

# History comes to life at EAA Fly-In at Outland

*Vintage planes on display  
at 15th annual event*

**BY TIM JOHNSON**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — Aviation history was on display Saturday as Outland Airport hosted the 15th annual Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-In and Veterans Reunion.

Parked on the tarmac this year were three World War II-era training planes as well as a nearly 70-year-old Douglas C-47 military transport plane flown in from St. Louis, the oldest still-flying C-47 in the world, according to owner Judy Scott.

The C-47 was here last year, but Lively Grove resident Roger



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**FAMILY OUTING** — The Olivier family checks out a World War II-era North American AT-6 training plane at the 15th Annual Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-in and Veterans Reunion at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport on Saturday. On the wing, FROM LEFT, are Kevin, Matthew and Timothy. On the ground are Victoria, Denise and Christopher.

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Sentinel Photo/TIM JOHNSON

**ROLLING HISTORY** — Jeff Meyers, LEFT, and wife LaDonna talk with Dennis Richardson as they stand behind LaDonna's Vietnam War-era M274-A5 Mechanical Mule at the 15th annual EAA Fly-In and Veterans Reunion.

## Fly-In:

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Weber was more interested in the silver North American AT-6 training plane parked nearby.

Having grown up on a farm not far from Scott Air Force Base, Weber, 78, vividly recalls watching pilots train in the same type of plane in the skies above his home as a child.

Weber is a regular visitor to the fly-in, only missing it when his truck breaks down. His experience as a boy inspired him to join the Air Force at age 19, and he became an aircraft mechanic during the tail end of the Korean War.

"During World War II, we would hear them up in the

air," Weber said. "They'd be roaring and snorting and growling."

The pilots were practicing dogfighting maneuvers to prepare them for combat.

"When they came into view we could see them chasing each other out of the sky," Weber said. "We'd get a big kick out of that."

Jeff Meyers of Mt. Vernon and his wife, LaDonna, brought a collection of old military machines and World War II memorabilia to the show, further immersing the fly-in in the sights and sounds of the era.

A Glenn Miller record played as Meyers talked with visitors about his wife's 1968 M274-A5 Mechanical Mule, a small all-terrain vehicle used during the Vietnam War, and his 1952 Jeep from the Korean War era.

Meyers has been collecting military machines since 1989, in that time he has acquired at least half a dozen trucks, armored cars and all-terrain vehicles, mostly from the time of World War II.

He said he likes bringing pieces of the collection to the airport to talk with veterans

who remember the days when they were still in use.

"It's always nice to see the veterans talk about them. It brings back memories for them," Meyers said. "They're a part of history. They need to be saved, cared for and preserved."

At the fly-in, children, ages 8 to 17, were given the opportunity to take free Young Eagle flights from EAA members above Mt. Vernon for no charge, heading to the west side of town, then south and back east to the airport.

"It really shows them a different view of Mt. Vernon and the area," said Airport Manager Chris Collins. "You can see Rend Lake as soon as you get about 200 feet off the ground."

Collins was disappointed to hear the news of a number of cancellations from military aircraft owners on Saturday, but he said he was glad for the perfect weather and the planes that made it in safely.

"You do the best you can with what you've got," Collins said. "And I think we've done that."

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