

# PROP NOISE

Volume 2, Issue 1

The Membership Newsletter for The Military Aviation Museum

Winter 2009

## 'Warbirds Over the Beach' Show

It has been announced by the Military Aviation Museum that they will host the first of an annual weekend event to be held at the Virginia Beach Airport. For the past three years, there has been a very successful private party hosted by the museum on Memorial Day. That event will be discontinued, but our aircraft will most likely still continue to be flown over the city's Veteran's Memorial on that date.

As an alternative, the museum will be having a two day fund raising event that will be open to the general public. It will be held the weekend of May 16-17 on Saturday and Sunday, which is the weekend after Mother's Day and the weekend just before Memorial Day, when all Pungo streets will be closed for the Strawberry Fest. There will be a minimal ticket charge to attend either day, but this will prove to be fine value for the many planned events scheduled for those two days.

Re-enactors will begin arriving for set ups on Friday afternoon and their encampments will be situated alongside our mile long turf runway. Come by and learn about their individual units, past history, military gear, and see them dressed in their period uniforms. It will be like stepping back in time to imagine what these young men would have encountered in the combat field, so far away from their homes. There will be many groups from both the allied powers and axis forces. All these re-enactors are wonderful examples of living history, portrayed on an airfield during the middle of the last century.

The action and flying begins Saturday morning with the smell of bacon in the air. Numerous vendors selling memorabilia from the era of both world wars. Food vendors will be serving snacks, meals, and drinks, or you can bring your own picnic basket. Come dressed in your grandparents' uniforms or outfits. It does not take a lot to get into the swing of things. Just think of all those old time movies late at night and impersonate your favorite characters from ~ A League of Their Own, Memphis Belle, Twelve O'clock High, and hundreds more such films. There are local costume shops (Echoes of Time 428-2332) for the real enthusiasts or rummage through a thrift store and your parent's attic. Come in costume, for the most fun, to also become a participant from the war years.

During the day, be entertained by Theresa Eamon will perform popular torch songs of the 1940's. Laugh

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Spitfire over Oceanfront

## Museum and Hangar Expansion Coming!

### Museum Expansion Approved

It has recently been announced by our growing museum that plans are in place for a substantial expansion of the facilities at the Virginia Beach Airport. After a review by the city staff, the Planning Commission approved the additions in November. Then the full city council heard the presentation on December 5, which was long term Mayor Myera Oberndorf's final session. After an extended discussion of over three hours of questions, rebuttals, suggestions, and explanations, it was overwhelmingly approved by the Council.

There will be five new additional structures added to the existing museum building. These will be

constructed at the end of the entrance road, where the current runway and taxiway intersect, and the gravel roadway bends to the right. Construction is expected to begin in the late spring on the first building, the new aircraft maintenance facility.

### New World War I Museum Hangar

WWI had begun only a dozen years after the Wright Brother's flew the world's first airplane in nearby Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Airplanes were very basic and still developing at the beginning of the First World War. Hangars were almost non-existent and primarily rudimentary barn structures that were converted to store these new flying machines.

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### Military Aviation Museum

[www.MilitaryAviationMuseum.org](http://www.MilitaryAviationMuseum.org)

### Virginia Beach Airport

[www.VBairport.com](http://www.VBairport.com)

### Fighter Factory

[www.FighterFactory.com](http://www.FighterFactory.com)

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with Abbott and Costello as performed by impersonators doing their "Who's on First" routines. Sing along with the Andrew Sisters, who as done by the Liberty Belles from New York City. As you wander among the encampments, you will feel that you are truly back in time, to an era that is fast being forgotten. Speak with many of the veteran pilots in attendance that experienced this first hand and they will tell you what it was really like. Chat with a Mustang pilot that was only a teenager when he first left home to go overseas to fight in the distant war. Many will have their own books to offer you or photos from so many years ago, that they will autograph for you.

At 1:00 p.m., the airplanes will roar to life and begin to taxi down the runway in individual groups. They will race across the grass field to their take off positions, climb overhead, and swoop down low in view of your camera. There will be fighters, bombers, trainers, sea planes, and more fighters, all operational and flying for you to see. This will continue until they gently touch down, to be replaced by another overhead group with the formations crisscrossing over each other. Never in Virginia Beach, have there been this many airplanes from World War II in the sky.

At the end of the day on Saturday, join us for a steak barbecue dinner with Pungo grown vegetables and strawberry treats for dessert. As the sun begins to set, the Glenn Miller style swing band will tune up their instruments and begin the evening hangar dance. You can just sit back to enjoy the music or join the GI's jitterbugging to the old, catchy tunes that bring back memories of our servicemen stationed overseas. If you need some help to get your feet moving, there will be several professional dance groups to show you how Rosie the Riveter used to swing dance to that music with her young Yank flyboy.

The music will last long into the night, but not too late, in order to allow you to get up at reveille and start all over again the next day. Sunday church services will be done in the encampment. The next day, it will all be done again, but we will be out of steak and the band will have gone home. However, the veterans and musical troops will all repeat their multiple performances, with the afternoon air show again repeating at 1:00 p.m. The re-enactors will break camp at four and we will wave you out, on your way back home with your camera full of memories. The beach will be full of only those that were there and the other that regretted missing it. Buy your tickets early because parking will limit attendance. □

## Education Committee To Develop Children's Programs

The all-volunteer Education Committee has held several planning sessions to determine the direction and focus for presenting future children's programs at the museum. The four areas for development are the history of flight, the principle of flight, flight communications and flight weather. The goal of the committee is to design and present lessons and activities, based on these areas, for children's groups.

The committee will coordinate with school groups for SOLs as well as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for badge-related activities.

"We want the museum experience to be a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment for children, as well as adults," said Marlene Durazo, Education Coordinator.

Additional ideas for the future are an Aviation Careers Day for middle and high school students and story time events for kindergarten children.

The Education Committee is looking for volunteers with an education background or who enjoy helping children. Please contact David Hunt at (757) 721-PROP. □

## Girl Scouts to Earn Aviation Merit Badges

On Saturday, March 14th, the Girl Scout Council of the Colonial Coast and the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Ninety-Nines, Inc. will team up for a day of exciting activities for area Girl Scouts. Women pilots from the Ninety-Nines will teach concepts of flight and aviation to over 100 Girl Scouts. The hands-on activities will help the girls fulfill their requirements for the Girl Scout Aviation badge. Included in the day's events will be a tour of the aircraft flown by the Ninety-Nines and a tour of the museum.

The Ninety-Nines is the first and only international organization of women pilots. Founded in 1929, in Long Island, New York with 99 charter members, their first president was famed aviator Amelia Earhart. Since that time, the Ninety-Nines have provided support, encouragement, and help to women pilots all over the world. They have flown with pride and served with distinction.

Actively involved in Wing Scouts and Air Rangers programs for senior Girl Scouts and Guides in the U.S. and Canada, the Ninety-Nines continue to promote aviation careers for young women today. □

## How Do You Make an Airplane?

*By Felix Usis, Museum Docent*

In the highly skilled world of today's aircraft making and repairing, the use of special glues, materials, and apparatus is fast becoming the modern norm. But, I ask you the question: Is the use of specialized glues and materials all that modern?

What if I said, we need to start with seasoned wood and a carpenter's saw! You might say that I was thinking of manufacturing a piece of furniture. And in some respect, you would be correct.

Right now, we are using tools like saws, planes, scissors, sanders, chisels, and glues

to recondition and restore one of the latest of aircraft at the Military Aviation Museum. The materials we are starting with include special woods, canvas and linen cloth, metals too, like steel, aluminum, and brass.

For this aircraft, we are making fairings and belly stringers from wood, emergency exit doors with wooden laminated reinforcing rings. Fabric faring, roof stiffing straps and pilot seat bases, all covered with a good coat of Everdure sealer. Then after cutting, sanding, and fitting, perhaps 5 or more coats of varnish and a lot of elbow grease are used to bring a high gloss to the surface. Then back to work to form and shape another piece of seasoned flat wood into the delicate curves of an aircraft.

What type aircraft are we speaking of. It took a lot of work to build a De Havilland D.H. 89 'Dragon Rapide' when it was new in 1934, but now it takes even more work to restore and rebuild one.



De Havilland DH.89A Dragon Rapide

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On the front lines of France, they were often wood frames, covered in canvas, and easy to relocate as the fighting lines moved with the ground battles.

We will be building a 15,000 square foot hangar structure to house our airplanes from the Great War. These aircraft are mostly open cockpit biplanes that are small in size. The conceptional design for this building is being done by Steven Atkin, an architect in England, who is most familiar with historic airplanes and European Aviation from both wars.

We anticipate it to have smaller hangar doors that will be manually opened onto grass parking for the light weight airplanes built of wood and fabric. The sides of the hangar will be clapboard wood or perhaps a synthetic material to replicate wooden boards. Turn of the century windows will let in the light and the roof will be a standard tin roof similar to many of the older barns still found throughout Pungo. The inside will be finished in exposed wood with rough wooden beams and wooden hangar doors facing westbound onto the short crosswind taxiway.

*Make an Airplane... Continued from page 2*

You can not take the parts off an assembly line for this work. Each wooden frame and plywood part has to be measured against 80 year old blueprints. Each part that can be salvaged from our 1944 'Dragon Rapide' has to be carefully removed from the original fuselage and refurbished before it can be placed into the new rebuilt wooden one. Each part, new and old, has to be checked for safety and tensile strength.

All this is painstakingly slow work that has been going on in New Zealand, over the past few months. The roofs fairing stringers and the belly stringers have all been fitted. The emergency exit hole with its laminated reinforcing ring has also been fitted to the roof above the main entry door. The main cabin door frame had to be completely rebuilt. Minor detailing to the fuselage in the areas of corner fabric fairing strips, roof stiffening straps, pilot seat base and the first coat of sealer to all external surfaces has been completed.

The baggage door structure from the original airframe was salvaged. The door has been fitted to the fuselage and is covered with fabric and the latch lever and mechanism have been installed. The top of the fuselage and main cabin door has also been covered with fabric. In preparation for the fabric on the fuselage,

### New Fighter Factory Maintenance Hangar

Design work and architectural plans have been completed for a new aircraft maintenance hangar for airplane inspections, maintenance, and restorations of the existing historic aircraft. Currently, this work is being performed by the museum's maintenance shop located at the Suffolk Municipal Airport, site of the annual Suffolk Peanut Fest. Over a dozen mechanics, inspectors, and technical personnel are employed there to adequately maintain these aircraft to the highest FAA standards. All of these highly skilled technicians will be offered transfers to their same positions at the museum airport in Virginia Beach.

The new facility to be constructed will be approximately 16,000 sq. ft. with the hangar able to completely hold the PBY Catalina or the museum's B-25. Matter of fact, it can hold several aircraft at the same time, while repairs or annual inspections are performed. In addition to the main hangar floor, there will also be a visitors entrance foyer, maintenance offices, tech library, machine shop, parts room, and a small paint room. Hangar doors open to a crosswind grass taxiway that allows aircraft to be taxied or towed to the

the tailplane alloy faring had to be refurbished and fitted to the woodwork.

Metal parts from an original 1944 aircraft have been removed, inspected for wear, corrosion and for sharp edging that might cut, bind or damage other parts when reinstalled in the newer airframe. If they fail the test, new parts have to be located someplace in the world.

Literally, anywhere in the world. One part might be found in some old warehouse in Africa, another in India, yet another located in the back corner of an aviation supply shop in Great Britain. Parts come from all over the world to a small rebuilding shop in New Zealand. And if they can not be found, then they have to be built from the original blueprints to aeronautical specifications.

Modern equipment, well, modern by today's standards, like Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs) have to be logically placed into to an aircraft that did not even have this technology when it was built.

Down in New Zealand, Avspecs and their very capable craftsman are restoring OUR De Havilland DH89A Dragon Rapide back into flight status. The latest rumors from New Zealand is that it might be airworthy by April or May. □

main museum building.

The building design is based upon an original period hangar built at the Waukesha County (Wisconsin) Airport by the Works Project Administration in 1937. It was listed on the National Historic Register, but in 1999 was donated to the Vintage Wings and Wheels Museum ([www.TheVintageMuseum.com](http://www.TheVintageMuseum.com)) in Poplar Grove, Illinois. They relocated the building in the summer of 2000 to the Poplar Grove Airport. In order to relocate the original Lannon Stone building, a new set of architectural drawings were made and this was the basis of our own design, which closely follows the original Wisconsin structure. □

## Cottbus German Hangar

In 1939, at the start of the Second World War, Germany designed a portable hangar that could be transported by railroad car to its destination airfield and quickly erected. As the fighting moved further away, it could be dismantled and again erected at a new airfield closer to the new front lines. It was manufactured near Cottbus, Germany, which is located south of Berlin. One of these first hangars was permanently erected at the nearby Cottbus airport.

It was never moved from there during the subsequent war years and housed German Messerschmitt and Fokker Wulf fighters to protect the southern flanks of Berlin from Allied bombers. After the war, it was located in the Russian zone of Eastern Germany. The former Soviet Union was never eager to construct new buildings in their occupying countries, so they continued to utilize it for airport storage since they were the principal users of the airport.

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, this historic hangar

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Cottbus German Hangar

## RAF Goxhill Control Tower

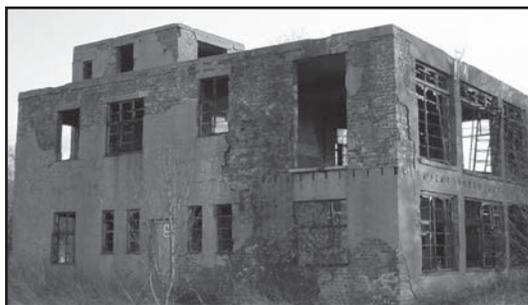
Along the Northeast coast of England is located the port of Hull on the Humber River. It was near here where the British first built a defensive airfield during the beginning of World War II. It opened on June 26, 1941, with Number one Group of Bomber Command that occupied the field with their British Lancaster bombers. In December 1941, 12 Group Fighter Command took over with 616 Squadron who were flying MKV Spitfires. August 1942, the United States Army Air Corps took over the Goxhill airfield with their Lockheed P-38 Lightnings of the American 1st Fighter Group. In subsequent years, the airfield was occupied by an assortment of different fighter groups flying the P-39 Airacobra, P-47 Thunderbolts, and eventually P-51 Mustangs.

Fighting Command of the Royal Air Force took over the field again in January 1945 and flying ceased at the end of the war. British Maintenance Command took over the airfield for ammunition storage until the end of 1953. Then the airfield was sold off in January 1962, when it all became farm land.

Early during the establishment of the Military airbase, there were many brick structures built at the field. The most prominent of these was the two story all brick control tower. This is the square building the size of a small house with extensive windows, outside decks, and rooftop vantage points. These control tower buildings of the Royal Air Force were at one time quite common throughout England and situated at all the many airfields. They are often remem-

bered as shown in the black and white movie, Twelve O'Clock High, starring Gregory Peck as the formative leader in the Eighth Air Force that flew daylight bombing missions over Germany. They are often remembered as standing on the roof and balconies of the Control Tower counting B-17 bombers coming back from these dangerous daylight raids.

A few years ago, we had an architect reverse engineer the original Goxhill Control Tower to make architectural working drawings of it. It was disassembled in sections for shipment to Virginia with plans to erect at the museum's airfield. We hope to do so alongside our German Cottbus Hangar. Today, such towers are historically preserved and protected. Therefore, this will be the only such original control tower to be in all America. We took everything that was still attached including the iron window frames, doorways, and even the urinals in the loo. Think of it a little like London Bridge when it moved to Arizona, a piece of British history in our own backyard. □



Goxhill Control Tower

*Cottbus... Continued from page 3*

had finally out lived it usefulness and the airport was scheduled to become an industrial park. Therefore, the hangar was one of the many unneeded building to be destroyed.

A few years ago, our museum sent a local architect to produce working drawings of the hangar building as it stood. Shortly thereafter, a German contractor unbolted the framework and loaded the components in numerous ocean containers and it was shipped here to Virginia. As it was being disassembled, machine gunfire dents were found in the heavy steel structures from ground fighting between the advancing Russian troops and the defending German Army.

We intend to reconstruct the hangar back to its original condition and recover the arched roof with wood as originally constructed. The steel frame hangar with its sliding wooden doors will hold our historic German aircraft which demonstrate the technology encountered by American forces that flew and fought overseas in Europe. It will make a fine addition to our airfield and allow us

to demonstrate the Axis aircraft in a unique and original hangar as used by their former military. □

CURRENT RESIDENT

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
OPEN DAILY

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MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER FOR  
THE MILITARY AVIATION MUSEUM

