



## OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

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George Vose, Secretary-Editor

Box 908, Texas 79831

432-837-5788

[gvose@yahoo.com](mailto:gvose@yahoo.com)

**Message from the Secretary-Editor:** In the December 2008 newsletter we mentioned that the cost of quarterly newsletter production was eating into our Wing treasury balance. We suggested that, since our Wing charges no dues, we would gladly accept any contributions to help pay for the newsletter production. We were more than pleased ! Within a month almost \$800 was received by mail. Thank you. While the preparation, assembly, folding, enveloping and addressing of 150 copies is contributed by Alpine OX5ers, and the postage is generously provided by a Texas business association, other items including cartridge ink, 24-pound paper and envelopes amount to about \$135 an issue. So your recent contributions assure more than another year of newsletters. (Providing that the editor and his Alpine helpers can hang in there ... we'll sure try).



**The Mystery Airplane** In pre-World War II days many civilian pilots learned to fly in this pretty bi-plane. During the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) times, thousands of young pilots were trained. (Just in case they might be needed as future military pilots .... and they were).

*Many current pilots will recognize that this airplane appears on the front page of AOPA's 2009 Airport Directory. We thank the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association for its use.*



The biplane on the left is a ....

**Stearman PT-17**

**Navy N3N**

**Fairchild PT-19**

**Waco UPF-7**

(Information and description on last page)

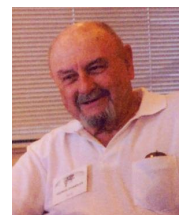
## Mid-Winter Reunion in Brownsville

**Photos and info by Wing Governor George Chandler**

The Holiday Inn-Brownsville was the setting for our winter meeting Feb. 26-27 and 28<sup>th</sup>. This was the second year in a row that we have had the meeting in Brownsville. On arrival Thursday the temperature was in the 70s with a strong south wind.



**OX5ers chose not to use the pool**



**George**

Robert and Penni Clark drove the farthest distance of 900 miles from their Panhandle ranch in Miami, Texas. The Clarks are gradually getting cattle back after wildfires destroyed the range last year. Over 20 miles of fence had to be rebuilt. Bob said that anything made of wood burned, and anything made of metal was ruined. Texans are resilient !

A well-stocked hospitality room was the focal point of activities as usual. On Friday, several took a tour of South Padre Island with lunch at the Amberjack restaurant. George Vose really enjoyed it (Not a lot of

seafood in the Big Bend city of Alpine for a Maine Yankee). On Friday night Jack Brouse showed a film and told about the restoration of his OX5 Eaglerock. It was a good presentation of the airplane that now hangs in the rotunda of the Science-Spectrum Museum in Lubbock.



George Vose, Betty and Bill Pritchett, Robert and Penni Clark



Mike Lawrence, Jack and Susie Brouse, Joan Buerschinger

### Above: Seafood OX5ers at the Amberjack

The weather changed on Saturday. A “blue norther” arrived with some rain, strong north winds and temps in the 50s ... a rare occurrence in Brownsville. The weather did not stop members from seeing the museums and shops of the city that is surrounded on three sides by Mexico. A trip to the famous zoo was cancelled because of the rain. So some of us watched TV hockey in the hospitality room.

There was a hot tub in the side room. It’s a shame that no one took advantage of it although, I’m sure, it entered in the minds of some. On Saturday night Jack Brouse showed a film on the tilt-wing XC142. The consensus of the “vaunted experts” in attendance was that it was a better design than the Osprey.



Sunday morning was travel day and we all headed East, North and West. South was not considered. Another great get together.

**Wing secretary’s note: Because four of our eight governors attended the Brownsville reunion, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and the secretary, we held a short business meeting. It was agreed that the Texas Wing will submit a proposal to National HQ to host the 2009 reunion in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in late September. (It’s not so hot there then). More about this later.**

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## Murphy’s Law proven again. As told by Ben Towle

Texas Wing members will recall that Ben Towle was a test pilot in the development of the WWII Chance-Vought Corsair F4U. And, while Ben did not seek the medal, he is eligible to wear the emblem of the Catapillar Club issued to pilots who have bailed out of crippled airplanes ... and lived. Bill sent us a bit about another of his test exploits. He said that it proved that Murphy’s law was still in effect. Here is Ben’s story:



*“Chance Vought was proud of their control system on the F4U. But one engineer thought that he could improve it, at least the ailerons. His boss approved the plan and it was sent to flight test where a pilot (me) was selected to fly it. An airplane was*

selected and modified. The modification consisted of the installation of chains of different lengths which were fastened to the right hand cockpit rail and the other end could be hooked to the control stick. One chain allowed 1/3<sup>rd</sup> aileron travel and the other allowed 2/3rds. A third chain (invisible) allowed full travel. Then the plane was moved to the flight line. The first flight was merely to check the system. Instrumentation would be added later”.



“I took off and climbed to 6,000 feet and set up a cruise of 180 mph. Then I hooked the short chain to the control stick and moved the stick to the left. I couldn’t notice any difference in control feel, so I hooked up the long chain and moved the stick to the left. As the stick moved past the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> position it was jerked out of my hand and it slammed against the chain. The force was so great that I couldn’t move it back. But I still had rudder and elevator control. At this point my main concern was to keep the plane as fast as possible and not let the nose drop. I kept the power up until I passed the inverted point and reduced power when it reached the upright position. I had lost enough speed to gain control again. **That ended the proposed change.**

**Thanks for the story Ben. We are glad YOU were the test pilot – not any of us.**

## **This letter flew with Lindy**

OX5er Lewis Travland has an air mail letter flown by Charles Lindbergh in 1928. He has framed it neatly and it hangs on his wall in Alpine, Texas.

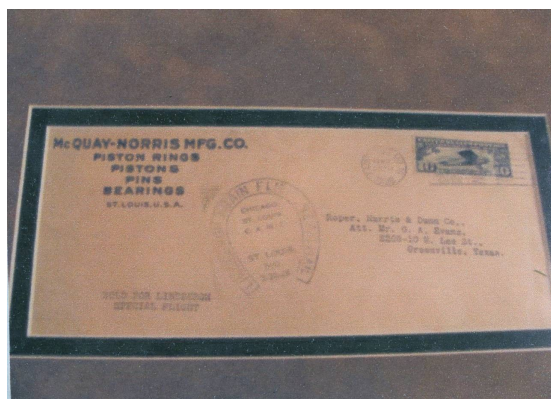
Lewis operates a busy aviation service at Alpine Airport. While Lewis is an AP mechanic-IA-CFI, chiefly he is in the helicopter business. He is away from his shops much of the time doing power and telephone line surveillance, herding cattle, monitoring wildlife, transporting people to remote areas and doing many other jobs a fixed wing airplane cannot do.

The letter and envelope that Lewis has framed and saved is shown below right. It was air mailed to customers of McQuay-Norris Manufacturing Company. (McQuay-Norris manufactured pistons, rings, pins and bearings). On the left is a view of the envelope. Wordings on the envelope are these: “Lindbergh again flies the air mail”, “Hold for Lindbergh special flight”, and below the stamp it states “Lindbergh Air Mail”.



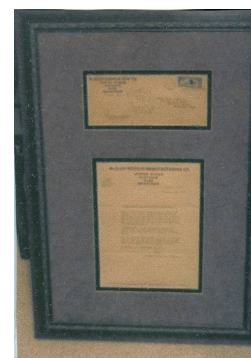
The letter reads as follows:

### **THIS LETTER FLEW WITH COLONEL LINDBERGH**



**Lindy – the modest young fellow who flew the Spirit of St. Louis to Paris with letters of introduction in his pocket – who just completed a tour of the Central American countries – who is the greatest flyer of all time – carries this letter to you as a souvenir greeting from McQuay-Norris.**

**Following his return from Cuba, Lindy re-entered the Air Mail Service for just one round trip. This letter was part of his mail cargo.**



**We are sending this letter to you as a souvenir, both of the daring aviator himself and of what may have been his last flight in the Air Mail Service. Keep this envelope as a historical keepsake.**

**From,**

**McQUAY-NORRIS MFG. COMPANY**

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## **Twenty-one years ago ... in Dallas**

Hazel Fehmel, our Texas Wing Historian, has accumulated massive amounts of information about our on-going records. She has saved in bound volumes every program, announcement and important letter for more than three decades. How fortunate we are that she has done this.



In one of her volumes we came across the 1988 program of the reunion of the Texas OX5 Aviation Pioneers held at the Dallas Ramada Hotel on December 18, 1988. At 3 p.m. that afternoon a festival of historical aviation films was shown in Tower Room 526. At 5:30 p.m. Fred Ridenour cranked up the OX5 engine he hauled from Wichita Falls to the Ramada parking lot. The sound of the 8-cylinder water-cooled engine was music to everyone's ears. After the cash bar at 6:30 the banquet began at 7:30.

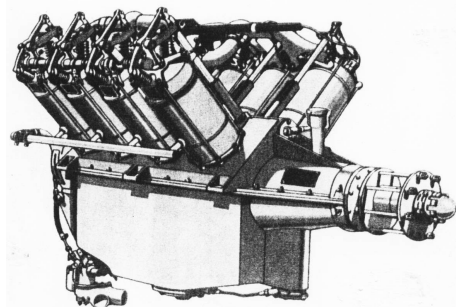
Wing President Robert Gettelman made the opening remarks. Willis Clark of Miami, Texas made the invocation, and Master of Ceremonies George Haddaway introduced the head table guests. Record holding pilot Jimmie Mattern was the guest speaker. His speech was followed by Acknowledgements and Presentations.

The plan of the OX5 banquet has been followed in many nation-wide locations since the first national reunion in Williamsport, Pennsylvania in 1956. Perhaps one noticeable change has been that the dress code has been somewhat relaxed.

The program booklet of the Dallas 1988 reunion contained the following description of the development of our vital and admired OX5 engine:

### **The Legendary OX5 (The keynote speech)**

**The Wright Brothers built bicycles and Glenn Curtiss built motorcycles. Both also had to build their own engines to get off the ground, none being available on the market. The Curtiss motorcycle was the direct ancestor of the OX5 as was the engine Curtiss built for Alexander Graham Bell's famous "June Bug" and the "Golden Flyer", the 50-hp job he flew at Reims in 1909. This was the first air race where Curtiss carried off top money and was catapulted into international fame. He had out flown Tissandier in the Wright biplane and Lantham in the Antoinette to win the Gordon Bennett Cup. From this water cooled V8 came the 90 hp OX5 in 1915.**



**No American airplane saw combat in WWI in Europe but the thousands of OX5 powered Jennies and Standards used for training became surplus after the war, selling for bargain basement prices and setting the stage for the barnstormers of the 1920s who provided the very roots for the U. S. Aviation industry. Perhaps your parents or grandparents received their first exposure to flying from these early birds. Many of us here today did.**

Little wonder that the OX5 is the only aircraft engine with so much sentiment that a national organization was formed around its history, fables and facts. Tonight, after the sun sets, OX5er Fred Ridenour will crank up his own OX5 so we can smell the exhaust, savor again the blue flame and listen to the melodious cacophony of the rocker arms and clacking cylinders of this V8 antique engine that kept 'em flying at the end of "the war fought to make the world safe for democracy".

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### **An OX5er flew west – too young**

In a previous issue of this newsletter we said that we would frequently tell about early and current airline pilots who are (or were) OX5 members. Some of them flew the early Lockheed Vegas, Boeing 247s and DC-2s with reciprocating Pratt and Whitney "Wasp" and Wright "Cyclone" engines. Now the airliners are mainly jet or turbine powered. We would like to tell a bit about one the "newer" airline pilots. Sadly, Jim Walling "flew west" in January.

One late afternoon in 1966 Jim Walling, age sixteen, came to George Vose at Hartlee Field, Denton, and asked for work so he could learn to fly. He was hired, and washed and helped to maintain airplanes and swept floors. While still in high school, he received his private pilot certificate on May 9, 1967 (his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday). He received his seaplane rating on July 14, 1967 and his commercial pilot certificate on May 9, 1968 (his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday).

After receiving his Flight Instructor rating he trained dozens of students at Hartlee Field and George assigned him to instruct pilots for seaplane ratings on Lake Dallas. (Jim's modest weight of about 155 pounds made him ideal for the job of instructing in an underpowered Cessna 150 seaplane). One day George flew overhead and saw Jim wading in the water and tugging the plane from a sand bar with his student still aboard. Lake Dallas is pretty shallow in places.



**James Walling**

Afterwards his aviation career became professional when he began flying De Havilland Twin Otters for Metro Airlines. He told George that it was a pretty good flying job until he could get onto a "real" airline. And that he did. For Continental Airlines he flew Douglass MD-80s, DC-10s and Boeing 767s.

Jim died this past January from a strange malady that mysteriously, and without known cause, affects only a very few people. Through the years, pilots and friends of Hartlee have held annual reunions each October. Jim rarely missed a Hartlee reunion. Sadly, he missed the most recent one last October 2008. A few days after the reunion he sent this message to Dale and Linda Gleason:

**"I wanted very much to be at Hartlee Field and say goodbye to everyone. After Christmas 2007 I married the woman I had been looking for all my life. On February 27, 2008 I was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. It is very aggressive. I have lost the use of my legs, hands, arms. I have lost my voice and have trouble swallowing. I am dying, one nerve and one muscle at a time. George, the Cub, Hartlee Field and you all mean so much to me. When I fly west for the last time, I will not be in a DC-10 or a 767. I will be in the Cub. Good Bye, JAMES WALLING" (OX5 22760)**

Jim Walling flew west on January 18, 2009.

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He was one of five Braniff Pilots selected to ferry dignitaries from Dallas Love Field to the opening of the Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Airport in 1973. He retired in September 1978 and later, in 1980, he and his family moved to Cedar Creek Lake and then to a family ranch in Wheeler County in 1995.

Tom Frye OX5 #13045 was a dedicated member and an OX5 promoter and recruiter. One day in a two-hour period at an annual Braniff Silver Eagles Fly-in he enlisted two fellow Braniff pilots, Gene Clark and George Chandler into the OX5. Capt. Gene Clark is now deceased but George Chandler remains very active in the Texas Wing.

Tom Frye's helpfulness and friendliness will be missed by all of us.

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## Message from the Wing President



Time to shift gears. The North Texas Antique Airplane Association (NTAAA) has decided NOT to have their Gainesville Fly-In in June this year. They will have their Fly-In in October. An October Gainesville Fly-In would interfere with our Kingsbury Brat Fest. So, now for the shifting of gears: The NTAAA, the Short Wing Piper Club, and the International Biplane Association will be attending the Ranger Fly-In and Air Show on May 28 through May 30 at the Ranger Airport (F23). Therefore I decided to change our summer meeting to the Ranger Fly-In in May.

The Texas Wing OX5 meeting will be Saturday at 11 a.m. at the airport just prior to the air show which starts at 1 p.m. I have been in contact with the La Quinta Inn and Suites in Eastland on I-20, about seven miles from the Ranger Airport and they are giving us a very good room rate. We will get that information to you as soon as possible so you can make your reservations. (Free shuttle from motel to airport).

If we book enough rooms we will get the hospitality room (OX5 Texas Hangar) at no charge. I have invited the other airplane clubs to join us. We will provide snacks, munchies and sodas and the rest is BYOB. We are thinking about a dutch treat dinner Saturday evening at a local restaurant. We are still in the planning stage. MORE LATER.

THIS IS GOING TO BE MORE FUN THAN WE HAVE HAD IN A LONG TIME. BE SURE TO BE THERE.

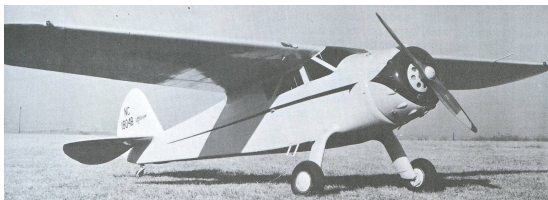
**Dan Brouse, Texas Wing President**

*ED NOTE Dan has sent this additional information: Official HQ La Quinta Inn: King room \$70, double bed room \$79 Mention "Ranger Air Show" for this \$20 discount rate before May 21. Tel. 1-254-629-1414*

**MORE LATER**

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### The Mystery Plane



The "Mystery Airplane" on page 1 is a Cessna C-37 "Airmaster" certificated on February 8, 1937. It was designed after the earlier Cessna model C-34, but by 1937 requisites for private owned airplanes had gone up considerably. So it was necessary to provide changes just to keep up with competition. Hence the "Airmaster".

The interior was enlarged and the cabin was made quieter and more comfortable. It carried four and had a good performance on a 145 hp Warner engine. It had two wing tanks holding 17.5 gallons each providing, at 2050 rpm, a cruise speed of 143 mph at sea level. Price \$5,490 at factory. (The "deluxe" version sold for \$6,000).

(Photo and information from J. P. Juptner, US Civil Aircraft Series. Vol 7, McGraw Hill 1978)