



Fort Worth Thunderbirds Radio Control Association Inc. **The Pilot's Log**



Issue 6103 - March 2023

Next club meeting: March 27th, 7 PM, Location CERA, 3300 Bryant Irvin Road

Presidents Corner: by *James Meadows*

Greetings Thunderbirds,

This year is really moving along fast or so it seems! April is knocking on the door step, and with it is a new flying season and events. AS a Reminder our training program has started up on Thursdays. Our Corp of instructors are ready to assist new, returning and perhaps a few rusty pilots with flight training, aircraft safety checks, or just good conversation. Check the website for more details.

April 13-16 is the Aero Design event! Expect a busy week at the field with field set up, and preparation. The actual student event will begin on Friday 14th April with Inspections, followed by the flying portion on Saturday and Sunday. Teams will begin showing up early in the week and trying to get some test flights in the past. The field will be open flying for all until Friday, at which time the field will only be open to participants in the SAE event. We need your assistance to make this event the best ever. The Fort Worth Thunderbirds have a great reputation of making this the best event, despite wind, heat, rain, even a time changes, have not prevented us from being the best. Please contact Sam Corlett via email@:

safetycoordinator@fwthunderbirds.org. He is the Coordinator for Thunderbird volunteers!

We have a world Class facility, and trust me when I say, that we host visitors thru out the year, from all over the world, that come to see it. It takes a dedicated staff of maintenance personnel to ensure that the field is in top shape. Over this last year, we have had some of our team, after years and to many hours of service to calculate, decide that it's time to allow other the opportunity to serve. We need some folks to step up and help the club with this task! The flying season is here, but so is the grass growing season. Contact our Lead Ground Manager Rex Anderson via text at [\(817\) 597-4968](tel:8175974968) for details on how you can assist!

In closing I want to say thanks to you, the membership of this organization. A world class organization, with a world class facility, that makes a difference to the world, community, model aviation, and in the lives of each other. Its takes all of us with our many talents, participation and at times understanding to keep this organization going. We continue to grow and do it in a fashion that is truly Thunderbird style.

Respectfully
James
Fly Safe

Vice Presidents Corner: by Rob Lowe

Hello Thunderbirds! Happy Spring (can you believe it?) Wow, things are turning green and growing fast – Please see James’ President Article above – WE NEED YOUR HELP on the Field Maintenance Team. Also, our largest event of the year is the SAE Aero Design contest next month – WE NEED ALL HANDS ON DECK to make this work. Again, please see James’ article for info on how you can do your part.

Lastly, your officer team continues to work with AMA (and indirectly to FAA) on higher altitudes for our field. I have interacted with them again this last couple of weeks and we are still on hold for a process to begin working on a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with our local air traffic control facilities. Behind the scenes, the local facilities are ready to go and have no issue with an LOA with us and a routine higher operating altitude above 400 feet AGL. The hold-up is that FAA HQ and AMA have not yet developed a process for fields in uncontrolled airspace such as ours. We will keep pestering them...

However, there is partial good news that affects us relative to higher altitudes for sanctioned events at fields like our in uncontrolled airspace. Hopefully you read the info sent out by AMA in the last couple weeks about this. There is a defined process now that impacts and affects every sanctioned event at our field if we need to fly over 400 feet AGL (virtually every event falls into this category). I am including the related FAQs from the AMA website below for your reference. (<https://amablog.modelaircraft.org/amagov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/03/Sanctioned-Altitudes-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf>)

Please note the long lead times to get this accomplished before a sanctioned event. Also note that this responsibility falls to the event CD (or designee) – this is NOT something that automatically happens for you if you are a CD. Please read these carefully and I’d recommend going to the AMA website where these reside so additional hyper-links work...

Here is some additional and related information from AMA recently:

This is just one of many steps in AMA’s strategy to continue securing higher altitudes for our safe operations. AMA has already secured higher altitudes for many of our club flying sites in controlled airspace, in some cases up to 2,000 feet. Our work is not done, AMA will continue to advocate for higher altitudes elsewhere.

To learn more about becoming a Contest Director or Event Manager to sanction an event, please visit www.modelaircraft.org/events/become-an-organizer. You can also contact our Competitions department at (765) 287-1256, ext. 252 or competitions@modelaircraft.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

Higher Altitudes for AMA Sanctioned Events in Uncontrolled Airspace (March 7, 2023)

Q: Do all sanctioned events receive higher altitudes?

A: We anticipated higher altitudes will be provided to most of our sanctioned events in uncontrolled airspace; however, events in controlled airspace need to continue comply with the altitudes established through the flying site’s letter of agreement with Air Traffic Control or LAANC.

Q: How much altitude could a sanctioned event receive?

A: Sanctioned events in uncontrolled airspace would likely be approved to 700 or 1,200 feet above ground level, which is the floor of FAA’s Class E5 airspace.

Q: How do I know whether a location will receive a 700- or 1,200-foot altitude?

A: Visit the FAA Facilities Map and unselect all layers except Class E5. When you enter your event address, you can click on the map to identify the “Lower Limit Value” as either 700 or 1,200 feet. You can also call AMA at (765) 287-1256, ext. 252 or email competitions@modelaircraft.org for help.

Q: How can I receive more than 700- or 1,200-foot altitudes at an event?

A: Although these altitudes are sufficient for most events, we recognize that Soaring and other disciplines might need higher altitudes. This is just one of many steps to secure higher altitudes. Our work is not done.

Q: How can I sanction an event so I can receive higher altitudes?

A: A Contest Director (CD) or Event Manager (EM) can apply for a sanction through AMA’s online sanction portal. To learn more about being a CD or EM, visit ww.modelaircraft.org/events/become-an-organizer.

Q: Can we sanction a club event to receive higher altitude consideration, even if we don’t need all the protections that come with a traditional competition sanction?

A: We recommend applying for a Class B sanctioned event through AMA’s online sanction portal. You can learn about all the different sanction classifications in our Contest Director Guide.

Q: How long can a sanctioned event run?

A: Generally, sanctioned events are only for a few days or a week at a time. If you anticipate hosting a sanctioned event every weekend, you should apply for multiple sanctions.

Q: How long does it take to process a sanctioned application?

A: AMA asks for a minimum of 30 days to process sanctioned applications. Applications should be submitted 90 days in advance if the event is to be printed in Model Aviation magazine.

Q: I previously submitted a sanction application; do I have to reapply to fly at higher altitudes?

A: No. For previously approved sanctioned events, AMA will send a second notification in the coming weeks notifying CDs of their approval to fly at higher altitudes.

Q: Does this apply to Control Line and Free Flight events?

A: AMA maintains that Control Line and Free Flight do not meet the definition of unmanned aircraft systems.

Q: Why are only events receiving higher altitudes and not club flying fields or operations in my backyard?

A: This is just one of many efforts from AMA to secure higher altitudes. AMA has been successfully securing higher altitudes for many of our clubs in controlled airspace through safety risk management panels. We will continue to advocate for higher altitudes to safely enjoy this hobby.

Q: Where can I learn more about being a CD or EM so I can sanction an event?

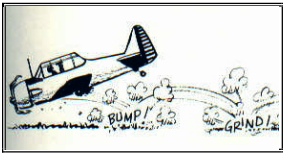
A: You can learn more at www.modelaircraft.org/events/become-an-organizer.

Q: How do I know if my event is in controlled or uncontrolled airspace?

A: This AMA blog can help you determine what classification of airspace you will be flying in. Feel free to contact AMA at (765) 287-1256 if you need assistance.

See ya at the field soon! Here is my virtual “Low Pass Salute” to you Thunderbirds...

Rob Lowe, VP



Secretaries Corner: *by Mike Schroeder*

Thunderbird Meeting Minutes by Mike Schroeder

February 27, 2023, Meeting at CERS, Meeting Starts at 7:00pm

James welcomes everyone and asks if there are any new members. Welcome Mitch Malicoate to his first meeting. Mitch attended the 60th anniversary celebration and was hooked. Mitch has built a trainer and still needs to maiden it and it will be his first flight.

Recap of events

Black Eye Pea: Great turn out and great weather. One of the best January 1st events we have had in a long time. Great food and no crashes for the first day of the New Year.

SAE April 14, 15, 16: There are seventy five teams signed up and teams coming from ten different countries. All hands on deck as we need sixty plus volunteers to work. Last year was the smoothest we had for everyone. Please respond to Sam's email and sign up for the same job you did last year.

Officers Reports

Safety Report by Sam Corlett: Sam talked about an accident that happen to him five years ago and should we have a no arm of electric planes in the Pitt area. Sam discuss how he was out at the flight line and how a shirt sleeve caught the throttle and moved it forward to accelerate full speed at him. Cut two fingers to the bone as he tried to swat the plane. The DX7 was never designed right to have a throttle disarms switch very easily. Some thought if we need to have a rule or can discuss more about safety at the field.

Treasurers Report by Chris Berardi: We have had 150 member renewals already this year. Those dues go to pay for Porta can which is three hundred a month and all the other things.

Some big expense are

- Re-stripping the runway
- Helicopter // Food Court
- Drill rental
- Electric for Helicopter cover
- Tables for Food Court
- Meeting room CERA rental

Checking and savings account are in good order

Vice Presidents Report by Rob Lowe: Nothing to report at this time

Secretary Report by Mike Schroeder: Motion made by Ed Kettler for Mike to read the minutes. Last motion he can make before he moves west. Quickly second by the famous Bill Lake, I thought he was my friend. Motion passed by show of hands. Sorry guys, there will be no minutes read. There are no minutes to be read since last month's meeting was canceled due to the deep freeze. Should have read the newsletter.

Show and Tell

Gary Stanford donated several planes to the club to be raffled off at the end of the meeting

Ken Killgo had several RC cars the he says can do a hundred mph and is having a lot of fun with them. Talked about seeing if the club could put in a track. James reminded Ken that we do not lease any grass from the CORP and that we cannot do any modifications like putting in a track. Reminded Killgo that we are a flying club and other things like cars might be a conflict to what we do.

Sam Corlett showed Gooskky helicopter he bought and how great it flies. A small helicopter that comes with just about everything. Blue tooth app for phone for set up. Direct drive metal gear servos. Price \$349

Project List: If you have a suggestion please get with a board member to see if we can add it to the list. Project list is post in the newsletter and update as things get done or explain what is going on.

Frequency Board AMA card display. Needs to be review as to we continue on with its use or some other fashion for displaying our AMA card. It is required in our lease with the CORP that your AMA card needs to be displayed somehow. Field rules also have to be displayed which they are. Would like four volunteers to discuss and give back input on what the club should do. Ken Knotts volunteer to help out, need three more volunteers.

Raising Dues: Chris talked about how our costs have gone up so much. The dues have been the same for over ten years. The Porta can now cost over \$300 a month; use to be \$75 a month. Mowers cost \$800 each for annual maintenance. Chris is going to put some numbers together so we can discuss at the next meeting. Any increase will be for 2024 renewals.

Calendar of Events:

May Warbirds event. Need a new CD as Ed Kettler is moving west. Please volunteer.

May 20 SPA

June is open

July 4 Club celebration. CD Board

August 5 Float Fly CD Mel wells

September Possible Jet Fly CD Tom Blakeney

October Elections for Officers

Flight Fest

Board Flight Celebration Demo

November 4 Electric Fly In Tom Blakeney

December Toy Drive

If you want to host or CD an event please get with a board member and get on the schedule.

Mystery Box up front: Chris had the coffee mugs that were suppose to come in for the Christmas party that just arrived. The mugs Thunderbird logo was not in the right spot and Chris contacted the supplier to send back as they were not correct. The supplier credit back out money so it was a free coffee mug day.

Club fund raising Auction:

Ed auction off a Radian glider for the club.

Ed also auction off Gary Stanfords Stuka with a OS 95 and all the servos. The bid went up pretty quick and was down to two for a few minutes until the winning big bid was placed.

Meeting ends at 8:30 with a short SAE meeting to follow

Thunderbirds in attendance

Bill Lake
Chris Berardi
Dave Williams
Tab Bowland
Ed Kettler
Ken Knotts
Johnny Hunt
Ian Warring
Mel Wells
Mike Schroeder

Kenneth Kilgo
Mitch Malicoate
Rick Kraft
Mark Johnson
Phil Mitchel
Phillip Ritter
John Rodriguez
Fred Neal
Clayton Neal
Reed Smith

Sam Corlett
Rex Anderson
Ron Anderson
James Meadows
Pete Devlin
Tom Blakeney
Gary Schindler
Phil Dunlap
Woody Lake

From the Treasury: By Chris Berardi

Here is our latest membership count as of 02/21/2023.

Membership Type	Count
Individual	117
Family	9
Associate	11
Life	16
Service & Gift	0
TOTAL	153

That's about it for this month. Check your mail for news on the SAE Aero Design contest and more!

Chris



Safety Officer submission: by Sam Corlett

By the time you read this we'll be in full swing preparing for our SAE AeroDesign event, April 14-16, 2023. If you have missed coordination, please let me know. There's a place for everyone to be a part of this great weekend.

By way of repeat, I've included the following from a year ago for your amusement. (copied here from the internet site, *RC Airplane World*, by Pete Carpenter.)

RC Airplane Crash Etiquette

- Keep quiet - let the pilot have the first word.
- Cover your ears if you don't like swearing or blasphemy.

- Let the pilot walk back to the flight line; don't go running over to him ready to initiate a group hug.
- Don't offer him \$10 for his transmitter.
- Don't hand him your plastic bag, let him use his own - it's part of the wreckage collection ceremony.
- Offer to help look for the wreckage if the plane came down out of sight, but don't go sprinting across to the crash site - this indicates your urge to salvage the good parts to sell on eBay.
- Don't offer to take photos until the pilot mentions the idea. Hide the fact that you had your camera turned on before the plane even hit the ground.
- Don't make comments such as "*I would never have tried that maneuver myself*", or "*It's so easy to get disoriented sometimes*", or "*Are you sure you remembered to put the radio gear on charge last night?*"...
- Instead, offer constructive, tactful comments such as "*Well, think of what your Christmas present will be!*", or "*Well, it doesn't look so bad - maybe a bit of epoxy here and there*", or "*Well you said you wanted to build a new plane*"...
- And whatever you do, never ever ever mention pilot error!

Saying the words "*pilot error*" is a definite no-no. Instead, just sympathetically nod your head in agreement with whatever the pilot blames. And if he blames himself (*very rare*), disagree with him completely and reassure him that the crash was caused by an outside influence completely beyond his control.

You'll be friends for life 😊

Sam



SAE April 14th-16th



Texaco B-17



The only thing stranger than the sight of a Boeing B-17G parked above a Milwaukie, Oregon gas station is the story of how it got there.

In February 1947, gas station owner Art Lacey announced that he planned to buy a mothballed bomber to attract—and shade—customers. A friend bet him five bucks that it would never happen. “If you told my dad he couldn’t do something,” his daughter Punky Scott says, “then he was going to do it.” The story of how he did it has been Lacey family lore for 70 years.

Lacey borrowed \$15,000 and hightailed it to the airport that very night. At Altus Army Airfield, Oklahoma, he bought a well-used B-17 for \$13,750. Although Lacey was an experienced pilot, he had never flown anything with more than one engine. But after a few taxi runs, he felt confident enough to take a test hop.



Everything went fine until it came time to land. The landing gear refused to extend, so Lacey belled in and slid into a second B-17. Fortunately, the War Assets Administration officer took pity on him, and declared it “the worst case of wind damage I’ve ever seen.” Then he sold Lacey another B-17 for a mere \$1,500.

This time, Lacey summoned two friends with B-17 experience to help. They arrived with a case of whiskey—Oklahoma was a dry state at the time—to barter for fuel (which base firefighters siphoned from other mothballed bombers). After a stop in Palm Springs, California, where Lacey wrote a bad check to cover refueling, the crew ran into a blizzard.

Visibility was miserable. Lacey slithered into the front turret so they could fly IFR—I Follow Railroads. This worked well until Lacey saw, through a break in the clouds, that they were about to hit a mountain. The crew barely cleared the obstruction.

Eventually they reached Portland but hit another problem after landing: Lacey couldn’t get a permit to truck the big airplane to Milwaukie. He disassembled the B-17, loaded it onto four flatbeds and hired funeral-procession motorcycle escorts to give the operation a patina of legality. As a backup, he also paid some hot-rodders to join the parade.

“He told them, ‘Do not stop for anything,’ ” says his grandson, Jayson Scott. “ ‘If anybody gives you a hard time, you peel out and burn rubber in different directions, and I’ll pay all of your tickets.’ ” Lacey got off lightly, with a \$10 fine for transporting the airplane without a permit. The B-17 *Lacey Lady* became a landmark on Highway 99E leaving Portland.

Lacey Lady did the trick, and customers flocked to the gas station. Over the years, visitors stole virtually everything

that wasn’t bolted down. The wooden floorboards were replaced seven times, before a young boy fell out of the B-17, prompting a lawsuit that shuttered the bomber in the late 1950s.

By the time Art Lacey died in 2000, the airplane looked forlorn. The rainy northwest is not kind to unprotected airplanes, and the B-17 proved an attractive nesting place for local birds. The nose section was removed in 1996 for a restoration project, which stalled when cash ran short.



In 2006, the family created the non-profit B-17 Alliance Foundation to do the job properly. *Lacey Lady* was taken apart and trucked—with a permit—to Salem, Oregon. Jayson Scott figures it will take \$10 million and 10 years to get the airplane back in the air. Long odds, but considering his grandfather’s record, you might think twice before betting against him.

2023 CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>POINT OF CONTACT</u>
April 14-16	SAE Contest	Tom Blakeny/Sam Corlett
May	Warbirds Over Benbrook	
May 20	SPA Contest	Ken Knots/Chris Berardi
July 4 th	Club Picnic	Club Officers
August 5	Float Fly	Mel Wells/Woody Lake



www.fwthunderbirds.org

POSITION	BOARD MEMBER	EMAIL
President	James Meadows	president@fwthunderbirds.org
Vice President	Rob Lowe	vicepresident@fwthunderbirds.org
Secretary	Mike Schroeder	secretary@fwthunderbirds.org
Treasurer	Chris Berardi	treasurer@fwthunderbirds.org
Safety Officer	Sam Corlett	safetyofficer@fwthunderbirds.org



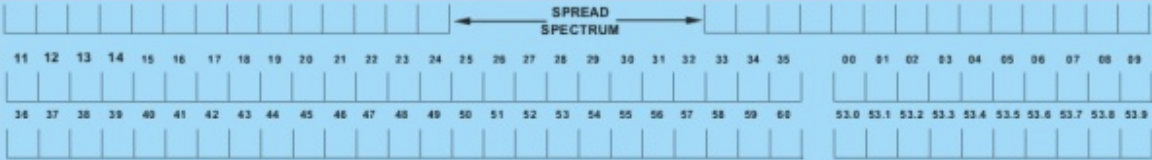
Pres: James Meadows *VP:* Rob Lowe *Sec:* Mike Schroeder *Safety:* Sam Corlett *Treas:* Chris Berardi

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTIZERS




JT's Hobby Shop 817 244-6171
8808 Camp Bowie Blvd. Fort Worth TX 76116
jtshobby@yahoo.com

Flying Field Rules



11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 53.0 53.1 53.2 53.3 53.4 53.5 53.6 53.7 53.8 53.9




CURRENT AMA CARDS ONLY. NO OTHER CARD IS ACCEPTABLE.

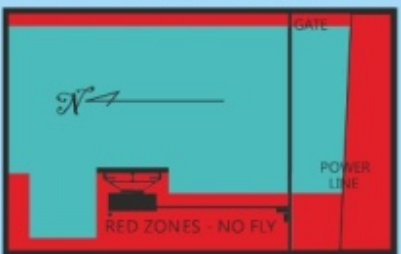
THIS FIELD IS LEASED BY, MAINTAINED BY, AND ITS CONSTRUCTION FUNDING WAS SECURED BY

THE FORT WORTH THUNDERBIRDS RADIO CONTROL ASSOCIATION

ALL AMA, CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE FOLLOWING RULES APPLY TO EVERYONE FLYING HERE.



1. Neither the Thunderbirds nor the Corps of Engineers is responsible for accident or injury.
2. Place your AMA card in the proper slot above before turning transmitter on.
3. All engines must have effective mufflers.
5. Fly from the station nearest the downwind end of the runway. In case of a crosswind the first pilot to fly will select the station.
6. Aircraft must follow the takeoff and landing pattern in effect.
7. Landing aircraft have the right-of-way over aircraft taking off.
8. Running aircraft shall not be left unattended.
9. No more than 5 pilots shall fly in each designated zone at one time.
10. LMA rules are posted in the bulletin board



Academy of Model Aeronautics National Model Aircraft Safety Code

Effective January 1, 2018

A model aircraft is a non-human-carrying device capable of sustained flight within visual line of sight of the pilot or spotter(s). It may not exceed limitations of this code and is intended exclusively for sport, recreation, education and/or competition. All model flights must be conducted in accordance with this safety code and related AMA guidelines, any additional rules specific to the flying site, as well as all applicable laws and regulations.

As an AMA member I agree:

- I will not fly a model aircraft in a careless or reckless manner.
- I will not interfere with and will yield the right of way to all human-carrying aircraft using AMA's *See and Avoid Guidance* and a spotter when appropriate.
- I will not operate any model aircraft while I am under the influence of alcohol or any drug that could adversely affect my ability to safely control the model.
- I will avoid flying directly over unprotected people, moving vehicles, and occupied structures.
- I will fly Free Flight (FF) and Control Line (CL) models in compliance with AMA's safety programming.
- I will maintain visual contact of an RC model aircraft without enhancement other than corrective lenses prescribed to me. When using an advanced flight system, such as an autopilot, or flying First-Person View (FPV), I will comply with AMA's Advanced Flight System programming.
- I will only fly models weighing more than 55 pounds, including fuel, if certified through AMA's Large Model Airplane Program.
- I will only fly a turbine-powered model aircraft in compliance with AMA's Gas Turbine Program.
- I will not fly a powered model outdoors closer than 25 feet to any individual, except for myself or my helper(s) located at the flightline, unless I am taking off and landing, or as otherwise provided in AMA's *Competition Regulation*.
- I will use an established safety line to separate all model aircraft operations from spectators and bystanders.

For a complete copy of AMA's Safety Handbook please visit:
www.modelaircraft.org/files/100.pdf

FW THUNDERBIRDS 2022 PROJECT LIST 3/19/2023 12:42 PM							
Project #	Proposed Project	Summary of Project	TYPE	EXPENSE	POC	Status	Notes
1	Update Freq Board	Update signage a use or Freq. board	self	\$100.00	BOARD	AWAITING ACTION	Setting up Membership Action Committee
2	Lost Aircraft Security	Provide a means to secure lost aircraft Found and returned	self	\$100.00	MEADOWS	researching need and solution	OC
3	Starting Stakes for big birds	Post for retaining Large A/C at starting area	self		Grant Schroeder		Awaiting information
4	Additional Storage AREA	Utilize Cargo container	self/contract	\$20,000.00	Chris	Hold	Would it require Lease mod?
5	Weather Station	complete with camera and Data port	Self	\$?	Chris/Mike	Discussion	Allow member or guest to see and look at actual Field conditions
6	Additional Bleachers	Provide addition guest seating for events and compitions	Self	\$?	Not assigned	Discussion	need to assign to POC
7	Members Walkway	Personal engraved brick pathway from Pit area to Flaggpole	Everyone		meadows	Discussion	Membership due details
8	Toilet	Real Toilet	combo	?	Meadows	Discussion	
9	RUNWAY	Paint lines of runway/taiways	contract	2000	Mike	completed	Completed
10	Helicopter Pit Area	Pit area for Heli Area	self		Mike/SAM	completed	90% awaiting Electrical completion

Humor



The above photo puts into perspective Chris Farley’s statement “Living In a Van Down by the River”

WASP Women Airforce Service Pilots

During World War II, a select group of young women pilots became pioneers, heroes, and role models...They were the Women Airforce Service Pilots, WASP, the first women in history trained to fly American military aircraft.

In the United States, women pilots were trained to fly non-combat missions in order to free male pilots for combat missions. They ferried planes from the manufacturing plants to military bases, and ended up doing much more -- including flying new aircraft such as the B-29, to prove to male pilots that these were not as difficult to fly as the men thought!

In 1939, women were allowed to be part of the Civilian Pilot Training Program, a program designed to train college students to fly, with an eye to national defense. But women were limited by quota to one woman for every ten men in the program.

The WASP was never militarized, and those who served as WASP were considered civil service employees. There was considerable opposition to the WASP program in the press and in Congress. General Henry "Hap" Arnold, US Army Air Force commander, first supported the program, and then disbanded it. The WASP was deactivated December 20, 1944, having flown about 60 million miles in operations. Thirty-eight WASP were killed, including some during training.

Records of WASP were classified and sealed, so historians minimized or ignored the women pilots. In 1977 -- the same year the Air Force graduated its first post-WASP women pilots -- Congress granted veteran status to those who had served as WASP, and in 1979 issued official honorable discharges.

The CORRECT SPELLING OF WASP-- is WASP! We DO NOT ADD AN EXTRA "S", because the acronym already stands for Women Airforce Service Pilots. If you add an's', it is redundant! "Pilotss!" Also, it is Women Airforce Service Pilots, not Women's. Adding 's makes it possessive. That means the Airforce belongs to the women. Think about it! YES, there are examples of both of these 'misspellings' --but that doesn't mean we won't encourage you to take a stand--and show that you've done your homework!

The story of Fifinella began in 1942 when Roald Dahl, who had been removed from flying with the RAF due to injury, wrote *The Gremlins*, a fairy tale about the hazards of combat flying; in this incarnation, the word "fifinella" only refers to female gremlins as opposed to

any specific one. Dahl took the name from the great "flying" filly, Fifinella, who won The Derby and Epsom Oaks in 1916, the year Dahl was born. As an RAF-trained pilot, he was familiar with prewar RAF folklore about the Gremlin, the mischievous source of any unknown problem. Although gremlins predated Murphy's Law that "whatever can go wrong, will go wrong," they were obviously motivated by the same principles. Fifinella was used as the WASP badge

Fifinella was a female gremlin designed by Walt Disney for a proposed film from Roald Dahl's book *The Gremlins*. During World War II, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) asked permission to use the image as their official mascot, and the Disney Company granted them the rights.



Avenger Field

Avenger Field was the largest all-female air base in American history. Its origins date to the 1920s as the Sweetwater Municipal Airport. At the airport, a small flight school operated with World War I surplus Curtiss JN-4s and Curtiss Robins.^[3]

In the spring of 1942, the flight school was taken over by the Plosser-Prince Air Academy, which moved to the airport from California. Plosser-Prince was contracted by the Royal Canadian Air Force to train British and American volunteer pilots. The airport became known as British Flying Training School No. 7. On June 15, 1942, about 100 male flight cadets began a course that included primary, basic and advanced training.^[3] Just before they arrived, the Sweetwater Airport was renamed "Avenger Field" in a contest won by a Mrs. Grace Faver.

In August 1942 the United States Government closed the private flying school and took it over as a United States

Army Air Forces military installation. Avenger Field was to be turned over to the Air Transport Command as a transition school for experienced airline pilots in single-engine Vultee BT-13 Valiant basic trainers. From Avenger Field, the graduates would be sent to twin-engine school and subsequently for overseas duty as USAAF pilots.

Women Airforce Service Pilots



Avenger Field WASPs and training aircraft

At this time, Jacqueline Cochran was making plans for a training program for women pilots to participate in the war effort. Working with the Army Air Forces, she established a training facility at the Howard Hughes field in Houston, Texas, for Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs as it was known. However, she was unable to develop a satisfactory school there. In January 1943, she and the AAF began to look for an alternative location. Avenger Field was chosen due to its multi-phase training capability and other assets. The field was acquired by the Houston contractors from Plosser-Prince, and in February 1943 Avenger Field became an all-female installation except for a few male instructors and other officers. The field was officially assigned to the 318th Army Air Forces Flying Training Detachment, 31st Flying Training Wing. Flight training was contracted to Aviation Enterprises.^[3]

Classes entered the WASP program at Avenger Field in monthly intervals. A total of 18 classes completed training: 8 in 1943 and 10 in 1944. Of the 25,000 women who applied for flight training, 1,830 were accepted, and

of those, 1,074 received their wings. Training for women pilots paralleled but did not duplicate that given the men. Because the women were expected to go into ferrying, emphasis was placed on cross-country flying. Gunnery and formation flight training were omitted.

The first course was four months long. Although the hours were flexible and varied according to previous training, 115 flying hours were generally called for in addition to 180 hours of ground instruction. As the experience level of the trainees declined, the course was expanded and revised. By the end of 1943, the length had been extended to 27 weeks and the flying hours to 210. Few curricular changes were made in 1944; the main one increased training from 27 to 30 weeks.



Avenger Field WASP Class Graduation Ceremony

The WASPs were employed under the Civil Service program. It was always assumed they would become part of the Army when a proper place within the military organization could be found for them. In fact, bills were introduced in Congress to give them military rank, but even with General Arnold's support, all efforts failed to absorb the WASPs into the military.

Avenger Field remained a WASP training base until being disbanded in December 1944. 1,074 women pilots were trained at the facility including 37 that gave their lives in the service of their country. On December 20 the Army Air Forces disbanded the WASP program and the WASPs returned to civilian life with no veterans' benefits. In 1977 Congress finally granted benefits to the 850 remaining WASPs.

At the end of the war the military decided the field was not needed and turned it over to the local government for civil use.





Jackie Cochran



B-17 Ferry Crew



WASP Survivor