

MILE HIGH FLIGHT 18

Order of Daedalians

Newsletter

Feb 2006

New Flight Captain assumes lead

Bob Mock sets course, speed for 2006

Mock 1



Fellow Daedalians,

I am highly honored to have been elected your Flight Captain for 2006 and I want to thank last year's officers and committee chairmen for an outstanding year. Special thanks to Dale Boggie, Bill Greener and Ger Spaulding who are staying on in their respective positions as Provost Marshall, Scholarship Chairman and Newsletter Editor.

Many of you put a lot of effort into presentations made at the monthly meetings and we are indebted to you for making those meetings a success.

My first order of business was to reread portions of the official Order of Daedalians Flight Manual. I believe the Tenets are worth repeating here:

First: To Place Nation Above Self

Second: To Be Worthy of the Trust and Confidence of Fellow Daedalians

Several of last year's and this year's officers met in early January to discuss lessons learned from last year and lay out objectives for the coming year. We came up with three Flight GOALS for 2006:

1. To recruit five new members this year.
2. To fund and present \$3000 in scholarships to deserving and eligible ROTC cadets.
3. To revise and update our Flight bylaws, membership activity and corporate status.

See MOCK 1 - page 2

2006 Flight Schedule

Flight 18 normally meets on the third Friday of each month. Exceptions are announced in the newsletter and through the caller phone tree. Your caller should contact you via phone/e-mail 7-10 days prior to each meeting. If not, please advise Flight Adjutant Ron Smith.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Speaker/activity</u>
20 Jan	Aurora Hills*	BG Lassen, COANG
17 Feb	Aurora Hills*	Bombing of UA-629
17 Mar	Aurora Hills*	TBA
21 Apr	Aurora Hills*	War Stories
19 May	Platte Valley	Lunch with wives
16 Jun	Aurora Hills*	TBA
21 Jul	Aurora Hills*	TBA
18 Aug	Aurora Hills*	TBA
13 Sep (Wed)	JeffCo Airport	Picnic with wives
20 Oct	Aurora Hills*	TBA
17 Nov	Aurora Hills*	Ann Business Mtg
?? Dec	Aurora Hills*	Christmas Party

* Aurora Hills Golf Course Tin Cup Bar & Grill

Help Wanted

Position: Editor, Mile High Flight 18 Newsletter

Open: January 2007

Salary: In your dreams. (*Expenses reimbursed*)

Contact: Current editor (*see Page 7*)

Remarks: OJT/assistance provided as necessary

References: Not required; never checked

Mock 1

From page 1

If you are paying close attention, you will recognize several of these goals as continuations of those set out by Tony Zang and Yumper Black in their initial letters to you as Flight Captain. Also, the Goals are in line with the Objectives stated in the Flight Manual.

We all felt that the goals are worthy of our best efforts and I am making a personal solicitation for all members to seek out new members. Along those lines I recommend you read Maj Gen Bud Breckner's article "A Few Good Men-and Women" in the winter issue of the *Daedalus Flyer*.

We are also looking for several volunteers to join the Membership and Bylaws Committees.

Now is the time to start your planning process to attend the 2006 Daedalian National Convention in San Antonio, Texas. It begins with an invitational golf tournament Thursday morning 29 June and will end with the most prestigious annual Awards Banquet Saturday night where our nationally known and recognized awards will be given to notables of aviation for 2005. I hope you all will make the effort and join me in San Antonio!

Lastly I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings. We've planned a variety of speakers and activities to keep the membership informed on aerospace activities. Please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the other officers with your suggestions.

Volabamus

Volamus

Bob

Robert K. Mock, COL, USAF (Ret)
Flight Captain

Christmas 2005



Outgoing Flight Captain Yumper Black caps his 3-year tenure by emceeing a Chinese Auction gift exchange at the annual Christmas party. Thanks to Cindy and her staff at Aurora Hills for doing a bang-up job as our hosts.

Mainliner Denver

The Bombing of Flight 629

Andrew J. Field

On the evening of November 1, 1955, high above the rural countryside east of Longmont, Colorado, disaster struck. At first glance, many of the sugar beet farmers thought the fiery oval-shaped object in the sky was nothing more than a natural event—the rising moon or a shooting star. What appeared harmless and normal suddenly escalated into a frightening and unnatural scene. As massive pieces of twisted burning metal fell from the night sky onto the fields, the neighboring farmers witnessed one of the most bizarre and tragic episodes in U.S. aviation history.



The plane, a DC-6 like the one pictured above, was dubbed the "Mainliner Denver," a part of United Air Lines' luxurious fleet of propeller-driven aircraft. Inexplicably, eleven minutes after lifting off from Denver's Stapleton Airfield en route to Portland, Oregon, it was gone—lost in a terrifying inferno.

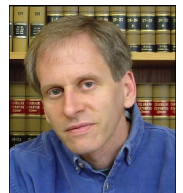
At first investigators thought the aircraft explosion might have been the result of an equipment malfunction. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Author and researcher Andrew J. Field explores aviation and legal history, unraveling the mystery behind the bombing of the "Mainliner Denver." In an absorbing, investigative style, Field recounts the mid-twentieth century's golden age of flight, painting a picture of the aviation world leading up to and following this incredible story. Detailing the changes in aviation security policy that occurred as a result of this incident, and the birth of televised courtroom proceedings that took place at the trial of the bomber, Field describes the comprehensive FBI investigation and highly publicized courtroom drama that revealed the calculating perpetrator behind it all: a young man who, in his obsession to murder his mother, killed her and all forty-three of the other people who were traveling aboard the "Mainliner Denver" on that fateful night 50 years ago.



Mainliner Denver: The Bombing of Flight 629 was named one of the best books of 2005 by the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Attorney and author Andrew J. Field will discuss Flight 629 at the 17 Feb luncheon



Welcome Aboard



Gregory J. Anderson, Capt, USAF (Sep)

Born in Postville, Iowa in January 1950, Greg attended the Air Force Academy before entering flight training, which he completed at Moody AFB, GA in 1974.

Following an assignment flying KC-135s at Plattsburgh, NY, he separated from the Air Force in 1979 after seven years of service with 1700 hours of military flight time. He has since added another 700 hours of civilian time.

With a Master's Degree in International Affairs, he's held some interesting jobs over the years: a Chamber of Commerce executive; Office Administrator for the Governor of Wisconsin; Executive Vice President Experimental Aircraft Association, and currently serving as President and CEO, Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum. As he briefed us last year, he's fully engaged these days in expansion plans for the Museum, including the addition of facilities at Centennial Airport.

Greg and his wife Beth have three daughters and live in Aurora.

George E. Grieger, Maj, USAF (Sep)

George's 1937 high school graduating class, 13 students in all, was the largest in the history of Hanna, Ind, where he was born on 1 Aug 1921. With diploma in hand, he completed training with the Curtiss-Wright then went to work engineering DC-3 parts for the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica.

Staying one step ahead of the draft, he entered the Army Air Corp cadet program, earning his wings with Class 44-E at Ft. Sumner, NM. Then it was down to Roswell for B-17 training and on to Biloxi to assemble and train a crew before

joining the 305th BG in England. He was flying missions over Germany at the end of the War and flew more afterward. In May 1945, he took part in the airlift of Russian-liberated American POWs from Stalag Luft I in northeastern Germany to Reims, France. He still has the list of those malnourished POWs he carried out of Germany.

After returning to the United States, George spent the next four years at Biloxi instructing B-17 pilots in SAR procedures, namely how to drop boats to survivors in the water. Unfortunately, he would develop a serious eye problem requiring surgery that ended his flying career. After a few years in supply, he separated from the Air Force at Shepherd AFB in 1960 with 17 years of service. He then went to work in electronic component sales for Avnet, from which he retired in 1970. He continued to work part time delivering electronic components until finally hanging it up only last year. George and his wife Betty Lou reside in Aurora.

Anthony J. Smith, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

A 1961 product of Hanover, PA, Tony graduated from the Air Force Academy in '83 with a degree in Engineering Mechanics. He then completed pilot training as a member of Class 84-07 at Reese AFB in Aug 84.

A series of assignments flying B-52s and B-1Bs followed, during which Tony commanded the first operational B-1 mission to Kuwait (feature article in *Aviation Week*), and was B-1 Flight Lead for the aircraft's first around-the-world mission. Instructor qualified in the B-52, B-1 and T-37, he served as Commander, 37th Flying Training Squadron, Columbus AFB. In addition to accruing 4,000 pilot hours, along the way he also picked up a Master's in International Relations, attended Air Command and Staff, Air War College,

See **WELCOME** - page 6, column 1

STILL HAVEN'T PAID YOUR 2006 FLIGHT DUES?

Please cut out and mail this coupon along with a check for your 2006 flight dues plus any unpaid flight dues for which you have received a delinquency notification. Add any amount you desire to donate to the Scholarship Fund. *And, remember, even if you are a Daedalian Life Member, you still owe annual flight dues. If you are not a LM, your annual Order of Daedalian membership dues are billed by and paid separately to National in San Antonio.*

Name: _____ Daedalian # _____ Home Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____ e-mail: _____

Amount enclosed for: 2006 Flight Dues \$12.00 + Flight Dues for prior years @ \$12.00/yr _____
+ Scholarship Fund _____ = Total Enclosed _____

** Make check payable to: **DAEDALIAN FLIGHT 18**

** Mail to: **Treasurer, Mile High Flight 18, P.O. Box 472976, Aurora, CO 80047-2976**
(Note new address)

One snake-bit pilot

Cliff Judkins went through flight training in Pensacola and got his wings as a Marine pilot in 1958. His training was slowed a little because while there he had a car accident and had to have his spleen removed. He joined an F-8 Crusader squadron in El Toro, CA.



Ordered to Japan, the squadron and would be one of the first to fly its planes to Japan rather than have them brought out by carrier. It would require numerous in-flight refueling events.

After starting out the first day they were forced to return to California because one of the Crusaders had caught fire while refueling.

The next day they started again. After cruising at 40,000' they dropped down to 20,000' and Cliff hooked up with one of the C-130 tankers. Shortly after the fuel gage showed *full* he felt an explosion. Apparently the cutoff valve malfunctioned and the fuel tank got overloaded and burst. Jet fuel flooded the engine, blew out several panels under the wings and caught fire. His wingman said he had a 200' long tail of flame from the rear of the plane. The engine would not start and the electrical and hydraulic systems were out. The emergency generator did function and he regained some control of the Crusader. Cliff got ready to eject by arming the ejection seat and pulling the curtain down over his face. The ejection seat failed to work even after several more tries.

He then tried blowing the canopy which also failed to work. He was trapped in a burning powerless plane going about 250 knots at around 20,000'. When he tried to manually open the canopy it instantly vanished.

He then unfastened himself from the ejection seat and the electrical and oxygen systems, slightly raised himself up in the seat and was immediately sucked out of the cockpit. He remembers a flash of gray and orange which he assumes were the plane and the trailing fireball.

He pulled the parachute D-ring and threw it away as he had been instructed. The parachute then the pack failed to open. It was a couple of feet over his head and had a small piece of chute poking out. Cliff pulled the chute down and tore it open. He was immediately entangled with the shroud lines and chute. For the next couple of minutes he struggled to try and untangle himself and shake the chute open. A few times he felt a jerk as if it had caught some air but it never untangled. He thought he was still 1,000 feet or more above the ocean when he hit. The force apparently set off the CO-2 cartridges and inflated his flotation vest and he bobbed up to the surface.

Although badly broken up, Cliff does not remember being in much pain. The waves were high with whitecaps so his visibility was limited.

One of the C130 tankers had come down and was circling what they thought was a dead pilot. Cliff waved and they started throwing things to him: shark repellent, dye markers, flares and a couple of life rafts that got blown away before he could get to them. A rescue plane dropped a large raft that he could reach and hold on to but couldn't get in. The waves were too high for a seaplane landing but fortunately a minesweeper was in the area and after three hours plus in the water he was found and picked up. He doesn't remember but was told he was screaming when lifted aboard.

Cliff was soon strapped in a wire basket and pulley-transferred over from the minesweeper to an accompanying cruiser. With both ships bobbing in the heavy sea it was one of the scariest moments for him because he feared the wire would break and he

would be dropped into the ocean still strapped in the basket.

Aboard the cruiser a chaplain asked if he was Catholic. When Cliff said he was Baptist it was the last he saw of the old chaplain. Morphine came to the rescue as far as the pain went but he had five broken bones in one foot and six in the other, two broken legs, a fractured hip and pelvis, three broken ribs and a collapsed lung.

The cruiser was en route to be decommissioned in California and had only enough diesel fuel for a slow trip. After increasing speed to get Cliff to a hospital in California, they ran out of diesel fuel. They resorted to running the diesels on some aviation fuel they had on board, in the process burning up two of the cruiser's six engines. A helicopter was sent from California to pick up Cliff who now had gone into renal failure.

Since they were near maximum one-way range of the helicopter, that pilot had a strong incentive for finding the cruiser. He did, refueled on board and got Cliff back to the mainland. In the hospital it was first thought that one of Cliff's feet would have to be amputated but, fortunately, both feet were saved by screws and pins. Then his kidneys started to function again.

He was told had his spleen not been removed earlier after the car wreck it probably would have ruptured when he hit the water and he would have bled to death before he was picked up. At a later meeting with a NASA representative it was estimated that he had hit the water at around 100 mph. His being relaxed because he thought he was still high above the water when he hit also contributed to his survival.

Following 6 months or so of rehab Cliff again went on flight status. His first flight back was in a Crusader in which he completed an in-flight refueling without incident.

After seven years flying military jets, Cliff flew for 30 years with Delta before retiring.

Author unknown

Left: This C-141 Starlifter, returned to its 1970's color scheme in 2002, was the first aircraft to fly American POWs to freedom from Gia Lam Airport in Hanoi, North Vietnam, on 12 Feb 1973. It was dubbed Hanoi Taxi sometime during the mission.

Right. Retired Brig. Gen. James E. Sehorn points to signatures of fellow prisoners of war on display in the Hanoi Taxi.

Last C-141, 'Hanoi Taxi,' will retire to USAF museum Wright-Patt in May '06

On May 6, 2006, the last C-141 Starlifter will be flown to the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and retired, closing the book on the 43-year career of the StarLifter. But until then, the Hanoi Taxi, the flagship of the 445th Airlift Wing, will be flown over the museum and on missions around the country.

The C-141 was first flown on Dec. 17, 1963, the 60th anniversary of the first flight of the Wright Brothers. Since the aircraft's operational debut on April 23, 1965, active duty, Guard and Reserve crews have played a critical role in every conflict, natural disaster and operation in which Military Airlift Command or Air Mobility Command has been involved. That includes delivering people, equipment and relief supplies to just about every point on the map. However, one mission still stands above the rest.

With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on 17 Jan 1973, the U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended. On 12 Feb crews flying three C-141As landed at Gia Lam Airport in Hanoi, North Vietnam. Their mission: repatriate the first U.S. servicemen held as prisoners of war, some for close to seven years. The first aircraft to land that day was serial number 66-0177. It quickly picked up the nickname Hanoi Taxi. The aircraft was repainted in 2002 in the same paint scheme it had worn during the historic airlift nearly 30 years previously.

After undergoing two major modification programs during its career, 66-0177, now a C-141C, has become a flying museum. The 40 POWs on that first flight

signed the aircraft under the wing box, and those signatures are preserved under Plexiglas. Framed photos mounted on the inside of the cargo compartment show POWs in Hanoi and aboard the aircraft. Aircrew headrest covers on the flight deck are embroidered with the black and white POW/MIA logo, and each of the crew positions has engraved plaques with the name of the crew member on that first Freedom Flight. The aircraft now has a total of 39,420 flight hours.

There are currently four C-141s still in service, but the other three aircraft will be retired early in 2006. Hanoi Taxi will be the last C-141 to retire. The final flight will consist of a takeoff from the Patterson side of the field, where the 445th Airlift Wing is based, and a landing at the museum on the Wright Field side of the base. The 445th, an Air Force Reserve Command unit, is now converting to C-5As and will eventually receive eight of those aircraft.



Preparing to fly Hanoi Taxi from Robins AFB back to Wright-Patt following the aircraft's 2002 upgrade, Maj. Gen. Edward Mechenbier relates what the aircraft means to him and other former POWs.