Dougherty Plane

VFTH

6/23/11

Another of America’s finest aviators from this area will be honored this weekend at the annual hangar party for Aviation Heritage Park.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham looks at the role WKU graduate Russ Dougherty played in our history.

General Russ Dougherty had a remarkable career as a Four

Star General in the U.S. Air Force. The Glasgow native will soon have his story on display for everyone to see.

This is a T-33 shooting star. The aircraft made it’s way to Bowling Green the first week of January.

 “Our restoration team went to work restoring it to what you see here today and we’re really proud of the way she looks.”

Even the cockpit has been restored. It’s the same type of T-33 shooting star flown by General Russ Dougherty.

 “We call her SAC-1, General Dougherty was a commander of strategic air command, he was the number one guy so the name sort of stuck, SAC-1.”

The T-33 will be the latest aircraft displayed here at Aviation Heritage Park, alongside the F-4 Phantom flown by General Dan Cherry and the F-9 Panther flown by Johnny Magda.

 “South Central Kentucky has a large number of aviators that have made significant contributions to the history of aviation.”

Dougherty’s association with the military began when he was just 15 years old and the Kentucky National Guard needed a bugler. He eventually climbed the ranks to four star general.

 “He was shuttling back and forth to the White House during the Cuban Missile Crisis so he was on the forefront for the decades of the cold war.”

During World War II, Dougherty flew a B-29 bomber. One of his crew members, at the top left of this picture, was Tennessee Ernie Ford with whom he remained close friends. “The thing that stands out in my mind at least, he was the perfect gentleman.”

Aviation Park Historian Ray Buckberry says Dougherty always treated everyone with respect.

 “At the end of each day and when he retired, he would always say good night good people, I couldn’t do it without you.”

Dougherty died in 2007 at the age of 86. But more than a dozen of his family members will be on hand for the unveiling of the aircraft at the Hangar Party Saturday night at the Bowling Green-Warren County Regional Airport.

Tickets are still available. They are 30 dollars and can be purchased at Ford’s Furniture in Bowling Green and Glasgow, as well as Barbara Stewart Interiors, Chuck’s Liquors and Bailey Gibson in Glasgow.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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