

March 2008

From Midland, TX and the Mid-Winter Staff Conference.

In the last update, I told you about the confusion that seems to exist about how we do things. And wrote multiple bullet points trying to explain it; I also said standby for changes.

And there will be changes. The Formation Working Group, Bob Stenevik put together met and is going to the Operations Board, which will go to the General Staff, with a recommendation that the verbiage concerning formation flying in the CAFRs be changed. It was not up to this group to write said verbiage, that's the Ops Board's field, but we suggested that the "anytime, anybody, anywhere" language they adopted a few years ago was too restrictive, especially toward training.

There are also going to be suggestions for photo flights and large aircraft (multi-engine stuff) formations. At the same time, the suggestion was brought up for the little guys, the L-birds that the CAF look into accepting a JSLF card for biplanes and high wing aircraft. TRARON has no issue with that and that is keeping with FAST policy that a card is a card is a card.

HOWEVER, nothing has changed yet. So, until you see something written down we are under the rules we are under.

In other fields, the National FAST Board met at NWOC last month and published Version 20 of the FAST Protocols. They are available on this website.

In them you will find that each signatory is responsible for producing it's own training manual. In compliance with that, we have several experienced pilots producing our manual. Unfortunately with the timing (FAST made this decision at NWOC in February), we won't have something to see until later this year – mid season.

So, for now, it's still the T-34 Manual and the Darton Tapes.

Other Sniping:

Elections. The last time TRARON had an election was 1994. Recently several folks have apparently called Midland and asked about this. I can tell you I joined TRARON in 1999 and have never experienced an election. Given the role of TRARON as the CAF representative to the National FAST organization, we (TRARON officers) and the staff from HQ thought it should not be a popularity contest. Nor do we have the need for a full staff like a unit as depicted in the unit manual. Therefore, a proposal was presented to the General Staff at MWS and passed unanimously that TRARON become an administrative arm of the President, Steve Brown.

There will be a rotation of officers, Lead and Sec/Tres., on a 4 year cycle, offset by two for continuity. These folks will be selected by a committee made up of the current TRARON officers and the prior officers and presented to Steve Brown for selection.

There have also been complaints that the information on the website concerning upcoming clinics is incomplete and/or missing. The information posted is that provided, if more is required the unit holding the clinic will need to tell us. The website is for communication, not from me to you but from everybody to everybody. We have a standing request for pictures from clinics, info about who was rated, etc. Generally, unless we chase it down, we receive nothing. We all need to communicate better.

The table for the O'Club. I got a tour of the new Center and we have an entire alcove for the TRARON presentation. We are digitizing pictures for the motif the staff has decided, our Distinguished Unit award will be hung there, etc. However, the table, pictured in a earlier update will not be. The builders from the PI are refusing to ship. For those of you that have been to the PI it should all make sense (I figure it cracked or they dropped it).

The good news is we got the money back. And will keep looking.

Also from the last couple of updates as a reminder:

There will be no more exchange or recognition of other signatory's card without a check ride and compliance with the TRARON requirements being demonstrated.

The 2-ship program is for aircraft which are few in number and do not gather regularly enough to get a 4-ship together. It does not apply to T-6s.

Wingmen will be checked in the #4 position. While this varies through FAST, it has always been a way of doing things, but somebody had an issue because it wasn't written that way - now it is.

Check rides will occur only at clinics to ensure the FORMAL ground school portion is met. Eventually, in my copious free time, I'll come up with a certificate of completion or something so we can change this back, but for right now...

Since it was brought up at the FAST Board meeting (I thought it went without saying); the recommending Lead and the Check Pilot have to be two different people. The Check Pilot will fly in the aircraft with the 'checkee'. And only certain Lead's can recommend, they know who they are.

AGAIN, WE NEED MORE CLINICS! All it takes is a 4-ship!

Right now we have Riverside underway, Castle AFB and Odessa scheduled. Plus the pre-Sun N Fun and Oshkosh clinics many of us participate in.

TRARON will help with any local clinic you guys want to hold, we will get you instructors/check pilots. All it takes is a 4-ship and an airport willing to work with you. Ideally, you should plan on a ground school Friday evening and as much flying as you can get in on Saturday and Sunday.

Anybody interested in more should contact me at skippert6@comcast.net and please put "FAST" in the subject line before I spam you out.

PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE