



The Flyer

March 2009
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High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-561-5581

On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday March 26th 7:00 p.m. in the Hangar

From the Lead

by Col Randy Wilson

It is now officially spring, and also the beginning of air show and fly-in season, so our maintenance crew is working steadily to finish repairs and annual inspections on all the HSW aircraft.

Events that we are planning to attend, weather permitting, include the Burnet air show, April 11th and a breakfast fly-in for Midland College on April 18th. April 2-3 is the Central Texas air show in Temple and a fly-in in Odessa - date not firm yet. We will try and have some updates on other flying events at the Wing meeting next Thursday.

The Wing is also looking at the possibility of hosting a one-day fly-in here at our facilities later in the year. This would be to not only advertise the High Sky Wing and the CAF but also to market our aircraft rides program. Look for more information in future newsletters.

Next Saturday, March 28th at 10:00 a.m., Keith Lawrence will be meeting with the HSW staff and other members to go over the various alarm and other systems and emergency plans for the Commemorative Center. If you are a member who is often at our building, you are invited to participate.

Speaking of events in our building, CAF *Hops & Props* is in the hangar Saturday, April 4th from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. with a live band, dancing, tasting of 17 beers from around the world and plenty of good food, all surrounded by aircraft of the Ghost Squadron! The HSW is looking a purchasing a table - if you are interested in participating, please give me a call as soon as possible.

At the last HSW staff meeting, we voted unanimously to join the CAF's new Cadet Crew program and form a High Sky Wing Cadet Crew. CAF HQ is finalizing a national sponsorship with the Boy Scouts of America and once that is in place, we will begin to form our crew and its advisors. More soon on this.



Our SNJ's annual is complete, including much better starting behavior, thanks to Cols Lance Sommers, James Martin and others. This photo was taken last year by Col Chris Aycock. If you aren't enjoying it in its full color, please consider getting your copy of the newsletter online in the future from our website and not just a B&W copy by mail.

Just a reminder that if you haven't yet paid your Wing dues for 2009, they are due, and also if you made a pledge to help **Pay the Rent** at the awards dinner, that pledge is also due. We thank everyone who helps make it possible for the High Sky Wing to continue maintain our facilities and keep our planes flying as part of the goals of the Commemorative Air Force.

Don't forget the first of the month *Friday Happy Hour* here in our Ready Room. Come out after work and enjoy visiting with other members and friends. Ed should be at the Wing about 5:00 p.m. to open up. Don't forget that Ed will also have the Ready Room open at 12:45 p.m. next Sunday for more NASCAR racing on satellite TV - just bring your favorite snacks and come out and enjoy the race!

Out next Wing meeting is next Thursday, March 26th with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a covered dish or your favorite deli selection and enjoy our evening meeting and program. See you there!

Executive Offerings

by Col Rick Peterson

Joining us as our guest speaker for March 2009 will be Charles Baldwin, Lt. Col. U.S. Army Air Corps, (Ret).

His experiences include training at Central Training Command, later receiving his wings at Aloe Army Air Field, Victoria Texas. At Aloe Army Air Field, pilots went through advanced single-engine training using AT-6 and P-40 trainers. After Aloe, Lt. Col Baldwin went to North Carolina for P-47 training and checkout.

He shipped overseas, first to London, then Paris, and then to his combat assignment with the 36th Fighter Group in Belgium. He was in training to go to Japan at war's end. After a long career, he retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1982 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Later, he lived in Artesia, NM and then moved to Lamesa in 1963, where he lives close to Wendell Strahan.

Of note: The 36th FG has a plaque in our CAF Memorial Garden and there's a story about the effort to retrieve the remains of one of the Group's pilots involving the Smithsonian.

Also, Charles wrote a booklet *On Laughter's Silvered Wings* from the poem *High Flight* which is in the CAF Library. Finally, Lt. Col. Baldwin once met Sen. Ted Stevens (Alaska) who was a cargo pilot who flew "The Hump".

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 March Wing meeting and remember to bring a covered dish. See you then.

Turn & Bank

by Col Steve Bolin

As we finished another Wing Staff Conference in Odessa, your staff was reinvigorated and motivated to improving the High Sky Wing. We're pretty good already, you say. Yes, but an increase in *Esprit De Corps* could always improve our situation. Big words, and French at that. What I mean is, let's set some goals and projects that bring us together. Ed has offered to have the Ready Room "Ready" for anyone to get together and share a thought or lie on the First Friday of each month. There are also a few NASCAR races, or the Kentucky Derby that might provide a

reason to gather and view our new satellite TV.

Even though we have a nice income, the Highland Lakes Sqdn. let everyone know how much fun they have had raffling off a Harley Davidson every year. I know there are a few more members that wear leather jackets other than the pilots. This might be one way to enjoy more than one hobby at the same time. Plus, we might get somebody involved that hasn't been involved before. Mike Hedrick and Bob Wray are working on getting the planes filled for Fly-ins, and contacting new and old members to see their smiling faces again. You've heard me say before, our most important asset is our membership. The High Sky Wing is rich with unknown assets. We should bring them out in the open.

Oh yeah, bank accounts are fine, we're monitoring your financial assets, and Bingo brought in another \$8400.00 this month. I will post a copy of the Wing financial reports that I provide to the staff each month in our Ready Room, if any member wants to see the details of how we spend our money and where it comes from. I will also work on a short financial report for future newsletters. See ya at the Wing.

As the Props Turn

by Col Ronnie Jones

Currency and *Proficiency* are two words used in the flying world. *Currency* is a word used in the legalese of the Federal Aviation Regulations. It usually pertains to a minimum number of certain flight activities required in order to, say, fly with passengers on board. For example, in order to carry passengers at night, a pilot must have made 3 night landings to a full stop within the last 90 days; or, an instrument-rated pilot must have made 6 approaches and 1 hold within the last 6 months in order to exercise the privileges of his instrument rating. Being *current* means a pilot meets the minimums required by law. *Proficiency* is a subjective term and pertains to a level of skill. And, by its very definition, *proficiency* requires maintenance...and that means practice!

Most pilots nowadays receive their training in tricycle geared planes. If a pilot wants to fly tail-draggers, he must receive additional flight training from a Certified Flight Instructor and an endorsement in his log book. This requirement points to the fact that tail-draggers demand more skill of the pilot...not so much 'in the air', but certainly during takeoffs, landings, and even taxiing.

I must say, in my opinion, that our Wing pilots exhibit all the traits that the CAF looks for when approving pilots to fly our irreplaceable aircraft. They are not 'hotdogs' or 'glory seekers'. They have a true respect for the legacy of the aircraft to which they've been entrusted. They not only want, but also need, to stay *proficient* in flying these planes.

To that end, one of our Wing members, **Col. Wayne Bissett**, is most graciously allowing the Wing's newer, less experienced pilots (who don't own a tail-dragger) to "fly the pants off" of his Scout, the only cost to the pilot is for the fuel they burn. This not only gives them more experience, but it makes it so affordable to them that they 'can't say no'. At the same time, it is saving countless hours (= maintenance) on our Wing aircraft. These pilots can then fly the Wing aircraft with the skills needed to protect the legacy, plus maintain a better level of *proficiency* than the 1½ hours allotted by CAF regulations (per plane – without the MCRP charge).

Col. Wayne is not asking for, nor expects, any accolades. But I, for one, would like him to know his donation is greatly appreciated and that every time I say "Hi", I'm really saying *Thank You!* The next time you see Col. Wayne, tell him, "Hi".

Keep 'em flying (by staying *proficient!*)

I Wanna' Fly

This program is designed to make it easy for you, a HSW member, to ride in any of our Wing aircraft!

Just sign up for a ride on a form we will have on a clipboard in the Ready Room and include your best contact phone number. If you have a preference of what plane you want to fly in, you can add that info. Then when a pilot is getting ready to fly one of the planes and has a seat open, he will call the first name on the sheet and see if that member is available to ride.

If you can't make it when called, the pilot will call the next name on the list in order but you will **not** be bumped to the bottom of the list and will be called again the next time. Pilots will try and give as much notice as they can but you may get a call only 30 minutes or so before a flight.

Keep in mind that you must have completed a current Hold Harmless form prior to the flight and have it properly witnessed. These forms will be available in the Ready Room.



The Fairchild J2K's battery caused some damage to the fabric in the tail, so the battery is being replaced with a gell-cell battery. Col James Martin (below) has rebuilt the battery box and is also leading the fabric work to get the plane ready to fly again.



The J2K's doors (above) were also found in need of repair and they are basically being rebuilt from the inside out. Col Mark Russell (left) is providing a lot of wood working talent and tools for the project under the supervision of Col Lance

Sommers. Part of the annual inspection on the J2K requires that all the landing gear fairings be removed and wheel bearings, tires and brakes be serviced and inspected. Below, new member Col Bob Keating supervises while Cols Steve Bolin and Philip Goforth service the wheels and struts.



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



The Big, Bad Chief of Staff?

At the last Wing meeting, Col Bruce Day enjoyed playing “uncle for the evening” to young Andrew Martin. If you haven’t yet met Andrew, he is the son of Col James and Sarah Martin and is a very bright and happy young man.

Even the appearance of the Big Bad Chief of the CAF General Staff, our own Col Bill Coombes, seems to be completely ignored! Oh well, Bill is kind of used to that!

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: Ronnie Jones
 Maintenance: Lance Sommers
 Safety - David Linebarger

New Hangar Phone: (432) 561-5581

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

What’s Happening & When

Mar 26 - Wing Meeting (7pm)
 Apr 4 - Hops & Props (6:30pm)
 Apr 7 - Wing Staff meeting (7pm)
 Apr 23 - Wing Meeting (7pm)
 May 5 - Wing Staff meeting (7pm)
 May 28 - Wing Meeting (7pm)

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