Wright "B" Flyer, Inc.

WRIGHT LANDINGS

Issue 1, 2010 **Dayton, Ohio** **Winter 2010**

Tom Henricks Flies the Wright "B"

Mr. Tom Henricks and his wife Rebecca recently visited and flew the Wright "B" Flyer. Tom is President of *Aviation Week* and is a retired USAF test pilot and NASA astronaut who flew four Space Shuttle missions as commander and pilot.

The following was posted on the Aviation Week Blog following Tom Henricks' flight on 5 October. Photos are courtesy of Tim Gaffney.

I fly because it releases my mind from the tyranny of petty things . . .

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

I enjoy reading the New York Times's Traveler blog. Yesterday's post was about Wilbur Wright flying up New York's Hudson River in the Model A Wright Flyer on Oct. 5, 1909.

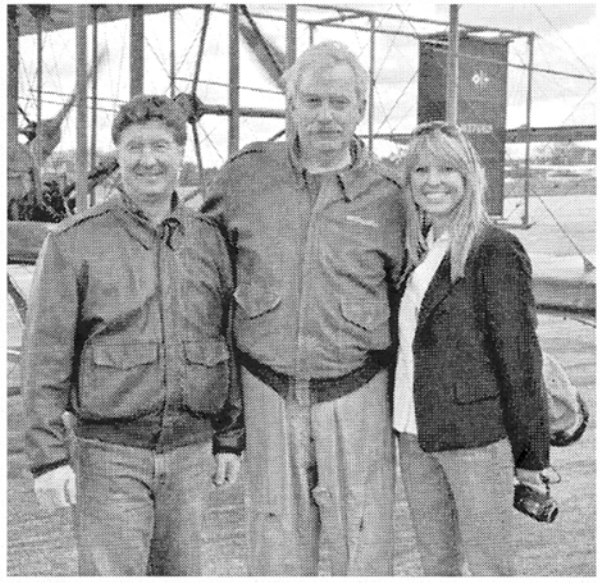
Aviation Week President (and retired space shuttle commander) Tom Henricks got the chance to fly in a Model B replica out of Ohio's Dayton-Wright Brothers Airport on Oct. 4. "I logged 6 takeoffs and landings in N3786B under the supervision of retired USAF test pilot Mitch Cary," said Henricks.

The replica has ailerons, a control wheel (instead of hand levers), wheels, an electrical system, electric starter, a radio, and a transponder. "The typical orientation flight is to takeoff, climb to 50 feet, descend and land in the length of the runway (5000 feet) turn around and repeat. I was fortunate that Mitch let me depart the pattern and maneuver at 1000 ft AGL," said Henricks.

Henricks noted that for a $100 [Honorary Aviator Membership} a member can go for an orientation flight. Information is available via the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association's Let's Go Flying Web site.

"I highly recommend it. Like most pilots, flying is a passion… whether it be Space Shuttle, F-16, A380, Stearman, or Wright Flyer, the thrill and sense of accomplishment is worth the risk," said Henricks.

That reminds me -- learning to fly is still on my list of things to do!



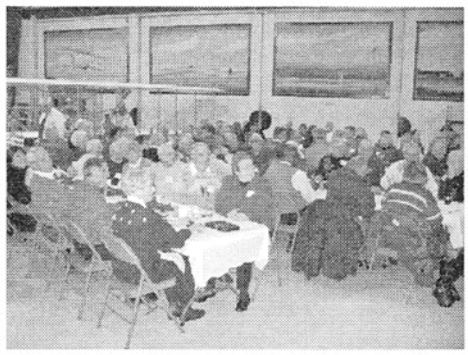
Tom , Mitch, and Rebecca pose after the flight

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER A SUCCESS

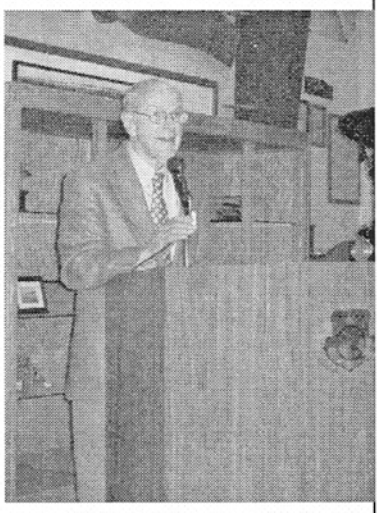
The annual Christmas/Holiday Dinner for volunteers and trustees was held at the hangar on 15 December. With the local weather much improved over last year we had a impressive turnout.

Chef Walt Hoy

Walt served turkey again this year and



tested his squash soup. John Bosch served as emcee and Phil Beaudoin outlined the challenge ahead with supporting the Daedalian centennial celebration at Ft. Sam Houston. This year will be one of the most challenging in the organization's history.



John Bosch thanks the volunteers for their hard work in 2009

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT MEMBERSHIP

Our annual membership dinner was

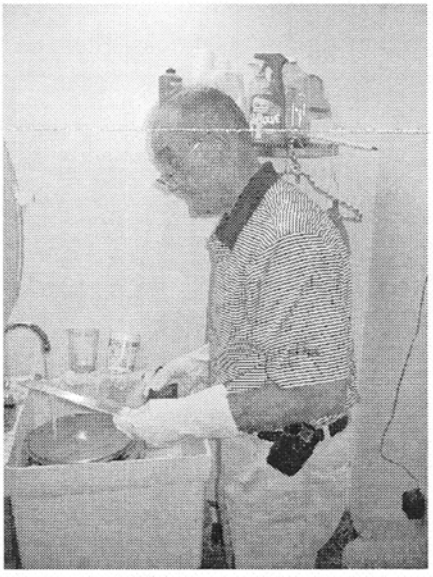
held October 22d at the hangar. This year's attendance was an all-time-high of 173. Once again Chef Walt prepared his famous spaghetti, complete with almost enough salad. The annual membership dinner gives our members an opportunity to come down to the hangar, see what is changed, check the status of the Silver Bird, enjoy the fellowship of the volunteers and trustees. Most importantly, members also vote on the slate of officers for the upcoming year.

This year we were honored to have Lt. Gen. (Retired) Dick Reynolds as our guest speaker. Gen Reynolds ' topic was how our aviation heritage advances our community agenda. Gen Rey-

Lt Gen (Ret) Dick Reynolds, USAF

nolds is a former Air Force Flight Test Center Commander, ASC Commander, and AFMC Vice Commander.

Awards were given to Richard Holt, Bill Simpson, and John Kennedy as outstanding volunteers of 2009. The following slate of trustees was nominated: Zot, John Bosch, Ed Mechenbier, Amanda Wright Lane, Bill Simpson, and Reed Madden.

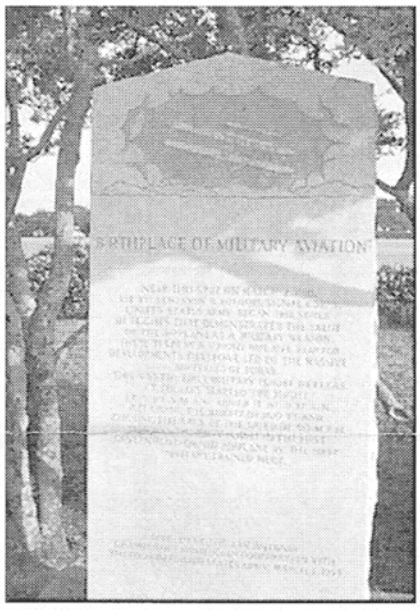


Gen Mechnebier displaying his core competency!

The evening ended with the usual clean-up effort led by Maj Gen (Ret) Ed Mechenbier, the most skilled pot-scrubber in the Dayton Area. Ed describes it as his "core competency." We decided after the dinner that a "success" at the Christmas Dinner would be to give Ed a break from his duties!

Benjamin Foulois and the Wright Flyer

The Wright "B" Flyer organization is currently preparing to take two of our airplanes to Ft Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX, to participate in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the military flights flown there by 1st Lt Benjamin Foulois. This marker, located near the parade field at Ft Sam, commemorates some of his achievements.



The Inscription reads:
"Near this spot on March 2, 1910, 1st LT Benjamin D. Foulois, Signal Corps, United States Army began the series of flights that demonstrated the value of the airplane as a military weapon. These tests in a Wright biplane started developments that have led to the massive air fleets of today. This was the first military flight in Texas.
LT Foulois started the flight at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 9:37 a.m. attaining the height of 200 feet and circling the area at a speed of 30 M.P.H. This was the first flight in the first government owned airplane by the first military trained pilot."

The man and the flying machine.
Benjamin Foulois' (pronounced foo-loy) first aviation assignment was to the Aeronautical Division, U.S. Signal Corps, where he operated the first dirigible balloon of the U.S. Government. With this aviation experience he was one of the Signal Corp officers assigned as an official observer for the demonstration of the Wright Brothers Type A airplane trials at Ft Myer that resulted in the purchase of the Wright Type A Flyer by the Army as Signal Corp Aircraft number 1.

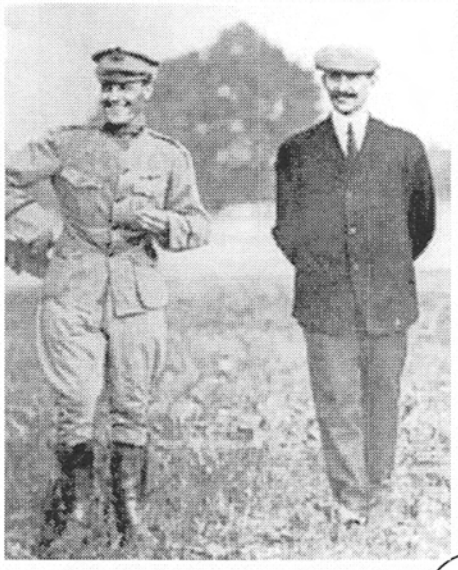
Foulois hoped to take direct instruction from the Wright brothers, but instead was sent to France in September 1909 as a delegate to the International Congress of Aeronautics. While he was away, Lieutenant Frederick E. Humphreys made the first military solo in an airplane, on October 26, 1909. Lieutenant Frank P. Lahm followed, but on November 5, the only trained military pilots crashed the only military airplane. Both pilots were reassigned to their non-flying units, and the damaged aircraft was shipped to San Antonio, Texas; more suitable than College park MD in the winter to conduct flight training. Upon his return, Foulois obtained less than one hour of instruction from Wilbur Wright, did not solo, but was directed to report to Fort Sam Houston and to "teach yourself to fly."

Foulois and Wright corresponded regularly, discussing aircraft maintenance and piloting techniques. Foulois made four flights with the rebuilt Wright Type A flyer, at Ft Sam, including his first solo takeoff, first solo landing, and first crash. In the next two years, Foulois made modifications and demonstrated the use of the newer Wright B Flyer aircraft for aerial mapping, photography, and reconnaissance. He substituted wheels in place of skids, and installed the first seat belt. On March 3, 1911, Foulois and Philip O. Parmalee made the first official military reconnaissance flight, looking for Army troops between Laredo and Eagle Pass, Texas.

Among the many firsts Foulois attained during his distinguished career are:

- 1908 First flight as a dirigible pilot
- 1909 First observer on an aircraft cross-country
- 1910 First military man to teach himself to fly
- First and only military test pilot flying SC No. 1
- 1911 First to fly more than 100 miles non-stop
- First on an operational reconnaissance flight
- First to test use of radio in flight
- 1914 First commander of a tactical air unit (1st Aero Squadron)
- First commander of the first mechanized tactical unit in the U.S. Army (1st Aero Squadron)
- 1916 First to use an aircraft in a combat operation (Mexico)
- 1918 First chief of Air Service, AEF, 1st Army
- 1931 First chief of Air Corps to be a military aviator
- 1933 First Air Corps chief to be awarded Mackay Trophy
- 1962 First Honorary Staff Member of Air Force Systems Command
- 1964 First honorary member of the Aerospace Primus Club

Foulois served as the Chief of the Air Service in 1931. He retired in 1935 as a Major General and in 1963 became the 6th person named to the Aviation Hall of Fame.



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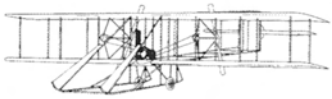
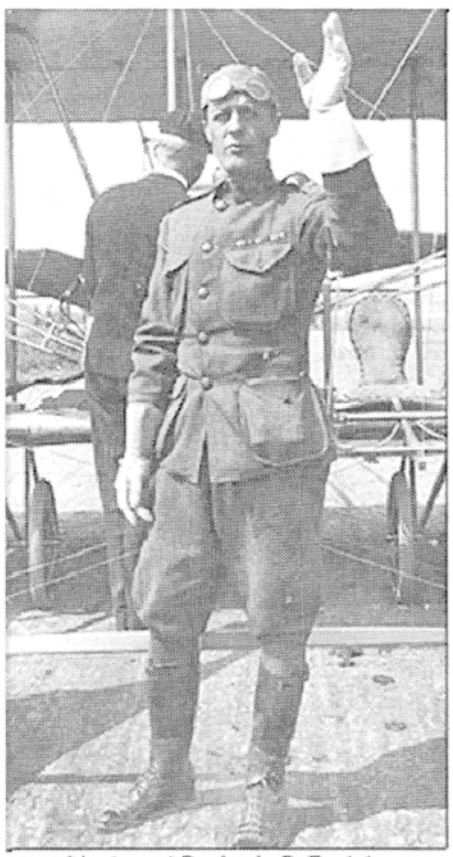


Wright "B" Flyer



Lieutenant Benjamin D. Foulois
Note the Binoculars in Lt Foulois' jacket pocket!

San Antonio Here We Come

Coming off one of the busiest years in recent history we are now preparing for our trip to San Antonio. If you haven't already guessed from the article about Benjamin Foulois we are taking two planes to San Antonio in Feb-Mar to celebrate the centennial of US military flight. This will be one of our biggest deployments in our history: two airplanes (Brown Bird and Yellow Bird) going to two separate locations in San Antonio. The 10+ person team will deploy several days early to unpack and assemble the planes and remain past the event to reverse the process sending the planes back to Ohio. This is a BIG event and we want it to go without a hitch for the Daedalians. Home again in March, we will turn our focus to the first flight of the Silver Bird and the 2010 flying season. Wish us luck in San Antonio and stop down and visit us anytime. Happy New Year.

Mitch

Please purchase our "Leader in Flight" license plates!

http://bmv.ohio.gov/vehicle_registration/leader_in_flight.htm