



COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

***LOBO WING
CHATTER***



WING LEADER BRIEFING

Thanks to everyone who renewed and participated in our officer voting process. If you haven't had the chance to renew please do so at your earliest convenience as we do depend on that income to stay in business. Because of the voting success we now have legally elected our officers.

Because so many members are somewhat new and unfamiliar with our history we felt it would be beneficial to discuss this in great detail. This issue of the Chatter includes the first volume of our history after the PT-26 was flying. This will be followed up by a special edition that will cover just the adventure of getting the AT11 moved from Grand Rapids to Moriarty.

Lobo Wing History

Volume 1 Overview

This section of our history is presented in three sections. The first section covers the period June 1999 to October 2003 and presents the information on Why we decided to obtain a second aircraft and how we settled on the AT-11.

Volume Two will cover the period October 2003 to January 2004. This short period covers the effort to retrieve the AT-11 and transport it back to Moriarty and begin work. This section is interesting and fairly lengthy so it will be published as a Special Edition Chatter.

Volume Three will cover the period October 2003 to September 2006 and then a little jump to the final paperwork in December 2017.

There are a lot of documents involved in this process both of the planning and legal variety. I will try to list them so you can appreciate the number of steps undertaken but not delve into the fine details. All the documents will be available if you really get into the story. However, even the overview of the overview covers around five years so it is extensive.

	VOLUME ONE
	June 1999 to October 2003
June 5, 1998	PT-26 is completed
January 1, 2002	Why a Second Aircraft
Jan to April 2002	The Lobo Wing Creating the Future Project"
April 1,2003 to June 9,2003	Selecting an Aircraft
May 2002 to April 2003	Aircraft Selection Committee search
May 2002 to April 2003	Find a Home
May 21,2003	AT11 evaluation visit to Grand Rapids
June 9,2003	Review of Grand Rapids AT11 and decision
July 20,2003	Apply for assignment
August 2,2003	Notified we had won assignment of the AT11
August 10,2003	Reach agreement with Eclipse for hangar space

September 1,2003	Lose Hangar arrangement with Eclipse
October 2,2003	Wing Staff documents approval to negotiate for a hangar

WHY A SECOND AIRCRAFT? (January 2002 through September 2003)

After the PT-26 restoration was completed and the aircraft was being flown to fly in's and airshows The Wing started to stagnate. Membership renewals declined and new member recruiting dropped off. The general feeling amongst the membership was there wasn't anything to do and we needed a new project.

At that time the wing had monthly meetings at Cutter Aviation in addition to our Saturday work days. At the meetings the discussion for a number of months was on finding a way forward. It was ultimately decided that we should create a business plan that would identify our strengths and weaknesses and hopefully create a plan to move forward.

The project to develop a business plan was named "the Lobo Wing Creating the Future project" and was directed by Scott Witschger. The project got underway around January 2002 and the final version was published in April 2002.

SELECTING AN AIRCRAFT

The key take away in this first round of analysis was that we had to have a project for members to work on at all times. That was and remains our primary recruiting tool. Col. Clay Keen was appointed to chair the acquisition committee. Other members were Julie Smith, Frank Gasperich and Scott Witschger. Col. Keen was provided an Aircraft Action Plan that laid out what we wanted to consider in a new project. Initial discussions were about identifying an aircraft that would have a tie to local New Mexico aviation history.

The committee considered a number of aircraft including a CAF owned TBM, a Midland based CAF AT-11, A Michigan based CAF owned AT-11, a privately owned California based AT-11, a New Mexico based privately owned NA-64 (Doug Taylor) and a New Mexico based CAF owned C-45.

Our first decision was that we preferred to look at CAF owned aircraft that did not require up front funding. That eliminated the NA-64 and California based AT-11. At the 2003 winter staff conference a group of members reviewed the Midland based AT-11 and were very concerned with the degree of corrosion that was evident on the steel spar and engine mounts. We felt that this was probably a static display restoration. The same group went to the New Mexico Wing at Hobbs to review the C-45 and the NA-64. The C-45 had not flown in 10 years and was very rough with questions on the legality of both engines. There were also questions about ownership and if the plane was available for reassignment.

After the search started headquarters informed us that the Michigan based AT-11 would be available for assignment. As a result, Julie Smith and Scott Witschger traveled to Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 21,2003 to evaluate the airplane and meet with members of the West Michigan Wing. Both Smith and Witschger had some reservations about what was seen on the

airframe and heard from the wing members. A lack of general aviation experience was evident and it was clear that a lot of work would have to be redone. The lack of participation by FAA A&Ps was also concerning. Initially we were told that the aircraft, while in the Army Air Corps, had been based in Midland. Further investigation however revealed that the aircraft had actually been delivered new to, and was initially based, in Albuquerque. On June 9th, 2003 the wing members were presented with a review of the Michigan AT-11 project and a discussion of what would need to be done next. At that meeting the members decide to move forward with an assignment request for the AT-11.

There was not a lot of time available as 5 other wings had already applied for assignment. Headquarters has a well-defined process for making an application. It is extensive and asks for a lot of preplanning. Scott Witschger prepared the application and it was sent to Headquarters July 20th, 2003.

Preparing the application took a lot of meetings and phone calls to gather information and to identify the initial group of donors and workers. Another key part of the application is to identify a location for the AT-11 during restoration. A lot of preliminary work had been completed assuming we would receive the aircraft. At the time we had friends of the wing at Eclipse Aviation who wanted to help. We met with them and they identified an area within their large hangar at Albuquerque Sunport that we could use to begin work. So, we assumed we were set and ready to go.

In early August 2003 we received a phone call from HQ informing us that we had been awarded the AT-11 but it had to be moved before the end of the year because the hangar lease in Grand Rapids was expiring. Planning for the move began immediately in August 2003. Almost immediately on August 10 we had a mutual agreement with Eclipse Aviation with restrictions.

No Place to call home

As we moved forward Eclipse continued to place more restrictions on what we would be allowed to do in the donated hangar space. Our presence was going to create issues with their manufacturing license that they had not thought through. We could work with all the access control and badging issues but the final requirement that we have no chemicals, paint or dust was not workable for a restoration facility. So, on September 1, 2003 we reluctantly withdrew from the Eclipse arrangement. However, now we had an airplane coming with nowhere to go when it got here. Now we needed a new home and we needed it quickly.

TO BE CONTINUED

A visit from the boss

On Sunday February 4, 2024 Alan Brooks was enroute from California to Dallas and decided to stop by and check out his favorite project. Alan is the Chairmen of the American Air Power Heritage Foundation. This is the foundation that owns all of the aircraft operated and maintained by the CAF. The AT-11 is a project that Alan follows closely and he has been

instrumental in helping us to get a significant amount of money from headquarters to support our project. He had heard about the quality of our work and was happy to finally get to see it personally. Although he was very impressed with our work, he is still looking forward to seeing it fly. Sean and Dave McBride and Scott and Maggy Witschger had a good meeting with Alan. This is the way we become better known at headquarters and garner support for our projects. It always helps to have the Boss in your corner!



Corvette Club Visit

On Saturday April 13 we had a visit from one of the local Corvette clubs. Interestingly there were no classic cars, all attendees were driving newer models. We voted on who had the prettiest engines and the AT-11 R-985 won. Nice group of folks with a lot of interest in the AT.



Elections

Below is the list of officers elected or reelected. One thing you may notice is that only half the officers were elected. This is because CAF regulations require half to be elected one year and the other half to be elected the next year. The theory is that alternating elections allows for overlapping experience.

SLATE of OFFICERS		APPROVED
Wing Leader	Elected	Dave McBride
Executive Officer	Elected	Scott Witschger
Adjutant	Elected	Ralph Crump
Finance	Elected	Maggy Witschger
Operations	Elected	Andy Wells
Maintenance		Brad Hueftle
Safety		Sean McBride
PX		Sara McBride
Development		Korry Tilbury
Education		Vacant

AT-11 Briefing

Right after the publication of the October Chatter we had the opportunity to have Taigh Ramey of Vintage Aircraft visit the Lobo Wing and spend a day reviewing the AT-11. Taigh is considered one of the preeminent authorities on twin Beechcraft so it was great to have him visit. We had specific questions on how some things should be done and if the close tolerance on some items is correct. These included the travel and feel of the engine controls and some control cable clearance issues. We got those questions answered but in addition we were informed of some items that while OK now were going to cause us problems once we got to the maintenance phase. He also pointed out a buckle in one former that came from a hard landing. Not to worry but watch it for cracks in the future.

The big three were;

1. Close up all cockpit openings to the engine compartments and to the fuel tanks. This prevents the inflow of toxic fumes. Scott and Stan Johnson worked on closing up the gaps.



2. The wing roots that we had closed up with fabric, like the original, should be closed with removable panels so they can be removed at annual to check and clean the interior of the wings. Stan Johnson used some hot rod techniques to fabricate really nice cover panels.



3. One of the fire extinguisher tubes was interfering with access to one of the engine oil drains on both engines. Brad Hueftle had to remove a lot of parts all the way to the carbs to get at the extinguisher tubes that had to be replaced or reformed. The problematic fire extinguisher in the photo was old steel tube that was so hard it could not be adjusted to clear the drain. We purchased the correct new tube and Brad has now installed

The new one has everything all buttoned up.

At this point all the minor and major issues have been dealt with and we are moving forward.



ORIGINAL RADIO INSTALLATION

Now that he was done with the wing panels Stan Johnson needed something to do so he installed the cleaned up and refurbished radios.



BOMBARDIER SEAT

The seat is stock original but we are making some modifications. One is to make it easier to remove the seat to gain access to the brake master cylinders. The other is to make a removable back support that follows the adjustment of the seat height. Seems simple but it isn't.

GUN TURRET DOME

Meanwhile Korry Tilbury continued to work on the gun turret dome male buck. This buck is now finished and ready to move off to the next step. I'm working with Carl Scholl at Aero Traders to figure out where we go next.



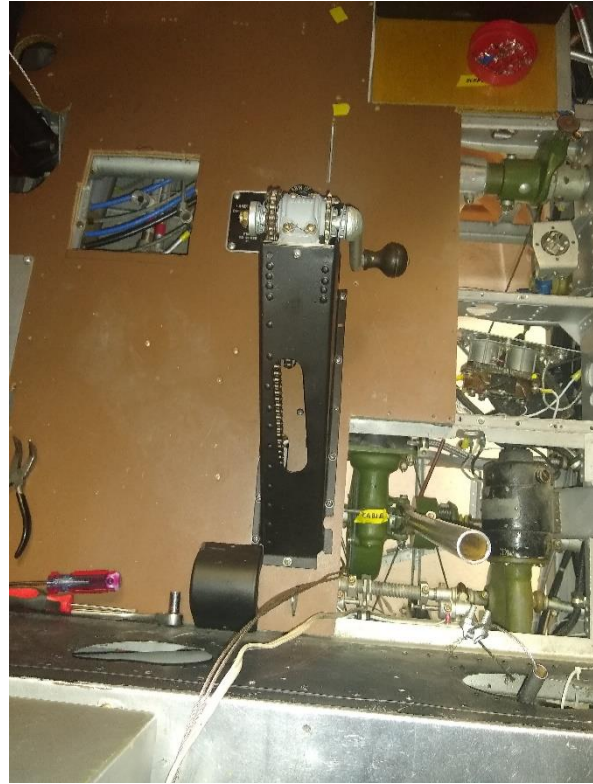
COPILOT YOKE BRACKET

There is a small bracket next to the co-pilot (bombardiers) seat that held the Oxygen pressure adjustment gauge and a bracket for holding back the starboard side control column. We did not have the bracket or the column clamp. William Lothrop fabricated both and John Lacher fitted them to the side panel. It still needs final detail work.

LANDING GEAR DOORS

Recently we have been working on fitting the landing gear doors. This required that we remove the wheels to have any hope of cranking the landing gear up or down manually using the emergency lever, not an easy thing. Things have been more of a challenge than expected but we are getting there.

Finished floor installed with the emergency gear and flap drive so we could manually move the gear.



Gear up and doors closed.



Lobo Wings Gets a New PT-26 Pilot

Col Dan Fernandez recently completed his training in the PT-26 and is now a CAF certified PT-26 pilot. That's Dan in the front seat getting some instruction from Andy Wells.

