



**Now in its ninth decade, the world's premier military aviation museum continues to grow.**

# The United States



United States Air Force Museum photo by Jeff Fisher

*With a 230-foot wingspan, this B-36J is the museum's largest display aircraft. The huge B-36 now resides inside the new Eugene W. Kettering Gallery, as does an F-94C (right foreground), as well as the Cessna U-3A (left background) and DeHavilland U-6A Beaver (right background).*

# Air Force Museum



**E**stablished in 1923 in a corner of a hangar at McCook Field in Dayton, Ohio, the US Air Force Museum is the oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world. It was moved several times over the years, finally finding a permanent home in 1971 on what was the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base outside Dayton. It was housed in a huge Quonset-hut-type hangar, that, even then, was too small for its collection. Some aircraft had to be exhibited outdoors, exposed to the weather. A second hangar was added in 1988. It would be another 15 years before the museum could add a third hangar, enabling it to move more aircraft indoors. At right, the museum entrance as it looks today.



Photos by Paul Kennedy



**Above, two of the many museum volunteers work on a new exhibit. At left, the museum's B-58A Hustler is towed to the new facility.**

**The opening of the third hangar—the Eugene W. Kettering Gallery—added some 200,000 square feet of exhibit space. The new hangar houses many of the Cold War-era aircraft, such as the B-36, providing room to display the aircraft and artifacts in a chronological order.**

**At right is an A-10 Thunderbolt II—affectionately known as the Warthog. It was flown by Capt. Paul Johnson during Operation Desert Storm. USAF awarded Johnson an Air Force Cross for his part in an eight-hour rescue mission on Jan. 21, 1991.**

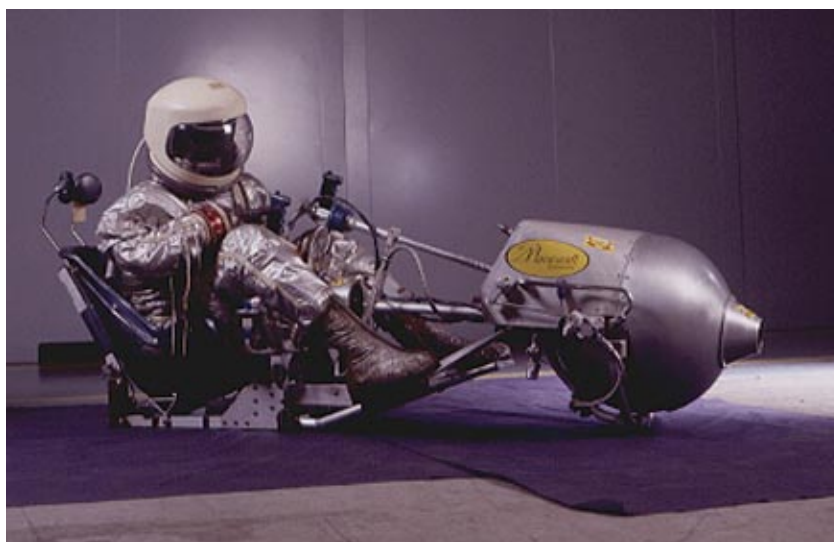


United States Air Force Museum photo by Jeff Fisher



*One of the latest additions to the museum's collection is the B-1B bomber (above). The 16-year veteran was the first B-1B to reach 2,000 flying hours and flew primarily as a training aircraft for bomber crews at Dyess AFB, Tex.*

*The museum is not just a collection of aircraft. Pictured below is a pair of aircrew headphones. Many of these individual elements are used to help create the museum's new-style exhibits featuring dynamic representations of actual events. Lifelike mannequins are essential pieces in many of the new dioramas.*



*The museum expansion plans also include galleries devoted to ballistic missiles and space. Once completed, the new vertical and cylindrical Hall of Missiles will house 15 missiles indoors. The Space Gallery will include other types of artifacts. Above, a mannequin in a 1960s experimental space suit rides the Marquardt space sled, designed to*

*allow individual spacefarers to maneuver outside a spacecraft. It was never used.*





*The museum would not be what it is without the professional and volunteer members of its restoration division. Not all aircraft arrive in the condition of this World War II Japanese fighter (at left), but many do require extensive work to get them into prime display shape. The aircraft shown here is a Kawanishi NIK2 Shiden Kai, known by American forces as "George 21."*

*Restoration work includes fabricating parts that are no longer available or hard to get, such as parts for a Soviet-built MiG-23. To restore the MiG, the museum had to fashion missing panels and the vertical stabilizer—all with an eye toward authenticity.*

Photos by Paul Kennedy



*Above is one of the many leather flight jackets in the new gallery's Cold War collection. Painting on leather jackets was an art form that carried over from World War II to the Korean War. This Korean War-era jacket sports an F-86 Sabre attacking a MiG-15.*

*The Kettering Gallery is named after the man the museum credits with "jump-starting" the museum back in the 1970s. Eugene W. Kettering was an engineer, industrialist, and philanthropist, as well as Air Force advocate for more than 40 years. Museum officials expect to be moving and shifting aircraft and exhibits in the gallery over the next few years but plan to keep the new facility open during the process.*



United States Air Force Museum photo by Jeff Fisher



*Shown above is part of the Korean War section in the Kettering Gallery. It contains a diorama (left) of a scene from the war that is reminiscent of the well-known photo of two 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing pilots walking through the torii-style gateway at Kimpo AB, South Korea, on their way to combat in MiG Alley. The gateway featured the sign "MiG Alley 200 Miles." In the museum display, full-size mannequins depict a pilot and a maintenance crew chief walking through the historic portal.*



*One of the first of the museum's new-style exhibits was the depiction (above) of Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle and members of his Raiders aboard USS Hornet. The display required nearly 5,000 hours of work.*

*At right is an F-117 stealth fighter. USAF flew the F-117 in combat for the first time during Operation Just Cause in December 1989. The stealth fighter was also key to Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. This F-117 is the second built and was specially modified for testing.*



*The Air Force Museum now also has the only B-2 stealth bomber on display. The museum rolled out its restored ground-test airframe B-2 in a special ceremony last month. Restorers spent nearly three years working on the bomber, which had been intentionally subjected to extreme tests to determine the limits of structural tolerance. The B-2 came to the museum disassembled, so the restoration crew had to rebuild the*

*aircraft, some sections of which weighed 70,000 pounds.*

*The addition of the B-2 and other key artifacts ensures that the Air Force Museum will remain the world's premier military aviation museum. ■*