



# THE READY ROOM



AUGUST 2023

Heart Of America Wing Est. 1982

Vol.3, Issue 8

A **ready room** is the room on a Navy aircraft carrier where air crews hold their pre-flight and post-flight briefs. Crews serving during WWII considered the ready room to be a clubroom.

“The funny thing about a ready room is that you get attached to the hole. As much as you are attached to the ship. It's more than sentiment. It's an urge for protection. The loneliest feeling in the whole of a carrier pilot's world is when he's at sea with the gas running low, and he can't see his carrier. You think of the ready room then, and the noisy guys who make it the most desirable place in the world. It's your office, you live in it, it is the big thing in your life. [...] You sweat and worry in it, and grouse and argue, and you get mad at it when you can't hear yourself speak because everyone is yelling at once, but you're deeply attached to the place.

— Tommy Booth

*"Wildcats" Over Casablanca*

## Wing Leader's Report

Even though the temperature doesn't feel like it, Fall will be here before we know it. The temperature at the KC Airshow was reported to be 140F on the ramp. I would like to thank all those who helped at the KC Airshow -- it was HOT! Although we talked to a lot of people at the show, we were only able to sell one Stearman ride, but I'm sure that more will come through as a result of us being there. It seemed to me that the attendance was down at the show, probably due to the heat and the cost to get into the show. The Warbird ramp consisted of our Stearman, three current day T-6 Texan II, and two A-10s, plus some helicopters. Not a lot to look at, which probably was the reason for numerous questions about us doing another Warbird Expo from the Warbird enthusiasts that attended. I think we could do another Expo and the timing might be right to give it another try. I have been traveling for the last couple of weeks and have attended some Warbird events. There has been no shortage of people attending, even with the high temperatures. We will discuss the possibilities at future staff meetings.

The PT-19 is coming along nicely. The center section and fuselage are almost ready to be covered with fabric. By the time you are reading this, the wings should be on the way from Pennsylvania to Junction City, Kansas. Thanks to all that have helped with this project, especially Steve Craig, who rented the truck for us to haul the wings. We are looking for PT-19 pilots and supporters. If you are interested, please let Bob Robinson, our Operations Officer, know. We have a ways to go, but it will be nice to get the PT-19 back in our hangar. Hopefully by Spring, it will be giving ride flights along with the Stearman.

Elections are coming up in a couple of months. If you would like to shape the future of our Wing, I encourage you to consider running for office. The nominating committee would love to hear from you. Tom McChesney is leading the Committee which consists of him, Bev Wittenborn and Rick Schubert. The Wing Leader, Executive Officer and Operations Officer are up for election this Fall. All three positions are vital to the continuation of the great work our Wing does. Please step up and help.

See you at the September Meeting.

**EDUCATE – INSPIRE – HONOR**

-- Steve Zimmerman

**NEXT MEETING:**

**16 SEP, 10:00**



The **Garmin/KC Airshow 2023** took place August 19-20th during a record heat wave for the Kansas City area. Heat indexes well over 100 degrees sent more than 150 people to the first aid station during the weekend show. We were there with the PT-13 Stearman explaining the CAF mission to show attendees. Great flying by the Blue Angels, the Air Force F-22 Demo Team, the US Marines F-35 Demo Team, and a host of civilian acts made for a tremendous show for those who braved the heat. It seemed like the crowd was down from years past. Hopefully that was just due to the weather.

The Stearman's great, great grandson on display.



The Stearman always makes a great ramp display.



Maybe we should have mentioned that the PT-13 air conditioning works great!



Wouldn't seem like a CAF-HOA event if the Suburban wasn't parked nearby.

## Safety Update

Jeff Anderson and I met at the hangar and completed the Annual Fire Inspection. He found a couple of gigs we'll be fixing ASAP.

I want to remind the membership that the path to ALL of the exit doors should be kept clear at all times. During the inspection yesterday, I found the tables in the SW corner of the hangar pushed in front of the path to get to that fire exit door. PLEASE be mindful of the fire exits when you're putting things away in the hangar.



Thanks for your help!  
-- Bill England



The fire exit on the southwest corner of hangar needs to be clear at all times.

If you're putting the round tables away, be mindful to not block the door.



**Wing Staff Meeting**

**7 Sep, 7 PM**



## Hangar Improvements

*As long as we've had airplanes in the hangar, we've had issues with oil dripping on the floor. The solution has been to put drip pans under the airplanes to catch the drips. Unfortunately, when we move the drip pans they often drip themselves, and when we stack them out of the way they get oil on the bottom and later deposits that end up back on the hangar floor. Wing member Jim Hathcoat came up with a nifty*

*solution to the problem: a drip pan drip rack. Now we can stack the pans sideways in the rack to keep them from leaking on the floor, and since they don't touch each other, they don't get dirty and later drop that mess on the floor. The rack should make it easier to set up the hangar for events, and also help keep things clean. Thanks, Jim!*

*-- Brian vonBevern*





# National Aviation Day

President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared August 19<sup>th</sup> as National Aviation Day, deciding for the first time in 1939 that the nation should celebrate the growth and advancements being made in aviation. It is also Orville Wright's birthday. Wright, born in 1871, was still alive when the proclamation was first issued. Katharine Wright, sister of Orville and Wilbur was also born on August 19<sup>th</sup>, but in 1874.



## Museum Update



Evoritt variable pitch propeller on American Eagle biplane.

*A major coup for the CAF-HOA Museum is the recent loan from the EAA of a prototype variable pitch propeller invented in the 1920s, close to Kansas City. On behalf of the inventor's descendants, who live in the KC area, Wing Leader Steve Zimmerman convinced the Experimental Aviation Association's Museum (located in Oshkosh, Wisconsin) to let us display the propeller in our Museum.*

*Variable pitch propellers were a major milestone in the development of aircraft during the twentieth century. Before the invention of practical variable pitch propellers, airplane engines were most efficient at only one airspeed--usually maximized for cruise speed. This meant aircraft took longer to take off, climbed slower, and were less fuel efficient. A variable pitch prop acts like the transmission in an automobile, allowing the engine to*

*operate in a much more efficient manner at a variety of airspeeds.*

*In 1929, brothers Guy and Kelly Evoritt, who lived in this area, designed and built a practical variable pitch propeller, which they flew on several aircraft types. Theirs was only the third design to successfully fly in the United States. They worked closely with the Nicholas-Beasley Aircraft Company of Marshall, Missouri to manufacture the blades for their invention, while they machined most of the variable-pitch mechanism themselves in their garage business. The Evoritts were awarded two patents for their invention.*

*Unfortunately, funding issues prevented the Evoritts from putting their propeller into production. We are lucky to be able to display what may be the sole surviving example. After a suitable time on display at the CAF-HOA, the prop is scheduled to move to Marshall, MO's Nicholas-Beasley Museum, which commemorates its namesake aviation company.*

*-- Brian vonBevern*





*It's almost election time! Each November we hold elections to replace part of the Wing staff, making sure "the same old folks" don't monopolize leadership positions. This year, we've got three offices up for election: Wing Leader (incumbent Steve Zimmerman), Wing Executive Officer (incumbent John Wittenborn), and Operations Officer (incumbent Bob Robinson). If you've got a candidate in mind---or you're interested in running for any of those positions---please let the nominating committee (Tom McChesney, Bev Wittenborn, and Rick Schubert) know. To find out more about what's involved in being on staff you can check the CAF unit manual located in the members' section of the national website. Staff positions are covered in section two of the manual. You can also talk to the incumbents to find out more about how things go locally. Here's your chance to get involved!*



## MONEY MATTERS

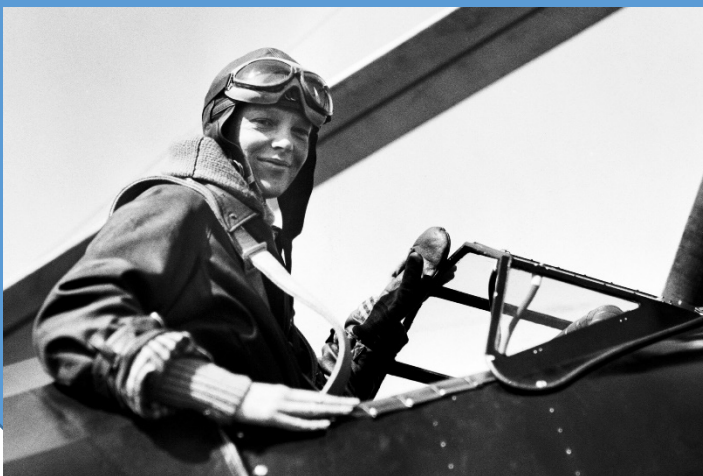
Hello HOA members and friends.

We continue to have good financial results for the first seven months of 2023. For that period, our revenue is up over the same period last year. We continue to sell PT-13 rides and have had successful recent events, including a hangar dance on July 15th and Open Hangar Day on August 5th. Both of these events generated substantial revenue for the Wing, with OHD generating over \$900 in donations! As far as significant recent and future expenditures, the Wing continues to make substantial investments in the restoration of our PT-19.



Let me know if you have any questions!

-- Mark Schlicht



**The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own reward.**

**Amelia Earhart**



## “You Have Left Them Behind”: Jackie Cochran and the T-38 Talon

Dec 03, 2021 By Michael Hankins

A T-38 Talon, in bright white, screamed across the desert; an F-100 Super Sabre followed. Southern California baked in the heat of the summer of 1961, even at nine in the morning. Jacqueline Cochran gripped the controls of the Talon, keeping it in just the right alignment to remain within a 9 mile (15-kilometer) closed-course oval track while pushing the limits of how fast the plane could go. Trailing behind her was Chuck Yeager, the first person to break the sound barrier.

Cochran had become the first woman to do so eight years earlier and was now continuing to push the limits of aviation at age 55. She maxed out the T-38’s speed on August 24, 1961, at 844.2 miles per hour (1358.6 km per hr), a new speed record for that distance.

For almost six weeks, Cochran flew that same T-38 in a blistering attempt at a series of records. Even a case of the flu didn’t keep her out of the airplane. She succeeded in setting eight speed, distance, and altitude records by mid-October 1961. That same T-38 is now on display at the National Air and Space Museum’s Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia.

T-38s are well-loved by most pilots that flew them. As Talon pilot Lt. Howard Morland remembered, “It looked like a comic book superhero.” Like many superheroes, the T-38 had a complicated origin story: Northrop had been attempting to make a new fighter aircraft, but the heavy jet engines of the early 1950s would have required a large, heavy plane. That plan got turned on

its head in July 1954 when General Electric engineers showed off their newest design, the lightweight J85, which weighed under 600 pounds but could generate over 3,800 pounds of thrust. The engine was so small that Northrop engineers at first thought it was a scale model. But its impressive thrust-to-weight ratio made it perfect for a lightweight supersonic fighter that could be launched from the U.S. Navy’s escort carriers. Northrop began work on just such a fighter, calling it the N-156.

Unfortunately, the Navy soon cancelled its requirement for the new lightweight fighter, but Northrop continued working on the N-156 anyway, hoping for international sales. Another opportunity presented itself when the U.S. Air Force issued a requirement for a new supersonic trainer in 1955. The N-156 competed with North American’s F-

100F, the two-seat version of the F-100 Super Sabre. Northrop’s plane was cheaper, easier to maintain, and safer (with its two engines instead of the F-100’s single engine). The Air Force declared the N-156 the winner and, after further development, the first prototype, newly designated YT-38 Talon, flew for the first time on April 10, 1959.

The Talon was the first supersonic trainer aircraft and provided foundational training experiences for Air Force pilots from the United States and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member nations. Tens of thousands of pilots trained in T-38s. Astronauts flew



Jackie Cochran  
1962 Harmon Trophy Winner

*Jackie Cochran stands in front of the T-38A Talon she flew to eight world records in 1961. (Smithsonian Institution)*

them to keep their flying skills sharp before voyaging into space. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration team chose them from 1974 to 1983 to demonstrate the beauty of precision flying and of United States aircraft technology. Talons were used as test beds for new equipment and weapons systems, and variants of the plane went on to achieve their own fame, most notably the F-5 Freedom Fighter and Tiger II.

It's no surprise that this aircraft, which went from being an unwanted design to an indispensable element of the United States military and space program, was the perfect fit for Jackie Cochran, whose career followed a similar trajectory. She earned a pilot's license in the early 1930s and began an air racing career, gaining attention and the nickname "Speed Queen" for her frequent record-setting flights and trophies. In addition to her work with the women pilots' organization the Ninety-Nines, Cochran was an important contributor to the Civil Air Patrol and during World War II was the head of the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP). Although blocked from flying combat missions, the WASP were a key contribution to the Allied effort in World War II, primarily by ferrying aircraft from production facilities to their designated units throughout the United States or by towing aerial targets for gunnery training.

She won the Bendix Trophy in 1938, but that was only the beginning of her record-setting career.. She broke the sound barrier in 1953 while flying a Canadair Sabre Mk.3 (a variant of the North American F-86 Sabre). After her eight record-setting flights in the T-38 Talon, she continued pushing the envelope. Her final record was set in an F-104 Starfighter, which she piloted at 1,429.297 mph (2,300.23 km/hr) in 1964 at age 58.

The T-38 that she flew, now on display at the Smithsonian Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, stayed in the Air Force inventory after Cochran's flights, going on to be used in important engineering flight tests at McClellan Air Force Base near Sacramento, California (the aircraft is currently displayed in these flight test

markings). The U.S. Air Force transferred the plane to the Air and Space Museum in 2004, but it remained in storage for over a decade. In 2018, the Museum's then-director Dr. Ellen Stofan toured the storage facility and spotted Cochran's T-38 from among a wealth of other artifacts in the collection. A simple question about whether anyone had considered including the aircraft in an upcoming gallery led to a series of decisions resulting in the plane's display. In early 2022, the T-38 will be moved to our flagship Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C. But until then, we are proud to share it with visitors to the

Udvar-Hazy Center. A grant from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative supported preparing the T-38 Talon for display.



*Chuck Yeager assisted and documented Cochran's record-setting attempts, flying an F-100 Super Sabre chase plane. (U.S. Air Force, courtesy photo)*

Cochran and the T-38 both had long careers that broke important new ground in aviation history. "I am often asked what my sensations were when flying at Mach 1 or beyond way up there," Cochran said, reflecting on her life. "Up there things come into proportion. The people on earth have disappeared. You have left them behind you and are on your own, impressed with the immensity of space—so close to space and those noontday stars, convinced there must be a divine order of things."

<https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/jackie-cochran-and-t-38-talon?fbclid=IwAR05kNPIXcswmWkZ2IF-Wf6GteK5ZZQvmBKcuDjTbgv63RcpryFmg44bAnE>



**Wing Elected Staff Officers:**

**Wing Leader:** Steve Zimmerman

**Executive Officer:** John Wittenborn

**Finance Officer:** Mark Schlicht

**Operations Officer:** Bob Robinson

**Maintenance Officer:** Mark  
McMahon

**Safety Officer:** Bill England

**Adjutant:** Debbie Atcheson

**Development Officer:** Jim Neese

**Education Officer:** Jesse Plous

**Wing Appointed Staff  
Officers:**

**Guest Speaker/Veteran Outreach:**  
Dave Dyer

**PIO:** Brian VonBevern

**Open Hangar Day Operations:** Jesse  
Plous

**Facility Rentals:** Jim Neese

**Wing Newsletter:** Anita Mack

**Museum & Library Curator:** Darren  
Roberts

**Photographer:** John English



**COMMEMORATIVE  
AIR FORCE**