



AIR FORCE MUSEUM
FOUNDATION

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FLYING
OVER THE HUMP



1942-1945



The Flying Over the Hump interactive exhibit
was made possible by a gift from

The Estate of
Wilfred and Louise Jones
to the Air Force
Museum Foundation

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CHIEF
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NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & CEO

Dear Supporters and Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, it is with immense gratitude and pride that we present the **Air Force Museum Foundation** Annual Report for 2023. Your unwavering support has been the wind beneath our wings, propelling us to new heights and enabling us to fulfill our mission by helping honor the legacy of the United States Air Force while inspiring future generations through our support of the **National Museum of the U.S. Air Force™**. As CEO and Board Chair, we extend our heartfelt thanks to each one of you who has generously contributed your time, resources, and enthusiasm to our cause.

Your support has had a profound impact on a myriad of programs that form the heartbeat of our Foundation. From aiding the preservation of priceless artifacts such as the last surviving **Boeing B-17D, *The Swoose***, to funding development of interactive exhibits, to supporting educational initiatives, your contributions have been instrumental in shaping the experiences of hundreds of thousands of visitors who walk through the Museum's doors each year.

At the heart of our mission is the belief that the lessons of history are not confined to the past, but rather have the power to shape our present and future. Through supporting exhibits like the new Museum-spanning ***Enlisted Force*** exhibit and the refresh of the ***Flying the Hump*** interactive exhibit in the *World War II Gallery* (see page 6 for more), and programs such as the Foundation's ***After Dark*** event series, we strive to make meaningful connections between the storied history of the Air Force and the everyday lives of Museum visitors. By showcasing the bravery, ingenuity, and sacrifice of those who have served, the Museum honors their heritage while inspiring future generations to carry the torch of freedom and innovation forward.

In closing, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who have played a role in supporting our Foundation. Together, we are ensuring that the legacy of the U.S. Air Force continues to soar for generations to come.

Sincerely,

CD Moore

MISSION

Raise funds and awareness to support the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force™ mission.

VISION

Honoring every Airman's story with a permanent home to inspire future generations.



AFMF photo



DAVID TILLOTSON
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF THE
U.S. AIR FORCE

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE NMUSAF

2023 proved to be another successful year at the Museum, filled with celebrations, awards, and facility improvements.

Throughout the year we celebrated the **Museum's Centennial Anniversary**. Many people found it hard to believe that the Museum is 100 years old: if you are counting you quickly realize that the Museum is older than the Air Force itself. This significant anniversary gave us the opportunity to go beyond the artifacts and shift our focus to the contributions made by the staff, volunteers and the **Air Force Museum Foundation** that make it all possible.

The tremendous efforts of our curatorial and exhibits staff were recognized with the 2023 Air Force Heritage Award for the exhibit ***A Force for Good: Department of the Air Force Humanitarian Missions***. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding achievements by Department of the Air Force History and Museums Program personnel that foster a better understanding and appreciation of the Air Force, its history, and accomplishments.

The exhibit, located in the Museum's *Global Reach Gallery*, highlights humanitarian missions conducted by the U.S. Air Force around the globe and domestically. If you haven't had a chance to see it yet, I encourage you to come take a look. It is remarkable to see the breadth and depth of talent and compassion in our Force to help those in need.

In 2023 we conducted a major lighting renovation in the *Early Years Gallery*. This upgrade was necessary to protect the health and longevity of the artifacts, many of which are more than 100 years old. During this time the gallery was closed to allow the overhead work to be done safely. While this closure was a temporary inconvenience, the lighting upgrade ultimately provides a better viewing experience for our visitors as it allows us to highlight the aircraft and artifacts in a more meaningful way.

And finally, we ended 2023 having welcomed more than 770,000 visitors through our doors. This is worth celebrating as it signals that we have recovered to pre-pandemic numbers. The Museum and Foundation staff and volunteers are working hard every day to offer programs, exhibits, and events that appeal to a wide variety of visitors — and that work is paying off.

On behalf of the entire Museum staff, I want to thank the Air Force Museum Foundation for its invaluable support which allows us to continue telling the stories of our Airmen and Guardians. Working together we can ensure that 100 years from now our successors can celebrate another century of progress.

Dave Tillotson





A/ME/Prichard

IMPACTING EXHIBITS

The **National Museum of the U.S. Air Force™** has created many new exhibits and restored several aircraft with financial assistance from the **Foundation** in recent years. But much as old aircraft need restoration occasionally, older exhibits also benefit from a revitalization.

During 2023 the ***Flying the Hump*** exhibit in the *World War II gallery* received such a refresh. Centered around the Curtiss C-46D Commando, the exhibit was refurbished and expanded to better highlight the challenges faced by airmen flying supplies from India to China over the Himalayan mountains (known as “the Hump”) during World War II.

Improvements to the exhibit include new graphic panels, display cases, and artifacts. In addition, a new video-game-like interactive component was designed and installed, giving visitors a hands-on experience that demonstrates some of the difficulties encountered flying over “the Hump” in a C-46 Commando.

Renovation of the exhibit and development of the interactive element was made possible by a gift to the Air Force Museum Foundation from the Louise Kendig Jones and Wilfred D. Jones Family Endowment through the Greene County Community Foundation. The gift honors Wilfred Jones’ service flying the Hump during World War II. Without the Jones gift the new exhibit would not exist.

Their support — and the support of all Foundation donors — is key to keeping the Museum’s offerings fresh and engaging for audiences of all ages.





CURATOR JACQUELINE HEISS, LEFT, AND CONSERVATOR JENNIFER MYERS FROM THE COLLECTIONS DIVISION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE™ INSPECT, CATALOG, AND PACK MODEL AIRCRAFT FROM THE KETTERING MODEL COLLECTION FOR SHIPPING TO THE CONSERVATION FIRM.



IMPACTING ARTIFACTS

In recent years the **National Museum of the U.S. Air Force™** has undertaken the restoration of several World War I-era aircraft (the Avro 504K in 2019, the Thomas-Morse S4C Scout in 2021, and the Curtiss JN-4D Jenny in 2023), and the Bleriot Monoplane is currently undergoing restoration. Support from the **Air Force Museum Foundation**, thanks in part to donations from **Friends of the Museum**, plays a major role in the successful completion of projects like these.

Now, with donations from the Kettering Family Philanthropies and a married couple who wish to remain anonymous, the Foundation is supporting the Museum's undertaking of a major conservation program involving some of the oldest artifacts in the Museum's collection on a scale that is both smaller and larger than any previously attempted.

Eugene W. Kettering, first chairman of the **Air Force Museum Foundation**, placed his 594-piece model aircraft collection on long-term loan to the Air Force Museum in 1962. Thirty more models were added in the 1980s bringing the total to 624. Many of these hand-made models date to the 1930s. They were last on display in the hallway between the second and third buildings in six long cases across from the *Berlin Airlift* exhibit, where they had been since the early 2000s. One of the anonymous donors has a true passion for model building which led them to support the project.



According to Jennifer Myers, the sole Objects Conservator for the Department of the Air Force and a staff member of the Museum's Collection Management Division, after decades on display to the delight of visitors young and old, these models were showing their age. Myers explained that unlike modern models which are constructed of plastics or metal, these aircraft have much more in common with the first aircraft in the *Early Years Gallery*, being constructed of wood, string, and glue. After years of fluctuating temperature and humidity, and exposure to LED lights, these materials have deteriorated requiring conservation or restoration. The wood has dried and become brittle; the glues have aged

CONSERVATOR SARAH GILCREASE FROM THE COLLECTION MANAGEMENT DIVISION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE™ INSPECTS, CATALOGS, AND PACKS MODEL AIRCRAFT FROM THE KETTERING MODEL COLLECTION FOR SHIPPING.





NMUSAF/Greenless

and become nonadhesive; and the paint has cracked, chipped, and faded; and all have accumulated a coating of dust. According to Myers, due to the sheer size of the collection, Collection Management Division personnel realized very quickly that they could not undertake treatment of the models in-house.

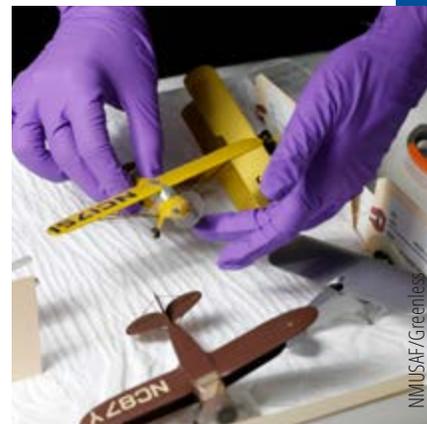
Thanks to generous support from the Air Force Museum Foundation, the Museum was able to research and select an outside company to undertake this huge, and expensive, task. The models are currently undergoing conservation by a non-profit art conservation firm in Cleveland. The work includes dry and wet surface cleaning of the models; consolidating loose paint and filling in gaps in paint; and repairing broken parts, fabricating missing parts, and replacing plastic propellers that have yellowed and warped with age.

Due to the size of the collection, conservation is being handled in lots. Myers reported that Lot 1, an initial batch of the 12 most damaged models in the collection, was completed last year. The 204 models in Lot 2 are being conserved now and will hopefully be returned to the Museum in June or July. Lots 3 and 4 are scheduled to be conserved after that with completion and installation in the case scheduled for 2025.

The project to create a new home for the model collection was featured in the *2022 Annual Report* and updated in a recent issue of our biweekly *Airmail* email. This structure has been assembled in *Kettering Hall*, the graphics package tracing the lineage of the more than 620 model aircraft has been installed, and it is awaiting conservation of the models so they can be placed on exhibit.

The Air Force Museum Foundation was incorporated in 1960. During Mr. Kettering's tenure he oversaw the decade long fundraising effort that led to what is now the first building of the campus of the Museum, opened in 1971. *Kettering Hall*, outside the *World War II Gallery*, is named in his honor, as is the third building of the Museum's 19-acre campus — the *Eugene W. Kettering Cold War Gallery*.

Construction of the case and conservation of the collection would not be taking place without the support of Kettering Family Philanthropies and the anonymous donors through the Air Force Museum Foundation.



NMUSAF/Greenless

*MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE
U.S. AIR FORCE™ AMERICAN ROCKETRY
CHALLENGE TEAM, SOLSTICE, LAUNCH
ROCKETS IN PREPARATION FOR COMPETITION.*





AFMF/Thomas



NMUSAF/Greenless

IMPACTING THE FUTURE

Inspiring future generations is part of the vision statement of the **Air Force Museum Foundation**. That inspiration extends beyond the exhibits highlighting the history of technological innovation and personal service and sacrifice on display at the **National Museum of the U.S. Air Force™**. Funding for educational initiatives at the Museum is a significant part of program support the Foundation provides every year and resulted in significant success in 2023.

AMERICAN ROCKETRY CHALLENGE SUPPORT

Last year the Foundation continued its support of the Museum's **American Rocketry Challenge** (ARC) teams. One of the Museum's teams, Team Prometheus (above right photo), finished first in the Ohio Cup with the best score in a field of seven teams, qualifying for the National Finals held near Washington, D.C. This marked the third time in four years that a Museum team qualified for the National Finals.

One of the required launches at nationals was a little higher, and the other a little lower than their launches at the Ohio Cup, according to Museum educator Jennifer Hess, and the team had to decide how to alter their rocket to best meet the challenge. "Practice launches from the Museum grounds really helped the team finalize their rocket configurations," she added.

Team Prometheus eventually placed 60th out of more than 798 teams during the finals held in May last year.

Foundation support was instrumental to Team Prometheus being able to travel to and compete in the ARC National Finals.

ROCKET DAY SUPPORT

In addition, the Museum has hosted Rocket Day for a number of years, to stimulate an interest in space-related STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

The 2018 and 2019 events were held in mid-July, with a record 622 rockets launched in 2019. The event wasn't held in 2020 due to Covid-related health concerns. In 2021 and 2022 it was moved to August with the number of launches steady at 350, roughly 80 percent being first time "fliers."

FIRE BUILDING WAS ONE OF THE MANY SURVIVAL SKILLS KIDS COULD LEARN AT THE SPECIAL EXHIBIT SURVIVAL: THE EXHIBITION.





Imagine Exhibitions



AFMF/Pritchard

In 2023 the Museum was intent on increasing participation to pre-pandemic levels. They set a goal of 500 rockets built. The Foundation financed the event with roughly \$9,450. On Sunday, October 7, 2023, young visitors built rockets and had the opportunity to launch them on the Museum lawn. The Museum also hosted numerous aerospace-related education opportunities throughout the facility.

Thanks to Foundation support, a total of 780 rockets were built during the five-hour event, and 665 were launched, breaking the previous record. Better yet, 580 “fliers” launched for the first time, exceeding the total number of first-time participants from the previous two years combined!

The Museum is shooting for 750 rockets on Rocket Day in 2024. Continued financial support from the Foundation will help ensure another successful event this year.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

While not specifically part of support for the Education Division, the two special exhibits funded by the Foundation in 2023 had significant educational aspects for the tens of thousands of visitors who experienced them.

From February 18 through May 7, the Foundation funded ***Survival: The Exhibition*** (by Imagine Exhibitions) at the Museum. This traveling exhibition provided practical, real-world, and science-based techniques to prepare visitors of all ages for survival situations they might actually face in their lifetimes. An interactive, informative, and safe place to learn and test essential survival skills, the exhibition featured nine zones with immersive scenic and theatrical elements that simulated extreme scenarios. Each zone combined STEM concepts with hands-on challenges that taught the scientific principles behind key survival tactics.

Then from September 24 through December 10, the Museum hosted ***Discover Steampunk: A Fantastical Hands-On Adventure*** (by Imagine Exhibitions), funded by the Foundation with generous support from CenterPoint Energy. Steampunk is a movement and an aesthetic inspired by the Victorian ideals of industry and steam power. In the exhibition, visitors explored galleries devoted to visionaries like Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, and five other innovators of the late 1800s, while experimenting with more than 20 original, interactive machines inspired by their ideas. The gorgeous, intricate machines taught about innovation and the disciplines of STEAM: science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics.

The Foundation has already funded one special exhibit in 2024, with another planned for the fall. “Supporting the Museum’s efforts to attract new audiences through innovative offerings — especially when they have such a strong educational component — is core to the Foundation’s work,” said Dr. Rorie Cartier, chief executive officer of the Air Force Museum Foundation.

FINANCIALS

for the year ending December 31, 2023.

REVENUE

Museum Store	\$5,092,484
Attractions	\$1,402,944
Events	\$330,335
Investment Income & Gains	\$1,739,523
Development	\$3,383,222
Other Operations and Grants	\$28,683
Total	\$11,977,191

EXPENSES

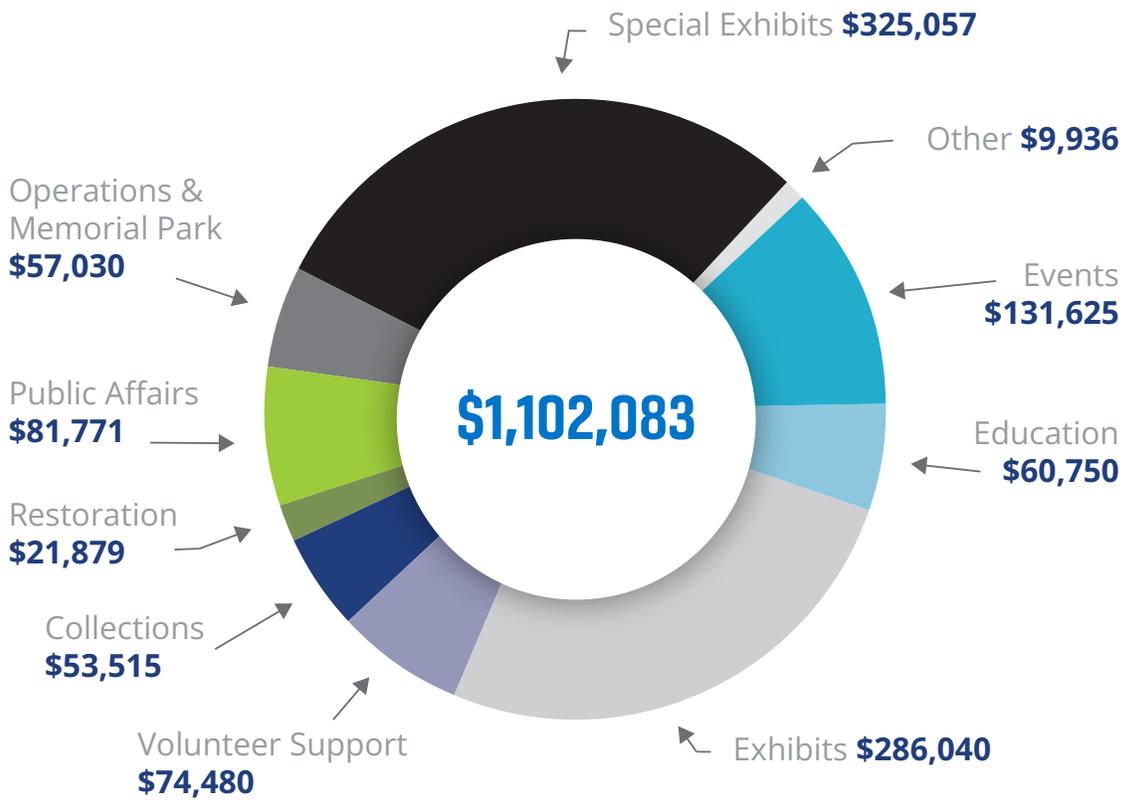
Cost of Goods Sold	\$2,098,355
Compensation & Benefits	\$3,820,868
Attraction Operations	\$446,097
Museum Program Support	\$1,102,083
Advertising/Marketing	\$293,079
General & Admin	\$908,600
Other & Depreciation	\$257,422
Total	\$8,926,504

NET INCOME	\$3,050,687*
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*Excludes unrealized gain of \$1,097,958

2023 MUSEUM PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Foundation's support of Museum programming is funded by donations, retail and attractions operations, fees from private events, and investment income and gains. Below is the overall Museum Program Support request for 2023 broken down by area of support.



The **Legacy Society** was established to acknowledge and thank our many friends who have remembered and supported the **Air Force Museum Foundation** through their estate planning and intended future charitable giving. Their dedicated support ensures that the Air Force story, and the story of aviation overall, will be preserved to inspire future generations to service, and to pursue education and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

If you would like information about planned gift opportunities, or to be included in the **Legacy Society**, please contact Abbie Sumners, at asumners@afmuseum.com or call 937.751.1570.

The asterisks below indicate the donor is deceased.

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