



The ThunderWord

Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217

August 2023

Scottsdale, Arizona

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from my corner of the hangar! Last month there was no meeting due to our meeting room being unavailable and yours truly being on vacation. Finding free meeting space now rivals finding speakers as one of the most challenging parts of running the chapter; if anyone has ideas I am all ears. We have some great speakers lined up so there should be some fun meetings.

July was the annual pilgrimage to Oshkosh for the EAA AirVenture Fly-In. 2023 marks 38 years of attending. There have been major changes, almost all for the better. It's always fun to check out the planes and meet up with Chapter members and old friends. We had a great turn out for our annual Happy Hour at Wendt's On The Lake.

This month's newsletter has a bunch of stories from Wisconsin because there is nothing going on at the airport with the extreme heat. I also shared a story about N104 a local plane that moved to Canada. It wasn't at Oshkosh.

See you around the aerodrome!

Curtis

AUGUST CHAPTER MEETING

The August 2023 meeting of Thunderbird Field EAA Chapter 1217 will be held on Thursday, August 16th beginning at 7 pm. The location is the Paradise Valley Community Center, 17402 North 40th Street, on 40th Street just north of Bell.

This month's guest speaker will be Fairfax O'Riley from Aerial Engagement at Scottsdale Airport. He is going to brief us on what Aerial Engagement mission is as well as talk about his newest passion, the state's newest glider operation at the Superior Airport. Fairfax has

been very involved in supporting youth aviation activities and getting more kids involved in aviation

AIRVENTURE HAPPY HOUR

The 24-year tradition of Chapter 1217 members attending the Oshkosh AirVenture Fly-in to get together one evening and compare sightings and stories lives on. This year's event was very well attended with 35 members, friends and families in attendance at WENDT'S ON THE LAKE. The longest distance was Rob a RV-8 owner from Australia. Many pitchers of Spotted Cow were consumed as well as lots of the house specialty of fried Lake Perch.

AIRVENTURE

This year's EAA AirVenture event in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, was, in fact, a record setter. The official attendance announcement from EAA today (Aug. 1) cites overall turnstile clicks at "approximately 677,000—a record total" eclipsing last year's tally of 650,000. According to EAA CEO and President Jack Pelton, "We had record-setting totals of campers, exhibitors, volunteers, and more. It was also a challenging year at times with weather, logistics, and other factors, which makes me even more proud of the efforts by our volunteers and staff to organize an outstanding event."

By the numbers: More than 10,000 aircraft arrived at Wittman Regional Airport (KOSH) and other nearby reliever airports. At KOSH Pelton added, "There was so much going on during the week that encompassed the entire world of flight, from the presence of the U.S. Air Force Training Command and NASA, to magnificent aircraft restorations and exciting new flying technology. Oshkosh was again the place that brought the aviation world together."



Wendts had many selections

“ground zero,” the FAA logged 21,883 aircraft operations in the 11-day period from July 20 to July 30. That works out to an average of approximately 148 takeoffs/landings per hour when the airport was open, according to EAA.

A total of 3,365 show planes were on display, including 1,497 registered in the vintage aircraft parking area (a record), 1,067 homebuilt aircraft, 380 warbirds (a modest increase of 3 percent over last year’s attendance), 194 ultralights, 134 seaplanes and amphibians, 52 aerobatic aircraft and 41 rotorcraft.

AirVenture hosted more than 1,400 forums, workshops, and presentations. And in the August 2023

ever-increasingly-vital realm of social media, more than 18.3 million people tapped EAA’s social media channels during AirVenture 2023, a stunning 78 percent boost from last year’s numbers. Viewers logged more than 189,000 hours of EAA video clips (the equivalent of 21.6 person-years!), more than double the 2022 total.

As evidence of what is hopefully an increasing return to “normal” in the post-pandemic world, international visitors flooded back to the American Heartland in 2023, with 2,372 attendees registering the International Visitors Tent. That posted a tie for the all-time high of 93 countries represented.

And finally, in some ways the most significant, the EAA Aviation Foundation’s annual event supporting aviation education programs drew more than 1,000 people and tallied in excess of \$2 million dollars toward supporting EAA’s efforts to grow participation in aviation.

OSHKOSH REPORT ON COOLEST PLANES

THE FLOGGER

Rare, and unique, airplanes are a relatively common occurrence at EAA AirVenture

Oshkosh, this year's event has proven to be exceptional for head-turning, "what the heck is that" aircraft. Possibly at the top of that list is a Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-23, the only flying example in the U.S.

Introduced in 1970, the MiG-23 (NATO reporting name "Flogger") is a swing-wing fighter that was operated by the Soviet Union into the 1990s and was sold to numerous Soviet allies. With a top speed of about Mach 2.35, it's among the 10 fastest fighter aircraft types ever built. The Flogger attending Oshkosh, a MiG-23UB imported from the Czech Republic, is owned by Dan "Files" Filer, EAA 1538389, a U.S. Navy combat veteran who flew A-6 Intruders in the Gulf War.

A longtime L-39 pilot as well, Dan stumbled on a MiG-23 up for sale a number of years ago and went for it. While looking for parts, he found 17 more MiG-23s (yes, 17), and bought those as well — donating the single-seaters to different air museums. He's in the process of getting a second Flogger in flying condition and hopes to have eight flyable aircraft. "So far it's proven a very, very reliable airplane," Dan said. "It's not an L-39. It takes a lot of man-hours for one hour flight-time compared to the 39, but it's been nice."

While the MiG-23 has a poor reputation when compared to other fighters of the era such as the F-14 Tomcat, Dan says that's not a completely fair assessment of the type, though he admitted he wouldn't want to dogfight in it. The Russian military pilots, Soviet guys that I've talked to, they love the airplane. And I like the airplane. Would I want to dogfight in it? No."

Dan said the reaction to his airplane has been a mix of excitement and confusion, as many folks at AirVenture, and the Western world as a whole, have never seen a MiG-23, much less one that's flying.

"Nobody's seen it. They say, 'We didn't know any of these existed,'" Dan said, "I've been flying around my hometown, Longview, Texas, and it was time to display it. They're just like, 'We didn't know there were any of these.' So

we're excited. It's been positive. Anybody from the Eastern bloc countries, they all come over. This guy just got a big tattoo of one 30 years ago. And then I have a bunch of Polish ones. This one came from Czech Republic. I got Polish ones, Bulgarian ones.

LONG NOSE RV-9A

It was hard to miss the bright yellow RV-9A on display at AirVenture, with an impressive nose job. Under the extended fiberglass is a turbocharged Rotax 915 in place of the usual four-cylinder Lycoming, a modification program run by Lockwood Aviation in Florida. The airframe was a factory-built ship provided to Lockwood for the project.

The turbocharged engine makes 141 hp for takeoff, which it can maintain up to 18,000 feet. In the Lockwood project, the engine is placed well ahead of where the Lycoming would be to counter the Rotax's considerably lower weight.

Phil Lockwood pointed out the plane is still in its initial test phase and is going to be flown back to Florida to complete its flight-test program. As you'd expect, the high-altitude performance could be impressive; Lockwood thinks 187 knots true is possible at the engine's critical altitude.

ASSENDER

Back around the turn of the century (2000) there was a guy from Aurora Oregon that built a twin engine Rotax powered Super Cub like plane called the Double-Ender. After making a big splash on the internet with some really cool videos it disappeared. It turns out the designer claims it was a "test bed" for some new ideas they wanted to incorporate into a new design. The new design is called the Assender and is a four place Lycoming powered plane with a clear plastic nose. It looked odd with a tremendous amount of dihedral and a bunch of up thrust on the engine. They are going to skip the kit phase and go right to FAA certification, the guy answering questions said. I see this being the new Sherpa spending millions on certification for a very small market.



The Assender

THUNDERBIRD

This bright blue P-51 was right out of the paint shop and you could smell the paint gassing. It was a magnificent restoration of Jimmy

Stewart's P-51C cross country racer. I am sure there will be a lot of articles in magazines in the upcoming months it was really cool!



STARFIGHTER N104...Not an Oshkosh story

Many moons ago I met a guy in Tempe who was selling a BMW Isetta that needed restoration. After the deal was done he said he was selling all his projects to concentrate on buying a F-104 Starfighter. I wished him luck and got out of there in a hurry! A few years later I was at the Copperstate Fly-In at Williams Air Force Base and the same guy came up and introduced himself and said "you want to take a peek at my F-104?" We went back to a giant hangar and there in the corner was an F-104. I recognized it as the one that was donated to the EAA Museum. I sat in it and checked it out, what a cool plane.

Over the next few years it appeared at local airshows and could be seen flying around the Phoenix area. Then it was parked for a decade and everyone forgot about it. Well it seems the plane now has a new home in Canada.

KF Centre for Excellence in Kelowna, British Columbia (thats in Canada) has unveiled the latest addition to its aircraft collection. "After much anticipation and speculation, the is pleased to (finally) officially announce the acquisition of a 1962 CF-104D Starfighter," said KF Centre for Excellence director Paula Quinn.

"We feel truly lucky to have been able to acquire this piece of Canadian military aviation history. This is an aircraft that holds a special place in the hearts of many veterans and aviation enthusiasts alike, and we are incredibly excited to bring it back to Canada, recognize its contributions, and be a part of its next chapter."

This CF-104D Starfighter was built in Canada by the Canadair company, under license from

Lockheed, now Lockheed Martin. This two-seater training aircraft was capable of reaching Mach 2 and was flown for over ten years by the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The KF Centre for Excellence acquired the jet in 2022; before that it served with the test squadron at Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake from 1962 until 1973, when it was sold by the RCAF to the Norwegian Air Force. The jet was sold to a California museum in 1984 and the CF-104D spent the next 10-plus years in the United States under several private owners.

"From 1996 until its acquisition by the KF Centre for Excellence in 2022, it had been privately owned and based in Mesa, Arizona," says Quinn. The plane had been flown approximately 200 hours over the past two decades and was still in near-airworthy condition, but despite that, the jet was shipped to Kelowna on two flatbed trucks—with one truck carrying the main fuselage and the other carrying the wings and miscellaneous parts.

The team at KF is currently hard at work restoring the aircraft bolt by bolt, "any part big or small that looks even remotely questionable will be replaced or repaired by our expert team, in an effort to restore it to an airworthy state. As one can imagine, this process will take some time," Quinn says. Once the jet is **restored to an airworthy state** it will be repainted back to its original RCAF paint job in order to recognize and pay tribute to the pilots who flew CF-104 Starfighters. "It means so much to us to see the looks on the faces of these veterans. It reminds us why we do what we do, and why it is so crucial to preserve Canadian aviation history," says Quinn.



Canadian F-104 Starfighter

Other things seen at Airventure



Guppy



Thunder Ads



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CURTIS F11C-2 "GOSHAWK"

Built by John Pike. R-1340 (600 HP). Less than 120 hours TT since new. Becker com & txpdr, Garmin ADS-B, 20 gal smoke tank, 102 gal fuel, <https://CaptainBillyWalker.com> 480-773-2823

AIRCRAFT TOOLS

I have some aircraft tools that I acquired through a friend. I would like to sell them. Dan Burdett 480-600-2865

LONGEZ AND SONEX

Two airplanes for sale at Thunder Ridge air park (AZ28), a 180hp LongEz and a 120hp Sonex. Contact Bertha Partin at bmpartin@gmail.com

COOL PLANES FOR SALE

Only flown by little old ladies to church on Sundays.

[HTTP://CAPTAINBILLYWALKER.COM/AIRCRAFT-FOR-SALE](http://CAPTAINBILLYWALKER.COM/AIRCRAFT-FOR-SALE) /AIRCRAFT-FOR-SALE

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