

MICHIGAN FIERO CLUB 2017 SPRING DUST OFF

From: Dick Dafforn

This year our destination was the Yankee Air Museum at the Willow Run Airport on Saturday May 6th. We met at “The Twisted Rooster” restaurant at 9729 Belleville Rd., Belleville, MI for lunch and then caravanned over to the museum after lunch. We had a total of (8) Fiero’s in attendance at the event this year. It was a bit windy and cool but no rain like last year’s event. The event was well planned and we were all admitted as a group with our own private tour guide. Members participating were Kirk and Marion Aldrich, Don and Sue Connors, Dick and Kaye Dafforn, Larry Magaw, Larry and Michelle Rhode, Danni and Jodee Merrell, Chuck Lozen and Rick Jarosz.

The original Yankee Air Museum burned down in 2004, so a lot of the original planes, displays and library were lost in that fire. I was impressed though with their efforts to recreate the new museum which opened up 10/10/10 exactly six years to the day after the fire. They have several static displays of WW2 and Vietnam era planes in the museum and on the field as follows:

- B-52 D Stratofortress (on airport grounds and not yet accessible from the museum)
- F-86L Dog Sabre
- F-84F Thunderstreak
- RF-84 Thunderflash
- F-104 Voodoo (outside of museum)
- Lockheed T-33B
- RB-57A Canberra (outside of museum)
- F-4C Phantom II
- PBY4Y (Navy version of the B-24 with a single tail outside of museum)

They also have a Vietnam era UH-1P Huey helicopter in the museum as well as lots of other aircraft memorabilia. Their small fleet of flying aircraft (B-17, B-25 and C-47) were all off-site to various shows for the day, so we didn’t get to see them. After touring the museum one of the staff members, who also owns a Fiero, offered to take us over to the hanger on the opposite side of the airport where those planes are normally stored. Even though the main planes weren’t there we did see a beautiful red Waco bi-plane in the hanger with a 7 cylinder radial engine and wooden propeller. There was also a yellow Stinson overhead wing V-77/AT-1-Reliant in the hanger. The tour guide showed us the old WW2 factory where the B-24 bombers were made and explained that the museum has raised enough money to buy a 144,000 sq. ft. section of the original factory for \$8 million in cash which will become the new home for the Yankee Air Museum in the near future, circa 2018.

Following are some pictures from the day’s events at the restaurant and museum:

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Additional comments:

Hope you all enjoy this excellent write up by Dick Dafforn and that more of you can join us for next year's event. I would also like to thank Sue and Don Connors for planning and executing this interesting and well run event.

Layne and I missed this event due to my 97 year old mother breaking her hip; she's recovering and doing reasonably well.

Layne and I will have to make a solo trip to see this museum when the B-17 is not on a fly away; my dad flew 25 plus missions over Germany in one of those bombers as a pilot in the 8th Air Force stationed in England.

Toward the end of the war, missions only counted if you dropped your bombs on an official target (hence the 25 plus comment) ... the crews thought that if you got shot at by planes or ground flak while over Germany that the risks were real and the missions should count!

All the best,

Roger Fagnani