



Photo by Jackie Gorski, TIMES-UNION

The Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum Board presented American Huey 369 a \$1,000 check toward the construction of the National American Huey History Museum during Rotors Over Mentone Saturday.



Photo by Jackie Gorski, TIMES-UNION

John Walker, co-founder of American Huey 369, spoke during Rotors Over Mentone Saturday.

American Huey 369 Co-Founder Speaks At Rotors Over Mentone

BY JACKIE GORSKI
TIMES-UNION Lifestyles Editor
jgorski@timesuniononline.com

MENTONE - American Huey 369, started 19 years ago, is building a 34,000-square-foot museum without grants, loans or state or federal money.

John Walker, co-founder of American Huey 369, said Saturday the National American Huey History Museum, located on 34 acres in Peru, Ind., will help to preserve and ensure the memo-



Photo by Jackie Gorski, TIMES-UNION

Select band members from Tippecanoe Valley High School performed during Rotors Over Mentone Saturday.

ry of over 50 different models spanning a period of 66 years.

Walker was the guest speaker during the annual

Rotors Over Mentone. After Walker's speech, the Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum Board presented American Huey 369 with a

\$1,000 check for the construction of the museum.

The museum won't be done for another year, See HUEY - Page 2A



Photo by Jackie Gorski, TIMES-UNION

People gather around one of the helicopters at Rotors Over Mentone Saturday.

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\$1.50

Huey

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Walker said. By the time it's done, the museum will be a \$8-\$9 million facility, Walker was told by the experts. American Huey 369 has a total of 16 helicopters that will be static displays at the museum.

In line with aircraft and helicopters, Walker began his speech talking about Lawrence "Larry" Bell, who the Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum in Mentone is named after.

He said there's a things that came to mind when

thinking about Bell, including he had a ton of perseverance. Bell was "an American visionary, he was an industrialist, he was a pioneer in aviation."

Bell was born in Mentone. His life was dedicated to excellence, Walker said. A lot of that excellence, he said, came from the fact Bell had a mother that raised 10 children and Bell was the youngest. Bell's mother taught Bell and his siblings ambition and drive.

Another fact Walker read about Bell was Bell was a loner. Some people are so

caught up with everything they're trying to do, they don't have time to write their own biography.

Bell was a high school dropout and didn't have any formal engineering training or college, Walker said. As an adult, he was responsible for gathering engineers to build aircraft and helicopters that are known today.

No one ever sees the heartache, the meetings with the bankers and the things businessmen have to do to make things happen for so many people and in order to make their own dreams

come true, Walker said.

Bell's history is an inspiration to America's young pioneers, Walker said. He was an exceptional man and imagined everything.

Bell wanted to be first in everything and wanted the first certificated flying helicopter to be offered to the public. He accomplished that goal, Walker said. By 1946, the Bell 47 was developed and certificated. There have been over 20,000 Hueys built. The Hueys were used in Vietnam.

The helicopters, however, couldn't be built without

people and some of them died during the process, Walker said.

Also during Saturday's event, select band members of Tippecanoe Valley High School played the national anthem and patriotic songs. Warsaw American Legion Post 49 Color Guard placed the colors, David Meredith, of the Mentone United Methodist Church, did the invocation.

All the veterans in attendance were also recognized.