



The Flyer

November 2004
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High Sky Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
Midland, Texas - Hangar: 432-563-5112

On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

From the Back Office

by Col Ralph Gillette

It's getting to be that time of the year again. No, not Christmas, although it is getting closer, I'm speaking of Wing elections and our awards dinner meeting.

At last month's wing meeting, the nominating committee put forth Gena Linebarger for Wing Leader, Mary Alice Tidwell for Adjutant and Bob Stine for Finance officer. Normally, we would vote on these nominations in November, but because our wing meeting was to be on Thanksgiving Thursday, we have moved the election to our combined November/December meeting, which will be **Thursday, December 2, 2004**. Remember, to be eligible to vote, you must be a paid up member of the CAF and of the High Sky Wing. Bring your CAF and Wing membership cards, or we can check you off against the roster.

The other big event that will be happening in January is our awards dinner. We have reserved the side room at the Clear Springs restaurant, just like last year. The date is **Saturday, January 8, 2005**; the time is 6:00 p.m. Mark that on your calendar so you don't forget. We award the Colonel of the Year and the Spirit of the Eagle, plus pass the gavel to the new Wing Leader.

Just a reminder, in case I forget or you miss the next meeting, we do have a trailer sitting on the West side of the hangar that is a great place to deposit your aluminum cans. Bill Stella takes the trailer over to the recycler whenever it gets full, which is not as often as it used to be. He tells me we make a little money, which goes to keep the planes in the air.

Speaking of planes in the air, all three of our aircraft are airworthy. Rusty Hall had 101X down south. He tells us the Waco air show turned out pretty good. We even got some press from the local paper, since Rusty is from Waco and his dad still lives there.

Our next Wing meeting is Thursday night, December 2nd. We will officially elect our next Wing Leader, Adjutant and Financial Officer. Also, the wing staff meetings have gone back to the first Saturday of the

month. The next meeting is December 4th. In the mean time, remember we are still stressing safety this year like never before. Please be careful out there and wear something CAF.



Col Rusty Hall flew 101X to the Ranger Wing's Waco air show earlier this month and is seen here doing tug duty as he prepares to fly a dawn patrol (below) on Veterans Day.



Hangar Lease Update

by Col Randy Wilson

Ralph, Gena and myself, along with Bob Rice and Eric Van Hoff presented a request to the Midland Airport Board on Nov. 16th, to allow us to stay in our hangar until the Commemorative Center was completed.

In our existing lease, which was to expire on Dec. 31st of this year, there was an option to allow us to continue on a month-by-month basis. The board voted

to allow us to do so without objection.

This option did include a \$50 increase in our monthly rent but it did not require taking the board's recommendations to the city council for a vote, so it was felt that this was our best plan for now. If there should be a commercial demand for our hangar, we would still have 120 days notice, which was also part of the existing lease we negotiated two years ago.

While not an absolute guarantee that we can remain in our hangar until the new building is ready, we think this option will give us that time. While we had hoped to not have any increase in costs, the chance to get a firm decision now was felt to be too good to let pass.

Hopefully a few of us will step forward when needed to help donate or raise the extra rent monies. Don't forget our **I Paid the Rent Club**, which is a great opportunity to make a year-end donation of \$550 to the Wing and get a nice tax deduction.

If you have any questions, we will be happy to try and answer them at the December Wing meeting.

Executive Views

by Col Ted Claussen

The holiday season is upon us and our schedules are rapidly filling up, but to help relieve some of your scheduling problems, the Wing meetings for November & December will be combined. That combined meeting will be December 2 at the usual time. It will also be our election meeting so in order to cast your ballot, you will need to bring your membership cards or other proof that you are a member in good standing with BOTH the CAF and the High Sky Wing. We will be enjoying our usual dinner arrangement in a festive atmosphere as this will be the last time we get together before the Awards Dinner on January 8, 2005.

The B-29 has a new head mechanic, Col Gary Austin, who has graciously agreed to join us for the December meeting and share some info about himself and give us a little insight into some of his interests. I think you will enjoy meeting him and I know he's excited about meeting you.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Winter is fast approaching, and with it the end of flying season, at least for most of the days of cold weather. The maintenance question of the moment then involves what we do to take care of our airplanes during the dreary days when the skies are cloudy and

the temps are below comfort levels. These are not difficult or glamorous jobs, but ones that will insure that, come Spring, our fleet will fly with nary a glitch or squawk.

First, we gotta keep air in the tires. Simple sounding, but airplane tubes are designed to slowly leak down, and so checking air pressures and adding air is an easy thing to accomplish every Saturday. The air pressures for the tires are written on the airplanes, so putting in the correct amount isn't hard at all.

Next, keeping the dust and dirt and bird droppings off the airplanes. A little time here with a towel or rag (or even that dust mop thing we have in one of the brown cabinets) will make the airplanes all look good. And bird crap is really destructive to airplane finishes and aluminum skin, so we must keep things cleaned. Not a job requiring an A&P, but a necessary item nonetheless.

Finally, we must take the airplanes outside and run them up to operating temps, preferably to fly them, but at least to get everything warm and working. Oil collects water from the atmosphere, and since we seem to be living in a humid climate all of a sudden, the chance that there is water drops in the oil is almost a given. By running the engines up to temps that water is burned away. No matter how cold, we should run them every two weeks or three weeks.

Thanks to H.D. and Jim and Danny, all the squawks on the PT-19 have been investigated and cured, except for the flap ratchet that doesn't catch every now and again. We shall look at that one day soon... The Tarbaby continues to operate without problems (can you believe it?) although we still haven't figured out how to make the nav side of the radio work correctly. Since I only use Exxon road maps to navigate, and since it is too slow to take on long journeys, this has not been a factor! I'm still waiting for Randy to jump back into the left seat of the Tarbaby....don't want to have all that fun alone! And, finally, now that we've spent the money on the SNJ for a steerable tailwheel, I suspect that we won't have brake adjustment issues as frequently, and the airplane in general should operate as dependably as mine. North American knew how to build a good airplane when they made those two....

Finally, on a personal note, thanks so much for all your support for Airsho and for my "campaign" to win a seat on the CAF General Staff. I was elected, so now you can direct your complaints to a fellow Wing

member instead of to an anonymous “they.” There are significant issues facing the organization that we all love and work so hard for; I can only promise that I will do my best to make sure we “keep ‘em flying!”

Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey.

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

As Bill notes, all three of our planes are flying, and Col Rusty Hall took the SNJ to the Ranger Wing’s show in Waco earlier this month. A couple of photos he sent me of a Veterans Day flight are on the front page. Rusty and 101X returned home in time for General Staff and committee meetings the next weekend and the SNJ is home safe in our hangar.

As Ted notes in his column, at our December 2nd meeting, Col Gary Austin will be our speaker. If you haven’t already met Gary, he is the new head mechanic for the B-29/24 team and worked for Nelson Ezell in Breckenridge for 5 or so years, so he has a lot of warbird maintenance experience. Gary is also an accomplished SNJ, Pitts and Seafury pilot and currently owns and flies an RV-4. We hope that when he isn’t too busy working on the B-29, Gary will join us as an active member, pilot and wrench-turner in the Wing.

I hope everyone has a happy and safe Thanksgiving. Pat and I will be driving to California to spend it with her folks. Fly safe, y’all.

Last Month’s Mystery

By Col Randy Wilson

Last month’s mystery plane is a Saab T 18B and the only correct answer was by Col Bruce Day.

We often forget that many neutral countries were armed for their own defense prior to and during World War II, and that some even produced their own combat aircraft. This was the case with Sweden during WWII where Saab (originally Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget AB) merged with other aircraft companies in 1939 and was the principle builder of combat aircraft.

The Saab 18 was a medium and attack bomber and reconnaissance aircraft, designed to replace aging Junkers Ju 86s purchased from Germany. The Saab B 18A entered service in 1944 powered by two Wright R-1830 engines. The model 18 had been designed for more powerful Daimler-Benz engines, and the B 18B bomber version was fitted with DB 605 engines.

The T 18B model was intended to carry torpedoes but was armed instead with one 57 mm and two 20

mm cannons plus air-to-ground rockets, serving in the ground attack role. The last Saab 18s were not retired from Swedish service until the late 1950s. Production of Saab 18s totaled 244 aircraft, with about 61 being T 18Bs. The photo is from *Saab Aircraft since 1937* by Hans G. Andersson.

Commemorative Center News

By Col Randy Wilson

The committee met in November to review plans and answer questions from the architect, Ashley Coco, in preparation for submission of the final plans to TxDOT for review. Once a few details about phones and network wiring are resolved, the final plans should be ready.

Rusty McInturff, the CAF Development Officer, reported that over \$770,000 had been raised and that all of the matching grants had been secured, totalling \$300,000. Local fund raising for the O’Brian Hall and other naming opportunities were continuing and had raised over \$137,000 so far.

We are still on schedule for an April bid letting, if there are no major problems in TxDOT’s review of the plans, which would mean that a contractor would be picked and we would know the final cost to build the building by early May. We still hope to have the ground breaking in conjunction with the Summer Staff Conference in July.

Ashley was asked how much of the building would be erected by Airsho 2005 and he surprised most of us by saying that the shell of the building would be up, assuming no weather or other delays. He estimated that the building would take from 9 to 14 months to complete, once construction began.

Due to a major increase in the costs of structural steel and other changes since the original concept for the building were presented to TxDOT for funding, we will still need to continue raising money to complete and finish out the new facilities. We all think that once construction begins and there is something for our fellow Colonels and local citizens to see, we will be successful in raising the funds needed. If you have any connections or suggestions for a donation or donor, please contact one of the Wing staff, or Rusty at CAF HQ.

It is going to be a challenge to have Airsho 2005 with construction right in the middle of the site but we can look forward to Airsho 2006 in our new home and an O’Club without a tent!

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Wing Meeting & Election Reminder

Due to holiday conflicts in November and December, we have combined those months' **Wing meeting and our Wing elections on Thursday, December 2nd** at 7 pm. The Nominating Committee has recommended the following nominees:

Col Gena Linebarger - Wing Leader
Col Mary Alice Tidwell - Adjutant
Col Bob Stine - Finance Officer

Awards Banquet
Saturday, January 8th, 2005
Clear Springs Cafe, Midland
6:00 p.m.

High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Ralph Gillette
Executive Officer: Ted Claussen
Adjutant: Mary Alice Tidwell
Finance: Bob Stine
Operations: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell
Maintenance: Bill Coombes - 689-8359 home
Safety - Don McCracken

Hangar Phone: (432) 563-5112

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

What's Happening & When

Dec 2 - Wing meeting & Wing elections (7pm)
Dec 4 - Wing Staff meeting (10am)
Jan 8 - Wing Staff meeting (10am)
Jan 8 - Awards banquet, Clear Springs Cafe (6pm)

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, December 2nd at 7:00pm in the Hangar
