



"From the Cockpit" Colonel Stan Goran

The past two months of September/October have tested the resolve, dedication and fortitude of the Wisconsin Wing in ways none of us could have imagined. A glorious day at the Waukegan Air Show on September 10th turned into a sad event that defied description. Our Award Winning PT-26 lost power after take-off, and with our most experienced pilot (Col. Mark Shilobrit), had to be brought down in a field close to the Waukegan Airport. The uneven and rough terrain in the field caused the complete destruction of the aircraft. Through the grace of God, Mark was not seriously injured and was able to exit the aircraft and signal to other pilots, circling in the pattern above, that he was OK.

From this difficult and incomprehensible event our Wing has traveled through a journey that at first seemed insurmountable, but had a happy ending. This involved the FAA investigation of the accident, a complex period of CAF-HQ insurance/administrative tasks that seemed unending. Plus, the trucking of the PT remains back to Waukesha for storage and future salvage of instrumentation and other valuable parts for our next PT. The skill and experience of Col Mark Shilobrit saved the day and allowed our PT-26 to "live on" with the migration and application of all these magnificent components to the next PT aircraft.

With the great support of Bob Stenevik (and Steve Brown and many CAF-HQ staff) our Wing has conducted a national search for another PT-26 to replace our original PT. Col. Gary Otto has spearheaded an exhaustive effort to identify, investigate, inspect and fly two excellent aircraft in the search process. Both these aircraft, unfortunately, did not "pass final pre-purchase inspection standards" (although generally fine aircraft). The Wing is now considering other PT-26s in both the private and the CAF inventory.

At the same time as all these efforts were taking place, Col. Gary Otto had taken the leadership to submit a proposal for the Wisconsin Wing to win the assignment of an Navy SNJ (T-6) from the CAF Inventory aircraft.

After considerable effort, travel and direct inspection of this magnificent aircraft at an Air Show in Midland, TX by Gary, the Wisconsin Wing was awarded assignment by the CAF and the SNJ arrived in Waukesha last week. It is housed in the hangar owned by Col. Steve Bezler.

A dedicated SNJ group of Pilot/Aircraft Sponsors (Colonels Gary Otto, Paul Keppeler, Aaron Marshall and Henning Henningson) have made the financial commitment that facilitated this wonderful opportunity for the Wing. A very special SNJ Welcome Party will be held on November 19th after our regular Staff Meeting to celebrate the arrival of this newest Wisconsin Wing aircraft to our "fleet".

Of added interest, on November 19th we will hold the 2012 Officer Elections (please see election information attached). We will elect a new Executive Officer, Finance Officer and Safety Officer for the next two year term (January 1, 2012-December 31, 2013).

Also, please "stay tuned" for an announcement of the date and time for our Annual Wing XMAS Party/Dinner at the Machine Shed in Pewaukee, WI in December (I will send this by e-mail soon).

So, the Wisconsin Wing has survived the "worst of times" and is poised to seize the "best of times" as we welcome the new SNJ and finalize the purchase of a new PT-26. The tremendous, uplifting spirit of the Wing continues to fuel our positive view of the future. Special thanks to Colonels Vic Stottlemeyer, John Westimyer, Mike Woods, Chuck Gilpatrick, John Kmet, Carl Gollnick, Tom McDermott and Bill Tromblay for all their time and effort with all the very hard work following the accident in Waukegan, transporting the PT-26 back to Waukesha and the PT national search.

I wish all members a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday as we have a LOT of things to be thankful for this year!

Wing Photo Gallery



Wing Photo Gallery



Calendar of Events

Saturday, November 5

SNJ Support Activities

Saturday, November 12

SNJ & PT Support Planning

Thursday, November 17

Second Wing Movie Night

See Special Announcement (e-mail)

Saturday, November 19

SNJ Open House/Welcome Party/Lunch

Wing Staff Meeting, 10:30-Noon, Terminal Conference Room

2010 Wing Elections

Sunday, November 20

Continued SNJ Open House, Noon – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 26

SNJ Work Party

WHO WE ARE?

The Commemorative Air Force - Wisconsin Wing, a branch of the National CAF organization, is a civilian group that shares a passion for military aviation history and is dedicated to the preservation and flying of vintage military aircraft.

Through social, educational, and public events, we promote camaraderie among our members and a public appreciation for our rich aviation heritage, while fostering a greater respect for our military and for those who served.

- Wing Mission Statement

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September/October 2011



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Commemorative Air Force



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National CAF, www.commemorativeairforce.org