



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

March 2014 No. 60

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



Message from the Editor/Secretary TO: All OX5 members and their guests:

We hope to see you in this far-west Texas locale as April ends – a great time to visit the Texas Big Bend. **This March 2014 newsletter is being mailed early so you can make your hotel reservations.** Friendly hospitality sessions will be held on Friday evening (April 25th) and all day on Saturday. The business meeting will be held on Saturday -- after a day of sightseeing and the free flights over the World War II Marfa Army Air Field -- for those who wish to do so. Plan to arrive in Alpine by Friday evening April 25th.

Then, on Sunday, 4/27, those who want to visit Big Bend National Park will drive to the Chisos Mountain Lodge. Reservation phone numbers for both places are given on page 2. Big Bend Park is huge. We recommend that at least two days be spent there. Local OX5 members will be there to assist. If you plan a boat ride across the Rio Grande at Boquillas, be sure to bring your passport or border crossing card (and a few dollar bills to purchase hand made items sold by the Mexican children who will greet you).

This issue's "Mystery Airplane"

This radial engine monoplane flew in the skies of the early 1930s.
It is one of these four, but which one?

- A. Fairchild 24J B. Stinson Junior Model S
- C. Spartan Model C-4 D. American Eagle Model E

Answer and information on page 6.



Message from the Wing President, Cade Woodward



I hope that the New Year, 2014, will be a great one for everyone, and I hope to see you at our April OX5 meeting in Alpine and the Big Bend Country.

As for me, I started the New Year by flying for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department doing the "Mid-Winter East Texas Waterfowl Survey". While flying at low altitude over most of east Texas, the biologists on board counted thousands of water birds – ducks, geese and sand hill cranes. Flying over the east Texas "piney woods" and lakes was far different than flying over the arid mountains of west Texas. When I am not flying I work on our family ranches in Pecos and Crocket Counties.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our two-day meeting in Alpine (April 25-26), with optional side trips to interesting Marfa, Fort Davis and Marathon. Then, on Sunday the 27th, some of us will drive to the Big Bend National Park.

In Alpine we have arranged accommodations at the refurbished Holland Hotel. This hotel was built downtown in 1928 across the street from the Union Pacific Railway Station -- in the days when people

(Message continued next page)

WING OFFICERS, 2013-14 Cade Woodward, President Colton Woodward, Vice President George Vose, Secretary
Michelle Lawrence, Treasurer Hazel Fehmel, Historian

GOVERNORS (Expiration dates shown) Jack Brouse 2014 Robert Clark 2015 Barbara Kraemer 2014
Michelle Lawrence 2015 Jack Nelson 2014 Cade Woodward 2015
George Vose 2015

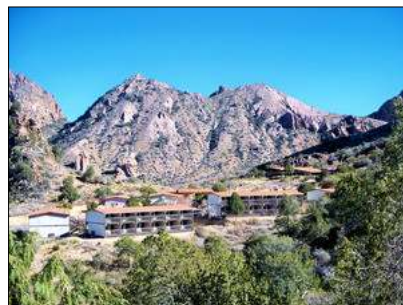
traveled by train. On Friday evening, and all-day on Saturday the "hospitality room" will be a second floor reserved suite. (Elevator accessible). For meals, nice breakfasts and lunches are served at the "Bread and Breakfast" restaurant, a short block away, and excellent evening meals are served at the hotel's Century Bar and Grill. The special rate of \$83 nightly (plus tax) is usually reserved for active military members or veterans – but just mention **OX5** for this same rate when you make your reservation by calling 432-837-2800. Rooms with two queen-size beds are \$115. **The cut-off date for the special OX5 rate is April 13.**

In Alpine, those who wish to view the remains of the old World War II Marfa Army Air Field may fly with me in my Cessna 180, or with my brother, Colton, in his Cessna 172, or with Ron Morton in his Bede 4. On Sunday, April 27, those who wish to continue will drive 100 miles to the Big Bend National Park – a "short distance" here in far west Texas terms. During our meeting at the Holland Hotel we will be joined by members of the Big Bend EAA Chapter. (Experimental Aircraft Association). This will be a nice mingling of OX5 members and EAA members who have similar interests.

Sincerely, *Cade Woodward*

Post meeting trip to Bend National Park (optional)

To make your reservations at the Holland Hotel in Alpine for April 25-26, call 432-837-2800 and mention **OX5** to receive the special king size bed rate of \$83, or the two queen bed room rate of \$115. **Cut off date for the OX5 rate is April 13.**



If you plan to attend the post-meeting trip to Big Bend National Park and make reservations at the Chisos Mountain Lodge for April 27 and beyond, call 855-584-5295. Rates start at about \$127 plus tax. (We recommend at least two nights).

The Chisos Mountain Lodge (above right) is the only hotel in the Park. Thirty rooms are available but bookings are rapid. **So make reservations ASAP.** A very good restaurant, convenience store and gift shop are nearby. April is a good month to visit the Big Bend. The National Park covers more than 800,000 acres of beautiful desert mountains with elevations ranging from 2,000 feet (in the Rio Grande canyons) to 8,000 feet (in the Chisos Mountains).

We came across this wrist watch

Several years ago, all of the OX5 materials and records were moved from Pittsburgh to Colorado without directions by the Board of Governors. For a year or so, the OX5 organization was in a state of turmoil. Eventually the situation was resolved and National President George Vose, with young OX5 member Paul Grebenow, drove a pickup truck to Colorado, gathered all of the material and brought it to the Alpine Texas Airport for temporary storage. Over a period of time most of the material was moved back to Pittsburgh. A few items remain in the Alpine storage room awaiting relocation directions.



One item that has not yet been sent to National HQ, is an Elgin wrist watch with a leather strap. The watch has long stopped running. On the reverse side of the watch is this engraved notation:

**SPRINGFIELD AIR RACES
BOWLES AIRPORT
DEDICATION
Springfield, Mass.
1930
1ST PRIZE**

Someone had won the Springfield, Massachusetts Air Races in 1930, but the winner's name was not engraved on the watch. Jerry Eoff, OX5 member in Alpine, Texas, solved the mystery. He learned that the winner of the 1930 races was Charles "Speed" Holman. **(Charles Holman was later inducted into the OX5 Hall of Fame in 1974).** Then he explored the time line and activities of Charles "Speed" Holman.



Charles Holman was raised on a farm in Minnesota. As a teen-ager, under the name of "Jack Speed", he did parachute jumps in a flying circus. When his father learned that "Jack Speed" was his son, he offered to buy him an airplane if he promised never to jump again. "Speed" broke his promise, and also broke his new airplane.

His name became a household word, and when the newly organized Northwest Airlines looked for its first pilot, he was hired. He became the line's Operations Manager and pioneered air mail routes across Wisconsin and into North Dakota. His airline career was punctuated by wins in national races, including the Springfield Air Race in Massachusetts in 1930, and the Thompson Trophy Races in Chicago. Holman set a looping record of 1,433 consecutive loops, and was the first pilot to complete an outside loop.

He was considered one of the country's top aerobatic pilots, and every fragment of his life was spectacular. Such, also, was his death in 1931 at age 33 during an impromptu aerobatic performance for the dedication of the Omaha Airport on May 17, 1931. There he crashed to his death in his gold Laird biplane after a spectacular performance. Spectators reported that just before the crash, Holman's body seemed to be hanging half way out of the cockpit, which led to the belief that his safety belt had broken, causing the crash.

Holman's prize watch is still with us. It will be retained unless it is claimed by a member of the Holman family. Or possibly it might be displayed one day in the beginning OX5 Museum at the Latrobe, Pennsylvania Airport where our organization was established in 1955.

How Holman's watch came into the hands of the OX5 is not known



"Matty" Laird (left) who built the winning racer in three weeks, Charles Holman (center) and Lee Schoenhart (right), Chief Pilot for BF Goodrich).



Engraving on the winner's watch.

Texas Wing flight instructors during WWII

At least seven Texas Wing members flew as civilian or commissioned flight instructors during World War II. These were H. B. "Benny" Benninghoff, George Chandler, Fritz Kahl, George Vose, Linley Wright, Tom Frye and Gene Clark. George Chandler's story appeared in the previous Dec 2013 newsletter. This newsletter includes a story by GEORGE VOSE. The others will follow in subsequent newsletters. (If there are other Texas Wing members who instructed during WWII, please let us know).

George Vose's story

New flight instructor in 1943

In March 1941 George Chandler (his story was in the December 2013 newsletter) and I were in the same wartime predicament. All civilian flying had been grounded for 100 miles inland along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. George Chandler was in Massachusetts and I was in Maine, so Chandler moved to Texas and I moved to Pennsylvania to continue our flying. I chose State College, Pennsylvania, the location of Penn State University. I enrolled in the Civil Pilot Training private and commercial curriculums just as the CPT was changing its name to WTS – the CAA War Training Service. After private and commercial certification I enrolled in the CAA-approved flight instructor course. Jack Mullins, the chief pilot of the Air Force Contract School at Barnes Field in Westfield, Massachusetts, had promised me a flight instructor position as soon as I was rated.

In State College, the chief CPT instructor was Sherm Lutz and the aircraft used were Aeronca Defenders. In training, I flew every day. Under the tutelage of Sherm Lutz and Wayne Showers we did precision flying and lots of it. Chandelles, lazy eights, stalls, spins (over the top and underneath), slips, pylon eights and spot landings were all part of the day's flying. In the World War II days it seemed that, for an instructor's rating, precision flying was more important than the ability to instruct. Presumably that phase would be gained later from Army Air Force texts.

Flight test weekend arrived. CAA Inspector Bob Bell of the Harrisburg District Office came to test our class of four on an October 1943 Friday and Saturday. On Friday afternoon he told me to climb to 2,500 feet and do a two turn spin to the left and to the right, a two-and-one-half turn spin to the left and to the right, and a three turn spin to the left and to the right, while he watched from the ground. (As George Chandler said in his article, "inspectors always preferred to watch spin performance from the ground instead of while sitting in the airplane"). My performance was OK. I had practiced spins hundreds of times.

The next day, Saturday, was the real test. I was the last of the four applicants to fly with Bell, which increased my tenseness. Bell said nothing after each flight, but when all flights were finished he went into Sherm's office and closed the door. We waited with bated breath for almost an hour until Sherm came out and said that all of us had passed. For the flight test I wore my good luck Scotch plaid necktie, the same tie I had worn for my previous flight tests. Bell signed my temporary flight instructor certificate, and it was good to have that paper in my hands only ninety days after receiving my private pilot certificate.

First aviation job with pay

Two days after receiving my certificate I left State College by Greyhound bus for Westfield, Massachusetts. It was an all night drive and the bus reached Westfield the next afternoon. The next morning, after an overnight stay in a third floor fire trap hotel room, Jack Mullins came by and we drove to Barnes Field about eight miles north of the city. It was a nice airport – far superior to the grass fields I had left behind in Center County, Pennsylvania. It had three paved runways, a nice brick and glass terminal building with a restaurant, offices for the FAA and the school, and classroom space. Adjacent hangars housed the Piper and Interstate trainers used in the program, and the maintenance shop.

Jack Mullins was the Operations Chief Pilot, but the Ground Manager, Steve Riggs, a previous Army P-26 pilot was really the person who kept the operations running. He viewed my new certificate and I was ready for a check ride with Jack. We used an Interstate trainer (military designation L-6) that I had never flown before. I was a nice airplane with ball bearing controls – another thing new to me.

Barnes Field, in western Massachusetts was only twenty miles north of the Connecticut border, and that is where my practice area would be. – across the state line in Connecticut. On the check we did a few basic flight maneuvers and then flew to the practice area, almost a 20-minute flight in a slow airplane. The distance would be an impediment when training flights were supposed to be limited to one-hour duration. The check flight was over and that afternoon I was assigned my first student.

The Flight Indoctrination Course had been designed to provide preliminary flight training to AAF cadets who had not attended college but were otherwise qualified for Air Force flying following six months of intensive training in selected colleges and universities. Our institution was the University of Massachusetts in nearby Amherst. The cadets traveled by bus daily to and from Barnes Field. Flight training for each cadet totaled ten hours and lasted for one month. Then a new group of trainees would arrive.



New War Training Service instructor

The training maneuvers were rigidly controlled. Each cadet, before starting any turn, was required to look in both directions, and state “All clear”. With 25 radio-less airplanes departing and arriving at about the same time, the traffic pattern procedures were precisely designed. I followed the procedures as directed, although some of the instructors ignored the directions and hurried their approaches in order to meet their next student. In one of my early flights I encountered a blinding snow squall while returning to the base. But after holding my heading for a while I was relieved to look down and see the runway directly below. My chief told me to make future returns immediately if a squall appeared – not an easy thing for me to do, having the most distant training area

Ferrying new airplane

After several months of routine flight instructing six days a week, sunrise to sunset, I was becoming pretty well “burned out” and welcomed the opportunity to travel by train to Houlton Army Air Field in northern Maine to pick up a new Piper L-4. Thor Solberg, the program contractor, called me to his office and assigned the delivery to me. He knew that I was from Maine and probably best qualified to bring the plane to Massachusetts. Solberg, an experienced pilot who moved from Norway to the United States prior to Hitler’s invasion, and who earlier had pioneered an amphibian route from New York to Oslo, had over estimated my cross country ability. At that time I had only limited cross country experience, but I grabbed the opportunity. With strong winds and military refueling impediments at Dow Field in Bangor and at Brunswick Navy Base, it took three days to fly 300 miles. I had become a fairly good cross-country pilot during the flight, and the new L-4 was assigned to me for instructing. But the assignment was short-lived – a week later the chief pilot took my new plane and I had to go back to NC32416.



AAF Cadet Paul Brown 3257492
(One of my 68)

Air Force Reserve to the Army Air Force

By March of 1944 World War II was well underway. With victory now in sight, military flight training began to taper off. The WTS program would soon be ended. As a civilian flight instructor for an Army Air Force Contract School, I had not yet fulfilled my WWII military obligation. I still wanted to fly in the Air Force and I hoped it would be possible. By “voluntary induction” I was soon in the 4th Air Force. As expected, pilot training had ceased. With my name tag identification “PVT George Vose FFI”. (“FFI” designating “former flight instructor”), I was assigned the MOS of Instructor Fixed Gunnery and was trained to teach P-51 pilots how to shoot down other airplanes. But a short time before the planned invasion of the Japanese mainland, in the wee morning hours of August 6, 1945, the CQ ran through the barracks shouting, “Wake up! The war’s over”. The Atom Bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima.

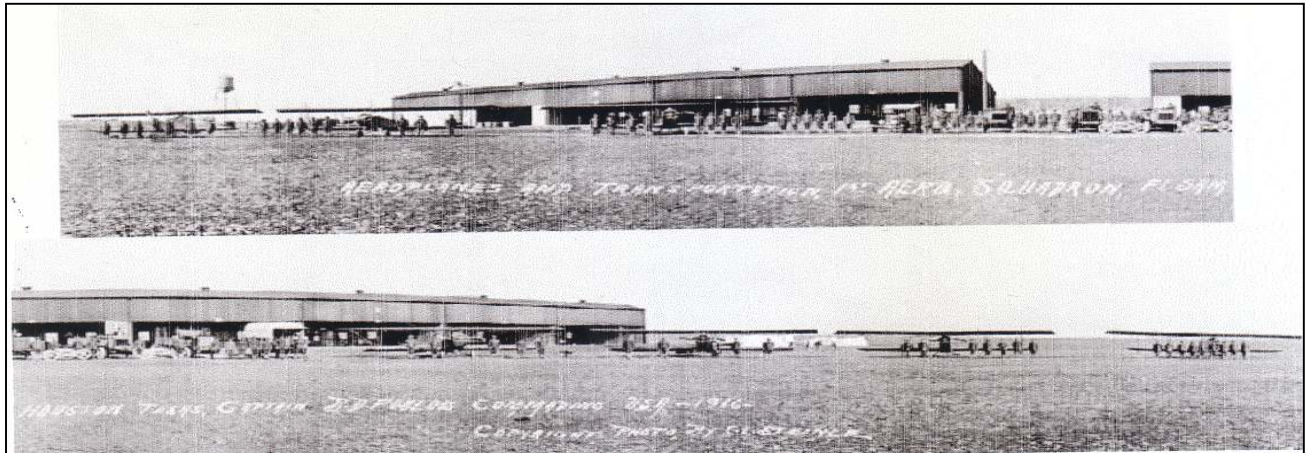
Military Aviation in Texas – A century ago

Part VII

By John McCrory

The 1st Aero Squadron reaches its permanent site

The December newsletter told of the transfer of the 1st Aero Squadron from Fort Sill to Dodd Field in San Antonio in 1915. This had been a complex operation, and the “Great Air Center” that General Scriven visualized, was now being staffed. The two split panoramic photos (below) show the 1916 facilities and equipment at Dodd Field soon after the Squadron’s arrival.



Shown are JN3s, auto, trucks, motorcycles and personnel of the 1st Aero Squadron. New galvanized metal hangars had been constructed. The aircraft had been flown to Fort Sam Houston on the long cross country flight from Fort Sill in November, 1915. With the squadron still under the command of Capt. Benjamin Foulois, the aircraft had only recently moved in.

However, they were about to be disassembled and sent again by railroad to New Mexico for support of the 1916-17 Punitive Expedition into Mexico. Pershing’s cavalry units were about to cross the border after rushing from Fort Bliss to Columbus, New Mexico, where the small community had been attacked by Villistas.

Subsequently, another Aero Squadron was soon organized at Dodd Field. A larger flying area was needed away from the city, and a new field was established southwest of San Antonio in 1917. The 3rd Aero Squadron was soon moved there and it later became Kelly Field, a major WWII training field in Texas.

The Mystery Plane, Page 1.

The airplane shown, NC10886, is a **STINSON JUNIOR MODEL S** owned by Jim Hammond of Yellow Springs, Ohio, and photographed by Daniel J. Simonsen.. The Model S was an up-grade of the 1930 Stinson SM-8. It was a high-wing cabin monoplane seating four. It was moderately priced in 1931 at \$4,995, reduced to \$4,595 in 1932. It was readily accepted for air taxi work. The model was comfortable with adjustable front seats, a bench rear seat, and it was well insulated and sound proofed. Gross weight was 3,520 lbs, useful load 1,043, max speed 128, cruise 105, landing speed 48. It was powered by a 215 h.p. Lycoming R-680 nine cylinder radial engine. More than 100 of the model were manufactured by the Stinson Aircraft Corp of Wayne, Michigan.



(Photo of Jim Hammond’s Stinson by Daniel J. Simonsen. Aircraft information from J. P. Juptner, McGraw-Hill 1997, U. S. Aircraft Series, Vol 6)