

## WARBIRD ARRIVES



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

The Boeing B-17G bomber Aluminum Overcast lands at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Thursday. The plane is being flown by pilots Ken Morris and Shawn Knickerbocker, and is owned and operated by the Experimental Aircraft Association.

# WWII aircraft arrives at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport

*The B-17 bomber Aluminum Overcast will be at the Mt. Vernon Outland Airport this weekend for people to see and ride in during the holiday weekend*

**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — The “Aluminum Overcast,” a Boeing B-17G bomber plane from World War II, touched down at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Thursday in preparation for the Independence Day weekend.

Shawn Knickerbocker, one of the pilots who flew “Aluminum Overcast” to Outland Airport, gave some background on the rich history of the bomber, from when it was constructed to its adventures after the war.

According to Knickerbocker, the

aircraft was made in May 1945, in Burbank, Calif. The plane, though designed for warfare, never saw combat and would later be sold in 1946 to an operator for \$758.

“It went on doing some mapping through the African continent, to ant spraying in Alabama, to carrying cattle from Florida to Puerto Rico,” Knickerbocker said of the aircraft.

This B-17G comes from the Experimental Aircraft Association out of Oshkosh, Wis.

According to Knickerbocker, 12,371 B-17s were made in preparation for the war, with close to 4,000

being lost during combat and another 1,000 lost due to training accidents.

Knickerbocker said how rare working B-17s really are and the unique opportunity people are getting this weekend to ride in one.

“There are only about 13 B-17s left today flying,” Knickerbocker said.

World War II veteran and first Lt. Evertt Dale Atkinson discussed flying a fighter plane and a B-17.

Atkinson also discussed the differences from being solo in a fighter plane, training with the B-17 and getting his 10-man crew when flying Boeing’s other World War II stalward, the B-29 Superfortress.

“I had a bunch of guys behind me doing this and that: flight engineers; bombardiers; gunners; and

Please see **Airport**, Page 3A



# Airport:

*Continued From Page 1A*

navigators," Atkinson said.

Atkinson also covered that the B-17 allowed him to take a step between the single-engine fighter plane and the four-engine B-29, which allowed him to transition from single-engine fighter instructor to B-29 aircraft commander at 22 years of age.

"I did master the B-17 as a first pilot and certified for that," Atkinson said.

Knickerbocker also dis-

cussed his delight in sharing in the history of the "Aluminum Overcast."

"It is a great privilege and a honor to fly an airplane that the generation that saved the world did," Knickerbocker said.

"Aluminum Overcast" will be available to take flights in this weekend starting today. There will be flights at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. with seats currently full, and more flights are being scheduled and those interested in obtaining a spot on a flight can contact the airport for more information.

*jjones@morningsentinel.com*

7/3/15