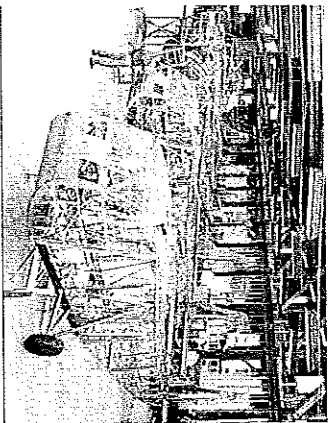


FIGHTING FALCON MILITARY MUSEUM



This legend begins in 1942. The Gibson Refrigerator Company, Greenville, Michigan, had just received a contract from the U.S. Army Air Forces for production of CG-4A troop carrying gliders. There were 15 companies in the U.S. given these cost-plus a 5% fixed fee contracts to manufacture the gliders. Most of the companies were small civilian aircraft manufacturers; the exceptions were Gibson Refrigerator Company and the Ford Motor Company. Gibson's produced a total of 1,078 CG-4A gliders.

The glider had over 70,000 individual parts, a height of 12'7", wing span of 83'8" and overall length of 48'4". The crew consisted of a pilot, co-pilot and 13 infantrymen. The glider was towed by a C-46 or C-47 and released behind enemy lines.

In March, 1943, the students of Greenville Public Schools decided to try to raise enough money to purchase one of the Gibson made gliders. In two months the students raised \$72,000, enough to purchase four of the Gibson-made gliders. On May 19, 1943, the school students christened one of these gliders "The Fighting Falcon" at a prestigious dedication ceremony on Black Field. The students received the coveted Distinguished Service Award from the United States Treasury Department, the first one in history to be awarded to school students. The Fighting Falcon was then disassembled, re-created at the Gibson factory, and shipped overseas to Crookham Commons, England with hundreds of other gliders.

In recognition of the students' patriotic efforts, the Ninth Air Force Headquarters ordered that the Fighting Falcon be the first glider in the echelon of 52 gliders heading into Normandy on D-Day. At 1:19 a.m. on June 6, 1944, the lead aircraft roared down the runway towing its glider, "The Fighting Falcon", with a big "1" chalked on its nose.



In May, 1993, a small yet dedicated group of individuals began work to complete a replica of "The Fighting Falcon", the most famous combat glider of WWII. The Cass Street school building has now become the Fighting Falcon Military Museum and is the permanent home of the CG-4A restoration. By creating a museum in this building we are also preserving the oldest existing school building in Greenville today.

The Fighting Falcon Military Museum became officially incorporated on March 7, 2000. The museum has several purposes:

- A. Establishment and maintenance for museum display of a collection of military artifacts and specific historic Army Air Force aircraft in honor of the sacrificial giving of men, women, and children during times of war.
- B. Education of the general public on wartime events through museum displays, aircraft displays, and presentations, publications, and educational programs.
- C. Promotion and knowledge of and appreciation for the American historical experience and the efforts of our forbearers to create and preserve our U.S. Constitutional freedoms and liberties.

thefightingfalcon.org