



The Flyer

November 2006
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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 Gena Linebarger

I know that AIRSHO 2006 has come and gone and now only a memory remains, but what a memory! The attendance was one of the largest in many years, 37,800. A huge "Thank You" goes to the members of the High Sky Wing for your tremendous support, for the endless hours you spent before, during and after the AIRSHO. Because of your dedication and enthusiasm the High Sky Wing showed profits in all of our endeavors. The three day Cantina was amazing, with tireless workers who sold everything we cooked and made money. The Friday night Reception at the O'Club was well received with money left over. The lounge crew stayed busy entertaining the troops and of course, also made money. The aluminum cans were gathered, recycled and turned into money. Don't forget about the Volunteer Hamburger feed before AIRSHO, we made money. Needless to say, it was a profitable time for the Wing. Way to go team, thank you for your hard work!

During the General Membership meeting at AIRSHO, several of our members received awards. Congratulations to the following for Letters of Commendation: Carol Claussen, Ted Claussen, Bill Stella, and Jim Adams. Congratulations on a Silver Magnolia to Randy Skinner.

October also brought three new members to the HSW family. Please welcome Kay Crawford, Sue Bowen and William Foster. We are pleased to have each of you as members.

Two donations were given to the HSW and are greatly appreciated. Through the generosity of the Explosive Ordnance Detachment (EOD) and the Blastards, checks in the amount of \$500 each were received. When you see members of these units please take a moment and thank them.

The next HSW General meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 30th at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a covered dish. Wing Staff elections will be held at this meeting. Offices and nominees are: Wing Leader – Gena

Linebarger, Finance – Steve Bolin, Adjutant – Lauri Skinner.

For the November 30th meeting the High Sky Wing has adopted a **special project**. Your help is needed to support the **Food Pantry** at Memorial Christian Church. H. A. Tuck, one of our own members, is a dedicated volunteer and director of the Food Pantry at this church. Let's all take this opportunity to reach out and help others during this Christmas season. Please bring nonperishable food and goods to this Wing meeting to help replenish and support the Food Pantry. Monetary donations are also acceptable. Please see H.A.'s article in this newsletter.

Upcoming dates to remember: Sat. December 2 – Staff meeting at 10:00 a.m.; No December Wing meeting; Sat. January 6 – Staff meeting at 10:00 a.m.; January Awards Banquet – date and place will be announced as soon as possible.

Members Asked to Bring Food

by Col H. A. Tuck

At the Nov. 2nd Wing Staff meeting, it was decided to ask members to make contributions of foodstuffs, canned or dried items, which will be donated to the Food Pantry at Memorial Christian Church that's coordinated by Col. H. A. Tuck.

Although any type of food would be welcome, the pantry is in particular need of cooking oil, sugar and flour. All sizes are welcome, since families may be as small as one person or as large as 14.

This pantry operates each Wednesday from 1-3 p.m. and eligible clients, all from Midland County, are allowed to attend once each calendar month. Currently, the pantry is serving an average of 50 families, 220 people, per week. Annual operating costs are about \$15,000, or less than \$1.25 per person. Most of the funds are used to pay costs of deliveries from the West Texas Food Bank. All the pantry workers are volunteers.

Your generous support would be a great holiday gift to local folks in need. Thank you.

From the Flannel Wrench Locker

by Col Bill Coombes

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, etc, etc, to all of you. Since the Airsho, things have been pretty quiet on the maintenance front for the High Sky Wing. However, now that winter is almost here, it is time to do some deferred work on all the airplanes. I hope that a number of you who are interested will come out to work on them.

First on our list is the Stinson, which is due for an annual inspection in December. My plan is to begin work on it after the 15th — my Christmas vacation — and have it finished by the first of the year. We have a brake issue to address, and a leaking primer, but nothing major to deal with, so I'm hopeful Lance, our incredibly talented ASMO, will not fret too much over the airplane.

We need to replace some canopy glass and some tires and tubes on the SNJ, and we are in the process of ordering two STC'd tailwheels for the Fairchild — the tailwheels on the airplanes require a tire that is very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. I'm pretty sure we will have some engine work to do on the Tarbaby, but that will wait until it's annual inspection during the summer. As always, member help is always appreciated, so come out on Saturdays and get involved.

And, in the realm of getting involved, please think seriously of joining in the effort that Gary Austin is leading in refurbishing our B-24 *Diamond Lil* into a real B-24A bomber. As all of you know, Gary is one of the top "old airplane" restorer/mechanic/artisans out there. The work he managed to accomplish, with essentially only two other guys, on the B-29 was unbelievable. He has a deadline of April 30th to get Lil reconfigured and in the air, but he needs our help to do it. If you are interested, please let Gary know. He is in that big hangar early and he stays late....maybe the best thing for us is to set up a night time work party one night a week...I bet we could coordinate with him on the night. Lyle, Tom, and I went over there Saturday for a couple of hours, and we were appreciated. Talk to me about helping out when I see you at the Wing meeting Thursday evening.

Finally, thank you so much again for all your help at Airsho. We had the biggest attendance and most profitability since 2001 (when the Thunderbirds came) so we can all take some pride in what we produced. Next year will be our 50th anniversary Airsho: I know I

can count on the High Sky Wing one more time!

All for now....lefty-loosey, righty-tighty

Being Safe!

by Col Lyle Thornton

I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Holiday Season. I would like to suggest that when you drag out all of the Christmas decorations, to please check all of the electrical connections for frayed wires and broken connectors. Not only will this prevent a nasty shock, but could prevent a fire in and around your home. The holiday season seems to have the greatest potential for home fires. This is not only because of the added electrical decorations, but also from fireplace and heating units.

I have received a copy of the CAF Ground Safety recommendations from our CAF Ground Safety Coordinator. In the near future I will get with our Safety Committee and then with the Wing Staff to put together a plan for implementing these recommendations. There is a lot of paperwork to go through and I hope to get some more guidance from the CAF Safety staff.

Again Happy Holidays and PLEASE BE SAFE.

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

As many of you know, I've had to be in Dallas most of the last couple of weeks helping my wife Pat recover from some back surgery. The good news is that she is healing very well and the surgery has helped alleviate the pain she had before. Hopefully, she and her Mom will be returning to Midland this weekend if all works out. Thanks to a number of members for their help and support during this hectic time.

Back to Wing operations — on Nov. 11th we flew over the dedication of a new Veterans memorial in Andrews, along with the Desert Squadron's aircraft. Col Lance Sommers is now qualified as a pilot and instructor in the PT-13 Stearman and lead the flight, with Col Ray Pierson in the DS's PT-26, followed by Col James Martin in our PT-19 and myself in the Stinson 105.

Lance was invited to check out in the Stearman by the Desert Squadron staff and FEB and will now be able to help both our units to transition new pilots and also provide additional instruction in all our light aircraft types, as needed.

Both units again worked together for a fly over at Col Chuck Borchert's funeral last week, organized by Col Bill Coombes.

I've also gotten a head up on some new information on TraRon training and other requirements but don't have all of that available yet. As soon as I do, I'll share that with all our pilots who are or would like to be formation rated in the future.

I'd also like to add something to Bill's comments about Gary Austin and his ongoing work to modify *Diamond 'Lil* back to B-24A configuration. Aside from all the hard work Gary has already done, mostly by himself, he has also generated a lot of interest not only in our B-24 and B-29 but for the whole CAF among a lot of warbird enthusiasts and potential members. If you are interested in how he is doing this, check out the Warbird Information Xchange website at <http://www.warbirdinformationexchange.org>. Click on **ENTER** and then click on the first forum called **The WIX Hangar**. Scroll down and find the discussion titled **Gary ~ What's the plan for Diamond Lil?**

You may also enjoy visiting this site for other warbird restoration news, photos and air show info. You don't have to register to read the forums but will need to register, which is free, to post your own replies or notes. Check it out and then see why Gary has been a true one-man force with his candid progress reports and photos of his ongoing work. Let's pitch in and give him a hand! I'll be out there as soon as I can get Pat home and comfortable, hopefully this weekend. See you in the big hangar!

Even if you can't come out and help, Gary needs help locating any and all photos or diagrams of the structure of the B-24A, in order to replicate and construct as accurately as possible the changes required to convert Lil from an LB-30 to a B-24A. If any of you have family or friends who used to work for Consolidated or who collect old aircraft manuals and photos of B-24As, let him know.

I'm having to put this newsletter together a bit late but hope to have it in the mail later today (Monday) so let me see what else I have to fill up the last column or so. Unfortunately, I will have to be in Dallas this Thursday and will miss the next Wing meeting but hope to see everyone again soon, as we get life back to normal or what passes for normal in our family.

From the Wilson family, here's wishing everyone a safe and very happy holidays. Fly safe, y'all.

Mysteries with Rotors

by Col Randy Wilson

With the very successful section of AIRSHO that featured helicopters, I thought I'd throw out a few rotorcraft as mystery planes for your enjoyment. As always, answers will be published in the next newsletter and I'll try and provide answers with Col Bill Coombes at the next Wing meeting.



Be careful with the aspect of this photo.



I could have removed the registration and other markings but left them for a bit of help.



Can you ID these production WWII helicopters and also the gentleman in the photo? Good luck on all of these.

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From LB-30 to B-24A

Here is an example of the modifications that Gary Austin is working on to convert Diamond 'Lil from its old identity as an LB-30 to what it would have been if completed as an original B-24A. See inside for more info on how you can help make this happen.



High Sky Wing Elected Officers

Wing Leader: Gena Linebarger - 528-0997 cell

Executive Officer: Ted Claussen

Adjutant: Mary Alice Tidwell

Finance: Steve Bolin

Operations: Randy Wilson - 352-4258 cell

Maintenance: Bill Coombes - 689-8359 home

Safety - Lyle Thornton

Hangar Phone: (432) 563-5112

all numbers are Area Code 432 unless indicated

What's Happening & When

Nov 30 - Wing meeting & Elections (7pm)

Dec 2 - Wing Staff meeting (10pm)

Note: No Wing meeting in December!

Jan 6 - Wing Staff Meeting (10pm)

Jan TBA - Awards Dinner

(Details as soon as possible)

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday November 30th 7:00 pm at the Hangar