



# MILE HIGH VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE MILE HIGH WING,  
COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE (CAF)

Keep 'em Flying!

March 2004

## Notes from the Winter Staff Conference

By Paul LaPrad

Four Mile High Wingers (Cols Hanson, Huston, LaPrad, and Meyer) attended the 2004 Winter Staff Conference in Midland on February 20-22, 2004. This is one report about the conference.

The first event on Saturday was the General Meeting, at which a roll call of all the squadrons and wings is made. Often group members answer their roll call with something funny, which adds some humor. General staff members are introduced as well as HQ staff, and it's nice to put a face with a name of someone you have heard about.

### Interesting CAF Statistics

Here's some of the info dispensed at the General Meeting:

- 1). 56 of the 76 CAF units had someone at this conference and there were about 220 people in attendance. CAF membership at year-end included 5,029 regular colonels plus 1,899 full life colonels. Other types of members bring the total to the range of 9,500-9,800. The top recruiting unit was the Dixie Wing with 50 new members (one of their members recruited 40 people!) with the Arizona Wing coming in second (38).
- 2). In December of 2003, the CAF had 67 aircraft in service with 51 planes in for maintenance. Units were *strongly* encouraged to have their planes at AIRSHO. The CAF has a total of 150 aircraft.
- 3). The Commemorative Center (which will include a new O Club) is progressing nicely. Texas DOT gave a large grant; CAF had to raise a matching \$750,000. Of this amount, \$587,000 has been raised and hopes are high that the additional amount will be raised in a timely fashion. They expect to sign the contract in April '05 with ground-

breaking in June '05 and completion a year later or perhaps earlier. This will be a very nice multipurpose facility, but in this writer's opinion the O Club will lack the character of the present large tent.

- 4). Perhaps the most important topic mentioned here, as well as in other workshops, was *safety* (more about this later).

### Check Rides and Safety

The workshop for Pilots and Operations Officers provided good information, much of which again centered on safety. Here it was mentioned that a check pilot's authority expires every 24 months. The CAF has 140 check pilots for some 400 pilots.

A check ride certifies a pilot to fly a particular aircraft, but it also can be used as a training session (as opposed to just washing someone out), it can contribute to safety, and it is good for the warbird industry.

### HQ Safety Board?

One topic of discussion was the formation of a Headquarters-level Safety Board. The committee would meet four times a year. If a pilot has an accident or incident, this information is to be sent to HQ. If there is no damage or injury, a pilot would be returned to flying status. Headquarters believes it is most important to also communicate with the local Flight Evaluation Boards when a pilot is returned to flying status.

It is a pilot's responsibility to provide HQ with all current licenses, paperwork, etc.

### Advisory Board Meeting

The Advisory Board Meeting (workshop) was composed of Unit Leaders, A/C Sponsor Groups, and General Staff. This time was set aside to express concerns, gripes, etc. One issue was the conference location/hotel. It was agreed that meeting in Midland made the most sense and that the Holiday Inn was probably the best for the cost.

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## Sloppy March and...

By Stan Peterson

It's been a sloppy March so far in more ways than one. Col Barry Barnow and I were getting used to our daily bath in hydraulic fluid as we continued to troubleshoot the C-60's problems.

The test line on the direct reading gauge was the first of many leaks that contributed to the daily showers. Just filling the hydraulic reservoir and draining it, which was required several times throughout the testing, contributed to the many spills and splashes of hydraulic fluid, because of the difficult location of the reservoir.

Barry really came through again for the Mile High Wing. After sending two regulators for a previous evaluation, which proved to create more of a problem for us because of an erroneous evaluation of one valve, Barry decided to get out an old hydraulic test bed, called a mule, that had been donated to him through one of his dealings from the past.

I became somewhat skeptical as soon as I saw the device. It looked like something out of Dr. Jekyll's laboratory.

However, it enabled us to conduct our own tests of the regulators; we discovered that only one out of the three regulators were operating and that happened to be the only one that was tagged inoperative!



**Mad scientist "Dr. Jekyll" (aka Barry Barnow) at the controls of his hydraulic "mule" device**

To check our findings we had to once again reinstall the valve and fill the reservoir for a functional check. Shazam! The functional check worked and the hydraulic system operated normally with the engine-driven hydraulic pump.

Not only did we discover a malfunctioning accumulator in our troubleshooting efforts, but we were able to avoid a possible complete hydraulic failure in the air by replacing a line that had blown, due to age and fatigue, during the tests.

But I'll let Barry tell the rest of the story...

## ...Hydraulic Gremlins

By Barry Barnow

You probably remember the popular book from the 60's, *Everything you always wanted to know about sex\* But were afraid to ask*. One of the key messages that I remember from those writings is "use it or lose it."

I believe that our recent problems with the Howard relate to this slogan.

As you all know, after approximately a year and a half, we finally have gotten our plane back in the air. Unfortunately, we are still facing some on-going difficulties with the hydraulic systems. The plane runs perfectly on the ground. Then, mysteriously, failure occurs during flight, rendering the wing flaps, landing gear, and brakes (yikes! no brakes no steering!) inoperative.

Yes, we can make the gear go down in spite of a total hydraulic failure. But imagine how fast we would be landing! No flaps to slow our approach and no brakes to stop, and worse yet, difficulty in steering the plane during the rollout.

I remember a few years ago when we were first getting the plane running. After this long restoration period, the hydraulics did not work one day. We fooled around with a few quick fixes and the problem went away—until recently.

The plane has flown three times in recent months. On each of these flights we took off with a working system and came back with a failure. Pilots Bill Lodge, Stan Peterson, and I were experiencing an elusive problem. Luckily, the last time it stayed broken and we were able to find the cause.

Stan Peterson and I quickly concluded that the bypass valve was our elusive culprit. The offending unit was removed and sent to be checked by a hydraulic shop in California, along with one extra valve. The repaired and tested part was then returned to its former place in the aircraft.

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### ***Hydraulic Gremlins, continued***

We started up the engines again—but no hydraulic pressure! What else could it be?

I will spare you the details but it was no fun taking baths in mil5606 hydraulic fluid day after day. I started wearing red clothing to match the red-colored fluid.

At this point, we decided to go back to basics. Luckily, as Stan mentioned, Boulder Valley Aviation had long ago acquired a hydraulic mule. This device specifically tests hydraulic systems and related equipment.

We removed the newly overhauled valve and tested it along with two other valves we found in our stock of used parts. Guess what? The repaired part was defective and so was one of the spare valves.

One of the three valves did work on the test stand. We installed it in the plane, ran the engines and it worked great! Unfortunately, this part is not suitable to be considered airworthy. So, we sent two of our three valves (including the one the hydraulic shop deemed serviceable) to once again be fixed and tested.

Additionally, the plane is equipped with two hydraulic accumulators. These units hold a reserve of hydraulic energy similar to a storage battery holding electrical energy to be used when the charging system is not available. We also sent these to be checked and recertified.

With any luck, we should be back in the air within a week or two and searching for the next problem to come along due to lack of use.

***Keep 'em flying - or you will lose it! →***

### ***Winter Staff Conference, continued***

Again the issue of safety was discussed with two situations of one pilot who was not making the safest of flights.

Another area involved the method of reporting incidents. The primary question raised was what would happen to the airplanes if all were permanently grounded. It was strongly suggested that while this could be a remote possibility, the HQ staff needs to draw up some guidelines.

### **Insurance Concerns**

One prevalent issue at the conference was presented as coming from our insurance carrier, due to losing three CAF planes within about a 12-18 month time period (two within about a 3-4 month time span). The insurance carrier(s) within the warbird community took in about seven million dollars, but spent about 12 million dollars and finally said *enough is enough*. Hence the stand-down we had last fall.

The insurance industry became very concerned as to whether 1) our aircraft were getting needed maintenance; 2) the maintenance was done by qualified people with *proper* supervision; 3) our pilots have the right training, and the right kind of attitudes to fly these old warbirds.

It was mentioned that from 1991-2001 the CAF had 11 incidents of loss of directional control, 4 stall/spins (all fatal), 3 mechanical incidents, 2 fuel starvations, and 3 "other pilot errors."

### **Safety, Safety, Safety...**

It was stressed that we keep this foremost in our work, not only when flying the plane, but on the ramp, in working around the plane, in the shop. ***Safety is a choice. →***

## **Ten Dollars**

Every year, Smitty and his wife Martha went to the State Fair. And every year, Smitty would say, "Martha, I'd like to ride in that there airplane." And every year, Martha would reply, "I know, Smitty, but that airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars."

This one year Smitty and Martha went to the fair and Smitty said, "Martha, I'm 71 years old. If I don't ride that airplane this year I may never get another chance."

Martha replied, "Smitty, that there airplane ride costs ten dollars, and ten dollars is ten dollars." The pilot overheard them and said, "Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say one word, I won't charge you, but if you say one word it's ten dollars." Smitty and Martha agreed, and up they went.

The pilot performs all kinds of twists and turns, rolls and dives, but not a word is heard. He even does a nose dive, pulling up 15 feet above the ground, but still not a word. They land and the pilot turns to Smitty, "By golly, I did everything I could think of to get you to yell out, but you didn't."

Smitty replied, "Well, I was gonna say something when Martha fell out . . . *but ten dollars is ten dollars!*"

***– Contributed by Stan Hanson, from the Parker Community Baptist Church newsletter***

## Calendar of Events

**March 20, 2004** – Wing meeting:  
10:00 a.m., Front Range Airport,  
terminal building, upstairs conference  
room

**April 17, 2004** – Wing meeting:  
10:00 a.m., Front Range Airport,  
terminal building, upstairs conference  
room

**June 26-27, 2004** – 26<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Rocky Mountain EAA Regional Fly-In,  
Front Range Airport. The Wing is  
looking for volunteers to help with  
general aircraft parking and the  
Wing's C-60/PX operations.



**Mile High Wing**

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