

## The Return of the SGS 1-26B

On Tuesday of this week, we began the saga of returning the SGS 1-26B to its rightful home, at Van Sant.

Bruce Weber kindly lent us his 1-26B trailer, and Phil and I met at Bruce's to hook the trailer up to Phil's car. This process went more smoothly than I had envisioned. The purely mechanical aspects of the trailer hook-up went pretty smoothly. We (i.e., Phil) had anticipated that we might encounter difficulties with the electrical hook-up, and this proved to be the case. Still, with Phil's expertise, we departed from Bruce's place for the off-field landing site more or less on schedule, with the left (rear) trailer brake light and turn signal operating. We never got the right one to light up.

We arrived at the landing site a little before 12:30pm. Examining the SGS 1-26B, I was surprised to see all four tie-downs (2 wings, nose, and tail) all intact. The plane looked fine.

While we were waiting for others to arrive, Phil and I did a little prep work on the SGS 1-26B, including removal of the canopy and turtle deck. We also positioned the trailer to enable us to roll the fuselage onto the trailer.

George Taylor and Chris (I don't know Chris's surname) showed up just a few minutes before Marty and Irene. Then the fun began.



Off came the wings, always easier said than done.



Naked fuselage. That was easy.



Just about ready to begin the most treacherous part of this day's adventure, i.e., driving the SGS 1-26B back to Van Sant. The roads in this area of PA present a number of challenges, including hair-pin turns, very bumpy roads, covered bridges, and washed-out bridges. We planned a route that we thought might help us to avoid these hazards. This took us longer than

desired, but Phil did a masterful job navigating the roads, with some navigational guidance by Marty.

I had the honor of driving behind the trailer, mostly to prevent others from seeing that the trailer's lights were not functioning quite up to code. Long story short, Phil delivered the SGS 1-26B back to Van Sant, where the next leg of this saga, the reassembly process, could start. Piece of cake, right?





After getting the first wing attached with relative ease, one might be forgiven for thinking that the second wing would go on similarly easily. It kind of did, but then we ran into hardware issues. During the dismantling process, we saved all of the hardware in zip-lock bags, so for reassembly, we definitely had all the parts. However, the plane's designers turn out to have been mischief-makers. When we tried to get the last major bolt into position, it became obvious (after a little while of trying to "coax" (i.e., hammer) it into place) that it was too large. Eventually, we removed its mirror-image bolt and found that the designers had used two different size bolts.

After sorting through this issue, it came down to tightening all of the bolts, nuts, etc.

When all was said and done, Phil and I tracted the SGS 1-26B back to its tie-down spot. After that, we drove Bruce's trailer back to his house, and then went our separate ways.

All in all, this took a herculean effort, and it was only made possible through the efforts and generosity of all who participated.



Back at home.