



HISTORY OF THE AIR FORCE MUSEUM FOUNDATION



The Air Force Museum Foundation (AFMF) was chartered in 1960 as an IRS Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the purpose of assisting the United States Air Force Museum (now the National Museum of the United States Air Force, (NMUSAF) in its efforts to inform and educate the public on the important role of the USAF in the nation's defense. The Foundation is a state of Ohio philanthropic corporation assisting the development and expansion of the facilities of the NMUSAF. In addition, the Foundation provides approximately \$150,000 each year to the NMUSAF for special projects and underwrites program activities such as education, volunteer support, special events, and promotional efforts.

The museum dates its origins back to 1923 when it opened to the public in an aircraft hangar at the edge of McCook Field near downtown Dayton, Ohio. When McCook Field closed in 1927, the museum moved to the new Wright Field, and in 1935, it moved again to a new building constructed by the Work Progress Administration (WPA). The onset of World War II and the need for office space at Wright Field caused the museum artifacts to be put into storage. However, the museum function remained active, and in 1955, it reopened to the public in an old, temporary structure used as an engine-overhaul facility during World War II. Quickly outgrowing this facility, the museum moved to a new building, funded by the AFMF, at its current location. President Richard Nixon dedicated the new museum on September 3, 1971, to a crowd of 12,000 enthusiastic supporters. The museum's operations and maintenance are funded by Air Force Appropriations. There is no charge for admission or parking.

The AFMF provided \$6.5 million dollars for the permanent, 220,000 sq. ft. home. Funds came largely from public contributions: donations by corporations, foundations and individuals, plus an Air Force in-service drive in 1970.

During 1975-1976, a two-story addition was constructed in front of the core building for approximately \$900,000. Funds were provided by AFMF and the estate of Brigadier General Erik Nelson, who in 1924 participated in the first flight around the world. The project provided a new entrance, additional office space, an enlarged cafeteria, and an expanded gift shop area.

The AFMF initiated its second major building fund campaign in 1984 to house the Korean War and Southeast Asia War Galleries. In accordance with a "matching fund" agreement by the 98th Congress, the AFMF and federal government each contributed \$5.4 million for the \$10.8 million project. The new, 160,000 sq. ft. building was completed and dedicated in April 1988.

The AFMF built a 500-seat, large-screen IMAX® theatre for the NMUSAF in May 1991. This \$7.3 million project included an 80-foot-high atrium over a new lobby, which serves as the

architectural focal point of the entire Museum complex. Funding for the theatre was obtained from revenues generated in the Museum Store, Valkyrie café, and Membership Program over several years, as well as from the proceeds of prudent investments. The theatre is an additional revenue-generating business operated by AFMF. Major renovations to the Valkyrie Cafe (\$900,000) and the Museum Store (\$500,000) were completed with existing Foundation resources in 1997 and 2000 respectively.

In 2003 and 2004, AFMF provided over \$24 million to the Air Force for the construction of the Eugene W. Kettering Cold War Gallery and the Missile and Space Gallery. These funds included a major gift from the Eugene Kettering family, one of the original and prominent supporters of the Museum, as well as a \$500,000 state appropriation.

In 2013 the AFMF completed an \$800,000 renovation and conversion from the IMAX® film format to a 400-seat, state-of-the-art, digital 3D projection system and custom sound system. Conversion from a leased, film format projection system to a Foundation-owned, digital projection format has cut costs and increased options for use.

The AFMF gifted \$40.8 million to the NMUSAF for construction of a new, 224,000 sq. ft., fourth building. The contract for the Museum's newest building, which is similar in size and shape to its three existing hangars, was awarded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District in December of 2013. Construction began July 22, 2014 and the contract was completed in March 2016. The fourth building opened to the public on June 8, 2016.

The new climate-controlled building, with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification, houses four galleries which highlight the Air Force's contributions to research & development, space, presidential airlift support, and global reach in support of the armed forces throughout the world, as well as three high-tech, hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning Nodes.

In addition to the large capital improvements, the AFMF has funded several small capital improvements of approximately \$200,000, bringing the total AFMF contributions for NMUSAF facility expansion to \$87.3 million, or 94% of the total \$93 million facility costs.

The affairs of the AFMF are governed by a Board of Trustees of up to 30 volunteer members, consisting of prominent local and national business leaders; retired senior military leaders; and retired government senior civilian employees. The AFMF Executive Director oversees the day-to-day operations of the Foundation, which include the Friends Membership Program, and Development, Air Force Museum Store, Air Force Museum Theatre, flight simulators and virtual adventures, and the Valkyrie and Refueling Cafes.

Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 33624
1100 Spaatz Street
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433-0624
www.afmuseum.com
foundation@afmuseum.com
(937) 258-1218