



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE



LOBO WING CHATTER

June 2021

Wing Leader Briefing by Scott Witschger

First allow me to apologize for the lengthy period between newsletters. While it may seem like your leaders have been ignoring the wing as you will see in the next segment nothing could be further from the truth.

We have been working on a major opportunity that will place the wing in a financial position that we have never previously experienced. Read Dave McBride's project briefing below to learn what we have been accomplishing.

R-2600 Project Briefing by Dave McBride

What is all that stuff across the taxiway from our hangar?

Almost a year ago one of our Lobo Wing members was having lunch with a friend of his in Santa Fe. This "friend" had a collection of "stuff" that he had purchased decades ago and was interested in getting rid of it. The "stuff" was Curtis Wright R2600 engine parts that he had collected in hopes of selling it to the US Forest Service for the planes (TBMs and B25s) they were using for firefighting. Well, shortly after collecting all of these parts the Forest Service decided they were no longer going to be using the planes that used these engines. So....the conversation turned into "would the Lobo Wing be interested in taking these parts?". Of course, the Lobo Wing member came to the staff and presented the offer. The offer was for the Lobo Wing to take ALL of the parts, which by the way were enough to fill ten eighteen-wheel 53-foot containers, and dispose of the containers. This offer was a pure donation to the Wing!

The Wing staff discussed this offer for quite a while with the main question being “if we take it what do we do with it?”. First, we had to determine what all this “stuff” was. As it turns out we were looking at what is termed a “barn find” of engine parts. The R2600 is a huge 14-cylinder twin row radial engine used on Grumman TBMs, North American B25s, Curtiss SB2C Helldivers and Martin PBM amphibious patrol aircraft. There are a lot of parts in one of these engines and we were looking at trailers full of most, if not all, of the parts needed to build one. The best part is a lot of these parts were brand new still in cosmoline preservative and wrapped in wax paper and in pristine condition. After inspecting the contents of the trailers, the staff decided we would do it.

First, we would have to take legal possession of the “stuff”, which we did with a Deed of Gift. Next, we had to move all of it off the “friends” property. This was a major evolution which took four very long days. We had four trucks, four trailers, quite a few volunteers and two forklifts. And, oh by the way, it was June and it was hot! And this “stuff” had been in these trailers in Santa Fe for over four decades and the trailers were not completely sealed. There was dirt, skeletons of various creatures, nests and feces of all kinds. It was not sanitary by any stretch of the imagination. We estimate we moved around 200,000 pounds of parts and equipment.

Once we got everything to Moriarty, we had to store it somewhere. The airport manager was kind enough to let us borrow the lot directly east of the Lobo Wing hangar because it was unusable anyway as it has a power pole in the middle of it. We then rented two 40-foot Conex shipping containers and had them placed on that lot. We placed as much of the parts in boxes in the containers to keep them out of the weather and anything that was semi weatherproof was left outside. This mostly consisted of engine cores and engine containers full of various parts. In addition to the Conex containers, we were able to move two 20-foot trailers from the lot in Santa Fe to Moriarty and use them for additional storage.

Over the last year we have been reorganizing and inventorying all of these parts so that we would be able to sell them. Getting back to the “what are we going to do with it?” at the beginning of this story we now had to decide how to dispose of everything. There were many routes available. eBay, Barnstormers, Antique Aero Exchange were some of the options. Salvage was an option but only as a last resort. We also talked with some engine rebuilders who dealt with these types of engines but they were slow to respond. And then we hit paydirt!

One of our members based in Phoenix went to look at some AT-11 parts that had been advertised online. Part of that discussion was about the R-2600 parts we had for sale. The AT-11 parts seller mentioned that he knew someone who would be very interested in the R2600 parts. The next thing we knew we were talking with that someone and he was extremely interested in what we had and could he come out tomorrow to look at it. We agreed on a visit for him to look at everything and lo and behold when he showed up he wanted EVERYTHING! After some back and forth negotiating we reached an agreement with this gentleman and sold him all of the R2600 parts AND the three Conex containers.

The Sales Agreement we signed (22 May 2021) consists of the following: One fully overhauled Pratt and Whitney R985 spare engine for the AT-11 (this has already been delivered) \$55,000 value. Here is a quick peek.



One fully overhauled Hamilton Standard 22D30 spare propeller for the AT-11 (to be delivered once freshly overhauled)-\$5000 to \$10,000 value.

Sale of three Conex shipping containers to the buyer- \$14,000 value (this amount has already been paid).

\$15,000 worth of various parts that we may need for the AT-11 and PT-26 including the hopeful manufacturing of a turret dome for the AT-11. We have already collected a pile of good used and NOS R-985 exhaust components that will allow us to have a full spare left and right exhaust.

\$40,000 cash which has already been paid.

A two-year loan for \$55,000 to be paid in four equal installments.

A little math places the total value of the agreement at \$175,000.

I think we did pretty darn well, considering a year ago we didn't know how we were going to accomplish this undertaking. And bear in mind we had very little, relatively speaking, investment in this venture. That "little investment" does not, however, take into account our tremendous volunteers. Every bit of what I just recounted was accomplished by very dedicated Lobo Wing volunteers. They deserve a huge "Well Done"!!

Wing Leader Briefing by Scott Witschger (continued)

So, what do you think about THAT? We entered this venture with no real idea how this might work out. Our biggest hope was that we would get something out of the effort. The one thing we felt obligated to do was to save these parts for the warbird community. There was no way they would end up scrap. I think returning the PT-26 to the air was a great accomplishment, we will have further stepped up our game by returning the oldest known AT-11 to flight worthy status but in my opinion saving these parts and making them available to keep the fleet of B-25's and TBM's in the air might be our greatest contribution. Everybody who has participated in the process should be proud of your contribution. I add my Well-done Lobo's! to Dave's.

You may have noticed that I broke from my normal habit of calling out the names of Lobo's who had put in a real effort to accomplish a goal. This time so many Lobo's participated with an extra effort that everyone deserved an Atta boy and Atta girl. However, there is one member that deserves extra thanks for a really special effort. Early on I knew we would need someone to head up the R-2600 project and that the individual would need experience in dealing with equipment logistics. So, I asked Korry Tilbury to head up the project (OK I begged). Despite his own hectic work and life schedule he agreed to my request. From the beginning from getting the parts moved to Moriarty to the recent work to prep the parts for shipment he has put in a truly dedicated effort and has used his local business contacts to get us the free use of a lot of heavy equipment.

This kind of dedication appears all through the CAF and is how we continue to achieve the mission of the CAF. Korry is one of those special dedicated individuals and we are lucky to have him. He has my eternal thanks.

As for the names of the donor and purchaser we have been asked not to share that information at this time.

AT-11 Project Update by Scott Witschger

While all the R-2600 stuff was going on progress was still being made on the AT-11. The big news is that we finally have two overhauled certified Hamilton Standard 22D30 full feathering propellers. While not cheap the damage could have been worse. The prop that was in reasonably good condition came in at \$2471.24 and the disaster prop came in at \$4548.44. With a total cost of \$7019.68 it is still well under the \$9000.00 we had been provided from the CAF Aircraft Restoration Grant. So, I guess you could say we made out OK? The biggest concern going forward was and continues to be how long it took to find good reusable parts.



In the previous segment it was mentioned that a seller in Phoenix had listed AT11/Beech 18 parts for sale. Among the items referenced were engine cowlings. Although we have engine cowlings available, they are in poor condition with numerous holes, dents, patches and cracks. So it was worth a visit from our local emissary to inspect the parts. It was determined that the 3 upper cowlings and 2 lower cowlings were all better than what we have so they would be worth acquiring if the price was right. In addition, the seller had a like new elevator frame, 2 good and 1 decent flap frames, 2 excellent engine mounts and 2 good D-18 wheels. All parts that would make good spares for our project. The entire package was purchased for \$1200 which is well below market for just the two sets of cowlings. These parts are currently in storage in Chandler.

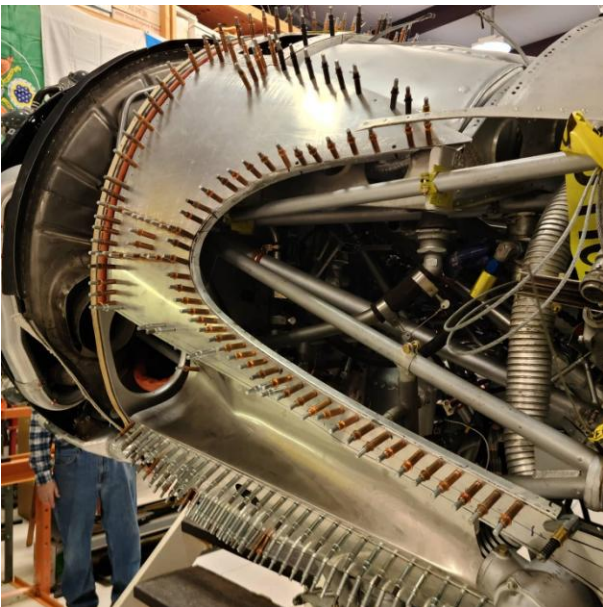
As a side note, as part of the R-2600 deal we acquired two smaller truck trailers. We intend to keep these to use for spare parts storage so we can free up much needed space in the hangar. When these parts are brought to Moriarty, they will be stored in the trailers until made ready for use.

In the last Chatter we discussed the issue with the engine control cables. Since then, new cables have been acquired and installed through a considerable effort from Larry Dalton and John Lacher. There has also been a lot of under the floor cleanup that is necessary prior to the final installation of the floor boards.

The left engine is done except for final rigging and assembly of the fuel strainer.

The right engine needs the case breathers finished, some hose clamps installed, the fuel strainer assembled and final rigging.

The wing stub skins are being reinstalled to evaluate what must be done to prepare for final installation.



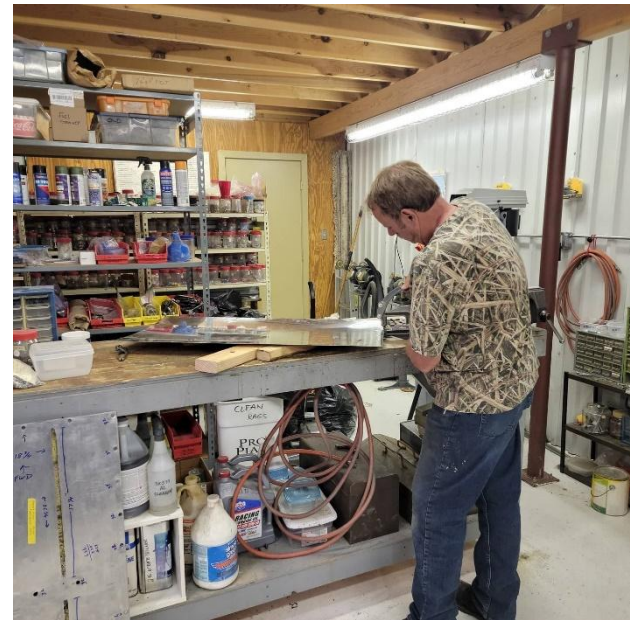
The small chains for the emergency extension and the elevator trim must be installed.

The cabin escape hatch has been cleaned, primed and received final paint.



The cockpit windshield glass and frames have been evaluated for installation needs. At this point we think all the components needed to start installation have been acquired or fabricated.

New member Ralph Crump has been fabricating new lower fuselage inspection panels that are in poor condition.



At the aft of the plane the horizontal stabilizers have been finalized, the rudder trim system is in and the elevator trim is near completion. Currently the fairings are being refitted and evaluated for any further action.



Questions or comments about Lobo Chatter should be directed to:

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