



The Flyer

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On the Web at
HighSkyWing.org

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

AirSho 2001 - Thank You!

by Col Bill Coombes, Airsho 2001 Chairman

Although you will get a formal letter of thanks later, along with a patch, I want to take this opportunity to say the most sincere THANK YOU to everyone in the High Sky Wing who worked to make this year's AIRSHO such a huge success.

As I have stated to everyone from the General Staff on down, it is the men and women of the High Sky Wing that make the show go. No job at AIRSHO is unimportant, and all of you stepped up and did superior work, from coordinating the Thunderbirds to selling burgers in the hangar and all the myriad of jobs in between. It was a privilege serving as chairman because of you.



Executive Views

by Col Ralph Gillette

I had planned to wax eleaquant in this month's newsletter, but when I opened the can of wax, it had dried up and then I found out I couldn't even spell eloquent. (Thank you spell check)

I am sure many people will say thank you to all the volunteers at the AirSho this year. I would like to add my thanks; everybody did a good job, including the weatherman. Bill Coombes is to be congratulated for his leadership and know-how in putting together the group he had working the show. Ernie, Chuck and the Cantina gang did yeoman duty feeding as many people as they did over the five days they were open in the hangar plus work a chalet.

Our speaker for the October meeting will be Bob Clarke of Midland. He was a Navy pilot before and during WWII and had some very interesting experiences. He flew the Vought OS2U Kingfisher among others. Courtney Clark was the planned September speaker, but got bumped by the events of September 11th. Courtney gallantly agreed to come back in November, so watch for him then. We have Vic Brockman lined up for December's meeting.



You Made It Happen!

by Col Randy Wilson

I would like to add my own thanks to the many High Sky Wing members who jumped in to help get ready for the Thunderbirds on such short notice.

Special thanks has to go to Gena Linebarger, who managed to get the 65 rooms needed at the Hilton when they didn't exist. Bobby Meroney trekked into the airport infield not once but twice to help position the buses used to mark the show line for the Thunderbirds, while Linda Gisolo and others helped man and supply the Avion south terminal, where the team was based.

Bob Stine didn't know it beforehand, but his suburban became the official tow vehicle for the Thunderbird communications trailer (below). Without Eric Van Hoff's help with vehicles and support equipment it wouldn't have happened, either.

You did six months of work in less than two weeks. You made it happen. Thank you all.



From the Maintenance Shop

by Col Bill Coombes

Although AIRSHO consumed the majority of our attention, some progress was made on the Fairchild UC-61. Harold Davis, our mechanic-de-jour, continued to work away on the airplane. After some necessary repairs (no surprise), he reinstalled the landing gear and strut fairings and wheel pants and installed much of the new instrument panel. Our goal was to have as many pieces reinstalled on the airplane prior to AIRSHO so that the risks of parts being misplaced would be minimized.

In looking at the tailwheel assembly that HSW members Ken Sass and Bobby Meroney removed, with an eye toward temporarily installing it again so the airplane could be moved around, Harold determined that it was simply not safe enough to put the tire and tube back on the hub.

The discouraging news continued as we looked more closely at the vertical fin and rudder. The rudder hinges are moving in ways that they're not supposed to move and the front attach blocks for the fin are cracked along the bolt holes. It is obvious that we will have to remove the entire assembly and send it off for repair.

There is some good news to mention in that a very thorough inspection of the wing's interior showed it to be sound. Work will continue, and Harold is looking for interested parties to work with him one night a week. See me for details.

Operations Officer Randy Wilson has flown the SNJ several more times since we brought it back from the main CAF hangar and it is working perfectly. Randy was tasked with helping put on the TRARON formation clinic prior to AIRSHO, but he graciously volunteered to serve as the Thunderbirds project officer instead, and so the airplane sat outside our hangar. As a consequence, it is incredibly dirty (as is my airplane) and so **Saturday, October 20th will be "wash airplanes" day**, weather permitting. I will try to coerce some students to come out to help.

I promised some information on what we, as non-A&P folks, can legally do to our airplanes; information that is found, listed very specifically in FAR Part 91. I will save that for a future column, but, as a thing that too many times is overlooked as a "not really important enough" mechanic's job, checking the tire pressure is a VITAL safety issue.

Aircraft tubes, as opposed to automotive tubes



The left side of the new instrument panel of the UC-61/Argus being test fitted. Things are going back together.

and tires, are designed to gradually leak air, so checking the tires for proper inflation is critical. The SNJ tires should be checked every three weeks, as they will lose around 8-10 pounds of pressure in that time. There is a digital tire pressure gauge in the back of the SNJ. The main wheel tires should have 35 psi, while the tail wheel should have 45 psi.

Having a tailwheel tire peel off the hub on landing roll, because of underinflation, is a guaranteed groundloop! Hence, sometimes the most unglamorous action can yield great rewards.

Remember, rightie-tightie, leftie-loosie.

Other Thoughts

by Col Bill Coombes

November's General Staff meeting will find our Wing representatives meeting with members of the finance committee to discuss the issues surrounding replacement of the two lost Wing-assigned aircraft. As will no doubt be addressed elsewhere in this newsletter, there are significant concerns that we must address.

The HSW staff will be talking with members on an informal basis at the Wing meeting, in an attempt to get a sense of the direction we should take. Please be candid in your comments: the success of AIRSHO and the Wing's participation in all of the key roles demonstrated that we are on the way back from the tragedies of April 14 and May 14, but we still have a distance to go, and we need everyone on board.

As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

Never be standing in the wrong place when the Thunderbirds call three weeks before AIRSHO and ask if they can come! Honestly, I enjoyed helping to coordinate their visit, as I know their performance added to the record crowds that came out to the show.

While I did not have time to fly in the show, either our SNJ or the Helldiver, the SNJ is running great, and we did fly last Saturday after cleaning up the hangar from the parties and other events of AIRSHO 2001. Jim Moore held down the back seat as Bill Coombes lead us in his SNJ on a brief flight over both Odessa and Midland. We have been contacted about flying both SNJs to Big Lake on Saturday, November 20th, for an event there. We'll have more info on this at the Wing meeting.

We have a meeting with the Finance Committee and General Staff in November to discuss the allocation and use of the insurance funds from the loss of the PT-19 and BT-13. As we noted before, there seems to be some question of where the funds for the BT-13 will go, if we are not going to use them to obtain and operate a replacement aircraft as part of the CPT program. We won't know if all the funds or just those from the PT-19 will be available to obtain a new aircraft until after those meetings.

We also should realize that the costs of getting the Fairchild UC-61/Argus airworthy have far exceeded what we expected, and the work is not yet finished. With the loss of our bingo income and a probable increase in our hangar lease fees, we need to consider the full costs of any new aircraft carefully. I'd like to hear your thoughts and comments on this during the

social hour and dinner at the next meeting.

The good news is that the SNJ is in great shape and the work on the Fairchild is proceeding at a steady pace, thanks to Harold Davis and his helper Frank. Harold attended last month's Wing meeting and he would be a valuable addition to the Wing as a member. Make a point to visit with Harold and get to know him a bit next time he is in the hangar. He and his family have an interesting aviation history here in West Texas.

Don't forget that Saturday, October 20th is wash the SNJ day! As always, members and workers who consistently show up and help on Saturdays and other times, are first on the list for rides when we fly.

See you at the hangar this and most Saturdays!



Roy Green Golf Tournament

The Roy Green Memorial Golf Tournament was held on September 14th and despite the terrible events just days before, the event was a great success, thanks to the many who made it happen, lead by Dan Linebarger (below in the brimmed hat).

The golf tournament is one of the Wing's major fund raisers and we encourage all members to help make it a success again next year. This event helps our community get to know the goals and the members of the High Sky Wing and CAF. **Keep 'em flying!**



Dollars and Cents

by Col Bob Stine

I am happy to report that Wing activities at AIRSHO 2001 brought in a net of about \$6,650 from all sources, and the Roy Green Memorial Golf Tournament looks like it will add about \$8,265 to the Wing's funds. In addition, the old PX trailer was sold resulting in another \$4,000.

The bad news is that we were informed late last month that the AAH Museum and High Sky Wing would no longer be able to participate in bingo, and we will not have any income from bingo in the future.

We welcomed three new members to the Wing during AIRSHO — William Cherwin of Naperville, IL, David Ingrham of Midland, TX and Robert Web of Cheyenne, WY. Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing all of you again soon!



Lest We Forget

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

Oct 18 - Wing meeting
Oct 20 - Wash the SNJ
Nov 3 - Staff meeting
Nov 15 - Wing meeting
Dec 1 - Staff meeting
Dec 20 - Wing meeting

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, October 18th at 7:00pm in the Hangar

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