



## OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

December 2008 No. 39

George Vose, Secretary/Editor

Box 908, Texas 79831 432-837-5788 [gvose@yahoo.com](mailto:gvose@yahoo.com)

Message from the secretary This newsletter contains a couple items about Charles Lindbergh, the first aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic from New York to Paris. Not very many of us recall the 1927 flight, an amazing event that resulted in the greatest-ever ticker tape parade in New York City. This secretary-editor was five years old at the time. Radios (with "earphones" or "loud speakers") were a luxury that few people could afford. Day-old newspaper news, the telegraph and word-of-mouth were the means for providing news in those days. My recollections at age five were gained from the excited enthusiasm of my elders. Someone gave me a small steel model of the Spirit of Saint Louis which could be disassembled and reassembled with nuts and bolts. (No plastics to snap together in those days).



A few decades later my flight instructor, in his declining years, gave me a large picture of Lindbergh standing beside the Spirit of Saint Louis. During pre-WWII days Lindbergh's image became tarnished because of his anti-war views, and the framed pictures of Lindbergh, that had been hanging in all Pennsylvania public schools since his famed flight, were ordered to be removed. The Boalsburg High School was right beside the airport where I learned to fly and the school janitor, instead of scrapping the picture, gave it to the flight school. The Lindbergh picture hanging on my den wall is a copy of the one ordered to be destroyed. I am glad to have it.



**The Mystery Airplane** This will be an easy one for "older" OX5 members, but this big all-metal plane may not be recognized by "younger" members. (Say, by those under 80). Very few of these airplanes remain in the U. S. today. But the one shown below has been meticulously restored, is flying, and it is described on page 3. (It is for sale).



This big airplane is a .....

**Curtiss "Condor"                      Fokker Tri-Motor**

**Consolidated Model 16              Ford Tri-Motor**

Aircraft information and description on page 3

**A good time at the Old Kingsbury brat fest** By Gov. George Chandler

The annual meeting of the Texas Wing was held at the **Old Kingsbury Aerodrome** on November 1 and 2, 2008. The Pecan Room at the Quality Inn In Seguin (formally the Holiday Inn) was bustling with OX5 members on Friday and Saturday nights. After filling up on all the goodies, many of us were too full to eat dinner.



As I pulled up to Roger Freeman's main hangar Saturday morning I had to laugh. The OX5 "Canuck" was sitting in front of the door, cowling off with Roger working on the same OX5 engine. (At exactly the same spot he was in when I arrived last year!) Time flies and some things never change.



Roger has built a new hangar to hold his late father's collection of airplane parts and memorabilia. Most of the material has not yet been unpacked, and I imagine that cataloging will be a real chore.

We shared the pavilion with a group of model airplane flyers and had quite a time watching those models in the air. Some of them had a four or five-foot wing span and, I

assume, a large financial investment.

Susie, Kaye and President Dan Brouse made sure that there were enough brats and side dishes for all. Even apple strudel!

A business meeting was held and all current officers were elected by acclamation. It was decided to again have a summer meeting with the Antique Airplane Association at Gainesville. A discussion was held about having a winter meeting in the South Texas area. Warm weather and palm trees. We certainly have had fun there in the past.



Warm weather and palm trees. We certainly have had fun there in the past.

As evening came, we returned to the Pecan Room to laugh, tell lies and look forward to next year.



**OX5 member Dr. Jim Hays brought his classic altimeter collection to Kingsbury.** He said that it all started 25 years ago when he bought a "1930s" altimeter to put in an antique airplane he tried, but failed, to buy. Then he began to pick up other old instruments for his J2 Cub and other planes he owned in the past. He sold a few of them to help other aircraft restorers. He said, "I have several 1930s civil and military altimeters, as well as the easier-to come by WWII instruments".

"Good old light plane ones are getting hard to come by as they were so cheaply made and have not survived well. I brought my WWI altimeters to Kingsbury because of its WWI theme. I'm still looking for an Aeromarine compass or even just the magnets, and also a Robison variometer for an old glider project. I'm now working on a Pietenpol

Aircamper and plan to eventually do its panel". **James B. Hayes, OX5 22474, 400 CR 339, Brownwood, TX 76802**

## New Wing Governor Cade Woodward

Cade Woodward is a senior at Sul Ross State University in Alpine. He is a private pilot – soon to be commercial, and a mechanic trainee on fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. He is from a ranching family and flies a Piper PA-12 connecting their working ranches in four West Texas counties.

Cade is not the youngest member in the Texas OX5 Wing. (That honor goes to Patricia C. Lawrence, age 16 and the daughter of member Mike Lawrence and granddaughter of member George Chandler), but he is the youngest Texas Wing governor. He assumed that position at the annual Wing election in Kingsbury. At one time the OX5 was a bunch of "aging airmen". It is good to have enthusiastic young members, like Cade, to take the helm.





Have you paid your 2008 national dues? If not, in order to remain on the Texas Wing Newsletter mailing list, mail your twenty-dollar check to: [Bob Taylor, PO Box 1406, Berthoud, CO 80513-1406](mailto:Bob Taylor, PO Box 1406, Berthoud, CO 80513-1406). (To: "OX5")



The "Mystery Plane" is the Ford "Tri-Motor" 4-AT-E. This aircraft became a significant part of American aviation. Many people received their first experience in air travel in the "Tin Goose". The model 4-AT-E was basically a model 4-AT-B with increased power. It was equipped with three 9 cylinder Wright J6 engines of 300 hp each. It carried up to 11 passengers in a cabin that was sound-proofed and insulated, heated and ventilated. For its time it was a big airplane, length 49'10", height 12'8" with a 74' wing span. Gross wgt 10,130 lbs. Max speed 132. Cruise 112, landing speed 58. Price at factory \$42,000.

The airplane shown in these pictures is 1929 NC9612, and titled "for immediate sale" by the present owner, Dolph Overton. It is based at Petersburg-Dinwiddie Airport in Central Virginia. In 1929 it was delivered as a passenger plane to Mamer Flying Service in Spokane. It was later sold to K-T Flying Service in Honolulu and was at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Later, on the mainland, it was leased by TWA for their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. It was modified and became one of the pioneer forest fire fighting air tankers.

It has been meticulously restored. The wings have been re-worked and re-skinned. The interior has been re-skinned and the wood paneling has been recreated. The description states, "There are no modern avionics or communications gear - just what came with the plane when it was delivered from the Ford factory". The total airframe time is 3102 hours and the total time on the engines and propellers is 48 hours SMOH.

For immediate sale Price \$2,700,000 / offers. [dolphoverton@yahoo.com](mailto:dolphoverton@yahoo.com).

Some photos of NC 9612:



Left: No av-gas  
In those days.



Right: No flight attendants either. (Bring your own snack)



Left: Back to the basics



Right: The Ford/Stout specifications plate



Ford Tri-Motor restroom facility. Was there a door or a sliding curtain?

(Must have been)

All pictures provided by Texas Wing Governor Bud Johnson, retired American Airlines captain.

*Thanks, Bud, for the pictures and information*

---

## Texas OX5er remembers Lindbergh

---



Most Wing members recall that Ben Towle was a test pilot for Chance Vought during World War II. He said he would send us some items about Charles Lindbergh who spent time at the factory in Fort Worth, and Ben got to know him quite well. A few days ago we received the items from Ben. In the early days of WWII Lindbergh was sent to the Chance Vought factory to pick up a Corsair for a flight to the Pacific Theater. Numerous delays kept him at the factory for a considerable time. Ben described the delay this way

**“When Lindbergh arrived to pick up the plane it was not ready so he visited around the factory and flight line for about a month. The plane he was to take was still being slow timed. During what would have been the last flight the pilot radioed that he had a flame out and no place to land, so he was abandoning the plane. He was found in a field very badly bruised. Evidently his chute opened while he was still in the cockpit and whipped him against the fuselage. This meant another thirty days for Lindbergh to wait”.**

Ben recalled some events that happened while Lindbergh was waiting for another plane. Here are a few:

**“Occasionally a group needed to visit supply factories in the company’s twin Beech and Lindbergh asked to go along with us. All the time we were in the air Lindbergh would be writing in his notebook”**

**“When I told him that he landed in Paris on my sister’s 12<sup>th</sup> birthday he replied that if he had know about it, he would have sent her a birthday card from France”.**



**“One day one of our pilots did a buzz job on the house where he was living. The next day he asked the pilot not to do a repeat buzz because the neighbors objected. (But their kids loved it)”.**

**“One day Lindbergh visited the hospital with me. One of our production test pilots had crashed. He had been testing the fuel tanks but left one tank on too long and ran it dry. He made a wheels-up forced landing in a brush patch, slid through a pile of rocks and ended up against a tree. His only injury was a crushed vertebra. At the hospital Lindbergh volunteered to autograph his cast, but he said no. I was stunned. The next day Lindbergh left for the Pacific”.**

Thanks for your interesting recollections, Ben.



## Lindbergh's first airplane out of storage (In 1976)

Because this issue of the Texas Wing Newsletter quotes some items about Charles Lindbergh, our Wing historian, Hazel Fehmel, has sent us an original 1976 OX5 NEWS which contains an interesting article about the planned restoration of Lindbergh's first airplane, a Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny". (Hazel has preserved many important OX5 items - including the OX5 NEWS - for many years). The heading of this 1976 issue reads: **LINDBERGH'S FIRST AIRPLANE OUT OF STORAGE.**

The article begins: "We are reliably informed that one of our OX5 members – George C. Dade of Glen Head, N. Y. is currently engaged in the restoration of Charles A. Lindbergh's first airplane – a WWI Curtiss JN-4 'Jenny'. Dade, an aviation enthusiast almost since childhood is rebuilding the airplane at his home. Every Wednesday evening, old timers from Long Island's aviation industry, and a few of their machine-happy sons, assist in authentically restoring the old Jenny to its original condition. The airplane, after 46 years of disintegration in an Iowa barn, is heading toward the condition it enjoyed when Lindbergh made his first solo flight in it 52 years ago".

George Dade lived with his family in a hangar at old Curtiss Field and, at age 15, he was doing odd jobs around the airport where he watched "Slim" Lindbergh prepare for his trans-Atlantic flight. The picture shows 17-year-old George adjusting Lindbergh's parachute at Roosevelt Field. Lindbergh was testing the Curtiss Falcon which he later used, after modifications, to survey the proposed route of Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT which later became TWA).



"Lindy" and George Dade

George Dade heard that Lindbergh's first Jenny had been stored for many years by Ernest LeClerc, a farmer in Coggon, Iowa. LeClerc had been hoping that someone with sufficient interest and ability would come along to restore it. George Dade was the lucky one and he quickly hauled the airplane back to Long Island. During its restoration, and six months before his death, Charles Lindbergh inspected the Jenny and verified in a written statement that it was the one he had owned.

When finished, the plan was to donate it to the proposed Nassau County Aviation Museum. A recent internet search shows that the museum was eventually completed and named the "Cradle of Aviation Museum" in Nassau County. A recent visitor to the museum writes. "A rather unimpressive Curtiss JN-4 Jenny hangs overhead – not much can be seen of it. But over in a simulated workshop, another Jenny, stripped of her canvas covering, sits there with her gleaming varnished wooden skeleton exposed".

Can either of these Jennys have been the first airplane owned by Lindbergh? We really do not know for sure. Anyone who has visited the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City, N. Y. might have the answer. Please let us know.

## A Texas Wing winter meeting?

For many years the Texas Wing held winter reunions, usually in the warmer climate of the Rio Grande Valley. A few years ago the meetings suddenly ceased. Last February we resumed the annual winter meetings. While the attendance was low, we had a very good time at the Holiday Inn Brownsville. The accommodations and food were excellent and the weather was perfect – in the 80s with palm trees rustling in the breeze. During the three-day stay we visited the Iwo Jima memorial in Harlingen and the CAF hanger at the Brownsville Airport.



At the Kingsbury meeting in November a committee was named to arrange another meeting in mid-February. The committee is working on it. We'll let you know.

## Some will remember ...

Some of the young OX5ers will not remember. But a few of the old timers vividly recall the domestic times of World War II. Neither the east or west coastlines experienced any serious hostilities during the years 1941-1945. Enemy submarines lurked off the Atlantic coast (and a number were destroyed), and the Pacific enemy launched a few abortive sea and balloon incidents. But the United States was prepared to repel any invasion from either ocean. This newsletter editor recalls long-night black-outs, muted traffic lights and "brown-outs" in coastal cities, and the required automobile headlight turn-offs while driving slowly during night in critical areas.



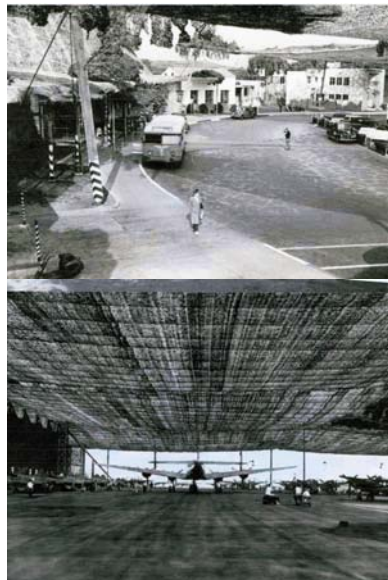
Manufacturing factories were particularly vulnerable. Unique camouflage designs were developed. One interesting plan was made to protect the Lockheed Aircraft Plant in Burbank, California. And, if ever needed, it probably would have worked. The unprotected Lockheed Factory would have been an easy target. The picture on the left shows the early WWII non-camouflaged plant. Then it was covered with a netting which, from the air, made it look like a urban subdivision. From the air the area looked like a pastoral rural scene, while inside it was a very busy factory with men and women constructing hundreds of war planes every day.

Was all this precaution necessary? We'll never know for sure, but certainly the U. S. was prepared.

---

Below are some photographs (from the inside and from above) of the very productive Lockheed Aircraft Factory

---



## Readers might help ? ?

Several readers have recently mailed donations to help with the newsletter expense. We thank them for their generosity. One person who is not an OX5 member but who likes to read the newsletter has contributed. Because the Texas Wing does not charge membership dues, the cost of the newsletter is gradually depleting our treasury. If anyone wishes to donate \$5, \$10 or whatever (to TX OX5), an addressed envelope is enclosed. (If you have already contributed, many thanks, and throw away the envelope.

George Vose, Editor