

WINGS



THINGS

GREAT PLAINS WING - COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

16803 McCandless Road • Council Bluffs Municipal Airport • Council Bluffs, IA 51503 • (712) 322-2435

3rd Quarter 2025

Wing Leader

Greg Jacobson
1906 Manor Court
Lincoln, NE 68506
C: 402-525-2871
gajacobsen@cs.com

Executive Officer

Chris Goodrich
16325 Hanover Street
Bennington, NE 68007
C: 402-214-3498
cgwildflyer@protonmail.com

Finance Officer

Terry Helphrey
10142 Josephine Avenue
LaVista, NE 68128
H: 402-593-6661 C: 402-578-2014
terry.helphrey@outlook.com

Adjutant Officer

Jared Albers
17363 Turnberry Ridge
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
C 712-310-1952
jaredmalbers@gmail.com

Operations Officer

Chad Bosworth
14725 Ernst Street
Bennington, NE 68007
H: 402-861-1880 C: 402-510-6644
cbosw2811@msn.com

Maintenance Officer

Jerry Mason
8070 Gold Street
Omaha, NE 68124
H: 402-393-0361 C: 402-968-6296
mason.jerry@cox.net

Safety Officer

Bruce Mundie
7323 S. 101st Ave.
La Vista, NE 68128
C: 703-405-7817
reccfaip@aol.com

Education Officer

David Pares
6338 Woolworth Ave.
Omaha, NE 68106
C: 402-651-9670
dppares@outlook.com

Development Officer

Greg Jacobson
1906 Manor Court
Lincoln, NE 68506
C: 402-525-2871
gajacobsen@cs.com

Museum Director

Jim Freibert
4923 Webster Street #3
Omaha, NE 68132
C: 531-203-4247
jamesfry714@gmail.com

Aircraft Coordinator

Chad Bosworth
14725 Ernst Street
Bennington, NE 68007
H: 402-861-1880 C: 402-510-6644
cbosw2811@msn.com

Editor

Terran Tidwell
3109 Windsor Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73122
terran2@cox.net

Webmaster

John Hubert
www.greatplainswing.org

Photo: Greg Jacobson



PT-19 weight and balance

Great Plains Wing CAF 2nd Quarter Update

The second quarter was another busy one for the Wing. The PT-19 is finally out of annual—later than we hoped, but better late than never. All pilots are actively working on updating their currency. We're also in the process of getting "60" enrolled in the CAF Ride Program, which will help generate income to support Wing operations while continuing to educate and inspire the public.

Now that the major annual is complete, focus can return to the Ercoupe, with hopes of making progress toward getting it back in the air. Meanwhile, the museum continues to evolve, with new displays being added and older ones getting refreshed.

"Lest We Forget"

Our monthly summer cookouts are back! They're held on the third Wednesday of each month starting at 5:00 p.m., and we serve until the food runs out. The menu includes hamburgers, hot dogs, brats, chicken, sides, and drinks—all available for a freewill donation. At our most recent cookout, we were honored to welcome four members of the Rocky Mountain Wing, who stopped by in their TBM Avenger en route to Michigan.

Photo: Greg Jacobsen



Chris Goodrich Handing flight patches to Taryn

Offutt Air Force Base recently selected an Airman of the Year, SRA Taryn Tapahonso, and as a reward, the Wing donated a ride in "60." Unfortunately, the ride scheduled for the 21st of June was not able to be completed due to high winds. This not only served as a token of appreciation but also helped generate visibility for our Wing as we prepare for possible inclusion in the Ride Program.

Photo: Greg Jacobsen



Chris Explaining the Instrument Panel to Taryn

Looking ahead, the third quarter is shaping up to be a busy one, pending approval into the Ride Program. "60" will be flying at several events this summer, including:

- A flyover at the Seward Fourth of July Parade at 4:00 p.m.
- Tarkio, MO: July 11–13

- Great Plains Wing Fly In August 2nd from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Possibly the Millard Fly-In on August 9

As always, we welcome visitors! Stop by on Wednesdays between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. or Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to tour the hangar, visit the museum, and see our planes up close.

The Akutan Zero by Jared Albers

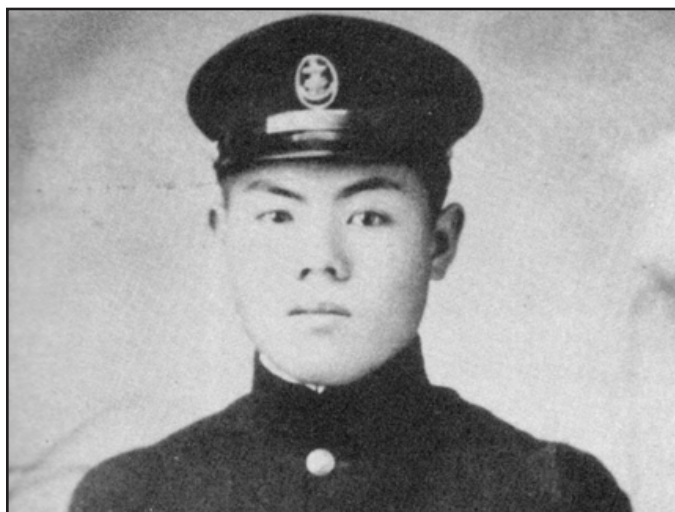
Photo: From the web



The Akutan Zero trailing oil at Dutch Harbor

June is a significant month in World War II history, marked by pivotal battles such as the Invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, and the start of the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942. However, a lesser-known event—the Japanese attack on the Aleutian Islands on June 3, 1942—may have had repercussions comparable to those more famous engagements.

Photo: From the web



Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga

On June 4, 1942, Japanese pilot Tadayoshi Koga was flying his Mitsubishi A6M Model 21 "Zero" during an attack on Dutch Harbor when his plane was struck by ground fire, severing a return oil line. As smoke poured

from the engine, Koga reduced power to delay its inevitable failure. Along with his two wingmen, he attempted to reach Akutan Island, a designated emergency landing site where submarines waited offshore to rescue downed pilots.

Photo: From the web

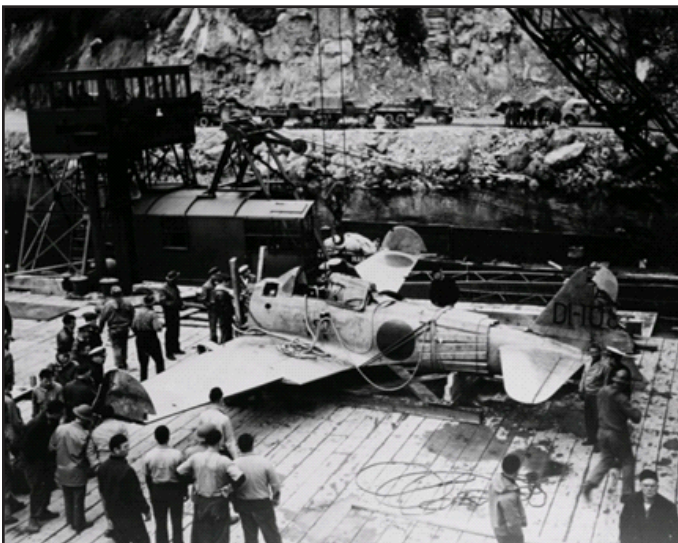


Koga's Crashed Zero

One of Koga's wingmen performed a low pass over the island, initially believing the terrain was solid. On a second pass, however, he realized it was marshy, making a belly landing the safer option. Unfortunately, Koga had already committed to landing with his gear down. As soon as his wheels touched the soft ground, they sank into the mud, flipping the plane onto its back. Koga was killed instantly, but his aircraft remained largely intact.

Japanese pilots were ordered to destroy any Zeros that were downed to prevent enemy intelligence gathering, but Koga's wingmen hesitated, unsure whether he had survived. Meanwhile, submariners searched for him but were driven off by the USS Williamson before they could recover the aircraft.

Photo: From the web



Koga's Zero after Recovery

A month later, a lost PBY Catalina crew happened to fly over Akutan and spotted the downed Zero. They marked the crash site on their map and returned to Dutch Harbor, reporting that the aircraft appeared salvageable. A recovery team was soon dispatched, and after extracting the Zero from the mud, it was shipped to North Island, near San Diego, for examination. The aircraft was repaired and repainted, replacing its Japanese insignia with the U.S. blue-and-white star roundel.

Photo: From the web



Koga's Zero in San Diego

Lieutenant Commander Eddie Sanders conducted 24 test flights with the captured Zero, identifying three key vulnerabilities that U.S. pilots could exploit. First, the ailerons locked up above 200 knots, making rolling maneuvers difficult. Second, the plane rolled more easily to the left than the right. Third, during negative acceleration, the carburetor float cut off fuel to the engine. These weaknesses informed new aerial combat tactics, including using power dives, negative acceleration, and rolling to the right at high speeds to evade the nimble Zero.

Photo: From the web



The Akutan Zero in Flight Testing

Following these initial tests, the Zero was flown to Langley, Virginia, where the Naval Advisory Committee for Aeronautics installed additional instrumentation and subjected it to wind tunnel testing. The aircraft was then returned to North Island for further evaluations by Frederick Trapnell, who, along with Sanders, conducted mock dogfights between the Zero and U.S. Navy aircraft. Later, Lieutenant Melvin Hoffman flew the Zero against newer Navy planes, providing valuable insights to pilots.

The Akutan Zero was briefly displayed as a war trophy in Washington before returning to North Island for demonstrations to naval aviators. It was eventually joined by an A6M Model 52, captured during operations on Guam.

Historians continue to debate the true impact of the Akutan Zero on U.S. aviation strategy. Before its recovery, the U.S. had already examined nine downed Zeros from Pearl Harbor, which were sent to the Experimental Engineering Department in Ohio. Additionally, three other Zeros were captured in the South Pacific, though only one was made flyable, and it arrived in the U.S. after the Akutan Zero. Moreover, prior to Pearl Harbor, John Thach had developed the Thach Weave tactic based on reports from China, and U.S. pilots had successfully countered the Zero at Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal. The F6F Hellcat, designed to outperform the Zero, was already in development before the Akutan Zero's capture.

Tragically, in February 1945, the Akutan Zero was destroyed when an SB2C Helldiver lost control and collided with it. Some parts of the aircraft were salvaged and distributed to the Alaska Heritage Museum, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, and the National Museum of the U.S. Navy.

As for Tadayoshi Koga, American author Jim Rearden searched for his remains in 1988. He located Koga's original grave on Akutan Island, but it was empty. Further investigation revealed that in 1947, the U.S. Grave Registration Service had moved his body to Adak Island, where it was marked as unidentified. In 1953, the remains were exhumed and sent to Japan, where they were cremated and interred at Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery.

2025 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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