



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

Quote From David Oliver, CAF Executive Vice President: When we are asked, “What’s the CAF?” The Words Should Roll Right Off Our Tongues: “The CAF is an Organization that Educates, Inspires, And Honors”

The General Staff recently voted to accept this new mission statement!



LOBO WING CHATTER

March - April 2019

Our thanks to Rose for all the support she has provided in publishing the Lobo Chatter in the past. Andy Wells and Larry Dalton have assumed the responsibility for publishing the Lobo Chatter as of this issue. As you have input for the Lobo Chatter at any time, please email your input in MSWord format to Andy and Larry as follows:

Andy Wells: andywells43@comcast.net

Larry Dalton: ljdalto@gmail.com

Special Notice: The Lobo Wing website, lobowing.org, now has a donate button on the Home Page. Because the Lobo Wing of the Commemorative Air Force is a nonprofit organization, we are in need of funds to support our ongoing restoration and educational efforts. Your donations make a huge difference! Please be as generous as you can afford to be. As you will read below, the wing needs \$15K at least to finish the AT-11. Please help the wing secure the funding to finish the AT-11 as well as ongoing PT-26 maintenance and operational costs.

David McBride, Wing Leader Update

It's been quite a while since I've updated everyone on the status of the Lobo Wing. As always, we are very busy at the hangar and if you haven't been there recently you will see lots of changes. The AT-11, of course, has been undergoing lots of those changes and Scott Witschger's update will cover all of that. I'll cover the PT-26 status also.

Let's start off with our success in the area of fundraising. After all, money is what really makes airplanes fly. We had two major donations, one from Harry Oliver of Santa Fe, who is a warbird enthusiast and gave us \$6,500. The other was from Jim Guthrie of CarCrafters, who gave us \$5,000. The key to each of these donations was personal contacts. A reminder that if you know someone in business or is affiliated with a foundation, it doesn't hurt to approach them. We also had three of our own Lobos who gave \$1,000 each. Now, \$14,500 seems like a lot of money, but we still need more, at least \$15,000 more to finish the AT-11 and get two pilots qualified to fly it. This is just the money we need for the airplanes. Of course, we always need money to operate the wing and hangar. This includes \$7,165 for various required insurances, \$3,656 for ANUAC and approximately \$3,600 to pay our utilities every year. This comes to a little over \$14,400; our projected income is approximately \$15,000. Obviously we just barely make ends meet and fundraising is a never ending endeavor.

The CAF Winter Staff Conference was held last month in Dallas and one of the most important topics was safety. If you hadn't heard already, the CAF had 14 aircraft accidents in 2018. Yes, you read that correctly. It was one of the worst years in CAF history, and almost cost us our insurance. It's a bitter reminder to keep our guard up at all times. This doesn't just apply to aircraft operations. It's just as important to stay very alert and safe in our hangar. And because we spend more time working around the hangar than we do flying, we need to be especially cautious.

Also discussed at the conference were the two programs for giving rides in our aircraft. One program is for Experimental Exhibition category aircraft, which was what we had planned for the AT-11. This would have allowed us to restore the AT-11 to original configuration. Under that program, each passenger riding in the plane must be a member of the CAF. For each seat that we would sell, CAF HQ takes a \$75 membership fee. This means we would lose \$300 per flight (\$75 x 4 seats) which is not feasible. The second program is for **Standard** category aircraft, which is how the AT-11 is currently registered. This will require some very minor modifications to the AT-11 which would not be noticeable to most passengers. To fly in this category, the FAA requires all crewmembers and maintenance personnel to participate in a drug and alcohol program at a cost of \$40 per quarter per person (we anticipate 6 personnel at this time for a cost of \$960/year). The benefit to this is we get to keep all of the ride revenue as there is no membership requirement for paying passengers. Obviously, this is the way to go and we are proceeding in that direction. By the way, we recently submitted our paperwork to put the PT-26 in this ride program, and we hope to have that very soon.

Again, I can't stress enough that if you haven't been to the hangar in a while, you need to come on out. Of the current 60 members, about 18 are the ones doing a lot of the work. That's not bad for a volunteer organization, but I'll bet that if you show up we can find something for you to do. And, there's always Russ's burgers and grilled chicken breasts, with all the usual trimmings every Saturday!



PT-26 Update from David McBride

If you've been to the hangar in the last few months, you've probably noticed the PT-26 tail is up higher than usual. The reason for this unusual position is the tailwheel was giving us a lot of problems with shimmying on landing. We've "chased" this problem for about as long as we've had this airplane, and the problem has existed since the design was first fielded in the 1940's. Numerous articles on the topic have been reviewed by us. Over the years, we have sent the tailwheel assembly to a number of experts to have it worked on. In every case, it would last for a while and then start shimmying again. This time we have completely disassembled the entire assembly and analyzed it for any defects. We consulted with a PT-26 expert who has built numerous award winning aircraft, and we think we have finally (?) found a solution. As we were taking it apart we found rod-end bearings that were a little loose and we also found the keyways in the strut to be worn. Each one of these is a multiplier with the result being tailwheel shimmy. We had to have two pieces made by a machinist who took a while, but we now have all the parts and we are starting to put everything back together. Hopefully, the PT will be back in the air soon.

Another item that needed addressing was a vacuum pump. We finally found the correct pump in Tulsa and had the aircraft accessory facility install the correct drive. The pump is now on the aircraft and all vacuum instruments should function properly. Our inspector will be very happy!

Trivia tidbit: More than 1,700 PT-26s were produced in the United States by Fairchild and in Canada by Fleet Aircraft, Ltd.

The photo below is of the Lobo Wing's PT-26 piloted by Andy Wells with Scott Ruyle in the back seat in September 2017. Fortunately they got home safe and didn't get lost.



AT-11 Update by Scott Witschger

The Lobo Wing AT-11 Long Term Project headed by Col. Scott Witschger.

Details: 41-9451 Beech construction number (c/n)877. N320A 15th AT-11 built, earliest know survivor. This Kansan will undoubtedly be one of the nicest restorations of any Twin Beech. (Ref: https://at-11kansan.fandom.com/wiki/Surviving_Aircraft)

The AT-11 is currently undergoing finishing detail work in a number of areas all simultaneously. The electrical wiring (except for avionics) is now down to the completion of the large gauge supply and distribution wires. When they are complete we will begin testing all the systems for proper operation. This will entail setting all the limit switches that impact the landing gear, flap and bomb door systems. The biggest job will be to raise and lower the gear to set switch travel and to ensure the motor clutch and emergency release work correctly.

Also underway is all the detail work to finalize the front and back of the firewalls. There are numerous items that will be very difficult to gain access to once the skin and wings are reinstalled so we are taking our time to ensure we don't miss some critical items. On the downside, as we install new items we discover fitment issues with previously completed items. Not unexpected but frustrating never the less. We hope that total relocation is unnecessary and all that is required is an adjustment in angle.

We are also prepping the inner cowls which are usually referred to as the dish pans. Essential welding repairs have been completed and the stainless steel pans cleaned and buffed. They look fantastic (Nice job Sean). We are now installing new upper and lower seals. These must be totally ready to go because they must go on behind the engines. All the seals are attached with small staples so removal, cleanup and reattachment is a tedious task. Mike Medlock found replacement stainless steel staples that are for the trim on 1927 to 1974 Chryslers. The classic car web sites have bailed us out on several occasions.

As soon as we think everything is ready we will be hanging engines. Then will come the task of final attachment and rigging of all the engine and environmental controls. After the controls are rigged we will secure them and be ready to reinstall the wing center section skins.

There is a lot of final clean up and painting that must be completed on the engine exhaust, engine cowls and skins. All this requires is manpower; desire and patience so please come out and lend a hand.