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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Museums and cultural institutions can easily fall into the trap of being static, immovable, and unchanging. We cherish the past, preserving its treasures and technologies for the benefit of future generations but don’t readily adapt to changing audiences and technologies. In many instances we become mere warehouses, storage vessels for the archaic remnants of days gone by. At the Curtiss Museum, however, our goal is to do more than store items and be more than our visitors expect. It is that sentiment that is guiding many of the renovations and remodeling that have taken place over the last few years.

As we look toward the second half of 2018 the Curtiss Museum will see a variety of changes, with some more visible than others. The most noticeable update so far this year is the cosmetic restoration of our beloved C-46 Commando. The venerable C-46 saw action in several different theaters during World War II, but is most closely associated with the operations in the China-Burma-India. Though this type was up to the task of flying the “Hump” of the Himalayas, more than a decade of Upstate NY weather had left our Commando in bad need of a facelift. Several months of cleaning, etching, and repainting will come to a close this month as we put on the finishing touches. Once completed, the aircraft will look great for many years to come.

In the coming months we will also be undertaking a variety of additional projects aimed at improving the functionality and visual appeal of the facility. If you haven’t been here in a while, stop by and check us out. You never know what you’ll rediscover!

BENJAMIN JOHNSON
Executive Director
Nearly 1,000 visitors and hundreds of motorcycles from across the northeast converged on the Curtiss Museum for our annual Classic Motorcycle Show. Motorcycle guru Bob Harris of Odd Ball Old Dog Motorcycles spearheaded the record-setting event again this year. This year’s show had a special focus on Hodaka Motorcycles, a joint Japanese and American company that manufactured motorcycles from 1964-1978. A key part of the Hodaka marketing success was their use of colorful model names including: Ace, Road Toad, Super Rat, Combat Wombat, and Dirt Squirt.
For many years it has been believed that Glenn H. Curtiss got his start in 1901. With the digital age now upon us, however, a wealth of new information is now literally at our fingertips. For the past several years, archives, libraries, museums and other repositories historical data have begun digitizing their collection records and making them publicly accessible via the internet.

This treasure-trove of new information has offered up several interesting revelations with regard to Curtiss’s early years. From digitized copies of early area newspapers, we now know that he opened up his first bicycle shop in Hammondsport, NY in April 1899, not in 1900 or 1901 as previously thought. The same sources have also proven that Glenn opened a second shop in Bath, NY exactly one year later (1900), and a third store dedicated solely to motorcycles in Corning, NY in 1902.

Another key aspect of this timeline has also changed. It has always been related that Curtiss saw his first motorcycle (a Thomas Auto Bi) at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in the summer of 1901 and was inspired to try his hand at building one. But this short excerpt from the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle from October 19, 1900 makes this announcement: “F. Neff and Glen (sic) Curtiss of Hammondsport, have nearly completed a motor-bicycle of their own invention. The motor is said to have a speed of nearly 2,500 revolutions per minute. The frame and wheels are not unlike any bicycle, except heavier.” The “F. Neff” in the article is Frank Neff, uncle to Glenn’s wife Lena. From this it is clear that Glenn started experimenting with motorcycles one year earlier than previously thought!

Is this the end of the story? Not hardly. Let’s just say that the past has many more secrets to reveal. In the next issue we’ll discuss more forgotten history of Glenn Curtiss and the Hammondsport area.
On July 28-29 the Curtiss Museum recognized “Warhawk Weekend” with a series of events highlighting the P-40 Warhawk. Author Samuel Kleiner, who received his BA from Northwestern University, Ph. D from Oxford University and JD from Yale Law School, was the featured speaker. He entertained a capacity crowd with a discussion of his new book “The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan.” Though the Flying Tigers are legends in aviation history circles, Dr. Kleiner focused on the personal stories of the men and women who risked everything to fight the Japanese over China and Burma. We were joined in the crowd by Mr. George Myfelt, a World War II veteran of the China-Burma-India Theater whose personal story entertained the crowd prior to Mr. Kleiner’s speech. The weekend also included the documentary film “Fei Hu: The Flying Tigers,” and the John Wayne classic “The Flying Tigers” from 1942.

“The Flying Tigers” by Samuel Kleiner is available for $28.00 from the Curtiss Museum Store.
ART WILDER’S
RESTORATION SHOP UPDATE

P-40 WARHAWK
Work continues on preparation to paint, cowl flap operation, rudder pedal assembly, elevator repair and hydraulic system permanent plumbing.

CURTISS GLIDER
Wing structural work is close to completion. The next step is wing struts, inter-wing wiring, completion of ailerons and construction of tail assembly.

HUDSON FLYER
Repair of ailerons, canard and wings are in progress. Fabric finishing and painting are the next steps. The fabric and chemicals were donated by Jon Goldenbaum of Consolidated Aircraft Coatings.
Sponsored by the Curtiss Wing of the Ox5 Aviation Pioneers Club, a group of 35 Museum members and friends made a trip to the Mid Atlantic Air Museum in Reading, PA for their annual air show.

World War II aircrafts were featured in simulated dog fights, aerobatic demonstrations and fly-bys.

Participating were B-25 medium bombers, a P-51, the two flying B-29's left in the world, Navy Carrier planes, many military transports, military re-enactors, a P-40, and other historical displays.

On a personal note, I had a ride in the B-29 “Fi Fi”. On this ride was WW11 Veteran, George Haldeman, age 94 who re-fueled the Enola Gay when it returned from the mission to Hiroshima.

The OX 5 National Convention will be held at the Curtiss Museum, and will be hosted by the OX5 Curtiss Wing Oct. 12-14, 2018.

WINGS & WHEELS
SEAPLANE & CAR SHOW

Wings & Wheels in Hammondsport is an annual event sponsored by and for the benefit of The Glenn H. Curtiss Museum. All proceeds go directly to the Curtiss Museum and we encourage you to visit it while you’re in Hammondsport. It’s a must see if you’ve never been and if you have been, you should go back because so much has changed recently!

For more details visit: WingsAndWheelsHammondsport.com
At the Curtiss Museum our volunteers are an essential part of our team. Each year our volunteers donate hundreds of hours in support of our great facility, and we’re taking some extra time to thank them with a new “Volunteer Spotlight” column. A few times a year we’ll pick an outstanding volunteer (or two) to recognize for their service. Thank you volunteers!

If you’ve stopped by the Curtiss Museum on a Tuesday morning, you’ve probably met these great ladies. Judy Jaromin Wrinkle (left) and Janet Hallahan (right) have been part of the Curtiss Museum for a combined 41 years! As admissions desk volunteers they ensure that all our guests start their visit off right.

INTERVIEW

How long have you been with the Curtiss Museum?
JJW Since 2002.
JH 25 years.

How did you first hear about the Glenn Curtiss Museum?
JJW We won a free membership to the Museum in a local raffle.
JH From the teaching staff at the Corning Free Academy.

What inspired you to become a volunteer?
JJW To keep active during my retirement and to give back.
JH To be involved in the Hammondsport community.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering at the Curtiss Museum?
JJW Meeting new people from around the world.
JH To share the heritage of Glenn Curtiss and the beauty of the Finger Lakes with visitors.

What do you enjoy most about being a volunteer?
JJW Talking with visitors.
JH Hearing visitors leave the Curtiss Museum with many compliments on the Museum and a smile on their face. One visitor just said “the museum is an awesome place to visit!”

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Makenzie Witter for more information: Education@GlennHCurtissMuseum.org

How have you benefited from your time here?
JJW Discounts in the gift shop are great!
JH To smile and always have a positive attitude.
By including the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum in your will, trust, or beneficiary designation, you can pass on your love of history and innovation to future generations. These gifts cost you nothing now and allow you to change your mind at any time.

When you are ready to create your legacy of innovation please contact us at Director@GlennHCurtissMuseum.org. You can also simply use the following language in your will or trust: “I would like to include the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum – a 501(c)3 organization in Hammondsport, NY, Tax ID 16-6061761 – as a beneficiary.”