



The Flyer

April 2003
Vol. Eleven, No. 4

High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 915-563-5112

On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

It's Finished and Ready to Fly!



The J2K, also known as the *Tar-Baby*, is finally finished and was rolled out onto the High Sky Wing ramp last Saturday for a little photo shoot. Standing in front of the plane are left to right, Cols Bob Walker, Ralph Gillette, Jim Moore and Bill Coombes.

Day aircraft tours and visitors (photo below).

The first flight will have to wait for a bit more paperwork to be finished but that should be done in the next week or two. You can read Col Coombes' comments on the first flight and first pilot in his maintenance column and Col Wilson's reply in the operations notes.

Once the J2K is airworthy, we need to be looking for new candidates to help pilot and crew the newest addition to the High Sky Wing collection.



The new alternator works, thanks to Col Walker and others, and even the radios work — amazing! Bill taxied the J2K over to the main CAF hangar later that day to make it available for the CAF's Open Cockpit



From the Back Office

by Col Ralph Gillette

Many exciting things are happening around the High Sky Wing. We have 101X back and ready to fly. We have the Fairchild J2K ready to fly. We are very close to acquiring a new PT-19 for the wing. We have a great program scheduled this month — see details elsewhere in this issue. We had the opportunity to help at the “Salute for the Troops” at the ballpark on Sunday, April 13. We have Open Cockpit Day coming on Saturday, April 19 where we will help in showing off some of the CAF fleet, plus we are cooking hamburgers and hot dogs for the expected crowd. All in all, it looks to be a very active April.

With all our activities comes exposure to the public and our fellow CAF members. We have gotten a little lax over the past few months about showing off our uniforms and patches. We had a suggestion during the last Staff meeting that we should all try to attend any function, be it Wing meeting or public appearance, in uniform. We have several that are acceptable including the old gray and the new tan. The main change is our CAF designator. We are working with Ernie Webb to get our old High Sky Wing patch updated to show Commemorative Air Force. These should be available soon. We are also getting some window stickers to show our colors on our automobiles or bicycles or whatever.

Speaking of Ernie, he is getting some new caps done and they will be available to the Wing. We are going to get the two-tone blue and gray with the wings rather than put a patch on a black or white cap. Everybody was pretty much in agreement that the two-tone was the better choice.

In parting, remember, the meeting for April is going to be on the fourth Thursday, April 24th (my birthday by the way) rather than the usual third Thursday. This is being done to take advantage of Bill Coombes’ Seminar program participants for our program. See you there and remember, wear something CAF.



Don't Forget!
Your 2003 Wing Dues Are Due

Executive Views

by Col Gena Linebarger

Great speakers are on line for the April 24th Wing meeting. As a prelude to the Saturday Seminar series presentation, “The Authors Speak”, our guest speakers will be authors Barrett Tillman and Eric Hammel. Please come out and make these guys feel welcome. As always bring your favorite covered dish for the feast.

Do you need an extra 2003 calendar? The Wing has extra Ghost Calendars on hand at a closeout price of \$5.00 each. Calendars will be available at Wing meeting for purchase or see Ralph or Gena.

Arriving soon — “NEW” High Sky Wing patches, stickers and hats.

Coming up April 19th is Open Cockpit Day. As a fund raiser, the Wing will be selling hamburgers and hotdogs in the big hangar during the event. Volunteers are needed in all areas; food prep, serving, cooking, etc. Open Cockpit is always a fun day and a great opportunity to share the HSW with the public. Contact Gena Linebarger if you can help out 915-528-0997.

See you at Wing meeting!

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Good news!!! When you all appear for the special Wing meeting on Thursday 24 April, you will be greeted by the sight of FLYING AIRPLANES! After hundreds of hours and hundreds and hundreds of dollars, both the High Sky Wing-assigned airplanes, the SNJ and the Fairchild J2K-2, are airworthy, with new annuals and all systems in A-1 operating condition. Many thanks go to many people, most recently to Bob Walker, Rodney Jackson, Rudy Silas, and Jim Moore, for finishing up the little glitches on the Tarbaby and 101X. These men have done yeoman service: I am (and we all) are in their debt.

Randy and I will flip a coin to see who gets to fly the Tarbaby first, with the loser making the maiden voyage! We tested the radio and the alternator last Saturday, and all went very well. The airplane needs to have some FAA blessings and a current weight and balance done to it, which is in the immediate future, and we see no more issues that will keep us from flying her. I hope that the members are as pleased with the finished product as I am.

On another front, many of us on the staff have been casting about for another project for the membership, this one involving a vehicle rather than an air-

plane. Col. Wallace has been scouting around for a WW II ear car, and he will continue his searching. I have found an interim project, something that is right in line with the demonstrated expertise of Messrs. McCracken, Moore, Meroney, etc, etc. We shall call it a Frank Bass Memorial Tug Overhaul. When Deerhorn Aviation acquired Avion, they donated three running airplane tugs to the CAF. All are in need of some paint and some TLC, something we can accomplish. As our airplanes become flyers and not fixer-uppers, we need something we can all piddle with, and one of those tugs would be just the ticket. My Krylon trigger finger is anxious to work miracles one more time! I hope that a number of you frustrated car mechanics will come out and join the fun as we “do” another tug in Frank’s memory.



In another part of the newsletter you will see the saga of our fly-over in at the Sunday “Support of our troops” rally. It has been too long since we’ve been able to fly the two SNJs together. We will be planning to do a similar fly-over for our Memorial Day ceremony coming up next month. We want to make Memorial Day’s affair a major fund-raising opportunity for the Wing, primarily by serving food to the crowds that come in the morning for the VN Vets deal, and the noon crowd for the CAF ceremony. We will need help: I hope that a number of you will step up.

The Wing meeting on the 24th will feature noted aviation authors Barrett Tillman (from Arizona) and Eric Hammel (a California quiche eater) as our special guests. They will be a part of the Seminar Series program on Saturday 26 April. I hope that a bunch of you come out to meet them and I hope that we have lots of good ole Texas type food: I’ve already bragged

about our hospitality to foreigners!

Until then, righty tighty and lefty loosey.

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

We are back flying! After a long period of winter maintenance, our SNJ is back airworthy. A test flight last Saturday turned up a vibration in the tail-wheel assembly at one specific taxi speed and we need to check some bolts, bushings, etc. to resolve that.

The vibration could be avoided enough to let us fly a mission to support the American and coalition troops on Sunday. We had hoped to have the CAF Corsair join us but learned Sunday morning that it had a landing gear door problem and was a scrub, however Col Gordon Stevenson and his son Taylor flew to Midland from the Burnet air show that morning to help support the mission. That gave us three SNJ/AT-6s, with Col Bill Coombes’ SNJ and our 101X.

After treating Gordon and Taylor to a couple of gourmet burgers with cheese (#521 for those who have the truck stop menu memorized) we returned to the CAF hangar to get ready for the mission.

CAF Ops Officer Eric Van Hoff briefed us on the waived air space and plans for the flyover, and then acted as our ground contact with a handheld radio. Led by Bill, the three of us launched just before 1:00pm that Sunday and orbited a couple of miles southeast of the stadium, where the rally was being held. We were briefed to make our pass over the stadium exactly as the song *God Bless the USA* ended. Now, if you haven’t tried this, it is not always easy to get a bunch of old airplanes in the exactly right spot at exactly the right time but somehow, this time it worked.

Parked about 10 feet left and below Bill’s wing, with Gordon the same place off his right wing, all I can tell you is we made a pass over a bunch of folks. However, over the radio, I heard Eric shouting “Great job” or something of the sort.

Somehow, we seemed to have arrived just as the last notes of the song were being sung — of course exactly as planned. Well, at least that’s my and Bill’s story and we are sticking to it!

The J2K, a.k.a. Tar-Baby is just awaiting some FAA and CAF paperwork to fly. As to who gets to make the first flight — let’s just say the looser will have a full report on that flight next month! P.S. My vote is for Col Coombes, after all it is the *Tar-Baby* ;-)
Y’all fly safe!

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Special Meeting Date Change

The HSW staff voted to move April's general Wing meeting from the third to the fourth Thursday to allow some of Col Bill Coombes guest speakers for the next symposium to also address our Wing meeting.

Please be sure to bring a covered dish or some contribution to the meeting's dinner, so we can show our guests and members that the High Sky Wing puts on a great Midland, Texas feed and welcome for our friends. If you can't find time to make something from scratch, just drop by HEB or Albertson's and pick up some fried chicken or something else ready made — we won't mind!

If the change to the fourth Thursday works out this time, we would like to ask you as members to comment on a possible permanent change of the Wing's general meeting to that date. Basically, this would give us more time to get out the newsletter — your comments are welcome. See you April 24th.

Lest We Forget

High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Ralph Gillette - 570-8093 ofc
Executive Officer: Gena Linebarger
Adjutant: Mary Alice Tidwell
Finance: Bob Stine
Operations: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell
Maintenance: Bill Coombes - 689-8359 home
Safety - David Linebarger

Hangar Phone: (915) 563-5112

all numbers are Area Code 915 unless indicated

What's Happening & When

Apr 19 - Open Cockpit Day
Apr 24 - Wing meeting
Apr 26 - Seminar *The Authors Speak*
May 1 - Staff meeting
May 15 - Wing meeting
May 26 - Memorial Day

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, April 24th at 7:00pm in the Hangar
