

WACO MILITARY EXPERIENCE

In Troy, Ohio the WACO Air Museum is located at 1865 S. County Road 25A. We were able to attend the military show and swap meet on Saturday the 11th and Sunday the 12th. There was a 79 acre grass airfield adjacent to the museum. They had a huge tent for the public to eat in, as well as listen to speakers. Food vendors had set up near the entrance to the museum and the swap meet vendors were between the WWII displays area and the food vendors. There was an area for the French and Indian Wars and the Civil War. There were many vendors primarily selling WWII items. Our area was the furthest from the museum, but we had plenty of room. There were many WWII vehicles: a Sherman tank, half track, jeeps, Amtrack, ambulances, bull dozer, grader, weapons carrier and many other military vehicles. This was the most vehicles I had seen at any recent events.

Friday the 11th

This was the set up day. Lt. Dennis Sullivan, 1st Sgt Bob Traphagan, T/Sgt Harry Busse, S/Sgt Doug Drieling, PFC Dave Dehart and PFC Chris Busse set up the GP medium tent and unloaded tables and props. The tent was donated to PFC Dehart and this was the first time we had set it up. We had to make a few adjustments with the center brace, but everything went well. The tent was however very dusty. We all looked like we had been in a dustbowl. By 1930 hours we secured the tent and left the airfield for the night.

Saturday the 12th

We arrived at 0800 hours. The first day of set up is typically the longest. Outside the tent we had the heavy weapons area and a cammo netting covering a soldier's display (set up by S/Sgt Drieling). In the tent we had a weapons area, a display of infantry equipment, airborne equipment, uniforms on shirt forms (Army, Navy Marines and Air Corp), a display case (with a map, books edge weapons and concentration camp artifacts) and much more. We rolled the sides of the tent up for air circulation.

As all good plans go, the weather was the variable. The forecast was for rain and boy did it ever rain. It rained form 1100 hours until 1400 hours. At times it was very heavy. We learned a lot about the tent and the canvas water proofing. As time progressed the tent began to leak from being saturated. Then the tent stakes began to come out of the ground due to the rain. T/Sgt Busse, while aiding another historian, noticed the stakes and went to his trailer for the sledge hammer. Several of us went outside in the down pour to secure the tent. We were soaked! Then the winds almost took the tent, but due to re-staking the tent we were ok. By 1500 hours the event organizers called the event due to the weather. The roster for Saturday included Lt. Sullivan, 1st Sgt Traphagan, T/Sgt Busse, S/Sgt Drieling, Cpl Fowler, PFC Dehart, PFC Bruce Knight and PFC Chris Busse.

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Sunday the 12th

What a difference a day makes. The weather was cloudy as we arrived at 0800 hours, but as the day progressed it was sunny. We set up and got ready for the visitors. There were a few planes for the spectators. There was a demonstration of various military weapons including a M1 Garand, Thompson and carbine at the range (of course all weapons fired powder or blanks only). The Sherman tank had two re-enactments of being fired on and returning fire.

The crowd was steady and manageable. We were able to gear up and walk around, visit the vendors and see the museum area. We met veterans and one WWII veteran was able to spend time with us at the tent. His name was Wilbur Horstman of the 3rd Division. He was wounded in France and had lost most of his right elbow. He shared some stories of his training and how he was wounded. He was from Trotwood, Ohio.

S/Sgt Drieling's sister Diane set up a Red Cross and home front display by the museum. Diane was also at The Veterans Memorial Museum on D-Day in Germantown, Ohio. S/Sgt Drieling's niece came as a WWII nurse and had a display. Many of the vehicles at the event were provided by Kenny Adams. Kenny owns Poverty Knob where we train.

The day was great, but we were tired. At 1700 hours we broke down the displays, took down the tent and packed up our gear. By 1830 hours we were on the road. The roster for Sunday included Lt. Sullivan, 1st Sgt Traphagan, T/Sgt Busse, S/Sgt Drieling, Cpl Fowler, PFC Dehart, PFC Bruce Knight, PFC Chris Busse and Pvt. Mark Albright.

Prepared by

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