



HERITAGE FLIGHT MUSEUM

Where History Flies in Skagit County

Volunteer/Member Newsletter

Fall 2021

Grand Opening and a call for our Volunteers

By Greg Anders, Executive Director

Well, our aspirations for a Fall Grand Opening have been pandemified. It is being pushed to Spring, specifically 21 May, 2022. The good news: rather than having the construction partially completed, we will be able to have a full and truly GRAND opening this Spring. Opening the Maintenance Hangar will redefine how we operate, and opening the two new galleries, The Earthrise Gallery and The '68 Experience, will redefine how we are perceived. I am excited to allow these spaces to mature the Heritage Flight Museum.

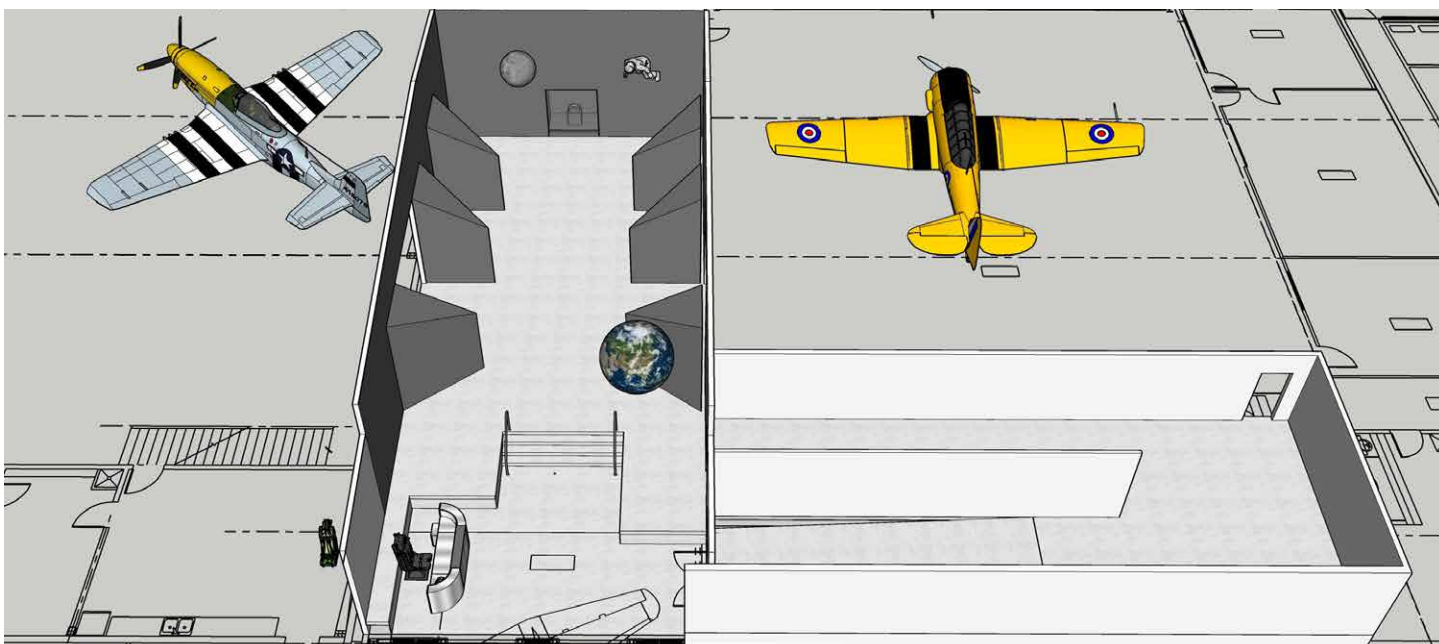
The most immediate adaptation to our operations will be the more sterile environment in which we will be able to conduct the maintenance of our aircraft. Moving into the Maintenance Hangar will take some time, but we aim to be fully functioning in March.

We are already making great strides in improving our ability to tell the stories of our aircraft and artifacts and I foresee our two original hangars becoming a more stable environment in which to organize our storytelling. Adding the impact of the two galleries at our entrance will clarify our brand presence within our community.

We will improve that brand presence most effectively through a greatly-improved capacity to operate an events center for Skagit County. This facet of our future is a key element of a revenue generation business model that will help to support the expenses of running the museum. We are doing events now, and we will be doing them more effectively once we have had a chance to grow into the new facility.

Once we master all of that while keeping our aircraft flying, we can then move into what I feel is the highest calling of our museum: STEM education and inspiration of the youth of Skagit and the surrounding communities.

All of this will demand greater effort from our staff and I am proud of the team we have put together, but we can only achieve success if we are able to continue to stand on the shoulders of our volunteer corps. This is especially true of that aspired-for education function. Our staff does a great job keeping the business running but I see our volunteers as THE critical element that will allow us to pursue the dreams of who we could be.



www.heritageflight.org
360-424-5151

Rendering of HFM's new front entrance with 1968 and Earthrise galleries
by architect Steve Hord.



Save the Date: Grand Opening May 21, 2022

Mark your calendars for a celebration weekend in 2022: May 20th for Heritage Flight Museum's Grand Opening Gala and May 21st for our Grand Opening Fly Day. The events are the high point and the kickoff of our 2022 flying season and we are too excited for words. The Grand Opening is in the planning stage, so keep checking our website, Facebook Page, and Instagram for updates.

See you on Friday, May 20th, 2022!

At right: HFM's new hangar in progress as seen from the ramp



Return of the HFM Fly Day



Photo: Karen Hicks

Heritage Flight Museum hosted two public Fly Days in 2021, a substantial improvement over the complete pandemification of 2020. Both the August and September Fly Days benefited from good weather and good turnouts. Many new members joined the museum and HFM was featured in the Skagit Valley Herald.

As a big treat in August, John Sessions of Historic Flight Foundation brought B-25 Mitchell "Grumpy" (pictured above) and pilot Vera Martinovich to fly a sortie with P-51 Mustang "Val-Halla," piloted by HFM Executive Director Greg Anders. Brando's BBQ truck fed the attendees (and

kindly donated meals to every one of our volunteers.)

The September event featured a T-6/T-34 missing man formation by HFM founder Maj. Gen. Bill Anders, Lt. Col. Greg Anders, Alan Anders and Craig Nelson in honor of Col. Fred Tollison, USMC and Adm. Ted Parker, USN. Former broadcaster Bill Quehrn was the announcer for both Fly Days (a real pro) and all of our awesome volunteers masked up and did what they do best. The scarcity of public entertainment this year made us all appreciate the demo flights even more than we usually do. We can't wait to have everyone back next spring!

Volunteer Spotlight

Chris Alker



Above: Chris Alker, Bell 47 at HFM, 2021
Below: Chris Alker, Bell 47 in Madagascar, 1966

If you ask Chris Alker how he got to HFM, you'd better settle in for a long and amazing story wrapped up in the history of World War II. It's well worth your time. Chris was born in 1941 in Gleiwitz, a German town then but part of Poland now. His father, Johannes Wilhelm Pogrzeba, Germanized the family name to Alker.

Johannes Alker was stationed in a small French town and was taken prisoner by the Americans as they liberated France. When they discovered he spoke French and English, they kept him in Le Havre as an asset instead of sending him to a POW camp in Canada.

Meanwhile, Chris, his mother and two sisters were travelling into Bavaria from Gleiwitz through Czechoslovakia with the Russian Army about seven kilometers behind them. Although only four years old at the time, Chris remembers the terrifying nighttime flash of cannon fire.

The family avoided starvation by stealing apples, begging for food and eating moldy bread supplied by local

farmers. Once in Rhine-Ruhr, they were split up and distributed into the homes of various distant relatives. They received a postcard from Johannes, their first inkling he was still alive, and he eventually rejoined them in Homberg.

Chris walked through bomb craters on his way to school, which was near a coal fuel factory that had been targeted by Allied bombers. He was lucky to get two hours of instruction per week during Germany's post-war teacher shortage. He gave up school to earn money for his family as a mechanic's apprentice, a job that cost him the pinkie finger on his left hand.

When his father couldn't find work in his pre-war job as a tax inspector, he went into railway reconstruction and would collect chunks of coal expelled by the trains for the family to cook with. Chris credits the Marshall Plan with keeping his family alive, fed and clothed during these years.

On his 17th birthday, Chris applied to the reestablished German Navy, but was told he needed his father's permission to join. Instead of receiving permission, Chris received five whacks with a strap. Undaunted, he tried again at age 18, this time setting his sights on the role of Air Force pilot. He made it through much of the selection process until they noticed his missing finger and ended his piloting ambitions.

He trained as a mechanic on the Dornier DO 27 and the Noratlas 2501. He learned how to drive in the Jeep DKW. During his years in the transport squadron, he flew all over Europe while his peers were confined to mopeds in their hometowns. When his service ended, he headed to Africa to start work at an oil refinery in Rhodesia and eventually ended up at a helicopter company in South Africa.

In the British Colony in South Africa, Chris met his future wife. A perfect stranger mistook Chris for a member of a group of friends and paid his way into a posh dinner dance. Although Chris spoke no English, he enjoyed dancing with a lovely woman named Billie. Some time later, on the way to a date at the local scone shop, they stopped to look in the window at a jewelry store. As they admired the rings, he asked her which one she wanted. "Is that a proposal?" she asked. Chris replied that she could take it however she wanted to, which led to their engagement.

After many life adventures, Chris' son convinced his parents to relocate to the U.S., a process that took 18 months. Chris drove a school bus in Beaverton, Oregon for 8 years before settling in Anacortes. His daughter-in-law, whose father had flown the KC-135, urged him to visit HFM. Chris joined our Volunteer Corps about six years ago and has become a docent as well as a member.

When asked what he loves about Heritage Flight Museum, Chris has a lot to say. He starts with the planes that actually fly, the smell of oil, the sense of living history—some aircraft older than Chris himself, who clocks in at over eighty years. Another big perk is finding a friend in fellow docent Del Chasteen and sharing their mutual experiences with helicopters. He tops it off with the the privilege of meeting the Anders family and enjoying the amazing father-son flying team at HFM.

Heritage Flight Museum depends on volunteers in many areas of operation. If you have a skill and some time to share and would like to experience the rewards of being part of the HFM team, contact volunteer coordinator Grant Reefer:

volunteer@heritageflight.org

Experience 1968: The Turmoil and The Triumph



By Brian Heiner

While the Heritage Flight Museum is primarily focused on sharing the history of flight and keeping a number of iconic planes in working order to share with the public, there have been some new and exciting developments in the works. Many of you know we are well underway with a large expansion here at the museum; one that will radically increase our gallery and maintenance spaces and allow us to share an entirely new adventure with our guests: The '68 Experience.

The central focus of the upcoming exhibit and gallery space will be to transport our guests back in time to the year 1968, arguably one of the most divisive years of the 20th century—not only for the United States, but also for the world as a whole. This point in history was full of both triumph and tragedy; it defined generations, brought about a sense of global community and perspective previously unknown to the world, and was rocked by a number of seemingly unimaginable events that cumulatively changed the Earth and the future of humanity.

The Vietnam War was in full swing amid rising spending and death tolls, and a growing number of vocal anti-war protestors around the world. The war's media coverage, particularly of North Vietnam's Tet Offensive at the start of the year, caused Americans to reevaluate the country's success in the ongoing conflict, and to question

our country's leadership, motives and strategies.

The assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy shook the nation to its core. These two iconic figures represented hope for civil rights progress; they were taken from the nation at a time when they were needed most.

The USS Pueblo was captured by North Korea, and its crew held captive in poor conditions for months. The USS Scorpion, a nuclear powered submarine, was mysteriously lost at sea, claiming the lives of everyone on board.

College campuses across the nation became battlegrounds where youth faced off against "the establishment" on the opposite side of the generation gap. Riots and protests erupted around the growing anti-war movement, the death of MLK, and the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. These incidents contributed to a country divided and sometimes at war with its own citizens.

While the year was marked with many tragic events, a number of achievements also dot the timeline. The world was introduced to the Boeing 747, which revolutionized air travel for the entire world. The Civil Rights Act was signed into law, becoming a first step in the ongoing struggle for racial and gender equality in America.

Meanwhile, the Cold War between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.—the impetus

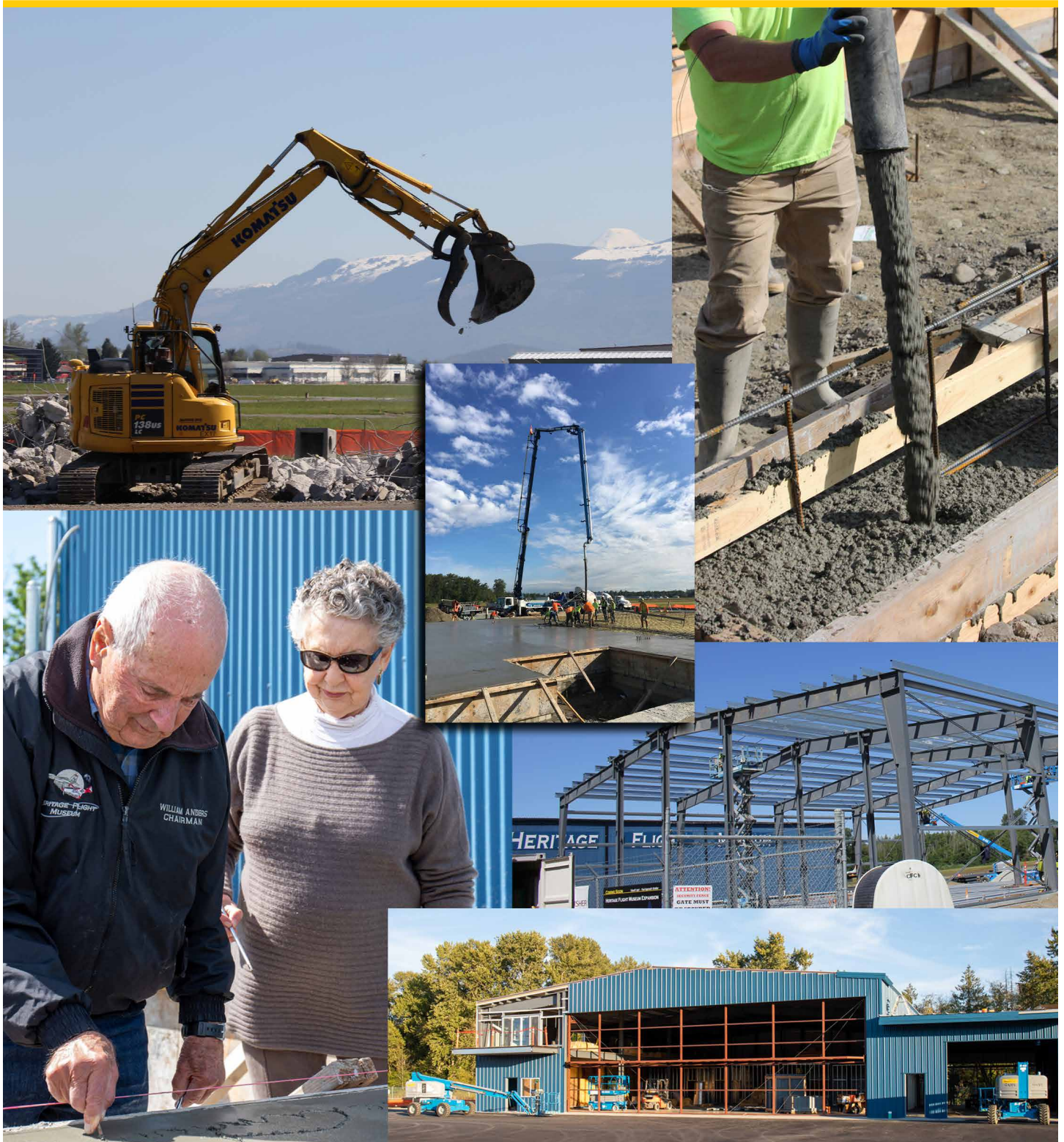
behind both the Vietnam War and the Space Race—continued. The Space Race was really heating up; both countries had experienced tragic setbacks and historic achievements as they competed to become the first to push past the limits of our home planet and reach beyond where any human had ever been.

The space race came to a head in December of 1968, when the United States sent astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders to orbit the moon during the historic Apollo 8 mission. Though the U.S. had lagged behind the Soviets in the early years of the race, this crowning achievement helped to salvage one of the nation's most tumultuous and difficult years.

The Earthrise photo taken on Christmas Eve by Heritage Flight Museum's founder, Bill Anders, was a final image of hope during that trying year, and has been credited with igniting the modern environmental movement. It will be featured in the new Earthrise Gallery space.

These are some of the things you will see highlighted in our new exhibit. Once they are completed, we invite you to visit our new '68 Experience and Earthrise Gallery. In the meantime, stop in and check out some of our iconic planes, learn about local veterans, join us for a fly day to see some of the planes in action, or even host a private event.

HFM's New Facilities Expansion on Final Approach

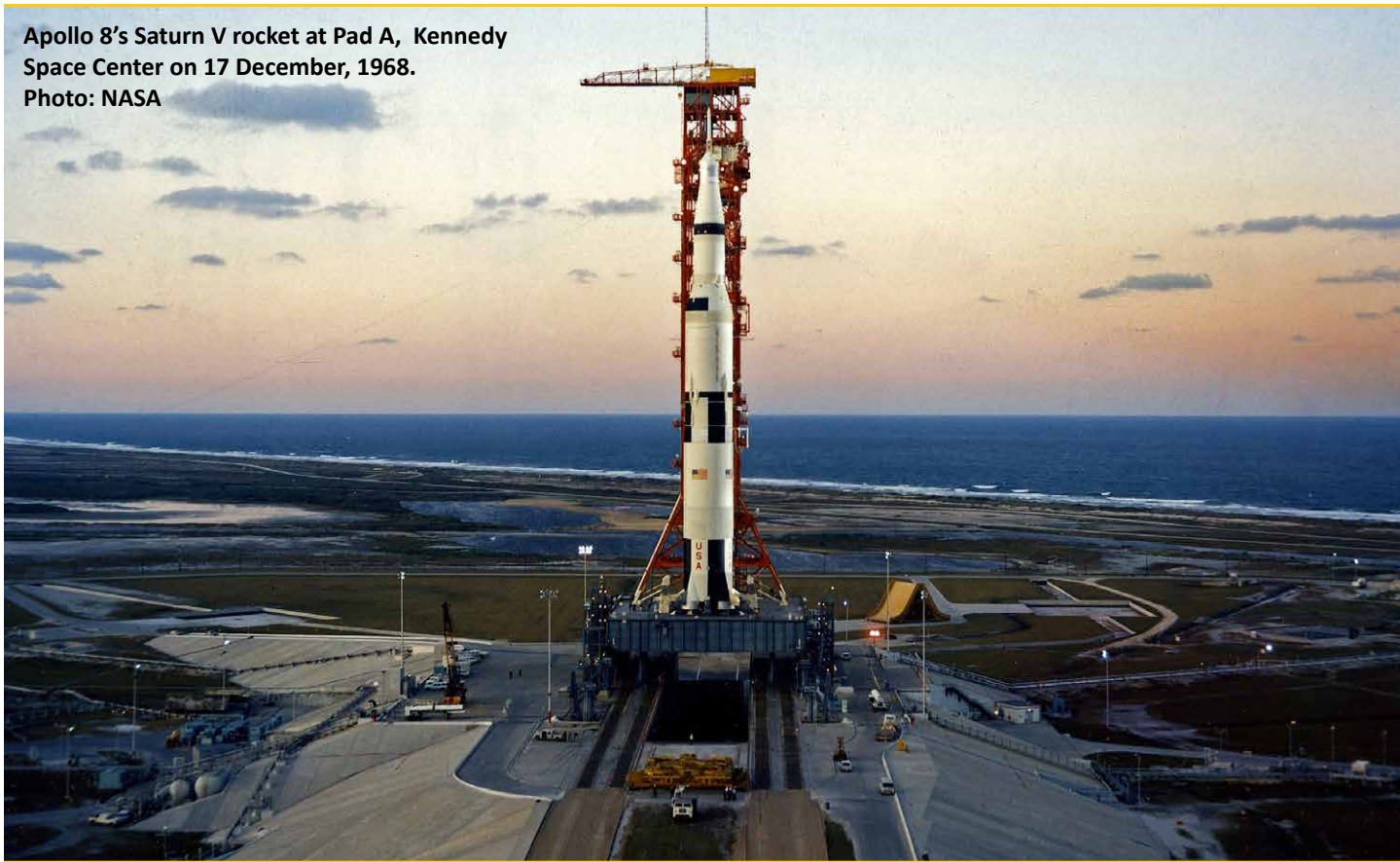


Chad Fisher Construction is moving along on Heritage Flight Museum's facilities expansion. After weeks of excavation and prepping forms for the foundation and slab, concrete was poured in late May/early June. Founders Bill and Valerie Anders signed the wet concrete

on June 8, and the steel structure went up quickly after a convoy of trucks brought the materials up from Texas. The new hangar is scheduled to open in the first half of 2022. The new building will house a maintenance shop and two new exhibit galleries.

Summer Quarter Donors

Apollo 8's Saturn V rocket at Pad A, Kennedy Space Center on 17 December, 1968.
Photo: NASA



A heartfelt thank you to the following supporters who have recently donated to help sustain Heritage Flight Museum's mission and goals:

Mark Ewart
James Irwin
Chris Alker
Don Collen
Gerry Richard
Michael McAuliffe
Kathleen Olsen
Ron Wesen
Don Griffin
Judith Mickunas
Linda Codlin
Matthew Gilcrease
Bob Morris
Chris Taylor
Sean Carr
Susan Munson
Pamela Mullin

History of the HFM Logo

The Heritage Flight Museum Logo was originally rendered by Alan Anders utilizing his computer graphic skills. Its foreground feature is a formation flight that Bill & Greg flew in 1999, Greg in the F-15E with Bill flying the P-51. This early "Heritage Flight" demonstrated a unique moment in the Anders Family Heritage when Greg got to fly his fighter on the wing of his father's fighter.

The background feature is a rendering of the Earthrise photograph with the moon in the foreground and the earth in the background. The background of black is a key feature that highlights the starkness of the moon, and the fragility and uniqueness of the little blue marble we call earth. Behind the "Heritage Flight Museum" is a subtle rendering of the Apollo 8 flight path, mirroring the Apollo 8 Mission patch. While it would be fun to develop reasoning for the yellow border, it just frames the graphic nicely.



Thank You for Your Support

SHOUT OUT!



Here's an official HFM thank you to all who contribute to the museum in so many helpful ways. Our "shout out" this quarter goes to the following:

Research: **Al Lindell**

Library: **Diane Danielson, Chris Alker, Del Chasteen, Jack Herring**

Photography: **Trent Hendricks, Roman Watson**

Shelving Donation: **Western Washington University**

Exhibits: **Ralph Peterson**

Newsletter: **Fred Smyth**

Construction: **All the great workers from Chad Fisher Construction who showed up on the hottest day of the year**

Veteran Interviews: **Jink & Michelle Bender**



Aircraft Battery Donation: **Concorde Battery Corp**

Summer Exhibits Internship: **Bryan Heiner, WWU**

Summer Collections Internship: **Nick DelDuca, Cooperstown Graduate Program**

Fly Day Pilots: **John Sessions, Vera Martinovich, Craig Nelson**

Volunteer Meals: **Brando's BBQ**

The Heritage Flight Museum would like to extend a special thank you to Concorde Battery Corp for their recent contribution of three brand-new aircraft batteries to the HFM fleet. The fully sealed batteries resist heat, won't leak during aerobatics and they retail at \$8K apiece. Concorde has been in business for 40 years building batteries to support not only the aviation industry, civilian and military alike, but also marine, medical, telecommunications, emergency backup, and photovoltaic applications. We greatly appreciate this incredibly generous donation to help keep history flying in Skagit County.

Welcome to the Attic



Nambu Pistol

By Bryan Heiner

*This article was contributed
by HFM's summer Quarter
Exhibits Intern*

When it comes to interesting items from the past, the Heritage Flight Museum is in no short supply: enter the Nambu Pistol Type 14. Manufactured by Nagoya Arsenal out of Japan, this handgun was the primary service pistol for many members of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II. It was designed in 1925 by Kijiro Nambu, a general of the Imperial army whose interesting firearms designs earned him the unofficial title as the "John Browning of Japan." He is associated with at least six different machine gun designs, a submachine gun and numerous pistols which made it into production and service.

The Type 14 was an improved

version of Nambu's earlier pistol designs and became one of the most common sidearms carried by non-commissioned officers in the Imperial Japanese Army. The pistol gets its name from the year it was adopted, the 14th year of the reign of the Emperor Taisho.

The Type 14 is a fixed rear sight, striker fired, recoil-operated semiautomatic handgun. The pistol fires the uniquely-sized 8x22mm Nambu rounds. With a barrel length of 4.76" and an eight-round, single stack feed system, the pistol weighs in at a surprisingly light 1.9 lbs. It has an interesting design which features two symmetrical recoil springs as well as a barrel and upper body manufactured from a single piece of solid steel.

The weapon was not without faults. Some complained that its smaller 8x22 rounds lacked stopping power. The magazine catch was quite snug which could make reloading the weapon unnecessarily difficult, and the striker springs could wear down rather quickly after prolonged use, rendering the

weapon inoperable.

The Type 14 went through a series of redesigns. Later in its production life, based on feedback from troops on the ground, the trigger guard size was increased in order to accommodate firing while wearing gloves. In 1940, an auxiliary magazine spring was added, which would assist with reloading function.

Some aspects of the machining and construction were simplified over time to speed production and meet the demands of a country at war; this included dropping the grooved grips in 1944. The Type 14s have a noticeable decline in quality near the end of WWII due to a shortage of materials available as a result of the war.

Due to the scarcity of ammunition and the limited number produced, the Nambu Type 14 has become a collector's item. The one on display at the Heritage Flight Museum was produced in March of 1936 and was donated by Vincent Hill and family.

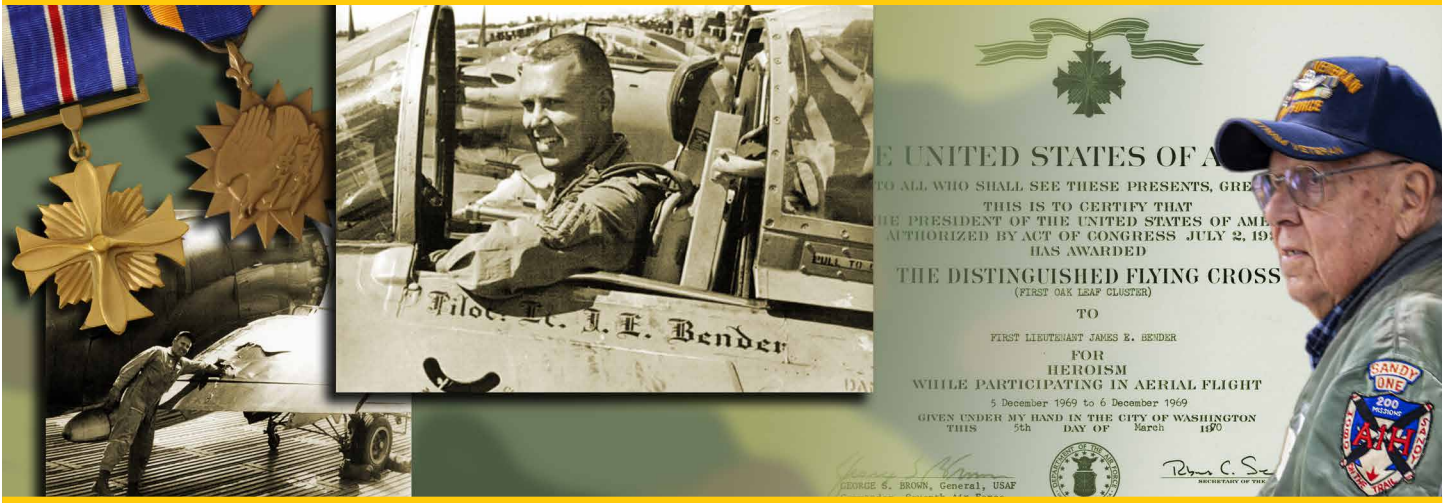
Who's Who at HFM

Bill and Valerie Anders - Founders
Greg Anders - Executive Director
Alan Anders - Maintenance/Operations Director

Julie Shelby - Chief of Staff
Karen Hicks - Events Manager
Grant Reefer - Volunteer Coordinator
Cassidy Moore - Chief Mechanic

Grace Stephens - Assistant Mechanic
Tiffany Hamilton - Collections/Exhibits
Marne Cohen-Vance - Visual Media
Neal Padbury - Building Maintenance

Exemplars of Courage: James “Jink” Bender



James “Jink” Bender grew up in Ferndale, Washington. His house was directly below United Airlines’ flight path into the Bellingham airport, which sparked an interest in aviation. Further inspiration came from *Watching War in the Air* on TV, building model airplanes and hearing about his grandfather’s WWI service.

Jim enlisted in the Air Force in January of 1964 after two years attending Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA. His very first flight was in the Western Airlines plane that took him to basic training. He was assigned to be an intercept operator, completed his training in June, 1964, and then trained as a teletype operator. Jim worked until April of 1965 in a communications center, during which time the Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred.

Jim took advantage of The Air Force Airman’s Education and Commissioning Program to attend college as a job and complete a bachelor’s degree. He went to Arizona State University in 1965, graduating with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Mechanical Engineering in 1967. He then attended Officer Training School in August 1967 receiving his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant.

He expressed interest in becoming a pilot, took a physical exam, and was sent to pilot training at Moody Airforce

Base. Jim completed his undergraduate pilot training in 1969, followed by A-1E Skyraider training in Hurlburt Field, Florida. Jim was stationed in Thailand at Nakhon Phanom Royal Airbase during June, 1969.

Jim flew 201 combat missions throughout the Vietnam War, logging over 600 combat hours. He participated in 17 search and rescue missions (call sign Sandy), and was the on-scene commander “Sandy One” for the successful Nail 28 OV-10 search and rescue mission on 8 May, 1970. Jim flew all of the Skyraider A-1E duties throughout the Vietnam War, which included close air support for ground troops, armed reconnaissance, interdiction, helicopter support, and combat search and rescue.

“Jinking” refers to sporadic movement of an airplane in the sky by the pilot, making the plane harder to track and less predictable to enemy gunners. Jim earned the call sign “Jink” on 7 February, 1970. During a rescue mission, his airplane came under fire after dropping ordnance on an anti-aircraft radar van. His Skyraider was hit in the wing, severing his master radio cable. After he successfully landed the damaged aircraft, an officer on the ground reminded him to “Jink” often to avoid enemy fire.

Over the course of his Air Force career, Jink was awarded three Meritorious Service Medals, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, eighteen Air Medals, and various other awards. After his service in Vietnam, Jim went on to serve as a T-38 pilot training instructor at Vance AFB, and lead-in fighter trainer at Holloman AFB. He had flight assignments in Alaska and served as an air liaison officer to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Germany.

After years of distinguished military service, Jim retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and took a job with Boeing as an Airplane Safety Engineer and B-737 ground Instructor. He later worked at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University as a flight and ground school instructor and taught private pilot ground school at Yavapai College in Prescott, Arizona. At the time of his civilian retirement, Jim had logged over 6,000 flying hours and over 3,000 hours as an instructor.



Jink Bender celebrates his last flight after more than 200 combat missions in Vietnam

Private Events at HFM are Back!

The time has finally arrived: our doors are open and so is our events venue. Moving forward, let's look at your calendar. Reserve your date with us. What kind of event would you

like to hold; seminar, auction dinner, recognition celebration? Make that call, send an email or go to heritageflight.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Three ways to reach Karen Hicks:
events@heritageflight.org
360-424-5151 extension 107
<https://heritageflight.org/events-contact/>



Photo: Damian Vines Photography

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