



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS

TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

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George Vose, Editor / Secretary
PO Box 908, Alpine, Texas 79831



From the Editor / Secretary,

I wish that I could have attended the OX5 National Reunion in Lakeland, Florida. But let's face the facts – I just do not travel very well anymore. I wonder why? I'm only 92.7 years old. (Perhaps that's why).

Wing Governor Jack Nelson represented the Texas Wing at the National reunion and some of his observations are noted on page 4 of this newsletter. Jack has reported that the Texas Wing and the Alaska Wing have, at this time, the largest memberships of all OX5 Wings. Because of the difficult transportation routes up north, OX5 members in the Alaska Wing reside mainly in the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas, while Texas members live "all over" this second largest state.

This issue's "Mystery Airplane"

The 1920-1930 decades were the hey-days for biplanes and monoplanes, most of them powered by World War I surplus OX5 engines. The biplane on the right, restored by Texas Wing member Jack Brouse and his associates, is ...

- A. a Waco 10 C. a Kreider-Reisner Challenger
B. a Swallow 90 D. an Alexander Eaglerock



Answer and information on page 4.



From the Wing President, Cade Woodward

While I have been busy lately with wildlife tracking using radio telemetry of pronghorn antelope, mule deer and big horn sheep in west Texas, I still manage to take care of needed OX5 duties. I wish that I had been able to attend the November 2014 National reunion in Lakeland, but it was necessary to continue with my wildlife flying. However, our Wing was well represented in Lakeland by Wing Governor Jack Nelson who sent us a message about the reunion events. George Vose, as newsletter editor, tells a bit about Jack Nelson's report on pages 3-4.

The site of the 2015 Texas Wing Reunion is still undecided, although Lubbock has been suggested by several members. As a newly rated FAA glider instructor, the Silent Wings Museum of WWII gliders would be very interesting to me.

(Message continued next page)

WING OFFICERS, 2014-15 Cade Woodward, President Colton Woodward, Vice President George Vose, Secretary
Michelle Lawrence, Treasurer Hazel Fehmel, Historian

GOVERNORS (Expiration dates shown) Jack Brouse 2016 Robert Clark 2016 Barbara Kraemer 2016
Michelle Lawrence 2015 Jack Nelson 2015 Cade Woodward 2015
George Vose 2015

(President's message continued)

Also, Jack Brouse probably would attend the reunion and tell us about the Alexander Eaglerock OX5 biplane suspended over the rotunda of Lubbock's Science Spectrum Museum. Jack Brouse and others restored the airplane to like new condition. (Jack says that it could be made flyable within a week's time).

The 2015 reunion site is still open. Please contact George Vose or myself with your suggestions.

I hope you are all are doing well, and I look forward to seeing you again at the 2015 reunion, or sooner.

Sincerely, *Cade Woodward*

Texas Wing flight instructors during WWII

At least nine Texas Wing members flew as civilian or commissioned flight instructors during WWII. These were: H. B. "Benny" Benninghoff, George Chandler, Gene Clark, Tom Frye, Fritz Kahl, Robert Taylor, George Vose, Edna Gardner Whyte and Linley Wright. This newsletter includes the story of **FRITZ M. KAHL**. Four of the instructors have been published. (Chandler, Vose, Wright and Benninghoff). The others will follow in subsequent newsletters. (If there are other Texas Wing members who instructed during WWII, please let us know).

"Fritz" Murray Kahl 1921-2004

EDITOR NOTE: Fritz Kahl was the last member of the Texas OX5 Wing to be eligible for membership under the original OX5 rules. As a teen-ager, Fritz often flew his older brother's OX5-powered Waco 9.

"Fritz" was not his real name. He hated his given first name and rarely used it except for legal purposes, or when it was absolutely necessary. So, for those who knew him, his name always was "Fritz".

"Fritz" Murray Kahl was born in Nevada, Iowa, (pronounced Ne-VAY-da), in 1921.

As a boy, and for many years, Fritz flew his brother's OX5 powered Waco 9, thus qualifying him for OX5 membership under the original rules – the need to have piloted or maintained an OX5 airplane prior to 1940.

In 1942, soon after the start of WWII, Fritz enlisted in the Army Air Force and earned AAF wings. As a 2nd Lieutenant he was assigned to the Texas Marfa Army Air Field in its earliest days of construction and operation. MAAF was the original "twin engine" base for training Army Air Force multiengine pilots. (And for a time Chinese pilots also trained there). Airplanes flown were the Cessna AT-17 "Bobcats", later designated as the UC-78.

The first shipment of Cessna AT-17s arrived in November, 1942. Fritz Kahl instructed in the first class beginning on December 11, 1942, and the class completed its training on February 6, 1943. Each class included five trainees and a flight instructor.



New AAF pilot, 1942

In the same year Fritz was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in a supervisory capacity with the unpleasant job of testing pilots who had been recommended for elimination by their instructors.

In addition to flight instruction, Fritz investigated occasional accidents and forced landings. For this job he flew a Beech Stagger Wing (military designation D-17) that required landings in remote locations, such as Castolon's short strip, in what is now Big Bend National Park.



A Cessna A-17 "Bobcat" twin 245 h. p. Jacobs engines. Cruise 175 mph.



Left: East quarter of Marfa Army Air Field and parking ramp, 1945.

At its peak MAAF operated a total of 500 aircraft.

Pilots presently flying in the west Texas Big Bend area sometimes are surprised by seeing several remnant runway areas with the same directional lay-outs as the Marfa Army Air Field. These were auxiliary landing fields used for the many daily training flights. (Local lore says that these were "decoy" sites supposedly built to confuse possible attacks by enemy powers through Mexican air space). Such precautions really would not have been necessary because nature itself was a real enemy. In the late summer of a 1943, within twenty minutes, a violent wind and hail storm destroyed 120 parked airplanes. For many days Fritz was busy ferrying replacement airplanes from all over the southern United States.



In 1944 Fritz married a Marfa ranch girl, Georgie Jones. After the war Fritz and Georgie remained in Marfa where he successfully operated Kahl Aviation doing flight training, cross-country charter and airplane maintenance at the new Marfa Airport for more than 40 years.

Fritz once was talked into making night flights, seeking the location of the "Marfa Mystery Lights", but that's another story.

Fritz Kahl, a talented speaker, presented his last talk at the 2002 Texas Wing OX5 reunion in Alpine.

Notes on the 2014 National OX5 Reunion in Florida

At this time it appears that Texas Wing Governor Jack Nelson was the only Texas member to attend the 2014 National Reunion in Lakeland, Florida. Wing President Cade Woodward was too busy with his wildlife tracking to attend, and Wing Secretary George Vose's comment on page 1 hints that he is now too slow for long distance traveling. Had an offer been made by a Lear Jet owner for non-stop transportation to Lakeland, George would have quickly accepted. (But that did not happen).

(continued next page)

However, our Wing was well represented by Jack Nelson who lives in Avinger, near the Texas-Louisiana border, and perhaps he is the Texas member closest to Florida. Jack and Bettye Drove more than 2,000 miles to Lakeland and return. Following are some of Jack's notes:



"On the evening of our arrival at the Hilton Gardens Inn (Thursday November 5th) a number of us met for a 'meet and greet'. I met Don Voland of Wisconsin who was to become our next National President, also a number of members from Ohio and other Wings, and a large group from Lakeland, the headquarters of the host Mid-Florida Wing".

"On Friday we toured the Central Florida Aerospace Academy located on the Lakeland Regional Airport. The students, age 13-18, receive both a high school education combined with an intensive aviation and aerospace curriculum".

"The Awards Banquet was held on Friday evening when I had the honor of accepting for George Vose a Presidential Citation. I also attended the meeting where the new officers were nominated. The General Membership meeting was held on Saturday".

"I really enjoyed the 2014 OX5 Reunion, and met many nice people". *Jack Nelson*

Have you visited the National OX5 Web Page?

Do you want to see a list of the National Officers? Do you want to view the December 2008 Texas Wing Newsletter? Do you want to make a copy of the OX5 membership application? These, and many other topics, can be found on the OX5 National web site. Past President Dennis Yerkey of the Pennsylvania Clifford Ball Wing is the Web Master of the National OX5 web site.

Try it. Just click on www.ox5.org to get started. You will find that Don Voland of the Wisconsin Wing is the new National President. You will be able to access and make copies of all Texas Wing newsletters since March 2008. Selections are: Home Page; News; Officers; HQ address; Reports; OX5 engines; Articles; Newsletters for National, Texas, Kansas, and Clifford Ball Wings; and Legal Information.

Indeed, it appears that the 59-year old OX-5 organization is slowly becoming "paperless".

The Mystery Plane, Page 1.

The standard color scheme for the **Alexander Eaglerock A-2** was blue and silver, and that is the color used on the Eaglerock biplane, meticulously restored by member Jack Brouse and his group. Built at the Colorado Springs factory, the model was popular with operators and was used by flying schools as a primary trainer. Many hundreds were built. Because of the beginning scarcity of surplus OX5 engines, it was often sold less engine for \$2,250. Any engine, from 90 to 260 h. p., could be used, so the buyers sometimes sent their own engines for factory installation.



Alexander Eaglerock A-2

Following are some specification and performance data for the OX5 powered Eaglerock: Empty weight 1,459, useful load 786, gross wt. 2,245, max. speed 99, cruise 85, landing speed 34, range 450 miles, ceiling 10,200 feet.

Information from Joseph P. Juptner, U. S. Civil Aircraft Series, Vol. 1, McGraw Hill, 1962.
Photograph from the Antique Aircraft Association, Blakesburg, Iowa

Katherine Stinson, American Aviation Pioneer

Part Ten

By John McCrory

Ed. Note: This is the tenth in the series of articles by Texas Wing member John McCrory of Marfa. All of John's articles have featured either the Curtiss OX5 engine, or engines prior to the OX5. Most of the airplanes Katherine Stinson flew were powered by engines earlier than the OX5. But later on she flew OX5 powered Curtiss Jennys, including the Jenny shown below in a Library of Congress photograph.



Katherine Stinson with an Curtiss OX5 Jenny

Katherine Stinson, the first pilot in the famous Stinson family, was born in the deep south on February 14 1891, and grew up in Arkansas. Her interests were in piano and flying, but at an early age her desire to fly became the most urgent. In 1911 she tracked down Tony Janus in St, Louis and tried to convince him to give her flying lessons, but he would only allow her to fly as a passenger in his Wright aeroplane. So she traveled to Chicago's Cicero Field where early aviator Max Lillie operated a flying school. Katherine's defining characteristic was persistence. And her persistence got her the flying lessons she needed to become the 4th woman aviatrix to be licensed with the Aero Club of America. That event happened on July 24, 1912 when she was barely 21 years of age. Lillie had called her a "natural" because she had taken only four hours of instruction in his Wright Model B to earn her certification.



Katherine Stinson, the "Flying School Girl" wearing her famed checkered cap



Katherine with her OX5 Curtiss-Stinson

The next year she did exhibition flying and was a sensation on the barnstorming circuit as the "Flying School Girl". When flying, she usually wore a checkered "tam-o-chanter" cap with her long curls tucked inside, and she dressed well, wearing the standard aviator's leather flying coat.

Katherine was the oldest sibling of the Stinson family and was always strongly supported by her mother, Emma. She and her mother formed the Stinson Aviation Company and the whole family eventually became involved. In 1913 the company moved to San Antonio because of its recommended good flying weather and the advice of Max Lillie. Land was leased south of the city to develop a civilian airport that still operates today as Stinson Field KSSF. It is the second oldest airport in the country; only Maryland's College Park Airport, where the Wright Brothers trained early Signal Corps pilots has the distinction of being in the business longer.



Katherine's younger sister, Marjorie, also learned to fly, and there was a demand for flight instructors. So the Stinsons organized a flying school on the southeast corner of their field and the Canadian military sent more than 100 students to San Antonio. While Katherine had become known as the "Flying School Girl", Marjorie became known as the "Flying School Marm". While both Katherine and Marjorie instructed Canadian pilots, the U. S. Army would not permit women to instruct U. S. pilots. But the Stinson sisters were very adamant about their desire to contribute to the war effort. Katherine's application was denied several times, but Marjorie eventually became a reserve member and was granted a pilot's license by the Army and Navy Committee of Aeronautics, the first woman to be so recognized.

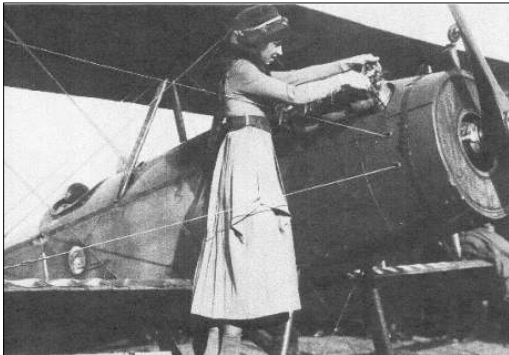
Katherine's younger sister, Marjorie

In 1916, arrangements were made for Katherine to do exhibition flying in Japan and China, and thus she became the first woman to fly in Asia. Again, she was a sensation, especially to young women. Within the time period of 1916 there were several remarkable photographs of Katherine Stinson and her airplane.



Katherine flying in Japan

Civilian flying was stopped in 1917 by the government as a wartime security measure. As a result the school was shut down. Exhibition flying then provided the necessary funding to keep the business going. A thousand dollars a day was common for barnstormers. Katherine was a popular sensation at fairs and special events all over the country. Initially she flew a Wright aeroplane. Then Matty Laird provided her with a small aerobatic biplane in which she performed her routines. Katherine hired a good mechanic, Rudoff "Shorty" Schroeder, to keep the plane in perfect condition. She too was capable of thorough preflights. It is said that she never had an accident, probably as a result of her attention to detail.



Katherine preflights her OX5

Katherine Stinson was the first woman to fly at night. She devised a method of attaching magnesium flares to her wing trailing edges. At night she flew spectacular maneuvers, then landing with the aid of the firelight in tar barrels on the landing field. When she cut her engine to land, helpers threw cans of gasoline into the barrels for better illumination of the ground.

Katherine flew some early airmail flights in Canada. In 1917, when the United States Post Office finally started air service she was the first woman commissioned to fly the mail. While doing this work she flew a record airmail flight from San Diego to San Francisco and flew other long trips on the East Coast.. She still wanted to contribute to the war effort, and she raised funds for the Red Cross with her flying performances.

The continuing denials by the military to allow her a flying status caused her to join the war effort by becoming an ambulance driver in England and then in France. In cold wartime conditions she developed a serious infection leading to influenza. She returned to Texas and was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Seeking medical care, she traveled to the Sunmount Sanatorium in Santa Fe. Her condition gradually improved in the dry mountainous climate.

Living in New Mexico she met Miquel A. Otera Jr. who had flown in Europe during the war, and they married in 1928. He held several important state offices and became the District Judge of Santa Fe. They also adopted the four children of Jack Stinson, her brother.

Architecture became Katherine's new interest and she designed homes in the pueblo style, actively participating in their construction. She remained in Santa Fe and is buried next to her husband in the National Cemetery. When she died in 1977, she was 86 years old and had lived a long and active life, in contrast to her earlier flying companions, some of whom died tragically. She is remembered as one of the true aviation pioneers in America.