

FLIGHT LINES

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A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTHERN MUSEUM OF FLIGHT
BIRMINGHAM, AL



***Capt. Joseph McConnell, top Ace of the Korean War, in his F-86 which has been replicated and proudly displayed as part of the Korean War Diorama, Southern Museum of Flight
-See Story On Page 3-***

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Throughout our museum industry, we continue to confront the dramatic impact of COVID-19, as well as the everchanging response efforts implemented over the last several months at the local, state, and federal levels. No one is immune to this pandemic – our team members and their families have been affected, visitors and patrons have been impacted, and our operational routines have all been disrupted in some way, shape, or form. As we wrap-up the spring and move into the summer season, our organization will be further challenged as we continue to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Though times are challenging, we will continue to move forward and as we do, the future impact of the novel coronavirus will most certainly create increasingly challenging obstacles that we must navigate to continue our education-oriented museum mission. In spite of these unprecedented and challenging times, I am so encouraged by the resilience, action, and decisions of our museum team members, industry partners and community leaders.

We, as a museum, are demonstrating resilience through both our COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts. Exhibit design, restoration, and education teams have “switched gears” recently to effectively implement measures that will allow us to continue our mission while keeping our team members and visitors safe. For example, the museum will have a new look in some respects, as polycarbonate shields have been installed in our front-line customer service areas, and motion-sensor hand sanitation stations have been strategically placed throughout our galleries. Social distancing has become the new norm, and museum guests will be greeted with social distancing wall placards and floor signs to help in guiding the visitor experience.

We will also see museums reinventing themselves and changing the manner in which they conduct routine business as we all move through this pandemic response. To that end, a focus on the museum’s Aviation Workforce Initiative (AWI), which we introduced last year, will become more of a central component of our operation as we continue to expand our educational programming and offerings. That focus will most certainly grow, and I am proud that the Southern Museum of Flight will continue in our commitment to lead the way in museum education and workforce development.

All the best,

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Flight Lines

is published monthly by the Southern Museum of Flight as an information source for its members, patrons, volunteers and friends. Articles that appear in this publication may be reprinted indicating the Southern Museum Of Flight as the source.

Comments are welcome and should be addressed to:

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THE FORGOTTEN WAR



Triple Jet Ace Of Korea



Joseph Christopher McConnell, Jr. (1922–1954) was a USAF fighter pilot who was the top American flying Ace during the Korean War. A native of Dover, New Hampshire, Captain McConnell was credited with shooting down 16 MiG-15s while flying North American F-86 Sabres. McConnell was the first American triple jet-on-jet fighter ace and is still the top-scoring American jet ace.

McConnell entered the USAAF Aviation Cadet Program in 1943. His dream of becoming a pilot was dashed when, instead of being sent to pilot training, he was assigned to navigator training. He completed B-24 training and joined the 448th Bomber Group in England in January 1945 where he flew 60 combat missions. He remained in the USAAF after the war and entered pilot training in 1946. McConnell finally achieved his goal of becoming a pilot, receiving his wings in 1948 at Williams AFB in Arizona.

McConnell flew at least three different F-86 Sabres, all named "Beauteous Butch". The name

referred to the nickname of his wife, Pearl "Butch" Brown. His final Sabre in combat was an F-86F-1 (SN 51-2910, Buzz No. FU-910). This aircraft was repainted following his final mission, with the name being changed to "Beauteous Butch II". His total victory count was 16 destroyed, plus 5 damaged, making him America's first triple jet ace. After his 16th air victory, he was sent back to the United States and met with the President. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, America's second-highest decoration for valor.

McConnell returned to his home in Apple Valley, California, and was stationed at George Air Force Base, California where he was assigned to the 445th Fighter Squadron and continued flying F-86s. In 1954, he was temporarily assigned to the test program for the new F-86H Sabre. On August 25, 1954, while testing the fifth production F-86H-1-NA at Edwards Air Force Base, McConnell was killed in a crash following a control malfunction. The cause of the accident was attributed to a missing bolt.

The 1955 film "The McConnell Story", starring Alan Ladd and June Allyson, chronicles his life story. The book "Sabre Jet Ace" by Charles Ira Coombs is a fictionalized biography of his experiences as a pilot in Korea.

McConnell's wife, Pearl "Butch" McConnell, died in 2008 at the age of 86. She never remarried and was buried with Captain McConnell at Victor Valley Memorial in California.

The Korean War Kimpo Field diorama at the museum is proud to display the aircraft paint scheme that Capt. McConnell chose in the final F-86 he flew in Korea (as shown in the picture in the left column).

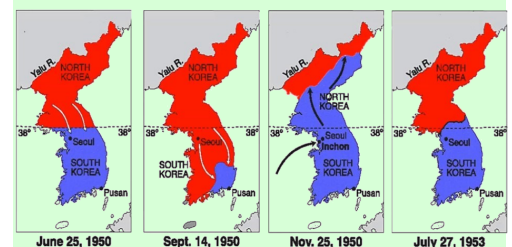
KOREA Combat Forces

1950 - 1953

During the three years of the Korean War, military forces of these nations were allied as members of the United National Command (UNC). Peak strength for the UNC was 932,964 on July 27, 1953, the day the Armistice Agreement was signed:

South Korea	590,911
United States	302,483
Australia	17,000
United Kingdom	14,198
Thailand	6,326
Canada	6,146
Turkey	5,453
Philippines	1,468
New Zealand	1,385
Ethiopia	1,271
Greece	1,263
France	1,119
Colombia	1,068
Belgium	900
South Africa	826
Netherlands	819
Luxembourg	44

The Korean War in Maps





THE AERO L-39C "ALBATROS"



*The Museum's L-39
Being Prepared For It's
"Flat-Bed" Journey For
Some Renovation Efforts*

The Aero-Vodochody L-39 "Albatros" is a high-performance military jet trainer developed in Czechoslovakia during the 1960s as a successor to the L-29 "Delfin". It recorded its first flight on November 4th, 1968 prior to introduction with the Czechoslovakian Air Force in 1972. From then on, the aircraft was equally accepted and successful in the training of a new generation of pilots for the Soviet Empire and its satellite states and supporters. Total production exceeded 3,000 aircraft from 1971 to 1999, becoming the first turboprop-powered trainer to enter serial production. At the peak of production, the primary users were the Soviet Air Force, the Czechoslovakian Air Force, and the Royal Thai Air Force.

Today, the majority of L-39 owners are American pilots who seek a low-cost private jet and find the aircraft's simplicity, ease of maintenance, and relatively low purchase price in the \$300,000-\$400,000 price range irresistible. Fully modular and rugged, able to fly from grass airfields, this extremely reliable and easy to fly aerobatic fighter-like has enabled many piston engine pilots to realize their craziest jet dreams. Sealed canopy and ejection seats add to the hype.

The FAA Registry indicates a total of two hundred L-39 models currently registered, with three of the models registered in Alabama. An unregistered model L-39C is fortunately part of the airframe inventory of the museum and has been proudly displayed at the Memorial AirPark. But its fortune has changed a bit now as it is making a trip to International Jets in Gadsden for some restoration work. Upon its return, it will add greatly to the exhibit quality of aircraft in the museum's "stable".

L-39 "Albatros"

Span	31.0 ft
Length	40.5 ft
Height	15.5 ft
Empty Weight	7,620 lbs
Take Off Weight	10,075 lbs
Fuel Capacity	3,360 lbs
Fuel Consumption	140 gph
Maximum Speed	483 mph
Stall Speed	105 mph
Service Ceiling	34,700 ft
Range (w/Drop Tanks)	994 miles
Take Off Run	1,575 ft

Aviation News

In the May edition of Flight Lines, an article discussed canceled or postponed air show events honoring World War II heroes. Mentioned in that article was AirVenture 2020 that was to be held during July 20-26, 2020. But the EAA announced on May 1st that it was canceling the 2020 edition of AirVenture Oshkosh.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the FAA issued a special federal aviation regulation (SFAR) that provides blanket extensions of medical certificates and airman knowledge tests that would have expired between March 1 and May 31 to all pilots regardless of the type of their flying. The SFAR also provides flight review and instrument currency extensions under very limited circumstances to get pilots back in the air to support the fight against this pandemic. Flight instructor certificates that would have expired between March 31 and May 31 will have a blanket certificate extension until June 30, 2020.

Plane & Pilot magazine recently announced their survey results of current flying activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 82% said that they are flying less than before, with only 4% saying that they are flying more.

Furthermore, they said that they expected the slowdown, which two-thirds of survey participants blamed on stay-at-home orders that make traveling to the airport or airport access more difficult. 60% expected that it would be a few months (49%) to perhaps never (11%) before things returned to normal.



The Paris Connection

(reprint from 2006 Flight Lines, Volume 7, Issue 4)

The museum was visited by two Catholic sisters in 2005. Two of their parishioners from Paris, TN had collected WW2 aircraft parts for many years. The two brothers had a large farm, where they had planned to build a grass airstrip for a TBM and Steen Skybolt that they owned. Both brothers passed away in 2004 and left the farm and all the aircraft parts to the church. The two sisters were in charge of finding a home for everything on the farm so the property could be sold. Now, would the museum be interested in helping the two sisters with their problem?

After several phone calls, Ken Coupland, Wayne Novy, and Alan Moseley traveled to Paris for an inspection tour. When they arrived, they found a very rural 135 acre farm with an old house, a barn or two, and six semi-trailers parked. The grounds were littered with old cars, trucks, a tractor, small trailers and aircraft parts. The aircraft parts were mostly from a BT-13 Vultee "Vibrator", a fixed gear WW2 trainer powered by a radial R-985 engine. One room had two zero time R-985 engines on mounts. One of the engines was still wrapped in plastic. Inside the trailers were fuselage parts, and other assorted parts. Away from the house were the BT-13 fuselages, sitting in a field along with flat bed trailers holding inverted BT-13 center sections. Before leaving the property, Wayne Novy shot digital pictures of everything of interest to the museum.

Two weeks later, the sisters offered the museum everything, except two Volvo cars. The plan was to take everything of value to the museum, with priority being given to the BT-13 parts, engines and other aircraft parts that we could

quickly sell to raise money for other projects. There was a concern that some of the locals had been removing parts from the farm. So it was imperative that the aircraft parts be loaded and removed to the museum as quickly as possible. Arrangements were made with David Wild of Wild Trucking in LaGrange, GA to provide two semi-trucks. Jim Owens, with Road Runner Moving, provided two of his best movers to help load the parts.

One afternoon, during the loading of the aircraft parts, a neighbor arrived at the farm and claimed that he was in charge of the property. After the museum produced the deeds to the property that the lawyers had prepared, he settled down. He was left to iron things out with the sisters. Afterwards, we learned that the unwanted visitor had no business on the property.

When you think of all the people who would be in a position to help the museum, two Catholic sisters would normally be far from the top of the list. The sisters are wonderful friends to the museum and real supporters of the work we are doing. God does work in mysterious ways.

There was a time, long ago, when I envisioned the role of Museum Director as being one of those lack-luster jobs, with hours of endless research, mind numbing meetings, and the occasional dusting of aircraft. The Paris adventure is one of many events that has changed that perception forever.

-Dr. Jim Griffin
SMF Director Emeritus

Scaled Dioramas

Besides the many "full scale" diorama exhibits in the museum, there are scale models and scaled dioramas which help to better tell a historical story.

A very impressive 11-foot precision replica model built by a dedicated member of the volunteer service corps, is the USS Enterprise, the most decorated warship of World War II.



The construction detail of this model is very impressive and clearly shows the dedication of the modeler.

Throughout the museum, there are many other scale model dioramas whose purpose and function is to "tell a better story" using creative visual interest settings. Here is another great example that tries to demonstrate this educational and stimulating approach.





ONE OF MANY AMBASSADORS

Dr. Ed Stevenson

Since retiring in 1994, Ed Stevenson found that piano lessons and left-handed golf didn't hold his attention as well as did his busy medical practice.

His interest in aviation and love of history would expand into his dedicated volunteering at the Southern Museum of Flight, the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame and the Birmingham Aero Club. His love of aviation has garnered much acclaim over the years, including his receiving the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2016 by the Federal Aviation Administration.



His love of history led to publishing the Jefferson County Historical Society's first historical article specifically on the history of Mountain Brook's Cherokee Bend neighborhood. *"They used to tell us, if you ever have to make a speech, be sure to know your subject. So I know my subject before I even started,"* Stevenson said.

The museum is fortunate to have many multi-talented individuals like Ed Stevenson sharing their valuable and discretionary time at helping achieve the organization's vision as an important, quality-focused educational institution.



Ed Stevenson and his Citabria at Pell City Airport in 2011

The "Stealthiest" Nighthawk



Stealth technology is a sub-discipline of military tactics which covers a range of methods used to make personnel, aircraft ships, submarines, missiles, satellites, and ground vehicles less visible (*ideally invisible*) to radar, infrared, sonar and other detection methods. The first operational aircraft specifically designed around stealth technology was the F-117 Nighthawk that was developed by Lockheed's Skunk Works division and operated by the USAF.

The Nighthawk's maiden flight took place in 1981 at Groom Lake, Nevada, and the aircraft achieved initial operating capability status in 1983. The Nighthawk was shrouded in secrecy until it was revealed to the public in 1988.

Of the 64 F-117s built, 59 were production versions, with the other five being prototypes. The USAF retired the F-117 in April 2008, primarily due to the fielding of the F-22 Raptor. Despite the type's retirement, a portion of the fleet has been kept in airworthy condition, and Nighthawks have been observed flying as recently as March 2020.

And located in the "boneyard" at Davis-Motham AFB in Arizona is a retired "Nighthawk" that resides alongside its other mothballed companions. Amazing and very stealthy (*doesn't Lockheed wish*).



REMEMBER THE FORGOTTEN WAR



The Korean War Memorial – in contrast to the other war memorials which in many ways glorifies war, tries to portray an accurate depiction of war. The 19 hero-sized statues represent each branch of the military. They reflect off of the black wall to make 38, representing the 38th parallel that still divides North and South Korea. The sandblasted sketches in the wall depict actual people helping in the war efforts, including clergy, code breakers, nurses, pilots, and even dogs.

This was the first war led by the United Nations, which was created after World War II. The left side has a list of all the countries that helped support the war. And consistent with other war memorials in DC, the inscription *"FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"* at the top of the Memorial reflects the sometimes necessary cost of war. And this war was a costly war. Approximately 58,000 U.S. soldiers died or went missing during the war, almost as many as in Vietnam, and approximately 600,000 from other UN countries. An inscription was placed to honor these veterans and describe their sacrifice. It reads: *"Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met"*.

But unfortunately, despite this service for others, the war became known as *"The Forgotten War"*, since when the one and a half

million Americans returned home after it ended, they came home to a country too preoccupied with peace and prosperity to care. Needless to say, it was exciting times for the American people, and they simply didn't care about a war that took place on the other side of the world.

While the war lasted 3 years for the United States and other UN countries, it's still ongoing. North and South Korea are still technically at war. In fact, the two Koreas exchanged gunfire as recent as May 2020 in what was described as a "low-level provocation". There was also an exchange of fire within the heavily-fortified DMZ in 2014 when Kim was unseen in public for more than a month.

Hundreds of thousands of troops on both sides of the border guard the DMZ, a legacy of the war that ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty.

The South Korean ambassador comes to the Korean War Memorial every week to replace the symbolic wreath with both U.S. and Korean flags as a symbol of the country's appreciation for America's support.

In the early days of the war, the North Korean People's Air Force, invaded the South Korean side, exerting superior air prowess over their South Korean neighbors, and consequently dominating South Korean skies while forcing a weaker South Korean military into retreat.

In a bid to prevent the collapse of South Korea, the United Nations (*with the U.S. primarily involved*) sent in military forces to their aid. And so it went that on June 27th, 1950, the North Korean aircraft met with the U.S. aircraft in what would become the first air combat of the Korean War - the Battle of Suwon Airfield - which pitched the USAF's North American F-82 Twin Mustang and F-80C Shooting Star aircraft against North Korea's Lavochkin La-7 and Ilyushin Il-10 aircraft.



This was easily in favor of the U.S. as they had better pilots and superior jets. But everything would change on November 8 during a USAF attack on an airfield in Sinuiju. The moment several silvery glints appeared unannounced in the sky, Lt. Russell Brown, on spotting these fierce jets, radioed to abort their attack run: the MiG-15 had joined the party.





MEMBERSHIP

When It Comes to Southern Aviation History ... Just Ace It !

With a Southern Museum of Flight Membership !

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Southern Museum of Flight

Your membership will help the museum continue its work in preserving southern aviation history, restoring historic aircraft and inspiring students to excel in science and technology

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Museum Hours

Tuesday—Saturday, 9:30 am—4:30 pm
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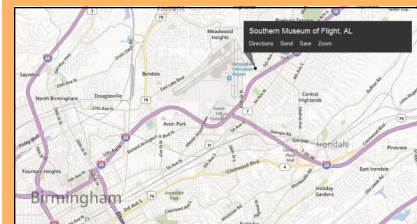
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The Southern Museum of Flight acknowledges the support provided by the Jefferson County Commission through the Jefferson County Community Arts Fund administered by the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham

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