

MINNESOTA ANG MUSEUM NEWS

*Minnesota Aviation History — Learn of the Past
Spring 2022*



The Museum has a New Look

story and photos by Mike Drews



Beginning in late November 2021 the Air Guard's 100th anniversary exhibit was displayed for six months at the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport terminal. It was then returned to the museum with new information panels and items used in the display. With the return of these items, the volunteers had to figure out how to use them to enhance the look of the museum. Despite the limited amount of space at the museum, everyone put their ideas together to rearrange existing exhibits so we could display all the new items.

To everyone's surprise we were able to rearrange the main entrance area, downstairs and upstairs, to accommodate everything. We were able to arrange the items in a timeline of the history of the Minnesota Air Guard. This arrangement gives a better understanding of the accomplishments the people serving in the past and the people serving now have achieved locally and worldwide for the last 100 years. Well done everyone!

Also inside:

- **Archive update**
- **Museum tours resume**
- **They will be missed**



L-4 in flight, U.S. Army Air Corps
by Anthony Bour



Our Volunteers: Josh Shaffer

story and photo by Terry Morris

Josh Shaffer is a renaissance man with a strong interest in aviation. The Ohio native grew up in an Air Force family and thus had the opportunity to experience life at several Air Force bases including Ramstein AB (Germany), RAF Lakenheath (UK), Grand Forks AFB (ND), and F.E. Warren AFB (Wyoming). This interest in aviation led him to obtain a pilot's license while in high school and later an ATP Certificate. He has flown a range of aircraft from the Cessna 150 to the 50+ seat SAB 2000.

With aviation appearing to be Josh's career of choice, he started college in Wyoming to study aeronautical engineering. However, while on a summer break, he applied for a position with the Union Pacific Railroad. This was the beginning of a successful 23-year career in the rail transportation industry. Starting as a switchman classifying train sets, Josh worked his way up the ladder to become a conductor, an engineer, and eventually a manager. As an engineer/conductor he moved large freight trains in the Nebraska/Wyoming area. He eventually accepted a management assignment for the Union Pacific Railroad in the Twin Cities area, making it his home for the past 12 years.

In addition to aviation and rail, Josh also has a strong interest in history and thus began looking for a volunteer opportunity to help satisfy these passions. Searching the internet for historical organizations in the area, he found the Minnesota Air Guard Museum. After meeting with Mike Drews, he saw that his skills and experience were an outstanding match for the museum's archiving needs. Since becoming a volunteer six months ago, Josh has focused on migrating artifact and photo records from a temporary Microsoft Access database into the industry standard, PastPerfect database, which is key to maintaining the museum's credibility. He gets special gratification from being able to find information for families of former Air Guard members regarding their loved ones' participation in the unit.

When asked what he likes best about being a volunteer, Josh says it's the friendships that he has made with the other volunteers and their diverse backgrounds. He greatly appreciates being able to learn from their experiences.



Museum Opens for Tours

story and photos by Mike Drews



As you know, the museum was closed for two years due to the Covid 19 pandemic. On April 11, 2022 the museum was able to open again for tours. The volunteers are excited to have visitors come back to the museum to see all the new displays and innovations. Since we announced on the museum's website that we are open again,



requests have been coming in daily for tours, and we've also started scheduling birthday parties. After the first two tours, the groups texted that they had a fantastic time and asked that we thank the great tour guides, **Kevin Auger**, **Tom Evans** and **Kurt Ransom**.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation is to preserve the heritage and traditions of the Minnesota Air National Guard, which includes the preservation of important artifacts and archives.

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Newsletter Editor: Deon Ford

Assistant Editors: Mark Moss and Sharon Drews

Past Newsletters can be accessed on the museum website at:

<https://mnangmuseum.org>

Museum Hours and Access: The museum has reopened for visits and tours. It hosts many new, interesting exhibits. Please visit the website

<https://mnangmuseum.org> for updates and instructions for booking a tour.

Address all correspondence to:
Minnesota Air Guard Museum
P.O. Box 11598
St. Paul, MN 55111-0598

(The Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and not affiliated with the Dept. of Defense, Minnesota Air National Guard, or the 133rd Airlift Wing.)

Comments from the Board Chair

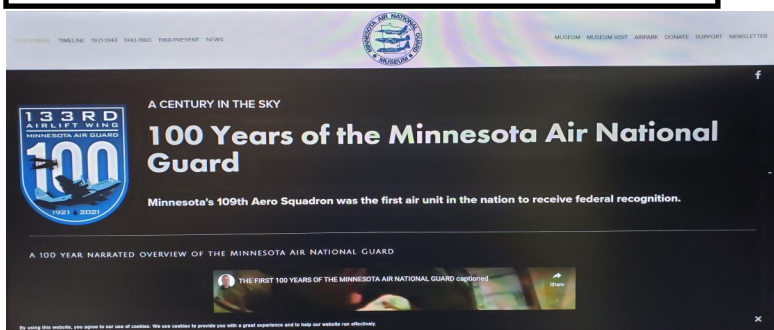
Wow, the museum looks great. The volunteers transferred many of the exhibits from last year's Concourse C airport display into the museum. Walking through the museum caused me to reflect on all that has been accomplished leading up to the pandemic-restricted centennial celebration. The short film **Mark Moss** produced received rave reviews at the Military Ball this past March. The airport display prompted more than just a high-quality tribute to the "First Federally Recognized National Guard Flying Unit", it also prompted foundation members to replicate the twelve timeline panels onto fabric with transportable stands. The timelines were proudly displayed around the exterior walls at the ball. The ball had one more item attributable to the foundation, the book "Century in the Sky" was on preview. The book was inspired and started by **Lowell Ueland** and is expected to be available by Family Day this coming August.

Now, hidden behind the scenes of the ball lies a larger story. In the pre-pandemic effort to fundraise enough money to outfit the Mall of America with a tribute to the 133rd AW and host an air expo, the foundation turned a \$20,000 investment into \$40,000 from two donors. The fundraising committee had several other committed donors but once the events for 2021 were cancelled we ceased any further solicitations. I believe we were wise not to pursue any more money which likely would have been returned to the donors. The wing utilized half of the \$40,000 to make the Military Ball a grand success; offsetting payments for lower-ranking airmen and securing a band.

Visit Our Website

We hope all have had a chance to view the Air Guard Museum website. If you haven't, we encourage you to take a look! The site hosts an abundance of information about the history of the Minnesota Air National Guard with links to a timeline, ways to donate, airpark information, past newsletters and more. Click the link to visit the site:

<https://mnangmuseum.org>



Comments from the Board Chair continued from page 3

I believe the foundation's efforts to support the centennial celebration brought about a good deal of positive change. The "Minnesota Air National Guard Website" was converted to Squarespace and is now a quality representation of the museum and the foundation, thanks to **Anja Drescher**, MNANGHF Operations Assistant. The foundation purchased the plaque that is proudly displayed at Curtiss Park on the corner of Larpenteur and Snelling avenues. Just across the street, the transportable panels occupied the 133 AW's tent at the Minnesota State Fair



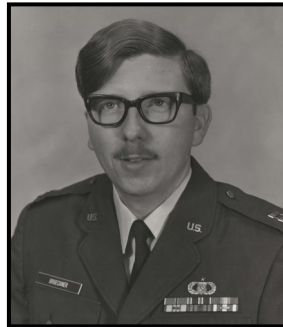
last year drawing many visitors and positive comments. Even KSTP anchor **Kevin Doran** picked up on the panel where KSTP partnered with the 109th to transmit their radio broadcast to outstate Minnesota. So yes, the stories of our great heritage came to life for the past few years and will continue to live in the book "Century in the Sky", and we deeply thank the former and current wing members who contributed to funding the publishing and printing of the book.

Unfortunately, as the finality of the centennial celebration is upon us so is the finality of building 670, the current home of the museum. The board is in discussion with the Wing and the Minnesota Military Museum to determine the future of the museum and the associated artifacts. A good deal of outreach will take place over the next six months to secure property, a facility and storage for items that will not fit into a presumably smaller museum. As we move down this new path the foundation will attempt to keep all its supporters in the know.

Thanks for all your continuing support.

Greg Haase, Brig Gen (Ret), USAF/ANG

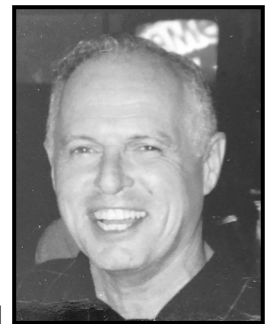
They Will be Missed...



Maj **Richard C. Brueckner**, 78, ret., 133rd AW and State Headquarters, of White Bear Township, passed away suddenly on March 10, 2022. During his tenure in the Minnesota Air National Guard Richard was a Public Affairs Officer. In the 1990s, after he retired from the military, he proudly served as a valued museum volunteer who always worked hard to tell the museum's story and make it a great place to visit.

Former 109th AS P-51 pilot, Lt **Harold J. Alton, Jr.**, age 87, died peacefully on Thursday, March 3, 2022. He learned to fly at the age of 14,

attended the St. Thomas Military Academy and spent two years in the U. S. Air Force. He finished his military career as a P-51 pilot in the Minnesota Air National Guard. He was an extremely generous man and a colossal supporter of the Air Guard Museum. Harry is renowned for his love of aviation, his great sense of humor but most of all, his appreciation for God's many blessings in his life. He will be remembered always for his positive attitude and making the most out of every day.



Museum Volunteers Meet

story and photo by Deon Ford

A joint meeting of the historical foundation board members and museum volunteers was held on May 7 to talk about the future of the Minnesota Air Guard Museum. Several topics were discussed including the museum opening for tours, ideas for potential new location options for the museum, organizing assets and displays, and building partnerships with other entities. All in attendance were enthusiastic about what the future holds for the museum, and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for June 4. I received a lot of positive comments about the joint nature of the group and the fact that it gave all volunteers the opportunity to voice their ideas. Overall it was a very successful meeting!



PIPER L-4 GRASSHOPPER USAAC SERIAL NUMBER A-691

story and submitted photos by Greg Bastyr



The Museum's L-4 on display



The Museum's L-4 cockpit
photo by Deon Ford

The piper L-4 was flown by the 109th Observation Squadron during the Louisiana maneuvers in 1940. It was a very temporary mission. A few months later the 109th transitioned to the O-47As.

The L-4 is the military version of the Piper J-3 Cub. Its first flight took place in 1938 and was produced until 1947. The US Army Air Corps procured almost 6,000 Piper Aircraft. The L-4 Grasshopper was mechanically identical to the J-3 civilian Cub but was distinguishable by the use of a Plexiglas greenhouse skylight and rear windows for improved visibility.

The L-4 was used extensively in WWII for reconnaissance, transporting supplies, artillery spotting duties and medical evacuation of wounded soldiers. During WWII L-4s were sometimes equipped with improvised racks of infantry bazookas for ground attack against German armored units.

During the Korean War the L-4 was used extensively by both U.S. and Korean Air Forces and saw service in many of the same roles it had performed during WWII.

Interesting Facts: The Piper L-4 Grasshopper and J-3 Cub are regulars at most airshows. The J-3 with tandem seating was intended for flight training but became one of the most popular and best-known light aircraft of all time.



Piper L-4 "Grasshopper". (Photo: USAFMW, Henry)



Piper J-3 Cub (civilian version)

Cost: \$995 to \$2,461

Crew: One Pilot and One Passenger

Length: 22 Feet, 5 Inches

Wingspan: 35 Feet, 3 Inches

Height: 6 Feet, 8 Inches

Maximum Speed: 87 MPH

Range: 191 Miles

Service Ceiling: 11,500 Feet

Engine: 1 Continental A-65-8

air-cooled flat four, 65 hp

Archive Update

by Josh Shaffer

The museum archive has been going through a transformation over the past few months. In previous years an insurmountable amount of work had already been accomplished to catalog and organize the collections within the museum. Organizing those collections into one database and using them to develop researchable content are the next logical steps, especially for those items that are more of an archival nature and aren't on display.

While items may be documented somewhere, unless those items can be pulled up in a catalog and the location identified they aren't of much use. Currently, if you're looking for a specific photograph, negative, document, or any other object, the best way to search the inventory is to ask **Kirk Ransom**, myself, or someone else who has knowledge of the few locations where this information may be found.

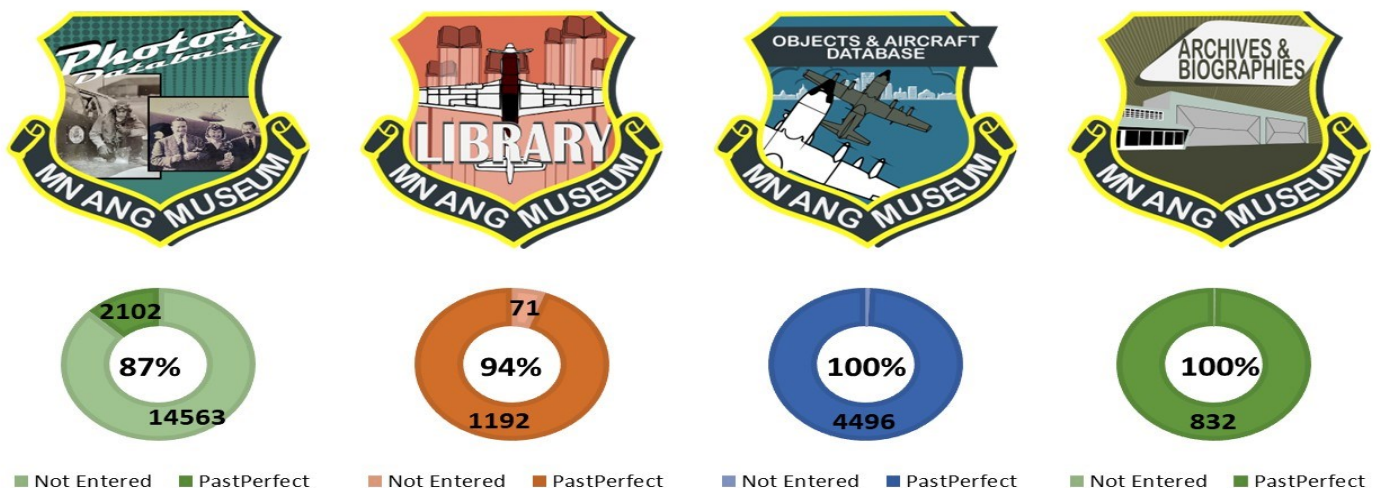
The Museum already has a great software suite called PastPerfect that has part of the "Objects" collection database housed within it and is used to manage a few other aspects of the museum's business. PastPerfect is one of the industry-leading providers of software for museum collections and management, so we are fortunate to have it.

Since I've started this project, I've found most of the objects on display are already cataloged in PastPerfect as well as most of the books in the library. Nearly all the photos stored in the Miller Room are cataloged in a Microsoft Access database, along with several handwritten and typed lists I've found. I have focused a lot of effort on the data migration from Access to PastPerfect. The items are being organized into four main databases. One for objects, which is basically everything from the helmets in a display case to an aircraft in the airpark. Another is for the library, which works just like your local library on the decimal system and author's name. There is also a database for archives, which contains mostly documents. Finally, my favorite, a database for photos. We have over 14,400 photos, slides, and negatives, around 10 percent being groups of pictures. It's hard to say how many total images there are in this collection.

I've also taken this opportunity to add some fields to the data and as I go through it, I'm able to add some filtering content, like locations, Wing, Group, Squadron, etc.. As I look through the boxes of photos and documents, I see the next step will need to be inventory, as many of the folders have been misplaced in the wrong boxes or are missing.

One last thing. I want to say thank you to all the great people around the museum. I really enjoy learning about the museum and the history here, and spending time with everyone. A special thanks goes to **Mike Drews** and **Bruce Graham** for their help, and to Kirk Ransom for his guidance.

Here is where the database project currently stands:



New Members Welcome

by Mark Moss and Mike Drews

After memorable centennial celebrations the past two years, now is an excellent time to bring on new members. Recipients of this newsletter are already friends of the Minnesota Air National Guard museum. All of us probably know others who might like to join the organization for the exciting events ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented many in-person gatherings, but hopefully that won't happen again. This summer the hangar doors are open and visitors are welcome.

It could start with a tour of the facility. Kids from two to 102 years old always enjoy the planes in the air park. It might take a phone call, but all members should consider inviting someone to come out. Passing on this newsletter, either on paper or electronically, is another way to introduce friends to the museum. Or send them a link to the pleasing new web site: <https://mangmuseum.org>

In addition, all of us can help with raising needed funds for future activities and events. It can be a direct donation, but it can also be as simple as linking your Amazon purchases via Amazon Smile to send a small portion of the purchase cost to the museum.

Here is how to do it all:

1. Mail tax deductible donations to Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation
P.O. Box 11598, St. Paul, MN 55111

2. Call 612.713.2523 and speak with someone at the museum.

3. Click on DONATE on the web site <https://mnangmuseum.org/donate>. The website accepts payment via PayPal or credit card.



4. When you shop online at Amazon, enable [AmazonSmile](#): The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate .05% of your eligible purchases to the museum when you choose the museum as the charity you wish to support, at no additional cost to you. On the AmazonSmile website charity list, the museum is listed as the Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation, Inc. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on the product detail pages. Your donations help us to strengthen our programs and develop new, innovative projects to serve the community.



New Look photos continued from page 1



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Exhibit Highlight - Women in Aviation

by Deon Ford



Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation board member, Col (Ret) **Julie Eszlinger Jensen**, Flight Nurse, is pictured in the “Women in Aviation” exhibit located on the wall immediately to your left as you walk into the museum main entrance. Jensen is a long-time Air Guard Museum enthusiast, who is an amazing asset to this great organization. Her hard work and dedication are second to none!

Col (ret) Eszlinger Jensen’s portrait can be seen in line three, fourth in from the left. Thanks for all you do Julie!!!