorial history of Topeka. One image from our collection is in Chapter Four, about the Topeka Free Fair. It is of the former Memorial Tower that stood at an entrance at 18th Street and Topeka Boulevard. The 60 foot tower was covered with porcelain panels, including 20 that formed a mural of Marines raising the US flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. Those panels and the bronze plaque at the base of the tower are now on exhibit in Hangar 602.

Chapter Five of the book is about Forbes Air Force Base. Five photos from our collection are in this chapter, including images from the World War II through the early 1970s. One is from the ceremony renaming Topeka Air Force Base to Forbes Air Force Base in 1949.

→ → →

December Membership Luncheon

As of this writing, we do not have a speaker for the December luncheon. Gene Howerter contacted our scheduled speaker and found out he was recovering after a recent hospital stay. He felt it would be better to reschedule for a future luncheon. But it is our Christmas luncheon, so plan to come out for good food and camaraderie. →



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Topeka, KS 66619-0142

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2011 Events Calendar

Dates subject to change

2011 Events Calendar

March

Aviation Education Class

March 21 - 24

April

Pancake Feed

April 30

June

Kansas 150th Sesquicentennial Celebration

June 4 5

Aviation Education Class

June 20 23

July

Aviation Education Class

July 11 - 14

August

Aviation Education Class

August 1 - 4

September

Winged Foot 5K Run/Walk

September 24



Endowed gift provides a welcomed piece of equipment

Thanks to an endowment from **Martin Moyer's** estate, we have a welcome addition to maintaining the Museum grounds. Chairman **Gene Howerter** received a call from **John Moyer**, Martin's son, this summer who said the Museum would be getting some money from Martin's estate. They talked awhile about use of the money, and Gene brought up the idea to purchase a larger mower for the Museum, possibly one with a zero turn radius. Martin and others had mowed the Museum grounds for years on riding lawn mowers better suited for large yards. Gene said he would do the leg work to find a suitable mower and told John he would let him know what he found.

Gene contacted the home office of KanEquip Inc., in Wamego, Kansas, and found a used mower that fit our needs and could be purchased with the endowment

funds, plus a bit more, and made the arrangements to buy the unit. He, **Dick Trupp** and **Chuck and Marlene Urban** contributed the additional money to make the purchase. We now own a John Deere ZTRAK M653 riding mower with a zero turn radius, 60-inch cut, and 7 Iron (7 gauge) deck. It is powered by a Kohler 23 hp Model CH23S engine.

Since the purchase, Chuck Urban has mowed the grounds a few times and feels the mower is a huge improvement over the smaller riding mowers we own. We will keep our Cub Cadet because it is best suited for mowing around the buttresses of Hangar 602. We will determine the disposition of the smaller John Deere and Montgomery Ward mowers.

