

September/October 2023



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COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE

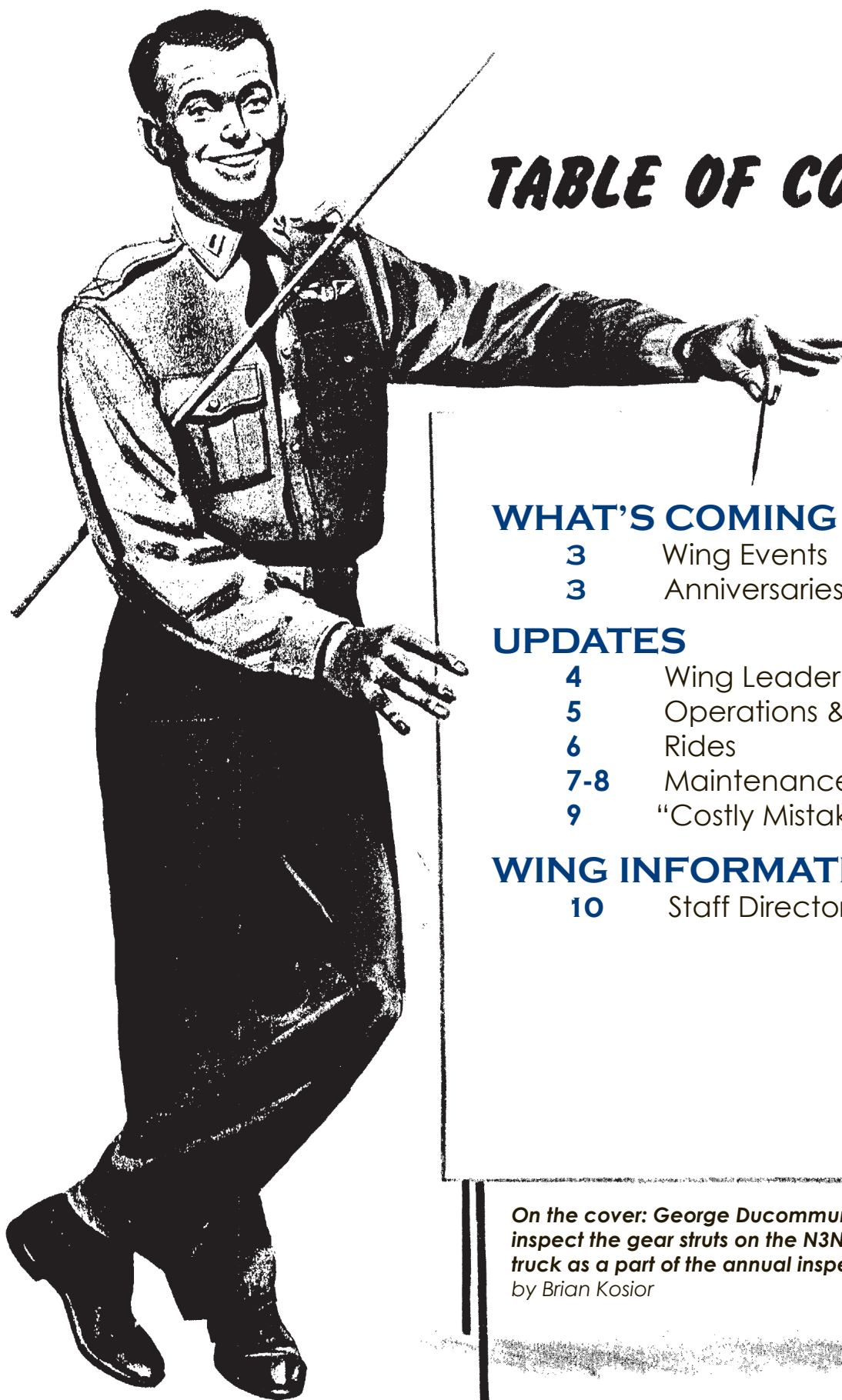
# Slips & Skids



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE  
**WINGS OVER HOUSTON  
AIRSHOW**  
Airshow this month! Oct 15-16

# INSPECTED

The N3N undergoes its annual inspection p. 7



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*On the cover: George Ducommun and team inspect the gear struts on the N3N, hoisted by his truck as a part of the annual inspection. Photo by Brian Kosior*



## October 2023

7th: Museum Day + WOH Workday  
 8th: "Texas Raiders" Memorial Unveiling  
       @ Montgomery County Veterans  
       Memorial Park  
 14-15th: **WINGS OVER HOUSTON!**  
 21st: Museum Day  
 22nd: NO Membership Meeting

## November 2023

4th: Museum Day  
 10-12: Aviation Discovery Fest @ RBD  
 18th: Museum & Rides Day

## December 2023

2nd: Museum Day  
 16th: Museum & Rides Day



## *Airbird Annie Sez*

### Anniversaries

9/2/22	Jorge Pau
9/9/13	Jane Copeland
9/11/89	Wesley Fellows
9/14/21	Country Newell
9/18/22	Caro Maitland
9/21/21	David Moyer
9/24/08	Bruce Bevers
9/24/18	Fox Benton
9/27/04	Sam Hoynes
9/28/95	Ed Bergmann
9/28/09	John Bixby
10/1/81	Carol Lee
10/3/90	Bill Roach
10/9/22	AJ Millin
10/10/81	Joe Hyatt
10/10/06	Sam Bulger
10/18/21	Julian Zapp
10/21/21	Field Parsons
10/21/22	Barry Doering
10/21/22	Anderson Fox
10/21/22	John Knapp
10/22/21	Marissa Colclasure
10/26/94	George Doland
10/28/98	Frank Robertson
10/29/19	Corey McLean
10/30/15	Todd Shackoules

### Birthdays

9/9	Joe Kudrna
9/16	Wesley Fellows
9/18	Chuck Waters Jr.
9/22	Brian Kosior
9/29	Sherry Johnson
10/7	Don Johnson
10/9	John Matthews
10/27	Sandy Lee
10/28	Felipe Borrero



## Wing Leader

BY LISA SANFORD



Air Show is just around the corner, Oct 15th-16th will be upon us before you know it. If you have not signed up to work at one of our three PX's during the show please do so ASAP. We need approximately 30 volunteers each day to cover all three locations. Please email Brian

(Briankosior@yahoo.com) to get your name added to the list. You will need to come to the hangar before the Air Show to get your passes. If you have friends that are not members but would like to help out during the show please add their names and bring them along! Please remember that the Air Show is our largest fund raiser of the year. The Houston Wing's portion of the proceeds from this show is what allows us to keep the lights on and to continue our Mission to Honor, Educate and Inspire through flight and living history experiences.

Speaking of Volunteers, I would like to give my heart felt thanks to everyone who showed up to volunteer at our Rides Day at TME on August 26th. We had a great turnout of both Colonels and Cadets. The Marshalling Detachment also showed up in force to help keep our patrons and volunteers safe. I would like to give a special shout out to our Rides Coordinator Brian Kosior for organizing this event. Brian puts a great deal of work and heart into organizing every aspect of these events and we could not do it without his expertise. On top of having our aircraft, the PX, and the L-39 on site he also made arrangements with James Bohannon Jr to have his P-51 Mustang and T-28 on the ramp as additional eye candy. Great job Brian and I am looking forward to seeing what you have up your sleeve for our next event!

August 26th was a very special day for another reason as well. The Wing had the privilege of conducting a Fly Over of our three Wing Aircraft for our very own Dick Harper's 100th Birthday. Dick is our last surviv-

ing WWII veteran and cherished member of the Wing. Happy Birthday Dick! It was an honor to participate in this flyover and we hope you enjoyed seeing the aircraft that you loved to fly in the not so distant past.

See you around the Hangar. ✂️



**Photos from the TME Warbird Expo and Dick Harper's flyover.**  
Photos by Joe Kudrna and Sam Bulger



## Operations

## Cadets



**BY MATT BRZOSTOWSKI**



Wayne, Field, Ed and Cory were busy on the 26nd of August flying rev rides in our Wing outing to the Houston Executive airport, KTME, just west of the West Houston Airport. Congratulations to Field and Cory flying their first Rev Rides, Field flying two paying passengers in the

BT-13 and Cory five in the N3N!

We had a busy September with the BT-13 participating in the Dallas-Fort Worth Warbirds and Wheels event on the 2nd, and Ace flying to the Corsicana Airshow on the 30th.

In the meantime, Wayne continues his training with Ed in Ace.

Of course, our main event of the year will be Wings Over Houston, with Ryszard flying Ace, Wayne the BT-13, and Cory the N3N! ✂

**Pictures from the TME and Corsicana fly-ins.**

*Photos by Matt Brzostowski*



**BY MATT BRZOSTOWSKI**

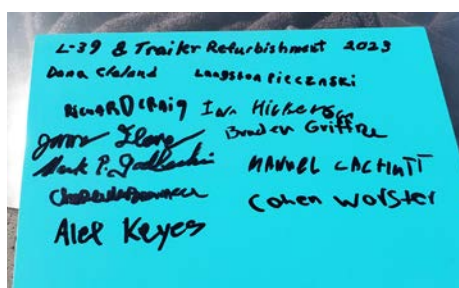
Besides Charlotte helping out with the PX, the cadets brought out their renovated L-39 cockpit to the KTME Rides Day. They earned a respectable amount of cash selling the chance to sit in the plane and don a flight helmet, while the cadets explained the history and functionality

of the aircraft. The cadets will now apply those funds towards their AT-6A pedal flyer project, while renovating the Wasp Junior engine static display.

Cadets continue to help out as docents on museum days, and will be preparing for the Wings Over Houston Airshow where they plan to operate the L-39 cockpit again and make dog tags.

A couple of the cadets are participating in Scott Williams' 777 ground school, so a special shout out to Scott for including us!

The cadets have been a big help getting us ready for Wings Over Houston and are excited about running the dog tag machine and L-39 cockpit again! ✂





## Rides

BY BRIAN KOSIOR



I once again I want to thank all of our Wing Members and Cadets that came out to support our Rides Day at Houston Executive Airport on one of the hottest days in July. We had a great showing from our unit and from the public. There were a lot people on the ramp before the heat of the day got to be too much.

We sold out of rides and even sold one extra one on the N3N, which may lead us to have a new corporate donor because of that ride. I will let Tony discuss the numbers in the Wing Meeting, but it seems that we did just as well, if not better than we did in Lake Jackson. My sincere thanks to the members, the cadets, the pilots, the Marshallers and our awesome Maintenance team for making it happen!

We have now proven (twice) that we are a big enough draw for the public on our own and can be very successful doing these barnstorming events. Matt and I are already looking into places to go for the Spring and we hope to see you there! We still have many things planned for October, so please continue to come out and support the Wing.

As Lisa mentioned in her article, we had a successful

flyover for Dick Harper's 100th birthday celebration. Thanks to Sam Bulger, Ed Vesely, Wayne, Field, Cory, and Frank in his personal Champ for making a special day for Dick on the way to TME. To quote Sam Bulger who was on the ground coordinating, "The Vultee Vibrator did indeed rattle the windows of the apartments!"

Let's Keep 'Em Flyin'! ✈️

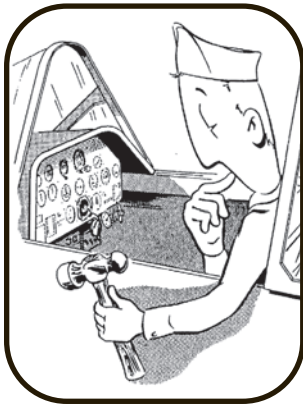
**Pictures from the TME Warbird Expo and Dick Harper's flyover**  
Photos by Matt Brzostowski, Brian Kosior, and Joe Kudrna





## Maintenance

**BY STAN TURNER**



On Saturday, August 26, the Wing went barnstorming at Houston Executive Airport (TME). All three of our historic aircraft (AT-6, BT-13 and N3N) attended and gave flight experiences to the public. This was a successful Houston Wing event. A big part of that success is due to the efforts of our amazing

aircraft Maintainers keeping our front-line aircraft in safe flying condition. Be sure to thank the 'blue shirts' who show up on Tuesdays and Saturdays to maintain not only our aircraft but our ground support equipment. Without their efforts we would not have the ability to do what we do.

### N3N Annual Inspection

The N3N is being serviced this month as its annual inspection is due. In the last 12 months, the aircraft has flown about 58 total hours. The maintenance department serviced the main landing gear including replacing the strut seals and brake pads as part of the work scope. Work started on Saturday September 2 with several maintainers and cadets removing and cleaning panels, draining the oil, cleaning oil filters, and preparing the airframe for inspection. The aircraft should be ready for Wings Over Houston mid-October.

*Carlos Sisso and new member Fredrick Gicquel remove and clean the N3N panels prior to the start of the 100 hour inspection. The safest and most efficient way to remove the main landing gear was to lift the front of the aircraft via a crane strapped to the engine mounts. Lisa Sanford, Wayne Loeber, and George Ducommun inspect the N3N gear strut prior to replacing the seals. Ed Vesley is in the background riveting new brake pads for the N3N. Photos by Stan Turner and Brian Kosior*



## R-985 Display Engine

The Wing has restarted the R-985 display engine restoration project once again. The R-985 is the same type engine used on our BT-13. Maintainers and cadets moved the engine and parts cabinet into the maintenance bay next to the tool room. A concerted effort has begun with adults and cadets cleaning, painting and generally making the engine look pretty. It is not air-worthy but should be a complete display once finished.



**Work continues on the Cadillac lathe in the Wings machine shop area. Dana Cleland and Mark Godleski adjust the coolant pump output. The lathe is operational and has already resurfaced our spare brake rotors. The N3N coming together again. The R-985 engine on its stand in the hangar.**

*Photos by Stan Turner*

Older members may recall that Craig Pridgeon organized and assisted cadets with this project a few years ago. When Craig passed away, the project went through several start/stops with different cadet leaders. Hopefully with it in a more centralized location, the wing can finish the display in the next few months. New member Fredrick Gicquel will manage the project.

## Maintenance Officer — Staff Elections

The Maintenance Officer position like most staff positions is a two year term. My term ends this year. While I have enjoyed managing the maintenance department, I would be happy to see someone else take over and bring some fresh energy and ideas. You DO NOT have to be an A&P or IA to hold this office. You DO have to have the time to effectively manage the maintenance and restoration operations. We have a great group of maintainers so that makes the job much easier. If you are interested in knowing more about the duties and responsibilities of the Houston Wing Maintenance Officer, feel free to contact me at the hangar or by email at [t28pilot44@aol.com](mailto:t28pilot44@aol.com).

Keep 'em flying and be kind to each other. ✂️



## Costly Mistakes

**BY DAVE GUGGEMOS**

*From Insurance Adjuster  
Conversation and AOPA Web  
Site – Richard McSpadden*



We have been on the receiving end of some hefty insurance rate increases the past few years. There are several causes for this trend, many of which involve pilot error. There are a couple of things

that we as pilots, can do to alleviate some of this.

I also had a discussion with my insurance agent and her underwriter a year ago, which underscored these conclusions.

I initiated the discussion by asking the question “Why do us older pilots see such high rate increases?” “Do you have data to back that up, or is it subjective in nature?”

The answer was that there have been some significant accidents over the past few years in the warbird community which were massive in fatalities as well as monetary costs. This plays into their profit and loss calculations. Some of these involve older pilots.

But most insurance loss events aren’t even reportable to the FAA and do involve older pilots.

Thankfully, the massive accidents are rare, and are not the major reason for the insurance rate increases.

So, the question is “What can we, as pilots, do to reduce the insurance rate increases?”

### Most Expensive Accidents

The most expensive accidents in terms of cost per occurrence are controlled flight into terrain, crashes on approach, in-flight break ups, and weather related crashes. These types of accidents usually involve total payouts for both hull and liability. They are not, however, the highest total cost to insurers, because they too, are infrequent.

The highest type of accidents based on total cost are gear up landings and gear collapses. (Over \$70,000 each) These accidents are far more frequent, and in most cases don’t even appear on the FAA accident list because in they may not be required to be reported. Usually it’s the pilot who forgets to lower the gear.

Gear Collapses are often difficult to ascertain the cause for, but a significant cause is pilot distraction which causes them to raise the gear handle on the ground instead of the flap or some other handle.

Another significant cause for these kinds of accidents is loss of directional control on the ground; this doesn’t only apply to tail draggers.

Another insurance claim and cost issue is prop strikes, which can easily be \$30,000 per occurrence. Some of these are caused by pilots’ distraction while trying to do something while taxiing.

While my insurance conversation was specially oriented toward older pilots, they maintained that older pilots incur a large number of hangar rash, taxi and prop strike accidents, and that that is the reason older pilots see higher rates.

It is surprising that the large catastrophic accidents are not considered to be the chief insurance payout cost in terms of total dollars.

### Pilots Can Reduce Insurance Costs

1. Make lowering the gear a priority task, especially during times with distractions, such as formation landings. Double check both the gear handle position and the gear position again on short final. For this reason, the Formation Knowledge Guide recommends that a gear check call on short final is made to remind everyone in the formation to make the last minute gear check.
2. Taxi after cockpit tasks have been completed. When taxiing, keep your attention on taxiing. Remove the tow bar before starting the engine.
3. Land on-speed. Landing with too much speed and landing longer than you planned are the causes of overrunning the end of the runway. This is a concern for formation flights, where we normally land long and keep the speed up to minimize the taxi distance. Make sure you land on-speed with enough runway length remaining.

Happy flying! Safety is a part of our culture. ✈️



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