

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

## **J. Elroy McCaw Personal Courage Wing**

### **The Personal Courage Wing . . .**

- Highlights the stories of courage, dedication, heroism and the triumph of the human spirit of those involved in fighter aviation in World War I and World War II.
- Presents the history, aircraft and memorabilia behind those amazing human stories.
- Is an 88,000-square-foot addition that opened on June 6, 2004 – the 60th anniversary of D-Day.
- Showcases 28 immaculately restored World War I and World War II fighter planes in two galleries — including one of the finest collections of historic fighters found anywhere in the world — the internationally known Champlin Fighter Collection.
- Features exhibits dedicated to telling the stories of not only those who flew, but the people who designed, built and maintained these amazing aircraft.
- Features two stunning galleries telling the dramatic history of World War I and World War II fighter aviation through state-of-the-art exhibits, interactive experiences and flight simulations.
- Is a highly dramatic, immersive environment offering visitors interactive displays and experiences using advanced technologies to create an unforgettable experience for all ages.
- Provides a fitting tribute to that “greatest generation” and a reminder to young people as they seek their own place in the world today
- Will, in its ground floor, become the future home of the Museum’s Library & Archives as well as a portion of a new Education Center.
- Is the official home of the American Fighter Aces and the American Volunteer Group — the “Flying Tigers.”

### **Project Background**

- The project began in the fall of 1999 as the first step in a master development plan for the Museum. In 2000, NBBJ architects initially designed the entire Master Plan and created construction drawings for initial construction phases. A feasibility study was undertaken that spring and fundraising began in the fall of 2000. Ground was broken for construction in May 2001.
- The Museum took possession of the completed PCW structure in August 2003. The exhibits were completed in early June 2004.
- Unlike the Museum’s Great Gallery, the new wing is essentially a black box. This provides the necessary protection from harmful ultraviolet light to enable the Museum to display fragile items like documents and uniforms that cannot be displayed in the glass-and-steel Great Gallery. An additional benefit of the architecture is that it facilitates the creative use of lighting, sounds and theatrical sets to enhance the visitor experience.

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## **Aircraft**

- The new wing is dedicated to telling the history of World War I and World War II fighter aviation. All of the aircraft in the exhibits are from those time periods.
- Aircraft include those of the internationally famous Champlin Fighter Collection, as well as other famous fighters already in the Museum's collection. Types represented include: the Fokker D.VII, SPAD, S.E.5a, Sopwith Camel and Nieuport 28 fighters of World War I; and the P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt, Messerschmitt Bf 109, Supermarine Spitfire and FG-1D Corsair fighters of World War II.
- With the acquisition of the Champlin Fighter Collection, the Museum now has most of the important fighter aircraft from all sides throughout both world wars. For the first time anywhere, visitors are able to see and compare these aircraft all in one place and to easily see the evolution of fighter aircraft technology.
- Doug Champlin is a private collector who has spent the last 30 years traveling the world and rescuing these rare and vintage aircraft. He has had many of these planes restored to their original look and configuration, using as many original parts as possible. Some of the aircraft are replicas that were made from original plans when the real plane could not be found. All the aircraft are flyable and many have original engines.
- The Champlin collection was trucked to Washington from Arizona. Each airplane was carefully disassembled, separating the wings from the fuselage and removing the tail sections and propellers. Wooden cradles were built to support and protect each section. Sections were loaded on large tractor-trailers and then delivered to Seattle.
- Fighters outside the Champlin Collection include the pre-World War I Caproni Ca 20, the world's first fighter plane. This has belonged to The Museum of Flight for the last three years. The JN-4D Jenny, FG-1D Corsair and Spitfire Mk. IX were also in the Museum's collection prior to the Champlin acquisition.
- The World War I gallery features two famous aircraft of types that were used by the Red Baron, Germany's most famous pilot of that era, as well as a Sopwith Camel, the aircraft made famous by Charles Schultz's cartoon character, Snoopy.
- One of the lesser known fighters in the collection is the Soviet Yak 9 — a workhorse of the Red Air Force on the Eastern Front during World War II. The Museum feels that it is very important to show the public a comprehensive collection of vintage aircraft and have planes that represent all the main combatants.

## **Personal Stories and Exhibits**

- The stories of World War I and World War II are told in a variety of ways, using live actors, videotaped oral histories, recorded sound and living history theater. Most of the stories are told in the first person and through many artifacts. Some famous people are profiled, but there are also many stories of typical representatives of different groups. The content of the stories has been gleaned from the Museum's extensive archives of original source material, as well as dozens of personal interviews with people who were actually involved.

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