

WISCONSIN WING COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE T-34A MENTOR N5347W FACTS SHEET

In 2016, one of our CAF members, Mike Woods, floated the idea of seeking out a T-34 Mentor for our Wing. We started a nation-wide search, but as luck would have it, we found one that had been in storage for several years right here in WI, and even better, the very generous owner agreed to donate the plane to the CAF in 2017. Steve Lark headed up our restoration committee and many hard working and generous WI Wing members helped bring this beautiful warbird back to life.

T-34 History

- The airplane design was started in 1948 by the Beechcraft Corporation and was based on the very successful Beechcraft Bonanza.
- The Air Force ordered 3 planes in early 1953 and flew them around the clock for 432 hours in 32 days. This rigorous testing resulted in the Air Force ordering 450 T-34A Mentors, with the last one being delivered in 1956.
- The Navy also order 423 T-34s, but since carrier type landings are more arrivals than landings, the gear was beefed up and a few other modifications were made so that model is the T-34B. The last Navy T-34B was delivered in 1957.
- The T-34s were also sold to many foreign countries.
- The Air Force flew the T-34As until the early 60's when they went to all jet trainers, the T-37, produced by Cessna Aircraft.
- The Navy flew their T-34Bs until the mid 70's when it was replaced by a turbine powered Beechcraft called the T-34C.

Our T-34A N5347W History

- Manufactured in 1953 but was not delivered to the Air Force until 1955.
- In 1964, it was assigned to the CAP and spent time in Texas, Nevada and Alabama.
- In 1971, it sold it to a company in the Philippines for \$10,800.
- In 1988, the plane was again sold to a California buyer who had a total restoration done on the plane at a cost of \$240,000. The plane was made better than new with updated avionics, a new panel and systems, a smoke system, and a much more powerful 300hp Continental engine with a 3 blade propeller.
- The plane was also painted the current Air Force paint scheme.
- In October, 1990 the plane was flown to Wisconsin, and was stored in a hangar until early 2017 when it was donated to the Wisconsin Wing of the Commemorative Air Force. The long storage resulted in another extensive restoration costing \$190,000 to date. This was all made possible by the generosity of the WI owner who donated it, our sponsor pilots, aircraft sponsors, corporate sponsors, including GAMI and Concorde Battery, and restoration grants from the Commemorative Air Force Museum.
- Plane Safe, Inc. headed up by Sam Cryer, did nearly all of the work to bring our plane back to life in 2021.

More work needs to be done with avionics and other updates so we are still in need of sponsorship funds, and pilot sponsors to fly it. If you can help financially, or want to learn how you too can fly this beautiful warbird, please contact our Wing Leader, Gary Otto.

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