CASTLE AIR MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

Photographer: Tom Tessier

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Flicks of Flight - Apr 18th**
  Featured Film: Planes: Fire & Rescue
  Bust your lawn chairs and blankets then join us for a special featured film out among the airplanes.

- **Bombs Away Car Show - Apr 25th**
  The Annual BOMBS AWAY Car Show, onsite among the airplanes at Castle Air Museum, will be held April 25th, 2026 from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Online registration and more information coming soon!

CASTLE'S MOST WANTED

This is the section of the newsletter where we post the job most in need of a special volunteer. Hence, our most wanted! If you have the desire and ability to fill this need or know someone who can, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator to start a journey to help make Castle the most desired destination in Central California!

Part-time Landscaper - We have an opening for a paid part-time landscaper. There is always work that needs to be accomplished when the grass and weeds start growing. Pick your days; 18 hours a week. You can inquire with Jared. Of course, we also accept volunteers. There is plenty of work to go around. Help make our grounds beautiful!

FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

MAJ GEN CLAY GARRISON USAF (RET)

Welcome to the February newsletter! We are glad to announce our newsletter editor, Jared Hines, is now our Executive Director. As a former active member of the Board of Directors, Jared is very familiar with our operation. He brings a wealth of operational management experience to the position, and he is already having a huge impact. Expect to see some great members only events in the future and some expanded opportunities to experience the museum in new and exciting ways.

Steady progress on the pavilion front. The covered rodeo structure is in plans review and moving forward. The primary structure is at the 30% design phase with the team meeting bi-weekly to finish by mid-May. We should see dirt moving this summer.

Lots of events coming up. Our annual Bombs Away Car Show is set for late April. A great way to see our museum and help raise money for the operation. Enter your vehicle online or just bring out the family for fun and food. The B-52 is on tap for the unveiling of its new paint for Open Cockpit Day. It will include special displays of weapons and former crew members giving tours. Get up for it!

I would encourage you to check out our YouTube channel if you haven't seen it. Our last video on the B-36 went viral with over 56K views! That's a big win for the museum and our team. Spread the word!

RESTORATION HANGAR

GREG STATHATOS, RESTORATION MANAGER

Love Is in the Air (and the Hangar)! February isn't just for Valentine's Day — there's plenty of love in the hangar.

The A-7 continues progressing toward its October AirFest debut. Jeff remains confident it will be finished on schedule. One final road trip to China Lake is planned to retrieve the remaining donor components, including the cockpit section that will replace missing structures in ours. Pat has already volunteered — reportedly inspired by the fried pickles at Charlie's. Welcome aboard, Mr. Pickles.

The TF-102 is coming together quickly. John is closing the remaining wing holes one by one, Pat is wrapping up the cockpit structural rebuild, and Eesa continues steady work on the ordinance bay. Soon, it will be not just functional, but the only fully functional ordinance bay of any TF-102.

The MiG-17 project officially begins in March. Damage is limited to the aileron, already removed for metal work, so we expect this restoration to move faster than the others in the hangar.

After 45 days of fog and another week of rain, the weather finally cleared. We moved the T-34 to protect Julian's polishing work from the birds, and Bill is refurbishing our "new-to-us" canopies ahead of Spring Open Cockpit Day.

The air compressor has been relocated near the B-52, allowing sanding to resume. We estimate about 200 hours remain before the BUFF is ready for paint ahead of Open Cockpit Day. With support from Al Osborn, it will feature some exciting display elements.

Thanks to a generous donation from Amazon, we're upgrading tools, improving our air and electrical systems, and enhancing safety for our volunteers.

Meanwhile, our youngest volunteer, Aaron, has once again taken on a yellow-painting project — and I have one in the works as well that will require new skills. I'm confident he's ready for the challenge.

ONE TEAM... ONE FIGHT

CURATOR'S CORNER

RUSTY WYNN, CURATOR

Collections & Inventory Update

Our Technical Manuals continue to be organized — special thanks to Matthew Kano, one of our college volunteers, who has taken on the task of sorting and cataloging this important resource.

It is also audit season. Each year, Castle Air Museum must report on every loaned artifact to its respective lending agency, and those inventories are now arriving.

- The National Naval Aviation Museum Loaned Government Property Inventory is well underway. Thank you to Greg and Jeff for helping locate and identify numerous artifacts.
- The National Atomic Museum Foundation Outgoing Heritage Assets Inventory is also progressing steadily.
- The National Museum of the United States Air Force Loan Inventory — our largest — has just arrived on the curator's desk.

In addition to reporting back to each agency, every loaned artifact will also be entered into Castle Air Museum's PastPerfect collections management system, strengthening our internal tracking and accountability.

GIFT SHOP

LUCY SILVA, RETAIL SALES MANAGER

There is more to the gift shop than meets the eye. Our team of professionals do more than simply sell tickets and welcome guests. The gift shop is the central hub for anyone making contact with the museum. Membership credentials, tours, banquet room scheduling, RV park reservations, mail, phone inquiries, donations...They do it all! And they sell tickets, greet guests, and keep the gift shop clean and ready, too. They are the face of the museum and a vital part of the operation.

Come by and meet the team. Your membership allows you unlimited access to the museum grounds. We have several members who daily walk our grounds on a paved path, safely away from traffic. What a way to exercise!

Not a member? Come by and sign up! Or sign up online. Membership has its privileges. Call the Gift Shop for details. 209-782-2182

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

BOB SCOBLE, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Volunteer & Community Engagement

Merced College diesel mechanics students are gaining hands-on experience by restoring our Ground Support Equipment — practical training that directly supports preservation.

Fifteen volunteers from the Amazon Fulfillment Center have adopted the F-104, an aircraft that has been without a Crew Chief for years. Their focused effort is already making a noticeable difference.

Returning volunteers Ric Nesslage, Bill Bulfer, Elizabeth Treadwell, Denis Davi, and Gary Bostrom are working to complete ongoing RB-36 projects and clean the aircraft's interior. This dedicated group remains committed to preserving large historic aircraft like the RB-36 across our grounds.

We've also received new community service requests from local schools for short-term grounds projects, volunteer opportunities, and support during special events — a strong sign of growing community engagement.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

JANIE SUNDGREN – MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Renewals: Go online to complete the form or contact Janie Sundgren at: membership@castleairmuseum.org

Membership Credentials: Stop by or contact the Gift Shop at 209-723-2182

Guided Tours: Stop by the Gift Shop or contact our retail sales manager, Lucy Silva at 209-723-2182. Email at: giftshopmanager@castleairmuseum.org

AIRCRAFT OF THE MONTH

RUSTY WYNN, CURATOR

Aircraft of the Month: Martin EB-57E Canberra, Serial 55-4253

When we think of U.S. Air Force aircraft, we often assume they were American-designed. This month's featured aircraft challenges that assumption. The Martin B-57 Canberra began as a British design by English Electric for the Royal Air Force. To replace the aging Douglas B-26 Invader, the U.S. Air Force licensed the design and contracted the Glenn L. Martin Company to build it in the United States.

Introduced in 1951, the Canberra could fly higher than any fighter then in service and faster than most. It later became the first U.S. jet bomber to drop bombs in combat when deployed to Vietnam in 1965.

Castle Air Museum's B-57 — Serial 55-4253

Built in Baltimore in 1956, serial 55-4253 entered service that October. Early assignments included aerial target towing and air defense evaluation work across Arizona, Florida, Utah, and New York.

In 1961, she was modified for electronic warfare training, and by 1964 converted to the EB-57E configuration — a platform capable of reconnaissance, radar jamming, and communications testing. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, she supported Defense Systems Evaluation Squadrons in the U.S. and Europe, including NATO deployments. Because the EB-57 could not refuel midair, long overseas flights required internal ferry tanks and multiple stops.

Retired in July 1979, 55-4253 was flown to Davis-Monthan AFB for storage before transferring to the National Museum of the United States Air Force loan program. In 1991, she was transported to Castle Air Museum for restoration.

Today, she stands in her distinctive silver finish with day-glow orange markings — a striking reminder of the Cold War electronic warfare missions she once performed.

Photographer: Robert C. Mikesh
55-4253 Martin EB-57E Canberra, 1968

Photographer: aviationphotocompany.com
Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, 1972

Photographer: Robin A. Walker
RAF Woodbridge, UK-England, 1978

Retrieved from storage, broken down to be transported, 1991