

# LIBERTY CALL

## Hawaii Museum of Flying

(Right top) A view of two of the museum's three A-4 Skyhawk jets and a vintage Army truck as seen through a cockpit window of a P-3 Orion sub-hunter aircraft on display at the former Naval Air Station Barbers Point airfield.



(Right middle) The P-3 Orion's radio operator station, restored as if ready for a mission.



(Right bottom) A view of the museum's only F-4 Phantom jet which is currently in the process of a two-year renovation project to restore it to like-new condition for display. In the background, Hawaii Museum of Flying Director, Brad Hayes gives a couple of curious passersby a quick tour of one of the museum's A-4 Skyhawk aircraft.



Dressed in a vintage flight suit, Hawaii Museum of Flying Director, Brad Hayes stands in front of one of the museum's A-4 Skyhawk aircraft. Besides the three A-4, one F-4 and one P-3 aircraft, the museum also displays various flight gear dating back to WWII.



Story and photos by  
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*Radar operator: "Sonar contact, bearing 0-9-0."*

*Pilot #1: "Roger Alpha Foxtrot, we'll take it from here."*

*Pilot #2: "Fire control operator, prepare to drop depth charges...."*

As a child around the age of 10, I remember having the most fun crawling inside an old cardboard box my parents were going to throw away, pretending to fly my "war bird."

I would carve out holes for windows, and draw my "control panel" on the box walls with an array of pens, markers and crayons. In my mind's eye, that box would be any airplane, fighter jet or spacecraft I wanted it to be, and it would take me wherever I needed to go, whenever I needed to go there.

However, the war games got boring after playing them for a while. I realized that no matter how many times I pressed that simulated "fire" button, the simulated

light would never come on, the simulated missile would never shoot and the simulated target would never be destroyed. That was a good thing since my parents would not have had anyplace to park their cars after I got back from my 19th sortie on the family garage. But it was fun while it lasted.

Now imagine pretending to fly that "war bird" while sitting in an authentic one. You could see and touch real gauges, maneuver the real steering control and press real "fire" buttons. It's a dream many children have. It's a dream that Brad Hayes had as a child that went unfulfilled - until now.

At the age of 30, Hayes is finally able to live out his childhood dream and share it with others. Nearly two years ago, Hayes - a commercial glider pilot and self-proclaimed aviation nut - took on the volunteer role of director at the Hawaii Museum of Flying at the former Barbers Point Naval Air station.

"When I was a kid growing up, there was no air museum in

Hawaii," said Hayes. "I had to beg my dad to drive me down to the airport just to get a look at the University of Hawaii maintenance school's airplanes through the fence - it wasn't very exciting," added Hayes.

"Now, I've got a chance to make a difference, because now kids can get on the other side of the fence, walk up to an airplane and touch it. They can even get inside a P-3, walk through it, and flip any switch they want." Who knows? You might be inspiring the next Ellison Onizuka out of here," Hayes said.

The museum, a registered non-profit organization since 1998, sports three A-4 Seahawks, one F-4 Phantom fighter jet and a P-3 Orion propeller plane tied down on the runway. The collection of five aircraft were gained after the closure of the air station and are on permanent loan from the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola, Fla.

Each of the planes is in the process of being restored to like-new condition and serves as a reminder of times past.

"Our plan is to show the state of Hawaii's aviation history," said Hayes. "We're going to be the first aircraft museum in Hawaii that actually has aircraft for display and we're going to focus on the naval aviation history from Barber's Point Naval Air Station," he said.

The biggest example of that display of local history is the museum's P-3 Orion, the interior of which has been restored and set up as if it's about to take off for a mission.

"We're still missing some things," said Hayes. "Due to various factors, excess parts are hard to come by, but we're still looking. However, we get lucky and find a part every now and then," he added.

Also on display at the museum is a vast array of military flight gear from the 1940s to present. Hayes and his team of about 10 volunteers have spent countless hours collecting the gear, the aircraft and spare parts through donations or by purchasing them at discount from military surplus.

Future plans at the museum include the addition of three helicopters. One Huey and one Cobra helicopter are expected in the next couple of months. And a Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter is expected to follow by the middle of next year.

Although the museum is not scheduled to officially open until December, Hayes and his crew have offered tours to Japanese tourists and groups of school children looking for a taste of local naval aviation history.

"Kids love airplanes, and this whole thing is for kids. We want to get them in here for free and get them stoked on flying," said Hayes. "If our flying museum steers kids in the direction of a positive lifestyle, then it's all worth it," he said.

And according to Hayes, although the work on the planes is far from completed, he is ready to give a tour to just about anyone who asks.

So why not ask? For more information about the museum, call Brad Hayes at 373-5743.