

The Cadet Flyer

*The Official Newsletter of the 63rd Preservation Society
and the World War Two Flight Training Museum*

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An Open Letter of Thanks and Appreciation to the Cadets and Instructors of the 63rd Flight Training Detachment

The Chairman, Directors, and Curator of the World War Two Flight Training Museum would like to take this time to personally thank each and every one of you for what you done for all of us during the greatest conflict in human history. Your courage, volunteerism, and skill were not only shining examples of patriotism during the war, but continue to be remembered by your friends and families, as well as by the grateful citizens of a small south Georgia community that you were once, still, and always will be a part of.

During this time of your reunion and return to Douglas, we would like to recognize your wartime service by inviting you to tour the museum facility that was created to both honor that service and to share its story with all Americans.

In December of 2003, a small group of local Coffee County citizens interested in history, aviation, and heritage preservation gathered together to both protect the site of the Raymond-Richardson Aviation School in Douglas, Georgia and to create and operate a historical museum that would tell the story of not only our community's role in WWII, but also share the lives of the men and women who lived, worked, and trained at the facility. Thus, the 63rd Preservation Society was formed, which in turn created the WWII Flight Training Museum.

Our mission statement clearly states who we are and what we hope to accomplish, *"The WWII Flight Training Museum is a non-profit organization that is entirely funded by donations, grants, and contributions. It is dedicated to sharing the story of the courage and spirit of the American men and women who became pilots during the Second World War. Our primary mission is to preserve, protect, develop, and advance the understanding of our nation's aviation training heritage through collections, research, exhibits, and interpretation of the 63rd Flight Training*

Detachment. Our secondary mission is to try to maintain the heritage and as much of the historical integrity of the Raymond-Richardson Aviation School as possible.”

We have successfully recreated a 1942 cadet barracks complete with WWII desks, beds, lockers, and uniformed cadets. A restored Link Trainer is also on display, as well as manuals, posters, pictures, and local base equipment. While over half of the museum is devoted to the 63rd FTD and the Douglas airfield, we also interpret WWII flight training as a whole and follow those new pilots and their planes as they go into combat around the world. In addition, the museum also has displays devoted to the lives and experiences of the aircrews that flew with the pilots and the families they left behind on the Home Front.

With only volunteer workers and small private donations we have accomplished much since that December, but we still have a lot to do. We still need oral histories of the men who trained at Douglas, as well as photographs of them during the war. We would like to display more pilot uniforms, insignia, and wartime mementos. We need to raise money to train and hire docents, to produce a short film about the 63rd FTD that will run at the Museum, and to finish the research library.

Any help that you can provide will be greatly appreciated and will allow the Museum to maintain and protect the permanent collections and to successfully reach a wide audience with the heritage of all of the pilots of World War Two.

Sincerely,

Museum Curator and Proud Grandson of a Ploesti Raid POW

What we hope to accomplish

The non-profit WWII Flight Training Museum is run by a highly motivated Board of Directors and by a growing number of enthusiastic volunteers, to high professional standards, in an attractive and historic building. It will serve a wide range of visitors, who will come to us from all over the world and of course especially from the South Georgia area. No other museum tells the story of World War Two Flight Training on the site of a nearly intact period training airbase.

The Highway 441 corridor and the South Georgia region in which we are situated is a growing tourist attraction and leisure destination and as such, the Museum will serve as an introduction to the role and sacrifice of those young pilots for many who live in or visit our area.

We will have a growing educational role in partnership with local schools and other educational bodies, including a contribution to in-service teacher training, and we will regularly welcome school groups to the museum where our educational services will

be available to them. Through our educational work, many of the community's children - and often their parents too – will become aware of the value and potential of aviation heritage.

We believe that the museum can make a great contribution to the preservation of our heritage in the future, and to the education of both children and the public in the area of our recent past.

Is it a future worth securing? We think so. We hope you do to.

Membership Levels

Individual and Family Levels

Cadet Recruit- \$40

Basic Individual level includes free admission to the museum, the newsletter and all mailings, membership card, one free pass to the Living History Weekend and discounts on other 63rd Preservation Society sponsored events

Cadet Crew- \$75, Family level includes all of the above plus free admission for entire family of four to the Living History Weekend.

Not Just Money

A museum needs more than just money to survive. We also need you to search your family photo albums, attics, and closets for items that the museum desperately needs for historical interpretation. Good examples would be:

Postcards and other souvenirs from the airbase

Pictures of the base or of Douglas during the war

Letters or dairies concerning the base

Cadet or civilian base worker uniforms, insignia, headgear, photos

Cadet yearbooks, flyers, posters

Airbase fixtures and furniture (sold at public auction December 1944)

Photos of base during its use as a:

A 1950's Spring Training Baseball Camp for the Reds

A corset company factory

A public school in the 1970's

SGC Housing during the 1950-60's

Think how you could help out your community by a donation of money, artifacts, or just time!

For further information, please contact:

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WWII Flight Training Museum

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