



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

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George Vose, Secretary-Editor

Box 908, Alpine, Texas 79831 432-837-5788

gvose@yahoo.com

Message from the Secretary-Editor: The Texas Wing will host OX5 members again on October 8-11. OX5ers like to come to Texas. During the past 21 years five national reunions have been held in our State. (Three in California and Wisconsin, two in Oklahoma and Arizona, and one or two in nine other states). At the 2002 reunion in Charleston, South Carolina, someone came to me and whispered, "We like Texas".



On October 8th members will arrive from all over for three great days. Let's show them real Texas hospitality. Mike Lawrence has done an excellent job as Chairperson of Reunion Activities. He has made the hotel and banquet arrangements and planned some interesting events.

We will need volunteers to help with such chores as the registration desk, travel escorts, tending light switches, etc. Let Mike or me know if you can help.

Another "Mystery Airplane"

Sometime back in the early 1970s a private pilot applicant came to George Vose for his flight test. The airplane to be flown was unusual – an open cockpit bi-plane designed in 1928. George said that squeezing into the front cockpit under that close upper wing was not easy. (It would be impossible for him to squeeze into it today with his stiff and achy joints).

Is the airplane on the right a

- A. Davis Model D
- B. Fleet Model 7
- C. Great Lakes Sports-Trainer
- D. American Eagle 201

Answer and information on page 2



Benny's cross-Atlantic flights

H. B. "Benny" Benninghoff has been an OX5 member for a long time. He has served several times as a National Governor and was National President for the year 2003. He has been in aviation for a long time. In the late 1930s, being too young to fly for a U. S. airline, he was hired by Panagra and flew DC-2s and DC-3s across the Andes in South America. After reaching age 21 he was hired by American Airlines. Then World War II happened and he elected to don an Air Force uniform and fly ATC C-54s across the Atlantic. (In those days ATC stood for "Air Transport Command", not the present "Air Traffic Control").

Earlier, when Benny was learning to fly in 1936, he had the pleasure of meeting stunt pilot Mike Murphy who flew an `inverted OX5 Travel Air in front of air show crowds with two arms sticking out of the cockpit. (Benny thinks those two arms were dummies). “How he got that OX5 to run inverted is a mystery to me”, he said. Little did Benny know that he was to meet Mike Murphy again under very different circumstances.



In the Air Transport command Benny was assigned to a military unit out of New York. The unit flew C-54 aircraft equipped with stretcher capability. Eastbound they would carry “Anything you could get through the door – mostly troops”. Benny made the trip once every three days. “We had four cabin tanks with a total of 3560 gallons of fuel and we carried 1500 pounds of mail plus cargo and troops”.

Weather reports were sent every 30 minutes. (Remember that this was before satellite images and weather radar). Benny said that these weather reports, among others, gave General Eisenhower the reason for delaying D-Day for two days. The decision was important because of the large number of troops and equipment in England with more to come. Weather reports were also important information for westbound flights waiting to depart.

Benny added: “Leaving Prestwick to return to the United States we would fly southwest to parallel 14 to keep us west of German JU-88s in Spain. Then we would usually fly to Marroketch, Morocco. Benny’s plane was the second one to land at Casa Blanca at night – no lights except burning oil drums for guidance. “Roosevelt’s plane en route to the Yalta Conference was number one”, he said.

One night at mid-Atlantic about half way between Marroketch and Fortaleza, Brazil, one of the nurses came into the cockpit and said, “There is a guy back there who grabs at me whenever I go by. If you don’t do something about it I will”. Benny told her that he would take care of it. He went back to the stretcher area in the cargo bay. He said, “I found a guy bound with cords, slings and bandages and only one arm free. Would you believe it, it was Mike Murphy, the old stunt pilot. He had flown a C-47 into Normandy at night. He landed in a large dark area as he was supposed to do. But the Germans had planted large tall stumps in the field and it was a bad crash”.



Benny continued: “They took him to a temporary army hospital and then to our pick up area in Marroketch. I congratulated Mike for his service but warned him that if he touched either nurse again I would dump him off at Fortaleza where there was no hospital. He said, “OK, Benny”.

“Our route from there was to San Juan, Puerto Rico, then to New York, La Guardia Field. It was not unusual to bring some of those boys to a hospital in New York within 48 hours of their injury. This was remarkable since we flew only 250-mph airplanes. ED. NOTE: At age 25 Benny was the youngest captain in the operation.

The “mystery plane” on page 1 is a



Great Lakes Sports-Trainer 2-L-1. It was designed and prototyped in 1928 and introduced to the public at the Detroit Air Show in March 1929. The manufacturer was the Great Lakes Aircraft Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio. Immediately the airplane was popular and in demand. The company soon had a back order of some 200 airplanes. Pilots established outstanding records and achievements with early models of the attractive bi-plane. Tex Rankin flew one non-stop from Canada through the United States to Mexico averaging 103 mph on the 1,350-mile flight. He also established a world record of 19 outside loops, really testing the robust framework of the airplane.

Many airplane orders were received and filled. But the easy times were not to prevail. Cancellations and production staggered with the Great Depression that started in 1929. The initial price at the factory was \$4990. It was lowered to \$3985, then to \$3150 and finally \$2985.



The Great Lakes 2-T-1 was a unique airplane and perhaps it has passed all other airplanes in production duration, although intermittent. While general production ceased in the early 1930s, in 1960 Harvey Swak of Cleveland obtained the rights to the Sport Trainer design and all factory drawings for it. Harvey sold plans to homebuilders until 1990 and then sold to Steen Aero Lab of Palm Bay, Florida. In 1993 Doug Chapin brought the Great Lakes back into production. The power was increased to 150 or 180 hp Lycoming engines. Chapin produced one airplane with a 450 hp engine. (It was quite a Show Stopper).



In 2000 John Duncan of Palmer Lake, Colorado bought the type certificate and tooling and, in 2006, announced his plan to bring the Sports Trainer back into production. When he gets ten orders the factory will begin production. While the actual production of the Great Lakes 2-T has certainly been spasmodic, its procurement life has spanned eight decades.

Texas member attends Alaska Wing picnic

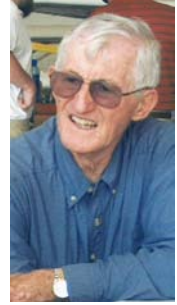
David Sanderson, OX5 22519, is a member of the Texas Wing but works and spends much of his time in Alaska. David is a professional pilot, an ATP, and flies passengers, mail and cargo from Fairbanks to remote strips north of the Yukon River. He is also an AP Mechanic, IA, and maintains helicopters for the pipeline service from the Arctic Circle northward to the Arctic Ocean.

David attended the recent summer picnic of the Alaska Wing at Lake Hood in Anchorage. There he met well-known pilot Oren Hudson who has attended all of the recent Texas reunions. Oren relays a cheery Hello to our Wing members. He is a current National Governor and is a Past National President. (2004). He has written us that he will attend the October reunion in Grapevine.

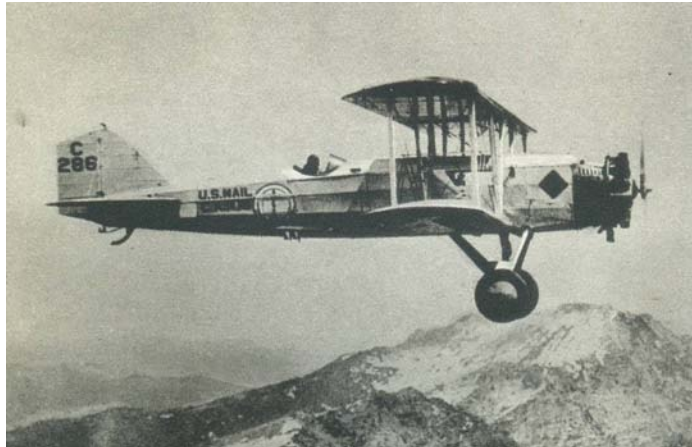


Air passenger service – the beginning

Texas Wing member “Bud” Johnson OX5 22274 attends almost every Wing and National activity. Bud is a retired American Airlines Captain. He sent us some new photos of the 1928 Boeing 40 that recently has been restored by Pemberton and Sons Aviation of Spokane. The airplane had crashed in the Oregon mountains in the early 1930s.



Some photos of the Boeing 40 were part of the March 2008 Texas Wing Newsletter. But Bud sent us some new pictures. The meticulously restored airplane is currently touring a number of U. S. Airports. How we would like to see that airplane and hear the sound of the 420 hp P&W Wasp engine. The two-place passenger compartment has been restored to even better condition than those of the 1929s-early 1930s. It is doubtful that the vintage Boeing 40 had any communication between the pilot and the passengers. Early descriptions state that the passenger compartment was insulated, sound proofed and heated. (“Sound proofed” from a 420 hp engine six feet away??)



The Boeing 40 was the beginning of air passenger transportation along with mail. We have done some literature search on the airplane. A good reference book is “Airways” published by the Knopf Company in 1942.

The Boeing Aircraft Company in Seattle, organized by Alfred A. Boeing, appeared to be waiting for the commercial air expansion following the Contract Air Mail (Kelly) Act of 1928. Western Air Express was making a good profit with the passage of the air mail amendment. The going payment rate by the Postal Service was about \$5.00 a pound. Surprisingly, William Boeing and his partner

Edward Hubbard offered to carry mail from San Francisco to Chicago for \$2.84 a pound. Operators of that time claimed that the Boeing bid was ridiculous. Stout Airways had bid \$5.09 for the same route.

Boeing and Hubbard organized Boeing Air Transport and put 25 Boeing 40s into operation. The mail-passenger line was successful from the very first day. The Boeing 40 carried two passengers forward of the mail pit, but the pilot remained in the open “where he could engage by contact the forces of the wind and the rain”.

Eventually, as mail and passenger aviation was expanded and accepted, the twin engine 10-passenger Boeing 247 (1933) and followed by the 14-passenger Douglas DC-2 (1934), spelled the final days of open cockpit commercial airplanes.

Here and on page 5 are some excellent pictures of the restored Boeing 40C sent to us by “Bud” Johnson:





Wing Governor attends Oshkosh

Young Texas Wing Governor and new commercial pilot Cade Woodward made the flight from Alpine to Oshkosh last month to attend the 2009 AirVenture. He flew a Piper Cherokee accompanied by a friend from Fort Stockton. They made the trip from Alpine to Oshkosh in one long day, refueling in Ponca City, and Dubuque, Iowa. At crowded Oshkosh they tented under the Cherokee wings. "I never saw so many airplanes", Cade said.



On three of the 4-1/2 days they spent at the event they visited the OX5 display in a building set up for "older aircraft" exhibits. He said that nobody maintained the OX5 area during their visiting times. In the past the OX5 tent was a welcome resting and watering ground for tired pilots. It is now difficult to replace the old timers who maintained the OX5 tent for many years.

They returned to Alpine on the final Saturday. Cade said that volunteers worked hard to make everything easy, and all attendees cleaned their areas spotlessly before departure. We asked Cade to send us a photo from the OX5 spot, and here it is.

**Let's have a great turn-out of Texas Wing members at the
Annual National Reunion in Grapevine in October 2009**

Note the hotel cut-off date for the special OX5 is September 10 (972-724-2600)

(complete and mail this form to Mile Lawrence)

OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS 54TH ANNUAL REUNION
Embassy Suites at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport
October 8-11, 2009

Arrive Thursday, October 8: If by air, call the Embassy Suites from airport hotel desk for complimentary shuttle service. If by automobile, from Highway 26 turn East at Bass Pro Drive, or from DFW north entrance road turn West at Bass Pro Drive.

Registration Form

Make checks payable to OX5 Texas Wing

Mail this registration form and check to Mike Lawrence, 32 Meadowbrook, Trophy Club, TX 76262

Name _____	Phone Number _____
Wing _____	Cell Number _____
Guest's Name _____	Email address _____
Guest's Name _____	Home Address _____

Events

Thursday, 8 October

- 1:00 PM—5:00 PM:** Registration at hotel **\$35.00**
- 3:00 PM:** Hospitality Suite opens (included in registration fee)
- 6:00 PM:** Welcome Party sponsored by Embassy Suites.
- 7:30 PM:** "Dinner with Duke" (We will be guests of "Duke" Iden)

Number Attending	Event Total
_____	\$ _____

Friday, 9 October

- 8:30 AM:** Wing Presidents' Meeting
- 10:00 AM:** National Governors Business Meeting
- 12:30 PM:** Bus departure
- Grapevine Steam Train** **\$30.00**
- EVENING:** Dinner and evening on your own.

_____	\$ _____
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Saturday, 10 October

- 9:30 AM:** Bus departure for Love Field
- 10:00 AM: Frontiers of Flight Museum** **\$30.00**
- LUNCHEON:** Dutch treat
- 2:00 PM:** National Governors Election Meeting
- 3:30 PM:** General Membership Meeting
- 6:00 PM:** Open Bar Gathering before Banquet
- 7:00 PM: Awards Banquet and Program** **\$35.00**

_____	\$ _____
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Sunday, 11 October

DEPARTURE DAY AND FAREWELL

Total:	\$ _____
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Those who have stayed at Embassy Suites know that they are great hotels. Our OX5 rate of \$119 is reduced from the usual \$145 price, including complimentary cooked-to-order breakfasts and free shuttle service from DFW to the hotel – a savings of as much as \$80 for one person.

Let's face it – the annual OX5 reunion is SPECIAL!

The cut-off date for the special rate is September 10. So make your reservations soon and mention OX5 for the special rate. The \$119 rate is for 1-2 people. For 3-4 people it's \$129.

For hotel reservations: call **972-724-2600** before September 10 (and mention OX5).

Embassy Suites address: 2408 Bass Pro Drive, Grapevine, TX 76051