



The Flyer

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

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On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

A Major Victory and a Challenge!

As most of you should know from the November newsletter and Wing meeting, we have been expecting the Midland Airport Board to recommend a new lease by the CAF of our High Sky Wing hangar at a commercial rate of over \$1,500 per month – much more than we can afford. We were prepared to challenge that recommendation with letters, petitions and in person before the Midland City Council.

In an unexpected turn of events, however, the airport board voted to extend the CAF's lease on the hangar until November 30th, 2002, with only a modest, 25-percent, increase per month. This is a major victory for the High Sky Wing and the CAF!

In the process of negotiating for a new long-term lease on the hangar at a non-commercial rate, the Wing staff discovered that the major obstacle to doing so was the location of the hangar in the commercial part of the airport and not on the land leased to the CAF at only a dollar a year. The CAF's non-profit status or tangible and intangible benefits to Midland do not change the commercial nature of our hangar's location. We were told very clearly that if we wanted a non-profit rate, the CAF already has that across the street from our present location.

What we need to consider now is building the Wing a new home on the CAF's lease. In thinking about this, it was suggested that we might not need to build an entire hangar, as the CAF's main hangar typically has space available in it for the Wing's aircraft. Why not build a structure to house a large meeting room, kitchen, offices and other space needed to continue the Wing's operations? Why not attach it in some way to the side of the main hangar, so that we can offer hospitality to museum and hangar visitors? Not only would this cost less than constructing an entire hangar, it would give us the use of the main ramp and hangar, for special events and gatherings, and also offer new opportunities for recruiting members.

Would CAF HQ let us do this? We asked Bob Rice this question informally, and his response was overwhelmingly positive. He felt that the Wing's activities and involvement in the main hangar and on the ramp would be a great benefit to both the CAF and the museum. Obviously lots of details are involved but for now, we need to decide if this general plan is the best for the Wing in the long run.

Out of respect for our guest speaker at the December meeting, if you want to discuss any of the hangar issues, please come out early, so we can do so before dinner. In addition, the staff will make this the major item for discussion at the next staff meeting, on Saturday, January 5th, 2002 at 10am, and invites any and all members to attend and participate. Lunch will be served — not sure just what, but it will be hot!

Over the next few weeks, we will be working with the HQ staff and local building firms to try and get an idea of just how much a new High Sky Wing facility would cost, if it were built as an annex to the main hangar. Another very positive point about such a project is that by adding onto the improvements on the CAF lease, we should have a very good chance of getting grants and other funding from foundations and individuals who have supported the CAF and museum in the past.

Let's talk about this over the next few weeks, firm up a plan and make it happen in 2002!



Don't Forget!
Your 2002 Wing Dues in January

From the Back Office

by Col Blake Cowart

On November 16, the High Sky Wing met with the Finance Committee during their final meeting for 2001. The Wing requested that the Committee table discussions involving insurance payments for the PT-19 and the BT-13 losses. The Committee agreed to accept our request.

The reason for our request is that the High Sky Wing is facing another challenge that will require much energy and focus in the coming year. That challenge is that we will likely be relocating our home over the next year. Those details are yet to be discussed, but I will inform you of what is known at this time.

The High Sky Wing met with the Airport Advisory Board on November 29, 2001, at Midland International Airport. Representing the CAF and High Sky Wing were Bob Rice, Keith Lawrence, Randy Wilson, Bob Stine and myself. The basic outcome of that meeting is explained in the lead article of this issue but it is clear that a move to a facility on the CAF's part of the airport will be the ultimate solution to the Wing's need for a base of operations and home.

The problem with the existing hangar is that the City wishes to utilize it for a commercial business, and we will have this black cloud over our heads for years to come. We will be faced with the possibility/probability that we will be forced to pay near commercial lease rates. We now have a year to avert that event and create a long-term, stable environment. The new environment can be better suited to fill our role in CAF functions and be more inviting to the general public.

Several ideas will be offered, some of which will be mentioned in this newsletter. Whatever actions are taken, it will take the efforts and spirit of all of you as members. I believe that a new project of large scale; especially one requiring many different talents and skills, will be very good for the Wing. Much like what was witnessed shortly after its inception and transition into the Gillespie hangar. We will have to make decisions and take actions very soon as twelve months will come and go very soon.

In closing, I wish to remind you that Wing annual memberships for 2002 are due in January. Those new members that have joined since AIRSHO 2001 are considered to be current for 2002.

Have a happy and safe holidays! See you at the next Wing meeting.

Images from the Big Lake, Veterans Day Parade



HSW XO Ralph Gillete narrated the flyover and then spoke on behalf of the CAF and High Sky Wing.
Anybody seen a couple of SNJs anywhere?



Local support for the parade was outstanding, complete with floats, costumes and lots of flags!



Ralph joined members of the Big Lake VFW, who sponsored the event, in the parade.

Executive Views

by Col Ralph Gillette

Hope everybody had a good turkey day and gave thanks for all the things we have in this country, in Texas and in the High Sky Wing. Even though it has been a very bad year for the wing, I believe the spirit is alive within the wing and that is because of our membership and their attitude. It is that attitude that has caused us to stand up and volunteer for all the AirSho jobs, the Special Show, the fly bys and all the dozens of other things that need to get done.

For those of you that could not make the November meeting, our two SNJ drivers and the Blastards were presented with Certificates of Appreciation by the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce for their involvement in the Veterans Day celebration. We were sent a few photos of the event, some of which are included in this issue. Courtney Clark was our speaker and he did an excellent job as always.

Vick Brockman will be our speaker in December. I have it on good authority (Lois Herrington) that Vick has a very interesting tale to tell. We will break in January for our annual awards party so there will be no speaker. William S. Vanderland, Supervisory Senior Resident Agent, Midland Resident Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation will be our February speaker.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

A short maintenance report this month, due to the length of the report about the hangar and our lease agreement. I hope all of you will read it carefully and visit with the staff if you have questions. The bottom line is that we won the battle, and there is no need to take our case to the City Council, as we probably won't be an agenda item for their December or January meeting. However, I believe that the City will win the war, in that they will not lower any new lease agreement to a level that we can manage.

I spent time with both Harold Davis and Dennis Givens, and we've mapped out a six-month plan of attack on the Tar-Baby. The tail feathers are going to be redone, installed and rigged, along with the tailwheel, and then we shall tackle the wings. We will need volunteers to help with the fabric work, primarily the doping of the new fabric.. We shall do all of that work in our hangar and we'll build a temporary "paint booth" so that we can paint the airplane as well. We are postponing the installation of the radio until all of

this work is done. We are again lucky to have friends like Harold and Dennis and Mona to help us with this at a very reasonable cost.

Jim Moore, Bruce Wallace and I fixed the brake problem on the SNJ so it is back "in service." However, it is due for its annual this month and I've made arrangements to do this the week after Christmas. I will need volunteers to help take the airplane apart and then put it back together ... Harold and his brother Todd will oversee the work. I will be doing my airplane at the same time and know enough about SNJs that I can direct the day-to-day activities.

The Saga of the Tar-Baby will continue (there is a "chapter two") in next month's issue. I hope to see many of you at the wing meeting on the 20th and after Christmas at the hangar turning wrenches.

Awards Banquet

The Wing's annual awards dinner will be held on Saturday, January 26th, 2002, at the Midland Hilton. The cost will be \$25 per person. A cash bar will be open from 6:00pm and the buffet dinner will begin at 7:00pm. Entertainment will be provided by some of the usual Wing characters!

Reservations can be made by calling Col Gena Linebarger at (915) 528-0997, and must be made no later than January 21st.

Dollars and Cents

by Col Bob Stine

For those interested, we have included in our expenses over the last seven or so years, depreciation on the hangar, based on, I assume, the value of the donated lease. This is a purely paper expense to the Wing and is something we will address with HQ about adjusting in the near future.

If we disregard the paper depreciation, the Wing's finances through the end of November show a gross income of \$61,206.64 and total expenses of \$56,409.65 for a net income of \$4,796.99.

The majority of our income, over \$36,500, has come from special projects and fund raising events, while the second most important source of income has been your Wing dues, which account for over \$8,400.

Speaking of Wing dues, please remember that **High Sky Wing dues for 2002 are due in January.** Dues are \$50 per year and, of course, you must be a current member of the CAF to be a Wing member.

CAF Traditions, Esprit and Humor

As we bid goodbye to our old name, we should remember that it, like much of what has made the Confederate Air Force succeed, had a generous helping of humor. Some of the best was even directed at ourselves and our traditions. The following is reproduced with permission from the book *History of the Ghost Squadron*, published in 1975. Whatever we are called next year, let's hope we can still laugh — even at ourselves!

The Confederate Air Force was initially conceived for, and has remained dedicated to, the acquisition and restoration of World War II combat aircraft, and the establishment of facilities for the maintenance and safe keeping of these aircraft. The identifiable "products" of the Colonels' efforts are the aircraft and facilities, which have been viewed by countless thousands, in action and in static display.

But along the way, there evolved a thing that is almost as tangible as the aircraft themselves. This can be called by many names: camaraderie, esprit-de-corps, organizational pride, etc. By whatever name it is called, it is, in the final analysis, the thing that made possible the completion of the CAF mission.

There are many similarities between the exploits of the Confederate Air Force and the air exploits of World War II. The CAF was not under fighter attack or anti-aircraft fire, but otherwise faced many of the same problems that the flight and maintenance crews faced more than thirty years ago.

The same attitude that existed during World War II enabled the CAF Colonels to get the job done, often under equally adverse conditions. This attitude is best described as being based on humor, and seemingly never taking anything completely seriously.

Anyone familiar with World War II combat aircraft know that these types require a high degree of flying skill. The Colonels that are certificated to fly these aircraft undergo the most strenuous training and proficiency testing imaginable. These aircraft are rare, expensive, and in many cases, irreplaceable. This, plus the high regard for the safety of the pilots, results in extremely restrictive proficiency demands on the CAF pilots. And the almost unbelievable safety record of the Ghost Squadron attests to their flying proficiency!

However, the General Instructions issued to Air Crews by the CAF Office of Flight Safety would lead one to believe that the pilots are totally inept, and the aircraft incapable of sustaining flight! Following are the General Instructions issued to Air Crews pertaining to a major CAF Airshow at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio:

The Octagon

TO: Rebel Air Crews
FROM: Office of Flight Safety
SUBJECT: General instructions
Demonstration
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

Pilots and crew members participating in WPAFB Demonstration will assume all responsibilities in a manner which will reflect the superior knowledge and extraordinary skill of the typical Rebel Aviator. Your instructions are as follows:

1) Aircraft from Bomb Command and Fighter Command will rendezvous over Dallas at an altitude of 8450 ft. on Friday, May 19, at 08.00 to 14:00 + or - 1:72 hrs. (Compass heading Rebel Field to Dallas — 372 ° variable magnetic.)

2) Any aircraft with operational compass may serve as flight leader. (Charts published prior to 1936 are not considered reliable and should not be used.) Refueling stop will be Springfield, Mo. (Compass heading 10° to 60° mag., approx.) Your route will take you over six states. Oklahoma is the green one; Missouri is brown; Illinois is yellow; Indiana is red and Ohio is the tan one on your TEXACO MAP. (Advise Headquarters of change of location of any major cities or rivers encountered enroute.) Care must be used at intersection of US 66 and US 40 East of St. Louis — stay on US 40!

3) If you become surrounded by lostness, land at nearest airport. Do not ask where you are. Ask direction to nearest men's room. Display confidence, smile at everyone. Read your location on front of hangar and proceed to Dayton.

4) FAA Briefing: Be a few minutes late to all FAA briefings. This will assure the Briefing Officer that you are no amateur and that you have attended many such sessions. Ask several elementary questions to be sure the Briefing Officer is competent. Make witty remarks through-

out this meeting to leave no doubt in his mind that you are not merely a “hot-rock” but that you are a “smolderin’ boulder — Senior Grade.”

5) Have the CAF Briefing Officer carefully describe your aircraft to avoid takeoff in the wrong machine.

6) At takeoff time, approach the aircraft in a reckless, devil-may-care manner as this makes a big impression on by-standers. Do not trip over the power cables, as this does not make a big impression on by-standers. Ask the nearest small boy what type aircraft this is — just to make sure.

7) Conduct your preflight in a rapid but deliberate manner. Check the fuel tanks to see that all air has been removed therefrom. Be sure to kick vigorously at all the tires. When you come to a complicated part of the airplane, stare at it seriously for several seconds before going on. This creates a favorable impression on your crew chief and makes the by-standers think you know what you are doing.

8) When you have finished the preflight, ask another by-stander what aircraft this is. Then proceed rapidly to your assigned aircraft and repeat steps 6 and 7.

9) To enter the aircraft, approach it from the left side and leap lightly onto the access ladder without looking.

10) Pick yourself up off the ground in a casual manner, locate an access ladder and climb the steps. (Note: Try to control the tense feeling in your stomach and above all, don’t look down!) Enter the cockpit in any manner you choose. If at all possible, avoid going in headfirst.

11) Next, check stick and throttle positions. If the stick is in your left hand and the throttle is in your right hand, you are in the cockpit backwards. Don’t panic! Smile at the crew chief, wave to the by-standers, and slowly rotate your body 180°. Now rearrange all shiny, well used switches, levers and buttons in the cockpit in a pleasing and eye catching manner. Don’t bother the dull, corroded ones. Prepare to start the engine!

12) Upon starting the engine, advance the throttle smartly to military power and stand by for the crew chief’s signal. When he begins waving to you, do not wave back. Rapidly rearrange the

switches, levers and buttons, until the right combination is found — whereupon the crew chief will stop waving. (Note: In making magneto check, move ignition switch as rapidly as possible to obtain lowest drop in revs — and to prevent complete engine failure on inoperative magneto.)

13) When signal is given to taxi, advance the throttle smoothly, hit the “highblower” switch and jump smartly over the chocks. Retard the throttle to military power and try to avoid further use of highblower while taxiing as this irritates ground personnel.

14) When taxiing, an effort should be made to avoid collision with spectators as this causes damage to the propeller, and creates an untidy condition on the ramp.

15) If, after turning out of your parking spot, you see a large gray wall, stop quickly, turn around and taxi back out of the hangar. You have committed a rather serious error.

16) After arriving in the general vicinity of the runway, immediately begin calling the tower at frequent intervals in a loud, authoritative voice. Do not take negative for an answer. This will accelerate the launching process. If you are on a downwind runway, take off anyway. This will demonstrate your self-confidence.

17) After leaving the ground, pull the nose up smartly, close your eyes and count to 10. If contact with the ground has not occurred by that time, continue the mission as briefed. (Note: You may open your eyes for the remainder of the flight if you wish. However, this is optional.)

18) You may now relax and amaze yourself (and the spectators) with your uncommon ability to perform incredible feats of aerial gymnastics. Note: All pilots are directed to maintain a one-to-one ratio between takeoffs and landings. Pilots found in violation of this directive will forfeit parachute privileges!

Carry on, Colonel — in the highest tradition of the Corps.

Your Friendly CAF Flying Safety Officer

Throckmorton T. Beauregard
Colonel, CAF



High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Blake Cowart - 528-1344 cell
Executive Officer: Ralph Gillette
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

Dec 20 - Wing meeting
Jan 5 - Staff meeting
Jan 26 - Awards dinner
Feb 2 - Staff meeting
Feb 21 - Wing meeting

A Belated Mystery Plane

We had planned to run this in the September issue but events precluded much humor then. As we move on, can anyone identify this American-built (hint!) aircraft?

If you think you know what it is, e-mail your answer to info@highskywing.org. Be sure to include the manufacturer and model number or service name, if appropriate. Or come to the December Wing meeting and tell us what you think it is. You might even win a prize, if you are correct! See you there.

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, December 20th at 7:00pm in the Hangar

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