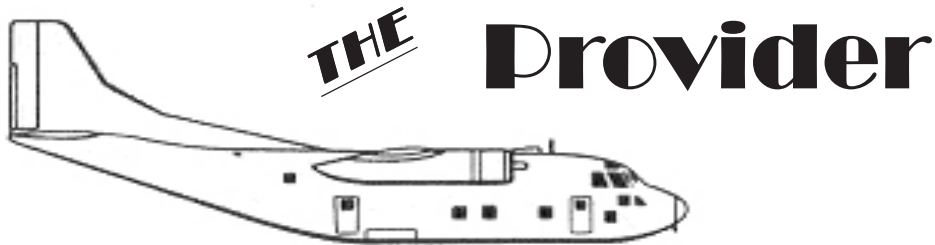




AIR AMERICA FOUNDATION



January 2012

Happy New Year! Yes I know I am a bit late. Many apologies. I hope everyone had a safe and happy start to the new year.

As we begin 2012, we have many challenges ahead of us and I hope that our crew is up to the task at hand.

I would like to bring everyone up to speed on some items that have been happening with the foundation and at the C123.

The board has officially decided that a full restoration of 54-674 is at this time not possible. We just do not have the funds or manpower. We can, with an infusion of both, preserve the aircraft to a fine static display that many can enjoy.

The best estimate we can give for a full flying restoration is around the three quarter to one million dollar mark. This would assume we could hire a firm to undergo the restoration to flight, which will be difficult as they would need to relocate to our facility as the plane is not flyable at this time.

I would like to give you a short list of all the reasons the board has decided that 54-674 is being approached as a static display piece.

1. No fuel bladders - This could cost about fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars, if we can find them or have them made.

2. No data plate - This went missing well before Paul passed away. We were hoping that when we cleaned out Paul's house and storage lockers, we would find it. We also had hopes that perhaps Josh had it, but no luck there either. You can get a new data plate, but it is not easy.

3. Corrosion - A decision several years ago was made to delay spraying the aircraft with a corrosion preventative, so the aircraft has much corrosion. We are trying to stay ahead of it as much as we can. This is one of the reasons that "The Cat House" has been grounded.

4. Cockpit / flight instrument wiring - this is simple, there is none. The volunteers were directed to cut this wiring in preparation of a restoration. We no longer have access to anyone who can recreate this so all the instruments are nonfunctional.

5. Money - We don't have any. Well, not enough anyway.

6. Volunteers - We need more.



Mailing Address :

Air America Foundation
P.O. Box 796
Titusville, FL 32781-0796

What's

NEW This

Week

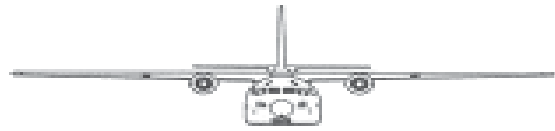
- ◆ Message from the editor
- ◆ Follow us on Facebook
- ◆ Membership info
- ◆ Website link

Continued...

*The Air America Foundation
is a 501 (c) 3 organization.*

THE

Provider



Actually, the list goes on, but I don't want to be too morose. My intent is also not to throw Paul, Josh or anyone else under the bus. These are the cards that I was dealt when the board of directors appointed me to succeed Josh. I am trying to make the best hand possible out of them.

My intent is to let everyone know where we stand. Facts, plain and simple. We need your help.

We need people to support the foundation with the purchase memberships so we can have an income that allows us to create a budget for future preservation of this aircraft as a static display. We also need people to come out and volunteer to work on the aircraft.

When we have to spend hours each week repairing support equipment and dealing with battery issues, we just can't work on the aircraft the way we need to. This is partly due to the fact that everything has to sit outside. If we had a small building, we could house equipment and start a small museum.

We have had serious setbacks in the past but so far we have always managed a way to keep the foundation alive. This is what I am asking all of you to help us do.

Some of our recent accomplishments have included fixing our prop hoist, so we can hang the props, keeping the various stated support pieces working, getting almost the entire interior painted, moving our semi-trailer next to the aircraft and other small successes. We can build on this and achieve great things.

We have just had a small feature write-up in Warbird Digest that I have scanned and placed in this issue, so we are trying to get noticed to attract people to the worthwhile project of 54-674.

The Valiant Air Command has again invited the Air America Foundation to participate in this years airshow. We are happy and excited to be a part of the event, but it is a great deal of work for the five local regular volunteers to do.

Tasks needed completed to get ready for the airshow include...

- ~ Cleaning the inside of the plane
- ~ Moving a display case for exhibits
- ~ Moving tools and other equipment to storage
- ~ Securing our support equipment at the airport to prevent intrusion and injury while the aircraft is relocated to the display line.
- ~ Recruiting volunteers to staff the aircraft during the airshow
- ~ Organizing food and drinks for us for the event
- ~ Moving concrete stanchions for display ropes to direct traffic
- ~ Making sure the Buda tug and forklift are operating
- ~ and much more!

And we only have a month to accomplish this. Five Saturdays to get all this finished and only a few people to do it.

The airshow, through tours of the aircraft, provides a serious source of income for the foundation for the preservation efforts.

What helps make this successful is the attendance of several of our local Air America veterans to talk to the visitors and to help create some excitement about the project as they tell their incredible stories. It is not often you get to meet living legends. Missing the airshow is really not an option.

On another note - some recent foundation updates that I would like to announce to you. We have repaired and load tested the prop hoist. This is now a functioning piece of equipment.

We have fixed our electric stairs and now have a way to reach most of the upper areas of the aircraft specifically around the engines.

Thanks to Dick Hart for completely restoring our flight control surfaces to flight condition. He will hopefully start on our dented jet pod soon.

We have relocated all but two pieces of our equipment to our location next to the aircraft. This eliminates the restricted access at the VAC and eliminates the 30 minute setback every time we needed a tool or to check a part number.

We have secured our space at the airport. We have worked with the Titusville - Cocoa Airport Authority and we have a home for the next three years minimum.

We have working relationships with three other organizations who have C123 Providers. John Eshelman's mechanic and staff in Alaska, Thunder Pig in Pennsylvania and Ponderous Polly in North Carolina. These are groups with similar missions. To preserve the heritage and usefulness of the C123 Provider.

www.airamfoundation.org

This last item brings me to my final discussion topic.

I have been hearing rumors circulating that we are scrapping out 54-674. I am here to tell you that this is not true.

We have loaned tools to Thunder Pig's mechanics and will assist them in any way we can. Last year, as the hurricane moved north, it hit North and South Carolina. New Bern, North Carolina is the home of Ponderous Polly. This hurricane damaged her rudder, nearly tearing it off.

We were contacted by her owner to see if we had spare rudder mounts so they could reattach her rudder. We did, and we sent them. A bigger issue for Polly is she has been grounded due to bad flight control surfaces.

The initial assessment on her flight controls is bad fabric, but as you know with C123's corrosion is a huge problem. We are certain her controls are in as bad of shape as ours were.

To this end, since the board of directors of The Air America Foundation, having decided to keep 54-674 as a static display preservation project (until funds and manpower for a flying restoration are realized) has decided to offer Polly's owners our reworked flight ready, flight controls (which now only need covered with fabric) in exchange for her damaged ones, we can use for static display.

This could also possibly be the direction we take with the props as well. The props are good, they were just serviced about ten years too soon. As such the tags have run out. In our opinion, we can exchange them if needed to another C123 somewhere to help someone out for timed out props for static display purposes.

It is the board's opinion, that if we can keep some C123's in the air, even if they are not ours, it is worth doing! We hope that you will agree.

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep everyone who is interested in the foundation informed and up to speed. If rumors such as the one about us scrapping out the C123 continue, it undermines all that we are trying to do.

We can continue to help to tell the story of Air America even if the C123 is only a static piece. We hope that we could acquire in the future another example of an Air America aircraft such as a Pilatus Porter, a Helio Courier or even a Sikorsky H34 that would be an easier aircraft to realistically maintain for flight. Then we could possibly travel to various airshows.

We could never hope to build a hangar (which, by the way, we could really use a small building to house our equipment to store our tug, forklift and other equipment in to keep it out of the weather) to house a flying C123. The wingspan is 110 feet and the tail is 35 feet in the air!

Just to give you an idea of costs for a C123 (in case you didn't know) to fly. If Polly were to travel to Florida for an airshow, or to winter here, it would cost over \$4000.00 just in fuel to get her here - one way! And that is if everything works perfectly.

I hope that this explains where we are and where we are headed as a foundation. We can really make this a great organization, but we can't do it without you. We know times are not the best for charitable organizations and non-profits, but we still have a chance.

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law and we appreciate every donation that we receive. We try to be attentive stewards with them and we waste very little.

We hope that you each choose to become members again, and also that you would consider becoming a volunteer. It would be great to have you.

We hope that you come and see us once in a while even if you feel that you can't volunteer right now. Visits give us a bit of recharging now and again.

This is a big project with big dreams and goals. We *can* make it happen.

I thank you for your time and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call, email or visit. We would be happy to give you the straight facts.

Historically Yours,



President,
Air America Foundation



Got a question?
Ask us!



Got an idea?
Let us know!

Follow the Air America
Foundation
on Facebook





▲ Air America Foundation Preserving C-123K *by Chris Henry*

Not far from where we send our astronauts into space a much smaller group is currently undertaking their own great mission. The Space Coast Regional Airport in Titusville, Florida is home to the Air America Foundation (AAF). This small band of dedicated volunteers is restoring a Vietnam War era Fairchild C-123K Provider. To honor the pilots and crews of the CIA owned airline that operated in Southeast Asia and other hot spots, the group plans to paint the C-123 in Air America markings.

The group has persevered despite numerous setbacks, including numerous hurricanes (four in less than eight weeks during 2004) and an eviction from their hangar space, which resulted from an FBO ownership change. The costs of moving their operations have stretched the organization to their limits, but they are committed to seeing their dreams realized by returning this combat veteran to a museum quality presentation. The group currently lacks funds to return the aircraft to flyable condition; however a membership drive and search for benefactors may allow the AAF to consider additional options.

With the recent declassification of records pertaining to Air America history, the efforts of the AAF is quite timely. Now that countless heroic deeds of pilots and crews of the clandestine organization are able to be told, the noble goal of the Air America Foundation to preserve history through the restoration of an aircraft that served Air America in Southeast Asia, deserves support and admiration. For more information visit: www.aramfoundation.org.