



The Flyer



Col Steve Bolin Retires

Will continue in aviation

After almost three decades as a government employee (USCG, ATC), Wing Finance Officer **Steve Bolin** has “hung up his headset”. Steve has performed his duties admirably over the years and is eager to begin a second career. He is multi-engine certified and has been partners in a Baron for a while now.



He is already acting as the primary pilot for one local Midland businessman, and with the completion of the King Air School he attended recently in Fort Worth, should be taking on other clients as well.

Best of luck to Steve from all of his friends in the wing.

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LOOSE FORMATION BY MIKE HEDRICK



The importance of being the High Sky Wing: our mission is people.

Our local newspaper, the Midland Reporter Telegram, has reported recently that our city has an “unemployment rate” of less than 4%, and that our local economy grew at the rate of 13.5% in 2011...we were taught in business school in the early 70’s that you couldn’t force the “unemployment rate” below 5-6%...we live in a very unusual place, if you haven’t already noticed.

Why is this happening? Simple. Our economy is based on oil and gas, a commodity. When the price is up, the industry expands, wells are drilled, completed and equipped, and oil income increases, filling the pockets and bank accounts

of everyone in the food chain, from local oilfield hands to white collar managers, all the way up to the financial generals in New York.

This has always been a boom-to-bust-to-boom-again economy, a rollercoaster that few had the stomach to endure for very long. If the last bust didn’t get you, the next one might. This has happened in many places and times, but why are we still here?

The answer is in the people that chose to come back to West Texas after World War II. Back? Some of them were natives who just came home. But many were veterans who had trained and earned their wings at the new Army Airfields in West Texas. Partly because of good flying weather, and partly because of a favorable political climate, airfields were built all over Texas to train pilots and aircrews for the war. Within 200 miles of Midland Army

Airfield, there were bases in Big Spring, San Angelo, Sweetwater (the Wasps), Abilene, Lubbock, Hobbs, Roswell, Pecos, Fort Stockton, Marfa and Pyote. These men and women came from all over the country, at a time when travel was considered a luxury, to a place few would have chosen to visit. Being far from home, and with little to do when off duty, the communities took them in, inviting them to their churches, picnics and social functions. What they learned was that the people were open and friendly (thanks to the ladies that inspired the Nose Art), and the oil business was a great way to make a fortune (thanks Hollywood).

After the war, these returning veterans brought with them some essential ingredients that have made our communities what they are today: an education (See Hedrick, pg 2)

OPERATIONS REPORT BY DREW DIGGINS*



The big news around Operations this month is expansion..as in expanding the number of pilots to fly our expanding fleet of aircraft. This is something that has been sorely needed, especially with the addition of the T-28 (and possibly another T-28), the Kate, and of course, an old family friend, SNJ-24.

But I digress. The Flight Evaluation Board (FEB) met and recommended three of our members to begin training in our aircraft, specifically, the L-17 and S-105, and they have received their Transition Letters from Headquarters. Those pilots are **Steve Clinton**, **John Echols** and **Mark Haskin**. Congratulations to you all. We are looking forward to your contributions and participation in the flying activities of our wing.

With more certified pilots we should be able to really get out the message of “Keep ‘em Flyin”.

Air show season is starting, and after monitoring e-mail traffic this past week, it looks as if things are in full swing. We are planning to try a new system of having one person as the coordinator for each air show. For the upcoming air show at Hondo (May 18-20), **James Martin** will be the ramrod. It appears that as many as nine of our aircraft will be flying to Hondo, but some may divert to Brady for all, or part of, the weekend, to give us a presence at their show.

By the time you read this, it is more than likely that all crew positions will have been filled. But...you might still contact James (james.a.martin@me.com) to get on the list. Feel free to contact me (dadiggins@pinnaclecng.com) for information on our participation in future air shows.



Stinson S-105 to be used as a transition training aircraft.

**This report prepared by Greg Gutting for Drew Diggins.*

Photo by Greg Gutting



Colonels and guests enjoy the 2012 High Sky Wing Awards Banquet.

Photos by H.A. Tuck

(*Hedrick, from pg 1*) courtesy of the G.I. Bill, a strong conservative work ethic learned from the Great Depression, and an appreciation of the freedoms for which they had fought. And something crucial to the oil business, a measured risk-taking ability that was natural after flying missions in hostile skies. These folks built the industry, and raised another generation that has followed in their footsteps.

Unfortunately, the “Greatest Generation” is nearing the end of its long successful run. The local newspapers print stories every week of their incredible service to our country, sometimes told in the cryptic language of their obituaries, and many times

surprising their closest friends and families who never knew of their dutiful exploits that earned some of the highest honors our country has to bestow.

Over the last few years the High Sky Wing has had the privilege of honoring the passing of a few of these veterans and their families by performing fly-overs of their graveside services. A simple missing-man formation, with a single plane turning and “going west” as a salute to their service to the Country, is a mission that we are proud to perform. This simple gesture has paid the High Sky Wing

participants dividends in the outpouring of thanks from the surviving families. This is a time to build patriotism in the hearts of those in attendance, and inform their children and grandchildren of what they gave to their country.

This is an important part of our mission: remembrance and education.

The Feb 23 General Monthly Meeting will be a “Meet ‘n Greet” Happy Hour and not the typical pot luck supper. Just bring yourself to the meeting and be ready to socialize.

KNUCKLEBUSTERS CORNER BY STEVE CLINTON



“It’s all good”. Hum, I think I’ve heard that somewhere before. The hangar is a busy place these days. With new opportunities being made available to the maintenance staff,

everyone has critical job duties to perform. The one thing I have been impressed by is the dedication of all our volunteers to absolute quality, and the desire to keep the wings’ fleet of historical assets in superb condition.



Photo by Greg Gutting

Bill Coombes’ SNJ has returned to the fleet and we look forward to other additions in the near future. Of course, with more aircraft to maintain the maintenance crew will need additional

volunteers. We invite you out on Tuesday and Thursday

nights and Saturday mornings for a little sweat labor and a lot of fun. Believe me, there is never a dull moment. Come out and help us keep um flyin’.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Are you doing your part? Are you aware that HSW collects aluminum cans and recycles them FOR PROFIT? Really. We have a good-sized trailer that we need to fill. Do



your part and bring cans in plastic bags out to the hangar. If no one is there to accept your donation, just leave it on the patio outside the Ready Room door and we will take care of it. Admittedly this is not a big money maker for the wing, but every little bit helps and it’s good for us all.

SAFETY REPORT BY PAUL COOPER



Ever wonder when goint into the hangar and you’re going “WOW! Look at all these planes!” Pretty soon it is going to be

like walking through a maze or a jungle We are getting more planes and starting to fill up the hangar space. So, as you start to maneuver around the hangar, we need to watch out for the pitot tubes, oil puddles on the floor, or anything that can cause a poke, a stab, a bump, or a slip. So, watch out when you are in the hangar FULL OF PLANES!

Another thing coming up soon is some safety training. We will be learning how to correctly operate the fire extinguishers and we will also be reviewing flight line and ramp safety. I will set up the date as soon as we find out when Colonel **Lyn Fite** will be available to conduct the training.



Mark Haskin helps keep the Tomato flying.

Photos by Greg Gutting

KEEP STEVE OUT OF VEGAS!
Donate to your wing today!



Have you looked at our web page recently? Check it out: highskywing.org



AWARDS BANQUET HONORS THREE

Award recipients(L to R) **John Meyer** (Gary Austin Memorial Award), **Bob Keating** (Colonel of the Year), and **Paul Cooper** (Spirit of the Eagle) were honored at the High Sky Wing Awards Banquet on January 21st.



Photos by H.A. Tuck

ADJUTANT REPORT BY PATTI COLLINS



Want To Get The Most Out Of Your Membership (from a female's perspective)?

Being the only lady that is present on work evenings and days, I have found that the best way to really get the most out of my membership is to come out on work nights/days and join in on the fun of learning about the HSW fleet. This has really been a great way for me to get involved, learn about the planes AND even learn how to assemble a German Storch (pronounced Stork), basically from scratch.

There are a number of things happening out here: from building planes to participating in routine inspections, to holding an impromptu airplane shuffle. There is always something to do at the High Sky Wing Hangar.

Thanks to our TV technicians climbing up on the HSW roof.... **James Martin** and **Paul Latham**, we were able to have the Super Bowl Game aired in the Ready Room as well as upstairs in the O'Club. We had a great turn out with some awesome food! Please try to join us next year.

Now, it has been brought to my attention by **Paul "Buffy" Cooper's** wife, Lanetta, that she would like to get some of the wives and ladies (the next generation of "Rosie the Riveter" Club) of the HSW together for a periodic ladies night out. Please contact Lanetta directly if you are interested in food and fun: Lanetta Cooper, 432-413-2412, ljcooper60@yahoo.com

H.A., you sly dog!
Has Brent seen this picture?

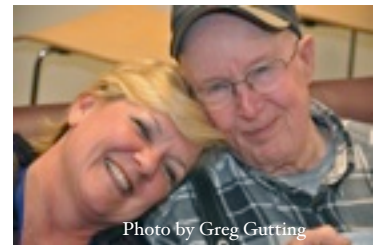


Photo by Greg Gutting

XO REPORT BY GREG GUTTING



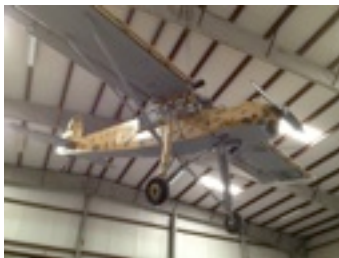
I recently returned from a trip to Tucson and while there visited the Pima Air and Space Museum. It was pretty impressive with over 300 aircraft on static display, including a "cousin"

of our Storch (left) that was recently put on display in the main hangar.

If you make a visit to Tucson, this is a must stop for any aviation buff. Across the highway from the museum is the "boneyard" where over 3000 aircraft are stored. Some are one of a kind aircraft, many are there for dismantling, and others, like the C130 (right), are there in large numbers, waiting to be dispatched when and where needed. Bus tours of the boneyard leave from the museum several times a day.

One little known factoid is that Tucson was picked as the location

for the storage of these aircraft, at least in part, because of the hard-packed caliche soil. It will bear the weight of any aircraft without the need to pour a four square mile concrete pad.



Photos by Greg Gutting



SUGGESTION BOX "OPEN FOR BUSINESS"

Have a good idea for improving our wing? Don't know who to turn to? Or do you just have a question about the way things operate? Well, now you have a source to consult...our Suggestion Box. Contact us at comments@highskywing.org. We will route your inquiry to the person/persons who can best help you, and they will get back to you with your personalized answer. Give it a try today!

TURN AND BANK BY STEVE BOLIN



Since we last met, I have finally hung up the headset and retired from the FAA. After my last day of work, I was coerced into appearing at the Wing to answer a Finance related question. When I entered the Ready Room, I was met by quite a few of our Wing members who had gathered to wish me well and eat some BBQ and cake. The cake was decorated with dollar signs and said, "Vegas; Here We come." So, to let you know what I have been encouraged to take to Las Vegas, here is this month's report.

As membership renewals start to roll in, over \$7200 has been received this month. Approximately 135 members have either joined or renewed for the year 2012.

The Wing has received over \$6100 in general donations. These include large donations from the families of several funeral flyovers we have done in the last few months. This includes one of our own. **John Echols** wife, (Heather) lost her father and we were privileged to perform a flyover for the graveside services. His estate honored us with a \$2500 gift to

keep em flying. Bingo made another \$6600 distribution, and the Awards Banquet generated \$7000 in pledges to Pay the Rent. Thanks to **Gena Linebarger** for coaxing those pledges out of our gracious members. I'll give a list of those next month when the pledges turn into real dollars.

The two major expenses for the month were Aircraft insurance and ANUAC. \$13,168 went to insure our fleet, and \$9,687 went across the ramp to HQ. Both necessary pleasures, even if we don't enjoy paying these expenses. Both take the pressure off of operating the Wing and the aircraft.

The good news is: with the exception of one more fairly large insurance bill, we have met the biggest part of our fixed expenses. Now it is on to operating, restoring, and maintaining the aircraft and equipment. As of the end of January we have around \$23,000 in cash plus the aircraft accounts. We'll just keep on heading to Vegas!

The more money Steve has in our account, the less likely he is to go to Vegas to try and increase it! **KEEP STEVE OUT OF VEGAS**, by making a private donation today.

MISCELLANEOUS MISCHIEF

Old number 24 returns

On January 27 pilot Colonel **Billy Parker** (L) and owner Colonel

George, had owned the plane for about 25 years before selling it in 2006.

Parker, a former *Tora!* pilot, is a member of the **Centex Wing** in San Marcos, while Butler is a member of both Centex and the **High Sky Wing**.

We are all looking forward to seeing SNJ-24 and SNJ-101 take to the sky as a team!

Bolin's Retirement Party



Photos by Greg Gutting

Despite the incorrect spelling of "Vegas" on the cake, a good time was had by all at **Steve Bolin's** retirement get-together in the Ready Room.



H.A. Tuck



James Martin (L) and John Echols



Photo by Greg Gutting

H.D. Butler pose beside SNJ-24 shortly before returning ownership to **Bill Coombs**. Bill and his father,



Image from Wikipedia

DID YOU KNOW? T-6 IS A GREAT IMITATOR

"Since the Second World War, the T-6 has been a regular participant at air shows, and was used in many movies. For example, in *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and *The Final Countdown*, converted single seat T-6's painted in Japanese markings represent Mitsubishi Zeroes, whereas in *A Bridge Too Far* it represented the razorback Republic P-47 Thunderbolt." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_T-6_Texan

High Sky Wing Newsletter

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UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14

Sweets With Your Sweetheart

February 23

HSW Monthly Meeting*

February 23-26

Wing Staff Conference

March 6

HSW Wing Staff Meeting

March 27-April 1

Sun 'n Fun, Lakeland, FL

***NEED A RIDE TO THE WING
MEETING?***

Drop us a line at comments@highskywing.org and we'll do our best to make sure you don't miss a meeting.

****FEBRUARY MEETING NOT
POTLUCK***

Come out on Thursday, Feb 23 to a "Meet 'n Greet" Happy Hour with Wing Staff Conference participants.

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