

Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum, Inc.

The Wing Script

Atterbury Army Air Base-Bakalar Air Force Base Columbus, Indiana

Museum Membership Newsletter February 2016 published by the Museum Volunteers.

The publication name, "The Wing Script" is taken from the former air base newspaper



In memory of Wendell Ralph Ross

July 6, 1934-December 20, 2015

Wendell was a retired Cummins Engineer, Columbus Airport Manager, U.S. Navy Commander and founding member of the Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum.



Wendell R. Ross with his wife of 58-years Janice "Jan" at the Hospice We Honor Veterans Pinning Ceremony at his home shortly before his passing. With Wendell is Gordon Lake, First Sergeant U.S. Army (Ret.), Larry Alexander, Colonel USAF (Ret.) and Mark Pillar, Major General USAF (Ret.) Wendell, a retired Navy Commander was in his dress uniform for the ceremony.



2015 was a record setting year for museum visitors and tour groups



Since the major museum expansion project was completed in the spring of 2014, the number of visitors continues to grow. More and more tour and school groups add to the museum's visitor count.



The museum became a photography classroom for Ivy Tech students. They chose the museum's barracks display and 1942 Jeep display for the photo shoot sets for the WWII Pinup photos class project. It took over an hour just to set up the lighting and prep for the photo shoot.



Robert Bakalar, son of the late Lt. John Bakalar who the former Bakalar Air Force Base was named in honor of visited the museum. Pictured on the right in a November 13, 1954 dedication ceremonies photo of Lt. Bakalar's mother Marie, his widow Dorothea, his daughter Suzanne and son Robert Bakalar in the Boy Scout uniform. In this recent photo on the left, Robert is standing next to his father's display panel. The museum lobby preserves the memory of Lt. Bakalar with special displays of uniform, photos, military awards and decorations. Lt. Bakalar died when his P-51 Mustang crashed September 1944 during WWII in France.

The Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum complex consists of the museum and William "Bruce" Dalton Media Center, the Jeanne Lewellen Norbeck Memorial Chapel and the Historical Markers on Bakalar Green. Bakalar Green is the preserved green area between the F-4 Phantom Jet static display and the airport rotating beacon.

Our simple "Butt Can" in the barracks display is a hit with visitors young and old. The young ones giggle and point and the old timers remember their days in barracks. Fire Guard anyone?



A rare original WWII artifact was donated recently to the museum.



This rare US Army #1 Space Heater is the same type used in many of the Atterbury Army Air Field/Bakalar Air Force Barracks during WWII and Korean War period. The original base barracks had three in them. They were coal burners and the base had a large coal yard by the air base rail road tracks at one time.



The Jeanne Lewellen Norbeck Memorial Chapel, #T-48 shown in this 1955 photo has been preserved and is used as a living museum. It is the only barracks style building remaining today.

The museum also serves in part as the Columbus Indiana Municipal Airport visitors center. The Columbus Visitors Center and museum work hand in hand to make visitors and tour groups welcome and assist with information. Some fly-in visitors only stop long enough to see the terminal building and museum. If we make their visit interesting and pleasant, they will be back.



Local schools use the museum as a history classroom. Home school families visit as well as college level students. Some of the Purdue Aviation students have flown in.



Some class groups as large as 120 students have visited. Our remaining WWII museum volunteers are always a special first person learning experience with the students.



The William "Bruce" Dalton Media Center is in use daily at the museum.

F-4 Phantom Jet Static Display



Since the F-4 Phantom was placed on display November 1988 it has been a constant draw for visitors. The museum volunteers have a bird's eye view every day and see cars stop to look, walkers with cameras, families on bikes, tour groups and school children all drawn to the Vietnam era war bird. The F-4 Phantom came to the Columbus Municipal Airport on a heavy lift Army helicopter from the Indiana Air National Guard 181st Tactical Fighter Group based at Hulman Field Terre Haute, Indiana.



This military CH-54 Tarhe heavy lift helicopter from Company H 104th Aviation Pennsylvania Army National Guard out of Harrisburg, PA sits on the ramp July 1, 1988 after it delivered the F4 Phantom to Columbus Airport. They came back in November after the display concrete pad was complete to place the F-4 on its new home. Lesson learned. Don't put the straw down on the seeded display area before the helicopter sets the plane on the display.

Thank you to the Columbus Aviation Board of Commissioners, Airport Director, the Mayor & the City of Columbus, the financial donors large and small and the visitors who support the Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum mission of preserving the rich military history of the former Army Air Field/Air Force Base.