



Sisters Lydia, 10, and Christiana Schaffer, 8, (partially hidden) admire the displays in the new Walker Aviation Museum during its grand opening gala held Saturday at the Roswell International Air Center. (Mark Wilson Photo)

[Joe Moore](#)

[Walker Aviation Museum becomes reality](#)

Sunday, September 19, 2010

Nothing was more packed than the parking lot, more crowded than the standing-room only auditorium than the love for country. The who's-who of Roswell and its former base lined the stage. The patriotism was palpable.

Such was the scene at Saturday afternoon's events commemorating Walker Air Force Base and its predecessor, the Roswell Army Air Field. The Remembering Walker Air Force Base program began with a ceremony at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell's Performing Arts Center and was immediately followed by a ribbon-cutting and museum dedication at the neighboring Roswell International Air Terminal.

Brig. Gen. Doug Murray, who spent 42 years on active duty in the Air Force and now serves as chief academic officer and as a dean at New Mexico Military Institute, was master of ceremonies. He described the event's purpose as remembering, celebrating and believing in the base.

Maj. Gen. Chris Adams, a distinguished Air Force veteran and a recipient of the nation's highest peacetime decoration, spoke of the nation's current lack of understanding of the military and its history in asserting the need to memorialize the base and establish a museum.

For his part, Roswell's mayor, Del Jurney, proclaimed Sept. 18 a day to honor Walker Air Force Base. He referred to the efforts of the Walker Aviation Museum Foundation as a "labor of love."

The New Mexico Military Institute color guard and regimental band also figured prominently in the ceremony, as did a message from Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., that Murray read.

Behind the scenes was Dr. Judy Armstrong. From the creation of the steering committee, she has plugged two-and-a-half hard years that, finally, culminated in Remembering Walker. While she won't acknowledge her central role in realizing the museum and preparing Saturday's slate of events, almost everyone else did.

Armstrong credited the 15 members of the Walker Aviation Museum Foundation board.

She revealed, too, that, while the event went off flawlessly, in reality, final preparations had continued right up until Saturday morning.

The crowds enjoying the ceremony and museum consisted of the young, old, and in-between, and plenty of veterans were interspersed among them. The appreciation of the men and women who had worked at the base was evident.

Retired Air Force Maj. Philip Berry simply said it was the "absolutely right thing" to do. Bobby Pike, the president and treasurer of the 6th Bomb Wing reunion, added, "It's great and an honor. The committee has done a fantastic job."

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Walker Aviation Museum

This is a fine addition to Roswell. Is the museum open now? What days? What hours? Do they have a web site? Well, anyway it's nice to know it's there. Thanks to the Record for reporting it. I guess we can all look up this info. L.R.

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