

Mentone Holds Seventh Annual “Rotors Over Mentone”

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Keynote speaker Robert Ruotolo speaks at “Rotors Over Mentone.”

MENTONE – Heavy rain and storms didn’t keep the community from attending the seventh annual “Rotors Over Mentone” fly-in this morning on Saturday, Aug. 27.

Held at the Bell Aircraft Museum, this annual event had special significance this year because it is the seventieth anniversary of the commercial Bell Model 47.

On Mar. 8, 1946, the Model 47 (NC 1H) was awarded the first commercial license by the US Civil Aeronautics Administration, now the FAA, to a helicopter manufacture which was the Bell Aircraft Corp of Buffalo, N.Y.

The event began with the placing of the colors presented by the Warsaw American Legion Post 49 Color Guard. Select band members of Tippecanoe Valley High School performed the National Anthem.

Robert Ruotolo was the keynote speaker at the event. Ruotolo is a writer, commercial photographer and cinematographer and also specializes in aerial and transportation systems photography. He spoke on the history of the Bell Helicopter. He explained how the Bell Helicopter came to be and the key people who made this invention possible. While many people may know of Lawrence Bell who is actually responsible for the helicopter, fewer people may aware it was Arthur M. Young who presented the idea of the helicopter to Bell.

Ruotolo was able to spend a day with Young before he died in 1995. This connection to Young gave Ruotolo special insight into the conception of the Bell Helicopter.

New exhibits in the Bell Aircraft Museum were open to the public during the event.

Due to heavy rain and storms, the helicopter scheduled to come in from Goshen to give rides to attendees was cancelled. The American Huey 369 had flown in earlier so members were able to get rides later in the afternoon.