

WINGS



THINGS

GREAT PLAINS WING - COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

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2nd Quarter 2026

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Photo: Greg Jacobson



Airplanes = Maintenance

Spring has Arrived, Someone Inform Mother Nature

By Terry Helphrey

Is it Spring or Winter? One would wonder since Mother Nature cannot make up its mind this time of year. One day she provides us with great weather to fly our open cockpit PT-19 and then the next day you need a parka to just to walk outside. Either way, our pilots are using the nice days to get current in the airplane and practice for the upcoming flying season. Fortunately, our winter maintenance period and annual was relatively uneventful. The PT-19 did require a new battery for the season. We are extremely grateful to Concorde Battery for donating a battery to our efforts. As a nonprofit, any cost reductions are always welcome. If you need a battery for your aircraft, please keep them in mind.

“Lest We Forget”

Chad Bosworth has been very busy getting our PT-19 booked for the summer. Currently, our season kicks off with aircraft rides at the Fremont, NE airport from June 19th to the 21st in conjunction with the Nebraska State Fly-in. The Fly-in itself will be held on the 20th where our PT-19 will be on display in a static setting. Shortly thereafter, the PT-19 will offer aircraft rides at the Seward, NE airport from July 3rd to the 5th. During this ride event, we have the privilege of performing a flyover during the parade in downtown Seward on the 4th to commemorate the 250th anniversary of this great nation. Our July schedule continues with aircraft rides at the Sioux Falls, SD airport from July 13th to the 16th. Details are still pending for us to participate in the Sioux Falls Airshow from July 17th to the 19th. Hopefully, this can be finalized soon. On August 1st, our PT-19 gets to stay home for our wing's pancake breakfast and open house on August 1st. The Pancake Man will be serving his world-famous pancakes in our hanger from 8am to 12pm while the open house continues to 4pm. Aircraft rides in our PT-19 will be offered throughout the day. On August 7th, our PT-19 will make a short hop over to Offutt AFB in Bellevue, NE for their open house. The plane will sit static at this event through August 9th. After a break from action, the plane will travel to Shenandoah, IA for a ride event from September 26th to the 27th. A parade flyover will also occur during this time.

In addition to these scheduled events, the airplane may make appearances at various flight breakfasts in the area where aircraft rides will be offered. If you know of any opportunities in your area where our PT-19 can sell rides, please contact Chad Bosworth. 2026 is shaping up to be a busy year for our wing and hope more weekends fill in with commitments.

In the hanger, restoration work continues on our Er-coupe project in between the required maintenance on the wing's PT-19. This includes work on the horizontal stabilizer and the windshield. Barring any mechanical issues with the PT-19 during the summer, we hope to make good progress on this restoration project this year.

Do you have a craving for a grilled burger? Then you are in luck. The wing will be hosting its monthly 'burger burn' at the hanger on the 3rd Wednesday of each month starting at 5:30pm. It's a great time to connect with other wing members and the aviation community at the airport.

Hope to see you at the hanger or at one of our stops. Enjoy the spring when it gets here.

Things you did not know about Elephants

Ed. From the web

Sir William Slim, commander of the XIVth Army wrote about elephants in his introduction to *Elephant Bill* (a book about a British Army Officer in Burma who was in charge of the Elephants): *"They built hundreds of bridges for us, they helped to build and launch more ships for us*

than Helen ever did for Greece. Without them our retreat from Burma would have been even more arduous and our advance to its liberation slower and more difficult."

Photo: From the Web



Aircraft tow in the Far East.

One would expect to see elephants in service in the Far East, where they had been used for logging and other commercial purposes for hundreds of years, but it was very unexpected to see them in use in Europe, both in WWI and WWII, on the continent and in England.

Photo: From the Web



Debris removal in Berlin, circa 1945

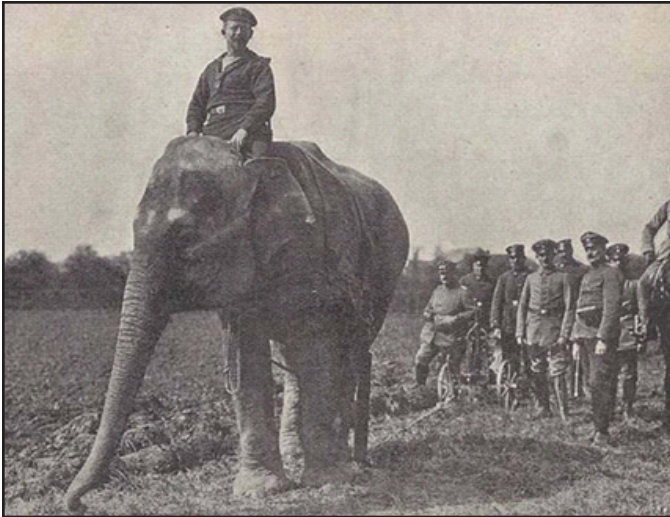
Photo: From the Web



German Army Service in Berlin, 1917

"Elephant Bill" (James Howard Williams) (of the quote at the beginning of this article) began his service in the Devonshire Regiment in WWI, where he was in the Camel Corps and later Transport Officer in charge of Mules. After WWI, he served in Afghanistan in 1919 and 1920. After the War, he decided to join the Bombay Burma Trading Company in Burma which milled teak and used around 200 elephants.

Photo: From the Web



Pack animal service in France

Initially he was at a camp on the banks of the Upper Chindwin River in Upper Burma. He was responsible for seventy elephants and their Mahouts in ten camps, an area of about 400 square miles (1,000 km²) in the Myittha Valley. In 1942, the Company initiated an evacuation of European women and children, in response to the Japanese advance.

Photo: From the Web



Fuel to get over the Hump

Photo: From the Web



Plowing in Towcester, 1939

This was Bill's finest achievement, He led an evacuation column, which included his own wife and children, training the elephants to build a stairway of slabs up a several-thousand-foot cliff, then training them to use it.

Photo: From the Web



Plowing in Belgium, 1915

Photo: From the Web



A former Circus elephant works in the Sheffield Coal fields

He ended this adventure posted to the 4th Army Corps as Elephant Advisor to the Elephant Company of the Royal Indian Engineers. Elephants were used as "sappers" i.e. as part of the Royal Engineers for use in bridge build-

ing in places where heavy equipment could otherwise not be brought in, Williams ended the War as a Lt, Colonel, was awarded the OBE and was three times Mentioned in Dispatches.

GREAT PLAINS WING 2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE

13th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00 a.m.
20th – Nebraska State Fly-in & Airshow
Fremont Municipal Airport – Fremont, NE
26th to 27th – Quad City Airshow
Davenport Municipal Airport – Davenport, IA

JULY

11th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00 a.m.
20th to 26th – EAA AirVenture 2024
Wittman Regional Airport – Oshkosh, WI

AUGUST

1st – GPW Open House &
Fly-in/Walk-in Pancake Breakfast - @ Hanger
Breakfast • 8:00-12:00 a.m.
Open House • 8:00-4:00 p.m.
8th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

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

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

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

DECEMBER

12th – Wing Meeting – @ Hanger – 11:00 a.m.
12th – Christmas Potluck - @ Hanger – 12:00 p.m.

Events TBD

Fly Iowa 2026 – Winterset Municipal Airport
Winterset, IA

If you would like to put a event on this calendar, please send an email with the necessary information to Terry Helphrey at terry.helphrey@outlook.com

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 - 8:00 to 10:00 am

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