

The Tri-State Warbird Museum...a historic aviation museum dedicated to remembering those who fought for our freedom, and honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

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The Tri-State Warbird Museum

Tri-State Warbird Museum

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Hours:

Wednesday 4pm-7pm

Saturday 10am-3pm

Admission \$12

Discounts available for veterans and students

Annual and lifetime individual and family memberships are available

Donations are needed and are most appreciated - Thank you!

Walk of Veterans Bricks

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Annual Gala

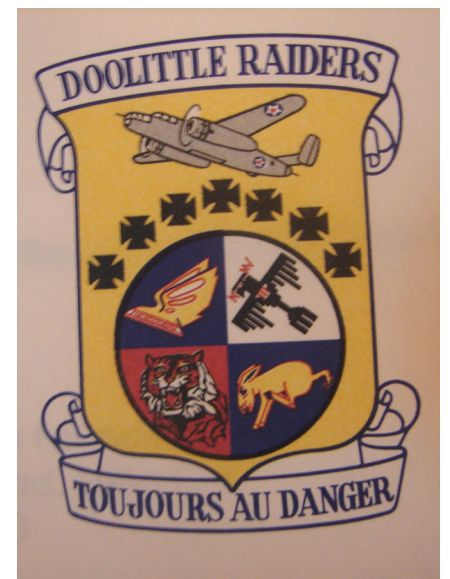
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welcome

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Tom Griffin and the Doolittle Raiders

Tom Griffin was, is and always will be a "Doolittle Raider". He is also a beloved Cincinnati and Tri-State Warbird Museum Honored Veteran. It is a privilege to listen to him tell the story with his outstanding memory at the still-young age of 93 (on July 10th). Married to Esther who he lost just a few years ago, he also has 2 sons, John a professor with a master of library sciences and German studies and Gary a musician with the famous Beach Boys and Jan and Dean surfer music. Tom still thinks of his sons as "kids" even though they are just getting to their 60's. Tom had an accounting business but retired in 1983 and has been "playing ever since". Actually he spends a great deal of time traveling to speaking arrangements and dinners in honor of the Doolittle Raiders and their significant contribution to the freedom we deeply enjoy.

After Japan attacked the U.S. at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 Tom Griffin was a B-25 navigator with the 17th Bomb Group patrolling the west coast based out of Portland, Oregon and Tacoma, Washington. As the U.S. military minds worked out possible Japan retaliation plans Tom's group received orders early February 1942 to travel to Columbia, South Carolina. There they met Lt. Col Jimmy Doolittle who asked the group for volunteers for a very secret mission with "unusual aspects of danger". Every one of the 80 airmen volunteered. Relocating the 20 planes and the crews to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida they began intensive training. They trained hard to learn long distance flying and to perfect their B-25 short field takeoff roll from the normal 1800' all the way down to 500'. During this pilot training Tom was sent with another top navigator Davey Jones to Air Force Intelligence in Washington, DC to collect, prepare and study any and all available navigational and topographical charts of Japan and China to gather information on the terrain and military and industrial targets. The plan for this "Doolittle Raiders" mission was to crane the B-25 bombers onto the USS Hornet, rendezvous with the USS Enterprise and accompanying task force of ships and to steam to within range of Japan when the planes would take off from the deck, bomb targets in Tokyo and proceed directly to the safe territory of China for landing. Radios would be removed to make room for as much fuel as possible so there would be no communication. The most dangerous



As a 501(c)3 organization the Tri-State Warbird Museum is supported primarily through membership dues and the contributions of individuals and businesses that share in the desire to preserve our country's rich aviation legacy.

...Tom Griffin...continued from page 1...

part of the mission would be if the ships were sighted by the enemy which would put all in grave danger as the element of surprise would be lost. A second aspect of danger if the ships were sighted was that the B-25s would be on-deck and blocking the ship's ability to launch their own Navy defense aircraft—it was made clear that the B-25s would be shoved overboard if they needed to be. With their intensive training completed with only one airplane damaged Doolittle was satisfied with his experienced crews and in March Tom flew with his group to San Francisco seeing the USS Hornet for the first time and remarking that “the runway looked awfully small”. The group of 20 B-25 twin engine Mitchell bombers were reduced to the best running 16, the number which would fit on the ship deck. After a night of leave all crew members were accounted for and boarded early on the morning of April 1, 1942 as the USS Hornet departed San Francisco Bay, prepared to rendezvous with the task force and head toward Japan.



The task force was spotted by Japanese ships while they were still 650 miles from Japan and the Doolittle Raiders got their orders to launch immediately on the morning of April 18th. They were still 200-300 miles away from the original planned take-off point, too far to land in safe territory with the fuel they had on board but the decision was to launch. Tom Griffin's B-25 was #9 and named “Whirling Dervish” - the brave crews ran to their planes and took off from the deck of the Hornet. They flew west, low over the water, toward their targets dropping their bombs on a very surprised Tokyo, encountering flak and enemy aircraft as the prior 8 B-25's had already stirred up a Japanese response. Headwinds turned into a tailwind but then a big storm came over them and each crew had the decision to make to stay low and probably ditch into the water or to fly high. B-25 #9 pulled up into the storm and flew about 300 miles inland until the engines sputtered and went quiet signaling the anxiously anti-

ipated end to their fuel after flying for 15 1/2 hours. The crew bailed out into the storm and nighttime blackness over rough mountain terrain. Tom, miraculously, after descending through 10,000 feet and swinging wildly in his parachute in the stormy winds, landed with his chute caught in big bamboo trees and with his feet gently touching the ground, and as he puts it, “scratchless”.

Tom Griffin and his crew all found each other and through the assistance of the grateful Chinese and withstanding many adventures including catching malaria and an around the world homeward-bound flight, made it back stateside in time to meet his future wife Esther relaxing at a friend's lake cabin in Michigan in the summer of 1942.

But World War II wasn't done with Tom Griffin yet. Tom was assigned to the medium bomber B-26B Marauder (nicknamed “The Widow Maker”) and in the fall of 1942 with the 319th Bombardment Group headed toward the European/Mediterranean Theater of Operations (ETO) for an invasion of North Africa called Operation Torch. Taking the northern route found the group stuck for a month of bad winter weather in Greenland and Iceland. Along the way the group became part of the newly formed 12th Air Force and came under the leadership of General Doolittle. This was a tough mission. The Germans were in control with more experience and established bases and the 319th Bomb Group's losses were high and morale was low. Tom's plane was “Hell's Cargo”



Tri-State Warbird Museum 5th Annual Fundraising Taking Flight Gala



The Tri-State Warbird Museum 6th Annual Taking Flight Gala was May 15th and was a lot of fun and a huge success. Thank you especially to our wonderful sponsors and patrons. Your continuing help makes our education mission possible. It was great to see everyone having a wonderful time in the museum and looking over the beautiful airplanes and restoration projects. The rain was very cooperative waiting until our formation flying T-6's came in for their landing.

Our Guest speaker was Brig. General Dan Cherry (ret) who spoke movingly about his amazing journey of shooting down a Mig21 from his F4 Phantom during the Vietnam War and then 36 years later meeting and spending time with the surviving Mig pilot. The story continues into a double-full-circle as Dan was instrumental in locating the US pilot that the Mig pilot shot down and they were subsequently able to meet. Dan chronicles this story in his book "My Enemy My Friend".

The Event Chairman for the Gala was US Bank President Richard Davis and he is a delightful and passionate speaker.

The 2009 Tri-State Warbird Museum Contribution to Freedom Award was presented to Ted Gardner whose wonderful enthusiasm is always appreciated.

Plan to attend the 6th Annual Taking Flight Gala Friday May 21, 2010, you won't want to miss it!



... Tom Griffin... *continued from page 2...*

and on January 23, 1943 during a skip-bombing mission along the Sicilian coast an anti-aircraft shell exploded in their windshield badly injuring the pilot Lt. Chuck Meyers and co-pilot Lt. Bennett "Holly" Grimm. The pilots managed to keep flying while Tom tended to their wounds and directed them to fly up the coastline hoping to make it to a sandy beach for a safe landing away from the cliffs they were seeing. The injured airplane was accompanied by 3 P-38's but before reaching anywhere to land "Hell's Cargo" lost both engines, hit the water and nosed over. Somehow each of the crew members came to the surface, helping each other and for 1 1/2 hours they bounced around in the cold and heavy surf. They were helped ashore by local Arabs and once Tom got his bearings he trekked 26 miles and back through heavy mountainous terrain to a French camp to bring help and stretchers. This mission earned the crew medals with Tom receiving the Air Medal.

But there's still more for Tom...his 23rd mission in the ETO, 47th mission total, was July 4th, 1943 and was a major offensive 12th Air Force airstrike at Italy's airfields with 31 Allied and about 50 enemy planes and flak. Tom saw Focke-Wulfs and Me-109s along with US P-38's and British Spitfires, the biggest air battle he had ever seen. His plane was the lead formation and took a direct hit on the left engine. The entire back of the plane was on fire but he had, unusually, taken a second parachute and stowed it in the front of the airplane. He put on the chute and bailed out. On the way down, completely vulnerable, hanging in the chute harness, he had the added adventure of watching an Me-109 come right at him again and again, wondering what his fate would be at the hands of this enemy pilot. He was later told the German pilot was taking his picture. Tom landed in a wheat field and was immediately taken prison of war and held by the Germans until being freed by the war's end.

The motto of the Doolittle Raiders is "Toujours Au Danger" which can be translated "always to danger". War is dangerous and Tom Griffin and Jimmy Doolittle and all the servicemen of World War II are our heroes as they worked and succeeded to keep the daily lives of Americans free and free from danger. This is one of the reasons the Tri-State Warbird Museum exists and is dedicated to remembering those who fought for our freedom, and honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Thank you Tom!

Hours:

Wednesday 4pm-7pm

Saturday 10am-3pm

Admission \$12

Discounted admission for veterans and students \$7

Admission for World War II veterans is complimentary

Group tours are a great way to spend some time learning about World War II aviation history

Memberships:

Annual individual and family

Lifetime individual and family

Bricks can be engraved into the Walk of Veterans—a great way to honor someone

Donations are needed and are most appreciated - Thank you!

Directions to the Tri-State Warbird Museum:

We are located on the east side of Cincinnati, just minutes off of Interstate 275 and State Route 32, at the end of a set of streets named after heroic aviation and space pioneers Neil Armstrong, John Glenn and Frank Borman...

...take Interstate 275 to State Route 32 East (exit 63B)

...follow Route 32 for 3 miles to the third traffic light

...turn right onto Old State Route 74 (also named Cincinnati-Batavia Pike), and follow for 1.1 miles

...turn right onto Armstrong Blvd

...turn next left onto Glenn Parkway

...turn next right onto Borman Drive

...the Tri-State Museum is located at the end of Borman Drive, next to the Clermont County Airport.

...look for the signs...see you soon!

Tri-State Warbird Museum

on the radio

Welcome WLW listeners!

The Tri-State Warbird Museum will be airing commercials throughout the summer on

700WLW radio!

Listen to WLW radio and visit our website

www.tri-statewarbirdmuseum.org for the announcement of our extended summer hours

Let us know that you heard us on the radio when you visit...WELCOME!



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