COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

LOBO WING CHATTER

October 2021

Wing Leader Briefing by Scott Witschger

The Wing has been making steady progress on our various projects. Sometimes I think that we are just not making progress. But then when I sit down to assemble this newsletter, I realize how much we really get done in a very short period of time. This last quarter was no different. We made major progress on the R-2600 project, moderate progress on the AT-11, kept the PT26 flying and attended the EAA Fly-In. Read on to learn more.

During most normal years we have used the December Christmas Party as our opportunity to hold our officer elections. Due to Covid the party was cancelled last year so we did our unit elections as part of the annual membership renewal drive. Participation was better than expected and we met the necessary voting requirements. So, we are going to do the same process this year. Look for the proposed officer lineup in your membership renewal letter.

The one negative report I must make is that two of our more active members have relocated. Phil and Sharon Nuckles relocated to Colorado to be closer to family.

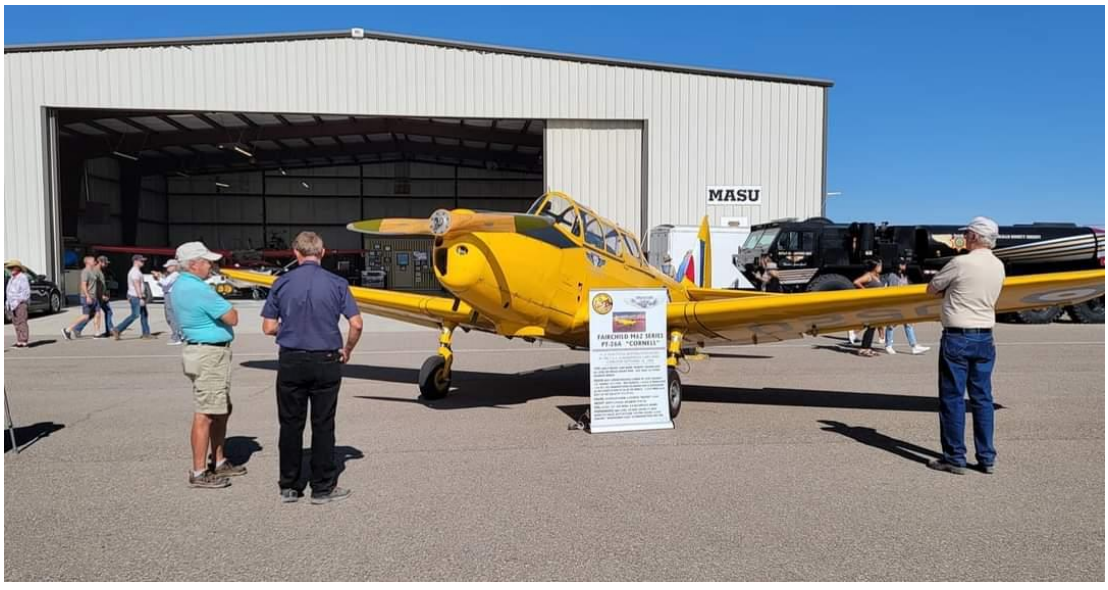
As I have mentioned previously Phil has been my go-to guy for the smaller detailed finish up projects and Sharon has been a huge help on Saturdays with lunch set up and cleanup and bathroom cleaning. But more importantly they have been great ambassadors for the

Lobo Wing. With a background in retail, they used their communications skills to greet everyone who entered the hangar and thanked everyone for coming when they left. If there was a new face Phil would quickly approach them and start his Lobo Wing sales pitch. They integrated in to our airport community quickly and are loved by everyone. They brought a skill set to the Lobo's that we had been missing and will be missed again going forward.

Phil Nuckles was the wing adjutant and that officer position really needs to be available locally. So, Ralph Crump volunteered to fill that position. In accordance with CAF regulations, I appointed him to the position until the next election.

Financial Update by Scott Witschger

On September 25th EAA Chapter 179 hosted its annual Land of Enchantment Fly in at Double Eagle airport. The Lobo Wing attended in force with a full PX and the PT-26. The event did not happen last year and this year it was clear there is a lot of pent-up demand for something to do. The ramp and hangars were packed with families and they had money to spend. We had our best single day PX sales in many years. We took in $1333.50 after deducting purchase cost and Card fees we will clear around $1,000.00. Thanks to everyone who helped out.



Our lunch sales continue to be strong and gross on average around $200.00 per week. We are concerned about cost as recent inflation is rapidly increasing the cost of our supplies. Like most businesses you never know what will happen if you increase the price of your product. The Wing remains in a fairly healthy financial position. We have a small amount remaining in the AT-11 account which I hope is enough to finish. The PT has a small reserve and the general fund will cover upcoming insurance on hangar and both aircraft.

R-2600 Project Briefing

The next phase of the R2600 project was to get the parts delivered to the buyer. The buyer can now be revealed as Carl Scholl, co-owner of AeroTrader in Chino CA. Aero Trader is the largest provider of B-25 parts and restorations in the world. Most of the B-25's still flying are due to Aero Traders huge supply of B-25 parts.

This, as we knew, would be no small task. Some of the parts would be going to the buyer's business in Chino California and some would go to his desert storage yard. With Korry Tilbury once again taking the lead it was decided that the parts could hopefully be moved in two groups. The first would be the three Conex containers with everything we could fit in and the second would be all of the engine storage containers and the larger loose engine components, partial engine cores and engine overhaul equipment.

The first step in the process was to organize parts and to pack the three Conex containers in preparation for shipping. We did a lot of preliminary work and in May Carl Scholl brought 4 employees and another trailer from California to help prep for stage one. The Aero Trader team came well prepared, it was clear they do this fairly often. It took two days for the containers to be prepped in absolutely miserable conditions in a howling wind. Picture above is a professionally packed container. All of the cylinders were removed from one of the trailers and loaded into the containers. To the left are the two trailers we are retaining for storage.

It took some time to schedule the trucks and crane. So, the loading took place about three weeks later. The crane to load the containers and the trucks were sourced locally by Pat Maloy at Maloy Storage. I have to say that the loading process was a little scary at times.

The drivers and crane operator were experienced local professionals so everything went smoothly. All containers arrived safely in Chino California the next day.

In August we started Phase 2. All of the engine containers were repacked to load as many of the remaining engine parts as possible. Aero Trader arranged for a single flatbed truck to pick up the remaining parts. Unfortunately, the trailer was not what was expected so we were not able to load it all. Here you see some of the repacked containers and the packed truck ready to go. It is our understanding that this entire load went to the desert storage facility.

Unfortunately, there will be a phase three to remove the remaining engine parts and one core. Pictured is all that remains. The core is a R2600-3 which is a rare version. We negotiated to keep one mostly complete R2600-20 from a TBM to use as a future museum display. It is stored in one of the trailers along with a partial Ranger 440 and parts of a R-985 that will both be future displays (we hope).

AT-11 Project Update by Scott Witschger

The cowlings stored in Chandler have been transported to Moriarty and we went through all our cowls and picked the best set we have. There is a lot of work to get these cowls ready for paint and installation. We count at least three layers of paint. These cowls are ½ inch shorter than the AT-11 cowls and should provide the clearance we need for the feathering propellers. We have also learned that the early AT-11 had no vent holes in the cowl but later models had various numbers of vents to help with engine cooling.

We now have all good parts for both fuel strainers and they are installed in the aircraft.

The cockpit windshield frames are fitted and are in the booth ready for paint.

Larry hard at work finalizing the Intercom wiring. Before Larry started back in on the Intercom he made a full set of rigging jigs for the rudder, elevator, aileron and flaps. This will make rigging a snap and provide the accuracy we would like to have.

In our quest for originality, we are installing the two original student seats on bulkhead 9. Unfortunately, original parts don't exist. But in this case we have the blueprints so we made them from scratch. Tom Thompson took on the task and used his skills and contacts to make these beautiful replicas. Not shown are the nicely finished plywood base inserts. Seat cushions will be fabricated along with the rest of the seats. We

are reinforcing bulkhead 9 to account for the heft of modern passengers but, that is all being done on the back side hidden from view.

Ralph continues to turn our difficult to use hardware inventory into a fully documented and organized piece of art. No more 30-minute searches for that one fastener.

Tom is also working on a non-stock set of seats that we are considering mounting in the cabin to allow us to have more seating options and to hopefully make it possible to fly the plane profitably. These seats came from the trove of parts we got from the gentleman in Chicago and are FAA approved 9G seats from a Twin Beech. We are evaluating mounting them just aft of the bomb doors so they will have a view out the side windows. Standby.

And finally, the tail cone has had final fitting and installation along with the horizontal stabilizer fairings. Other than final rigging the tail is close to being a wrap.

Every summer we see a slowdown in work accomplished because many of our workers are off doing their own thing. Taking trips to visit friends and the ever-popular grandchildren visit. This year we were further slowed done by the work being done with the R-2600 parts. I look forward to everyone being back and progress picking up again. Thank goodness for a heated hangar.

Over the years I have found that it can take weeks to months to find and acquire some parts, and in our quest for authenticity we end up fabricating a lot of parts which takes additional time.

As we reach the end of this restoration, we are experiencing delays that are caused by our inability to get parts in a timely manner. When this happens, we are redirecting our efforts to other areas but they tend to be ones that are not needed in order to make the aircraft fly. This issue is mostly caused by our inexperience with this aircraft and its low serial number. We often don't know we need something until we get there and find we are missing a

component that we did not even know we needed. Typical of most restorations we also have to disassemble previously completed items in order to finish up a certain area. Not unexpected but frustrating never the less.

In the case of a twin beech about 80 percent of the work takes place from one engine across the plane to the other engine. This area is packed solid with motors, switches, relays, tubing, wiring and cables. Until this area under the cockpit floor and running out into the wing stubs is pristine the wing stub skins and the cockpit floorboards cannot be reinstalled. We have seen the airplane sit in this condition for years and we are getting impatient to see this area finished. But we need to ensure that we are not tempted to cut corners at this late date. I want a safe and long flying aircraft. This area will be inspected several times by various experienced individuals to ensure we don't miss anything. Then, final assembly will at long last proceed.

PT-26 Update

Great news! Mitch Wainwright has been approved to start training to be a pilot in the PT-26. Mitch recently received his tailwheel certification just so he could be a qualified pilot in the PT. We're looking forward to adding Mitch to our pilot cadre!

Now for the rest of the story. Unfortunately, the PT-26 is going through some unscheduled maintenance which will delay the start of Mitch's training. As some of you may know the PT has had a chronic tailwheel shimmy over the years. Just when we think we've conquered it the problem crops up again. We've expended a lot of time and money chasing this issue and now we have to address it again. Scott Ruyle, Chuck Swanberg and Billy Lothrop have taken on this project and are doing some research to come up with a successful solution, hopefully soon.

Questions or comments about Lobo Chatter should be directed to:

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