



MILE HIGH VIEW

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

Keep 'Em Flying!

March 2006

Highlights from Winter Staff Conference 2006

By Col Paul LaPrad, Wing Leader

This report covers only a fraction of the information provided at the Winter Staff Conference held on February 18-19, 2006, at the MCM Grande Fun Dome in Odessa, Texas.

The meeting was called to order by Executive Director Bob Rice. After the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance Bob's secretary, Sharon McKay, conducted the Unit Roll Call. It is always interesting to see who is attending from where and to hear some of the responses that are far different than "present." Joe Cowan, Chief of Staff, then introduced the members of the General Staff.

This was followed by information on the P-82 (twin Mustang) and the B-29 (about 15,000 man-hours—many dealing with corrosion—have been spent on this plane in the last 18 months and the last engine overhaul was \$175,000). We heard about marketing efforts, membership recruitment, the American Combat Airman Hall of Fame (one of the inductees for 2006 is Bob Hoover) and the Commemorative Center. Unfortunately, that will not be finished for AIRSHO 2006.

After this general session, attendees could go to such focus groups as Unit Leaders/Adjutants, Recruiting Officers, Finance Officers, PX Officers, Safety Officers, Operations Officers/Pilots and Maintenance Officers. At the evening banquet, various awards were distributed, one of which went to our own Col Stan Peterson.

continued on page 3

Ready for Flight

By Col Stan Peterson

This month brings us closer to what is shaping up to be a promising "Airsho" season, a season filled with challenges and rewards.

Our first immediate challenge comes on March 11th, when the Mile High Wing is scheduled to fly approximately 20 passengers. Our Cream Puff is in excellent condition and the weather forecast doesn't appear to present a problem, so there's a great likelihood that this next Saturday could be our first rewarding event of the season.

Speaking of challenges, I was recently able to expand my education in aircraft maintenance by helping Gordon Rupert (Gordy) replace some worn rivets on the airplane's cowlings. The task proved interesting and allowed me to get some hands-on experience

continued on page 2



Can you identify this mystery AT-7 part?

Ready for Flight, continued

using my newly acquired riveting tools. I had previously practiced with scrap material and also worked with Gordy on my own airplane. The reward came from completing the job with satisfying results.

Since we had the cowlings removed, I decided that it would be a good time to address the sloppy cowl flap operation that had occurred after years of normal use. This repair required replacing old bushings that had to be machined individually due to the uneven wear that had taken place.

My engineer and machinist friend, Joseph Brexa, did a beautiful job of fitting the new aircraft bolts and bushings. The reward now is tight-fitting, smooth-operating, cowl flaps.

Our continuing challenge, of course, is the general care and appearance of the airplane, which we are all capable of performing.

The decision has been made to make the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month the Mile High Wing's scheduled workdays. If you should remember anything from this newsletter, please remember this—the **1st and 3rd**.

Thanks to Cols Stan Hanson and Quentin Huston, our first scheduled workday did “get off the ground,” and although there was a small showing, a considerable amount of work was accomplished. And the reward: we now have the airplane's empennage and entire left side of the fuselage polished!

continued on page 3



Joseph Brexa works on the “mystery part”—fixing the cowl flap bushings



Left: Tight-fitting, smooth-operating cowl flaps!

The flaps feature new bolts and bushings.

Ready for Flight, continued

Perhaps the greatest challenge we face in the near future will be our annual inspection, which is due in April. Although we performed an extensive inspection last year and we don't expect this year's inspection to be nearly as expensive, completing the task will be a big challenge. We'll need a hangar, jacks, mechanics and volunteers. The decision to fly back to Wichita and have Earl Long perform the inspection again may be our most viable option.

Once the inspection has been completed, we'll be perched and ready to launch into our airshow season. We have had several invitations for appearances from around Colorado, Utah, and even an invitation from the Jay Hawk Wing in Wichita, Kansas to attend their fly-in. →

Winter Staff Conference, continued

At the end of 2005, the CAF had 158 total aircraft. Fifty-five of these were in service, 57 in maintenance, with the remainder either in restoration or storage. The CAF had 79 total units and enjoyed a membership of 8,987—down from 9,361 at the end of 2004.

HQ staff is focusing on many issues, such as an aggressive membership drive, promoting "safety" as part of the corporate culture, and promoting CAF name awareness, both from the HQ and local levels. An acknowledgment was made that in the past some of the "we" vs. "they" attitude existed; that is, HQ vs. the local units. The current push is for HQ to assist local units in whatever way possible.

CAF members now get discounts at Enterprise Rental Car, the Hilton Family of Hotels, and FTD Florists. For anyone interested in history—which is what we are about—there are about 4,000 oral histories on record at CAF HQ.

For over a year, HQ has been working on redeveloping their website. They have one bid on doing the job, a second is coming in shortly, then work will begin on a greatly improved website.

All members are encouraged to come to a general staff meeting. Six are held each year and the next one is April 22, 2006.

Again I would say the Staff Conferences are a great experience. You get to meet people from other units, HQ and general staff, pick up information and see the airplanes that are on static display in Midland. Hopefully some of you can go next year. In the meantime, KEEP 'EM FLYING. →

Calendar of Events

March 18, 2006 – Wing meeting:
10:00 a.m. at Platte Valley Airport.

April 1, 2006 – Aircraft work day:
10:00 a.m. at Platte Valley Airport.

April 15, 2006 – Wing meeting:
10:00 a.m. at Platte Valley Airport.

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

Directions to Platte Valley Airport

Platte Valley Airport is 3 miles
northwest of Hudson, Colorado:

- Take I-76 north to Hudson
and exit west on Highway 52.
- At CR 41, turn right (north).
- At CR 18, turn left (west).

At the Platte Valley Airpark sign, turn
left again.



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