



The Flyer

October 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



What's That Up There?

by Col Randy Wilson

As I walked into our hangar at O-dark thirty Sunday morning of AIRSHO, Col Bruce Day asked me if I saw a strange object with lots of yellow, silver and red flying in the show on Saturday. Yes, finally our own SNJ 101X has been 1) healthy enough and 2) with an available qualified pilot to make an appearance in our own AIRSHO!

Special thanks to Col Rusty Hall for handling the piloting duties, plus thanks to all our Wing members who have worked so hard to keep our little fleet of planes in top running condition. Ya'll done good!

Wing Election Information

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

Please be sure to bring your CAF membership card to the election meeting, as you must be a dues-paid member of both the CAF and High Sky Wing to vote in the Wing elections. See you there.

From the Back Office

by Col Ralph Gillette

Hope everybody survived the AirSho. Saturday was great, Sunday was not so good. From my viewpoint, Saturday was the best ever show in the past six or eight years. My thanks to all those who came out on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to work the cantina, especially Carol Claussen who kept us all in line. Carol tried to make sure she got all the names of the workers so she could pass along individual thanks, but it is hard to get everybody with so many working.

I really enjoyed being a part of Colonel Wallace receiving the "Baton" from the Golden Knights. He may not tell you, but he was one of the instigators of the group that became the Golden Knights. The other recipient of the "Baton" was Ray Sharp. He received his on Sunday when the Knights could not jump, so not everyone knows.

Wasn't it great to see 101X finally flying in the Midland/Odessa AirSho? This is the first time since we got her ready to fly some five or six years ago that everything came together to get her in the air. Thank you Rusty Hall for making our dreams come true. Maybe next year, we will have all three of our aircraft in the show.

Check the future dates section of this newsletter. We are planning on combining the November and December meetings into one early December meeting because of the holidays, both Thanksgiving and Christmas. This will be the big meeting to vote for your choices for new leadership. Everybody please plan to be there. We will have an awards meeting in January, date to be determined.

We have a big event coming up at the next meeting. It is time again to nominate our *Colonel of the Year* and the *Spirit of the Eagle* award winners. These awards will be given out at the awards banquet in January. For reference, the past *Colonel of the Year* winners were: Bob Hansen, Mary Alice Tidwell, Ted Clausen, Bill Coombes, Billy & Betty Barnhill, Blake

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Cowart, David Linebarger, Roy Green, Gena Linebarger, Jim Moore and Bobby Meroney. Winners of the *Spirit of the Eagle* award were: Ernie Webb, Jim Moore, Ray Sharp, Dan Secker, Peggy Vaught, Chuck Hayne, Frank Bass, Bruce Wallace, Bill Coombes, Bob Stine and Gena Linebarger. We will announce these again at the meeting, but be thinking about our High Sky Wing members that are deserving of these very special awards.

Our next Wing meeting is Thursday night, October 28th. We will officially nominate candidates for our next Wing Leader, Adjutant and Financial Officer. Also, the Wing staff meetings will go back to the first Saturday of the month starting in November. In the mean time, remember we are still stressing safety this year like never before. Please be careful out there and wear something CAF.

Executive Views

by Col Ted Claussen

AIRSHO 2004 is behind us and once again volunteers have made it work. For example — just to provide lunch for people Wednesday through Friday, volunteers begin Tuesday night preparing what others purchased, and then they set up the serving lines and equipment. On Wednesday morning further preparation, cooking, serving and of course there is clean-up and prep for the next day. AND by the way, this must meet the Health Department standards.

Many of the faithful were involved with this operation and to them we say THANK YOU and WE APPRECIATE YOU. Some of those involved are: David, Gena & Ryan Linebarger; Richard & Kathryn Collier; Deborah Magness; Mary Alice Tidwell; Harry Hugly; Lois Harrington; Anne Trout; Bill Smith; Becky Carter; Karen & Jill McCracken; Jim Moore; Rusty Hall; Hugh Cagle (& puppy Jane); Bruce & Susie Day; Linda Gisolo; Mary Simolke; Tonya & Haley Houston; Ralph & Carol Gillette; Rudy Silas and Bob Stine. To those whom I have forgotten, I apologize. No one was unappreciated. Again thank you for some really hard work and long hours. It couldn't be done without you.

If you want to get some information and hear about our successes, please come to the Wing meeting this month. Our program will consist of reports and stories about AIRSHO.

Thanks Partners!

by Col Bruce Wallace

This is a difficult task! To express in a few words the sum total of over ten years of close association with members of the CAF and the High Sky Wing could be compared to filling the Grand Canyon with a teaspoon. Obviously, it can't be done ... nevertheless; perhaps I can fill a few of the potholes. I hope so, for those potholes are in fact gold mines, a veritable treasure trove of fond memories and a steady source of inspiration.

I am a member of the High Sky Wing. That brief statement says a lot ... and it says nothing. A lot because it is a source of pride that makes me a member of a unique, diversified group; and nothing, because it fails miserably in identifying the true nature of this organization, its members and its mission.

As some of you know, I ended up spending almost 34 years of my life in the U.S. Military, including participation in four wars. Some of my friends and a few members of my family say "You were in the wrong place at the wrong time." I disagree. I admit there was a considerable source of mental, emotional, and physical pain involved but I contend "I was in the **right** place at the **right** time" and would do it all over again if called upon to do so.

In short, I have never regretted my decision to make the military my career. However, the first few years after retirement, I found I was developing a rather cynical attitude toward the path this great nation seemed to be taking. The Jane Fondas, Dan Rathers and the liberal media all conspired to belittle and castigate what the U.S. had done in past wars, and no one in the higher echelons seemed to be taking exception to it. I found this very disturbing and was considering some rather drastic steps I might have to take.

Fortunately, none of them became necessary! I read an article in the local paper about the CAF moving to Midland and that help was needed to unload some World War II memorabilia for storage. Curiosity drove me to the warehouse, where I met several members, and we spent most of the day unpacking and storing odds and bods. The next day I joined the CAF ... one of the best decisions I've ever made! Thanks to you people, I no longer worry about the direction this nation is taking. My association with High Sky Wing members has been an eye-opener regarding patriotism, loyalty and work for the com-

mon good of all Americans. To heck with the liberal media ... let them drown in their own filth.

And last, but not least, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the honors you bestowed on me at our last Wing meeting and at AIRSHO 2004. To say that I was surprised is putting it mildly! I knew something was up, but it far exceeded anything I could have dreamed up. I know this — if, in fact, I have contributed something to the High Sky Wing, I want you to know that it is nothing compared to what I have gained from my association with you. And I mean that sincerely!

I think one short sentence best describes my association with you: “They were not always around when I wanted them, but they were always there when I needed them.” And I’ll settle for that any day!

Thanks, Partners. Bruce E. Wallace, Col/Col.



Above, Col Wallace being honored (and lightly roasted!) at our last Wing meeting and below, receiving the baton from the U.S. Army Golden Knights at AIRSHO 2004.



As the Props Turn

by Col Randy Wilson

Well, we did it again and survived another attempt by Mother Nature to turn AIRSHO into the Midland kayak races! Honestly, I thought that the Saturday show was great and that both Airsho Chairman Bill Coombes and Airboss Ralph Royce are to be congratulated, along with all of the other Colonels and volunteers who braved the rain, thunder and lightning.

Sunday was another matter but I have to say that the great Taxi In Review plus the great pyro show seemed to keep those die-hard Airsho fans who showed up happy. I’m not even going to describe the Masters of Disaster’s performance on Sunday ... if you didn’t see it with your own eyes you would not have believed it with the smoke and “few” low clouds!

All our planes are operational and we flew a mission in support of the Midland County library childrens department’s 50th anniversary the other weekend. The two SNJs were then joined by Col Gordon Stevenson’s SNJ for a nationally telecast fly-over during the opening ceremonies of the Lee/Permian football game, broadcast by Fox Sports. We also shot a bit of air-to-air of the CAF P-40 for them from 101X earlier that day.

Col Bill Coombes advises that he is all wrapped up in “little girl basketball” so no maintenance article this month — everything flies!

Last Month’s Mystery

By Col Randy Wilson

The Mystery Airplane last month was the Fisher XP-75 Eagle, also know as the “Spare Parts Fighter” by some, as it initially used the tail section of a Douglas SBD, the landing gear of a Vought F4U Corsair, and wings and canopy sections modified from the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk.

The engine was an Allison V-3420, basically two V-1710 engines as used in the P-38, P-39, P-40, etc. joined together in a common crankcase and producing 2300-2600 horsepower for the counter-rotating propeller of the Eagle.

Five production P-75s were completed plus prototypes but in fly-offs with P-47s, the P-75 did poorly and the original order for 2500 was cancelled. The only surviving Eagle is in the collection at the U.S.A.F. Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

Lest We Forget!



noticed something extra in the walking bombs. Dave (at his expense) brought black powder, mortars and “stars” to simulate white phosphorous into our standard bombs. It looked awesome!!

By the end of the weekend, we were all tired but thrilled to see old friends, meet new friends and do our part in making Airsho 2004 as realistic as possible.

[We should also mention that the Blastards donated \$500 to the High Sky Wing for use of part of our ramp and facilities at AIRSHO. Also, the pictures of the pyro and 101X are courtesy of Blastard Stuart Small. *Ed.*]



From Across the Field — BOOM!

by Col Dan Linebarger

The Blastards (many are HSW members) supported the CAF Explosive Ordnance Detachment to provide pyro again at this years airshow. As usual, the pyro volunteers prepare for heat, cold, sunshine and rain. And sometimes, you get all 4 on the same weekend!!!

A typical pyro day starts early. At 0700 many volunteers began showing up at the hangar sniffing for coffee and a favorable weather report. Mary Ann Drennan is busy with obtaining signatures on Hold Harmless Agreements, ATF forms, medical data etc. By 0730 everyone is in place on the east side of HQ with vehicles pointed into the sunrise. Everyone has a job and thanks to most of the ordnance being sorted, bagged and boxed the prior Thursday, shooters are able to take to their spreads once the magazines are opened across the field. This year, we expended approx 2,000 pounds of explosives and 2,800 gallons of fuel. Speaking of fuel, thanks to Gary McCright with Eagle Propane and Fuels we had something more than just a “bang” at the airshow. Gregg Ulvestad secured Gary’s involvement in dispensing the fuel for us just weeks earlier, after our fuel distributor from last year withdrew. If you get a chance, please tell Gary thanks!

An EOD member, Bernie Yost commented that “An airshow without Pyro, is just another fly-in”. Little did we realize that on Sunday, pyro would “BE” the airshow. At least in the early part of the day that is. This year we had a special effects man named Dave Barker join us from Las Vegas. Dave works in Hollywood doing special effects for movies. You may have



Cols and HSW members Frank McBride and Randy Skinner display the high-tech equipment required to set off the sound charge for the A-bomb on Saturday. The secret is that you put the explosives inside the plunger and ... the Roadrunner wins again! HA!



nothing new to Jason, after West Texas and Twentynine Palms, Calif (above)! We also understand that he and his wife Beth are now expecting their first child. All our best to them both.

My own sister's youngest son is on the left in the picture below, taken several months ago in Iraq. He is 1LT Rob Stonaker (a.k.a. the Perfect Nephew to my wife Pat) and was serving as an aide to the Brigadier General on the right. In the middle is the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Hagee. Rob is now on his fourth trip to Iraq and became engaged just before his return. Nice that a 1LT can smile next to a four-star!

Don't forget that we continue to accept donations of things to send over to our Marines (see last month's Flyer for details), plus donations for postage are also welcome. If you want to help, please contact Lauri or Randy Skinner. Thank you.

If any other High Sky Wing members or their extended family have young men or women serving in Iraq or elsewhere, please let me know and we'll be happy to try and mention them in future newsletters.

We Support Our Troops

by Col Randy Wilson

As many of you know, our extended Wing family has at least two young men in service in Iraq, both U.S. Marines.

Sgt. Jason Skinner, son of Lauri & Randy Skinner sent this photo of himself (left) and another sergeant in front of their new home. Of course sand and dust are



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Another What Is It?

The XP-75 last month was kind of an “easy” mystery plane but I think you may find this one somewhat more challenging. It is one that I have used before, several years ago, but not in this newsletter, which is the best clue I can give.

There are no prizes or awards, just a bit of fun for us “plane nuts” and a good excuse to dust off your reference books. Good hunting!

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

Oct 28 - Wing meeting (7pm)
Nov 6 - Wing Staff meeting (10am)
Dec 2 - Wing meeting & Wing elections (7pm)
Dec 4 - Wing Staff meeting (10am)
Jan TBA - Awards banquet

Next Wing Meeting is Thursday, October 28th at 7:00pm in the Hangar
