

Greater Huntsville Section at AirVenture 2019

by

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Images by Lisa Philippart and EAA

Members of the Greater Huntsville Section attended the world's largest aviation gathering, the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) *AirVenture* in Oshkosh, Wisconsin from July 22 - 28. For the second consecutive year, section members met for pictures and socializing while enjoying all that *AirVenture* offered. New this year, Greater Huntsville invited the Wisconsin Section to join in on the fun also.

AirVenture celebrated its 50th anniversary in Oshkosh this year. Over 640,000 people made the pilgrimage to Oshkosh in 2019, a new attendance record.

Over 10,000 aircraft ranging from operational military aircraft, homebuilts, vintage warbirds, antique general aviation aircraft, ultralights, unmanned aerial vehicles and powered parachutes converged on Whitman Field for the annual celebration of all things aviation. Daily airshows included military flybys, aerobatics, vintage warbird formations, World War II reenactments, parachuting teams and commemoration of events such as the 70th anniversary of the legendary T-28 trainer and the Year of the Fighter. The Apollo 11 50th anniversary celebration featured a presentation by Apollo 11 Command Module pilot Michael Collins and his long-time friend, X-15 pilot and astronaut Joe Engel. Two evening airshows capped the performances with aircraft equipped with LEDs and fireworks dispensers followed by a fireworks show culminating in *AirVenture's* unique Wall of Fire with a new fireball display this year.

Aviation legends Dick and Burt Rutan, World War II triple Ace Col Bud Anderson, and Tuskegee Airman Colonel Charles McGee spoke about their experiences, helping aviation history come alive for *AirVenture* attendees.



(L to R) Tom Brennison, Ken & Lisa Philippart and Wisconsin Section Past Chair Mike Brennison at AirVenture's iconic Brown Arch.

Section Members Lisa Philippart and Susan Mallett also participated in *WomenVenture*, the 12th annual celebration of female aviators



WomenVenture 2019 participants (image by EAA)

and aviation enthusiasts at *AirVenture*. Activities included a group photo in front of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, the *WomenVenture Breakfast* and a luncheon with guest speaker Air Force Lt Col and Iraqi War A-10 pilot Kim Campbell.

Greater Huntsville again arranged for a group photo at the iconic *AirVenture* arch and this year invited Wisconsin Section members to participate. While several members in attendance could not be in the photo due to conflicts, Wisconsin Section Past Chair Mike Brennison and his father Tom met up with Greater Huntsville Section members Ken and Lisa Philippart for the traditional picture. The two sections discussed ways to collaborate on activities at *AirVenture* in 2020.



(L to R) Susan Mallett, past national aerobatic champion Debbie Rihn-Harvey and Lisa & Ken Philippart at the Roxy Supper Club.



Air Force Heritage Flight F-22 Raptor, P-51 Mustangs and A-10 Thunderbolt II fly in formation over Oshkosh.

There is abundance of things to do at *AirVenture* but Greater Huntsville Section members again made time to meet at Oshkosh’s historic Roxy Supper Club. Susan Mallett arranged for AIAA members to dine with a diverse group of aviation enthusiasts including 3-time US National Aerobatic Champion and retired Southwest Airline Captain Debbie Rihn-Harvey, Korean War pilot Lt Col Bob Haver and members of the Civil Air Patrol. The stories and passion for flight shared by this group of aviation experts made for an enjoyable evening befitting *AirVenture*’s moniker as an “aviation family reunion.”

The Greater Huntsville Section enjoyed its second *AirVenture* adventure. Section members are making plans to return next year. See you in Oshkosh!