



# COWL FLAPS

For Members of the Gulf Coast Wing—CAF



## IMPORTANT DATES

- **SATURDAY, AUG 21**  
0900hrs—Staff Meeting  
1030hrs—Wing Meeting  
1200hrs—Potluck Lunch  
1300hrs—Work on TR
- **SATURDAY, SEP 11**  
0900hrs—Staff Meeting  
1030hrs—Wing Meeting  
1200hrs—Potluck Lunch  
1300hrs—Work at TJC Hangar
- **AUG 21 & 22 TORA -**  
Westfield MA  
**SEP 11 & 12 —**Scott AFB  
Belleville, IL

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Volume III Issue VII

AUGUST 18, 2010

## Flying Fortress Parade



YPSILANTI, MI — As rare a sight as it can be, Col Kevin Hong captured this line up of eight B-17s early Friday morning, August 6th at Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti. Rarely will you find a sight such as this. Our 2010 summer tour took us from Chanute Air Museum in Rantoul, Illinois up through Osh Kosh, Wisconsin, in to Kalamazoo, Michigan then on to Ypsilanti for this event of *Thunder Over Michigan*. Our final stop was in Nashville, Tennessee where we helped celebrate the 381st Bomb Group's annual Reunion. It was fun...it was grueling at times...it was so rewarding....and it was a time to see what we as a team could accomplish in generating our mission of education for the public. We too were likewise educated, when meeting the veterans and families who came out to see us at several of our tour stops.

Touring with a B-17 is more than just flying from city to city meeting folks. It is tough at times, sweating like you've never perspired before, yet there is a undefined feeling of accomplishment when you pull into a station, hear the cheering and clapping of the crowd (as we did at Harrison, Arkansas and Kalamazoo, Michigan), little children asking for your autograph, or posing for a picture with a couple of visitors. Some



Arrival at Air Zoo— Kalamazoo, MI



folks drove four or more hours just to get a chance to see this B-17.

Our tour this summer was very special in that it had been eight and a half years since TEXAS RAIDERS had set out on an extended tour. Upon departing Tomball Jet Center, July

23rd just two of our crew members, had ever stayed on tour ...continued on page 4



## TEXAS RAIDERS on TOUR—Summer 2010

### Written at various stops and stages.

It is late on the last night we are staying at Kalamazoo, Michigan. A little more than half of our first long tour is complete. I have seen our road warriors at their best and smelled them at their worst. We were treated like royalty at Chanute Air Museum and like paupers at Oshkosh. Conversely TEXAS RAIDERS was the flagship for the CAF at Oshkosh and the Wing got some excellent exposure for the entire CAF at Air Venture.

I have a new list of favorite moments in the CAF and a list of not so favorite moments. I have withstood visits from the FAA on the Wing's behalf and I appreciate the FAA's concerns. As of now I have to say they have been sympathetic to

our dilemma(s). And I thank them for that.

We have a problem with some tape peeling off the rudder, but the folks at EAA Oshkosh's fabric workshop have provided supplies and Ron Dietes and I have been up and down the ladder multiple times getting us ready to complete our missions. The FAA-FSDO has said he is satisfied with our repair as a temporary solution, but we are going to have to address the issue upon return to Houston.

Chief among my disappointments is that a good portion of us cannot be present at Cindy Conway's Memorial service. Chuck's wife passed suddenly and it has shocked and saddened us beyond words. I thank all of the Wing members who are able to be there for Chuck while we on the road are not.

Our next stop is Thunder Over Michigan. It is GCW's honor to be one of eight B17s present. We are all missing home but the memories being made are simply priceless.

CONTINUED



New favorite moments are: seeing three other B-17s circling around Warbird Island at Osh Kosh waiting to make their Airshow pass. Sadly almost everything else at Oshkosh seems to fall into the hardship column.

The young lady floor manager at Kalamazoo Air Zoo who was selected by her managers to help fill out a revenue ride announcing that this was her "first airplane ride of any kind... ever!" The smile on her face was unforgettable.

Upon arrival at Willow Run we had a "revoltin' development." A screw on the left landing gear micro-switch was broken, which allowed the landing gear motor to run longer than called for, which burned out the internal clutches. An un-named company that is engaged in "delicate" flight operations opened their hearts, tool chests and machine shop to help fix that problem.

Ron Dietes went above and beyond at that point. Sadly a maintenance flight pointed out that our motor clutches were kaput. Then Yankee Air Museum's Norm Ellickson loaned us their hangar and jacks and tools to tackle the motor replacement task. THEN YANKEE LADY suffered a prop governor malfunction and THEY wound up changing that out on a hot ramp, while we occupied their comfortable hangar. Curt Rowe and David Carr and his dad showed up and helped Ron Dietes and others with the repair. About that time the Maintenance Team thought we had trashed the jack-screw. The future looked grim and we were faced with pinning the gear in the down position and flying home on a Ferry Permit. We even started sending some folks home because we could only fly with a minimal crew under those circumstances.

Then more experienced hands stepped in and saved the rest of tour. Larry Pederson from Sentimental Journey (Airzona Wing) and Tim Burgoine from Liberty Belle (Liberty Foundation) tutored us through some delicate trouble shooting and adjustments and with a loaner Gear Motor from SJ we were signed off and good to fly. We thought... *continued page 3*



*continued from page 2*

Back to favorite moments... The Friday Photo Flight at Thunder Over Michigan was special because of the images burned into my memory and the fact that David Carr was aboard for that flight.

Meeting and talking with other B17 operators was a valuable experience. Don Brooks (owner) and Ray Fowler (Flight Ops. Manager) for Liberty Belle were open and forthcoming about how things worked with their Foundation and some of the other B17 groups they had experience with. It made the "bar-stool flying" exceptionally worthwhile.

Just when it looked like nothing but blue skies the FAA-FSDO at Willow Run stepped in and did a dreaded ramp check. They decided NONE of our paperwork was cor-



rect and we were not leaving their fine airport until that had been rectified. Our registration was a Xerox copy of a "good for 30 days" temporary certificate dated 1992 and they later discovered it was the wrong serial number. Our Airworthy Certificate was NOT the proper pink copy. I cannot remember what they didn't like about our Operating Limitations, but whatever it was it MUST have been heinous, insidious and just not right!

They also didn't like the FORM 337s relating to our exhaust modifications, but bless their hearts they re-wrote them to their satisfaction in their office and proceeded to field approve them on the spot. Unfortunately it took a day and a half for Oklahoma City's FAA- Office of Registration to issue a new Registration for TR. During that time I got on a first name basis with the folks at the Detroit FSDO and even they were beginning to feel sympathy for our NON-Flight-worthy plight. But after we had twisted in the breeze long enough relief appeared on the FAX machine and we were on our way to Nashville.

The 381<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group re-union was the perfect last stop. That is not to say everything went perfectly, because we got a rain that kept the veterans off the ramp during our reception at the airport. But the chance to meet and thank the flesh and blood we honor with the Triangle L and a chance to hear their stories and pay them our heart-felt respect was a highlight of the trip. Doc Hecker and his brother have set up the Hecker Brothers Fund within the 381<sup>st</sup> to honor their Father and two Uncles who served in various units and capacities during WWII, including the 381<sup>st</sup> BG. It is a link between the 381<sup>st</sup> Association and TEXAS RAIDERS to help fund keeping TR flying well into the future.

Upon our return home, Friday August 13<sup>th</sup> Ken Hyman and Chris Williams helped us put TR to bed. Ken asked the 64 thousand dollar question, "Did I consider the trip a success?"

Unequivocally YES! All of the problems with the airplane would have showed up later and in the case of the landing gear it was BEST they showed up sooner. Walt pointed out that what better place to have a problem than a Gathering of Fortresses where we had expertise like Pederson and Burgoine available to us?

TEXAS RAIDERS was the flagship for the CAF at both Oshkosh and Thunder and was appreciated by HQ as such. Whether by pure dumb luck or Divine Providence TEXAS RAIDERS was at the head of the line of the eight B17s at Thunder and appears at the front of EVERY photographer's photos who used the scissors lift provided at the show. The fact that we had an additional CAF sign at her nose helped the cause of marketing the CAF. And in the success column was the money we made that will help to correct those problems we identified. I will let your Staff members give their figures in next month's COWL FLAPS, but we came out WAY AHEAD and looking back at it... we could not afford NOT TO GO!

So to wrap this up... It is natural for us to expect service above and beyond from our pilots, SICs, and Staff members and they delivered! Walt, Buddy, Ken, Dean, Ole, Ron as well as Wayne and Bud delivered.

*continued on page 4*



*continued from page 3*

But deserving special MENTION IN DISPATCHES as the British used to say are Walt & Sandy Thompson for negotiating their way through the never-ending minefields that we had to wander through on tour, Kevin Hong, Vicki Thomas, Ron Dietes (AGAIN!!!) "Doc" Hecker for multiple reasons and Kara Hueni. Without their special efforts we would not have made as great a success as this trip turned out to be. Please take a moment and thank them.

Also deserving a bomb-load of THANK YOUS are Col. Chuck Conway and his maintenance team. We launched when we said we would, we returned on the day we said we would and the only reason we missed one air show mission was because the Air Show's tug operators would not come pull us out of the hangar after the maximum effort of those who fixed the landing gear problem. Chuck sent us out with a solid aircraft with an efficient system for packing our luggage and PX.

We have all learned something during our travails. I know many things I would do better and things I might NOT say, if given a second chance. But life does not work that way, does it? I, as well as others, have met the limits of our stamina and endurance. If I could make us all 18 years old again I am sure we would all do better, but again, life doesn't work that way.

The most important thing this trip points out is the need to work as a team. When we stayed flexible and helped one another out, we overcame our problems and kept the show on the road.

*Col Don Price, Wing Leader Gulf Coast Wing CAF*

**FLYING FORTRESS PARADE** *continued from page 1*

longer than three days. By August 13th, we had several "seasoned" crewmembers. Of the originating crew from July 23rd, Don Price, Ron Dietes and Kevin Hong had remained on the entire tour. Whether we can attribute that to vitamins, stamina or super-strength deodorant is anyone's guess. There were very few "free" days, and our stint at the Osh Kosh dormitories will be something most of the crew won't forget: toilets down the hall-way, no air-conditioning, no elevators, and coffee in the morning was across the street. Yet the pub at the Detroit Airport Marriott hotel quickly made us forget the Osh Kosh lodging experience.

One of our most memorable moments came at the 381st Bomb Group's reunion, when two WWII veterans (see photo below) made their first visual reun-

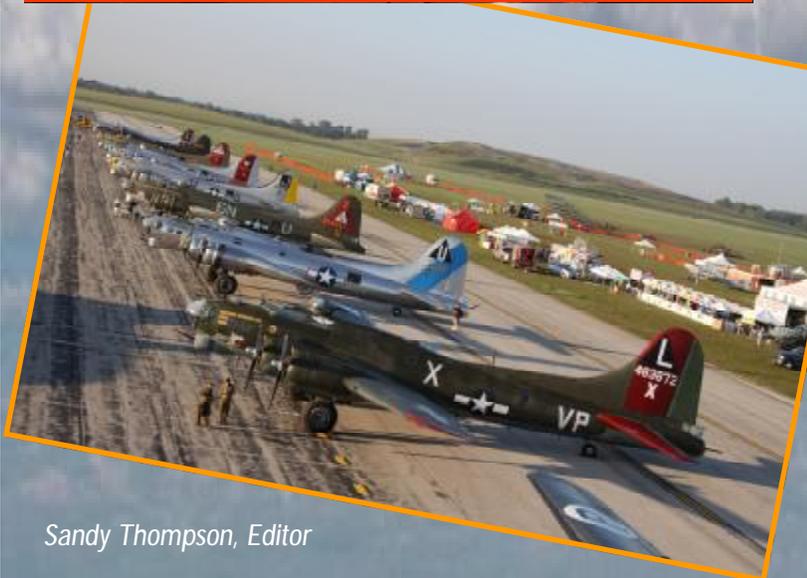
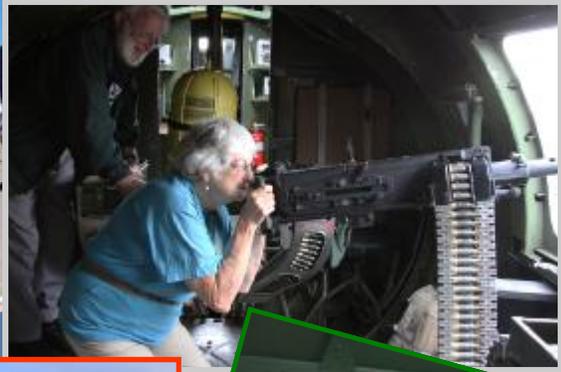


ion in 67-years, after both had bailed out over Belgium upon catastrophe to their B-17, *Chug-A-Lug-LuLu*. Alan Chapin (88yrs old) and Joseph Walters (97yrs old) had remained in touch over the years, but had not physically seen each other since that fateful day in 1943. Perhaps this part of our tour was one unforgettable moment, as we had arranged this special opportunity to bring the veterans and families in touch with this unique aircraft. ....*continued on page 5*

FLYING FORTRESS PARADE *continued from page 4*

This won't be the last tour for TEXAS RAIDERS, but it is a very special tour in that this aircraft is flying, and flying quite well, in spite of the FAA paper-work "bumps" along the way. Thanks to the crew who made it special: Ron Dietes, Ken & Shirley Hyman, Buddy Cooksey, Rick & Vicki Thomas, Curtis Hall, Larry Doucette, Kevin Hong, Don Price, Ole Nygren, Dean Robnett, Doc Hecker, Bud Bearce, Kara Hueni, Curt Rowe, Doug Loftin, Jerry Hobbs, John Alkire, Wayne Kennedy, and Walt & Sandy Thompson. And thanks to wing members Peter Green, John Hotopp, Sam Bulger, Mark Gregg, Kim Eisenbeis and Ron MacKay who joined us along the way.

Here are a few more photos from the tour.....thank you, Kevin for your talents and thousands of photos taken.



Sandy Thompson, Editor

**PX** **W**INGS OVER HOUSTON is our most profitable PX event of the year. THANKS goes to those wing members who have volunteered to work this year's show.

**U** To reconfirm some of the important parts involved in your participation, please review the following information;

**P** Those who work all day will be entitled to air show complimentary lunch. You may work all day or in half-day shifts. However, half-day volunteers are not provided free lunch tickets. If you are inviting a family member to volunteer with you, please advise me (at the contact info below) of their name, and understand that only one "immediate-family-member" is authorized to work in the PX booth with you.



I would also like to request that you limit your family volunteer to someone over 15-years of age. The environment and safety of handling cash and documented inventory is not conducive to organized merchandising when small children are present behind the PX-table. Your understanding in this matter is very appreciated.

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**IN MEMORY**  
of  
**CINDY CONWAY**

*Our deepest sympathy and thoughts are with the Conway family. Cindy was loved by many and her memories will be cherished and held in our hearts for a very long time.*



**WINGS OVER HOUSTON, 2010—News and Information**  
Volunteers are still needed for this year's show: Gate Observers, Parking Lot Security, Sign-Crew (Set up and tear-down). If you can volunteer for either of these areas, please contact Janis Roach at 281-579-1942 or [janisroach@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janisroach@sbcglobal.net) Stay tuned for more information on scheduled work-days in September.

Lodging at special air show rates (based on availability) should be reserved soon. The Hilton Houston NASA Clear Lake Hotel (281 333 9300) is offering a special \$84/night rate (group code W.O.H.). The Hampton Inn (281 332 7952), Hilton Garden Inn (281 332 6284), Homewood Suites (281 486 7677) and the Marriott Hobby (713 943 7979) also offer special W.O.H. air show rates.



## B-17 TOUR TIPS

The 2010 summer extended tour can be considered successful. With very few abnormalities, we made some money, spent some money, had great camaraderie, learned a few things along the way, and made new friends. Through our tour, we continued to receive the comment: “I’m sure glad to see this B-17 back in the air again.” Many folks across the U.S. were pulling for us, just as much as we were during the restoration process.

### B-17 Operations Update

1. **FINANCIAL REVIEW FROM TOUR**— We brought in \$10,983 in tours & donations, and \$38,550 in Revenue Rides for a total of \$49,483 in combined tours and rides revenue. Our \$20,000 appearance fee at YIP brings our total income for the tour up to **\$69,483**. We also had fuel and oil donations (1,000 gal of fuel and 35 gal of oil at OSH // 3,000 gal fuel and oil as required at YIP). Our expenses, with just a few items yet to be reported were \$23,842.
2. **MAINTENANCE FOR TR**—The next item up for TR is the 30-hour maintenance check. We are planning on rides at Hooks during the month of September and a possible “out-and-back”. Details on this are forthcoming.
3. **AIRSHO and WINGS OVER HOUSTON**—The October events of AIRSHO at Midland are noted below and a detailed bid for this event will be published/distributed this week:

Departure for MAF Friday, October 08, 2010

Return to DWH TBD (Pending Stop on return to DWH)

Lodging: Clarion Hotel—Block of 5-DBLB are held @ \$69.99/night until 08SEP (Payment is personal responsibility. This will not be paid by the GCW. If you want to reserve one of these rooms contact the hotel at 432 697 3181 and ask for the Gulf Coast Wing block & rate. If you want to reserve a different hotel, you can locate one at [www.airsho.org](http://www.airsho.org) then click on “PLANNING” and “ACCOMMODATIONS” for a list of local hotels)

Ground Transportation: Is on your own. The rental car lot at the terminal is very close to the warbird ramp where we will be parked if you want to reserve a rental car.

WINGS OVER HOUSTON—A detailed bid for W.O.H will be published this week. If you are interested in bidding for this, be aware that a limitation of essential crew (4) is in effect during the air-show. We will need a minimum of seven (7) volunteers to work tours at the B-17 during open (non-sterile) conditions at Ellington Field. We plan on arriving at EFD on Friday afternoon, October 22 conducting rides at 500pm and we plan on rides at 500pm and 600pm on Saturday, October 23. Departure from EFD to DWH is planned for Sunday afternoon.

Thanks to all who participated in the 2010 summer extended tour. We’ll have more news on future touring events upcoming.

*Col Walt Thompson, Bomber Opns Officer*



# WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

OCT 23—OCT 24 2010

Col Sandy Thompson  
Gulf Coast Wing—CAF  
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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.....	<a href="mailto:rikkysue@aol.com">rikkysue@aol.com</a> .....	281 398 6977
Development Ofcr...	Col Don Outler.....	<a href="mailto:djoutler@comcast.net">djoutler@comcast.net</a> .....	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 <a href="http://www.gulfcoastwing.org">www.gulfcoastwing.org</a>			



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