



Big Easy Wing



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Happy Mardi Gras

Membership Meeting/

February 10th

10am



Unit Leader—Harold Buchler

Greetings!

As we approach the Mardi Gras season, I want to wish you a safe and happy Mardi Gras.

As you know we have a new pilot on board, Kris Caldwell. Due to the cold temperatures the Wind was not able to have any flying days in January. Hopefully with the coming spring we will get back to our mission.

Several projects are coming up that I would like as many of our members to participate in as possible. First, we are having our Wing ground school set for Saturday, March 9. Secondly, the CAF Wing Staff Conference is set for February 29 through March 3 in Dallas at CAFHQ. It is great chance to meet other CAF members from around the country and the chance to promote our Wing.



In March we will be participating at the Belle Chasse Naval Air Station during their Air Show. The Wing's Stearman will be on static display. Kris is undertaking to get all the approvals needed to get the Stearman over there. We will have our PX at the show. We need volunteers to help with the sales and assist guests to sit in the Stearman.

March 22-24

On April 11 the Salvation Army is hosting a fundraiser at the Terminal Building at Lakefront Airport. They have asked that the BEW position the Stearman outside the terminal for individuals to view the plane. Other Warbirds might also participate. The BEW will have a table set up to inform patrons about our Wing and hopefully sell rides.

On May 6, Airbase Arizona, the Gulf Coast Wing, Bayou State Escadrille, and the Mississippi Wing will present a Warbird Expo at Lakefront. Participating aircraft will be a B-17, B-25, C-45, SNJ, L-5, Bell 47 Helicopter, our Stearman and possibly Gunslinger a P-51. The planes will be on display for tours from May 6 through May 9, followed by flight days on May 10 through May 12. We will need many volunteers to help make this event a huge success.

See you at the hangar!



COMMEMORATIVE
AIR FORCE

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Executive Officer– Robert Claypool



We did have a great Big Easy Wing Ground School last year. So, I will take that as a win. And, what's more thrilling, is that the 2024 Ground School is just around the corner!

Ground school is an important part of our CAF requirements. CAF Head Quarters recommends that all members attend their unit's ground school. And why would we not? This is the opportunity to learn or refresh yourself on topics that are vital to the success of our wing. Like last year, sessions will cover everything from CAF rules, regulations, and safety protocols to Big Easy Wing specific operations:

Guest Speaker

Pilot's Session

Door Operations

Education

PX

Loadmaster

Maintenance

Marshalling

Our ground school will be held at the hangar on March 9th. We will begin registration at 9:00 AM, and plan to end around 3:00 PM. We will run through all the general information in the morning, including the pilot session for all members, and then do the training for each of the 'certificated' positions.

There is plenty to learn, and even more to do to help us grow the wing to honor and preserve the legacy of our warbirds!

This meeting is a great opportunity to encourage any of your friends that may have an interest in the wing to join. By the end of the day, you and any of your guests will find a passion for the Big Easy Wing and will better enjoy making a difference in educating on and preserving our history.

Snacks, coffee, drinks, and lunch will be served. So please mark your calendar now and plan to attend the Ground School on March 9th. Be sure to check the March newsletter for the agenda.

See you !



Tom Gibbs, Gary Sinise Foundation



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Operation Officer—Kris Caldwell



Happy Mardi Gras!

Terry and Pat have worked diligently to get N'Awlins Lady back in service after the annual inspection. We'll be doing a return to service flight soon. We want to be ready for the JRB NAS New Orleans Airshow 22-24 March. It's going to be a fun event to demonstrate this piece of history to our own community.

Stearman orientation and refresher training will be occurring two weeks before the show on Saturday, 9 March. Please make it a point to be there for that meeting. It'll be important to get the team together to hash out logistics and responsibilities for the airshow. **All hands-on deck!**



Education Officer—Roger Jeffrey



Greetings!

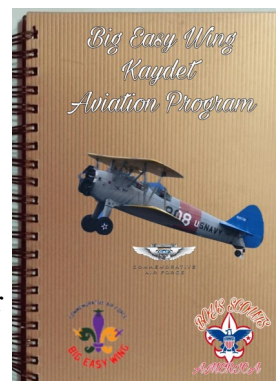
At the January meeting we identified several members who volunteered to be instructors in our Kaydet program for teaching the Boy Scouts Aviation Merit Badge. We learned that there are several requirements to qualify as a Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselor, so at our next meeting we will be working with the volunteers to complete these requirements and submit them to the Boy Scouts. We need each of these volunteer instructors to attend our February 10th meeting.

I have broken down our Aviation Merit Badge course curriculum into appropriate modules with slides and handouts to be used during instruction. Instructors will be able to teach a module and then sign the scout's Aviation Merit Badge Workbook section as complete.

Our goal is to begin to enroll 5-6 scouts per session, starting sometime in March. I wish to thank the volunteer instructors and look forward to the completion of our first successful Aviation Merit Badge Training program.

If anyone else is interested in volunteering see me at this meeting.

See you all on February 10th!





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Adjutant-Shirley Colomb



It's Carnival Time! And we all ASK for YOU!

We welcome our 2 new newest members. Greeting to **Celeste Landry Fortier of Baton Rouge** and **Carlton Dufrechou of Metairie**. We look forward to meeting you each. Please try to join us at our next meeting Feb. 10 and specially Ground School on March 9th. Thank you for joining our wing.

It is important for each of us to reach out to friends and acquaintances that show aviation interest or community involvement. We all need to pursue prospective members. Already, there are many events on our calendar-promote these with friends and people you meet to increase membership. Perhaps, we will obtain new members.

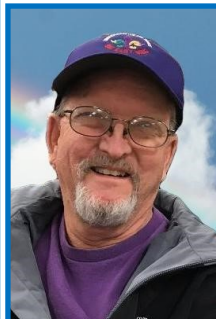
Dues may be paid *Online* by going to our BEW website [online store](#), call me or you can mail me a check.

Checks mailed to:

CAF Big Easy Wing
c/o Shirley Colomb, Adjutant
281-413-4525
1216 Brockenbraugh Ct
Metairie, LA 70005



Safety Officer— Rick Wood



Good day Big Easy Wing !

I hoped everyone had a great and safe holiday. In the next few months, the unit has many events planned. First and foremost, there is Ground School. Followed by Belle Chasse Airshow, Salvation Army event and Warbird Airshow at Lakefront.

This year the unit is starting a Boy Scouts program and working with Christian Brothers students. So, there will be plenty new people youth around the hangar. Remember- Safety First. Let's make all the upcoming events safe and enjoyable for everyone. If you have any questions about safety for any upcoming events please reach out to me. I will see everyone on the 10th of February.

UTVA-66

The Grey Beast

First Impressions: The UTVA-66 is indeed a beast. It’s big, it’s tough, and it’s LOUD. This multi-role aircraft served in air ambulance, artillery spotter, and liaison roles, both as a landplane and amphibious float-plane. Although a rare find, these days it performs as a very capable backcountry STOL machine.

Background: Utva (or UTVA) Aviation Industry begun as a Yugoslav glider manufacturer in 1937 and eventually came to manufacture single-engine general aviation aircraft and military trainers. Today, Utva is located in Pančevo, Serbia. Generally, Utva’s aircraft designations were based on the year of their design, with the UTVA-66 being designed in 1966. The UTVA-66 in this article was manufactured in 1975 and has since found its way from the Balkan Peninsula to Huntsville, Alabama, via Canada. In 2020 it became the personal adventure machine of Jay Phelps, who made it airworthy with some needed maintenance. Having no Pilot Operating Handbook, he contacted Utva, hoping to acquire one. They replied rather directly that a significant portion of their archives were destroyed when “your country” bombed their factory in 1999. Jay’s diplomacy skills, sharpened during his 20-year service in the U.S. Army, paid off and they did eventually find and send him a copy. He spent about three weeks using Google translator before he finally had a working copy in English.

Design Characteristics: There is nothing flimsy about the UTVA-66. This multi-role liaison aircraft was built for both slow speed and maneuverability. The all-metal four-seater uses metal wing spars and ailerons which begin to droop with the flaps at 20 degrees. The outboard wing leading edge has fixed slats to improve slow-speed roll controllability. Throttles and prop control levers are located on the left and right forward windowsills. The pilot’s side throttle lever has a button to enable emergency power, boosting manifold pressure to 48 inches). In its air ambulance configuration, the back seat, right stick, and copilot seat are removed so that two bunkbed-style litters can be loaded through the upward-swinging back window hatch and stacked along the pilot’s right side. A small medic’s seat can be installed behind the pilot’s seat for in-flight patient care. For the Forward Air Controller and artillery-spotting roles, there is a single hard point on each wing for pylons which can carry rocket pods or machine guns.



Powerplant: Everything forward of the firewall is American. A 340-horsepower supercharged Lycoming GSO-480 turns a three-bladed, 96-inch Hartzell constant-speed prop via the gearbox (77:120 reduction ratio). Interestingly, the engine mount is an I-beam “bed mount”. To say that it is sturdy is an understatement. It’s more like having a bulldozer scraper blade attached to the front of your airplane! Sixty-six gallons of fuel are held in two wing tanks. If a ladder is unavailable for fueling, you can climb on top of the wings with convenient handles and steps from the right landing gear to on top of the cowl and on to the wings. There are two red stripes marking the walkway down to the filler caps.

Taxi/Takeoff: Strapping into your seat may cause some confusion the first time you do it. The four-point seat belt system consists of canvas straps with a single, drilled pivot pin and multiple grommet holes on each of the non-adjustable straps. You need to put the strap with the pivot pin on the bottom and stack the other lap belt and shoulder straps on top, finding the grommets that best fits you. Lastly, a double hairpin cotter key must be inserted into the drilled pivot pin to hold everything in place. In contrast to the complexity of the seatbelts, startup is simple. Check the fuel is “ON” (there is no left or



right), magnetos to both, master and alternator to on, mixture about 2/3 rich, and hit the geared starter switch. If the cylinders are a little reluctant to start, they can be coaxed with a quick flick of the electric fuel pump switch. The mixture on the auto-compensating Bendix-Stromberg carburetor goes to full rich, where it remains until shutdown. After firing to life, set about 1500 rpm and leave it there. Even during taxi, if you need to slow down, use the brakes; they're cheaper to replace than the gearbox. With the tailwheel unlocked, it will caster, which requires differential braking to keep tracking straight. When making a turn, you need to “stab” the appropriate brake and then apply opposite braking once it starts turning. There is a lot of mass in the beast, and it doesn't like to stop turning once in motion. Visibility over the nose in the three-point attitude is nil, so your visibility will be relegated to the corner of the windscreen. If you've got a taxiway centerline, offset the left main landing gear slightly to the right. Occasional swerves are necessary to ensure no obstacles are in your path. In preparation for takeoff, set the trim with a 6.5-inch trim wheel located just forward of the left door frame, above the throttle quadrant. Push the two-way flap selector valve down and then use the floor mounted hand lever to hydraulically pump the flaps down to your desired takeoff setting. Any setting (0 to 40 degrees) is acceptable for takeoff with twenty degrees being a good compromise setting for acceleration and takeoff performance.

After takeoff checks are completed, line-up on the runway and slide the tailwheel lock lever (by the pilot's left knee) forward. Hold the brakes and smoothly push the throttle forward until you feel the brakes straining. Release the brakes and continue to push the throttle all the way forward. With 45-inches of manifold pressure, the *Grey Beast* is foaming at the mouth and roaring with full fury. It accelerates with a vengeance, eager to claw its way skyward. The tail will lift off the ground on its own. With a light-loaded airplane, you'll be off the ground in 3 to 4 seconds. Did I mention that it's loud? I mean *really* LOUD. Active Noise Reduction (ANR) headsets are a must and should be used in conjunction with earplugs.

There are two instrument panels: one for flight instrument and one for engine instruments. Each panel is “floating”, with eight springs keeping them in place. With full power, all the instruments are jiggling in the panel, adding to the sensation that you are indeed riding a galloping beast. Safely away from the ground, you can bring the throttle back to a mere 40-inches of manifold pressure and try not to think about the 52-gallons-per-hour of takeoff power fun that you're having!

Flight Characteristics: After leveling off, pull the manifold pressure back to about 33 inHg (830 mmHG on the original *Manovakimetar*) and set 2700 rpm. This will yield about 125-mph at the lowest consumption rate of only 18 gph. Finally, the lower noise level will finally allow you to communicate with passengers over the ICS. The UTVA is a nice flying machine with smooth controls. It is trim sensitive, but utilizing the convenient trim wheel on the left becomes second nature quickly. Just a bit of leading rudder in the direction of turn is all that's needed to keep the ball centered. The roll rate is good, and it's not far-fetched to appreciate how this would be a reasonable aircraft for target-spotting and even conducting roll-in attacks. You would certainly be vulnerable to small arms fire but no worse than in an L-19 Bird Dog.



Landing: When it comes time to “tame the beast” (land), you need to be mindful of the GSO-480's gearbox. As with any geared engine, you *always* want the engine to drive the propeller and not ever allow the propeller to drive the engine. If on the *Harwood Arrival* (unofficial arrival honoring a local legend who incredibly never skipped a day of flying in over 20 years) to Cullman, Alabama, you need to bring back the power slowly and manage your airspeed. On downwind, ensure the flap selector valve is down and then pump the flaps down to 20 degrees. A normal approach is made at 65 mph with flaps between 20 to 40 degrees. A true STOL landing will be configured with 40 degrees of flaps and the approach will be made at about 55 mph. Significant power is required. Round-out and reduce power simultaneously. Each main landing gear has four rubber donuts that can absorb a good energy dissipating STOL landing. Eastern European and Soviet aircraft manufacturers tend to love leather stirrups on their rudder pedals, which create a bit of awkwardness for the *plantar* (push) and *dorsiflex* (pull) motions of your ankles. Those of us who like to use our toes on the bottom of the pedals for the rudder and then slide our feet up to apply brakes, will have to be cognizant not to land with the brakes applied. Each wheel uses quadruple puck brakes to get the 4,000-pound animal stopped. Congratulations, you have tamed the beast – *this* time.

Wrap-Up: In Jay's words, the Utva can be described as so ugly that it's pretty. It might be a little intimidating at first, but after some time in the seat, you'll soon find it fun to fly. Two things that can be confirmed is the utilitarian ruggedness and brute power of the *Grey Beast*. Oh, and did I mention that it's LOUD?



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