



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

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Message from the secretary

The aviation past, present and future. I am sure that some of the “younger” pilots are tired of hearing about aviation in the old days. It is agreed that, with modern avionics and devices, aviation is a heck of a lot better and safer than it has ever been. In the editor’s days, nobody would have dreamed of a modern general aviation airplane equipped with a parachute for safe emergency descent of the entire craft, nor a panic button that, when pressed, will recover the plane from an uncontrolled attitude of 75 degrees of roll and 50 degrees pitch. But we now have one.



No longer is it necessary to do spins on the flight test. (The CAA Inspector in 1941, while sitting on the ground to watch, directed me to do a two-turn spin to the right and to the left, a two-and-one-half turn spin to the right and to the left, and a three turn spin to the right and to the left – and I did OK).

While some old-time pilots disagreed with the decision to eliminate spins, it definitely stimulated general aviation. The elimination of required spins (with parachutes) and the introduction of the tri-cycle landing gear probably did more than anything else to promote general aviation.



The autopilot, the satellite ground positioning system, the moving map and weather displays are wonderful. It’s a pity that old-time pilots wish they would go away because they are too complicated and expensive – **Expensive, yes**. This editor’s 69 flying years during 70% of all powered aircraft history have seen many changes. We wonder what the next 69 years will bring?

We couldn’t resist including this photo of the Wing editor in the simpler, tail spinning aviation days of the early 1940s

The Mystery Airplane This famous bi-plane, designed before World War II and adopted as a major primary trainer by the Army Air Force, was one of the airplanes in which thousands of military pilots first learned to fly. Following WWII, these surplus planes were adapted for agricultural spraying, flight training, sport flying, banner towing and, as can also be seen in these pictures, aerobatics and air show “wing walking”.



Is this airplane a

Fairchild PT-19

Waco UPF-7

Stearman PT-17

Navy N3N

(Aircraft identification and description on page 3)

The summer OX5-AAA aviation “gathering”

The 5th annual meeting of the OX5 Texas Wing in combination with the Texas Antique Airplane Association Fly-In in Gainesville was held on the weekend of June 13-15, 2008. The newsletter editor usually attends all Wing and National meetings, but he missed this first one in over three years. We asked Wing Governor and Past President George Chandler to take the minutes, make photographs and write the script. And he did a good job with all three items. Here is George’s report:



George Chandler

The summer meeting of the Texas Wing of the OX5 Aviation Pioneers was held with the annual Fly-in of the Antique Airplane Association. During the past few years the Texas Wing of the OX5 has been invited to participate, and several of our members are also active in the A.A.A.

The weather was good this year. No rain showers to dodge, even though the weather service had predicted scattered activity. That may have kept some of the airplanes away. A nice breeze kept everyone in the “hanger” tent happy.

It is always nice to see old friends. Ben Towle, the F4U Corsair test pilot, had some pictures of himself and some of the other test pilots in their “flying suits”. They looked like astronauts. Twenty-eight thousand feet was very high in those days. **Ed note: See item about Ben on page 4**

Bob Clark and his son Douglas came in from the panhandle ranch in Miami, Texas. Bob and his family are getting the ranch back in shape after devastating brush fires destroyed the grass, fences and buildings two years ago. Bob has a large collection of OX5 material that he would like someone to look at and give ideas about display.

Kaye Brouse gave a talk about the Old Terminal Building Museum at Hobby Airport in Houston. They would like donations and are giving away a Cessna 140 as a prize. They can be reached at 1940 Air Terminal Museum at William P. Hobby Airport, Houston, Texas.

Not many antique airplanes were here this year. Aviation gas at the pump was \$4.56. Not bad since it is seven to eight dollars in many places. Maybe the price of “go-juice” kept a lot of airplanes in their home hangars.

Fly-ins are always fun, and with Dan and Kaye furnishing two golf carts, driving around the flight line was first class.

A few of the nineteen OX5ers who traveled to Gainesville



Kaye Brouse



Benny Benninghoff



Robert Clark



Barbara Kraemer



Mike Lawrence



Ben Towle



Bud Johnson

A couple of Benny Benninghoff's "high altitude" tales



When Howard "Benny" Benninghoff was 15 years old he worked for the Pierce Flying Service in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He washed airplanes and helped with maintenance on an OX5 Waco 10, a Waco cabin and a Kinner Fleet. At age 17 he received a private pilot license, and a year later he passed the CAA transport license and began instructing for the CPT program in new Piper Cubs at Purdue University.

In 1940 he joined Pan American Grace Airways (Panagra) as a co-pilot. (At age 20 he was too young to fly for a U. S. airline). Then, bad luck. A serious accident occurred following a DC-2 take-off at high altitude Quito, Ecuador. The left engine quit on climb out, and increasing terrain elevation resulting in a crash and a demolished DC-2. Benny spent six weeks recovering in a Canal Zone hospital.

Back in the U. S. he became a captain with American Airlines. During World War II, with the Air Transport Command, he flew C-54s to Europe and all over the North and South Atlantic. Following WWII he again flew for American Airlines until retirement in 1982.

We asked Benny to tell us about some of his high altitude experiences while flying in the Andes. And here are a couple of them. (Not really aviation stories, but good high altitude "tales") Thanks, Benny:

TALE NO. 1. As a 20-year old co-pilot on Pan American Grace Airways (Panagra), in 1940 we flew trips from Santiago, Chile across the Andes to Buenos Aries. Panagra had a man stationed in a building at the 15,000 foot elevation crest. This was only pass you could negotiate to Buenos Aries. If you took the wrong one, the terrain would out-climb you and there was not enough room to turn around.

We would take our time, circle to get the DC-2 high enough to make the 15,000-foot pass, with peaks around us to 23,000 feet. The man stationed at the pass would send a message each morning whether the pass was open or closed (clouded in). If closed, you just waited until the next day.



One day the company noticed that the food bills were mounting. So they sent an expedition up to check. They found that he was keeping five women with him!

TALE NO. 2. While based in Lima, Peru, three of us hired a car and driver to take us up over the Andes (called the "hill") to the jungles of Perente. At Cera de Pasco, a mining town at 15,000 feet, the driver changed from an Oldsmobile to a Chevrolet because of the narrow width of the road beyond. Above this elevation there were cut-outs for passing. After backing our car into one of them (trucks could not back up) they could get by us.

At Cero de Pasco the Indians used donkeys and large llamas to carry their wares. The Indians who had only donkeys tried to compete with the llamas. So they would cut a third nostril in their nose so they could get more air. (We called them supercharged asses).

Thanks, Benny. We believe tale no. 1. (But perhaps not tale no 2.)

THE "MYSTERY PLANE"

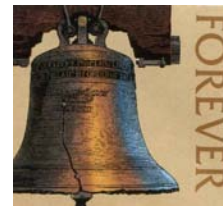
Yes, the mystery plane is a Stearman PT-17. The PT-17 was the final version of the Stearman-Boeing A75L3, part of a family of airplanes dating back to 1933. By 1940 the PT-17 (Stearman-Boeing "Kaydet") was introduced with a 220 h.p Continental engine or a 225 h.p. Jacobs. Over 10,000 Kaydets were built in early WWII – one airplane every three hours! Production ended in 1944. Its gross weight was 2686 lbs, including a useful load of 649 lbs. Max. speed at SL 124 mph, cruise 103 mph. The price varied from \$7,213 to \$10,442 depending on the engine and equipment



The Stearman N450SR, shown in the photo with wing walker Margi Stivers, was filmed by Bernard Zee at the Chino, California Air Show – known as the "Planes of Fame Air Show. This model is equipped with wheel fairings for enhancement which were not part of the basic PT-17, and the original 220 h.p Continental engine was increased to a 450 h p. Pratt and Whitney 985. (Information from Juptner, U. S. Civil Aviation Series, Vol 8, McGraw-Hill, 1964).

Postage stamps are getting expensive

Our Wing publication, the *Texas Wing Newsletter*, is assembled every three months and mailed to about 150 members. Because the Texas Wing charges no membership dues, we depend on occasional contributions to keep our treasury in the black. While color cartridges, paper and envelopes are costly, one of our largest expenses would be the postage cost for mailing the newsletter every 90 days to our 150 members. We say “would be” because we are fortunate to have a friendly commercial organization which runs all of our newsletters through their mailing system at no cost to the Wing.



Every three months, the editor and assembly staff in Alpine mail 150 addressed envelopes to wing treasurer Kaye Brouse in Magnolia, Texas (near Houston) who has arranged with her company, **Linebarger Goggan Blair and Simpson**, to provide free first class mailings to all of our members. For their generous help we give them a VERY appreciative THANK YOU.

Here's more on Ben's photos (Shown at the Gainesville reunion)

George Chandler described the June 2008 reunion in Gainesville (see page 2 of this newsletter). He mentioned that Texas OX5er Ben Towle showed some photos of Corsair test pilots back in WWII days. We contacted Ben and he kindly sent us copies of the photos that he showed at Gainesville.

We checked an earlier newsletter of December 2004. One of the items included a vivid description of Ben's "bail out" from an exploding and burning Corsair when he was an experimental test pilot for Chance-Vought. At 28,000 feet, without oxygen, he passed out soon after leaving the airplane. When he regained consciousness during the 15-minute descent, he looked up and saw a shredded, flailing parachute resulting from its high speed opening. After a hard landing, and with two sprained ankles together with burns, he was pretty well used-up until rescued by a ground search crew while he was searching for help. Obviously Ben is a deserving member of the Caterpillar Club! **(ED NOTE: Write to us for a copy of the Dec 2004 newsletter with Ben's complete story).**

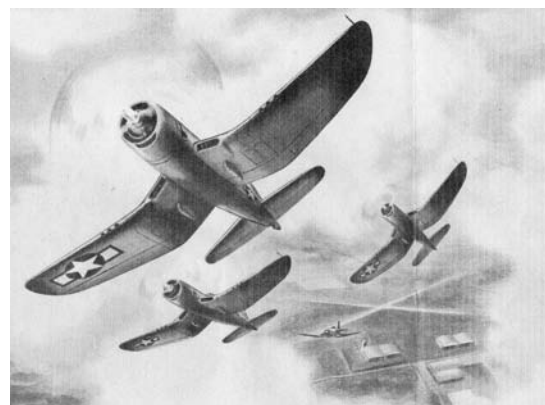
Here are Ben's photos of WWII Chance-Vought test pilots. Ben's narrative about the picture on the right: **"Ben, Mac and Bill – I don't remember their last names. Mac and Bill flew for General Chenault's 'Flying Tigers' for China against the Japanese prior to the U. S. entry into WWII. When war was declared they resigned and took jobs with U. S. airlines. They flew production tests for Chance-Vought on their free days".**



Ben describes the well-protected test pilot (below-left) as a "mystery



pilot for mystery series". We will bet, however, that Ben is the "mystery" pilot in the photo. Check Ben's eyes in the color photo taken last month in Gainesville ... we'll wager that it's the same guy!"



Annual Reunion in Tullahoma -- Good things and bad

(Story and pictures by George Chandler)

The 53rd reunion of the OX5 Pioneers was held at the Beech Heritage Museum on the Airport at Tullahoma, Tennessee on September 11-14 2008. It was hosted by Harold Bost, a longtime contributor to the museum.

Tullahoma is located 90 miles south of Nashville and nestled in the mountains. Absolutely gorgeous landscape and pristine farms with fields that look like manicured lawns. The museum is composed of three buildings. One is dedicated to the D-18 Staggerwing, and among the airplanes there is the first Travel Air ever built (right). It is powered by an OX5 engine. Another has the Twin Beech D-18, and the third with a Bonanza Baron series and also the Beech Starship.



Thursday was registration day and the evening was spent in the hospitality room at the Inn, laughing and talking with old friends.

On Friday we had a tour of the Jack Daniels Distillery in Lynchburg. It was a good tour. We learned that Bourbon Whiskey is distilled only in Kentucky and Tennessee. The water is filtered through the special rock formation that takes all the iron out of the water. Iron in the water and it becomes Rye Whiskey. Jack Daniels began distilling whiskey when he was only 13 years old.

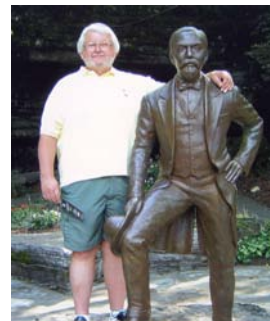
Lunch that day was held at Miss Bobo's boarding house in Lynchburg. The rooms of the home are made into separate dining rooms with tables seating about nine. The food is served family style passing large bowls and platters from right to left. A hostess at the end of the table talked about the area and answered questions. Reservations must be made at Miss Bobo's because there is only one seating. When the bell rings at 1 p.m. the guests are ushered to their seats, and that is it.

Saturday was filled with meetings and our own George Vose was elected National President. George had a freak fall at the hotel and was unable to attend the awards dinner. (We will let him fill you in on that).

Other than George's accident, a good time as held by all. It was a shame that only thirty of the OX5 Aviation Pioneers were able to attend.



The
Starship



Mike Lawrence and
Jack Daniels

THIS WILL BE THE START OF GEORGE'S MESSAGE IN NEXT MONTH'S OX5 NEWS:

Probably I am the first OX5 president who has never made an acceptance speech. At precisely 6:20 p.m. on Saturday, September 13 – as I was leaving the hotel en route to the awards banquet to accept the honor of national OX5 president for the year 2009 – I clumsily tripped on the concrete walkway and fell face downward, fracturing cervical vertebrae #1 and #2. X-rays made at the Tullahoma hospital expedited an 80-mile flight in a Bell Helicopter to a Nashville hospital.

A week of good care in Nashville, followed by a 1,150-mile automobile return trip to my local hospital in Alpine, left me a bit weary. Last week I was released from the hospital still sporting a rigid neck brace, and am unable to drive or fly because of zero neck movement. With good luck, the brace will be removed soon.



A message from Wing President, Dan Brouse

As most of you know, I love to hear great airplane stories. I also believe that this is the history of aviation, and that it is slipping away from us every day.

I recently heard an interesting story about a man in Los Angeles named Herbert. Herbert worked long hours daily with his brothers, and also enjoyed two hobbies during his off time. One of the hobbies was going to the race track where he met a man from Douglas Aircraft Company who mentioned to him that they were having trouble getting machine work done locally in southern California. Because Herbert's other hobby is working with machines and hand tools, before you know it (in early 1941) he has started the Marman Products Company and is making products for DC-3s.

Herbert continues to work his day job and, along the way, meets a down-on-his luck inventor who has a product that Herbert thinks he can market to the aircraft industry. The two men link up and Marman Products begins manufacturing and selling large numbers of their stainless steel band clamps. They are perfect for flexible aircraft fuel lines. As a matter of fact the Marman band clamp can stand such high pressures that they are used to help make turbochargers for WWII aero engines possible.

They work so well that in a very short time the aircraft industry is using them to secure all kind of things on airplanes, oxygen hoses, air intakes, hydraulic lines, and the list goes on. Herbert expands his business to two factories and employs more than 500 people. And the business does not slow down after the war. In 1962 a six-foot Marman band clamp was used aboard *Friendship 7* that took John Glenn into space --this clamp released the capsule from the Atlas Rocket. Marman clamps are still in high demand to this day.

But what about Herbert? When the Marman Products Company and the band clamp took off Herbert was forced to quit his day job that he worked with his brothers. Herbert (Zeppo) Marx had to leave the Marx Brothers after starring in only five of their films. As they say, AND NOW YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY.

Let's all get together at the Old Kingsbury Aerodrome and pass along more stories this November.

Regards, DAN BROUSE

ED. NOTE: We apologize that the September OX5 Newsletter is very late. The November Old Kingsbury reunion was held last week. Indeed, we passed along a lot of stories. A write-up of the Old Kingsbury fall reunion will be included in the December newsletter. (Hurricane Ike hindered the Wing president and a hospital stay hindered the editor – hence a late SEPTEMBER newsletter).

One topic we discussed at Kingsbury was the revival of our winter reunions in the sub-tropical Rio Grand Valley. There we can enjoy rustling palm trees in February and the spinning of more great stories. More on this possibility in the December newsletter