



HERITAGE FLIGHT MUSEUM

Where History Flies in Skagit County

Volunteer/Member Newsletter

Spring 2023

Michael Collins Trophy Presentation Weekend

By Greg Anders, Executive Director

What a great weekend we had in the DC area enjoying the several facets of the National Air and Space Museum! And our weekend just happened to fall at the peak bloom of the Cherry Blossoms covering so much of our National Mall.

Our weekend started with a special “behind the scenes” tour of the restoration facilities at Udvar-Hazy Center. This included the Mary Baker Engen aircraft restoration facility with many incredible aircraft undergoing the preservation and restoration process, including “Flak Bait” and a V-2 rocket!

The Michael Collins Trophy for Lifetime Achievement was presented to Bill Anders at an evening event at the NASM Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles Airport. Also receiving a Trophy for Current Achievement were many in attendance from NASA’s Webb Telescope team.

The event started with a social gathering around the left wing of the SR-71 that is a centerpiece display on the main floor of the Udvar-Hazy Center. We then moved to a presentation stage under the tail of Space Shuttle Discovery for the presentation ceremony. Then on to dinner seating at tables set around the right wing of the SR-71.

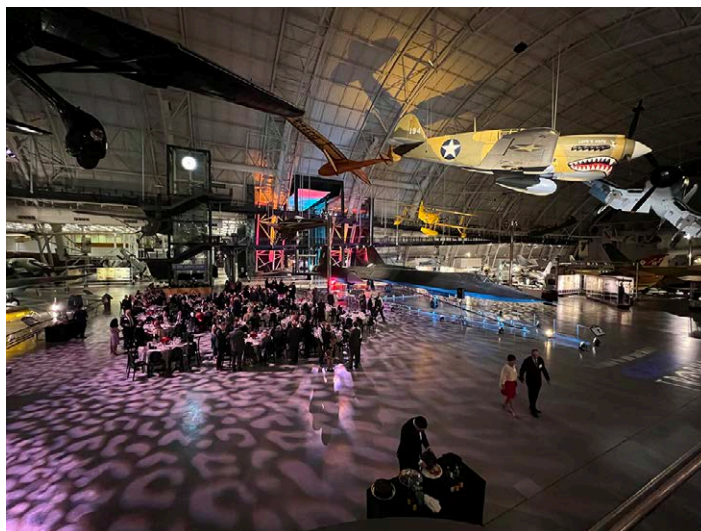
Heritage Flight Museum, through the generous sponsorship of Jerry and Jan Barto, was able to seat 30 of our own guests at the event. Since the event was on the East Coast, many of the Anders party were friends from that area although

several HFM Board Members were able to attend including Steven Hoard, Bruce Dietsch and Dave Johnson.

On the Saturday after the presentation, we were hosted by National Air and Space Museum Director Chris Browne for a private, pre-opening tour of the new Destination Moon gallery. It was a great experience to take that tour with Bill and Valerie and experience the fantastic storytelling galleries that speak to the whole story of Mankind’s ambitious undertaking of “putting a man on the Moon, and returning him safely to Earth.”

Naturally, Apollo 8 is prominently featured in that story with heavy emphasis on Earthrise. One of the artifacts in the display was the camera that Bill used to capture the iconic photo.

It was a great weekend to honor both of HFM’s founders for the lifetime of achievement they were both a part of.



Highlights from the Smithsonian Trip



Top: longtime HFM supporters Jerry and Jan Barto with Greg and Judy Anders.

Center: Bill receives the Michael Collins Trophy for Lifetime Achievement.

Bottom: the Anders party tours National Air and Space Museum's Destination Moon exhibit.

Top: touring the Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hangar.

Bottom: Bill in the Destination Moon Gallery in front of the Hasselblad that he used to capture Earthrise during the flight of Apollo 8. A similar model camera can be found in HFM's Earthrise Gallery.

A Weekend to Remember



Above: Bill and Valerie Anders at an Apollo 8 Exhibit during their tour.



Right: Greg and Judy Anders experience the beauty of springtime on the National Mall; Bob Craddock and Chris Browne of the National Air & Space Museum with Bill & Valerie Anders.



Service is All in the Family: Two Combat Veterans

One of the very special moments of the Collins Award Trophy presentation weekend was taking my 96-year-old Father-in-Law to the Udvar-Hazy Center and walking around a bit.

Herb Kiker had no military background in his family but joined the Navy just as World War II was ending. He was trained as a Naval Aviator and his first assignment was in the F8F Bearcat. He also flew the F2H Banshee and the F9F. After being one of the first Navy Lieutenants to land a jet aircraft on an aircraft carrier, he eventually moved into the F8 Crusader, commanding a squadron of Crusaders at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



This is a picture of Herb and me in front of the Crusader on the floor of the Udvar-Hazy Center. What a special moment to be with one of the men who flew that airframe as a Combat Qualified Naval Aviator!

Volunteer Spotlight

Del Chasteen



Photo by Deane Crilley

For years, Del Chasteen was a "snowbird" whose annual migration took him from Texas to Washington and back every spring and fall. When in Texas, he volunteered as a docent at Fort Worth Aviation Museum. When in Washington, he volunteered at Heritage Flight Museum. Now that Del has settled down as a full-time Washingtonian, he has become one of HFM's best tour guides.

Del was born in Fort Worth in 1942. At the time, his mother was a "Rosie the Riveter" assembling B-24s at the Consolidated-Vultee factory. When Del was 9 years old, the Bell Helicopter Company bought some land from one of his relatives. Del received his first helicopter ride during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new factory Bell built on that land.

He got to know the incoming Bell employees who relocated to his Texas

neighborhood, a place he describes as "right out of the TV show *Leave It to Beaver*." These connections got him a job immediately after high school in 1961. Although Del's poor eyesight scuttled his plans for a career as an Army helicopter pilot, he landed a fast-track management slot in the aviation industry instead.

He started in the "worst" job Bell had to offer: heat forming the clear bubbles that enclosed Model 47 helicopter cockpits. They were fabricated in a massive autoclave and heated up to several hundred degrees, so they came out glowing. Del had to spend days in a shed in the hot sun, polishing the bubbles by hand to full clarity.

He eventually worked in every aspect of helicopter manufacturing: tooling, paint shop, machine shop, transmission assembly, flight and new products development, AOG

(aircraft on ground), factory tour guide and Master Scheduler, Production Control (the person who scheduled and staffed the assembly line). The job he held at retirement was Quality Circle Facilitator; he assembled teams to analyze production problems and made sure the discussions stayed on topic and the problems got resolved.

In its heyday during the Vietnam War, Bell Helicopter built 12 to 14 Hueys and Cobras per day. Cots encircled the hangars so workers could sleep at the factory, get up and get back to work without losing any time. But in 1979, when the Shah of Iran was deposed, Bell laid off 1500 workers in one day; Del was one of them. Later, a chance conversation in a pub led him to a new career as a worldwide coffee, tea and spice broker.

He was recruited back to Bell at the time of the V-22 Osprey program, and it was there he met his wife, Sandy. His other most memorable experience at Bell was being part of the team that developed and flew the N209J, the very first Cobra attack helicopter in the world. He was present at the first flights of many aircraft, including the F-111, Super Huey, Cobra, Super Cobra, XV-15 and V-22.

Del has an amazing knowledge base and has loved conducting tours ever since his days of showing visitors around the Bell Helicopter factory. One of his trademark HFM tour gags is to hold up a five dollar bill, stand under the jungle penetrator and offer the money to anyone in the group who can identify what it is. One day, a 90-year-old gentleman snatched the bill out of his hand saying, "Hell, son, I used to ride one of those." Del reached into his pocket, pulled out a twenty and handed that over as well.

Gone West: Merrill Wien

Destined to become a pilot



Noel Merrill Wien stood tall among pilots. He was a superb flight instructor. *Alaska Aviation Legends* magazine called him “one of the most diversified and experienced pilots of his time,” with more than 30,000 hours in at least 149 different aircraft. He was the son of famous Alaskan bush pilot Noel Wien, who in 1927 started Alaska’s first airline, Wien Alaska Airways (later Wien Air Alaska).

Merrill inherited his father’s love of aviation. From his first Luscombe 8A solo on his 16th birthday (under the instruction of an ex-WASP at the Smith Dairy farm’s airport in Kent, Washington), Merrill worked toward fulfilling his destiny. While attending the University of Washington, he jumped at an offer to work for Pan Am Airlines; at the time, he was the youngest pilot they had ever hired.

During the Korean War, Merrill was drafted into the Army. The Army agreed to let him enlist in the Air Force with an intent to fly. Yet, despite his civilian piloting experience, he was two years short of a college degree and could

not get into the cadet program. A civilian Link Trainer instructor rating now served Merrill in good stead; it opened the door to eventual primary flight training at Marana Air Base near Tucson. The Korean War ended just before he graduated as a Second Lieutenant in 1953. Merrill became commander of a C-119, the aircraft in which he experienced his “closest calls” while flying reconnaissance missions over The Soviet Union.

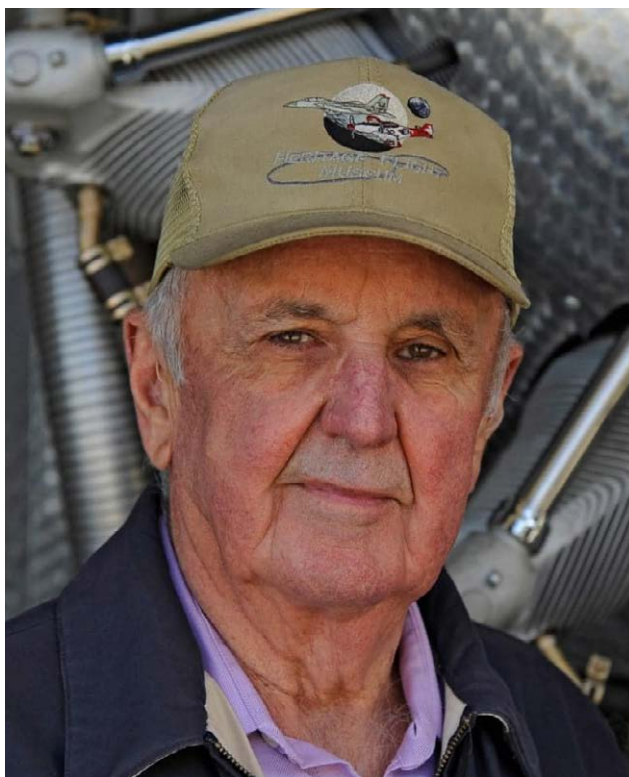
After his service ended, he chose to rejoin his family’s airline, flying DC-3, C-46, DC-4, 749 Constellation, F-27, 737, 727 and the bush-type airplanes like the Cessna 185, 195, Twin Beech and Pilatus Porter. He used Cessna 180s on ski wheels to access McCall Glacier for a scientific team. He flew Lowell Thomas, Sr.’s crew as they filmed his High Adventure documentary series. He flew glacier scientist Dr. Maynard Miller and his University of Idaho students onto the Juneau Ice Cap. He flew dawn-to-dark rescues during the 1957 Fairbanks flood.

Merrill, his brother, Richard, and two fellow pilots started a company (Merric) that supported state forest-fire fighting efforts with surplus B-25s and helicopters. When age 60 arrived and forced his retirement from the airlines, he hauled bulk fuel into outlying villages with no road access. He flew charters over Denali and test flights for the Soloy Corporation. He also volunteered as an instructor pilot with the Commemorative Air Force and performed at

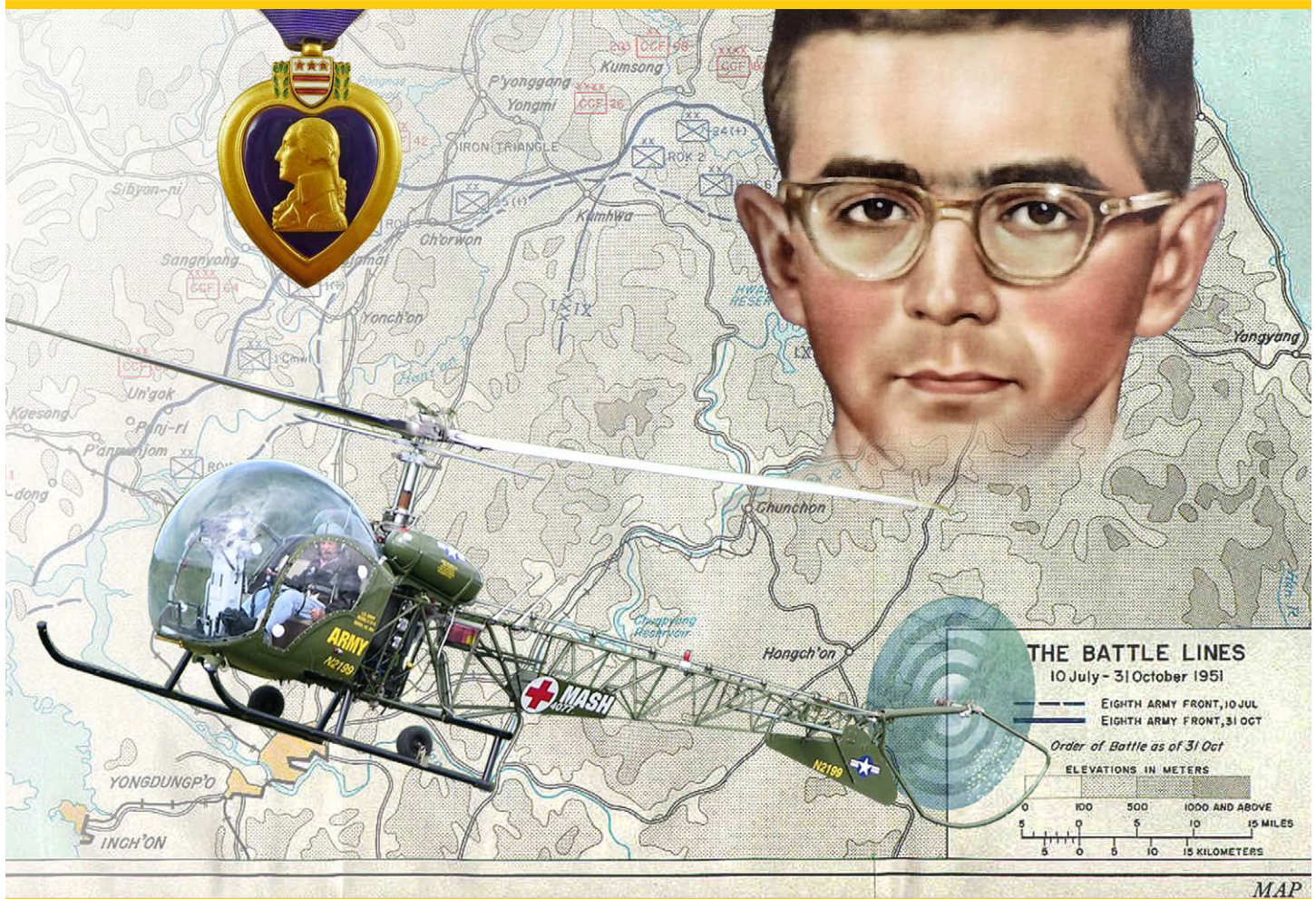
airshows in their B-29 “Fifi” and other CAF aircraft.

Merrill conducted check rides in all kinds of warbirds as a designated FAA examiner. He checked out more than one flying Anders on various aircraft; HFM Executive Director Greg Anders got his taildragger rating in Merrill’s Widgeon. (Could this have inspired Greg’s latest acquisition, a certain Grumman G44 currently under restoration in Bellingham?)

Merrill had a strong connection to Heritage Flight Museum. He was an instrumental figure in the earliest days of HFM when it lived, along with Bill and Valerie Anders, on Orcas Island. He took on the role of HFM’s first Director of Flight Operations. The loss of Merrill Wien is a deep loss for HFM. We extend our condolences to his family and friends as we contemplate his place in the history of aviation.



Korea Combat Veteran Medevac'd on an H13 Sioux



By Don Collen

Transcribed from an interview with Mr. Collen by HFM Archivist Tiffany Hamilton

I was an asshole when I was young [laughing]. When you're 21 you know everything, and I hated over in Korea when an officer would call me "son," but – anyhow. We were lying in a slot along the bottom of the hill there, and there are tons of hills. And every hill has a number and a name. The nickname comes from the G.I.s, but the number is for the aircraft so when they call in an airstrike, why they can go to number so-and-so on the map and that type of thing. I tried looking up some of my old notes to try and jar my memory because there's so many hills and so many battles over there that you get mixed up, but I'm pretty certain this was on Baldy.

The fatality rate of seriously wounded soldiers dropped by almost half during the Korean War from 4.5% in the WWII era. This success was credited to the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit and a system of aerial medical evacuations by helicopter (medevac) that was perfected in Korea.

We were waiting for the whistle to go off. All your whole company is lying in the bottom of the hill, waiting for the whistle to go off and the flares and so on, and then you go up the hill. I would say I was probably a third of the way up the hill and hadn't gotten any return fire yet. And all of a sudden, I felt this pressure on my foot – kind of knocked

my leg sideways. And I looked down and there was a hole through my boot, both sides [chuckling], and the blood was coming out of it – I didn't even feel the pain.

You gotta think about adrenaline when you're in combat. I had no pain on my wound. Like when I sliced my stomach open here with a bullet and so on. I didn't feel it. I got another 150 feet and I noticed my pant leg all full of blood and my boot full of blood. But when you're going from one hill to the next, the adrenaline's not there and it's fear. It is downright fear; is this my turn? Am I going to get to come back? That type of thing.

I called for a medic, and he come over and cut my boot off and tried to stop the blood flow. I'm a bleeder, I bleed a lot. But he saw where the

bullet had gone through, and he was very concerned that it had taken out my Achilles tendon, because it was between the bone and so on, with blood you know, it's a mess. He called two G.I.s over and I put my arms around and he says, 'don't flex that muscle in that leg'. And they hauled me down to where the medevac was.

He hauled me over there and I didn't flex my ankle at all. I bled a lot, but anyhow, they put me on this stretcher on the side of the thing [referring to a H13 Helicopter], and gave me a shot and it kind of made me a little fuzzy you know. So I didn't feel anything. And then they strap you around your legs just above the knees, and across right in the shoulder, and then they put a kind of a funny helmet on you so your head won't rock back and forth. And they put a shield over top of your head and you're covered – course it's cold over there, but anyhow, you're covered. [There's] this slit in this little deal, you look and you can see where the center of the blades are going around. You can actually count them because it's in so close to where the axle (rotor shaft) is.

I didn't remember too much on the flight other than I was scared sh*tless. I mean, you got to remember that the whole peninsula was loaded with Chinese guerrillas that were snipers and so on. And if they had taken that helicopter out, you're dead. I mean, because you crash. Fear does come up in that sense, but I was still kind of fuzzy from that shot. And we got down there with a MASH unit, it's kind of like the one that's on TV...anyhow, it's on a hill where you land, there were two helicopters coming in, I heard the other one. And the other one, when they flatten their blades out well you don't get that chop that you normally have.

Anyhow a whole group of people come out, and they were all doctors and nurses. And they come out and two jeeps come up... no, all I had was one jeep but I think there's two that

come out, cause there's two [soldiers], one on each side of the 'copter that's wounded. And I really wasn't wounded. I mean just in the ankle but if you took out my Achilles tendon, then I'm going home because that's it. They picked you up bodily and, and – no they didn't either. They picked up the stretcher and they hauled me over to the jeep and put me on the back of the jeep, and they actually walk along with you holding the stretcher on.

And we went down the hill, and there's a whole group of tents and buildings that they made down there, and one was the operating area and so on. And I went in immediately because they wanted to make sure that my Achilles tendon wasn't severed. I'm guessing on that because I'm taking it from a nurse that came out and told me afterward what had happened.

Trying to think of the sequence of this – I kind of went out from then because they did x-rays, they opened me up down there to check things, and the next thing I knew I was waking up in the...I guess it's kind of a waiting room or something like that. And this nurse came out and I kept asking her questions, she wouldn't answer, she says 'the doctor will be in shortly'.

Well, then a captain came around and, and he said 'you're lucky', and I says 'oh, how's that?' and he says 'well it didn't hit the Achilles tendon. It took a chip of bone and a little bit of the Achilles tendon but not enough to worry about. But I'm going to keep you here two days' and so I says, 'you couldn't make that two weeks could you?' [chuckling/laughter] I remember telling him that, he says, 'no, you gotta get back up and to your unit'.

I think that was all that there was on that thing because when I got through then I could flex my heel and it had healed over on the outside edge. And I marched up to get shot again I guess [chuckling again]. And any G.I. that'll tell you anything different is

crazy because there was two types of wounds: one where you went with the medevac to get out of there, and then when they came over they said there's what they call a band-aid wound. They just patch you up, and away you go up again. That's what they did on this wound here [gesturing to left side and stomach], they put a, I'm going to guess a butterfly bandage, have you heard of it? Because it clamped it shut. And it was, it's about that long [indicating ~6" with his two index fingers]. But it just laid it open so the blood would come out, then he wrapped me all up.

And that's the one that's kind of a joke in there because we both laughed at it but he started to walk away and I says 'don't I get to go on a copter, get down and get sewed up?' and kind of let out a grunt, and he took about four more steps and then he come back to me and he says, 'I'll tell you what I'll do for you, son,' God, I could have killed him, but anyhow, 'tell you what I'll do for you, son' he says, 'you go up and you talk to that Chinese feller that shot you there, tell him to pull it two inches to the left' he says 'and I'll come back with a wheelbarrow and a shovel and I'll haul you down' [laughing]. That's what's known as combat humor. But anyhow, that's about it. That's the only time I got to ride in anything.

I was wounded numerous times, but well... yeah that's on there, the purple heart with three oak leaves [showing his Korean War Veteran hat with award bars on it, including a purple heart ribbon with three oak leaf clusters], and I probably got wounded...I'm going to say a dozen times? Something like that, little bullet knicks and cuts and so on from a bullet. Um, it's hard to remember, I'm 93 years old dammit [laughing].

Don Collen is a veteran of the Korean War, resident of Sedro-Woolley and longtime HFM member and donor.

Thanks for Your Support



A big “shout out” goes to the following supporters from the local community and beyond, who have donated their time and/or expertise to benefit the museum:

Special Thanks: **FOX Business Network, The Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum, Christopher Browne**

Photography: **Karen Hicks, Deane Crilley, Chris Peterson, Roman Watson**

Exhibits: **The Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum, Alison Wood, Ralph Peterson**

Newsletter Editing: **Fred C Smyth**

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Mark Carpenter
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Joe Faherty**

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Matt Growth
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Check our website for updates; flying subject to last-minute change/cancellation

Events Corner

The Events Center has been busy receiving inquiries for events and Heritage Flight Museum tours. Recently, a group of Cub Scouts and troop leaders enjoyed a day of hiking through the Port of Skagit Nature trails and then stopped by the museum for their pre-arranged tour by our amazing docents. They had a full and fun day of healthy hiking and learning. At the museum they heard about history via the stories told, artifacts displayed, and aircraft stationed at the Heritage Flight Museum. Our Volunteer Coordinator, Mark Carpenter, shared that it was a fun site to see twenty-six Scouts marching

along the trails up to the entrance of the museum. The following weekend, we had a small group of aspiring female aviators and future astronauts come by to hear from our lead aircraft A&P IA mechanic, Grace Stephens, and then receive a tour from one of our amazing docents. The docent tour guide, Joyce Eastwick, helped pave the way for future women to graduate from the United States Air Force Academy as she was in the second class of women to be accepted into the academy. There, she earned an aeronautical engineering degree and served as a US Naval Flight Officer.

Interested in setting up a tour? Please contact Lynn Wade or Mariah Samora at events@heritageflight.org. Or, call 360-424-5151, ext 107 or 110.



Who's Who at Heritage Flight Museum

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

Julie Shelby - Chief of Staff
Lynn Wade - Events Manager
Mariah Samora - Events Coordinator
Mark Carpenter - Volunteer Coordinator

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

Welcome to the Attic



A Silver Snoopy Award pin.

The Beagle Has Landed

By Tiffany Hamilton

To paraphrase Pete Conrad, "That may have been one small step for Neil, but it's a long one for Snoopy." Wait, Snoopy? The beagle from *Peanuts*? Yes, that Snoopy!

Our artifact today is an Apollo-era Astro-Snoopy, all suited up and ready for the Moon. The adventurous beagle is equipped with his flight suit, flight safety box and hose, lunar overshoes, space helmet, and of course, his Red Baron-fighting WWI Flying Ace scarf. This Snoopy toy was made of plastic and nylon. It was produced in 1969 to commemorate mankind's (and dogkind's) journey to the Moon.

Created by American cartoonist Charles Schulz based on his own dog, Spike, Snoopy is not only a beloved character from *Peanuts*, but he's also the NASA safety mascot. So how did Snoopy become associated with NASA?

Schulz introduced space exploration themes in his comic strips in 1959. He firmly supported President Kennedy's goal to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. When approached by Al Chop, Director of Public Affairs for the Manned Spacecraft Center (now the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center), Schulz welcomed a partnership with NASA.

The Apollo 1 tragedy in 1967 was a lesson NASA would not soon forget. As NASA worked to win back public trust and support, they emphasized the importance of safety and developed improved safety methods. In 1968, Al Chop requested permission to use Snoopy as a safety mascot. Schulz

agreed and never asked for a dime in return.

Snoopy, already a household name, had flight experience as a WWI Flying Ace. He was the perfect character to provide NASA with a safety mascot. Friendly and charismatic, appealing to audiences young and old, Snoopy is to space what Smokey the Bear is to the forest.

The "astrobeagle" made his first adventure to the stars in March 1969, when Apollo 10 named their Lunar



To this day, Snoopy remains a symbol of space flight safety. This particular Snoopy toy has been donated to HFM by Executive Director Greg Anders and is part of The '68 Experience exhibit.

Module Snoopy, and their Command Module, Charlie Brown. Meanwhile, back on Earth, Snoopy continued to show up as a space explorer in Schulz's *Peanuts* comics.

Snoopy lent his image to the NASA Silver Snoopy Award pin. First presented in 1968, it was awarded to 62 individuals, including those working on the LTA-8 project conducting thermal-vacuum testing in the Lunar Module. The award includes a Silver Snoopy pin which was flown during a NASA mission, a commendation letter

stating which mission the pin flew on, a signed Silver Snoopy certificate and frame, and Snoopy decals and a poster.

Do you want a Silver Snoopy of your own? Strap into your Command Module because you've got a lot of work to do. To be eligible for a Silver Snoopy you need to accomplish one of the following: a) significantly contribute beyond your normal work requirements to the development and implementation of human spaceflight programs while ensuring quality and safety; b) accomplish a specific achievement that has had a significant impact on the attainment of a particular human spaceflight program while ensuring quality and safety; c) contribute to a major cost saving or series of lesser cost savings pertaining directly to human spaceflight programs; d) be instrumental in developing modifications to human spaceflight mission hardware, software, or materials that increase reliability, efficiency, or performance; e) assist in operational improvements that increase efficiency or performance; f) be a key player in developing a beneficial process improvement of significant magnitude; g) contribute significantly beyond fundamental task accountabilities in support of NASA programs; or h) show sustained quality performance over an extended period of time in support of human spaceflight programs.

Awardees receive the Silver Snoopy from an astronaut who has signed the letter of commendation and certificate. Recipients may earn only one Silver Snoopy in their lifetime, and to date, more than 15,000 Silver Snoopys have been awarded. They cannot be given posthumously and may only be awarded to 1% of the program population each year.

Pictures Worth a Thousand Words...



Vintage offset lithograph by Allen Saalberg, created by the United States Office of War Information, 1942



Three NYC firemen, George Johnson and Dan McWilliams and Bill Eisengrein, raise an American flag near the rubble of the World Trade Center. Taken at 5:01 PM on September 11th.
© Thomas E. Franklin – USA TODAY NETWORK

HFM Exhibits in the works

HFM has recently acquired a vintage WWII-era poster by Allen Saalberg, distributed by the United States Office of War Information in 1942. It commemorates the Attack on Pearl Harbor and will become part of our exhibit on Cornelia Fort's Interstate Cadet, "The Pearl." The poster depicts a tattered flag that flies at half-mast as a sinking US Navy ship burns behind it. A quotation by Abraham Lincoln from the Gettysburg Address evokes the emotion of a famous speech delivered four months after a significant battle that is often cited as the turning point of the American Civil War.

Alongside the poster, we plan to feature a copy of a more recent photograph taken on September 11, 2001

after the destruction of the World Trade Towers in New York. It depicts three fireman raising a flag amid piles of rubble at Ground Zero. While researching the history of the second image, we came across an amazing story about the flag depicted in the photo. The story starts out in New York City and winds up in—of all places—Everett, WA before returning to its origin after a series of adventures. It begins on a day which, like December 7, shall also "live in infamy." It ends with a US Marine Corps veteran from right down the road. The flag story is so packed with plot twists and suspense, it's almost a movie. We have included it in our newsletter for your reading enjoyment.

The Lost Flag of Ground Zero

New Yorker Shirley Dreifus overslept on the morning of September 11, 2001, which caused her to miss an early meeting at her office on the 89th floor of the World Trade Center.

Her husband, Spyros Kopelakis, was making breakfast. At about 8:30 am, she called in to report that she would be late for work. Shortly after that, a nearby explosion rocked the entire building where they lived.

At 8:46 am, a Boeing 767 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. A second plane impacted the South Tower 17 minutes later. By 10:30 am, both towers had collapsed, leaving behind only rubble, toxic dust and lost lives. It was the deadliest terror attack in world history to date.

Dreifus and Kopelakis moored their yacht, *Star of America*, at a marina near the Twin Towers. As a column of smoke spread over the neighborhood, they tried to check on their boat and its crew. They were stopped short; police weren't letting people walk south toward the destruction, so they walked north from downtown to the Chelsea Piers, where they found the *Star of America's* crew.

The crew informed the couple their yacht was safe, but something was missing: its American flag. Apparently, one of the firefighters responding to the unfolding disaster had spotted the flag on *Star of America* and cut it from its staff. Dreifus said firefighter Dan McWilliams took the flag because he wanted to use it as a “symbol of

hope” in the horrific aftermath of the 9/11 terror attack. It would serve that purpose better than he guessed.

On that same fateful morning, Thomas Franklin, a staff journalist for the *Bergen Record*, was sent by his editor to the New Jersey waterfront, across the river from the smoking ruins. As lower Manhattan evacuated, he approached the devastation in a police boat and wandered through a grim, gray wasteland for about three hours, snapping photos of the eerily transformed scene.

With a journalist's keen sense of responsibility, he trekked through the grit and dust. Among the images he captured that day was a group of three firefighters raising a flag on a tilted flagpole that protruded from the rubble of the destroyed towers. The photo was published in the *Record* the following day, and then sent to the Associated Press. The AP made the image globally available, and it immediately became an icon.

Certain photographs take on a life of their own and crystallize a point in history for future generations. “Raising the Flag at Ground Zero” could be the most famous photograph to emerge from that day. It has been compared to Joe Rosenthal's famous WWII photo of US Marines raising the American flag on Iwo Jima. “Ground Zero,” like “Iwo Jima,” became a US postage stamp. Published globally, the image raised millions for families of the fallen and had a tremendous impact in 2001 and beyond.

The flag so central to the impact of Franklin's photograph was given to City Hall by firefighters. On September 23, a group of New York City officials signed the “Ground Zero Flag” at Shea Stadium

before it embarked on a world tour on board the *USS Roosevelt*. The flag traveled all the way to Afghanistan and was featured in worldwide ceremonies and televised events.

A few months after 9/11, Kopelakis requested to borrow his flag from the City of New York. He and his wife had agreed to host a fundraiser aboard *Star of America* for children of fallen firefighters and wanted the flag to be part of the event. The City agreed, but when the couple opened the case they were given and unfolded the flag inside, they knew right away it was much larger than the one that had flown on their boat. It was the wrong flag.

This larger flag was signed by former New York Governor Pataki and former NYC Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg. The signatures identified it as the flag that had toured the world on the *USS Roosevelt*. But where was the flag that was taken from *Star of America*, raised over Ground Zero by firefighters and photographed by Franklin?

Kopelakis and his wife never received a satisfactory answer from City Hall. The flag mixup was an embarrassment that the City didn't want to stir up, and nobody seemed to know where the flag had gone. With each passing year, the Ground Zero flag's unknown fate bothered Kopelakis more. It wasn't just the disappearance, but the City's refusal to acknowledge it that upset him. He worried the artifact could be auctioned into private hands and never seen again. It would be 15 years before Dreifus, after the death of her husband, would finally learn the fate of the flag.

Meanwhile, the public remained unaware it was lost until the History Channel published a documentary. It included a video from Ground Zero,

Missing Flag Turns Up in Pacific Northwest

taken on 9/11 by a NYPD officer, which revealed an empty pole where the flag had flown. Here was proof that the famous flag had disappeared between dusk and midnight on the same day it was raised.

The flag's trail had gone cold. However, 3000 miles across the continent in the small West Coast city of Everett, Washington, it picked up again in November, 2014. At Fire Station #1 on Rucker Avenue, a man identified only as "Brian" walked up to the door with a plastic Jo-Ann Fabrics shopping bag. He explained to the firefighters that the folded flag and halyard in the bag could possibly be the lost flag of Ground Zero. During the excitement that ensued, he walked away and disappeared.

The fire department turned the flag over to the Everett Police Department for an investigation. Police detectives Jim Massingale and Mike Atwood were tasked with the daunting work of safeguarding, authenticating, and returning the flag to its true home. Unfortunately, "Brian" could not be located. Nobody knew his full name. Nearby surveillance cameras had missed him coming and going from the firehouse. Press releases and sketches failed to turn up any leads.

Meanwhile, Thomas Franklin's additional unpublished photographs from 9/11 helped detective Steve Paxton of the Forensics Investigations Unit compare the flag in their custody to the one at Ground Zero. A length of black tape wrapped around the halyard provided a distinctive characteristic that could be evaluated. Washington State Patrol forensic scientist William Schneck analyzed the debris on the flag, comparing the percentages of its component materials (mica, asbestos, cement) to that of debris collected at

Ground Zero. He found the samples to be consistent. The second mate of *Star of America*, who was flown from NYC to Everett, thought the flag looked right.

As the investigation went on, the mysterious "Brian" came forward when he learned that police were looking for him, and detectives were able to piece together the flag's path since its disappearance. US Marine Corps veteran Brian Browne recounted that in November 2006, a friend brought him some American flags, knowing him to be a collector of military memorabilia. The friend said the smallest of the flags had been presented to the widow of a 9/11 victim. She gave the flag to a couple from Washington State, who passed it on to Browne's friend.

Eight years later, Browne happened to see an episode of *Brad Melzer's Lost History* about the missing Ground Zero flag. He noticed the distinctive black tape on the halyard and thought of the flag stored in his freezer. This was a moment of reckoning; Browne made the stunning realization that he could be in possession of something much larger than himself. He carried his artifact to the nearest fire station.

The Everett Police Department's meticulous investigation eventually concluded that this was almost certainly the halyard—and likely the now-famous Ground Zero flag—that had started a coast-to-coast journey on one of the darkest days in American history. The artifact that had acquired so much significance was packaged for its long-delayed return to New York.

Kopelakis, the flag's original owner, passed away in 2015 while the investigation was still going on in Everett. An American citizen of Greek descent, he took great pride in the Stars and Stripes. Kopelakis said he bought the flag at a boat show for \$50, but after 9/11, considered that it was priceless and belonged to the people of America.

The flag is easy to find today, all it takes is a visit to the new World Trade Center and museum at site of the attack, which was completed in 2014. Kopelakis' widow, Shirley Dreifus, donated the Ground Zero flag in her husband's name to the National September 11 Memorial Museum where it is now on permanent display to the public.



The 9/11 Memorial stands on the site of the former twin towers in Lower Manhattan.

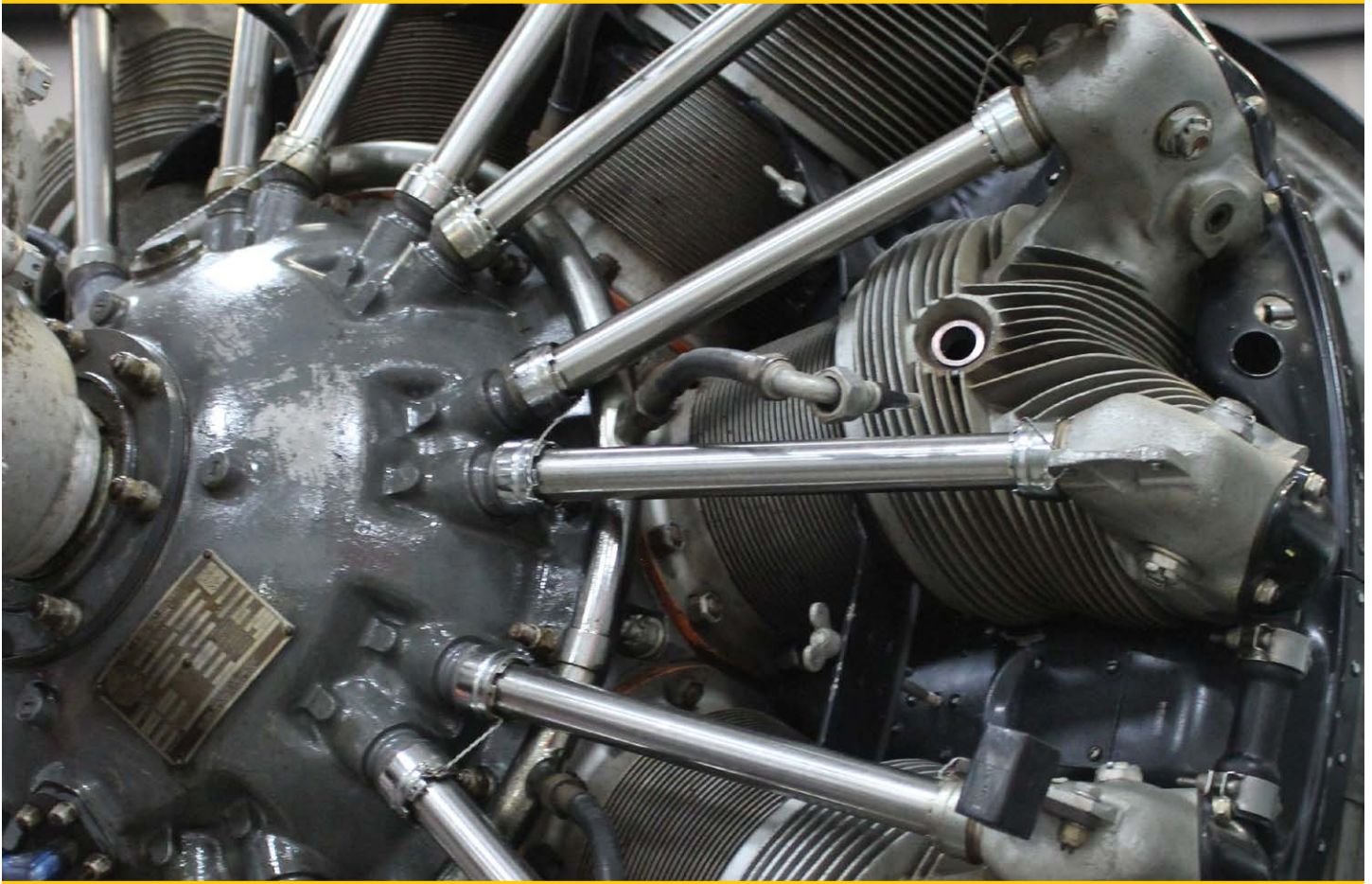
Finishing Touches in HFM's New Exhibit Galleries



With an incredible boost from Skagit County's Tourism Grants and the helpful advice of Kathrin Halpern at the Smithsonian Institution, HFM's Exhibits, Visual Media and Building Maintenance Departments completed the final phase of HFM's newest exhibit galleries. The Apollo 8 Command Module half-scale model moved to its new central location in the Earthrise exhibit. Pop culture

and technology walls were added to The '68 Experience exploring the lasting impact of Apollo 8 in the context of its era. Our thanks also to MIT Library, Museum of Pop Culture, The Boeing Company, Fred Smyth, Brent Work, Image360 of Burlington and the Oughtred Society (a remarkable online treasure trove of just about every slide rule ever made.)

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