



OX5 AVIATION PIONEERS TEXAS WING NEWSLETTER

December 2012 No. 55

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

Please excuse the delay of this December newsletter – there were numerous causes, and the editor was under the weather for a while,

Message from the Editor/Secretary



The Message in the September Texas Wing Newsletter stated that the month of September was to be an important one – AND IT WAS. The 57th Annual Reunion was held in Saint Louis on September 20-23, and it was excellent and productive. All activities were well reported in the November National OX5 NEWS, edited by Sylvia Cook, our Governor who lives in Princeton, Missouri. Sylvia had an unfortunate experience after the reunion. She had a major vehicle breakdown and had to be towed all the way back to Princeton. Sylvia Cook has, since 2008, edited the OX5 NEWS that has been mailed to all current OX5 members for many years.

The second source that members can now use to keep up with National OX5 activities is the Web Page “OX5 Aviation Pioneers” (<http://ox5.org>), prepared monthly by Immediate Past President Dennis Yerkey. In it you will find the home page, latest news, history, newsletters (including the Texas Wing Newsletter), photos, articles, reunion reports, and many other items. By December 17, after six months of availability, it had received 31,342 hits.

Message from Wing President, Mike Lawrence

Dear Texas Wing Members:

It's that time again, and George Vose is reminding me that I owe him a President's Message for the newsletter, so here goes.



The six months-or-so since my election in Mineral Wells has quite literary flown by. During that time, the proposed new bylaws for the national OX5 were approved overwhelmingly by the national membership and accepted and implemented at the reunion in St. Louis. The new national bylaws make it far easier to form new wings and also to conduct the day-to-day business of the club.

I will be working with George and others to select a site for our next Texas Wing meeting. Any suggestions for interesting places and activities will be greatly appreciated.

As always, I encourage each of you to talk with any of your aviation enthusiastic friends to consider joining our Texas Wing. We have, in fact, added new members. But sadly, we've lost some to old Father Time.

All of you should by now know that George Vose was inducted into the OX5 Hall of Fame. Induction into the Hall is the highest honor that OX5 can bestow on any member. In my opinion, no one deserves the honor more. George led the National organization through a very trying time as president a few years ago, and

(Continued next page)

WING OFFICERS:	Mike Lawrence, President	Cade Woodward, Vice President	George Vose, Secretary/Editor
	Michelle Lawrence, Treasurer	Hazel Fehmel, Historian	
GOVERNORS:	Jack Brouse	Susie Brouse	Barbara Kraemer,
	Cade Woodward	George Vose	Michelle Lawrence,
			Michael Lawrence

again, in my humble opinion, saved it from collapse. He did all of this at his own expense and without seeking any recognition, thanks or platitudes from anyone. I was honored to have the opportunity to nominate him.

Finally, at this special time of year, I would like to wish each of you a very merry Christmas or Hanukah and a joyous, safe and healthy New Year. Also, thanks to each of you for your support and vote for the new National Bylaws.

Respectfully,

Michael Lawrence, Texas Wing President

This issue's "Mystery" airplane

The tables are turned. As stated in the September newsletter, an OX5 reader sent this "Mystery" Airplane photo for us to identify. OX5 member David Sanderson is the Texas Wing's farthest-flung member who flies airplanes and maintains helicopters in Alaska.

David wrote:



"Howdy, George: Here are a couple photos I made while on the job in Iliamna. This airplane arrived, piloted by a young man who was flying around Alaska building time for his commercial pilot certificate. The airplane belonged to his father who happened to be a senior captain with FedEx. I thought you may want to use this plane for your "Mystery Airplane" in one of your OX5 newsletters".



David admitted he did not know what kind of an airplane it was. So the challenge was for Texas members to identify it.

This was the editor's guess:

The double-strut landing gear assembly passing through the wing struts then braced to the wing root was a typical Fairchild configuration. Anyone who has flown a Fairchild 24 remembers the soft landings made possible by the long outer gear hydraulic struts.

The pictured airplane may have been a Fairchild Model 24-G manufactured in 1937. The model was generally powered by a 7 cylinder Warner "Super Scarab" engine, but, strangely, the model could be purchased without an engine. The model in question may have a substitute engine. (Note: The editor's guess was incorrect).

Other guesses:

We had two responses by Texas Wing members. One by Dr. James Hill of Brownwood, and one by Don Card of Dallas. Both have established good records in vintage aircraft identification.

Dr. James Hays wrote: *This appears to be a Fairchild 24J "Deluxe" by the position of the entry step attached to the lower longeron, while in the earlier 24G the step was attached to the main gear leg, the G being 3-place and the J having 4-seats. The J was certified in late 1937. (The G was certified earlier that same year). The Deluxe had flaps and originally had wheel pants, whereas the Standard did not, and had a cheaper paint job. The pictured airplane could have been STC'd with the old reliable Continental W670, usually found in the 220 h.p. model which powered many PT-17s, and Wacos.*

Don Card Wrote: *The Fairchild 24 in the OX5 newsletter is newer than the 1937 model my Dad owned and flew for missionary work in the Sierra Madres. We had a '38 G model and it had the older tapered gear and a newer tail that looked more like a Piper tail. My brother (an AP mechanic) said that the engine looks like a Continental R670 220 h.p.*

James Hays added: "Working airplanes in Alaska can be a little confusing to identify because of the modifications necessitated by terrain, time, and engine parts availability". Regardless, the red and white Fairchild that landed at Iliamna is a pretty airplane.

Airplane engines prior to the OX5

Note: *OX5 member John McCrory of Marfa has been researching early airplane engines that eventually led to Glenn Curtiss' OX5. This is Part II of the series. (For Part I, see web page <http://ox5.org> for the March 2012 Texas Wing Newsletter).*

Military Aviation in Texas – A century ago Part II By John McCrory

The Wright brothers taught themselves to fly in gliders. Their serious study of aeronautics began in 1900 through existing literature on the subject. Their first trip to Kitty Hawk was in September 1900 where they tested their wing-warping theory with a tethered glider. In 1901 they increased the size of the glider and improved the control system. Then, with their 1902 glider, the brothers demonstrated successful longitudinal and lateral control and began looking for an engine to power the machine. Receiving no response from auto manufacturers, they designed and manufactured a small 12 hp liquid cooled engine with a basic weight of 160 pounds. Charles Taylor was instrumental in this project.

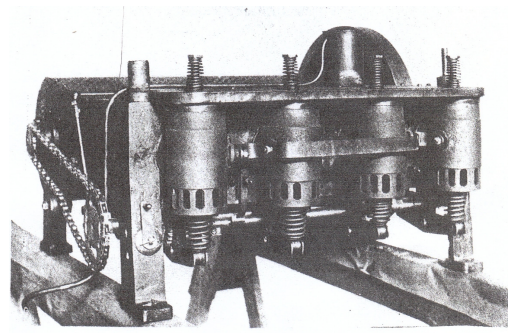
This new aeroplane had a 40-foot, six-inch wing span, and under full power at sea level on a cold day of December 17, 1903, was successfully launched from their monorail in a 20 mph wind. A short telegram informed their family in Dayton. The Wright brothers received no financial help in their endeavor. They had to invent all of the component parts -- the airfoil of the wings, the engine, the propellers, the control system and the basic structure of the airframe. They didn't come to Texas then, but their aeroplanes eventually would.

The Wrights wanted to sell their invention to the U. S. Government and offered the machine for sale to the U.S. Army in 1905, but they did not have an enthusiastic buyer. The Army really did not know much about what an aeroplane was at the time. President Theodore Roosevelt was told of the Wright developments in 1907 by prominent members of the Aero Club of America and thus encouraged meetings between the Army and Wilbur Wright. That year the Army established an Aeronautical Division within the Signal Corps to handle such matters, and placed Capt. Charles F. Chandler in charge. Negotiations became more positive when the Wrights began showing their flying skills in Europe with the intention of interesting the French, German and Italian Authorities.

Flight tests required for U. S. Army acquisition began in September 1908 at Fort Meyer, Virginia with Orville at the controls of the latest model of the Wright Flyer equipped with a 30 hp engine. The machine still relied

on the catapult monorail to take off. These were the first public flights for the Wright brothers in America. Large crowds were present during these demonstration flights which also drew a great deal of attention by important government officials.

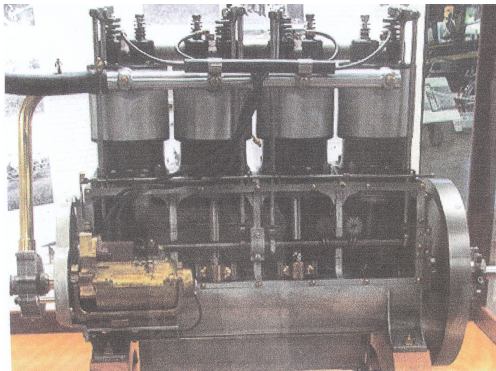
At this time Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge arrived in Fort Meyers. He was a 1903 West Point graduate and an aviation enthusiast. He was seriously interested in aeronautics and had recently been involved with the Aerial Experimental Association (AEA), an organization conducted by Alexander Graham Bell in Nova Scotia. Selfridge had participated in the design of the first AEA powered airplanes and had flown two of the aeroplanes himself, thus becoming the first US Army officer to have flown at all, as well as having flown enough to be considered a trained aviator. In addition, Selfridge had designed a propeller for the first Army dirigible, while another AEA member, Glenn H. Curtiss, had manufactured the engine. Army Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois was also assigned to the airship project. All three men knew each other.



Wright Flyer 12 hp engine built by Charles Taylor

Orville Wright allowed Lt. Selfridge to ride with him on September 17, 1908. The Wright biplane was launched using the derrick and rail system, climbing to 150 feet above the parade ground. Orville began to circle the field in order to stay in the area. A strong vibration was felt, coming from the chain driven dual propeller system. He reduced power on the engine and turned toward the landing site. On this fateful day one of the propeller blades had split creating asymmetrical thrust, then one of the propellers hit a guy wire that led to the rudder control. The airplane was seen to enter a normal glide, then pitch up and lose speed before nosing down. Orville was unable to regain control at this low altitude to prevent the most serious accident of his long career. Lt. Selfridge was killed, the first U. S. Military Officer to lose his life while flying. Orville was severely injured, suffering a broken leg and ribs, and entering a long period of hospitalization.

Despite the tragic accident, the Army continued the test program and allowed Orville to return to Washington in 1909 with a new machine. The official Army tests were continued with Lt. Frank P. Lahm as a passenger. Orville then flew Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois on a five mile flight to Alexandria, Virginia and back. The Army was now satisfied and bought Signal Corps Aeroplane No.1 for \$25,000 and allowed a \$5,000 bonus. The Wrights also provided training for two pilots, Lt. Lahm and Lt. Frederick E. Humphreys who both received three hours of training before solo flight which qualified them to be the first military aviators.



**Wright 40 hp vertical inline engine
powered the military Model B 1910**

Lt. Foulois also received training from Orville at nearby College Park, Maryland, but did not complete the solo requirement, perhaps due to oncoming weather conditions. Foulois had previous aeronautical experience, having become the first military crew member on the Baldwin Airship. (The early dirigible the Signal Corps was considering). In addition, it should be noted that he had a long military history, having enlisted in the Army during the Spanish American War, serving in Puerto Rico. Reenlisting in the Regular Army in 1899, the year the Wright brothers began their experiments, he won a commission during combat while serving in the Philippines. Although Lt. Foulois had not been rated as one of the first military aviators Wilbur flew with him for three hours during which Wilbur made all of the landings.

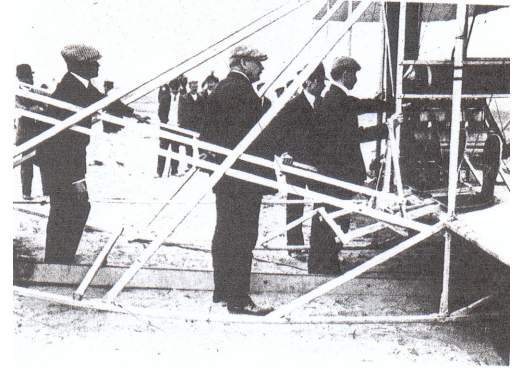
The flying season was coming to an end, and the two qualified aviators, Lahm and Humphreys, were sent back to their respective original branches of Army service. Lt. Benjamin Delahauf Foulois was retained in the Signal Corps to be in charge of the well-worn Aeroplane No. 1. This was in late October 1909. His commanding officer, Brig. Gen. James Allen, the Chief of the Signal Corps, suggested that he pack up the old aeroplane and take it to Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio where he could expect milder weather which would allow him to continue his flying and get in a landing or two – in other words, complete his solo flying requirement in sunny Texas.

Left with the Wright Flyer, several enlisted men and limited funds, Foulois crated up the aeroplane and took it to Fort Sam Houston in February 1910. It should be noted that all Wright aeroplanes had been designed with disassembly in mind. The wings were in sections that would fit into a standard box car – the multiple trips to Kitty Hawk by the Wright brothers could not have been made any other way.

Fort Sam Houston was a well-established military post with Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery as well as a large Headquarters Contingent. It also had a large parade ground suitable for a landing site. Aeroplane No. 1 arrived on February 3, 1910 and was unloaded from the boxcar by enlisted men of Lt. Foulois' group. Also sent were the launch derrick, 60 feet of monorail track, and assorted ropes and pulleys totaling 1,400 pounds. Setting up all this equipment was time consuming and inconvenient if the wind changed, or if off-field landings should occur. The skids got beat up as well. (Europeans had already started using wheels on their flying machines). In preparation for flight operations to come, a civilian construction company built a wooden hangar for storage and indoor maintenance on the Post.

March 2, 1910 became the historic first day of flying in Texas. Today a historic marker is placed to mark the spot. Many spectators watched as Lt. Foulois attempted to get the aeroplane set up to fly. He got in off the ground successfully but damaged the aeroplane on landing. It was his first solo flight.

Since Foulois was short-changed on his training prior to arriving in Texas, and had not completed a solo flight at College Park, he corresponded with the Wrights on the subject. They, in turn, sent written answers to him, and he bravely continued flight operations alone with the support of his enlisted men throughout 1910.



Orville Wright demonstrating the Model A 1909

He made modifications to the ship, including the additions of wheels to the skids to eliminate the use of the launch rail. It was during this time that he invented the seat belt with the help of the Cavalry saddle shop. However the old Aeroplane No. 1 was nearing the limit of its useful life.

Robert F. Collier was a prominent NYC publisher and aviation enthusiast, as well as an investor in the Wright Company. In early 1911 he purchased a Wright Model B which now had a 40 hp engine, and hired a pilot to fly it at his estate in New Jersey. He conceived the notion that aeroplanes could be assigned to the Military Reserve organization. He was probably aware that the military authorities were not properly funding Foulois in San Antonio. The First Lieutenant received only \$150 initially for maintenance funds and had to spend some of his own pocket money to keep Aeroplane No. 1 in the air. Collier therefore offered to loan his Model B to the Army. When they accepted and a suitable lease agreement was worked out, it became the second airplane in San Antonio.

The Wright brothers generously sent one of their experienced pilots, Phillip O. Parmalee, to Texas in order to provide "recurrent training" to Foulois. The Model B was to be the main production model of the Wright Company, but unfortunately it retained the dual pusher prop design. The aeroplane was never owned by the government, but was flown extensively at Fort Sam Houston.

Foulois had now spent a full year at San Antonio and was anxious to demonstrate his military flying abilities. He was still in charge of his small contingent of men and two Wright flying machines, the A and the B. The Army was planning military maneuvers along the Mexican border so Foulois got permission to transport the Model B to Fort McIntosh near Laredo. This was done on the railroad with the crated aeroplane assembled for flight on arrival. On March 3, 1911 Foulois and Parmalee took off on a recon flight to Eagle Pass, a flight of 100 miles. Arriving safely, they serviced the Model B and started back to Laredo. Because of the rough terrain along the route, they deviated from their direct flight and followed the Rio Grande. After flying only a few miles they experienced engine stoppage and ditched in the river, ending up upside-down in shallow water. Extracting themselves from the machinery, they made it to shore on El Indio Ranch. Word was sent to Eagle Pass and the Model B was recovered by Army wagon. Foulois and Parmalee went back to San Antonio on the train.



Correction: Bill Haddock is still up and at ‘em

In an item on page 6 of the recent September OX5 Texas Wing Newsletter, the editor erroneously mixed up some first names and some surnames, leading several readers to think that Bill Haddock of San Antonio had flown west. Wrong! Bill Haddock is alive and well at his home on Teakwood Lane in the Alamo City. Bill has many OX5 fiends who straightened this out.

Bill still owns the Kreidner-Riesner KR-31 which he has meticulously maintained and flown all of his life, (Except for a few years during World War II when Bill was in the Service and it was retained by his family). A while ago, during an OX5 reunion in Seguin, we pushed it out of the hanger. Bill climbed aboard and it was hand-propped by Ron Morton. It started immediately and purred beautifully. Bill flew it on his 85th birthday and the photo was published on the front page of Trade-A-Plane. It's a beautiful airplane, although right now it has a magneto problem, which is being fixed. (As we all know, at this time one cannot simply order OX5 magneto parts from Aircraft Spruce or Univair). We look forward to seeing Bill flying it again soon.

**Bill Haddock (in red cap)
watches a run-up of his
KR-31**



From the Texas Wing Scrapbook



Some members at the business meeting, Gainesville, June, 2009
(It was hot in the hangar, so we soon moved into the air-conditioned pilot's lounge)