

Helicopter Experts, Enthusiasts Converge On Mentone

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By Phil Smith

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Capt. Tom Agness, wearing air cavalry insignia, briefs attendees planning to take helicopter rides.

MENTONE — Spinning blades were everywhere in Mentone at the town’s Lawrence D. Bell Aircraft Museum for Rotors Over Mentone, an all-day family event that showcased Bell’s beloved rotor aircraft.

Lawrence D. Bell is arguably Mentone’s most storied alum. The aviation pioneer became involved with aircraft during the earliest days of manned flight and became a pioneer in several aerial disciplines, most notably rotary aircraft and was the founder of Bell Aircraft Corporation.

During the event, Vietnam helicopter pilot Phil Marshall spoke to the crowd. Helicopter rides were also available to patrons, as well as tours of the museum.

“We were doing pretty good after it stopped raining,” said Museum Board Member Linda Cochran. “We had a good crowd watching our speaker and he did a good job.”

On hand for the event was the organization American Huey 369. Military helicopter veterans were in attendance and shared their experiences.



Jerry Conner with American Huey 369 poses with his organization's aircraft.



An M-60 machine-gun with dummy ammunition give the helicopter a realistic look.



Various rotor aircraft were on display at the Mentone museum.



Attendees enjoyed helicopter rides.

