

Col (Ret) Clint Churchill asked me to forward his message below to all the retirees on the Retiree News listing.

The F-86E, F-86L, F-102A, and F-4C are an important part of the Hawaii Air National Guard history - from the early days until 1987, when we converted to the F-15A. For today's HIANG members, these static displays are part of our organization's history – where the HIANG came from. But to those of us who served while these planes were in service, they are part of our personal history and legacy – whether you were in an operational or a support function.

As you read Church's message, please note the \$60,000 used to refurbish the F-102A came from operations and maintenance (O&M) funds. This is not the first time O&M funds were used to maintain our static displays. The current operation tempo and budget restraints severely limit the full time force from continuing the upkeep of these static displays.

We are at a critical junction! Please read on....

APPEAL TO RETIREES: "SAVE THE STATIC DISPLAYS!"

By Colonel (Ret) Clinton Churchill

As you know, there are four static displays at the 154th Wing headquarters: an F-86E, F-86L, F-102A, and F-4C. Over the decades, the Wing has tried to keep these artifacts of our heritage in reasonable condition, but time and the elements have taken their toll. The Wing has concluded that, due to budget constraints and manpower issues, it is not possible to continue displaying the planes outside the Wing headquarters. The F-102, recently refurbished at a cost of \$60,000, is already showing corrosion bubbling under the new coat of paint. Both of the F-86 Sabres are in terrible condition.

The planes are technically owned by the USAF Museum System at Wright-Patterson AFB and on loan to the Wing. The museum has a waitlist of mainland aviation museums desiring planes such as these and, barring any other solution, the museum at the top of the list for each plane will presumably have "our" planes shipped to their respective museums for display.

Enter Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor (PAM), the new museum on Ford Island that opened last December. There has been significant HIANG involvement in the museum's development, including Col (Ret) Clint Churchill as the museum's president, Maj Gen (Ret) Rick Richardson as one of the museum's vice presidents, and Maj Gen (Ret) Mike Tice, Col (Ret) John Lee, and Maj (Ret) Dave Gilbert, in various docent and restoration department volunteer positions.

Realizing that it would be a shame to allow these planes to be shipped out of the state, PAM officials recently met with Gen Charles Metcalf, director of the USAF Museum. Gen. Metcalf indicated, with respect to transferring some or all of the planes over to PAM, "I think that's do-able." Gen Metcalf emphasized, however, that a significant commitment will need to be made to arrest the corrosion and return the planes to acceptable condition for display to the public.

With the ball back in PAM's court to consider such a commitment, its Executive Committee recently approved the following:

- Undertaking relocation and restoration of the F-86E, F-102A, and F-4C in Hangar 79 on Ford Island (the F-86L would presumably go to the mainland).
- Committing more than \$100,000 to properly equip a restoration shop in Hangar 79, to include electrical modifications and equipment such as drill presses, lathes, welders, and sheet metal shears and brakes.
- PAM will eventually display the planes in the museum's Phase 3 (likely to be about four years away), which will include exhibits on Korea and Vietnam.

The commitment by PAM's board was conditioned, however, on the following: **That there be a sufficient commitment of volunteer manpower by HIANG retirees to undertake the restoration over the next four years.** Without such a commitment, PAM simply doesn't have the manpower to take on these longer-term challenges (PAM's focus over the next two years will be to expand its WWII exhibits). Given workload, drill weekend, and family requirements, it is not reasonable to expect active Guardsmen to commit much time.

So, the ball is now over to the HIANG retirees. Are there enough of you out there willing to volunteer a few half-days (or more) per week? The "Save the Static Displays" initiative is off to a good start with several former pilots expressing their willingness to help. What's needed now, however, is a commitment from those of you that have aircraft maintenance skills, with particular emphasis on sheet metal work, corrosion control, and related expertise.

If you are willing to volunteer some of your time to "Save the Static Displays," please e-mail Col Churchill at clintc@pacificaviationmuseum.org. Be sure to include your name, retirement rank, and phone number. This project (actually three projects) will give you the opportunity to rekindle old friendships, become a part of making PAM, a nationally respected aviation museum, and, most importantly, help to keep these planes in Hawaii so that many future generations can understand the important role that they played in aviation history.

PAM sincerely hopes that a number of you will step forward so that they, in turn, will be able to convince the USAF Museum to transfer the planes to Ford Island. If you would like to learn more about PAM, go to their website at www.pacificaviationmuseum.org.

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