



**AIAA**  
**Joint Zoom Section Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 17, 2022**  
**Ms. Michelle Evans**  
**AIAA Distinguished Speaker**



**“The X-15 Rocket Plane, Flying the First Wings into Space”**

**Location:** Zoom Meeting online  
**Link will be sent to those who register**

**Time:** 6:30 PM Social Time  
7:00 PM Presentation

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**  
**RSVP BY Feb. 16, 2022**  
**[davidsparis@twc.com](mailto:davidsparis@twc.com)**  
**or (516) 458-8593**

**Cost: Free for Everyone**

With the Soviet Union’s launch of the first Sputnik satellite in 1957, the Cold War soared to new heights as Americans feared losing the race into space. This presentation tells the enthralling yet little-known story of the hypersonic X-15, the winged rocket ship that met this challenge and opened the way into human-controlled spaceflight. This remarkable research aircraft held the world’s altitude record for 41 years, and still has no equal to match or better its speed of more than 4,500 mph. Beyond the X-15 are the stories of the 12 men who guided it into space, and all the people who kept the rocket plane flying for nearly a decade. This is the story that has never been told of the vehicle that was the true precursor to the Space Shuttle by being the first piloted and winged vehicle to exit Earth’s atmosphere, and make a precision piloted reentry to a landing on hard-packed dry desert lakebeds. In her research, Ms. Evans conducted 70 interviews, including 9 of the 12 pilots, such as Neil Armstrong, Scott Crossfield, Joe Walker, and Robert White, with family representatives for the remaining pilots. Others she spoke with include managers, flight planners, and the technicians and engineers who made the X-15 ready to fly its next research mission at high altitude and high Mach, expanding the frontiers of flight research.

Michelle Evans is the founder of Mach 25 Media ([www.Mach25Media.com](http://www.Mach25Media.com)) and is a writer, photographer, and communications specialist in aerospace. She has written the bestselling book “The X-15 Rocket Plane, Flying the First Wings into Space” which was published by the University of Nebraska Press as part of their “Outward Odyssey, People's History of Spaceflight” series. Michelle's background in aerospace engineering includes serving in the US Air Force working on missile systems, and later in private industry accomplishing environmental testing for systems used in airliners and spacecraft. Her current work primarily involves exciting audiences about space exploration by speaking of the X-15 and other areas of the space program at venues across the country, as well as overseas. Her book on the X-15 was a finalist for the Eugene M. Emme Award for Astronautical Literature. Michelle received the Diverse Community Leader Award from Orange County Human Relations, and was recognized as number 3 on the Orange County Register’s list of the 100 Most Influential People in Orange County. She has appeared in numerous publications, including Air & Space Smithsonian, Ad Astra, Orange County Register, Los Angeles Times, and the New York Times. Michelle had feature stories about her life in both Time and Newsweek magazines. She was a technical consultant on the Neil Armstrong biopic “First Man,” and has consulted with National Geographic television for “The Real Right Stuff.”

**Directions:** Click on the link in the meeting invitation you will receive after signing up for the meeting.