



# Freedom *Flyer*

Celebrate Freedom Foundation Newsletter

Jan /Feb  
2020

Volume 3 Issue 1

## Inside this Edition

- Press Release pg. 1
- Sponsor Highlight pg. 2
- Chairman's Corner pg.3
- Unit History Highlight pg. 4
- STEM Team Report and schedule pg. 5&6
- Upcoming CFF Community Support Events pg.7
- Meet our staff pg. 7
- Veterans Health pg. 8 & 9
- CFF Contact Information pg. 10
- Sponsors pg. 11

## Alleged drunk driver crashes into historic Army attack helicopter at Columbia airport

JEFF WILKINSON—The State News

January 02, 2020

COLUMBIA, S.C.

The Celebrate Freedom Foundation is raising money to repair a historic attack helicopter hit by an alleged drunk driver last month at Columbia Metropolitan Airport.

The Vietnam War-era Cobra chopper was used to teach students about science, technology, engineering and math, commonly known as “STEM” subjects.

“Everything they learn in school is on that helicopter,” said Lori Wicker, director the organization’s STEM program. “Even history and art.”

The helicopter is one of six the organization has renovated or is renovating to educate students and inform the public. Veterans and active-duty soldiers volunteer to do the renovations on the helicopters, which are donated by the Army and individuals.

The helicopters have visited 150 schools and 100,000 students in five states.

The organization decorates one of its helicopters with lights each Christmas, Wicker said. The Cobra, named “Annie,” had just been put on display Dec. 14 in front of the foundation’s hangar next to the former John Hardee Expressway when it was struck.

According to police reports, Thomas Andrew Anderson, 37, of Harrisburg, N.C., had been drinking at the Skyline Club near the airport.

About 2 a.m., he left the club and was heading to Interstate 77, police reported. But he mistakenly took an access road at the airport instead of the expressway and hit the helicopter, which was parked at the end of the access road, according to the police reports.

Reports say Anderson was checked by EMS for injuries and released. He was charged with driving under the Influence, less than .10, first offense, according to court records.

The helicopter, which was restored and decoratively painted, sustained an estimated \$6.6 million in damages, including to the rotor, transmission, fuel tank, skids and weapon mounts, Wicker said. And like a totaled car, she said, most of the vehicle is now out of alignment.

“And we still haven’t gotten it off the ground, so there may be more damage,” Wicker said.

Annie is capable of flying, but hasn’t flown since 2001, she said.

She added that Anderson’s and the foundation’s insurance won’t come close to covering the repairs.

Individuals or companies wanting to donate can do so at [GoCFF.org](http://GoCFF.org) or call (803) 822-8812.

And while the cost of repairs is staggering, “every little bit helps,” Wicker said.

Cont. on next page



**Photos taken the morning of the accident when it was light enough out.**



Fill in the text here.

## **Chairman's Corner**

Happy New Year! A nice sentiment for the season unfortunately, our year for CFF starts out on a sour note. By now, most have heard of the drunk driver on 14 December, about 2 am, virtually destroyed “Annie” the CFF helicopter that supports STEM visits to schools and events in the Southeast. We are now in the process off assessing the extent of the damage and developing the plans for future school visits using another sister ship. Our executive director , Stephen Seymour and our President, Jack Lovelady have the mission to assess the damage and future disposition of “Annie”.

This year will have its normal challenges particularly funding. The loss of “Annie“ is tragic but one thing military training gives you is the ability to handle adversity. The CFF mission does not change . The STEM school visitation program will move ahead. This academic year, CFF has a partnership with the S.C. Electric CoOps to deliver, in each of their service areas, STEM enhancement visits the schools with an emphasis on those most in need of our visits. Fairfield Electric Co-op has taken the lead in promoting the importance of courses in technology at both Middle schools and High schools.

Your support for CFF this year, as always, is critical to our success in mission accomplishment. Losing the services of “Annie” makes your support even more essential . Please continue to support CFF with your time and treasure.

## **Website redesign and modernization**

CFF is proud to announce a partnership with Mountain Castle Media for our website services. Ken Yamashiro, CEO, is a graduate of CFFs 2013 Summer Aviation Camp. He was recommended to us by one of our Board Members and as soon as he walked into our hanger he instantly recognized our Cobra helicopter named “Maggie”. He shared his memories from camp and we enjoyed listening to them. Her is a bio provided by Ken;

**KENNETH YAMASHIRO**

### **Web Design & Digital Exposure**

Founder & CEO of Mountain Castle Media, a local digital marketing agency, Kenneth handles the Foundation's Web Design and Digital Exposure.

Kenneth currently works in South Carolina's solar industry as an energy consultant. He is also an FAA Licensed and Certified Drone Pilot, providing aerial imaging services to the Midlands.

Email: [kyamashiro5@gmail.com](mailto:kyamashiro5@gmail.com)

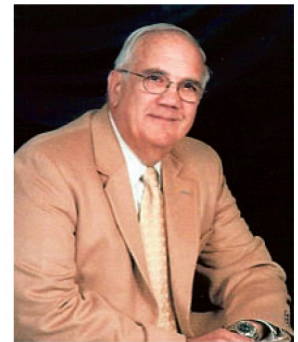
C: 803-807-7417

## Major General John M. Lenti

*is a recipient of the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Valour, five Legions of Merit, the Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, and other awards for exceptional service. He has been associated with the USC Darla Moore School of Business since 1976 where he designed the highly-regarded leadership program, and previously directed the SC Small Business Development Center Program.*



### A MESSAGE FROM John M. Lenti President / CEO



After more than 30 years of military service - including four years as a cadet at West Point - I retired from active duty. Short of being in uniform again, I wanted to reestablish those relationships that I coveted so much on active duty.

Celebrate Freedom Foundation (CFF) has again provided me with the opportunity to take up the guardian role of American men and women. The CFF mission statement embodies those outcomes for today and future generations.

CFF's education programs alert youth, especially those academically at risk, to the necessity of STEM courses. The STEM Education Outreach program connects the classroom with jobs and career fields and helps to build a STEM literate workforce.

CFF works each day to provide guidance to the next generation in South Carolina and beyond to ensure we preserve what so many of our forefathers gave their final measure of devotion.

This is an opportunity for you to protect and preserve our common heritage.

-- Major General John M. Lenti, USA, retired

**10,000 VETS**  
IMPACTED ANNUALLY  
BY CELEBRATE FREEDOM  
EVENTS AND PROGRAMS



# SOUTH CAROLINA CELEBRATES FREEDOM CAMPAIGN

Celebrate Freedom Foundation (CFF) is a South Carolina treasure. Since its founding, in 1999, CFF has commemorated the state's military heritage with the reverence it richly deserves. CFF launched an ambitious series of Air & Ground Shows that introduced to regional audiences to veterans whose contributions represent the enduring legacy of our freedom.

WE WORK WITH  
**SPONSORS & PARTNERS**  
TO ENSURE THAT  
**STUDENTS CONSIDER**  
**THE AVIATION-AEROSPACE**  
ECONOMY AS A VIABLE  
OPTION FOR THEIR TALENT

More than 250,000 spectators have attended public events that celebrated the gallantry of America's citizen-soldiers. We formed lasting bonds with veterans who received special recognition - 485th Bomb Group, Buffalo Soldiers, Doolittle's Raiders, Rosie the Riveter, Tuskegee Airmen, and War Dogs. These organizations are emblematic of everyone who serves - past, present and future.

In recent years, Celebrate Freedom has pivoted to leadership programs that emphasize Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) by highlighting South's Carolina aerospace-aviation economy. The future has never been brighter. Look around. You'll find STEM in everything from smartphones and TV's to restaurant kitchens. It's everywhere whether we realize it or not. Talk to a dairy farmer or seamstress, meet an entrepreneur or pilot. Excitement for STEM as a career option may depend on where you are. Consider the possibility that a few tweaks to a student's schedule has the potential to change their fortunes, for the better, in just a few years.

CFF's STEM Outreach Program visits campuses in the Southeast to encourage students to prepare for transformative change now. Communities around South Carolina have taken notice because we help prepare the next generation of leaders to enter the workforce. CFF brings a \$10 million Cobra Attack Helicopter, accompanied by a veteran and education team, so students can experience the application of STEM. Life at these schools will never be the same, and we're happy about that.

Celebrate Freedom makes STEM real for kids.

# TIMELINE



**1999**

*CFF is organized as a Nonprofit Corp. by Dr. Bruce Rippeteau, Col. Jack Lovelady and Gen. Phil Latham (USAF).*



**1999**

*35,000 people attend Celebrate Freedom '99 Festival™.*



**2000**

*Celebrate Freedom™ attracts 56,267 veterans, guests and children at Owens Field.*

## CELEBRATE FREEDOM'S VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

The men and women who call Celebrate Freedom Foundation their unit hail from many places. They share a devotion to duty wherever they are posted. CFF veteran Tom Robbins, from Holt, Michigan, enjoyed the military experience so much that he joined twice. Tom Robbins is a retired Staff Sergeant. He tells his story in his own words:



My grades weren't good enough for college. I wasn't feeling like working a minimum wage job so I came to the military to get benefits and a job. My first 16 years were in the infantry.

I spent a year and a half in Korea and three years in Panama, where I met my wife Missy. The economy got better in Michigan so I decided to go home for a bit. I went to college for a law enforcement degree and worked at that a couple of years. Missy and I got married and we missed the military life, so I entered service again.

When my son enlisted and I had mixed feelings. Serving is an honor but it's tough sometimes. Veterans experience thoughts and feelings that many others do not.

I want other vets to know that you're not always prepared when you get out. You don't know what you might want to do. I was happy being a stay at home Dad. My wife was in school and working, but I was sitting around all day. Then I got a call from a buddy asking me to come over to Celebrate Freedom. All of a sudden, things changed. Being at Celebrate Freedom and seeing kids get excited about our work gives me meaning and purpose in life...and that's all anyone can ask for.

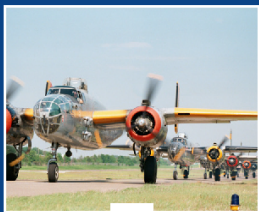
DOOLITTLE RAIDERS 60TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION  
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA  
April 18, 2002



### DOOLITTLE RAIDERS:

The Doolittle Raid, which changed the course of WWII, was conceived at Columbia Army Air Base where Celebrate Freedom Foundation is located. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. military needed to prove to enemy military leaders our ability to strike the Japanese mainland. The Doolittle Raider crew practiced at Columbia Army Air Base and two South Carolinians, Lt. Nolan Herndon and Lt. Horace Crouch, took part in the Raid. Celebrate Freedom hosted their reunion in 2002 (pictured here)."

Picture Copyright © Brian Dressler



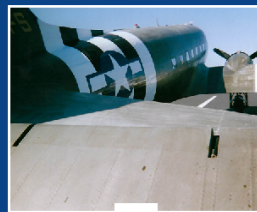
**2001**

CFF Festival tops attendance records:  
102,000 largest non-athletic event in SC  
history



**2002**

Doolittle Raiders 60th Anniversary /  
Black Sheep Squadron / Navajo Codetalkers  
at Owens Field



**2003**

CFF Hosts Centennial of Flight /  
Woodward Field in Camden, SC



**2004**

Tuskegee Airman 60th Reunion  
+ USAF Thunderbirds

# CFF's STEM Outreach Program

During the past 25 years, South Carolina's economy has been transformed by STEM investment in aviation-aerospace, automotive, healthcare, manufacturing and other fields creating a dynamic environment to live and work.

CFF's STEM Outreach Program inspires students to refine their ambitions. Our veterans are top-notch professionals whose skills translate readily into the marketplace. They mentor students to prepare them for STEM careers. By high school, we suggest that students prepare for their futures by:

- Developing a 4-Year Action Plan
- Setting a goal to exceed minimum STEM requirements
- Seeking input from Parents & Adult Mentors



## Jake Reed, a senior at Liberty University's School of Aeronautics gives credit to Celebrate Freedom with his career choice. He tells his story in his own words:

I was in the first Summer Camp that CFF hosted back in 2012. That's the first time I saw two helicopters named Maggie and Lena in the hangar. I didn't come from an academic background and I was surprised I was able to keep my GPA up and get into summer camp. This was the first time I was surrounded by people that cared about their academics and it was my first hands-on experience studying aviation. I couldn't believe I was able to go flying and got my hands on the airplane! I learned so much and it changed my perspective on life!

I've been keeping in touch with a lot of people who attended summer camp with me and a lot of them are in aviation right now which is a cool thing. I really didn't care about my academics prior to going into the CFF camp, so the Aviation Summer Camp was the first time I was awarded a scholarship! Now, I'm a charter pilot and we've been flying all over the country because of CFF!



## THE RED TAILS:

***CFF Air & Ground Shows, and cultural events provide a forum for heroes to share their stories...***

The Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber to enemy fighters. Laurens County native Ernest Henderson, Sr. was a flight instructor. Post-WWII, Mr. Henderson enjoyed a career as educator, community leader and prominent member of the South Carolina Aviation community. CFF honored The Red Tails for their valor at home and overseas. (Photo courtesy Ernest Henderson, Sr.)



**2008**

*U.S. Army Provides Cobra's on permanent loan*



**2012**

*Martha Reeves headlines Heros of Freedom*



**2013**

*STEM Education Summer Camp Sponsored by SC Aeronautics*



**2018**

*CFF begins workforce development program*

**CFF HAS**  
**21,000**  
 VOLUNTEER HOURS  
 GIVEN EACH YEAR



**OUR**  
**\$4**  
**MILLION**  
**GOAL**  
**WILL IMPACT**  
**EVERYONE!**

**MOST CFF**  
**PROGRAMS**  
 ARE DELIVERED  
 ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BY  
 COMBAT WOUNDED VETS

## **CELEBRATE FREEDOM FOUNDATION PROGRAMS:**

**Summer Workforce Development Program** has a mission to build a STEM workforce to ensure South Carolina's technological leadership. Celebrate Freedom Foundation makes students aware of opportunities in the Palmetto State, and beyond. Multi-billion dollar investments by Lockheed Martin Corporation (Greenville), GKN Aerospace (Orangeburg), and The Boeing Company (Charleston) are supported by more than 400 suppliers in the state. During the Summer Workforce Development Program, CFF emulates the environment of a global manufacturer by helping twelve students evolve into a team capable of planning, managing and tracking work flow. Students became proficient with the Wasp Barcoding inventory control system, materials handling, safety procedures, financial literacy and healthcare. With a proven 95% success rate for students who complete the program, Celebrate Freedom is impacting South Carolina's economy for decades.

**STEM Education Outreach Program** is a "field trip" that brings South Carolina's aviation-aerospace sector to high school campuses. Widely praised, the program helps build a workforce that is positioned to succeed in a global economy. Most visits include a Cobra (AH-1F) attack helicopter as a training aid to emphasize Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics in student performance. Each year, we visit about twenty schools meeting 10,000 students.

**National JROTC Excellence in Academics Award** recognizes leadership by cadets at 1,500 high schools in all 50 states, U.S. territories and overseas. The distinctive red, white and blue ribbon is approved by the U.S. Department of Defense. This program is administered by Celebrate Freedom Foundation.

**Veteran Care & Appreciation.** CFF networks with veterans and support groups to provide services veterans need to better cope with PTSD and prevent veteran suicide. Through CFF's programs with youth, airshows and parades, veterans are able to connect with others who have had similar experiences.



## 2019 South Carolina Celebrates Freedom Host Committee



- Lindsey Graham (SC) ..... United States Senator
- Tim Scott (SC) ..... United States Senator
- Jim Clyburn (SC) ..... U.S. Congressman
- Joe Wilson (SC) ..... U.S. Congressman
- Gilda Cobb-Hunter ..... SC State Representative
- Steve Benjamin ..... Mayor, City of Columbia, SC
- Sheriff Leon Lott ..... Sheriff, Richland County, SC
- Bruce G. Bacon ..... Chief Executive Officer, Fairfield Electric Cooperative
- Jim Bigham, Jr. .... Captain, JetBlue Airways
- Gail Lumet Buckley ..... Award-winning Author, Daughter of Lena Horne
- Steve Cohen ..... President/CEO, Home Concepts II
- Susan Clary ..... Marketing Director, Mashburn Construction- NAMIC
- Chase Clelland ..... Vice President of Enterprise Risk, Grow Financial Federal Credit Union
- Dr. Noble Cooper, Jr. .... General Dentistry, Cooper & Cooper
- Dr. Baron R. Davis ..... Superintendent, Richland School District Two
- Karen Davison ..... Manager, Global Business Development, Charleston Regional Development Alliance
- Lynne Douglas ..... Customer Service & Public Relations Manager, Columbia Metropolitan Airport (CAE)
- Brian P. Dunphy ..... First Vice President-Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors
- Dean Ellison ..... President/Chief Executive Officer, Gentleman's Closet
- Leslie Farmer ..... Communications Lead, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics
- Marilyn Gray ..... President/CEO, GMM Insurance
- Coral Gresham ..... Architect, Jumper Carter Sease Architects
- Jonathan Harling, Esq. .... Attorneys at Law, Harling & West, LLC
- Howard Henry ..... Aircraft Sales & Acquisitions, Eagle Aviation (CAE)
- Wendy Nipper Homeyer ..... Principal, Hoymeyer Strategy Group
- Brent Johnson ..... Morning Personality 93.1 FM The Lake, Midlands Media Group
- Lynn H. Kenyon ..... Account Manager, VC3, Inc.
- Kirk Luther ..... Publisher, Old Fashioned Community Newspapers
- Susan Vaughan McPherson ..... Director of Public Policy & Military Affairs, The Columbia Chamber
- Morgan Nichols ..... 2019 Miss South Carolina, Miss Clemson
- Scott Merrill ..... Ft. Jackson Branch Manager, NAVY Federal Credit Union
- Richard Burton Peterson ..... President/Chief Executive Officer, Lake Murray Chamber of Commerce
- Vince Pace ..... Associate, RE/MAX Home Team
- Scott Powers ..... Executive Director, Experience ColumbiaSC.com
- Kevin & Stefanie Poysck ..... Group President/Hubbell Lighting, Philanthropists
- Joseph Rich ..... Chief Executive Officer, Sunshine Recycling LLC
- Thomas Springs III ..... CAE Base Manager, Air Wisconsin Airlines
- Frank Strait ..... Senior Meteorologist, Accuweather.com
- Bill & Vicki Shanahan ..... Owners, Lexington County Blowfish
- Troy A. Simpson ..... Vice President/Member Services, Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative
- James Stephens ..... Executive Director, SC Aeronautics Commission
- Wally & Delores Steinhauser ..... Co-Owners, Wingard's Nursery
- Dr. Joseph C. Von Nessen ..... Research Economist, USC Darla Moore School of Business
- Carl Washburn ..... Dept. Head, Aviation Maintenance & Truck Driver Training, Greenville Technical College
- Col. Walter L. Watson, Jr. (USAF, Retired) ..... Motivational Speaker, Columbia, SC
- Michael Williams ..... Facility Personnel Manager, Michelin North America
- Dr. Craig Witherspoon ..... Superintendent, Richland School District One
- David Zalesne ..... President, Owen Steel Company



2533 B Airport Boulevard  
West Columbia, SC 29170

**(803) 822-8812**

**www.gocff.org**

### BUFFALO SOLDIERS:

*CFF is indebted to all veterans; their service is at the heart of the South Carolina Celebrates Freedom Campaign...*

The all-Black 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiment and 24th and 25th Infantry Regiment were the Heroes of the West. The Buffalo Soldiers earned their nickname from the First Nation's peoples that respected the soldiers' ferocity. CFF will support the Buffalo Soldiers Reunion, in Columbia, scheduled for July 2020.



# STEM Team Report

Celebrate Freedom Foundation’s exciting STEM Outreach Program visits dozens of schools across the Southeastern U.S. every year with more than 10,000 students participating annually.

CFF’s STEM Outreach Program, emphasizes the necessity of STEM Subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in middle schools and high schools. It connects the classroom with real world jobs and career fields. The program’s mission is to help build a workforce that can compete globally for jobs in the future, and to ensure America’s technological advantage in a global environment. STEM subjects provide skills and competencies greatly needed here in the Southeast, across the nation and globally.

How can you help the CFF STEM Outreach Program? We are always looking for volunteers to assist in these visits and if you have a school that you want us to visit, let us know. You can reach out to **Lori Wicker** our Director of STEM Education by email at [stemed@cff-soar.org](mailto:stemed@cff-soar.org) or a phone call at **(803) 882-8812**



STEM Education Outreach Program visit with “Lena”

## 2019 SCHEDULE

**Jan**

**Feb**

**Mar**

**Apr**

Booking now! Contact CFF

**CFF Community Support Events**

**To Contact the Celebrate Freedom Foundation:**

National Headquarters and  
STEM Education Center

Celebrate Freedom Foundation  
2533 B Airport Blvd.  
West Columbia, SC 29170

Phone: (803) 822-8812  
Email: info@cff-soar.org  
website: www.GoCFF.org

**Educating the Public, Promoting  
Patriotism and Honoring the  
Military - Past, Present and  
Future**



Future


Celebrate Freedom would like to give a special thanks to all of the volunteers that have given their time and effort to the renovation of the CFF National Headquarters and to our Board of Directors for their continued pursuit of progress. Without the countless hours of help, CFF wouldn't be where we are today.  
Thank you!



Any questions or concerns about the newsletter, please contact Tom Robbins at the phone number above or by email - webmaster@cff-soar.org


## Donation or Membership Mail In Slip

If you would like to make a donation or become a member of CFF you can fill in your information below, cut it out and mail it to CFF at the address listed above or go to our website and use PayPal.



Mail in donation and or membership slip

Please Print



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Prior Service?: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \$25.00 x \_\_\_\_ General: \$50.00 x \_\_\_\_ Lifetime: \$250.00 x \_\_\_\_ Sponsor: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

The Celebrate Freedom Foundation would like to thank all of our sponsors who have given donations in order to ensure the education of STEM and to honor our military - past, present and future.



**PPG Aerospace**



**Mountain Castle Media**

