



COWL FLAPS

For Members of the Gulf Coast Wing—CAF



IMPORTANT DATES

- **SATURDAY, JUN 12**
0900hrs—Staff Meeting
1030hrs—Wing Meeting
1200hrs—Potluck Lunch
1300hrs—NEW MEMBERS Session at TJC
1400hrs—Loading Class
- **SATURDAY, JUL 10**
0900hrs—Staff Meeting
1030hrs—Wing Meeting
1200hrs—Potluck Lunch
1300hrs—Loading and Tie-Down Class at TJC Hangar
- **SAT & SUN JUN 19-20**
TORA - AT Tinker AFB
JUN 26-27—Davenport IA

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Volume III Issue VI

JUNE 10, 2010

Our Rememberance on Memorial Day

HOUSTON, TX—A lucky group of passengers, in a last minute arrangement, were able to purchase a ride on TEXAS RAIDERS as we paid tribute in remembering the veterans who have served our country Memorial Day, 2010. The experience for these passengers pictured to the right (two different families) was duly memora-



ble as we disbursed the ashes of our friend and former wing member, Col Royce Mills. It was indeed special for our four crew members, Col Ole Nygren, Col Ken Hyman, Col Wayne Kennedy and Col Bob Linquiti who served as honor guards for Col Royce at his funeral this year.

If we take these special experiences, and couple it with another, we have what Col Allen Turk would call "awesome." Col Turk has been a CAF member for some time, but had not joined any unit. After joining the Gulf



Col Mills was a frequent member at the Hobby Hangar in 2009



Coast Wing, he was given an opportunity to fly on TEXAS RAIDERS on the 31st of May, when an open seat became available at the last minute. Now that we've corralled him into the Gulf Coast Wing, and put him to work upon arrival at TJC, we think he just might stick around for a while. It was a great memorable, Memorial Day event for passengers and crew alike.



FROM THE WING LEADER

MISSION READY

Gulf Coast Wing thanks our Maintenance Team for making TEXAS RAIDERS ready for our Memorial Day missions. The missions were multiple that day. It took a lot of effort to make this happen and the Maintenance folks have earned a salute from all of us.

All in one morning, TR flew a dedication for a War Memorial over Friendswood, made a revenue ride, and qualified a new Flight Engineer (Col Stan Turner) and a new Load Master (Col Bob Linguiti.) And it was Gulf Coast Wing's honor to spread the ashes of Col Royce Mills in flight. Royce was a longtime CAF member who retired from a twenty year career in the USAF. I first met Royce at ER-7 when he would show up late on Saturday afternoons and help however he could. What better day to perform this sad, but honorable duty than on Memorial Day. Fair tailwinds, Col Mills.

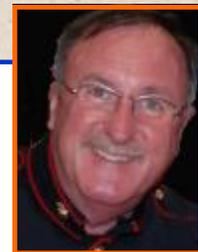
As we fly more missions we are learning what we need to do to insure that the Wing is training properly qualified FEs and LMs. As a result we have decided that it is best to have the trainee make a complete flight, from pre-flight to shut-down with an experienced crew member in order to be Mission Qualified. This may take a little more time for everyone to get through the process, but it will make for safer crews who are more professional and Mission Ready in the truest sense of the word. There are plenty of tasks to accomplish, both with crew qualifications and maintenance objectives before we make the trip to OshKosh and Thunder Over Michigan this summer.

The Wing will be hiring some work out on the hydraulic system that we need to have done by experienced tubing specialists. The never-ending battle of the radios is...never-ending. There are machine gun chutes and ammunition belts to be installed and various other accoutrements that will make TEXAS RAIDERS the proper tribute to the role all B17s played in combat. So don't feel like you have to be a certified A&P mechanic to come make a contribution to the effort. There are many new faces because a lot of new folks have joined since our move to Hooks. That puts a lot of pressure on the old guard to make certain that things get done to FAA and CAF standards. And it will take some patience from our new members while we get them integrated into the Wing. As a result we are going to write up a brochure for new members. We expect everyone's cooperation in this.

These are exciting times for the CAF and the Gulf Coast Wing, so come on down to the hangar and get involved.

Col Don Price—Wing Leader Gulf Coast Wing

EXECUTIVE OFFICER, Col Wayne Kennedy



Fellow Colonels,

As you know, May was a month for us that consisted of highs and lows. Certainly we had many highs consisting of Aeros & Autos, and Our Memorial Day Mission. For those of us who have been around long enough - we experienced our low by losing a very dear friend - Col H.M. Hancock. When I joined the Gulf Coast Wing in 1994, H.M. was our Bomber Ops Officer. As I grew to know him, I found out that he and his loving bride, Frances, were and are the most loving and respected people that I will ever know. You would always see them working under the wing of TR at any and every air show or stop that TR made. I considered them, in a sense, the parents that every one would love to have. After H.M. and Frances retired from operating with TR, H.M. asked me if I would be willing to buy their David Clark headsets, of which I eagerly accepted. Every time that I will have the opportunity to fly in TR, I will be wearing H.M.'s headset and his spirit will always fly crew with us. Frances, please come out to the hangar and join us. We miss you and want you to know that our hearts, our thoughts and our prayers are with you and your family. And should you want to fly with us again, your headset will be waiting for you. We love you Frances.

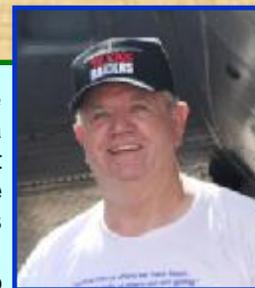
On Memorial Day, part of our mission consisted of disbursing the ashes of SMGT Royce Mills. Col Bob Linguiti had the distinguished honor of disbursing Royce's ashes via the tail gun area. Larry & Debbie Bristow (Royce's daughter & son-in-law) were kept in constant contact by me to let them know of the event. Larry & Debbie - I just want to let you know that we appreciate the honor of having Royce fly with us on Memorial Day. His spirit will always fly with us.

On a final note, I have set up and posted the Gulf Coast Wing sign in / sign out sheet, posted on a clip board to the right of the entry that connects the hangar to the triangle room. Please remember to sign in and sign out as we did at Hobby when you are at the hangar.

May the month of June bring us all happiness, health and certainly lots of opportunities to meet and support "Texas Raiders".

Semper Fi, *Wayne F. Kennedy*

Maintenance Officer's Report



As most of you know TR flew three times Memorial Day and the crew said she had never flown better !!! The problem with that situation is, it gives one a false sense of security that all is well or putting it another way, don't fix what isn't broke. The sad truth is (as with any machine) that parts wear out and have to be replaced, sometimes with warning—sometimes not. Knowing that fact, many years ago someone came up with the great idea of PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE. Sounds good but what does it mean? After all...a crystal ball doesn't really exist, so what are we trying to prevent from happening? How do we determine what to do and when to do it?. The name says *Preventive Maintenance* so does that mean we are going to do something now so we don't have to do something later? What's the point of that? Maybe I'd rather wait till later to do whatever. Confusing? Not really. You see the idea of preventive maintenance is to do something now that will cut the odds way down that something dreadful and very costly won't happen because you prevented it by doing something not so costly now. An example would be flushing your cooling system in your car before Winter, the new coolant at the correct mix for your area will prevent the engine from freezing and cracking the engine block (very costly). The old coolant does not have the protection needed after a couple years. Another example would be cleaning the coils on your refrigerator. They get completely clogged up and when they do it forces the compressor to work twice as hard to maintain the temp you selected for the interior of the fridge. This in turn shortens the life span of the compressor as much as half or more. Spending less than an hour cleaning the coils could save a thousand dollars.

So now back to TR —we are doing as much preventive maintenance now before the long trip, so we won't have to spend hours and days working on her during the trip. This is not to say that something won't break, but we will have cut the odds way down in our favor.

On another note, it is with much pride that I want to inform you that our very own Terry Fogelson has been asked to go to Midland and help out with the sheet-metal work on the CAF's B-29 to help get her ready for OshKosh. Terry will leave Monday June 7 and return in a week or so.....Kudo's to Col. Fogelson.

Col. Chuck Conway
GCW. Maintenance Officer

PX News & Info

In April, I took the PX to my first out-of-town air show with Texas Raiders. While we had a few snags with the PX, we ended up with very impressive total proceeds of **\$1,592.00**. WooHoo! And fun was had by all!

Believe it or not, we are already starting to prepare the PX for Wings Over Houston, as well as other events coming up this summer! So, start considering whether you'd like to volunteer to help out with the PX this year. For those of you who do work the PX booths, there are some important things to remember:

1. Crew members must remember that the merchandise carried in the PX has been paid for and, therefore, is to be protected at all times.
2. The PX merchandise should be unpacked carefully and displayed in an attractive manner. At the end of the day, merchandise must be carefully and neatly packed into the bins. Remember...you will be displaying this merchandise again!
3. Only CAF/GCW members are allowed to handle the money.
4. You are expected to work the entire shift for which you volunteered.
5. You are expected to present a professional image when working the PX. We ask that you wear clothing (uniform) that represents the CAF and Gulf Coast Wing.



Please contact the PX Officer (at px@gulfcoastwing.org) if you have any questions, or would like more information on volunteering with the PX.

Col. Vicki Thomas
Commemorative Air Force
Gulf Coast Wing - PX Officer
281.620.5639 (cell)
281.303-8008 (home)

Design-A-Sign Results

With fifteen entries before them, the panel of judges (Col Don Outler, Con Van Skiles and Col Sandy Thompson) poured over the numbered entries, unaware of their corresponding artists. The judges were looking for impact, balance and visual "TR" appeal. The results are below:

1st Place Winner: Artist—Col Jack Amuny



Col Bud Bearce, GCW Supply Officer and Contest Organizer

We'd like to thank Peter Green, Jerry Casey, Bud Bearce, Larry Doucette, Winfield Salter, Jack Amuny and Bill Silverman for their creative and artistic entries. Some artists submitted more than one entry and that made the selection process more interesting. Thanks for the great response to our request for designs. The printing of the sign is now being organized through competitive bids, which must comply with sign-dimensions and material-requirements. The finished sign will be displayed outside Tomball Jet Center on the east side of the FBO.

Flying the P-61 Night-Fighter over the Apennines in WWII

I knew that one of our B-17 crew members had a WWII combat story that rivaled a scene out of a major film production, so I asked if he would share his experience with us. Col Ky Putnam, a Lifemember of the CAF and a Gulf Coast Wing member for over twenty years describes his WWII experience as a P-61 pilot in the Army Air Corps:

They said I'd have to go to college for four years to join the US Army Air Corps, but within three semesters, I was told I had to go now." said Ky Putnam, a 21 year old recruit who just wanted to join in the European war efforts, like so many young men at that time. It was 1943 and WWII was fiercely underway as the Germans and Fascists waged war against the

against the Allied forces in Italy. Recruit Putnam trained in several places: his primary training was at Wickenburg Field in Wickenburg, Arizona, and single-engine advanced (AT-6) in Phoenix at Luke Field. Basic training (BT-13) found him in Lancaster, California. "After that we



graduated to twin engine transition" says Ky. The war efforts required many pilots to be as proficient as possible flying bombers, but a new high-powered twin-engine, twin-boom "hunter/killer" radar-equipped airplane was on the production line to be entered into the war effort in 1944, and Ky Putnam was destined to fly what we now know as the P-61 *BLACK WIDOW*, a night fighter with bombing capabilities. The P-61 was initially built



with radar to follow aircraft at night, and soon was equipped with *continued page 5*

P-61 Night Fighter continued from page 5

more powerful 2000 hp engines. Ky Putnam saw this as something he wanted to fly, and he readily volunteered. He trained on A-20s (which at that time were known as P-70s) and were also used in training as Night-Fighters. Next up...Ky was introduced to the YP-P61. As Ky puts it...."They wanted us to fly 'em, and figure out what was wrong...then they'd make the corrections afterward."



Example of P-61 NIGHT FIGHTER

The P-61 three-man crews were used in the Pacific Theatre, but for what was needed in Europe, two-men crews were the norm. "My radar operator was a fellow by the name of Johnny Marunovich, a Hungarian by descent (which would come to be pretty beneficial later on). He trained in Florida and I trained in California, then we trained together in California."

"They wanted us to fly 'em and figure out what was wrong...then they'd make the corrections afterward"

*Note: The P-61, is a twin-engine, powerful combat aircraft, equipped with four 20mm Hispano M2 forward firing cannons, mounted on the lower fuselage, and four Browning M2 50 caliber machine guns. Two Pratt & Whitney R2800-25S Double Wasp radial engines were mounted out on each wing. It had a 400 mph top speed (which according to Ky was a "Power-Pull") with a 40,000 ft service ceiling. With a a 66-foot wingspan and up to 22,600 lb full load weight it was huge for a fighter. Therefore it was dubbed **The Night Fighter, Black Widow** because it was routinely black and was flown at night to attack enemy targets. SCR-720A radar had a range of approximately five miles.*

Ky's first P-61 was named **WILLING WIDOW #1** and he was stationed initially in Pontedera (near Pisa), Italy. His Squadron, was the 414th 9th Fighter Squadron. Because missions were conducted at night, these squadrons were therefore known as NFS or Night-Fighter-Squadrons.

Throughout various missions, Ky and Johnny were assigned targets along the Po River in northern Italy, which ran east and west, south of Milano.

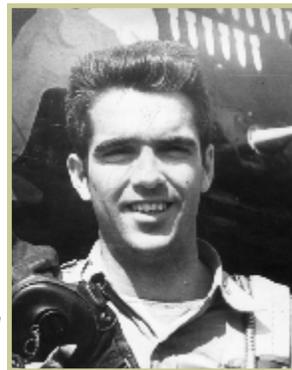
During one mission, Ky and Johnny were looking for a

target along the Po River. They saw one which happened to be a train, so they tried to strafe the train...and as Ky says..."We weren't experienced bombardiers to begin with, so when we flew down over the target, they (enemy) shot up a flare. Guns started shooting and we flew through the smoke from the train engines. I told Johnny ' I'll go for it and drop a bomb on 'em'.

Well, as a rule of thumb you were supposed to have an altitude of a foot for every pound of bomb weight, but let's just say I didn't meet those standards. There was a terrible explosion, and I tried to climb up to 9,000 feet, but because of the explosion, some of my instruments were not working. Johnny was in the back and said 'You tell me if I need to bail out.' I told him we would turn back and try to gain more altitude.

Well, nothing seemed to be working right and it was time to jump. Johnny bailed out then I jumped. I landed on the side of a mountain (Apennines) into the snow. I could see the explosion of the aircraft reflecting off an adjacent mountain. It was cold, and I knew I had to go south to reach base...it was probably 150 miles. My primary thought was 'I'm gonna freeze to death', so I walked to a shed near a house and tried to keep warm, but couldn't. Finally, family members came out from the house and one was pointing an old rusty gun at me. They looked at me, still in my uniform, and being extremely poor, they thought they could find some value in my uniform and parachute with its fabric, lines and harness. You see, the residents living on the side of the mountain were trying to escape the Fascists in the flatlands and were nearly destitute...they didn't have access to many supplies or necessities. So I took them to my chute. I guess they considered this kindness, and after two days, they decided to return my clothes and let me leave.

I started down the mountain and back to the burnt remains of Willing Widow #1. There, I saw a figure with a stick poking around the charred pieces of metal. I shouted 'What are you doing?' It was Johnny. He said 'I was looking for your bones!' He had been hiding under a bridge nearby and cautioned me that we were being watched. And we were...by a group of displaced refugees from various countries (mostly Italian & Hungarian)...folks who were politically oppressed, somewhat mean and very poor. They took us back to the top of the mountain (about 8,000 ft) where they put us in a room and held a meeting nearby. We were to topic of conversation, but what they didn't realize is that Johnny, who had a Hungarian background, understood the language. He said 'They think our brass is gold, and we're in trouble. They're either gonna shoot us, take our escape kits for ransom money or sell us to the Fascists.' Well they talked about us into the night but the next morning shooting broke out all over the place and they shouted to us to RUN! We were dog-tired but we ran. During the next two tiresome days we came across a few more groups of displaced countrymen, along with one very strange fellow who wanted to tag along with us. He was a German SS Officer in full uniform, but we couldn't

Johnny, Biggs & Putnam 1945
(Radar Operator, Mechanic & Pilot)

P-61 NIGHT FIGHTER continued from page 5

pronounce his name, so we called him Carl.

Well, Carl was a non-stop talker. We could barely communicate with him, but as we walked along, Carl would stop and talk to the residents of the villages and would refer to Johnny and me as *pepoe* (we thought he was saying **people**). It wasn't until sixty years later that I found out what *pepoe* meant to the locals (*one who flies the plane at night and fires into the countryside*). The residents would always get huffy when hearing the word *pepoe*. One thing

was becoming clear...we couldn't afford to have Carl travel with us causing a disturbance, so Johnny said 'We're gonna have to shoot him!' Well, I had to think about that. When we'd try to get Carl to leave us, he'd break down and cry. This was becoming a big nuisance, so now we were looking at alternatives. Just when we thought we had no other course to take (but to shoot him), we met up with another group: missionaries and the OSS (now known as the CIA).

One of the missionaries, a Brit, asked us 'Where are you going? and What's with the would-be-German? Is he giving you any trouble?' We told him we were just trying to get back to our base, then we mentioned the *pepoe* comments Carl was making. With that said, the Brit told us 'We'll take care of him', and we never saw Carl again.

The Brit introduced us to some guides who would get us through the towns and across the lines back to our base. Of the eight people in our group, four were South Africans who definitely knew how to stay alive. They took one look at Johnny's boots which were deteriorated since he had refused to wear the standard combat type boots and wore only the fleece type with oxfords. Trekking through the snow up and down the mountain had left his boots in shreds. The South Africans somehow managed to get him a pair of the right sized combat boots so he could manage the trip to the base. It had taken us three weeks to get across the mountains and through the lines but we made it.



Ky & Fellow Aviators, 1945

I never had a problem with Willing Widow #2 and never had to bail out again, since I had learned a lot about flying, strafing and bombing.

We took our aircraft from Italy to China, then it was decided that our squadron would be sent to the Philippines. As we crossed Gibraltar, the Hiroshima Bomb was dropped and a couple of days later Nagasaki occurred. As a result, the war was coming to an end...so we never made it to the Philippines. Instead they turned us around and sent us to New York. I didn't exactly retire; I just decided it was time to leave, so I resigned.

I've stayed in touch with Johnny all these years and visited him and his wife in Aberdeen Washington. He passed away in 2007. Our squadron members used to have reunions, but we don't anymore; there just aren't enough of us left.

I've been working on TEXAS RAIDERS for a long time now. Our move to Hobby Airport in 2002 was probably not the best choice and we should have considered other options. We've complied with the AD and have found other problems, but have corrected them. Now that we are finished with most of these maintenance projects and have her flying, I'll say this: This airplane will be flying twenty years from now and other B-17s won't. With what we've done so far, we won't have a part-failure. And that can be satisfying."



Col Ky Putnam volunteers in the TEXAS RAIDERS maintenance project and is a Team Leader on the Wright R-1820 engines. He is also a Gulf Coast Wing Staff member, serving a term as Safety Officer.



Ky and his wife, Anna Ruth, (who also is a Gulf Coast Wing member) are frequent guests at wing social functions and meetings. When meeting Ky, remember that you are speaking with a veteran NIGHT FIGHTER Black Widow Pilot. He can fill you in on

the rest!

The above article was originally published in April, 2008, by Col Sandy Thompson, GCW Public Information Officer, and is reprinted here for those who may not have been a wing member at that time, or for those who admire Ky's service and want to read the story of his P-61 NIGHT FIGHTER days again.

CALL FOR SERVICE STORIES

If you have served our country in any war time or peace time era and have an interesting story for our wing members, please let me hear from you. I can set aside a few hours, write as fast as I can, and scan your military photos for publishing. Your children or grandchildren would be interested in reading your story as well.

Sandy Thompson, Gulf Coast Wing CAF—Public Information Officer thompsonb17@uwmail.com or 817 341 1541 home or 817 304 0393



B-17 TOUR TIPS

Much work still lies ahead for us in flight operations, even with TEXAS RAIDERS flying. There are pilots who have yet to be checked-off into current B-17 flying status, IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) currency, and continuing crew member training. We have an aggressive summer tour lined up through Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Tennessee and the bids for these trips are coming in. Review the Tour Data below, and if you have the time and skills to join us on the tour, we will welcome your assistance. Once we leave the Houston area, all crew

members will be expected to help in all phases of the tour, since it takes teamwork to make the tour successful.

B-17 Operations Update

TO: All "TR" Crew Members

Details of Subject Tour have been finalized as follows:

DATE	LEAVE	ARRIVE	EVENT
23JUL	DWH	TIP (Rantoul, ILL Champaign/Urbana)	Tours, Rev Rides, Chanute Air Museum
27JUL	TIP	OSH	EAA Air Venture / Tours, Air Show Flying, 28, 30JUL
01AUG	OSH	AZO (Kalamazoo)	Tours, Rev Rides, Air Zoo Museum
05AUG	AZO	YIP (Yipsilanti, MI Willow Run A/P)	Thunder Over Michigan / Tours, Air Show Flying, Gathering of B-17s
09AUG	YIP	BNA (Nashville, TN)	381st BG Annual Reunion / Tours, Rev Rides, Reception for 381st BG Atlantic Aviation FBO
13AUG	BNA	DWH	Return to Home Base

1. Non-pilot crew members, please submit your request for assignment not later than 20JUN (Sunday) Crew members may bid for assignment to all or part of the schedule. Pilots bid under a separate process.
2. UNIFORMS: Two different uniforms are required for this assignment: (a) Nomex flight suit with CAF (Commemorative Air Force) and American flag patches, and leather name patch. NO Confederate AF patches while on duty. (b) Red crew polo shirt with name tag or embroidery, and dark "bottoms".
3. Crew members joining or leaving the aircraft after it leaves Home Base are responsible for their own travel to/from home.
4. Assigned crew members will be provided with hotel (double occupancy) and local transportation. All other expenses are the responsibility of crew member.
5. Crew Assignments made in accordance with Gulf Coast Wing Operations Manual.
6. Note: Wing members who elect to attend any portion of this tour on their own are welcomed to do so but with the understanding that lodging and ground-transportation are at your own expense. If you elect to volunteer/work around the airplane, you must be in proper uniform.

Walt Thompson, B-17 Operations Officer
Gulf Coast Wing



WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

OCT 23—OCT 24 2010

Col Sandy Thompson
Gulf Coast Wing—CAF
Public Information Officer
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Weatherford, TX 76088-6402

Phone 817 341 1541
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If you've received this newsletter by mistake, but you are happy with what you see, please feel free to contact any one of us listed in this document, to join our group. The Commemorative Air Force is dedicated to the educational preservation in flying condition of WWII and combat aircraft. Our mission extols the sacrifice made by veterans from all wars who have helped us live in freedom.



Gulf Coast Wing
Of The
Commemorative Air Force

COWL FLAPS

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Morale Officer.....	Col Suzie Bredlau.....	rikkysue@aol.com	281 398 6977
Development Ofcr...	Col Don Outler.....	djoutler@comcast.net	281 486 1830
Gulf Coast Wing Hangar is located at 9310 Max Conrad Drive, Spring TX 77379			
Volunteers and wing members are dedicated to the preservation in flying status of WWII aircraft which include the TORA fleet and the B-17, TEXAS RAIDERS. Interested parties are encouraged to visit, volunteer and, of course, <u>join</u> our organization. CAF memberships with full-voting privileges are \$200/year. Supporting/Associate memberships provide benefits without voting privileges and are \$55/year (effective 03/01/08). Cadet memberships for ages 13-23 are \$45/year. Membership forms are found on our website at www.gulfcoastwing.org			



Col Sandy Thompson
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