



# Plane Talk

Volume 21, Number 1

*The Newsletter of the War Eagles Air Museum*

## Editorial

There's something a little different in this issue of *Plane Talk*. In the past, with just a few exceptions, the "Featured Aircraft" columns have covered aircraft in the War Eagles Air Museum collection that still fly, or that at least are still in "flyable" condition. This issue's Featured Aircraft, however, is a static, non-flyable hulk, for reasons that you'll learn when you read the article. Although this aircraft will probably never fly, it is so rare, so little-known and yet so important in the history of global military aviation that it deserves to have its full story told. You can see this airplane at War Eagles Air Museum and at *only* three other places in the world that we're aware of. There's one at the Monino Aviation Museum near Moscow, one at the China Aviation Museum near Beijing and one at the Polish Aviation Museum in Krakow. That's it—only four in the entire world. So when you see this airplane at War Eagles Air Museum, you are truly looking at a rare item of aviation history. We are privileged indeed to display it, and hope you will take the time to look it over carefully when you visit.

Speaking of non-U.S. aircraft, you'll notice that our collection features several other foreign airplanes in addition to the Tu-2, including three Soviet MiG jets, a *Sea Fury* and a *Tiger Moth* from England and a German Fieseler *Storch*. We hope you find it educational, as you view these aircraft, to see that no nation has a monopoly on engineering, technology and design competence. There are many different ways to solve the problems of flight, and no one way is always "the best." ✪



## Featured Aircraft

As one of the first things visitors see when they arrive at the Museum, the airplane parked on the ramp near the entrance, with two huge radial engines, big four-bladed propellers, narrow fuselage and twin vertical tails, is very distinctive. But their guesses about its identity are usually wrong. "Is that a *Mosquito*? Or is it a Ju.88?" many ask. The answer: it is neither. One of the rarest aircraft in the world, it is a truly significant artifact in the Museum collection. It is, in fact, a World-War-II-era Soviet Tupolev Tu-2 medium bomber.

*Featured Aircraft (Continued on Page 2)*

▲ "Is that a *Mosquito*? No, it must be...let's see, is it a Ju.88?" War Eagles Air Museum's vaguely familiar-looking but invariably misidentified Soviet Tupolev Tu-2 is one of only four on display in the entire world.

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## From the Director

**W**ar Eagles Air Museum held its semi-annual Board of Directors meeting on January 23, and we welcomed two new Board members that I'd like to introduce to you.

Joining current Board members Lee Carnes, Carol Johnson, Betty MacGuire, Juan Provencio, Terry Sunday and Skip Trammel were El Paso aviation community notables William "Bill" Gardner and Alan Russell.

Bill has been a friend and Museum supporter for many years. As a pilot with the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force in World War II, he flew a B-24 *Liberator* heavy bomber until he was shot down over Italy on his fourth mission. The dramatic story of his escape and evasion is a tale for another time. He retired from Qwest Communications in 1986. Before moving to his current home on El Paso's west side, Bill and his wife Mamie lived in the Cielo Dorado fly-in community near the Museum, where he flew his Beechcraft V-35 *Bonanza* and Piper PA-18 *Super Cub*.

Alan has a long list of aviation accomplishments. He is a Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) and an original founder of El Paso's Amigo Airsho. For a number of years, he flew DC-10s and other 'heavy iron' for Continental Airlines. He was a founder of Cielo Dorado. He and his wife Patty are building a home there.

We are very fortunate indeed to have these men join the Board. We welcome them to the War Eagles Air Museum family as we chart our way into the future.

Skip Trammell ✪

### Plane Talk

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### Featured Aircraft (Continued from page 1)

Andrei Nikolayevich Tupolev, the former Soviet Union's most famous and respected aircraft designer, was born on November 10, 1888 in the village of Pustomazovo, about 600 miles south of Moscow. During his life, he suffered severe persecution, harsh imprisonment and horrible privation. But with incredible perseverance under very trying conditions, he became a true 20<sup>th</sup> century aviation luminary and founded one of the greatest aircraft companies in the world.

By the time Tupolev was 20, he was proficient at building gliders. In 1918, he earned an "engineer-mechanic" degree, and four years later he became the head of a team assigned to develop all-metal aircraft for the Red Air Force. The team was part of the Moscow-based TsAGI (*Tsentralniy Aerogidrodinamicheskiiy Institut*, or Central Aero-hydrodynamics Institute), the premiere Soviet aeronautical research organization. One of the Tupolev team's early designs was the eight-engine ANT-20 ("ANT" from Tupolev's initials) *Maxim Gorky*, the world's largest aircraft at the time, with a wingspan longer than that of a Boeing 747. Another



▲ *Andrei Nikolayevich Tupolev was the Soviet Union's most famous aircraft designer and the beloved patriarch of the nation's aircraft industry.*



▲ *This undated photograph shows a Tupolev Tu-2S over Moscow near Gorkiy Park.*

was the long-range ANT-25, which made the first non-stop flight from the Soviet Union to the U.S. over the North Pole.

By mid-1936, Tupolev's team separated from TsAGI and became the unimaginatively named Plant No. 156. A little over a year later, with the Stalinist purges in full swing, the dreaded NKVD (*Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*, or People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) arrested Tupolev and thousands of other scientists, engineers and designers on trumped-up charges of plotting to set up a Russian Fascist state. The NKVD forced the hapless detainees to sign false "confessions" and imprisoned them in the horrific *Gulag* hard-labor-prison system. As a side note, one of those arrested was Sergei Pavlovich Korolev, the future Soviet space program's "chief designer." Korolev created *Sputnik 1* and the other space "firsts" that rattled America in the 1950s and '60s. He was the equivalent of Dr. Wernher von Braun, the ex-German rocket scientist who developed the World War II V-2 (*Vergeltungswaffe Zwei*, or Vengeance Weapon Two), the world's first practical surface-to-surface ballistic missile, and who later became the mastermind of NASA's Apollo program. Un-

*Featured Aircraft (Continued on page 3)*

Featured Aircraft (Continued from page 2)

til his death in 1966, Korolev pushed for a Soviet manned moon landing program just as hard as von Braun did in the U.S.

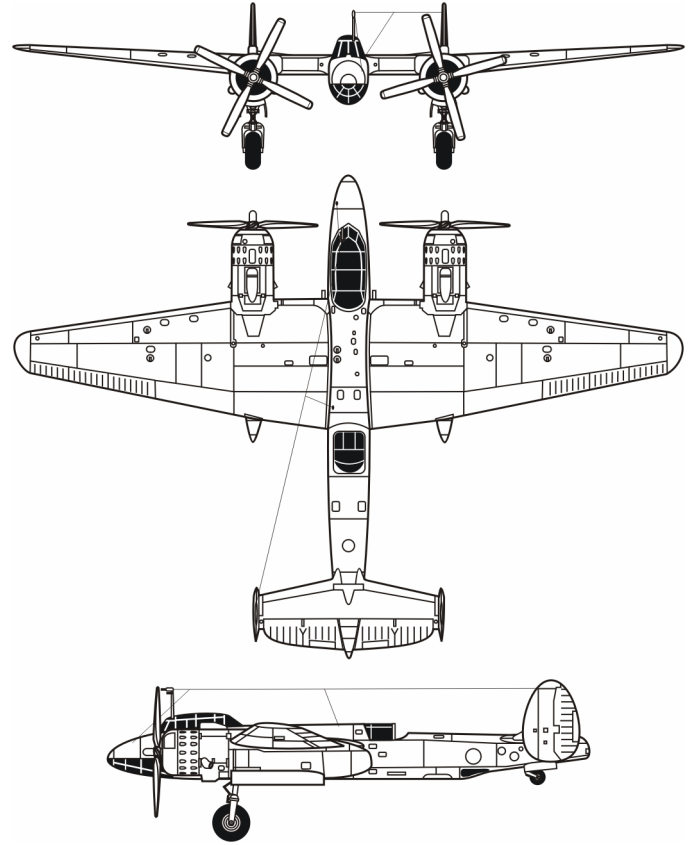
Fortunately for Tupolev, the notorious Lavrentiy Beria, Stalin’s Commissar for Internal Affairs and the chief of the NKVD, had second thoughts about incarcerating so many key technical people, especially since war with Germany appeared inevitable. In 1938, Beria set up a special prison camp in Moscow, called a *sharashka*, and sent to it many of the detained aircraft designers. Tupolev accepted Beria’s “offer” to lead the team. He soon had cause to regret his decision, though, when Beria at first demanded the team work on a four-engine dive bomber. At the risk of his life, Tupolev eventually convinced Beria that such an aircraft was impractical, so the team instead set to work on a high-speed, twin-engine dive bomber intended to be as capable as the German’s vaunted Junkers Ju.88. The designers, laboring under constant scrutiny of NKVD guards, were not allowed to sign their own drawings—they could only rubber-stamp them with a number.

The Tu-2, arguably the best Soviet bomber of World War II and the aircraft that launched Tupolev to pre-eminence among Soviet aircraft designers, started as the *Samolyet* (aircraft) 103 project, also known as the ANT-58. By February 1940, the design for a clean, all-metal, mid-wing monoplane, with a high-dihedral

tail and twin vertical stabilizers, was finished. Powered by two 1,400-hp water-cooled Mikulin AM-37 V-12 engines, the prototype ANT-58 first flew on January 29, 1941, with Mikhail Nukhtinov at the controls. A few minor problems showed up that needed attention. The second prototype, *Samolyet* 103U or ANT-59, had a larger cockpit and a new tail turret to cover the vulnerable rear quadrant. Nukhtinov first took the new airplane aloft on May 18, 1941. The initial ANT-59s used AM-37 engines, which gave it a top speed of 379 miles per hour. But the supply of these engines soon dried up, since they also powered

the Ilyushin Il-2 *Shturmovik*, the most-produced military aircraft in history and the third-most-produced of any kind ever, exceeded only by the Cessna 172 and the Polikarpov Po-2. So Tupolev adapted the ANT-59 to use less-powerful (but more readily available) 14-cylinder, 1,350-hp Shvetsov ASh-82 radial engines, which were very similar to the U.S. Wright *Cyclone*. Top speed fell to 329 miles per hour. Called the *Samolyet* 103V, or ANT-60, the revised airplane flew in November 1941. It was the first version to enter production, at a former automobile plant in Omsk. But only 19 left the line before the plant switched to producing more-needed Yakovlev Yak-1 fighters.

In the lull, the Tupolev team revised the design for mass-production, resulting in the first version to bear the designation “Tu-2.” Test pilots wrung out three early models in September and October 1942, and the new bombers then were sent to a V-VS (*Voенно-Vоздушные Силы*, or military air force) bomber unit. These aircraft flew hundreds of combat sorties without loss during Operation *Uranus*, General



Georgi Zhukov’s counterattack against German 6<sup>th</sup> Army forces under General Friedrich von Paulus at Stalingrad that turned the tide of World War II on the Eastern Front. The Soviet assault kicked off on November 19, 1942, and involved half a million troops, 900 tanks and 1,400 aircraft. Within three days, the 200,000-man Axis force was encircled. Besieged Italian and Romanian troops surrendered, but the Germans hung on tenaciously, depending on airlifted food and supplies to survive the brutal Russian winter. But on January 21, 1943, the Soviets overran the last German-held airport, completely severing the supply lines. Von Paulus had no option but to surrender, which he did on February 2. Hitler’s aggression was put in check at last and the long, bloody road to Berlin was open.

Flight crews really liked the Tu-2’s performance, armament and bomb capacity, and they clamored for more of them, despite field maintenance issues because of the airplane’s complexity. This enthus-

Featured Aircraft (Continued on page 4)

Tupolev Tu-2S General Characteristics	
Powerplant	2 1,850-hp Shvetsov ASh-82FN 14-cylinder twin-row radials
Cruise Speed	~280 miles per hour
Maximum Speed	~350 miles per hour
Service Ceiling	~31,000 feet
Length	45 feet 3 inches
Wingspan	61 feet 11 inches
Range	~1,300 miles
Weight (empty)	16,500 pounds
Weight (maximum)	25,050 pounds

*Featured Aircraft (Continued from page 3)*

ism led the government to re-open the Omsk factory for Tu-2 production. Constantly revising his design, Tupolev finally created the simplified Tu-2S that first flew on August 26, 1943. With 1,850-hp fuel-injected ASh-82FN engines giving it a top speed of 352 miles per hour, this was the definitive Tu-2 version.

By January 1944, production Tu-2s began to enter front-line service with the V-VS. They first saw large-scale action in June in Karelia, near the Finnish border in the northwest Soviet Union. With long range, high speed, effective defensive armament, an excellent bomb load and a remarkable loss rate of one aircraft for every 46.5 sorties, the Tu-2 quickly gained fame as the best Soviet bomber of the war. By the fall of 1944, as German resistance stiffened at the eastern borders of the Reich, Tu-2 units neutralized such heavily defended targets as Kustrin and Königsberg. They played a key role in the final battle for Berlin, and also saw a lot of action against Japanese Kwantung Army forces in Manchuria.

The V-VS liked their Tu-2s so much that production continued until 1952. Tupolev's outstanding bombers remained in service in the V-VS until 1955, although there are conflicting reports of how many were actually produced—estimates range from 1,100 to more than 2,500. Regardless of the numbers, it is indisputable that the Tu-2 was highly regarded indeed. It is one of only a handful of World War II aircraft that served long enough after the War to receive a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) code name—*Bat*<sup>1</sup>. During the Cold War, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union went to great lengths to supply their allies with military equipment. Export Tu-2s thus served in the air forces of North Korea, China, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other Warsaw Pact nations for years after the Soviet Union stopped using them. And that brings us to the story of the War Eagles Air Museum's Tu-2.

<sup>1</sup> In the NATO codename system used to identify military aircraft of the Soviet Union, the number of syllables in the name indicated the type of engines (1 syllable=prop, 2 syllables=jet) and the first letter of the name indicated the type of aircraft (B=bomber, F=fighter, C=cargo, etc.).

In September of 1989, War Eagles Air Museum founder John MacGuire and then-Director of Development Skip Trammell, while on a visit to the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino, California, took a side trip to an aircraft broker called AeroTrader. There they spotted some shipping crates that had recently come in from China. Destined for Kermit Weeks' Fantasy of Flight Museum in Kissimmee, Florida, the crates contained two unusual aircraft of a type that neither John nor Skip had ever seen before. They were Soviet-built Tupolev Tu-2 medium bombers.

Intrigued by the possibility of adding such a rare aircraft to the War Eagles Air Museum collection, John and Skip did a bit of research—this was back in the days before “research” was simply a matter of clicking a mouse button—and concluded, as actor Will Smith enthused in the movie *Independence Day*: “I gotta get me one of these!” Contacting the Chinese firm Poly-Tech, which had supplied the Tu-2s that they had seen in Chino and which had a contract with the Chinese government to dispose of surplus aircraft and



▲ This Tupolev Tu-2S, in its wartime paint and markings, is currently parked outside at the Monino Aviation Museum near Moscow. It is one of only four of these aircraft displayed in the world.

other military equipment, John and Skip found out that some more Tu-2s were available. After six long months of painful, tedious negotiations, a deal with the Chinese was struck. The next step was to inspect the aircraft.

Skip still vividly remembers his trip to China in September 1990. To get to the remote airfield where the Tu-2s were in storage, he flew into Beijing and then, accompanied by Chinese interpreters and Government representatives, endured a 14-hour train trip, followed by a 6-hour car trip and then a 3-hour four-wheel-drive “Jeep” trip. The aircraft were stored in “hangars” that the Chinese had carved

out of two steep mountains near the airfield. You may hear someone say, “The Tu-2s were found in caves in China” and get a mental image of them parked amidst a bunch of stalagmites and stalactites. But that’s actually not true. The “caves” were real hangars that had been excavated from natural caves and had fully finished concrete walls and ceilings and



▲ This undated photo shows the Museum's Tupolev Tu-2, still with Chinese Air Force paint and markings, being reassembled on the ramp in front of the maintenance hangar.

*Featured Aircraft  
(Continued on Page 6)*

Regular *Plane Talk* readers have already seen Part I of the following article in the last issue (fourth quarter of 2007). If you haven't seen it, you can now read it online or download it (as well as 19 other archived newsletters as far back to the first quarter of 2003) on our website. And now, War Eagles Air Museum staffer and contributing author Cassandra Rodriguez continues the story of...

## Clyde Cessna and the Cotton Clipper Cutie

by Cassandra Rodriguez

The color pink in American culture typically symbolizes femininity and womanhood. Up until 1929, it also often represented “lack of opportunity” and “weakness.” That year, less than a decade after American women won the right to vote with the 1920 ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, witnessed an important step forward in the women’s rights movement and added a chapter to the pages of aviation history. That year, for the first time, women pilots were allowed to compete in air races. Famed aviator and ardent feminist Amelia Earhart, who had earned her pilot’s license in 1921, organized the first-ever all-women’s transcontinental Air Derby from Santa Monica, California, to Cleveland, Ohio. Popular humorist Will Rogers nicknamed the race “The Powder Puff Derby.” There were some irritating limitations, such as the rule that no woman could fly an airplane having more than an “appropriate” horsepower rating lest it fly “too fast for a girl.” But for the 20 women pilots who showed up to start the nine-day race on August 13, 1929, the event represented a huge leap into a field that men had dominated unchallenged since the early days of aviation. One of the tangible results of the acceptance of women as air race pilots now hangs from the ceiling at the War Eagles Air Museum—a bright pink 1950 Cessna 140A named *Cotton Clipper Cutie*.

Inspired by her adequate, if not stellar, third-place finish in the race, Earhart and 25 other like-minded women met in a hangar at Curtiss Field, on Long Island, New York, in November 1929, to set up a new organization to coordinate the interests and efforts of women in aviation. Only 99 of the 117 U.S.-licensed woman pilots responded to an invitation to join. That response led to the name by which the organization has been known ever since—the “Ninety-Nines.” Earhart was elected the first President. Over the years since its formation, the Ninety-Nines have grown to include more than 6,000 members from 35 countries. Some of the organization’s ongoing activities include sponsoring hundreds of educational programs per year, conducting airport tours for school children, holding airline passenger “fear-of-flying” clinics and co-sponsoring a major share of FAA pilot safety programs.

Some Museum visitors miss seeing the *Cotton Clipper Cutie* because it hangs overhead. But it is a key exhibit. The tiny pink Cessna represents the intersection of Clyde Vernon Cessna’s airplane-building drive and the skill, perseverance and determination of America’s women pilots. The pink Cessna’s place in history is as secure as that of the two El Paso women, the late Ruth Deerman and the late Ruby Hays, who flew it to triumphant victory in the Powder Puff Derby in 1954.

According to a profile on the women that appeared in the *El Paso Times* in the 1990s, Deerman—a charter member of the El Paso Chapter of the Ninety-Nines in 1946—and Hays had completely opposite personalities. Deerman was “energetic and a go-getter,” while Hays was “calm and collected.” But they were united by their common love of flying. They first met in 1946, and flew together often for several years before deciding to com-



▲ Ruth Deerman (l.), Ruby Hays and Airport Manager Jim Gagnon pose beside Powder-Puff-Derby-winning Cessna 140A, number 22, at El Paso International Airport in this 1954 photograph.

pete in Powder Puff Derbies. Their first try, in the 1950 Derby, covered a 2,460-mile course from San Diego, California, to Greenville, South Carolina. They ended up finishing 10<sup>th</sup>. They entered again in the 1951 and 1953 races, but failed to place. Their luck changed in 1954.

Soaring aloft from Long Beach, California, on July 3, 1954, on the first leg of

*Clyde Cessna and the Cotton Clipper Cutie*  
(Continued on page 6)

## Website Update

Thanks to master web developer Bruce Quackenbush at Art Works Studio in Denver, you will now find many *Plane Talk* newsletters available for viewing or download on our website [www.war-eagles-air-museum.com](http://www.war-eagles-air-museum.com). Just click the links on the home page for the most recent *Plane Talk* or for archived issues back to the first quarter of 2003. You’ll see them in all their full-color glory.

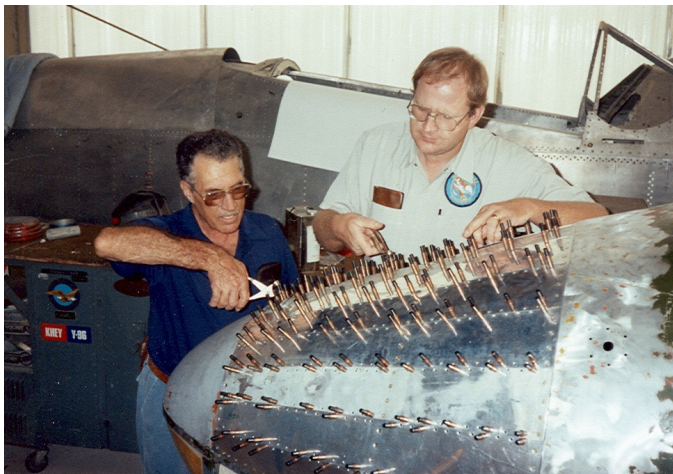
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<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/>

*Featured Aircraft (Continued from page 4)*

heavy, blast-proof steel doors. Unfortunately, we have no pictures of the area to run with this article because the Chinese prohibited photography at the airfield.

According to Skip, the Tu-2s were “weathered,” but they were all “on their wheels” and generally in decent shape. They had last been flown seven winters earlier on missions to bomb ice dams in Chinese rivers. The only obvious problem that he saw when he inspected them was that every engine was missing its twin magneto drive assemblies. Knowing that the engines were similar to the readily available Wright *Cyclone*, Skip fig-



▲ Volunteer the late Bob James (l.) and War Eagles Air Museum’s Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) mechanic Dan Taylor (r.) work on the Tu-2 nose section in the shop.

ured these missing parts would not be too hard to find. He had high hopes that War Eagles Air Museum would soon have the only flying Tu-2 in the world. With that thought in mind, he signed a contract to purchase two aircraft and “pieces and parts” for a number of others.

When the shipment arrived in the U.S. on July 13, 1991, it was obvious that the Chinese had not adhered to the contract. Rather than carefully dismantle and pack the aircraft for their long sea voyage from Singapore to Beaumont, Texas, the Chinese had crudely ripped them apart using any means they could. For example, they had cut bolts rather than unscrew them. They had damaged the frag-

ile nose sections and broken their Plexiglas panels by tossing them into crates with no padding. They had jerked some of the aircraft sideways to move them, bending the landing gear hydraulic actuating cylinders. But the worst thing they had done was hacksaw the wire bundles from the electrical connectors and remove the wiring harnesses to salvage the copper. When John and Skip saw the aircraft in Beaumont, they realized that the hopes they had had of one day flying a Tu-2 may have been premature.

Shipping the aircraft from Beaumont to West Texas was also a logistical challenge. A month after the shipment came into port, 23 flatcar-loads of crates ar-

rived in Tornillo, Texas, a middle-of-nowhere place that had the only siding in the area long enough to hold that many cars. A fleet of trucks then hauled the crates to the MacGuire Ranch in Fort Hancock. John and Skip selected the two aircraft in the “best” condition and had them moved to the Museum, where the re-assembly of one became a major project.

Many people contributed to the year-long effort, including the late Jack Bell, the late Tom Blackwell, Jack Clark, the late Bob James, Bill Swartout, Dan Taylor, Dario Toffenetti, Jim Velia and Tom Walker.

By the end of 1992, the Tu-2 was put back together, still in its original Chinese markings. A couple of years later it was re-painted in an authentic Russian winter paint scheme such as it would have worn on combat missions during the final months of World War II in Europe.

The idea of restoring a Tu-2 to flying condition is not *completely* dead, but the condition of the aircraft means that it would not be quick or easy. “It’s a matter of money,” says Skip. It *may* be a project the Museum will consider tackling in the future—but don’t hold your breath... ✪

*Clyde Cessna and the Cotton Clipper Cutie (Continued from page 5)*

the 1,986-mile course ending in Knoxville, Tennessee, the Cessna 140A named *Cotton Picker Junior* (later renamed *Cotton Clipper Cutie*) and bearing Transcontinental Air Race (TAR) number 22 was in the skilled hands of pilot Deerman and co-pilot Hays. Fifty other aircraft competed in the race. Intermediate stops were: Blythe, California; Prescott and Winslow, Arizona; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Amarillo, Texas, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Fort Smith, Arkansas; and Memphis and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

In those days, women wore dresses, nylon stockings, hats and gloves whenever they appeared “in public.” Just because a woman happened to be an experienced pilot flying hour after grueling hour in a transcontinental air race was no reason for an exception. “We never looked like we had just stepped out of an airplane,” Deerman said. And, according to Hays, “You had to be quite a runner to be the navigator and the co-pilot.” One of her jobs was to jump out of the airplane as soon as it landed at a check point and get the logbook stamped for verification. Once during the race she took a spill on loose gravel and ignominiously slid underneath the check-in table.

Roaring into Knoxville on July 7, 1954, Deerman and Hays were thrilled to learn that they were the first-place finishers, at an average ground speed of 123.9 miles per hour. Thanks to the performance and reliability of the *Cotton Picker Junior*, they had realized their long-held dream and joined the rarified ranks of exceptional women pilots who had truly accomplished something special.

In 1994, Deerman and Hays, who still lived in El Paso, generously donated their race-winning Cessna 140A to War Eagles Air Museum. When you visit, be sure you look overhead and check it out. Also, take the time to study the articles, uniforms, photographs and memorabilia about these two aviators that are displayed under the *Cotton Clipper Cutie*. Elsewhere in the hangar, you’ll find a large exhibit focusing on the contributions of women in aviation history. ✪

## Membership Application War Eagles Air Museum

The War Eagles Air Museum collects, restores and displays historic aircraft, mainly from the World War II and Korean War time periods, to encourage awareness and appreciation of military aviation history through exhibits, educational programs and special events. The Museum is a nonprofit organization as defined by the United States Internal Revenue Code. Operated by staff and volunteers, the Museum is supported by funds obtained from admissions, memberships and contributions. All dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

War Eagles Air Museum memberships are available in six categories. All memberships include the following privileges:

- Free admission to the Museum and all exhibits.
- Free admission to all special events.
- 10% general admission discounts for all guests of a current Member.
- 10% discount on all Member purchases in the Gift Shop.

In addition, a Family Membership includes free admission for spouses and all children under 18 living at home.

To become a Member of the War Eagles Air Museum, please fill in the information requested below and note the category of membership you desire. Mail this form, along with a check payable to “War Eagles Air Museum” for the annual fee shown, to:

War Eagles Air Museum  
8012 Airport Road  
Santa Teresa, NM 88008

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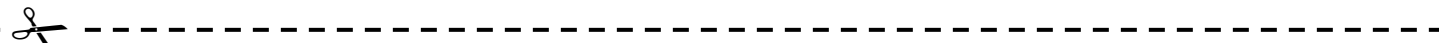
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**W**ar Eagles Air Museum sincerely thanks the following individuals and organizations for their donations to the 2007 Corporate Youth Sponsors Program. This program educates local student groups about the contributions of military aviation to America’s history. For many students, visits to the Museum funded by these generous donors kindle an interest in aviation and related technical career fields. ✪

<b>War Eagles Air Museum Corporate Youth Sponsors</b>				
<b>Bronze</b> (\$50–\$249)	<b>Silver</b> (\$250–\$499)	<b>Gold</b> (\$500–\$999)	<b>Platinum</b> (\$1,000–\$2,499)	<b>Diamond</b> (\$2,500 or more)
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## War Eagles Air Museum

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8012 Airport Road  
Santa Teresa, New Mexico 88008



### *Luftwaffe Officer Has Flight to Remember*

**O**n December 6, 2007, a group of 33 German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*) Command soldiers, stationed at nearby Fort Bliss, Texas, visited War Eagles Air Museum to celebrate the upcoming transfer of the unit's Commander, Colonel Heinz Joachim Hecht, back to Germany. The troops enjoyed a superb barbecue lunch of beef brisket, sausage and all the trimmings catered by Cowboy Cooks of El Paso. The highlight of the visit was Colonel Hecht's surprise opportunity to fly in the Museum's 1943 PT-17 *Stearman* open-cockpit biplane.

A former McDonnell F-4 *Phantom II* pilot, Colonel Hecht had never flown in an airplane like the venerable old *Stearman*—the type of aircraft in which nearly all American student pilots in World War II took their first flying lessons. In warm clothing, goggles and a vintage cloth hel-

met, he looked very much like an intrepid aviator from the "Golden Age of Flight." At the controls in the rear cockpit was War Eagles' Chief Pilot Gene Dawson. A retired U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilot who flew the Vought F4U *Corsair* in the Korean War, Gene has more than 26,000 hours in his logbook and is the owner of



▲ *War Eagles Air Museum's Maintenance Manager Dan Taylor (far side) and Chief Pilot Gene Dawson help Luftwaffe Colonel Heinz Joachim Hecht strap into the front cockpit of the Museum's 1943 PT-17 Stearman before his brief but memorable flight.*

Gene's Flight School at this airport. After takeoff, Gene flew off to the north, where he maneuvered the *Stearman* out over the desert before returning to the airport for a high-speed pass down Runway 28. When the delighted Colonel Hecht climbed out of the cockpit after Gene's perfect landing, the waiting *Luftwaffe* troops subjected him to the traditional "hosing down" with water from a fire extinguisher.

The *Luftwaffe* and War Eagles Air Museum have a special relationship. Several years ago, a former *Luftwaffe* Commander donated to the Museum a Mikoyan Gurevich MiG-21PFM *Fishbed F* jet fighter from the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (East Germany). More recently, the Museum was honored to accept *Luftwaffe* donations of a Cessna T-37B *Twenty Bird* twin-jet trainer and several pieces of equipment from Raytheon *HAWK* and *Patriot* anti-aircraft missile systems. ✪

For more Museum information, visit:  
[www.war-eagles-air-museum.com](http://www.war-eagles-air-museum.com)