

DCMA Employee's Dream Come True

By Mark Woodbury, Associate Editor

A Defense Contract Management Agency Boeing Mesa, Ariz., quality assurance representative had a long-time dream come true after receiving an incentive ride in a modified Air Force T-38C trainer aircraft recently.

Gary Borman, a 20-year Air Force retiree, said when he first heard there was a possibility for an incentive ride in a supersonic airplane his first thought was that he would “give it [his] best shot.”

He immediately submitted the required paperwork through

his command to the Air Force Materiel Command. From that point on, Borman said all he could do was “hold [his] breath.”

A few oxygen-deprived days later, Borman received word the paperwork was approved. “I was nearly speechless,” he said. “Not often does a ‘ground-pounder’ get the opportunity to fly in a high-performance trainer aircraft.”

After receiving the approval notification, Borman experienced the five “longest days of [his] life” before he had a flight date.

The night before the flight, Borman went to bed a little earlier than usual. Excitement getting the best of him,

Borman said, “I lay in bed, eyes wide-open, like a kid before a big event, eliminating any benefit to an early bedtime.”

When the big day finally came, Borman said the flight was nothing short of breathtaking. “The responsiveness of the aircraft is unbelievable.”

During the flight, the pilot — a former F-16 pilot who has flown in Iraq — performed several different mock bomb runs so Borman could get an idea of what tactics are used in different scenarios. Borman said throughout the flight the aircraft performed superbly.

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imes True

Borman said the 55-minute flight flashed by in an instant for him, but he is excited he can now say he has been a 'quasi-pilot' for at least a few minutes. "I can only say that this was a dream come true for me," he said.

After experiencing g-force stresses for the first time, Borman said, "My hat is off to the pilots for the physical stresses they endure — even on a light training mission like this one."

Would Borman take the opportunity for another flight? He said, "I'd be there again tomorrow."

Borman began his civil service career in 1986, after his service with the Air Force, and has been assigned at the Mesa, Ariz., facility since. 

(Background Photo) AT-38C aircraft (U.S. Air Force photo)

T-38C Avionics Upgrade Program

The T-38C Avionics Upgrade Program has modified over 450 Air Force T-38 trainer aircraft with new avionics suites. Original manufacture of these aircraft dates back to 1963 through 1970, but because they simulate the performance of the Air Force modern fighter aircraft, the T-38C has been upgraded throughout its life span and is considered by many as the number-one supersonic trainer aircraft in the Air Force inventory.

The AUP began production in May 2000, and Borman was the first quality assurance representative assigned to the program. Working with the

program office and Air Force pilots, he established the government quality program for surveillance, verification and validation of contractor processes and products. He and other assigned quality assurance representatives have been the liaisons between the Air Force program office and the final customer — the Air Education and Training Command. Their duties have been varied — some of the primary duties included witnessing safety of flight installations and operational checks. The program has been highly successful and the end user, AETC, has been very pleased with the AUP modification.



Gary Borman, right, with T-38 pilot Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Donald Merritt, left. Merritt is operations officer for the 420th Flight Test Flight unit at Mesa's Williams Gateway Airport. (Photo by Air Force Lt. Col. Thomas Saxon, 420th Flight Test Flight commander)

T-38 Fact Sheet

Mission

The T-38A Talon is a twin-engine, high-altitude, supersonic jet trainer used in a variety of roles because of its design, economy of operations, ease of maintenance, high performance and exceptional safety record. The Air Force Air Education and Training Command is the primary user of the T-38 for joint specialized undergraduate pilot training. The Air Combat Command, Air Force Materiel Command and NASA also use the T-38 for various roles.

Features

The T-38 has swept wings, a streamlined fuselage and tricycle landing gear with a steerable nose wheel. Two independent hydraulic systems power the ailerons, rudder and other flight control surfaces. Critical aircraft components are waist high and can be reached easily by maintenance crews.

The T-38C incorporates a "glass cockpit" with integrated avionics displays, head-up display and an electronic "no drop bomb" scoring system. The AT-38B has a gun sight and practice bomb dispenser.

The T-38 needs as little as 2,300 feet (695.2 meters) of runway to take off and can climb from sea level to nearly 30,000 feet (9,068 meters) in one minute. T-38s modified by the propulsion modernization program have approximately 19 percent more thrust, reducing takeoff distance by 9 percent.

The instructor and student sit in tandem on rocket-powered ejection seats in a pressurized, air-conditioned cockpit.

Source: Air Force Link, *T-38 Talon*, 2006, U.S. Air Force, 8 Aug. 2007, <<http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=126>>.