***On the Road*** with Wyoming Wing’s “Dr. Bob” in Greenfield, Iowa

By Lt. Col. Bob Ditch, CAP, Chief of Staff - Wyoming Wing

GREENFIELD, Iowa – While on the road, spending time in the great state of Iowa, and waiting to attend a friend’s wedding, what do you do? Go to a great air and space museum and catch up on some personal aerospace education. That was my situation in May while in Des Moines, Iowa.

With a good eight hours to wait for the wedding, I took advantage of the time to discover a great national treasure, the Iowa Aviation Museum in Greenfield, Iowa. Nestled among acres and acres of corn and soybean fields, just 12 miles south of Interstate 80, halfway between Des Moines and Omaha, Nebraska, there is a short unpaved road leading into the airport in the small town of Greenfield. At the end of that road, you will find several small buildings and hangars with a retired Iowa Air National Guard A-7 Corsair mounted as a static display. Next to this warrior of the past sits that small, but premier museum.

From the moment you enter this treasure trove of air and space history, you are warmly welcomed by either Larry Konz or Kris Schildberg, mainstays of the museum. Their warmth and hospitality are palatable, and their knowledge of Iowa’s air and space history is overwhelming. After signing their guest book and paying the nominal admittance fee, you are free to roam among all the treasures and historical artifacts.

But please follow Larry and Kris’s directions and move clockwise around the entry room, taking in all the history of aviation from the Wright-Brothers’ visits to Iowa, to the renaissance period of our nation’s aeronautical growth, through the two World Wars, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars, operations Desert Shield and Storm, the evolution of civil air transport, into the modern age of aviation.

One of the most fascinating collections of artifacts was that of Neta Snook, the woman who charged Amelia Earhart one dollar for every minute they spent in the air while she was teaching Earhart how to fly. It’s quite a collection. Once you have exhausted your eyes, overwhelmed your senses, and refreshed your shortcomings in history, they will welcome you into the hangar next door.

Upon entry into that large hangar, you will most likely be awed by the overwhelming collection of “planes of the past,” many I had never seen or even heard of before. Then you end the tour by entering the aviation shrine of Iowa – the Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame, where great men and women pioneers of aviation history are recognized for their experiences, contributions, and roots as Iowans.

Again, do not wait for a wedding invitation to Des Moines to take advantage of this treasure trove of aviation history. It only lies just a few minutes south of your cross-country journey on Interstate 80. It is worth the welcomed detour into history.

For more information on this great showcase of Iowan aviation history, and the Iowan aviation pioneers’ contributions to our nation, go to <http://www.flyingmuseum.com/>. Take advantage of this oasis in history, lying deep within the breadbasket and heartland of America’s farmlands of Iowa “***While on the Road.”***