

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.

March 2009 Volume 3 Number 1

## The Tri-State Warbird Museum

Tri-State Warbird Museum

4021 Borman Drive

Batavia, Ohio 45103

513.735.4500

513.735.4333 fax

www.tri-statewarbirdmuseum.org

tristatewarbirdmuseum@fuse.net

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

...Don Brandt Page 2

Save the Date Gala May 15 Page 2

P-40 project update Page 3

Photography and article reproduction restricted without permission. ©2009 Tri-State Warbird Museum

## Don Brandt



The Tri-State Warbird Museum is a wonderful place to be for many reasons, and Don Brandt is one of those reasons. Don Brandt is charming, funny, upbeat, nearly larger-than-life but at the same time just a real guy. Not just every guy though lives through the harrowing tale that was told in the October 1984 issue of Reader's Digest on page 10..."The Incredible Escape of Ensign Brandt" written by Mark Sufrin. The story is also told in "The Hornets and Their Heroic Men" with Editors Kenneth Glass (another Tri-State Warbird Museum beloved World War II veteran!) and Harold L. Buell, again written by Mark Sufrin. Don Brandt's story goes a bit like this: It was June 13, 1944 and Don was a fighter pilot flying the F6F-3 Hellcat buno 40079. He was an Ensign in the US Navy stationed on the USS Hornet (CV-12) with the VF-2 squadron in the West Central Pacific. On this day the mission was to fly pre-invasion assaults on the islands of Guam, Saipan and Tinian. While preparing to attack Japanese forces over Guam Don's Hellcat was hit with flak in the forward section and began trailing black smoke and losing control. As he prepared to bail out his parachute riser got stuck under his seat harness and he was blown out of the plane sideways, breaking ribs in the process. He wound up 500 yards off the beach in the Agana Bay waters. While struggling in the water with a flak-damaged bleeding hand he managed to cut away his parachute which promptly got blown away in the stiff wind and sank taking with it his seatpack and inflatable raft. Inflating his mae west life vest, breaking the green dye markers and struggling out of his heavy shoes and ammunition belt, Don was alone in the water for 2 1/2 hours listening to shells and sniper fire aimed at him from the beach. As he floated in the waves and the wind an SB2C Helldiver divebomber flown by Glen LeMoyne approached low overhead while the back-seater/radioman/gunman Don Donnellon dropped an inflatable raft into the water. Probably nothing was going to keep Don Brandt apart from that raft and he managed to grab it and climb in. For another 3 hours he watched fighters fly overhead and listened to the sounds of war wondering what next. There was a new Navy rescue proce-

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.

**...Don Brandt...***continued from page 1...*

... Don had been trained for only the day before called periscope-rescue which came into play as the submarine *Stingray* with Lt. Cmdr Sam Loomis, Jr. arrived on the shallow-waters Agana Bay scene. Again and again Cmdr Loomis slowly (slowly for the sub but fast for a man in a raft) brought his sub periscopes alongside the raft until finally Don was somehow able to lasso his raft rope around it, hang on for dear life for an hour while getting towed out to open sea and out of harm's way. It was about 4:30pm when the sub was able to surface and welcome Ensign Brandt onboard. What a day that was. Don stayed with the *Stingray* sub for a month before he was able to rejoin his Air Group in the Marshalls. The hardest part for Don was that while he was stuck on the sub his Hornet Squadron had their official photograph taken and he isn't in it.

When you see Don at the Tri-State Warbird Museum, shake his hand and thank him, like all veterans, for our beloved freedom.



Don and Rose Brandt



Ken Glass and Don Brandt in front of the TSWM USSHornet display



Don Brandt and Paul Redlich



**FIFTH ANNUAL**  
**TAKING FLIGHT**  
*Tri-State Warbird Museum Gala Event*

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009**

RECEPTION, DINNER & PROGRAM

*Featuring Guest Speaker:* Brigadier General Daniel 'Dan' Cherry (USAF Ret.)

To benefit the mission of the Museum

Formal invitations will be mailed in March  
Questions? Call Denise Eldridge 513-735-4500



## Tri-State Warbird Museum P-40 restoration project update

Restoration of the Tri-State Warbird Museum 1943 Curtiss P-40M is progressing steadily. Technicians Paul Redlich, Steve Emery, Mike Ketterer and Ken Wiggers have been working on this project since February 2008 and have logged over 6000 man-hours toward putting this historic ex-Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) Pacific Theater combat veteran back in the air.

Literally hundreds of airframe parts have been fabricated from scratch in the TSWM workshops. Luckily microfilm copies of the original Curtiss engineering drawings for the entire P-40 were available from the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum in Washington, DC. Modern computer technology has enabled these cumbersome rolls of film to be transferred to CD complete with an extensive index and cross reference guide making locating a drawing for a particular part fast and easy. Large scale copies of several drawings are on display around the aircraft. It's interesting to note that many of these pen and ink drawings were originally produced at Curtiss as early as 1938.

A major time setback was encountered last November when Steve Emery discovered corrosion and improper sheet metal repairs in the horizontal stabilizer. To perform a complete rebuild of the stabilizer required the fabrication of a steel jig to hold the structure in proper alignment as the outside skins were removed. Steve has completely fabricated all of the internal spars, ribs and skins. Temporary fasteners called "clecos" are holding it all together prior to the installation of thousands of rivets. Come and see for yourself this amazing piece of aircraft structural work.

The Allison V-1710 engine for the P-40 is at the overhaul shop being completely rebuilt to new specifications and will be ready in mid-March. Once complete the engine will run for 5 hours on a test stand to ensure everything is perfect prior to installation in the airplane. This will be the first time this engine has run in over 60 years. Before the engine can be installed the TSWM team had to fabricate a complete new engine mount assembly. This project was spearheaded by Ken Wiggers and included the talents of several large Cincinnati and Dayton based industrial machine shops to outside-dimension grind, line-bore, cross drill, heat treat and straighten those big chunks of alloy steel tubing.



Inside the fuselage control cables have been strung for the elevator, rudder, tail wheel steering and trim controls. The oxygen bottle mount is in place along with the hydraulic reservoir and several hydraulic lines. Soon to follow are the original WWII radios and a completely new wiring harness made from original cotton jacketed wiring. Also in place is the complete tail landing gear assembly and tail wheel.

Behind the scenes many of the wing and fuselage hydraulic components have been overhauled; the fuselage fuel tank has been restored and is ready for installation. Many of the items for the cockpit like rudder pedals, control stick and throttle quadrant have also received complete restorations. Work has also been done restoring the sliding canopy section and the front windshield. New tires have been installed on restored wheels and the brakes are also ready for installation.

This is an exciting project on the most historically significant aircraft at the Tri-State Warbird Museum. Be sure to come by often and watch as this amazing aircraft comes together.



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 ...become a member!**

The Tri-State Warbird Museum is a wonderful place to bring your family. The history and pride of our country can be seen and felt with these magnificent airplanes as they are brought to life through extensive restoration. Take this opportunity also to introduce yourself to another one of our precious resources—the World War II veteran.

Becoming a member is also a great savings for your family—come and visit all year long—become a lifetime member and contribute to the Tri-State Warbird Museum in a most meaningful way...we

Welcome you



Tri-State Warbird Museum  
4021 Borman Drive  
Batavia, OH 45103

513.735.4500

513.735.4333 fax

[www.tri-statewarbirdmuseum.org](http://www.tri-statewarbirdmuseum.org)

