

History Takes Flight

at the Champaign Aviation Museum

At the Champaign Aviation Museum, you'll get a close-up look at historic aircraft—particularly from World War II—that soared great heights to preserve freedom.

More than stationary museum pieces, these warbirds have been or are being restored to fly again—to thunder to life, taxi down a runway and take off from our home base, Grimes Field in Urbana, Ohio.

Whenever you visit, you'll witness history in the remaking. Our

corps of volunteers (you're welcome to join them) will continually be at work reconstructing a plane, such as our current project, the Champaign Lady B-17G Flying Fortress (#44-85813). Piece by piece, volunteers are returning the B-17 to flying form, right in the museum.

Birth of a Museum

The Champaign Lady B-17 restoration project, launched in 2005 by local businessman and benefactor Jerry Shiffer, has been continued by the Shiffer family since his death. From this project, the family developed plans for the museum to honor the legacy of the historic aircraft and the veterans who sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today.

How You Can Support the Museum...

- **Become a volunteer and help restore the Champaign Lady B-17G. We welcome teens and adults of all ages and skill levels. We provide on-the-job training. And the good times are free! Call 937-652-4710.**
- **Make a donation to support the Champaign Aviation Museum, a nonprofit organization. Donate at least \$25 to become a Friend of the Museum and receive a Champaign Lady patch. Admission to the museum is free—and donations are always appreciated.**

About the Champaign Lady

Now being reconstructed at the Champaign Aviation Museum, the Champaign Lady (#44-85813) was used by the Curtiss-Wright Corporation as a test bed for experimental turboprop and turbojet engines. It also was flown for propeller research and eventually was modified as an air tanker. In 1980, while fighting a forest fire, the plane crashed in Bear Pen, N.C.

The Champaign Lady will be painted in the scheme of the 401st Bombardment Group (H), 1st Air Division of the Eighth Air Force, which flew 155 missions out of Deenethorpe, England, from Nov. 26, 1943 to April 20, 1945.

A section from another B-17, being used in the restoration, was used in filming "Twelve O'Clock High," starring Gregory Peck.

About Our Squadron

Here's a little background on the historic aircraft represented in our museum:



Painting by Frank and Kevin Drain

B-17 Flying Fortress

The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, considered the first truly mass-produced large aircraft, is best known for the Eighth Air Force's daylight strategic bombing raids on Nazi targets.

B-17s dropped 640,036 long tons of bombs on European targets, compared to 463,544 by all other U.S. aircraft. About one third of the fleet—4,750 planes—was lost in combat.

Today only 14 of the original 12,731 B-17s are airworthy. *Champaign Lady will be No. 15!*



B-25 Mitchell

The North American B-25 is considered one of the most versatile aircraft of World War II—used for high- and low-level bombing, strafing, photoreconnaissance, submarine patrol and as a fighter.

The B-25 gained notoriety for the Tokyo raid led by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle. Nearly 10,000 B-25s, in numerous models, were built. Some saw service across four decades.



C-47 Skytrain

The Douglas C-47 Skytrain, developed from the DC-3 airliner, was used during World War II by the U.S. and our Allies to transport troops, cargo and wounded. More than 10,000 were produced.

The C-47 also was used to ferry soldiers from the Pacific Theater to the U.S., played a critical role in the Berlin Airlift, and was enlisted for counterintelligence in the Vietnam War.



A-26 Invader

The Douglas A-26 was the only American bomber to fly missions in three wars—World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Douglas built 2,503 of the aircraft.

The A-26 used remote controlled gun turrets and was the last twin-engine, propeller-driven bomber to be built for the U.S. Air Force.



T-6 Texan/SNJ-4

The North American T-6 Texan was used to train American and British fighter pilots for combat in World War II. In variant forms, a total of 15,495 T-6s were built.

The T-6 also was used for forward air control in Korea and Vietnam and has been a popular performer in air shows.

Home of the Champaign Lady B-17
at Grimes Field (174) in Urbana, Ohio

Where History Takes Flight

THE CHAMPAIGN AVIATION MUSEUM



Meet a Few of Our Volunteers...



Bridging the Generations

"By the time the B-17 takes flight, I could have my pilot's license," says Chase Abbey. Drawn to planes since a toddler he has accompanied his grandfather Fred Zerkle to air shows and the U.S. Air Force Museum.

Now the two work together on the Champaign Lady B-17 restoration project. During the summer of 2008, at age 13, Chase put in 350 hours.

"I think it's neat I'll be able to tell my kids I'm one of the ones who helped rebuild it."

Says Chase's proud grandfather, "He's helped rivet and done about every chore that's here. He definitely stays on task."



Trading Nails for Rivets

Four friends who used to build houses for Habitat for Humanity have been making an hour-long commute to help rebuild the Champaign Lady. They're Irv Bence of Westerville; Steve Kenish, Lewis Center; Lee Terflinger, Columbus; and Randall Waldron, Delaware.

"I have a love of visiting historic places and museums. To be part of creating a museum here is a plus," says Bence, a retired aerospace engineer.

Kenish adds, "There are places that charge people \$500 a week to do what we're doing here for our time and the price of gas."

And Waldron, a retired English professor, isn't complaining—but rather reveling in the task—when he adds, "This is such exquisitely precise work, because if one rivet hole on a part is just a tiny fraction off, you have to start over. I've learned not to agonize over it....It is a lapidarian enterprise." That is, they've found a gem of a volunteer opportunity.



A Family Affair

Robert and Carole Buckwalter of Ashley, Ohio, met each other at work building buses for Grumman Flexible. Now they enjoy working together as husband and wife on the B-17.

Robert, who learned of the project in the *Columbus Dispatch*, said, "This is our fun time together. We can work on the house anytime." Their daughter, son and grandson also help out. "It's a family affair. We all love doing it."

Carole says, "The people here are great teachers." And "icing on the cake," she adds, is when veterans who flew B-17s in combat stop by to see how the project is coming along and talk about their experiences.



From left, Lee Terflinger, Randall Waldron, Irv Bence and Steve Kenish.

Museum Hours

Monday-Friday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Closed Sunday

Tour groups or for other times, please contact Jack Bailey at 937-652-4710



THE CHAMPAIGN AVIATION MUSEUM

1652 N. Main St., Urbana, OH 43078
937-652-4710

www.champaignaviationmuseum.org
www.b17project.com



Also at Grimes Field:

- **The Grimes Flying Lab Museum**, a part of the National Aviation Heritage Area, honors Warren G. Grimes, the father of aviation lighting, and houses the restored Grimes Flying Lab, a Beech 18 used to test Grimes' lighting systems. Open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. (877) 873-5764 and (937) 652-4319 (weekends).
- **The Airport Café**, open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday.