

34 Pender Lane  
Edisto Beach  
SC 29438.

Governor Nikki R. Haley,  
Office of the Governor,  
120 Pendleton Street  
Columbia  
South Carolina 29201

November 9<sup>th</sup> 2015

Dear Governor Haley,

When as a young engineer I emigrated from England to the U.S. over 50 years ago, like all young men I had a dream. America has fulfilled that dream beyond my wildest expectations and I never let a day pass without trying to repay my debt. I have a wonderful marriage (celebrating 50 years next January 22) two very well educated daughters thanks to their grounding in the Fort Mill school system and enjoy good health. My wife and I are indeed very fortunate. I am now retired.

My aeronautical engineering background and career experience provided me with a vehicle to become involved with various schools, mainly in the greater Rock Hill area, where I actively run aviation courses for young people and endeavor to stimulate them into career paths similar to my own. We have had some truly remarkable successes and I believe this played a significant part of my being inducted into the SC Aviation Hall of Fame this year. I am still a very active pilot despite my antiquity and have flown close to two hundred young folks as part of the national Young Eagles program.

I worry about the future of my adopted country but not for lack of confidence in the upcoming generations – in fact quite the contrary – the young folks that I meet are marvelous enthusiastic citizens.

My concern is quite different to that of most people and that is the surreptitious growth of Islam.

My business career took me to the four corners of the earth and whenever I visited Islamic countries I found monumental divisions and hatred; it seems that the faith is based on division and only survives by oppression and strife. In 1899 Winston Churchill wrote the most appropriate summary that I ever saw (worth Googling).

Current events in Europe and certain views by President Obama give me great cause for concern. As you know there is a real likelihood that several European states will be predominantly Muslim in the foreseeable future. Apparently several cities in our country already have areas where Sharia Law is being practiced. The recent announcement that our neighboring state of North Carolina has passed a law effectively sidelining Sharia gave me a degree of hope. I had in fact suggested something similar some time ago in conversation with Senator Mark Sanford. He felt at the time that it would be unlikely to pass.

I would welcome the possibility of meeting you for a few minutes sometime at your convenience to explore your views on whether or not we might see a similar development in South Carolina. Obviously I will undertake not to share those views with a third party other than my wife – in fact I know that she would love to join us were a meeting possible. Our preference would be to invite you for lunch in Columbia any day at your choosing.

Looking forward very much to hearing from you, I remain with best wishes and thanks for all you have done for our great State of South Carolina,

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Griffin", written in a cursive style.

David H. Griffin

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Fort Mill Times

# Education

## Fort Mill students' historic plane lands in Charlotte

### Sopwith Camel on view at Carolinas Aviation Museum

By RACHEL SOUTHMAYD  
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For two and a half years, volunteer Dave Griffin and teachers and students at Fort Mill High School have been building a plane in the middle of the cafeteria.

They didn't want to fly it or sell it or really do anything with it except teach the students valuable lessons in engineering and honor a local legend. But now the plane has a new home at a museum, where it will be on display for the public at the Carolinas Aviation Museum, near Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

The plane is a World War I-era Sopwith Camel, a replica of the biplane flown by flying ace Col. Elliott Springs of the Springs Cotton Mill family in Fort Mill.

Griffin, a retiree and aviation buff who is originally from Great Britain, said he got the idea to incorporate his history (his father was a pilot in the Royal Air Force during World War II) with that of the town of Fort Mill, all through the lens of educating the next generation of pilots, engineers and manufacturers — the students in Fort Mill's two high schools.

With the help of Ell Close, Springs' grandson, Griffin was able to get a kit to make the Sopwith Camel, and for the last two and a half years he and students at Fort Mill High School have worked on



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A WWI Sopwith Camel replica, built by Fort Mill students, is on display at the Carolinas Aviation Museum.

it diligently. The students at Nation Ford High School got to build an engine. While the engine isn't in the plane, Griffin thinks they'll be able to find a use for it in a new project.

A few months ago, Griffin and Close went to visit the Carolinas Aviation Museum and told them about the plane. Wally Coppinger, the museum's executive director, said officials there jumped at the chance to have a local story about aviation history on display.

"It really fits into our mission here," Coppinger said.

Over the summer, Griffin and a handful of students dismantled the plane, loaded it into a trailer, and transported it to the museum, where it was reassembled in the gift shop, with just inches to spare between the plane and the ceiling and walls.

"She looks quite fine," said Griffin of the finished airplane, which is painted and decorated to look exactly like

### If you go

**What:** The Sopwith Camel at the Carolinas Aviation Museum

**Where:** 4672 1st Flight Drive, Charlotte

**When:** Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday 1 p.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Admission this Saturday is free for the museum's "Community Day", all other days ranges from \$8-\$12.

the one Springs flew nearly 100 years ago.

Now, the replica of the plane that was flown during a war but recreated by local high school students will be one of the first things people see when they walk in the building.

"It draws people in immediately," Coppinger said. "We feel like our guests will be inspired, not only by what Col. Springs did, but what these students did as well."

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