



# MILE HIGH VIEW

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

Keep 'Em Flying!

December 2004

## Always Forward

*By Col Stan Peterson, Wing Leader*

Interesting how popular we've become since we started shopping for a replacement airplane.

Some of the airplanes that are either up for adoption or purchase and might be worthy of our consideration are a Howard GH-3 Light Personnel Transport and a Cessna Bobcat UC-78 Early Twin Engine Trainer. However, these planes are mainly constructed of wood and would have to be hangared.

There is some heavy metal available in the form of a C-46 and possibly even a PV-2, but the operating costs of these planes are beyond the Mile High Wing's present resources, although we are seeking additional support and searching the area for possible hangar space that might be donated.

The most practical replacement for the C-60 Lodestar seems to be a 1943 RC-45J (same vintage). This metal airplane is durable enough to weather the elements and could bear being tied down, as was the C-60. The fuel burn, maintenance, and pilot proficiency costs are all considerably less than those of the Lodestar and more within our capabilities. For more about this airplane, see page 3.

As we move forward out of this dark period, there is something I'd like to pass along, something that I turn to for inspiration during

times like these. I think most of you will recognize the author:

*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood: because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.*

—Theodore Roosevelt.

I hope these words may inspire you as well.

May you all have a Merry Christmas and a joyous Holiday Season, and don't forget to bring that white elephant gift to this month's meeting, 10:00hrs, Sat. the 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Front Range Airport; and remember, always forward, never turn back! ➔



**A twin-engine Beech RC-45J: Another potential aircraft for the Wing? Read more about this aircraft on page 3.**

## The Annual Holiday Food and Gift Show

*By Col Stan Hanson*

The Annual Holiday Food and Gift Show at the Denver Convention Center was a real learning experience and a success. For our first time taking the PX to something other than an airport and providing goods to a very specialized clientele, we did very well. As Col Chuck Kinney said many times to the passing shoppers, “Yes ladies, this is a more male-oriented booth.”

We were, to say the least, a little hesitant as to what we should bring to sell. Col Scott Lawrence contacted several of us and asked what we thought would sell and the decision was made. We brought T-shirts, die-cast airplanes, pins, parachute duds, a few pictures, and the dog tag machine.

We had plenty of help to cover the four days of the show. Col Stan Peterson’s wife, Ann, and my wife, Gerrie, filled in on Thursday and Friday for those of us who have day jobs. Some could only work in the afternoon or evenings, while others were able to adjust their schedule to fill in the gaps.

The event started with setting up the booth Wednesday evening, and collecting the merchandise from Col Scott Lawrence’s home in the middle of one of Colorado’s hit-and-run snow storms.

With the help of Colonels King, Lawrence, Peterson, McCown, and Hanson, the booth was set up and ready—well, nearly ready—to go by 9 PM. The next morning the PX was open and ready to go on time.

That first day showed we had selected the correct merchandise and that we were well on our way to a successful adventure. By the end of the weekend we had sold enough goods to more than satisfy the space rental cost and the taxes we were required to collect, and to defray

## Wing Dues Are Due

Yes, it is that time again. Your annual Wing dues are due in January. Please mail your \$45 to:

The Mile High Wing  
P.O. Box 471596  
Aurora, CO 80047-1596

Or bring your payment to the next general meeting of the Mile High Wing.

For this you will receive the monthly newsletter, an ID card, and a whole lot of camaraderie.

the costs of purchasing some new restock items, with about a \$500 profit left over.

The learning part was on the need to develop a better way to display our inventory items, and maybe to consider the use of credit cards.

Many thanks to all who participated: Dan King, Stan & Ann Peterson, Paul LaPrad, Chuck Kinney, Jeff McCown, Gerrie Hanson, and Quentin Huston. Special thanks to Mike Kalinowski for the idea and to Scott Lawrence for the “can-do!” attitude. →

**For Sale: The 2005 GHOSTS calendar, 25th Anniversary edition.** Great Christmas gift! Get one—or two!—at the December Wing meeting. Quantities are limited! Price \$15.50.

## Got stuff for the *Mile High View*?

Send it to the editor, Col Lynn Merrill. Email your articles or photos by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month (e.g., Jan. 5 for the January newsletter) to: [lmerrill@qualcomm.com](mailto:lmerrill@qualcomm.com).

## Twin Beech N40189: 1943 SNB-2, SNB-5P, RC-45J

This Beech aircraft, pictured on page 1, was originally an SNB-2, one of 150 ordered by the Navy on Feb. 5, 1943, at a cost of about \$59,000 each. They were used for training advanced student pilots on twin-engine aircraft, and instructing students in aerial navigation.

Between 1949 and 1953, it was one of 796 Navy SNBs rebuilt as an SNB-5P. This rebuild included a new wing center section, fuselage, landing gear, brakes, and tail wheel. Many other parts, including the engines, propellers, and tail section, were reconditioned at this time also.

It was delivered to the Navy in 1953 as a zero-time, new aircraft with a fuselage and center section that included the post-war improvements found in the D-18S. These changes included nacelles that extended further back over the wing, and an extended inboard wing leading edge.

These converted aircraft were designed for aerial photography work and training.

The equipment included two camera hatches in the floor just behind the bulkhead. The external doors under the plate glass hatches could be opened during flight. There was also a removable panel in the main cabin door through which pictures could be taken. An optical viewfinder mounted on the instrument panel provided both vertical and forward vision through a viewfinder in the bottom of the nose cone.

According to the *Beechcrafter* (March 5, 1953), these SNB-5Ps often flew high-altitude photographic missions at nearly 30,000 feet. By 1962 this aircraft was assigned to Alameda Naval Air Station. It was redesignated an RC-45J, as part of a new Department of Defense unified system of aircraft designation.

In 1969 it was civil registered as N40189 and donated to the U.S. Geological Survey in Phoenix, Arizona. By late 1969 it was registered to South Dakota State University in Brookings.

Between 1989 and 2002 it passed through at least four registered owners, including the Northern Indiana Aviation Museum in Goshen, Indiana, before finding a home with its present owner, Chris Cecil of Almont, Michigan.

This information is from a report compiled by:

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## Book Review

by Col Stan Hanson

*The Flame Keepers:  
The True Story of an  
American Soldier's Survival  
Inside Stalag 17.*

by Ned Handy and Kemp Battle



Ned Handy enlisted in the Army Air Corps right after December 7, 1941, and was assigned as a flight engineer to a B-24 unit in the 8th Air Force in England. In the spring of 1944, Handy's plane was shot down. This is where the story begins, the story of survival both physically and mentally.

Ned Handy was one of 4,300 prisoners of war that were incarcerated in Stalag 17. The 13 months spent in captivity would have an impact on the rest of Handy's life.

As he called it in the book, "the year of five seasons" is packed with stories of escape attempts, finding ways to keep from going crazy, and the day-to-day struggle of survival. As the war was nearing its end, Ned Handy and his fellow POWs force-marched 120 miles west toward the American lines, where they were finally repatriated.

This book is filled with stories of intrigue, distrust, trust, some tragedy, and some ironies, of being alone yet sharing your life with 4,300 strangers. When I first picked it up, I could not put it down. It is truly a spectacular story of the sacrifice the POWs made and a tribute to their ingenuity and efforts to survive.

If you are familiar with the movie *Stalag 13*, you will find a lot of striking similarities. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this account and highly recommend this book to anyone interested in learning more about German POW camps in WWII. →

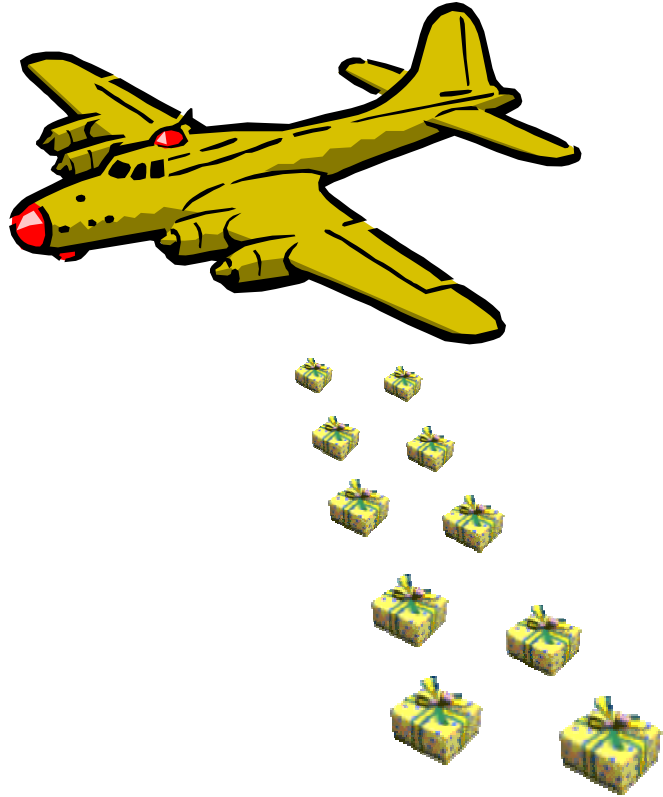
## Calendar of Events

**Dec. 18, 2004** – Wing meeting:  
10:00 a.m., Front Range Airport,  
terminal building, upstairs conference  
room. Guest speaker: Bruce McAllister,  
author of *Wings Over Denali*.

**Holiday Party!** – Dec. 18, right after  
the Wing meeting at Front Range  
Airport. Bring a small (\$5-10) gift or a  
white elephant gift to share.

**Jan. 15, 2005** – Wing meeting:  
10:00 a.m., Front Range Airport,  
terminal building, upstairs conference  
room.

Wing meetings are held on the 3rd  
Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m.



**Mile High Wing - CAF**  
P.O. Box 471596  
Aurora, CO 80047-1596