

# MINNESOTA ANG MUSEUM NEWS

*Minnesota Aviation History — Learn of the Past  
Spring 2023*



## The Museum is Moving

*story by Greg Haase and photos by Deon Ford*

Fellow history enthusiasts, I wanted to take a few minutes of your time to provide an update on current events at the museum and in the foundation. Due to an expanded mission at the 133rd Airlift Wing, we have been asked to vacate all but half of one of the hangar bays and the entirety of the center section, currently housing museum artifacts. The wholesale departure is similar to the after-effects of 9/11, only this time building 670 will meet its fate sometime in the not-so-distant future.

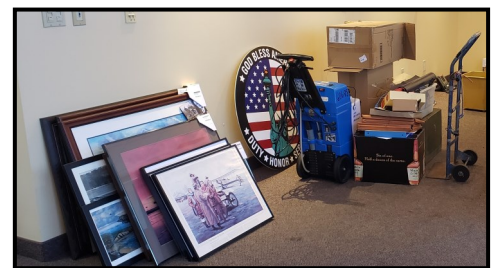
The demolition of building 670 is forcing us to look for alternative locations. A relocation committee, resident within the foundation, is scouring the airport property, Veteran's Administration properties, MN Historical Society properties, locations at the feeder airports and rental space close to the airport. Possibilities still exist that the southeast corner of the 133rd AW may prove to be buildable. The verdict resides within soil tests scheduled for this spring to determine the amount of soil contamination and the associated mediation costs.



Other avenues are being explored. The Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum is breaking ground this spring with an estimated completion date in 2025. The integration of Air Guard artifacts into the museum along with components of the air park is being considered. The new museum is located on a 32-acre parcel just east of Camp Ripley on Highway 371.

I also offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the volunteers who tirelessly packed up four shipping containers with artifacts from the bays and are currently packing the artifacts on the second floor of the museum. Our hope is to maintain an air park tour

capability through the next few summers. With the addition of a small portable building across from building 670 we could stage the tours. Presently we are receiving six to ten calls a week seeking a tour of the museum. The incredible part is that the website they reference to get the telephone number clearly states we are closed for the winter. The website is also getting over 8,000 hits a month.



The foundation is fiscally viable with sufficient funds to weather this storm. We plan on meeting and operating as close to normal as possible. Your donations and membership dues are greatly appreciated and constitute the beginnings of a new museum. We are currently looking for board members with marketing or fund-raising experience: any recommendations are greatly appreciated. Over the next six months the final landing spot for the museum should become clearly visible. As for now, we offer our thanks to all our members for your generosity and understanding.

Sincerely,

Greg Haase, Brig Gen (Ret), USAF/ANG  
Chairman, MN Air National Guard Historical Foundation

**Also inside:**

**- Farewell to Ray Pittman  
- History in the making**

## 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.

### **Board Members**

Chairman: Greg Haase

Vice Chairman: Karen Wolf

Secretary: Terry Morris

Executive Dir./Dir of Operations: Mike Drews

Operations Assistant: Anja Drescher

Treasurer: Tom Simonet

Members: Rick Dow, Deon Ford, Julie Eszlinger Jensen, Herb Ketcham, Mark Schutta, Lowell Ueland, James Zwiefel

Wing Advisor: Col. Mike Piontek

Legal Counsel: Kelly & Lemmons, P.A., Joe Kelly and Kevin Beck

Newsletter Editor: Deon Ford

Assistant Editors: Mark Moss and Sharon Drews

Past Newsletters can be accessed on the museum website at: <https://mnangmuseum.org>

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

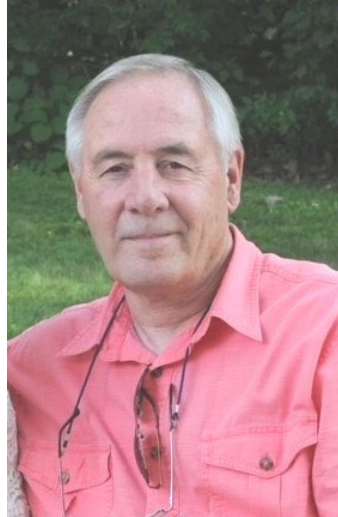
(The Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization and not affiliated with the Dept. of Defense, Minnesota Air National Guard, or the 133rd Airlift Wing.)

## Visit Our Website for Updates

Although the museum is currently closed, we hope you continue to view the Air Guard Museum website and watch for updates throughout this fluid relocation process. Further, 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>

## Farewell Ray Pittman



Raymond Joseph Pittman, 74, of North Branch, Minnesota, passed away from a cardiac event after a battle with cancer on December 14, 2022.

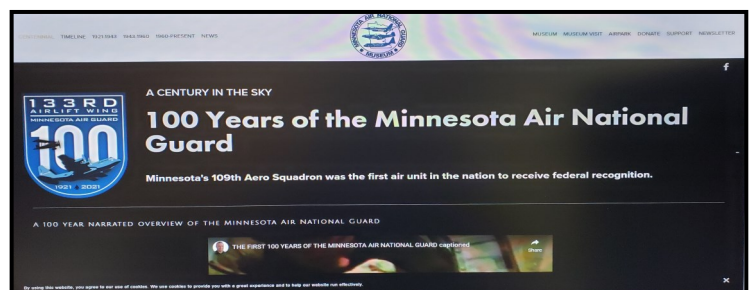
Ray was a dedicated ANG Museum volunteer for many years. He worked tirelessly to ensure that the museum was top notch in every way possible and the results of his efforts were always reflected in the countless positive comments from museum members and visitors.

Ray was a dedicated patriot. He served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Purple Heart for his service and sacrifices to our country. It was in the military that Ray began his education in the avionics field, learning to work on military helicopters. More recently, in North Branch, Ray served three years as commander of his local American Legion Post #85.

Ray continued his love of aviation throughout his life and he blended it with his love of photography. Ray's photos of varying aircraft and military historic aircraft will live on forever. He was honored to have his photography in many newspapers and on the covers of national magazines including TIME, Smithsonian and Sports Illustrated for Kids.

Ray had thousands of friends and loved meeting people, especially during the many airshows he coordinated. He enjoyed all the notes, letters and calls from so many folks across the country and cherished his friendships with all.

All foundation members and museum volunteers will miss him dearly and think of him often.



# MIKOYAN-GUREVICH MIG-15UTI

POLISH AIR FORCE SERIAL NUMBER 306

NATO REPORTING NAME "FAGOT"

USAF/DOD REPORTING NAME "TYPE 14"

story and submitted photos by Greg Bastyr



The Museum's MIG-15UTI on display

**Crew: 2**

**Length: 33 Feet, 2 Inches**

**Wingspan: 33 Feet, 1 inch**

**Height: 12 Feet, 2 Inches**

**Engine: 1 Klimov VK-1 Turbojet,  
5,950 lbs of thrust**

**Maximum Speed: 668 MPH**

**Range: 1,225 Miles with external  
tanks**

**Service Ceiling: 50,850 Feet**

**Armament: 2 NR-23 23mm can-  
nons in lower left fuselage, 80  
rounds per gun, 1 Nudelman N-37  
37mm cannon in lower right fuse-  
lage 40 rounds total, 2 220 lb bombs,**

The MIG-15 is a jet fighter developed for the USSR. It was one of the first successful swept-wing jet fighters and it achieved fame in the skies over Korea during the Korean conflict, where early in the war it outclassed all straight-winged enemy fighters in daylight.

The MIG-15's first flight took place on 30 December 1947 and it is believed to be to have been the most widely produced jet fighter ever made, with over 18,000 built. It also served as the starting point for development of the more advanced MIG-17, which was still an effective threat to supersonic American fighters over Vietnam in the 1960s.

The MIG-15 was originally intended to intercept American bombers like the B-29. It was even evaluated in mock air-to-air combat trials with a captured U.S. B-29 as well as the later Soviet B-29 copy, the TU-4. A variety of MIG-15 variants were built but the most common was the MIG-15UTI two seat trainer, which remained the sole Warsaw Pact advanced jet trainer well into the 1970s.



A single seat, Chinese built, MIG-15

**Interesting Facts:** The museum MIG-15 is a reconnaissance version with a camera pod under the fuselage, it was built in 1955 and flew with the Polish Air Force. It was given to the museum as a donation. Having been an operational success in the Korean War, the United States was eager to obtain an intact MIG-15 for testing and created "Operation Moolah" which offered a reward of US \$100,000 and political asylum to any pilot who would defect with his MIG-15. Franciszek Jarecki, a pilot of the Polish Air Force, defected from Soviet-controlled Poland in a MIG-15 on the morning of 5 March 1953, allowing western experts to examine the aircraft for the first time. Others eventually followed such as North Korean pilot Lieutenant No Kum-Sok who landed his aircraft at Kimpo Air Base, South Korea on 21 September 1953. This aircraft was minutely inspected and is now on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force near Dayton Ohio.

# History in the Making: Major Katie Lunning, 133rd MDG

Exerpts from:

## Modern-Day Minuteman Makes History: First Air National Guard Flight Nurse Receives Distinguished Flying Cross Medal

01.07.2023

Story by Capt. Andrea Kostiuik  
133rd Airlift Wing

Maj. Katie Lunning made history as the first Air National Guard Flight Nurse to be presented the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal.



She was awarded the DFC for her actions as a Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) nurse in support of Operation Allies Refuge and the evacuation of Kabul on August 26, 2021.

Lunning was working as an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse manager at the Iowa VA Hospital when she learned of a short-notice deployment opportunity. When the nurse originally assigned to the deployment had to withdraw from the mission, Lunning packed her gear and within three short weeks of notification, was enroute to serve with the 379th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (AES) at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

Less than a month after she arrived, the transition of power in Afghanistan was announced. All personnel at Al Udeid Air Base were briefed on the deteriorating

situation in Afghanistan and to be ready – although no one knew exactly for what. Around the same time, the two CCATT teams assigned to the 379th AES decreased to one: Lunning was now the only CCATT nurse in the region and thus assigned to every medical mission.

For two weeks, Lunning flew up to six missions a day to evacuate casualties from Hamid Karzai International Airport. Up to 36 times per day, she would trek three blocks pushing a stretcher through Taliban-controlled city streets to the Kabul Coalition Hospital. There, she received a critical patient ready for transport, exchanged equipment, and returned to the aircraft with nothing more than her M-9 to protect her. After the day's missions were complete, she caught a couple hours of sleep and within hours was flying again.

August 26 began routine; Lunning had completed the day's missions and was almost asleep when her phone rang. It was the team doctor. "We need to report for duty in 20 minutes. Get dressed and go," he told her. Within 20 minutes she was back at the hangar and briefed on the situation in Kabul. A suicide bomber attacked the airport in Kabul, killed dozens and dozens more were injured. They were flying into danger and chaos.

Running on adrenaline in the face of imminent danger, she repeated her mantra, "Scary stuff we can't control." And she was off, down her familiar route in now hostile territory. Under small arms fire and the looming threat of a second suicide bomber, Lunning recalls focusing her mind on the patients that needed her. She performed patient triage and intake for 22 patients before they embarked on an eight-hour aeromedical evacuation flight to Landstuhl, Germany.

*History in the Making continues on page 5.*

*History in the Making continued from page 4.*

The skills of the ICU Nurse perfectly complemented the CCATT nurse who saved multiple lives during that flight. From gaining intravenous access to an 18-month old patient with zero pediatric supplies to managing a lifesaving in-flight massive blood resuscitation of a post-operative patient, the skills from her civilian career kept her fighting for the patients that needed her expertise.

A mother herself, Lunning recalls interacting with the sibling of the critical 18-month old. “At one point I took her hand and placed it on the baby’s and held it there. I wanted her to know that we cared and were doing our best to save her brother.”

The modern-day minuteman, who rapidly deployed to serve her nation, displayed leadership, professional competence and aerial skill that culminated in all 22 lives saved during the single largest aeromedical evacuation airlift in Kabul Coalition Hospital’s history.

“Thank you, Major Lunning, for your dedication to the mission, for your bravery under fire, serving our nation with your medical expertise, and your care for humanity. You make us all very proud,” said Loh. “Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a true American hero, Maj. Katie Lunning.”

## Packing Up the Museum

*photos by Deon*



**Museum volunteers who have been packing up the museum include: (front row) Robert Ball, Bruce Peters, Greg Bastyr and Mark Lanphear (back row) Mike Drews, Tom Evans, Kevin Auger, Terry Morris, and many others.**



**Minnesota Air National  
Guard Museum  
P.O. Box 11598  
St. Paul, MN 55111-0598**

Non-Profit Org.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 7911  
TWIN CITIES, MN

# Thanks for the Memories...

*photos by Deon Ford*



♥ Minnesota Air National Guard ♥  
Thank you so much for allow MSAD visit at Minnesota Air National Guard  
I had so much fun learning about plane's histories. Also I love to play inside historic planes, jeep, and helicopter.  
Sincerely, [Name]

Thanks so much for your time, patience and kindness today - our tour with you has surpassed my expectations - even my 5 yr. old daughter wants to come back!  
You are a real inspiration and hero in my eyes - the basic information you shared today about your own experiences reminds me how much we take for granted today - thanks for your bravery and your service!  
Many Blessings to you!  
[Name]

Thank you for the wonderful Base for a great history lesson and inspiring our boys!

Cub Scout Pack 777  
Webelo 1 and 2's  
Cottage Grove, MN

**Many thanks!**  
Thank you for giving us all a wonderful tour and showing us all a close up view of the vehicles/helicopters used in the war, etc. That was an amazing opportunity. Keep up giving tours and letting everyone know about your history.  
- [Name]

Thank you for giving us an awesome opportunity to see several different airplanes. I never thought I would actually to see real airplanes Military war. And I also didn't expect to see an engine from Black Bird.

