



# The Flyer



July 2010 Issue, Vol. Eighteen, No. 7  
**High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force**  
**On the Web at [HighSkyWing.org](http://HighSkyWing.org)**  
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-561-5581

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## Next Wing Meeting, Thursday July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the ComCenter

### From the Lead

by Col Randy Wilson

Our next regular Wing meeting is next Thursday and due to the expected heat, will again be held upstairs in O'Brien Hall in the Commemorative Center. We do have a speaker and hope you will bring a covered dish or favorite deli item and join us starting at 6:00 p.m. for the social hour.

I am very happy to report that the North American L-17A is now flying and the PT-19 is just about ready to fly! You can read more on both in Col Bill Coombes' column. All of our other planes are being flown, too. We are also happy to welcome Col Brad Bond as the newest CAF and HSW pilot, having checked out in the Stinson last Saturday. We will also begin checking out pilots in the L-17 in the next few days.

Col Steve Bolin's column will tell you where we stand on raising money for both the L-17 and T-28A. As an update, I think we are now only about \$800 short in signed pledges. Now is the time to step up and pledge if you want to see the Wing acquire the T-28A.

On other Wing matters, a Nominating Committee has been appointed to find candidates for three Wing elected offices: Wing Leader, Adjutant and Finance Officer for 2011-2012. The committee is chaired by Col Blake Cowart, with Cols H. A. Tuck and Susie Day also serving. Due to personal demands on my time outside the Wing, I am not able to run as your Wing Leader for the next two years, however, I will still continue to be very active and help support the High Sky Wing. If you wish to put up a candidate for any of these positions, please contact one of the members of the committee. A slate of candidates will be announced and published at least thirty days before the election, which will be held at our December meeting.

AIRSHO 2010 is only a few weeks away, so now is the time to sign up as a volunteer job. You can find

out where help is needed by visiting with Cols Gena Linebarger or Clay Francell. One need that I am aware of is for additional escorts for ACAHOF inductees. If you would like to know more about these duties, contact me or Jennifer Coleman in the museum.

Next Friday, the SNB (James Martin's Twin Beech), Steve Bolin's Baron and our SNJ, flown by Lance Sommers, will depart for Minnesota and CAF meetings there, then go onto AirVenture at Oshkosh. They will be back the next week but I should be back in Midland by late Sunday, due to other commitments. Hopefully we will have some great stories when they return from Oshkosh!

The HSW Cadet Crew has begun a new project to restore the World War II vintage Sikorsky R-4B helicopter as a static display in the main CAF hangar. Hopefully, some of the cadets or adults will document the work with some photos and a story for the newsletter in the near future.

I hope to see a number of you at the Wing meeting next Thursday or out at the hangar on Saturdays. We are also continuing our Monday and Wednesday work parties starting about 6:00 p.m. or earlier. As always, if you have any questions about the Wing or its activities, drop me a note or give me a call.

### Safety's Edge

by Col Bobby Meroney

With all the recent rain, there is still a lot of standing water, and this brings mosquitoes and all the problems that come with them. You can help prevent these problems by dumping anything around the hangar or your home that holds water and use a repellent. If you go out in the evening, wear long pants and a long sleeve shirt if possible. Always remember, **Safety First!**

*Lest We Forget*

## Executive Offerings

by Col Rick Peterson

Thanks to a suggestion from Col Ralph Gillette, our guest speaker for the July 2010 Wing meeting will be Glenn Redmond, Major General USAF (Ret.). Glenn provided the following bio:

General Redmond was born on December 28, 1939 in Brooklyn, NY. He has earned two bachelor degrees and a Masters degree.

General Redmond entered the Aviation Cadet Program in October, 1959 and received his commission and wings in January 1961. After completing gunnery school, he flew F-100 Super Sabres from 1961 to 1972 in Europe, Libya, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and the U.S.

He joined the New Mexico Air National Guard in 1966 where in managed the Intelligence Division while maintaining currency in the F-100. While with the Guard, he flew 173 combat missions from Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

From 1973 to 1993, General Redmond held Air Force assignments which include Mobilization Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff – Intelligence at the Strategic Air Command and to the Deputy Chief of Staff – Personnel at Air Force Headquarters in the Pentagon.

The General is a senior pilot with more than 2,500 flying hours which include more than 2,000 hours in F-100s. His military awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star and Air Medal with nine oak leaf clusters.

General Redmond retired from the Air Force in 1993, and is currently living in Midland, Texas. He was married to the former Peggy O'Neal of Odessa, Texas. They have two children, Michael and Corey, and six grand children. Here in Midland, Glenn serves as a docent at the CAF Airpower Museum.

As your XO, I always gladly consider any suggestions for future speakers at upcoming Wing meetings, so let me know if you have someone you would like to speak to us. Please join us at the July Wing meeting and remember to bring a covered dish. See you then.

## From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill "Parking Lot" Coombes

Much progress on the maintenance front this month, thanks again to the tireless efforts of our volunteer mechanics. The L-17, gleaming like a "diamond in a goat's ass" as one admiring B-29 crew member

said, has flown its first test flight, and the newly rebuilt PT-19 engine should run in a few days. These are two very significant achievements.

First, the L-17 truly does sparkle. Col Paul "Buffy" Cooper expended unknown gallons of sweat in leading the effort to polish the airplane and the results are magnificent. Cols Bob Keating and James Martin have done yeoman's service in bringing the airplane to its current state. Besides the shiny finish, the L-17 also sports a new interior (thank you Jim Fowler) and lots of additional touches thanks to the "Keating and Martin" attitude that there is no reason to do something half-way. The Wing should be very proud to incorporate this airplane into the fleet. I would like to see, however, some additional sponsors on the airplane, at whatever level you can commit. Thanks for considering that.

Col Lance Sommers took the lead in repairing the PT-19's Ranger engine, and he, along with Cols Brad Bond, Sam Strahan, Chris Aycock and others, have rebuilt the engine with new cylinders, valves, etc, all done in an incredibly short amount of time. I thought the airplane would be down for a minimum of three months, but Lance and crew proved me wrong. We even have a nice newly refurbished prop to mount on the nose, so the PT will be up and going and giving rides in the very near future.

Coming up next for the maintenance team is the annual on the Fairchild J2K, aka "Tarbaby." This shouldn't be (probably wishful thinking) a lengthy process, as the airplane has been up and flying regularly with no squawks from the pilots. The Stinson is also coming up for its annual next month, so the work never stops for the maintenance team! Although we've had a core group of about six guys out every Monday and Wednesday evening, we need more folks. PLEASE, if you have a spare couple of hours between six and nine on those two evenings, consider joining us. With five (about to be six?) airplanes assigned to us, plus member-owed airplanes, we are stretched pretty thinly.

On another front, it is off to Oshkosh next Friday! For the first time the High Sky Wing will have a real "presence" at AirVenture, as Cols Martin, Coombes, Bolin, Givhan, Cooper, Echols, Diggins, Sommers, Baxter, and possibly Strahan will be flying up in the Twin Beech, the Baron, and the SNJ. This great adventure should generate lots of stories, so be sure and come to the August meeting to hear all about it.

And, on a personal note, I've made an agreement with the Museum to begin the Seminar Series of programs again. The first one will be either September 18<sup>th</sup> or October 2<sup>nd</sup> and will feature Colonel Dick Cole, Jimmy Doolittle's copilot on the famous Tokyo raid, paired with Colonel Chip Setnor, an F-117 Night-hawk pilot who planned all of the F-117 missions over Baghdad during Operation Desert Storm. He was involved in the F-117 program when it was a "black" program, so his story should really complement Dick Cole's. I hope you will help me out by attending the Seminar Series programs and meeting the guests. And, if you know of someone who might be willing to participate in a program please let me know. I'm always on the look-out for interesting program possibilities.

Until next month, righty-tighty and lefty-loosey.

## Turn and Bank

by Col Steve Bolin

This month I am going to focus on a couple of specific fund raising issues that have dominated our Wing over the last year; the L-17 Navion and the T-28A Trojan. What started out as an attempt to obtain a Stearman, (Sorry Sam) morphed into a gigantic project of restoration and "Show me the Money." The Navion arrived and was soon flying from the rafters as the crew worked hard to literally take the aircraft apart. Unlike Humpty Dumpty, the L-17 is finally making it back together again, better than ever. Bill Coombes can describe the efforts of those that have worked many months better than I. However, the following members have donated the cash required to purchase the needed items, and refurbish the second shiny, silver airplane in the hangar. Donations have equaled or exceeded the cost of acquiring this aircraft also.

John Echols, Lyle Thornton, Steve Hanson, Robin Donnelly, H. A. Tuck, Blake Cowart, Bill Coombes, and Patti Reakes-Collins.

Much has been said about the T-28A as well over the last year. Would we, could we, raise the money to restore and operate that huge oil leaking hulk? After much cussing and discussing, wheelin' and dealin', and some very gracious donations and concessions by the General Staff, (Thanks to Chris Aycock and Steve Byrd); we are very close to being able to accept assignment of the Trojan. We decided at the last Wing staff meeting, that if we had \$35,000 in signed commitment letters, not just verbal promises, that was the magic number needed to get the T-28A flying again.

That money was to come from members or outside of the Wing, but it was to be new funds. The Wing would not be encumbered with getting the aircraft flying. Once the money was raised, and the aircraft returned to flying status, then the Wing would take on the responsibility of operating it. Just as we do for the other aircraft we operate.

As of tonight, July 14<sup>th</sup>, we have firm commitments, or cash in hand for \$30,790.00. We have been told to expect at least one more full flying sponsorship for \$3500.00. We are only \$710.00 away from making the High Sky Wing operate 6 CAF aircraft. That is more opportunities for all the Wing members to experience the enjoyment and thrill of keeping these aircraft flying.

Chris Aycock, Neils Agather, Steve Bolin, Steve Brown, Brad Bond, Bob Keating, Randy Wilson, Sam Strahan, Drew Diggins, Bill Coombes, James Martin, Bill Stella, Mark Russell, Bobby Meroney, Lauri Skinner, Ralph Gillette, and Megan O'Hearn have put us very close to our goal. Do you know someone who can help?

I have purposely not stated the amount of donations in this never ending story for a couple of reasons. Our passion that is the Commemorative Air Force and the High Sky Wing compels us to "Keep Em Flying." We are not here to impress anyone with the size of our pocketbook or wallet. We also don't wish to scare off any person who wishes to donate, but is frightened by the amounts being thrown about. It isn't all about the cash either, your time and sweat wiping, or sweeping, or carrying trash are all as important to the effort. Thanks to all the members of the High Sky Wing that have made us successful in so many projects. We have a few more headed our way. I'll finish reminding you again; you and your fellow Wing members are the most important assets we have. Let's all take care of each other.



Special thanks to Col Richard Cotte for rebuilding the steering and front end of the Blue Angel tug and returning it to service. Good job Richard!

## L-17 Test Flight a Success!

Last Thursday, Cols Lance Sommers and Bob Keating took the newly restored L-17A Navion up for its first test flight. All went well with only a few small things that needed to be tweaked. On a second flight, Bob got checked out and will soon be acting as an additional Instructor Pilot for the Wing. Great job making this happen everyone! Thanks to Col James Martin for these photos.



OK, now where did we put the checklist? Got it, we're good to go! Good job Lance and Bob!



## The L-17 Really Shines!

by Col Randy Wilson

Below are some photos that I took Sunday, showing the L-17 complete with CAF markings and its new interior. The shot of Col John Paul "Buffy" Cooper is by James Martin from the first test flight.





## Flying the L-17

by Col Randy Wilson

Late last Saturday, I climbed into the L-17 with Col Lance Sommers as my instructor and check pilot to learn about our newest Wing aircraft. I have to preface this by noting that the last nose wheel aircraft I flew was the Cessna O-2A three years ago and before that I had to go back to 2003 for a BFR in a Cherokee!

Fortunately, Lance and I have flown together and checked each other out many times and he was a very gracious check pilot. Now I just need to work on keeping the nose wheel straight on landing!

Once we sat in the cockpit and went over all the controls and systems we cranked up and took off on runway 10. My first landing came only about five minutes later when Lance noticed the fuel cap wasn't tight. So, we quickly landed on 16L, tightened the cap and headed back out to the practice area for some air work. Frankly, I was a bit surprised by the performance on takeoff and climb, best climb is 80 mph but we used 100 to help keep the engine cooler. The plane proved very docile as we went through the usual stall series and slow flight maneuvers. Note, however, there is a good pitch change if full flaps are used and that position does create a lot of drag. You have to estimate the flap position visually but we did all our landings

with between one-half and two-thirds flaps.

The L-17 has a few systems that are different and have to be learned, the first being that you need to remember to turn on and turn off the hydraulic system before and after operating the gear and flaps. While this is similar to the "power push" in the SNJ, in that plane the system turns itself off after about 90 seconds. I proved that remembering to turn the L-17 hydraulics on or off required some practice and an occasional reminder from Lance.

The variable pitch propeller is adjustable with a vernier knob but is not constant speed. This means that as you climb, descend or change power settings, you need to adjust the prop to keep the proper rpm. I had flown a Bellanca with a similar prop back in my college days, so this wasn't too odd to me.

The other major system differences are the brakes and nose wheel steering. There is only a hand brake which is operated by the pilot's right hand. The nose wheel steering is directly connected to the rudder pedals and takes some getting used to. Braking and turns need to be planned well ahead, with the turns being somewhat wide and any braking done before the turn. Adding to the planning is the fact that right now, the throttle has a tendency to creep towards part throttle, so if you close the throttle to slow down for a turn, you will need to make sure the friction lock is tightened before reaching for the brake handle. The same thing applies for full throttle on takeoff. This is something that we will look at fixing.

If you are training in the L-17 on a hot day, as we were, once you takeoff and climb to altitude, you need to monitor the oil temperature. If it gets to 220, you can cool it down by leveling off, reducing power and increasing air speed before doing further high power maneuvers. I didn't get a good feel for normal cruising speeds but Lance says the plane should cruise around 120-125 mph and could fly with the SNJ and Swift. We will check all that out as we get more time in the L-17.

Back in the pattern, we shot a few landings, trying to get my head used to having a nose wheel to keep straight. Operations of the hydraulic system were starting to take by the time we finished, but I do plan on going out to get a bit more time in the L-17 before helping Lance with future check outs. All in all I think everyone will be very happy and proud of our newest addition. Thanks once again to all who made it happen!

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While the PT-19 has been down for engine work, the Stinson 105 has been busy as our primary trainer for new HSW pilots as well as for proficiency flights for existing pilots. Last Saturday Col Brad Bond (left) checked out in the Stinson and on Sunday, rode with Col Sam Strahan (right) for a proficiency flight. Welcome aboard Brad!

### High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell  
 Executive Officer: Rick Peterson  
 Adjutant: Lauri Skinner - 553-2316 cell  
 Finance: Steve Bolin  
 Operations: Chris Aycock  
 Maintenance: Bill Coombes  
 Safety - Bobby Meroney

### New Hangar Phone: (432) 561-5581

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

### What's Happening & When

July 22 - Wing Meeting (6pm)  
 July 26-Aug 1 - Oshkosh/Air Venture  
 Aug 5 - Wing Staff meeting (6pm)  
 Aug 8 - Pecos fly-in  
 Aug 26 - Wing Meeting (6pm)

**Work Parties every Monday and Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. until done**

**Next Wing Meeting, Thursday July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the ComCenter**