

# The Wing Script

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

Museum Membership Newsletter **February 2021** is published by the Museum Volunteers.  
The publication name, "The Wing Script" is taken from the former air base newspaper

## Museum Expansion

The museum volunteers have been creating some new displays for the museum.



Mehul Dhillon built a new display for the museum as his senior project. This display explains how controllers in the airport tower use a hand held signal light to communicate with pilots. The display also includes a tablet that quizzes the visitor on the flashing codes that are used with the tower light.



The flight simulator construction is progressing. The electronic hardware was assembled and tested. The next step was to build a cockpit to hold the "pilot" and all of the electronics.

The carpentry work was delayed due to the COVID-19 virus, but the simulator should be completed this summer. The cockpit will resemble that of a C-119 when it is completed.

## President Nick Firestone Remarks

Due to the Pandemic, museum activity was limited last year. We had to close after being open for only 3 weeks and didn't reopen until there were just 14 weeks left in the year, during which we were only open on Saturdays.

There were some bright spots, however:

- The Charlie 119 restoration project began with major parts arriving in March, although the center wing section (wingbox) wasn't delivered until July due to Pandemic delays. Co-leaders, Skip Taylor and Pat Billey are keeping the project running smoothly.
- The Pandemic also caused delays in the flight simulator project, although it is expected to be completed in June, according to museum volunteer, Jim Sellars.
- A new interactive display featuring a vintage airport signal light gun was created by local high school student Mehul Dhillon as his senior project.
- We were visited by several members of the 434<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing from Grissom Air Reserve Base in northern Indiana.
- During a 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron reunion visit to the museum, Col. Al Heuss presented a large wood medallion based on the design of the 71<sup>st</sup> SOS insignia.

We're planning to reopen in March, although our operating schedule hasn't yet been determined. For updates, check our website:

[www.atterburybakalarairmuseum.org](http://www.atterburybakalarairmuseum.org) or  
[www.facebook.com/atterburybakalarairmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/atterburybakalarairmuseum)

- Nick -

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.

## Special Events



A group of four men from the 434<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing at Grissom ARB visited the museum to learn more about the early history of the 434<sup>th</sup>. They were joined by Maj. Gen. Mark A. Pillar (Ret.) of Columbus.



David Gray and his wife visited the museum and Charlie 119. Mr. Gray grew up in Columbus and he has done many paintings that are aviation related.



One of his paintings is of a C-119 that was damaged and abandoned at the airbase. He and his friends used to play in this airplane. This painting, titled "The Clubhouse", is on display at the museum.

## 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron

Several veterans of the 71<sup>st</sup> SOS met at the museum in June for their annual reunion.



After their luncheon and meeting, they visited with the Charlie 119 Restoration Team. For most of the veterans it was first C-119 they had seen in 50 years.

This was a good opportunity for the Restoration Team members to talk with the men who flew and maintained these airplanes for so many years.



After the reunion, Col. Al Heuss presented a large wooden medallion to the museum. This medallion is based on the design of the 71<sup>st</sup> SOS insignia. It will be painted to match the colors of the insignia and added to the 71<sup>st</sup> SOS display.

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## Charlie 119 Project - 2020

The disassembly of Charlie 119 was completed in Feb. 2020. The components were then shipped to Columbus in five truck loads from March-July.



The first truck arrived on March 9<sup>th</sup> with the two tail booms and the two engines.



A second truck also arrived on March 9<sup>th</sup>. This box truck and drivers was donated by Real World Testing. This truck was used to carry the smaller components.



On March 29<sup>th</sup> a flatbed truck delivered the wings. On March 30<sup>th</sup> the fuselage was delivered. The trailer that carried the fuselage was 90 feet long.

## Charlie 119 Project - 2020



The wingbox was the most difficult component to ship because of its width. It was ready to ship in March, but was delayed due to the impact that COVID-19 had on state police and highway departments. The wingbox finally left Greybull, WY on June 20<sup>th</sup> and it arrived in Columbus on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.



The first priority, after all of the components were on hand, was cleaning. The airplane had been sitting in the desert for 29 years. On August 11 the reassembly process began when the fuselage and wing box were joined.



After that, Charlie 119 was moved inside a hangar and the slow, careful, restoration work began.

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## Charlie 119 Project - 2020



Throughout the restoration process every part was cleaned, and then cleaned again.



Damaged or missing parts were repaired or replaced. The windows in the cockpit and fuselage were degraded and had to be replaced.

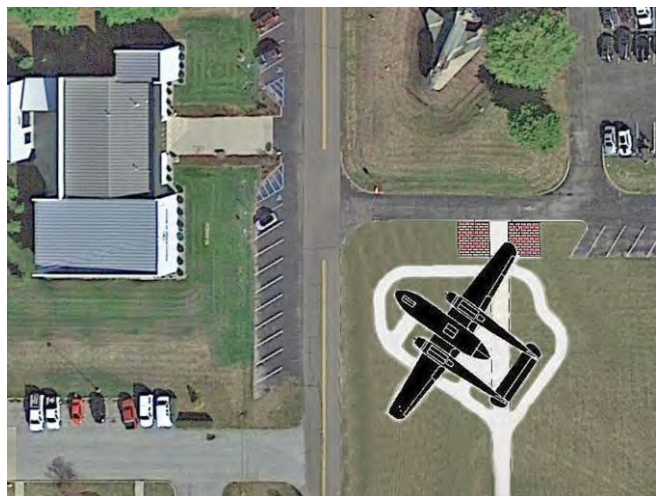


After all of the detailed repair work was completed, the interior of the fuselage was painted. The exterior of the airplane will be painted this summer when the airplane is at the display site.

## Charlie 119 Project – 2021 Goals



The display site for Charlie 119 has been completed. The work was done by Force Construction, Inc.



The aircraft should move to the display site soon. The outer wings and engines will be added after the aircraft is at the display site.

The commemorative bricks that were purchased by donors will be added to the site in the spring.



**The Charlie 119 Restoration Team**  
(Note: some valued members are not in this photo)