



The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

July 2022

Scottsdale, Arizona

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! Last month John Wight from the Arizona Wing of the Commemorative Air Force gave a great presentation on the first bomber to reach 25 missions in World War 2. The story of the B-24 Hot Stuff isn't found in too many history books. John has painstakingly researched the history of the crewmembers, the plane, the mission and the politics of the period. This is one of those stories that probably few if any of us had ever heard. Thanks go out to Chapter member John Warner for getting this speaker lined up.

It's very interesting how some stories such as last month's presentation and Morgan Lowe's talk about the Spirit of Fun are parts of aviation history that we would never know anything about if the speakers hadn't put together their ideas and research, and had a willingness to speak to our group. I guess the title "aviation story teller" is a small sub group within a bigger group that provides a vital educational and entertainment part of aviation history. Please keep an eye out for these people so we can hear their stories at our meetings.

See you at Oshkosh or around the aerodrome!

Curtis

JULY CHAPTER MEETING

CANCELLED

A decision has been made to not have a meeting in July since most people are out of town going to Oshkosh or hopefully someplace cooler. It has always been a hard month to find speakers and attendance at the July meeting is usually really low. Rest assured we will be back live in August.

AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR

It has now been a 24-year tradition of Chapter 1217 members attending the Oshkosh AirVenture Fly-In to get together one evening and compare sightings and stories. This year on the first day of the Fly-In, we will have our annual AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR AND FISH FRY at WENDT'S ON THE LAKE. Come and join us for some traditional Wisconsin food and libations. That's on Monday, July 25th around 7 pm.

If you want to plug it into your GPS the address is N9699 Lake Shore Road, Van Dyne, WI 54979-9703 www.wendtsonthelake.com. (920) 688-5231. They are located 3.8 miles south of the seaplane base.

See you there!

HUNDRED YEAR OLD PILOT FLIES RV-8

There is wisdom to be learned from our elders. A few months ago one of my coworkers asked me "Curtis would you take my/her Uncle for a plane ride to celebrate his 100th birthday". I said sure and learned that he was an Arizona native and lived in Wickenburg until recently when the town got too big for him. It also turns out he had been a pilot for most of his life. As the date, July ninth approached, it was all set to fly in the early morning from Deer Valley. I even had Jack Pollack as a backup plane and pilot if my plane had an attitude. Heck you only turn one hundred once and I didn't want to ruin it.

As the date approached everything was setup, his niece Nancy called and told me he was all excited but had these words of wisdom: "why the hell are we going flying in July in Arizona?" So, the mission was scrubbed for now and I will take him when it cools off a little.



Cessna XMC

CESSNA'S DREAM PLANE

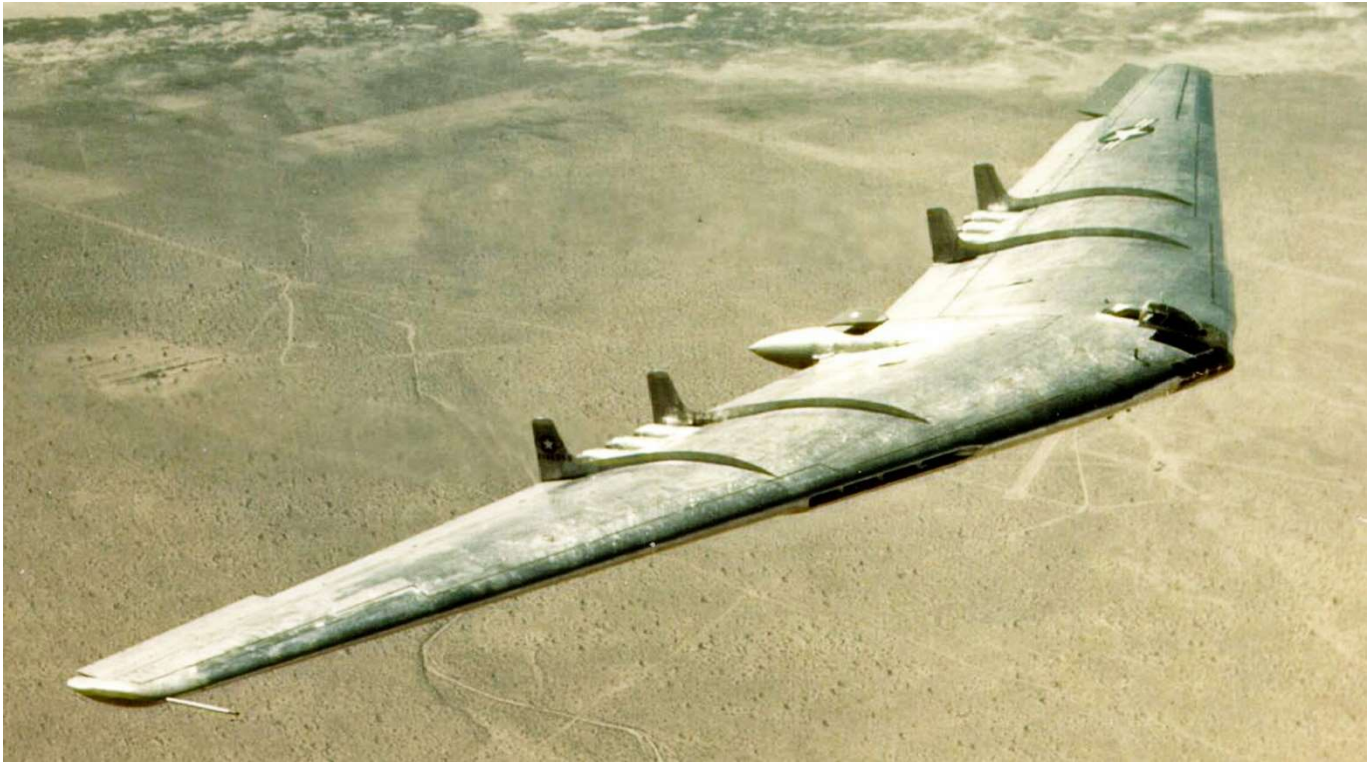
If you dug around the storage lots and junkyards of any airplane manufacturer you would probably find some cool planes that for whatever reason did not make it into production. Cessna had a few of these and generally tried to chop them up so they wouldn't end up back in the air. Cessna had a few of these including a four-engine piston twin and a small helicopter.

One of the coolest planes Cessna ever built was a small single engine pusher that looked like a Skymaster with only the rear engine. It was actually a much smaller plane and featured a swept wing. The plane was named the Cessna XMC. Only one was built and it

flew in 1971. The name stood for "eXperimental Magic Carpet". It was never intended for series production but more of a research aircraft to test various design concepts and manufacturing ideas.

From the outside the XMC looked like a Cessna 150 from the future. Same 100 hp engine, two seats, same basic empty weight and a wingspan only six inches shorter. What really set it apart was the twin boom and pusher configuration. One of the biggest benefits was that the cabin area was lower than a normal plane and the huge entry doors made cabin entry a breeze.

Maybe it is time for someone to revive a similar configuration of plane for the kit market.



YB-49 Flying Wing

YB-49 LANDS IN WINSLOW

A friend of mine was checking into the La Posada hotel in Winslow, Arizona a while back and stumbled across a little-known story in the history of aviation flight test. The part it played at a small airfield, a steppingstone for many greats from the early years of aviation. A rare photo showing the YB-49 flying wing being towed at Winslow/Lindbergh airport.

But one story that these walls were keeping secret would soon come to life when a chance sighting of an old photo had me thinking about an old friend, the late Bob Cardenas. He shared stories about the early days of the YB-49 flying wing test program, his historic speed run to Washington, D.C., and a famous picture of him flying the wing down Pennsylvania Avenue.

There on the wall, in the hotel's hall was a picture at the Lindbergh/Winslow Airport and a YB-49 sitting on the ramp with some people milling about. His mind started to reboot a bit and remembered an aspect of that famous trip to Washington and back to Muroc, that had some drama to it. Here we were visiting the location where flyover country became center

stage to the occurrences that took place on Feb.9, 1949. As luck would have it, the crew of that flight and Bob would end up spending some nights at this hotel until the plane was fixed and ready to depart.

The very first YB-49 flew from Muroc Air Force Base in California to Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, D.C., in 4 hours, 25 minutes to establish a coast-to-coast speed record.

President Harry Truman came to inspect the YB-49 at Andrews Air Force Base in February 1949, after which he had Cardenas fly it down Pennsylvania Avenue and over the Capitol in a demonstration that the pilot described as "kind of hairy." The flyby at rooftop level was intended send a message showing the taxpayers what the government was spending its money on.

The return flight from Andrews was not to be without controversy when four of the eight engines had to be shut down due to oil starvation. It appeared that at its stop at Wright Field on the return trip, the oil was never checked, or there was a more sinister act in

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play. Inspection after a successful emergency landing at Winslow Airport, Ariz., revealed no oil had been replaced in those engines at Wright after the Muroc-to-Andrew's leg, raising a suspicion of industrial sabotage.

On their way home with a faltering aircraft, when the crew reached Durango, Colo., it was decided that the best location for an emergency landing would be at the Winslow Airport, as it had the longest and flattest approaches with a more than adequate runway for roll out.

The small Winslow community, used to the traffic generated by their presence on the famous Route 66, was about to get a visit from a Cold War warrior that would have the highway playing second fiddle in the minds of many people in that region.

With a successful landing Winslow, the crowds began to appear and with little or no military presence at the field it fell to the small local Winslow Civil Air Patrol detachment to deal with security until the feds showed up! The wing drew crowds from all over the region and as the plane waited for replacement engines to arrive from California, it became a must-see event much to the dislike of the Department of Defense.

Funny that even the local newspaper, the Winslow Mail, detailed the arrival and

installation of the new engines and promoted the spectacle as a public attraction! Hundreds of people came to see the unique plane. Then on March 2, hundreds came to the airport to watch the amazing site of the YB-49 takeoff. Now, back in 1949 it was not a very common sight for the people of a remote town in Northern Arizona, so they eagerly watched as the futuristic flying wing took to the air on its way home.

On a side trip out to the field, as the wind whistled around that old 1930s hanger, I was thinking of the activity in this one lone structure, that for about a month was home for a bunch of Northrop folks and all the equipment that had to be flown in to change out four engines on a YB-49.

After a brief visit to the wind swept airport we made our way back to the old La Posada hotel bar, one could only wonder what that crew ordered up to drink as Bob Cardenas and his band of misplaced airmen wondered how long they would be singing the blues at an airport in a town that years later would become famous for the line in an Eagles song. What did they think, as they stood "on a corner in Winslow, Arizona," waiting for four Allison J35-A-15 turbojet engines to show up, maybe even on a "flatbed Ford."

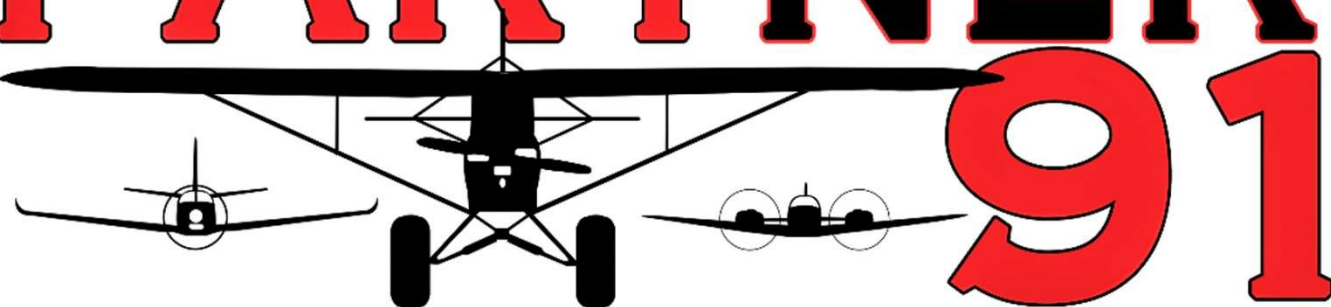


Van's RV-15 Taxiing Out for First Flight



Van's RV-15 First Flight

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LONGEZ AND SONEX

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