

# Slips and Skids



January  
2012

Newsletter for the  
**West Houston Squadron**  
Commemorative Air Force

## Leader Report

*By Stan Turner*

Happy New Year to all members of the West Houston Squadron! This is my first month as your squadron leader so bear with me while I learn the ropes. I would like to thank Steve Sehnert for his leadership these past four years. The squadron has grown during his tenure and he leaves the position with the squadron in sound shape, both aviation wise and financially.

During the past few years, the squadron has focused on two major restoration projects. The AT-6 received a new engine, paint job, canopy glass, and a general overhaul. The C-60 finally took to the air after sitting in the corner of the hanger for 7+ years. An article was written on the squadron featuring the C-60 for the local newspaper and it was also featured in the January addition of Dispatch. Last year ended on the positive side for the aircraft. During the final flyover of 2011, the hanger was void of all aircraft as they were all in the air at the same time. This was truly a milestone for the squadron and it showcases the talent and commitment we have as a group.

By all appearances at the hanger, we have started 2012 with a bang. There is a flurry of activity as different teams have started on their respective projects. The C-60 is already deep into winter maintenance activities as Ulf and his crew prepares the plane for the upcoming flying season. An engine change, avionic upgrade and annual inspection are part of the activities planned for Goodtime Gal.

We now have the majority of the Navion/L-17 project in our hanger including the spare fuselage and wing assemblies.

See LEADER REPORT Page 4

## Operations Report

*By John Cotter*

Happy New Year!! Welcome to 2012 and what looks to be a great year for the West Houston Squadron and all our members.

### Aircraft Status:

Right now the AT-6, BT-13 and Stinson are all operational with the C-60 down for winter maintenance and engine change while the N3N is hiding out at Dry Creek waiting for new flying wires to arrive. We will schedule the annual inspection for the AT-6 during February so we can have it up to speed for the spring airshow season.

### This Year:

The Squadron already has our first mission for 2012. We will be flying for the Homes for Our Troops event that is taking place January 27 and 28. We plan on sending the AT-6 and BT-13, plus several other member owned aircraft.

We are working on the Air Show schedules for our aircraft and have made contact with several shows. One event that is already on the books is our annual Open House. This year it will be held on April 21 & 22. We scheduled it for this weekend to avoid conflict with the Bluebonnet Airshow.

We would also like to run a couple mini-formation clinics this year. We have several of our pilots that are interested in getting their formation cards and some of those that already have cards would like to become lead formation pilots.

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## Hangar/PX Report

By Bob Linguiti

It is truly hard to believe that 2011 has come to a close. December saw Flughafen, which was reasonably well-attended and at which the squadron was honored for its support of the Wing and of the C.A.F., a very well-represented fly over of the Battleship Texas, a chili cook-off at which, alas, the prizes outnumbered the entrants, and, of course, Christmas which was, I hope, a very merry one for all. The weather has been up and down like the proverbial yo-yo: sometimes resembling a northern autumn and sometimes mimicking the late spring, even summer months. A day at the hangar may as easily find one in a T-shirt as in a jacket. For our early December Flughafen, the two propane heaters that were residuals from Rich Welsh's office party were most welcome and, indeed, former the loci of the two groups of attendees that could be seen huddled around the popular objects and, thus, not shivering.

When not serving as the venue for the aforementioned festivities, our hangar has become the residence of our usual coterie of planes (minus the as-yet elusive N3N), as well as two Navion fuselages and a set of wings. These latter, as is well-known, will form the basis of our latest aircraft restoration project and may be seen nestled in their respective cradles in the northwest and southeast corners of the hangar floor. Owing to the extensive number of planes, caution is urged for anyone, particularly guests that might be moving about the hangar (or attempting to do so). Moreover, with an eastward extension of the loft about to get underway, additional care will be required, when making a foray to the slop sink or the maintenance refrigerator. With renewed attention being paid to curbing the creeping attrition of our dwindling supply of tools, it is to be hoped that fewer and fewer of those frisky run-aways will be found ready to trip or otherwise fell the unsuspecting foot traveler. For those guilty of aiding and abetting the tools' shameless flight to freedom, mend your evil ways and return the wrenches, sockets, screw drivers, et cetera, to the drawers whence they came.



The annual Awards Dinner is fast-approaching and, as will, undoubtedly, be noted elsewhere in this issue and via email, reservations are barely dribbling in; as of two nights previous, we were just at the half-way point of our required numbers. Time is of the essence and, by the time this edition "hits the streets," your dinner requests and your checks should long since have been sent to Gary Hurta. All members, new and of long-standing, are encouraged to attend; enjoy the dinner, the camaraderie, the awards themselves, and the silent and not-so-silent auctions. May I wish one and all a very Happy New Year and express the hope that I shall see many, if not most, of you at the Crowne Plaza on 14 January.



### Slips and Skids

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### West Houston Airport

FAA ID: IWS  
Latitude: 29°49'05"N  
Longitude: 95°40'21"W  
Elevation: 111 ft  
Runway (1): 3973 x 75 ft  
CTAF/UNICOM 123.05  
APPROACH: 123.8  
DEPARTURE: 123.8  
CLEARANCE: 121.15

## Member's Corner

### Mark Your Calendar

**Jan 14 – Awards Banquet Dinner**  
6:00 PM Crowne Plaza

**Feb 19 - General Membership Meeting**  
2:00 PM - Hangar B-5

**Mar 18 - General Membership Meeting**  
2:00 PM - Hangar B-5

**Apr 15- General Membership Meeting**  
2:00 PM - Hangar B-5

**Apr 21 & 22 - Open House**  
More Details To Come

### January Birthdays

*By Shirley Hyman*

Jim McPhee	Jan 1
George Watts	Jan 5
Frank Vargas	Jan 6
Mike Phillips	Jan 15
John Bixby	Jan 19
Elaine Lockwood	Jan 21
Bruce Gispanski	Jan 24
Mike Hiner	Jan 30

Annual renewal West Houston Squadron forms will go in the mail in early January. Check your mailbox and return it with your check. I want to get an updated 2012 WHS Roster distributed by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Member News

#### Menu

*By Shirley Hyman*

Thanks to Mary Nygren for hosting the December meeting luncheon and furnishing the hot dogs and buns! And to everyone else for contributing chili for the cookoff and side dishes.

There is no monthly meeting; hence, no meeting luncheon, since it is our annual West Houston Squadron Awards Banquet. I'll be nursing my daughter in Austin, who will be recovering from sinus surgery; so I hope you all have a great time!

#### Silent Auction at Awards Dinner

*By Elaine Lockwood*

*While shopping, keep an eye out for that perfect item to donate at the awards dinner silent auction.*

### Squadron Staff Directory

<b>Squadron Leader</b>	Col Stan Turner	T28pilot44@aol.com
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<b>Public Information Officer</b>	Col Elaine Lockwood	cafwhseditor@aol.com



## Navion Project

By Michael Steiger

N4983K owned by William D. Johnston, a WWII P-40 fighter pilot, was donated to the West Houston Squadron November 2011. The airplane is a 1949 Navion A serial number 4-1983 with a 225-4 engine. Mr. Johnston had his plane tied down at Waller airport located 20 miles west of Houston.

The Navion was originally designed at the end of WWII by North American Aviation, mostly noted for the T-6 and P-51, as the NA-145. It was designed for the civilian market but also attracted the interest of the USAAF. The Army Air Force ordered 83 of the NA-154 version, designated the L-17A, to be used as a liaison aircraft, personnel and cargo carrier, and trainer for the university-ROTC flight training programs, 35 of which were later converted to L-17C standard by Schweizer by fitting them with L-17B model features such as an auxiliary fuel tank.

Ryan acquired the design in 1948, and built approximately 1,200 examples over the following three years. Ryan designated the aircraft the Navion A with a 205 hp Continental E-185, E-225 and, later, the Navion B with 260 hp engines of either the Lycoming GO-435, or optionally the Continental IO-470 engine. The Navion As became the basis for the military L-17B.

The Navion brings us an opportunity at the WHS to attract more members because of its 4 place seating and tricycle landing gear we taildragger pilots call a "training wheel". The multiple seats will enable more riders in its spacious cabin and will provide us with a great Squadron hack.



Eager as we were when we heard the news of the donation the process of transporting the plane to the WHS was a learning experience laced with comedy.

An inspection prior the donation revealed the plane had not been flown in 9 years and half of the time it was kept outside. The wing showed corrosion inside and out with many varmints nesting throughout the structure. Mostly the wings. The fuselage was in great shape with little corrosion and very little damage. At one time someone bumped the tail. (nosewheel pilots)! The interior is in really great shape however the windows need replacing due to the sun damage. Eager as some were to get it back to the WHS, a ferry permit was out of the question. Now the fun starts.

Upon hearing our call, many members and guests flocked to Waller for the dismantling of the plane so it could be trailered 14 miles to our great hangar. Don Johnson, Al Feltis, John Bixby, Dan Gould, Jim Miles, Ole Nygren, Gale Haskins, Ken Hyman, John Cotter, Mark Johnson and myself gathered in by the Navion in mid-November with tools in hand and determination to see this plane dismantled. Disassembly teams were formed and the work begun with gusto! The tail was off in the first 2 hours while the interior was pulled so we could get to the bolts to demate the wing from the fuselage. Another team pulled the top cowling so we could have access to the engine lift lug.

## Navion

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The idea as per the Ryan maintenance manual recommends lifting the fuselage by the engine and a strap around the aft fuselage bulkhead and sliding the wing out from underneath. Easier done then said as all of us had zero Navion maintenance time. The end of the day was fast approaching and the Maintenance Officer wanted to find a local watering hole so we packed our bags and agreed to meet the next day. Comedy took its toll on day 2 by tricking me where all the bolts really were. This plane has a beef-up kit between the wing and fuselage so after I had what I thought were the 6 bolts and the beef up kit bolts removed we started the separation process. It did not happen. With the Maintenance Officer laughing, 2 hours and 3 different people later we found the last 2 bolts right where the manual said they were and we now had a fuselage without a tail and wing! Glad I am not able to attend the awards banquet this year. I'll show them! The Navion is a very light plane for its size. The empty weight is 1600 pounds. We backed the trailer up and loaded the wing. Day 2 ended and Thanksgiving interrupted the fuselage move.

Dan and Al had the daunting task to build a cradle for the fuselage as all it had left was a nose gear, we needed to be creative. Dan took Al under his wing and the 2 built a rolling cradle so we can roll the plane where ever we need for restoration. With the fuselage neatly sitting on the cradle, Gale barked commands to the guys and with little effort they were strapping it down for the trip to its new home.

The New Year is here and plans to have this plane flying will be a big effort and we have the gang to do it. As the plane was not an original L-17 we like the look of the plane in military colors. Current plans are to strip and polish the plane with the proper Star and Bars of 1949.



The factory fresh look to me is the most appealing and the cleanest look to show the lines of the plane. As for it saying Air Force, Navy, Marines, under the SN on the tail, the sponsors will have that choice. A disk brake conversion, new windows and windshield, radio and transponder, military interior are on the too do list. The engine will be removed for inspection and possible overhaul/replacement.

We have a project, we have the people and they have the talent to make this a rewarding and fun project.