



The Flyer



HSW Salutes America

Fly-overs in Big Spring and Midland highlight the week



July started out as a busy month for the High Sky Wing and member owned aircraft. The long

4th of July weekend was celebrated by fly-overs for Big Spring's Pops in the Park, Midland's Star Spangled Salute and twice for the Rock Hounds' baseball games. We received great public recognition and waived the banner for the CAF.

As you know, the SNJ has been grounded for wing attach point failure. The Staff voted to return the aircraft to flying condition. Soon a ferry permit will be obtained and the SNJ will be flown to Tucson, AZ for repairs. Many of you have already made pledges to help finance this costly repair. If you have made a pledge, now is the time to come forward and make it good. If you have yet to contribute, please consider making a donation. Any and all amounts are accepted! Remember, the SNJ 101 is the first aircraft obtained by the High Sky Wing. It is the cornerstone in our fleet that has now grown to include 6 aircraft. What an accomplishment!

Be sure to visit the new exhibit in the Museum "Flappers to Fighters: The Women of World War II".

Mark your calendars for October 12-13 for AIRSHO. The

High Sky Wing members are valuable players in the overall success of AIRSHO. If you have never helped out, or want a more predominant role at the show, please don't hesitate to step forward and ask. AIRSHO Volunteer meetings are set for July 16, August 13 and September 10 at 6:00 p.m. in Gunfighter Pub. The AIRSHO Volunteer Dinner will be September 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commemorative Center Hangar (RSVP).

Join us at Wing meeting on Thursday, July 25th. Come out early to visit with friends. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Bring a covered dish to share for dinner, along with a \$5 donation for your meal.

Come out, get involved and "Let's Keep 'em Flying"!

--Gena Linebarger



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Be sure to read the special update on Airbase West Texas, beginning on page three. Col Bill Coombes has done an excellent job of clarifying a complicated issue. His update is current as of printing time, but that is not to say that plans could not change. This is a constantly evolving plan that is far from complete. If you have any questions or recommendations, please feel free to discuss your concerns with any of the committee members.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS KEEP HSW MEMBERS IN THE AIR BY COL H.A. TUCK

Five missions crammed into three days kept High Sky Wing pilots, planes and crew busy helping the Permian Basin celebrate Independence Day.

It began on Wednesday, July 3, when four member-owned SNJ's flew over Big Spring's Comanche Trails Park for an evening event. Col. **Bill Coombes** led Col. **Stephen Beal**, Col. **Ray Hofman** and Col. **Sam Strahan**. It was the first mission for new member Beal and his recently acquired SNJ.

Independence Day featured the Commemorative Air Force's High Sky Wing at its best. It began at 7 p.m. with a fly-over prior to the start of the Rockhounds' baseball game. Again, it was an all-SNJ event featuring Coombes, Hofman and Strahan.

As they hustled back to base, three "slow-movers" prepared to thrill thousands gathered at Midland's downtown celebration. Col **Steve Clinton** led in the HSW's L-17, followed by Col. **Robin Donnelly** in his member-owned LC-126, and Col. **Steve Bolin** in HSW's *Tarbaby*. They did three passes East to West, the first two at 1,500 feet and the last at 1,000.

During one pass, the crowd was dazzled to see five "fast-movers" on a South-North pattern at 1,500. Col Coombes, Col. Strahan and Col. Hofman were joined by Col. **Randy Wilson**, flying Col. Don Hoffman's "Kate" and Col. **Mark Haskin** in Col. Don Hoffman's T-28. After the slower planes departed, the fast movers dropped to 1,000 feet for their final pass.

That group then gave Midland International Airport visitors a treat by coming over in close echelon formation while blowing smoke, then doing the military break.

After a short breather, the HSW ended the week on Saturday by once again flying over the Rockhounds crowd at the end of the Star Spangled Banner. That mission included Col. **James Martin** in his SBD, Col Haskin in the T-28, and Col. Coombes and Col. Randy Wilson in the "Kate".

Rousing cheers for the pilots, plane owners, maintenance crew, gate-watchers and many others who made the High Sky Wing's 2013 salute to America's freedom a very special week for residents and visitors to the Permian Basin.



Photos by H.A. Tuck

There might be a few Sumer Mummer tickets available from Patti Collins.

THE KNUCKLEBUSTERS CORNER BY STEVE CLINTON



July 2013 Maintenance Report

N81348 – UC-61 – Tarbaby

Annual due 2/28/2014
Transponder Due 8/30/2014
ELT Battery due 8/30/2013

No notable issues. Ready for assignment

N49797 – PT-19

Annual Due 8/30/2013
Transponder Due 5/30/2014
ELT Due 8/30/2014

No notable issues. Ready for assignment

N101X – Wing SNJ

Annual Due 4/30/2013
Transponder Due 5/31/2013
ELT Battery due 8/30/2013

Wing attach angles have been acquired. Need to make transport arrangements and get ferry permit.

N23784 – Stinson 105

Annual due 2/28/2014
Transponder due 11/30/13
ELT Battery due 11/30/2013

No notable issues. Ready for assignment.

N4321K – L-17

Annual Due 8/30/2013
Transponder Due 2/28/2014
ELT Battery Due 8/30/2014

No notable issues. Ready for assignment

N70743 – T-28A

Annual Due 3/2013
Transponder Due 3/2013
ELT Due 3/2013

Nose bowl with new prop seal has been received & installed. Waiting on new prop cone and are assembling new rear canopy. Expect ready for assignment within the next 10 days.

N12718 – Martin’s Twin Beech

Good to go.

N3653G – Coombes’ SNJ

Good to go.

N81643 – Hoffman T-28A

Currently talking with D. Hoffman about performing top overhaul on engine. Heavy oil usage. Also looking at possibility of changing prop to a 3 blade.

N7130C – Hoffman’s Kate

Annual Due 5/31/2013
Transponder Due 5/31/2014
ELT Battery Due 6/30/2013

Down for annual.

Annuals Due in -----

July - Kate

AIR BASE WEST TEXAS UPDATE BY BILL COOMBES

In case you have been living under a rock and missed all the news, the CAF General Staff voted to explore the possibility of moving “Headquarters” out of Midland, in order to establish a “Super Air Base” in a more populous location. Obviously there would be an impact of the High Sky Wing as well as in the community. But, in reality, this move presents the Wing with significant opportunities for growth

and continued success. The question is, how?

To figure out the answer to that question, and others, Wing Leader **Gena Linebarger** created a committee (**Bill Coombes** as chair, Gena Linebarger as vice chair, **James Martin, Steve Bolin, Ray Hofman, and Robin Donnelly**) to formulate a plan to best position the Wing as this possible move takes place. After several early meetings with the senior HQ staff, hearing

their plans, the committee made a counter-proposal, which James Martin and I presented to the membership at our last Wing meeting.

As of today, there is no firm plan in place to do anything. The General Staff is still evaluating its options, and the HSW committee is still looking at all the moving pieces (and there are lots of those!) before we can come up with something

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concrete. What follows is our “vision” of the new “Air Base West Texas.”

Our goal is to continue the operation of the current CAF campus, including the CAF Airpower Museum, the High Sky Wing of the CAF, the George H.W. and Barbara Bush Commemorative Center, and the annual CAF AIRSHO, as an Air Base, while the CAF Headquarters Staff moves to create another Air Base. The High Sky Wing would move its maintenance and flying operations to the main CAF hangar. There, in conjunction with the CAF Museum’s expanded new exhibits, we would have much greater exposure to the general public. Right now the regular museum visitor never sees our operation or interacts with our “crew” who are out there doing the real work of the CAF. We would potentially gain in membership, our airplanes would be part of a bigger attraction, and we would have a space that would not require repeated moves of our airplanes to accommodate rentals.

The Commemorative Center would continue to be home to our offices and Ready Room, and would be the location for our monthly meetings. We would also begin planning for the construction of a new Ready Room off of the main hangar, this most likely being a remodeling of the current “library and parts room” on the southwest side of the hangar. The CommCtr would continue to be the location for Memorial Day activities, Seminar Series programs, visiting CAF airplanes, additional museum displays besides the Texas Medal of Honor Hall, and all rentals.

To accomplish all of this we asked HQ to authorize the creation of an Air Base Management Board to oversee the operation of the Air Base, this Board being tasked with (1) creating a plan for the utilization of the current campus to reflect its new role as an Air Base, (2) creating a time-line for the transition to an Air Base, (3) entering into talks with airport management, city officials, and state officials to assure that current lease agreements and funding remain in effect, and 4) to direct a paid staff in the operation of the Air Base. This Management Board would consist of representatives from the Museum, from the High Sky Wing, from the Hofman Foundation, and the AIRSHO to assure that each “tenant” of the Air Base has a voice in its operation. As a practical matter, the High Sky Wing would run the Air Base.

Phase One of the Air Base plan calls for the Museum to construct a new entrance to the main CAF Hangar and to reconfigure one half of the hangar into a new Museum space, with initial emphasis being the creation of an expanded “Midland Army Airfield” exhibit, to include an AT-11 bombardier trainer under restoration and the Hofman foundation’s authentically restored and flying AT-11. The HSW would move its seven operational airplanes (and six member-owned airplanes) into the main hangar and conduct all maintenance and flying activities from that facility. The Hofman Foundation would rotate their aircraft into the main hangar to enhance the visitor experience. The entrance to the facility, the Gift Shop, and the Nose Art Gallery remain as currently configured.

Phase Two would see further expansion of the Museum’s new displays into the main hangar, while planning begins for the leasing of the current HQ office space and the creation of a new “convention center” in the old Museum gallery area. This space will include various exhibits and displays designed to create an area similar to the convention space at the Hangar Hotel in Fredericksburg Texas. This entire plan will take three to five years to fully implement.

At this point all of the equipment, displays, etc., currently on the campus will remain here. We are obviously going to reconfigure much of it, as HQ moves out, and parts of the campus will become “lease-able space,” which would obviously be necessary to generate an income stream. What HQ staff remains on site is still not determined. Obviously there would be a complete relocation and disposition of the current Museum Gallery’s exhibits. I personally think some of that could fit nicely into the Commemorative Center, but that is probably into Phase Three of the development of the Air Base.

The costs for this undertaking will be significant. This is one of the biggest “moving pieces” that the committee is addressing. Our thinking is that any move of HQ is going to happen with a budget that must include money for construction of the new Air Base as well as continued operation of the current facility. This “subsidy” would continue for a period of years (3-5) as this transition takes place. Already we have an agreement that an increasing portion of AIRSHO profit goes to Air Base West Texas rather than CAF HQ.

(UPDATE continued on page five)

(UPDATE continued from page four)

The relationship between the HSW and the Museum is also key. We simply must operate well together for the Air Base to function. Our operations will complement their interpretive exhibits: their staff will monitor visitors in the main hangar, and they will make sure our aircraft (which are truly historical treasures) are in a clean environment and in roped-off areas. Our job is to be the friendly “face” of the CAF, to operate the airplanes, to maintain them, to keep our “messes” to a minimum, and to encourage becoming a member (with the carrot being a member ride in a warbird). We must be knowledgeable of what is in the Museum, and we must support all Museum activities with enthusiasm, knowing that a successful Museum is critical in fulfilling the only true purpose of the CAF, which is education.

I know that HSW personnel will have to take a larger role in running literally everything, as HQ personnel are

phased out of the operation. We will need to call on members who have skill sets in critical areas (like fundraising, financial management, etc.) to “step up” in the day-to-day operations of the Air Base. AIRSHO, which will be our largest fund-raiser, will require a much larger commitment of Wing personnel.

So that is it. Again, nothing is cast in cement. Members of the Air Base committee will be traveling to the Arizona Wing to observe their operations, as they are effectively an Air Base. This will give us a better understanding of operating a large campus beyond the immediate “grasp” of HQ. As I see it, we have no alternative to making this plan, whatever its final form, work. The existence of the High Sky Wing and of the CAF in the Permian Basin hinges on our efforts. I believe we are up to the challenges, and I will enjoy working with all of you to make Air Base West Texas a success.



It's not always about work



It's not always about the planes



*Center photo by H.A. Tuck
Perimeter photos by Greg Gutting*

High Sky Wing Newsletter

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UPCOMING EVENTS

July 16

AIRSHO Volunteer Meeting

July 25

Monthly Wing Meeting

August 6

Monthly Wing Staff Meeting

August 13

AIRSHO Volunteer Meeting

August 22

Monthly Wing Meeting

August 23, 24, 25

TRARON Clinic

August 24

Mustang Stampede

Check the Events tab on the
web page for the most current
information.

<http://highskywing.org>

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