



# PLANES OF FAME AIR MUSEUM

NEWS

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*Achievement in Aviation Award is presented to Captain E. Royce Williams*



*Steven Hinton and Steve Hinton interview Captain E. Royce Williams*

## THE 13TH ANNUAL 'TASTE OF FLIGHT' GALA, AN INCREDIBLE EVENING WITH CAPTAIN E. ROYCE WILLIAMS

By: Frank B. Mormillo

Photos by: Ashleigh Long Photography

The highlight of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of Flight Gala hosted by the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino, California on October 26, 2019 was the presentation of the museum's Achievement in Aviation Award to Captain E. Royce Williams, U.S. Navy retired. The victor in one of the most intense aerial battles of the Korean War, Royce's exploit was actually classified for over half a century.

Operating from the deck of the USS Oriskany in the Sea of Japan on November 18, 1952, Lieutenant E. Royce Williams led the second section of a four-plane flight of Grumman F9F-5 Panther jets from VF-781 that attempted to intercept a flight of seven Soviet MiG-15 jet fighters from Vladivostok, Russia that was approaching U.S. Navy Task Force 77. As the four Panther jets climbed for altitude, the flight leader experienced a fuel pump problem and, together with his wingman, had to remain at a lower altitude near the aircraft carrier, leaving Williams and his wingman to face the seven MiG-15s alone. However, as the two Panther jets engaged the MiG-15s which actually had a speed and altitude performance advantage over the Panther jets, the guns in the Panther flown by Williams' wingman jammed, leaving Williams to battle the Soviet jets by himself. Although Williams' jet was badly damaged in the furious dogfight, he managed to shoot down four of the MiG-15s, and was even able to land aboard his aircraft carrier safely,



*Guests enjoy dessert and the Presentation.*

though his Panther jet was too badly damaged to ever fly again.

Although the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) had monitored the entire air battle and confirmed that Williams had shot down at least three of the Soviet jets, Williams's epic dogfight was classified, both to conceal the NSA's monitoring capabilities and to avoid drawing attention to the air battle involving Soviet jets flown by Soviet pilots from a Soviet base.

It was not until the collapse of the Soviet Union that the true story of Lieutenant E. Royce Williams' epic air battle received public attention. In 1992, the Russians actually revealed the names of the four Soviet pilots who perished in the battle against Williams.

A major fundraiser for the Planes of Fame Air Museum's mission to preserve aviation history, inspire interest in aviation, educate the public and honor aviation pioneers and veterans, the Annual Taste of Flight Gala provided guests with wine and beer tasting from a variety of award winning vineyards and breweries, and a selection of delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts from local caterers. Guests were also able to take part in a silent auction featuring all sorts of aviation memorabilia, jewelry, fine art pieces, weekend getaways, warbird rides and even the opportunity to drive a Sherman tank and fire (with blanks) its 75 mm cannon. Hosted in the Planes of Fame Air Museum's Edward T. Maloney and Robert Pond display hangars, the event had a number of historic aircraft as backdrops. One of the most interesting displays was the fuselage of the 1929 Curtiss Robin that Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan flew from New York to Ireland in 1938. Donated to Planes of Fame by Corrigan's son. Thank you to all of the Sponsors, Guests and Volunteers that helped make the '13th Annual Taste of Flight' a pleasurable success. All benefits from the Taste of Flight Gala support the Planes of Fame Air Museum, its aircraft, and programs which include veteran appreciation, youth education, and scholarships. A portion of this year's event proceeds will go towards the completion of our Korean War Memorial. Thank you once again for helping us to 'Keep em flying'.



## TASTE OF FLIGHT HIGHLIGHTS



Captain E. Royce Williams greets PoF Volunteer Greg Cameron in front of the F9F Panther.



A variety of caterers were serving delicious small dishes.



Wines from The Council were a big hit.



Wiens Brewing poured a great beer.



Plenty of great auction items to choose from.  
Photos by: Ashleigh Long Photography.

## KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL COMING 2020!

# A TRIBUTE TO THE FORGOTTEN WAR



Korean War Memorial Artists Concept Drawing.

The Korean War Memorial will be located in front of the Planes of Fame Air Museum. The memorial will commemorate the sacrifices of the 5.8 million Americans who served in the U.S. armed services during the three-year period of the Korean War. The War was one of the most hard fought in our history. During its relatively short duration from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953, over 36,000 Americans died in hostile actions in the Korean War theater. Of these, 8,200 are listed as missing in action, lost, or buried at sea. In addition, 103,284 were wounded during the conflict.

## KEY MEMORIAL GARDEN ELEMENTS

**MIG ALLEY** - Visitors to the memorial will pass through a reproduction of the famous "MiG Alley" sign in the same way Korean War pilots would have on the way to their next mission. U.S. Air Force fighter pilots routinely risked their lives flying sleek F-86 Sabres above "MiG Alley," the most dangerous piece of sky in the Korean War. To their right, visitors will see a "crash landed" MiG-15.

**F-86 'SWEET ROSE'** - Perched approximately 15 feet in the air, in a banked position, will be an F-86 painted as "Sweet Rose". Wally Yocum was a young man when he shipped out to Korea and was assigned as Crew Chief on FU-539. He

named the plane "Sweet Rose" in honor of his high school girlfriend Rose. After the war, he returned home, married Rose, and had four children. Those children are now raising the funds needed to paint the F-86 as "Sweet Rose" in honor of their father. History comes full circle.

**BOOTS ON THE GROUND** - Educational displays focusing on personal stories and the human impact of the war will be included in the memorial circle. The centerpiece of the circle will be a bronze statue "battlecross" featuring Korean War boots, a rifle, and helmet. Although air support was an important factor, the Korean War was primarily fought on the ground. The courage, valor, and sacrifice of these troops will be remembered forever and honored in this place.



Wally's children are now raising the funds needed to paint the F-86 as "Sweet Rose" in honor of their father

## HELP PAVE THE WAY!

With a brick in the Korean War Memorial at the Planes of Fame Air Museum, you have a unique opportunity to create a lasting tribute to loved ones. For only \$100, you can honor your personal hero with a classic red brick to be installed in the Korean War Memorial. Bricks are available now through the Planes of Fame Gift Shop, 909 597 3722, or visit [PlanesOfFame.org](http://PlanesOfFame.org)!







# A NEW HOME FOR “WRONG WAY” CORRIGAN’S AIRPLANE

Article and Photos by Frank B. Mormillo

The 1929 Curtiss Robin that the late Douglas “Wrong Way” Corrigan used for his epic solo flight from Floyd Bennet Field in New York to Dublin, Ireland in 1938 has found a new home at the Planes of Fame Air Museum in Chino, California. Except for one public appearance the Curtiss Robin had been languishing in a garage in Orange County, California from 1950 until January 2019. At that time, Corrigan’s son, Harry Corrigan, decided that it should find a more fitting home in a museum. Eventually, Chuck Lowry, a former North American Aviation engineering manager put him in touch with Planes of Fame.

Inspired by Lindberg’s flight across the Atlantic, Douglas Corrigan purchased a 1929 Curtiss Robin for \$310 in 1933. He repaired the battered airplane as much as possible, replaced its 90hp Curtiss OX-5 engine with a 165hp Wright J-6-5 Whirlwind engine, increased the fuel capacity to 320 gallons, installed a 16-gallon oil tank, named the airplane “Sunshine,” had it registered as NX9243 and applied to the U.S. Bureau of Air Commerce for permission to make a solo flight from New York to Ireland in 1935. However, Corrigan’s application was rejected by the Bureau of Air Commerce because his airplane was considered to be unsuitable for the flight.



*Wrong Way Corrigan’s “Sunshine” awaits restoration by Planes of Fame Air Museum volunteers.*



*The control panel of Wrong Way Corrigan’s “Sunshine.”*

Nevertheless, on July 9, 1938 Corrigan flew “Sunshine” on a solo, non-stop flight from California to New York’s Floyd Bennet Field in 27 hours. On July 19, 1938 he supposedly took off in “Sunshine” for a return flight to Long Beach, California, but wound up instead in Dublin, Ireland after a 28-hour and 13-minute flight. According to Corrigan, heavy clouds and a navigation error sent him off in the wrong direction. His airplane had no radio, and was only equipped with a basic compass. Naturally, there was some skepticism about Corrigan’s story. Nevertheless, now nicknamed “Wrong Way Corrigan,” he returned to a

hero’s welcome in the United States and ticker tape parades in New York and Chicago.

“Sunshine” was trucked to the Planes of Fame Air Museum in October 2019 in a disassembled state. The fuselage was put on temporary display in the museum’s Edward T. Maloney Hangar in time for its Annual “Taste of Flight” Gala on October 26, 2019. The long-term plan is to eventually restore the entire airplane to static display condition. Harry Corrigan has provided Planes of Fame with numerous detailed photos of the airplane in its original condition to facilitate that effort.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Liz Esparza

As I reflect on the past year I can’t help but smile. I am ever so grateful for my job here at Planes of Fame Air Museum. I am grateful that I have been given the chance to put a face to the membership program. Grateful that I have had the chance to meet so many of you and getting to know some of you better.

Most of all I am grateful for you, our members. I do what I do because of our members, and I strive to put a smile on your face and be there to answer your questions or address your needs. It’s what really makes this job special. I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you, whether you are a brand new member or this was your 20<sup>th</sup> year renewing your membership, you all help Planes of Fame to continue its mission.

When I look at this last year I am pleasantly surprised by the numbers. We have over 1000 “Active” members. WOW!! I want to encourage you

to stop by and say hi the next time you are at the museum. You can either find me in the lobby on Living History Days, running around the premises, or in the office Monday through Friday. And because our members are so important to us, I will continue to explore new ways to make your membership at Planes of Fame a unique and fantastic value. I also welcome suggestions, comments, or questions, especially if it helps improve our member experience.

During this Holiday Season, consider the “Gift of Membership”. This is a great option for the person in your life that loves history, airplanes, or the “hard to shop for” person in your life. I again thank each and every one of our members for your continued support of the museum. Please do not hesitate to email me at [Liz.Esparza@planesoffame.org](mailto:Liz.Esparza@planesoffame.org) or call me at 909-927-5300 with any questions or concerns regarding your membership with us. Season’s Greetings, Liz Esparza.



*Liz Esparza, Membership Programs and Development Manager*



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