

# WINGS



# THINGS

## GREAT PLAINS WING - COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

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### 1st Quarter 2025

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Photo: Terry Helphrey



The PT-19.

## Fairchild PT-19 Update

By Terry Helphrey

As I sit down to write this article, 2024 is about to wrap up and our first year with the Fairchild PT-19 will be in the books. By all accounts, it was a successful first year with this new wing aircraft. We are proud to have her in our hanger and help promote the CAF mission.

After being assigned the aircraft, 2 of the aircraft sponsors took off for Dallas in May to bring her to her new home. Soon after her arrival, the sponsors started with their flight operations. First out of the gate was a sponsor who had numerous hours in type. He was able to pass his check ride and go on to meet the qualifications to be a check pilot in type. Soon after, other sponsors began getting flight time in the aircraft with some

***“Lest We Forget”***

of them passing their check ride during 2024.

The aircraft appeared on static display at the following four different events during the year

- Fly Nebraska – O'Neill Municipal Airport – O'Neill, NE
- Fly Iowa 2024 – Clarinda Municipal Airport – Clarinda, IA
- Defenders of Freedom Airshow – Offutt AFB – Bellevue, NE
- VFW Fundraiser – Millard Municipal Airport – Millard, NE

During December, the airplane has remained at the front of the hanger in hopes of some good flying days. These have turned out to be few and far between. With winter setting in, the airplane will likely enter a maintenance period starting on January 1st. Known items on the agenda are its annual inspection, work on the tail wheel, installation of an after-market oil filter assembly, and anything else that turns up during the inspection. Our goal is to return this aircraft to flight worthy status by the time Mother Nature decides winter is over. We have already been contacted by Scott AFB in Illinois about the possibility of appearing for static display at their event. Negotiations are ongoing. We also plan to complete the necessary paperwork and steps to have the aircraft in the ride program for 2025. If you have not been out to the hanger for a while, now is a good time to visit as a lot is happening. Look forward to seeing you soon.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



**Christmas Potluck**  
By Terry Helphrey

On Saturday, December 14th, 2024, the Great Plains Wing held their annual Christmas potluck in their hanger at the Council Bluffs Airport during the lunch hour. The event was in doubt Friday

evening as Mother Nature allowed Mr. Snow Miser to drop freezing rain and sleet on the area making travel almost impossible. As an indication of the treacherous travel conditions during the evening hours, the Omaha Police Department received approx. 550 reports of accidents in the metro area.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



Fortunately, Mother Nature allowed Mr. Heat Miser to intervene and ease the temperatures during the night hours. With temperatures getting above freezing during the night, travel became possible again Saturday morning and allowed our members to venture out to the hanger.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



Approx. 25-30 people representing our members and family made the trek to the hanger to enjoy some great food and camaraderie. As with most potlucks, there was enough food to feed a small army. The copious amounts of food was delectable and the wide array of desserts only added to the calorie count but who counts those anyway. The tables were placed throughout the hanger with our 2 airplanes as a backdrop. The Fairchild PT-19 sat at the front of the hanger with the hopes of 1 or 2 more days of good flying weather before winter hits

full time. We will see if that happens. The Ercoupe currently going through a complete restoration sat at the back of the hanger in what we call the 'high dollar corner.' Despite everyone's busy schedule, it is nice we can all get together this time of year, slow down, and enjoy some fellowship.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



Photo: Terry Helphrey



Photo: Terry Helphrey



There were 2 photo albums on display during the event which drew some attention and brought back some fond memories. These photo albums started back in the mid to late 80's when the Great Plains Wing first took possession of its current

hanger and continued into the early 2000's. Pictures showed the wing members building the museum and restrooms at the front of the hanger in the early days and also adding the officer club upstairs years later. There were pictures of our annual picnics, hanger dances, and other events held at the hanger over the years. These pictures clearly showed the progress the wing has made over the years and the dedication of our past and present members. Speaking for myself, it also reminded me my physique has changed over the years along with hair color. I know we all wish we could blame this on bad lighting. Lastly, these pictures remind us of how many great members have Gone West over the years. They are dearly missed but their memories live on. Maybe some of these pictures can be reproduced in upcoming newsletters.

In the end, it was a great day and wish days like this could happen more often but treasure the days when it does.

Wishing all of you a Happy New Year and good health in 2025!!!

## Ercoupe Update

By Terry Helphrey

Like with most hangers/wings, there is never a shortage of projects and we all know projects must be prioritized. In our case, the Ercoupe has, at times, taken a back seat to more pressing projects.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



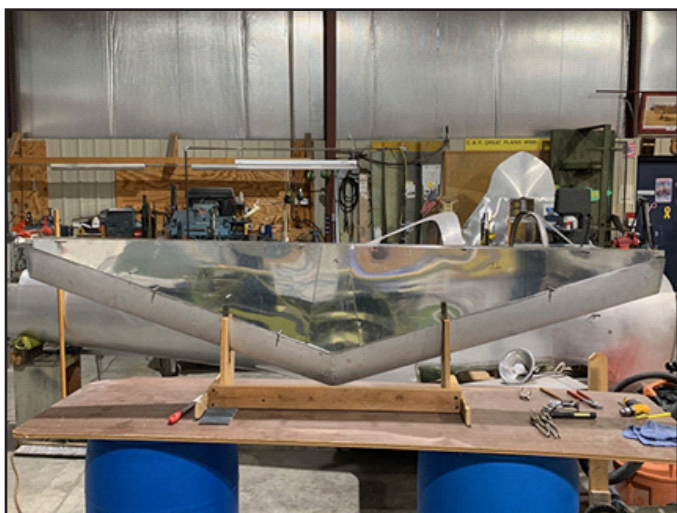
However, this does not mean progress has not been made on this restoration project. As evidenced by the attached pictures, the main landing gear assemblies are mostly complete and ready to be temporarily installed on the aircraft to give it the capability of being easily moved around the hanger as needed.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



Also, work continues on the layout of the new instrument panel and, lastly, the horizontal stabilizer is currently in a nose-down attitude while new skins are being made and riveted to the structure.

Photo: Terry Helphrey



While the restoration project has a long way to go, it's nice to see the progress. Progress requires 2 components: Time and money. In a aircraft restoration project, time cannot be invested without the influx of money. Therefore, if your lottery numbers come in tomorrow or you have excess cash burning a hole in your pocket, please give some thought towards a donation to our wing to help fund this on-going restoration project. It is a great cause and tax deductible.

## 2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JANUARY

18th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### FEBRUARY

8th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### MARCH

8th – Wing Meeting - @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### APRIL

1st to 6th – Sun'n Fun Fly-In – Lakeland Linder Regional Airport – Lakeland, FL

12th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### MAY

10th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### JUNE

7th to 8th – Nebraska State Fly-in & Airshow  
Gordon Municipal Airport – Gordon, NE

14th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### JULY

12th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

21st to 27th – EAA AirVenture 2024

Wittman Regional Airport – Oshkosh, WI

### AUGUST

2nd – GPW Open House & Fly-in/Walk-in Pancake Breakfast - @ Hanger

- Breakfast • 8:00-12:00am

- Open House • 8:00-4:00pm

9th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

23rd to 24th – Quad City Air Show – Davenport Municipal Airport – Davenport, IA

### SEPTEMBER

13th to 14th – Fly Iowa 2025

Clinton Municipal Airport – Clinton, IA

13th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### OCTOBER

11th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### NOVEMBER

8th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### DECEMBER

13th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00a.m.

### 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 pm

York, NE Airport • EAA Chapter 1055 hosts a fly-in breakfast on the 1st Saturday of every month - 8:00am to 10:00am

Crete, NE Airport • EAA Chapter 569 hosts a fly-in breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of every month - 8:00am to 10:00am

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)