



# The Flyer

February 2002  
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High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force  
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 915-563-5112

On the Web at  
HighSkyWing.org



## 2001 Award Winners

The Wing's annual Awards Banquet was held at the Midland Hilton on January 26th and was attended by about fifty High Sky Wing members and their significant others.

Recognized as the Wing's *Colonel of the Year* for 2001 was Col Gena Linebarger (above right), and everyone who knows Gena agrees that it is a very well deserved honor. Among Gena's many contributions were coordinating the Awards Banquet itself and the excellent dinner we all enjoyed — but the award was a surprise!

Also singled out for much deserved special recognition was Col Bill Coombes (above left), who received the Wing's *Spirit of the Eagle* award. Bill's numerous projects and activities with both the CAF and Museum are an example of the sort of spirit for which all High Sky Wing members strive.

Be sure to read Col Becky Carter's poem about the events and people of last year on page 3.

## Another New Home Option

At the February Wing staff meeting, CAF Executive Director Bob Rice and newly elected CAF Chief of Staff, Col Don, "Tiny" Malm, presented us with information about a new combined-use facility that will be funded primarily by a grant from the Texas Department of Transportation. The High Sky Wing was invited to consider using space in the new facility for a new home.

After a number of questions from the staff and other members, it was clear that hard details of the building's exact location, plans, layout and building schedule were just in the first stages of planning, and it will be sometime before firm answers to many questions are available. We asked to be kept informed of any decisions about the facility, as they became available over the next few weeks and months, especially as to the location of the new building.

The original subject of the Wing staff meeting was to continue to determine whether we would build a full hangar or a meeting facility, as a new home or first-stage of one, and where it might be located. Obviously, that discussion got a bit side-tracked by the new multi-use facility option, about which we had no prior knowledge.

We are hoping that after meeting with some of the CAF General Staff and the AAH Museum Board members at the upcoming Winter Staff Conference, that we can get some clarification of how the High Sky Wing would exactly fit into the new building, and then we can report back to you on the results.

All options are still being studied and discussed. If you have a question or opinion, please share it with your Wing staff.



**Don't Forget!**  
**Your 2002 Wing Dues**

## From the Back Office

by Col Blake Cowart

Thanks to those of you in attendance at the February Staff meeting. As we learned, we now have another option. That issue is discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.

I, as well as many of the Staff members will be in attendance at the Winter Staff conference to be held at the Hilton Midland and Towers February 22, 23 and 24th. Certainly, each of you is invited to attend. We will keep you informed regarding the circumstances surrounding the High Sky Wing home project.

In an effort to do a little fund raising, we have rescheduled the Wing meeting dates for the months of March and April. The March meeting will be held on Friday the 15th as a fund raising dinner open to the general public.

The special guests will be The Blacksheep of VMF-214. Volunteer cooks and other kitchen help will be needed. The April meeting date has been changed to Friday the 26th and our guests will be Chuck Yeager and Bud Anderson. This will also be a dinner open to the general public and assistance will be needed to cook, serve and clean.

We still intend to mail a membership renewal packet, but decided to delay it a few short weeks to include discoveries made during the Winter Staff conference. Membership renewals are still needed, so please return the packet as soon as possible.

See you at the Wing meeting on Thursday the 21st.

## For Members Only!

by Col Randy Wilson

We are just putting the finishing touches on a new Wing members-only section of our web site, where current High Sky Wing members can log in and update their own contact information, including their mailing address, phone numbers and e-mail. You can also look up the basic contact info for other active Wing members, all in a secure manner.

Another new feature we are testing is a members-only forum, where members can discuss Wing issues with the Wing staff and other members. This would allow members who don't live in Midland to have a more active role in Wing planning and activities.

To access any of these new sections you will need a login name and password. These will be provided to all current members as soon as possible.

## Executive Views

by Col Ralph Gillette

It is certainly nice to see the increased activity around the hanger on Saturdays now. This past weekend was the Wing Staff Meeting and it was very well attended. See elsewhere in the newsletter to get a read out on what took place. But even without the Staff meeting, we have had a fairly good group in the hanger on the odd Saturday. Maybe it is the fact that we only have about eleven months left to enjoy the comforts of the old home, or maybe it's because the weather is too ugly to be playing golf or maybe it's just because of the availability of good friends and interesting talk.

And speaking of talk, thank you Ms. Poet Laureate, Becky Carter, for that stirring rendition of the foibles and fallacies of our High Sky Wing brethren. My congratulations to Gena Linebarger for being voted Colonel of the Year and to Bill Coombes for receiving the Spirit of the Eagle award. Both are very well deserved.

William S. Vanderland, Supervisory Senior Resident Agent, Midland Resident Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation will be our February speaker. In lieu of our regular meeting, we will have a special dinner on Friday, March 15th in honor of the Black Sheep Group that will be the subject of Bill Coombes Remembrance of War seminar on Saturday, March 16th. Likewise, we will be having a very special dinner on Friday April 26th for General Chuck Yeager.

## From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Not much new to report this month...the Tarbaby continues to receive treatment, this month some rewiring courtesy of Ted Claussen, with the goal being to run the engine as soon as we receive the newly recovered tail feathers. We are 99% certain that the wings will have to be recovered as well, but that will wait until the engine run.

As far as the SNJ is concerned, the rebuilt cylinder was installed, but the induction leak problem was hard to find. We might still have a problem there. Harold and crew readjusted the valve clearance and either Randy or myself will run the engine next week to see whether that helped or hurt. Everything else during the annual checked out fine, so 101 is essentially back in service. My thanks to Ted, Jim Moore, Bruce Wallace, Don McCracken, David Linebarger, Randy,

and the rest of the gang who helped with the inspections. It was a good team effort.

I hope that everyone who is "computer savvy" will take advantage of the High Sky Wing web site that Randy has put together. It is very professionally done, and the members' forum area is an excellent idea for increasing dialogue amongst the membership. When you see Randy, you might give him an additional "attaboy" for all his work on the web site as well as the newsletter.

I hope that we have a good crowd for the February meeting so that we can finalize plans for the special dinner/meeting for the Blacksheep in March and for the big Yeager/Anderson dinner in April. These could be very significant fundraisers for the Wing, but they will be labor intensive. I hope that many of you will once again step up to volunteer your services.

Lastly, the TxDoT grant to the CAF for the second big hangar added another option and another few obstacles to our on-going search for a home. There are many strong feelings out there about what the HSW should do, and I've heard rumors that, unless things are done in one way, this group will quit, or unless they are done the other way, another group will quit.

I sincerely hope that everyone steps back from such extreme positions and re-evaluates why they are members of the CAF anyway. The airplanes are first and foremost the only reason the outfit exists, and we should always, as custodians of two CAF airplanes (and with the possibility of getting another one), remember that they come before a building, a bar, or an office.

See you at the meetings.

## A Look Back at 2001

The following look back at last year was written and performed by Col Becky Carter at the Wing's Awards Banquet. Becky is now the High Sky Wing *poet laureate*!

It's been a heck of a year, one of a kind.  
One that will forever stay in our hearts and our minds.  
We lost some good friends but also gained a few.  
Despite all our hardships, we still made it through.  
We've been told to fly the coop, so to speak,  
So it looks like we'll be moving across the street.  
Yes, the airport board with all its wisdom was unyielding,  
Now they'll get the hangar back, another empty building.

Plans are being drawn up and we're looking at options,  
But right now it feels like we're up for adoption.  
We'll get it all done, because that's the kind of people we are,  
We may not be bigger, but we'll be better by far.

Sue Becraft works in our library every week without fail,  
To sing her praises would take too long to tell.  
It's a great place for meeting and for mingling,  
To walk in there is quite spine tingling.

Our Illustrious staff has been solid as a rock,  
Through all of our trials, they sat back and took stock.  
When things got rough, they played a very integral part,  
Why, we even found out Ralph Gillette really does have a heart.

Randy Wilson is in charge of operations which he does quite well,  
He took over a job that was pretty hard to sell.  
He jumped on board and became part of the crew,  
If you have any questions, just ask him and he'll tell you, and tell you and tell you.

Bill Coombes runs maintenance and also air show,  
If you have any questions, he's the man that will know.  
He's a sweetheart of a guy, even with a bar maid he'll tip her,  
As long as she keeps giving him a cold Dr. Pepper.

David Linebarger is safety officer, he does his job with care,  
I know when I go to the hangar, I feel safe there.  
He's always there to help out, he knows the drill  
Whether it running the lounge or helping Ernie with the grill.

Mary Alice is our adjutant, she's so short and small,  
But the job that she does makes her look ten feet tall.  
With the life that she's led, her stories have no end,  
I just know that we are all proud to call her our friend.

Colonel-Colonel Bruce Wallace helps corral this rowdy bunch.  
He's always there when we get in a crunch.  
He's a war hero and in our ACAHOF hall of fame,  
A gentleman's gentleman is synonymous with his name.

Now we get down to Blake, who is our wing leader.  
He was so diplomatic about handing the refrigerator.  
He's our number one guy, he's up at the top,  
Now he only has to come once a week to clean the pots.

Gena runs modern military, which is a job I would hate,  
Looking at all those boys in their flight suits would be hard to take.  
She did a great job, so smoothly it ran,  
Gena even helped the guys to get off to Afganistan.

Bob Stine doc's the books and he doc's it so well,  
The job that he's doing, he's doing it swell.  
He makes the deposits and puts them in the bank,  
Our on going process we have Bob to thank.

So this is our year in a nutshell.  
I think that we've done pretty well.  
But as long as we have each other to rely on,  
I know that we can get the big job done.



*Lest We Forget*



## Mystery Plane #3

Can you identify this WWII aircraft? If you can, send your answer by e-mail to [info@highskywing.org](mailto:info@highskywing.org) or give your answer at the next Wing meeting. We may even have a prize at the meeting for the first correct identification. See you there.

No one offered a guess for the last published mystery plane but that may have been due to the events of the last few months. Mystery Plane #2 was a Martin Model 187 (A-30) Maryland light bomber, used primarily by the British. For a bit more info on that plane please visit [http://highskywing.org/past\\_mysteries.htm](http://highskywing.org/past_mysteries.htm).

## 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

Feb 22-24 - CAF Wing Staff Conference

Mar 2 - Staff meeting

Mar 15 - Wing meeting & Special dinner

Mar 30 - Open Cockpit Day

April 6 - Staff meeting

April 26 - Wing meeting & Special dinner

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**Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, February 21 at 7:00pm in the Hangar**

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HIGH SKY WING - CAF  
Post Office Box 61064  
Midland, Texas 79711-1064