

# WINGS



# THINGS

## GREAT PLAINS WING - COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

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### 2nd Quarter 2024

Photo: Chad Bosworth

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The PT-19 in Midland

### Our New Resident

(Chad Bosworth)

### What's new at the Great Plains Wing

In December of 2022, the Great Plains Wing found an airplane in a true “barn find.” It is an Erco Ercoupe, and had been a long term storage project in pieces. Eventually this plane ended up being donated to the CAF, and was brought to her new home in Council Bluffs.

## “Lest We Forget”

At Oshkosh last summer, there were several conversations with CAF Headquarters staff. They highly encouraged us to fill out an application to put our Ercoupe project on their "12 Planes of Christmas" campaign. We were selected, and you might have seen some of the posts on social media about this project as well as information in the CAF magazine.

What is an Ercoupe? It is a 2 seat, 1946 plane that was designed as a civilian airplane; there were no rudder pedals, and was designed to fly like you drive a car. The military acquired 3 of them, and ran different tests with this type of aircraft, including the first JATO tests. This is the story we would like to tell about this plane and its unique history.

*From the web*



*The GPW Ercoupe (...as it might appear?)*

During the 12 Planes of Christmas campaign, we raised over \$6900 for our project! We are so thankful for those who donated, and are looking forward to continuing to work to bring this plane back to life. We know this would not be possible without all of the help we have received and will continue to receive; thank you! So far, the plane has been completely disassembled; all metal parts (landing gear, etc) have been stripped and painted. The instrument panel is currently being rebuilt, and while there is still a lot of work to do, we are thankful for the ability to work on this project. We hope to continue to make great progress over the summer.

Life is full of change, and our wing experienced that this past year as well. Gunfighter has found a new hangar/home in FL, though she occasionally comes back 'home' to visit! We love getting to see this incredible plane, and are excited about what she's been up to in the Sun Shine state.

*Chad Bosworth*



This year, the CAF had several planes coming up for assignment, including a few PT-19s and PT-26s. After a few staff meetings and a Wing meeting to discuss this, we put our name in the hat for one of the PT-19s. After many conversations with CAF HQ staff, we decided that a PT-19 that was being purchased by the Museum, would be the one that would suit us the best. The board voted at the Winter Conference on aircraft assignments. We would like to formally introduce you to our newly assigned airplane. "60" or N60112 is now the Great Plains Wing aircraft!

*Chad Bosworth*



*The GPW PT-19*

This PT comes to us from TX, and we are ready to have her home in Council Bluffs! We are waiting on some logistics with travel, weather, checking out pilots, etc, but she should be in our hangar by the end of May. Once we have pilots trained and checked out, we look forward to taking the PT to airshows and flight breakfasts this year. Next summer we hope to be able to start a ride program and sell History flights in our open cockpit PT-19. Come out and see this new to us aircraft this summer.

*Abridged From Wikipedia. Ed.*

The Fairchild PT-19 is an American monoplane primary trainer aircraft that served with the United States Army Air Forces, RAF and RCAF during World War II and was used by the USAAF during Primary Flying Training.

Advanced flight training at the time was conducted with more modern monoplane aircraft, but Primary Training was still accomplished using older biplanes. Fairchild began work on a new low wing trainer using the proven Ranger power plant, internally known as the M-62. The M-62, used the experience gained from the F-24 and the more recent Model 46.

Armand Thiebolt, chief structural engineer at Fairchild was given the responsibility for the design of the new aircraft. Included in the design was the use of interchangeable parts and non-strategic materials. The low wing also incorporated a wide tread landing gear and easier ground handling characteristics to reduce risk of groundlooping. The in-line design of the Ranger engine resulted in a narrower cowling and better pilot than a radial engine, which meant increased visibility for the pilot as well as improved propeller efficiency and a net increase in horsepower.

*Chad Bosworth*



*The GPW PT-19*

The wings were wooden cantilever covered in Duramold, a resin impregnated, heat-formed plywood. Interestingly, Duramold was also used in the construction of the DeHavilland Mosquito. Hollow wooden box spars were used in the wings and wing center section, although the wing center section and fuselage were constructed primarily of steel tubing. Contained in the wing center was the 24.5 US-gallon (93L) fuel tank, with landing gear housings on the out board ends. The oleo struts were designed to withstand a 6g acceleration from a 30-inch (76cm) drop. Cockpit floor, seats and flaps were initially alu-

minum but were later made of plywood. The vertical and horizontal stabilizers were made of spruce spars covered in plywood. Around 7,700 aircraft of all models were produced. A relatively small number of aircraft survived, mostly due to deterioration of the wood structure from exposure to moisture.

On 15 May 1939, the M-62 prototype first flew. In a fly-off competition at Wright Field, the aircraft proved superior to 17 other designs. On 22 September 1939, the Army placed an order for 270 airplanes. Fairchild included a wide range of wood-working subcontractors, including furniture stores, a hosiery plant and a foundry. After the start of WWII, Fairchild licensed manufacturing to several other aircraft manufacturers.

The original production run of 275 aircraft were powered by the inline 175hp Ranger L-440-1 engine and designated the PT-19. In 1941, mass production began and 3,181 of the PT-19A model, powered by the 200hp L-440-3, were made by Fairchild. The PT-19B, of which 917 were built, was equipped for instrument flight training by attaching a collapsible hood to the front cockpit.

When airplane production exceeded engine production, the PT-23 was prototyped by Fairchild. Except for the engine, the airplane was identical from the firewall rearwards. The PT-23 was powered by the 220hp Continental R-670 radial. A total of 869 PT-23s were built as well as 256 of the PT-23A, which was the instrument flight-equipped version. Variants of the PT-19 series were manufactured in the US by Fairchild, Aeronca, the St. Louis Aircraft Corporation and Howard Aircraft Corporation, in Canada by Fleet Aircraft Corporation and in Brazil by the Fabricado Galeao. Production ended in 1948.

During 1943, USAAF Training Command received a number of complaints about durability issues with the plywood wings of the PT-19 and the PT-23 when exposed to the high heat and/or humidity of training bases located in Texas and Florida. Maintenance officers at the USAAF overhaul depots had been forced to order replacement of the wooden wing sections after only two to three months active service because of wood rot and ply separation issues. Subsequent to this experience the USAAF incorporated a demand for all-metal wing sections on all future fixed-wing training aircraft.

The final variant was the PT-26 which used the L-440-7 engine. The Canadian-built versions of these were designated the Cornell for use by the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which was centered in Canada.

The Fairchild PT-19 provided a training aircraft with higher speeds and wing loading more

closely approximated that of combat aircraft when compared to the earlier biplane trainers and yet possessed flight characteristics demanding precision and care while remaining easy to fly. Its virtues were that it was inexpensive, simple to maintain. The PT-19 truly lived up to its nickname, the Cradle of Heroes. It was one of a handful of primary trainer designs that were the first stop on a cadet's way to becoming a combat pilot.

These planes were delivered to various bases all over the country by WASPs (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) between 1942-1944.

Thousands of the PT-19 series were rapidly integrated into the United States and Commonwealth training programs, serving throughout World War II and beyond. Even after their retirement in the late 1940s, a substantial number found their way onto the United States and other civil registers, being flown by private pilot owners.

### Variants

**PT-19** Initial production variant of the Model M62 powered by 175hp L-440-1, 270 built.

**PT-19A** As the PT-19 but powered by a 200hp L-440-3 and detailed changes, re-designated T-19A in 1948, 3226 built.

**PT-19B** Instrument training version of the PT-19A, 143 built and six conversions from PT-19A.

**XPT-23A** A PT-19 re-engined with a 220hp R-670-5 radial engine.

**PT-23** Production radial-engined version, 774 built.

**PT-23A** Instrument training version of the PT-23, 256 built.

**PT-26P** T-19 A variant with enclosed cockpit for the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme, powered by a 200hp L-440-3, 670 built for the Royal Canadian Air Force as the Cornell I.

**PT-26A** As PT-26 but with a 200hp L-440-7 engine, 807 built by Fleet as the Cornell II.

**PT-26B** A S PT-26A with minor changes, 250 built as the Cornell III.

## 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MAY

May 18 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

### JUNE

June 15 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

### JULY

July 20 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

July 22-28 EAA AirVenture 2024 Whittman Regional Airport - Oshkosh, WI

### AUGUST

Aug. 3 GPW Open House & Fly-in/Walk-in Pancake Breakfast 8:00 - 12:00 AM Breakfast  
8:00 - 4:00 PM Open House

Aug. 17 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

Aug. 24-25 Defenders of Freedom Air & Space Show Offutt AFB - Bellevue, NE

### SEPTEMBER

Sept. 21 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

### OCTOBER

Oct. 19 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

### NOVEMBER

Nov. 16 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

### DECEMBER

Dec. 21 Wing Meeting 11:00 AM GPW Hangar

## MONTHLY EVENTS

*Council Bluffs Airport - Great Plains Wing hosts a monthly cookout on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from April to October - 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.*

*York, NE Airport: EAA Chapter 1055 hosts a fly-in breakfast on the 1st Saturday of each month from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. (free-will offering)*

*Crete, NE Airport: EAA Chapter 569 hosts a fly in breakfast on the 3rd Sat. of every month from 8 to 10 a.m.*

*If you would like to put an event on this calendar, please send an email with the necessary information to Terry Helphrey at [terry.helphrey@outlook.com](mailto:terry.helphrey@outlook.com)*