

TEXASAAA



TEXAS CHAPTER • ANTIQUE AIRPLANE ASSOCIATION • NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2011

NOVEMBER MEETING AT THE NUNN'S

This time of year there are many parties and family gatherings and I attended one of those occasions this month. Thus, I was not present for the November meeting at the Nunn's Hangar.

I want to thank Randy and Maybeth for hosting the meeting and Clare Wright for officiating. Also, thanks to Don Pellegrino for his work on the nomination committee.

Please plan on attending our Christmas party on December 17. We will be voting on the new board of directors for 2012. Lunch will be catered so look at the calendar of events page for all the details.

Unfortunately I forgot to ask someone to take a few pictures of the festivities and so the pictures in this issue were taken at our big fly in last October.

I will see everyone at the Christmas party.

Terry

More Gainsville Photo's.







A FLYING MECHANIC! TAKING AN F86 FOR A JOY RIDE!

A little background from my view..

I was an aircraft electrician (civilian) at WAFB when this incident took place. I knew the Airman, although I had forgotten his name until now.

Later, after I had transferred to Luke AFB, I became the primary Electrical Maintenance person for F86s. When they were sending the old war horses to other countries for their use they brought them to Luke for repairs and preparation. Walt B

The day an Air Force mechanic commandeered a North American F-86.

By Paul D. Mather

Air & Space Magazine, November 01, 2011

Courtesy George R. Johnson

Even as the powerful F-100 and other Century Series jets were carrying the U.S. Air Force to supersonic speeds in the 1950s, the North American F-86 Sabre was still a trusted fighter. Its reputation as a MiG killer, earned during the Korean War, made flying the Sabrejet a young airman's dream. It wasn't easy, especially considering the competition. Many F-86 pilots were World War II veterans with combat experience.

New Sabre pilots faced at least a year of training, including several hundred hours of classroom work and several hundred more of dual and solo flight time. After that came 15 hours in a cockpit simulator. During the student's first flight in the single-seat fighter, an instructor flew on his wing, teaching via radio. And then there was Airman First Class George R. Johnson. A 20-year-old mechanic at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona, Johnson skipped the preliminaries; on the evening of September 20, 1956, he took a Sabrejet up for a ride. Up to then, Johnson's piloting experience amounted to two hours with an instructor in a Piper Cub.

I learned about Johnson from an article in the now-defunct Argosy magazine, published in February 1959. At the time, I was a senior at Iowa State University studying aeronautical engineering and in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program. (I was commissioned in November 1959 and entered active duty the following January.) There were no quotes from Johnson in the Argosy story, and the piece did not say what happened to him after his adventure. I always wondered about him, and when I asked around in the rather large community of former F-86 pilots, I was surprised to find how little anyone knew about his exploit. After retiring from the Air Force, I decided to look him up.

Now 75, Johnson was amazed that anyone would still be interested in his long-ago flight. An intensely private man, he nonetheless agreed to meet me at a motel in Safford, Arizona, near his hometown, last November.

He grew up fascinated with airplanes. Johnson still remembered the bright yellow AT-6 Texan trainer that buzzed his family's Pima home early in World War II. After his family moved to Los Angeles, he rode his bicycle to Inglewood to watch airplanes take off and land at the airport. At 17, with a letter of permission from his mother, the underage Johnson enlisted in the Air Force in January 1954. He got his first airplane ride on a chartered Convair 240 to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas for basic training. Having worked on cars in high school, Johnson had mechanical skills, and so was sent to jet engine school at

Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. There, he accompanied pilots in the T-6, rode in the nose of a B-25, and in his spare time logged Cub flight time. Though Johnson dearly wanted to fly for the Air Force, he knew he never would; as a boy, he had stared at the sun during an eclipse and had slightly burned one retina, making it impossible for him to pass the physical for military pilots.

In October 1955, Johnson arrived at Williams, about 30 miles southeast of Phoenix. The base was just beginning to transition from a basic training site, where students flew the Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer, to an advanced fighter training base stocked with F-86s. Assigned to the 3525th Periodic Maintenance Squadron as a T-33 mechanic, Johnson did hydraulic and electrical repairs, engine changes, flight control and system checks, and flight instrument calibrations. He learned how to start and run the engine, and how to taxi the aircraft.

Johnson was proficient enough to be reassigned to the Sabre early the next year. On September 20, he and several other mechanics were working the evening shift on the flightline. The day shift had done major maintenance on an F-86F, no. 52-5039, but the work had not been done correctly; as a result, one of the aircraft's control cables became inoperative. Fixing it required that the aft section of the Sabre be pulled off, the cables realigned, and then the aft reinstalled before all wiring, cables, and tubing could be reconnected.

Before the evening shift's work could be signed off on, the mechanics had to perform a functional check, to be followed the next morning by a pilot's flight check. While one mechanic connected a ground power unit to the aircraft, Johnson gave the Sabre an external check, grabbed his headset and microphone from his toolbox, climbed into the cockpit, and started the engine. Normal procedures called for the aircraft to be taxied to a run-up area, a short concrete spur near the active runway, where the engine could be monitored for normal operation up to full power.

Donning his headset, Johnson called the control tower, manned by Airman First Class Theodore Davis Jr., who cleared him to taxi to the run-up area. A few minutes later, after the engine check, Johnson called again and asked for permission to use the runway for a high-speed taxi test—a common procedure after any work on the brakes or nosewheel. The F-86 had a history of problems in which the nosewheel shimmed, so the damping mechanism had to be carefully adjusted. Davis again granted clearance, and watched as Johnson taxied the Sabre to the active runway, 30L, which was seldom used at night.

"My intentions were still just to do a high-speed taxi," Johnson recalled. "I never had a conscious intention to fly that airplane. The nose lifts off the runway at about 105 knots [120 mph]. As I approached 105, I could feel the nose getting light, and I thought I would just wait a few more seconds to see if I could feel the plane getting light on the main gear. The few seconds passed, and I just didn't think I had enough room to stop. I wasn't thinking about being in trouble. I was thinking about maintaining climb airspeed, and when I was in a definite climb, I retracted the landing gear. I was off and committed. There was no wind at all that night. The air was smooth as glass." The time was 10:34 p.m.

Reaction on the ground was immediate. As the F-86 climbed northwest into the moonlit sky, Davis tried, unsuccessfully, to contact it. He then alerted the Officer of the Day, Captain Robert McCormick, who in turn notified other officers, including the base commander, Colonel Jerry Page, and the fire chief, Edward Anderson.

As all of them converged on the airfield, Johnson finally came on the radio, calmly announced that he had taken off, and

asked what the tower thought he should do. McCormick, who by then had arrived in the tower, asked Johnson to orbit eight or 10 miles from the base and to avoid flying over residential areas. McCormick, who was an F-86 pilot, talked Johnson through the proper engine power adjustments to conserve fuel and to cease his climb and level the aircraft.

Johnson told me that while he was a bit apprehensive about his predicament, he was not afraid for his life. "I knew that airplane," he said, "and I knew the numbers on various approach speeds because I knew the pilot's handbook. I knew that intimately. Spent a lot of time studying that. I was as prepared as you could be without actually flying.

"The F-86 had one nasty characteristic. You could get into trouble on takeoff. If you lifted the nose too high at 105 [knots], then you get [too much] drag, and it wouldn't accelerate out of it. You had to put the nose down to get the speed on up.

"I knew all about things like that, so I flew the airplane largely with trim. I knew all about over-controlling. I wasn't gonna do aerobatics or anything like that. It was very stable. And it instantly obeyed where I told it I wanted to go. I just spent my time at 10,000 feet circling the base."

Though Johnson wasn't worried, the men on the ground were. For one thing, Johnson had no parachute. His only hope, base officials felt, was to make a survivable landing with their help.

"There was quite a lot of [radio] chat back and forth," Johnson recalled. "Everything got pretty well stabilized with me at slow cruise and orbiting the base. I could see everything moving on the taxiways and runways. I don't recall being frightened, although I was being very careful with the controls."

Johnson asked the tower to contact Second Lieutenant George Madison to come and fly on his wing. Madison, an F-86 check pilot, had until recently been Johnson's supervisor, and Johnson respected and trusted him. One of the senior maintenance officers, Captain Linden Kelly, also a pilot, roused Madison from bed and briefed him on the situation. Madison quickly dressed, grabbed his flight gear, helmet, and parachute, and rushed to the flightline, where a crew had readied an F-86. Madison asked Kelly to accompany him in another F-86. Within minutes, both were airborne.

"The F-86F is very stable in smooth air and the night was smooth," Madison told me via e-mail (he wouldn't say where he lived). "I knew that if we could get him in a controlled descent of about 500 feet per minute at around 140 knots [161 mph] and keep him lined up with the runway, there was a chance he might survive. I told George to just relax when the aircraft smacked the runway and keep it straight. All the time I was hoping the aircraft would not bounce or porpoise. I told George to forget about the brakes and let the barrier stop the aircraft."

Said Johnson: "When we turned to final approach, they [Madison and Kelly] had me lined up with the runway very nicely. On their instructions, I had extended the speed brakes and landing gear, and put the wing flaps down. Madison had me back off the throttle at just the right time, and I touched down very smoothly, right on the runway centerline. I saw both of them accelerate and begin climbing away. One of them said 'Good boy' as I touched down."

Even though he had come in faster than normal touchdown speed, Johnson had lots of experience in braking and steering the aircraft. Still, he took Madison's advice and let the Sabre roll the length of the runway and plow into the cable barrier.

"It seemed to me that I was still very fast and not at all sure about getting stopped. I stayed off the brakes and was still rolling quite fast as I hit the barrier target right in the middle. The barrier engaged very smoothly and quickly slowed me down to a stop." Johnson opened the canopy and shut down the avionics and

navigation lights. Anderson, the fire chief, ran over, hopped up on a wing, and leaned into the cockpit, where Johnson was cleaning things up. "This bird really can fly by itself," Johnson told Anderson in amazement, adding, "It's all over now but the shouting." And it was. Johnson had flown an F-86 for one hour and two minutes. For his adventure, he was whisked off to the base hospital, given a blood test (presumably to check for drugs and alcohol), and confined for the night in a guarded room.

The next morning, Page, the base commander, came in and opened the conversation with "Well, what do we do now?" Johnson had expected a tongue-lashing, but found the colonel to be a kind man. Page told Johnson that he had put on quite a show of flying skill, and under other circumstances Page might even have considered recommending him for pilot training. However, Page said, a court-martial was inevitable. If he were to show leniency, he told Johnson, "I would have half of my mechanics trying the same damn fool stunt tomorrow."

Johnson's general court-martial was held on March 26, 1957. The mechanic faced three charges: stealing an F-86F (valued at \$217,427), causing \$195.64 worth of damage to the aircraft when he hit the barrier upon landing, and flying the aircraft without proper flight orders or clearance. The trial lasted a day, and a transcript shows that members of the court were keenly interested in whether Johnson had seemed distraught or had hinted that he intended to fly the aircraft. Witnesses who spoke with him on the radio that night, and those who listened in, were unanimous: He seemed calm and completely in control of the situation.

Ultimately, the court agreed that Johnson had not intended to steal the Sabre. He was allowed to plead guilty to a lesser charge: wrongful appropriation. He was found guilty on the second charge of damaging the aircraft but was acquitted on the third on the grounds that the regulation applied only to Air Force pilots.

The court sentenced him to six months confinement at hard labor, which reduced his rank to Airman Basic, plus he had to forfeit \$65 a month for six months. But Johnson was not discharged. He served his time in the jail at Williams, and looks back on his imprisonment as not at all depressing. Daily he was allowed outside to serve on various work details, such as mowing grass. His cell door was seldom locked, and he spent many evenings playing cards with the guards. For good behavior, he was freed after five months.

The Air Force put Johnson back to work in a different maintenance squadron, and at a desk, rather than on the flightline. Given charge of the technical and maintenance library, he soon excelled and began to earn back his rank. Johnson served another two years at Williams until the base began a transition to training pilots in the new F-100 Super Sabre. In early 1960, he was transferred to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, and assigned to the headquarters of the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing. Following his overseas tour, Johnson opted not to re-enlist, and in late 1961 he was released from active duty as an Airman Second Class (equivalent to today's Airman First Class or E-3).

Johnson went on to work in the computer industry as a customer engineering and service representative. He eventually earned his pilot's license, flew cropdusters, and for a time owned a Mooney M20 four-seat airplane. He did not consider his Sabrejet flight a big event in his life. "It was kind of a dumb thing to do, but I got away with it," he told me. "Had a guardian angel on my shoulder that night."

When the F-86 was rolling out to U.S. bases in the 1950s, North American Aviation dispatched its legendary test pilot, Bob Hoover, to show the fighter's safe handling and flying capabilities

to Air Force pilots all over the world. Hoover's demonstrations—which included barrel rolls immediately after takeoff—were meant to allay concerns about the stability of the new swept-wing aircraft at low speeds, and to reassure pilots of the ease of flying the Sabre. Too late came Airman Johnson and his amazing one-hour flight to provide the ultimate proof. Paul D. Mather is a lifelong self-admitted aviation nut who has never read or heard an uninteresting airplane story. □

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER MEETING 2011

December Meeting: December 17th, 2011 at the Tomlinson Aviation Hangar, Gainesville Municipal Airport at Gainesville, Texas. Bill Morrow, Manager of Tomlinson Aviation will be our host and provide the very nice hangar to have our Christmas Party in. The Noon Meal will be catered by Dieter Bros. and include Salad, Turkey and Ham, Sides and Dessert for \$10.00 per person.

No Gift Exchange is planned, but each person is encouraged to bring a minimum of two non-perishable food items which will be donated to Vista, a local Gainesville Food Bank. The challenge would be to see if each person could bring a grocery sack full, instead of just two items, as this way our Chapter could really make an impact which is badly needed this year. Remember that the City and area of Gainesville has supported our Chapter very well each year.

Chapter Election Process: This is our Chapter Officers Election Meeting. The slate of candidates is listed elsewhere in this newsletter. You must be present to vote. Please make every effort to attend so that your desires will count in the election process.

For Fliers: Gainesville Municipal (GLE) is on the Sectional Chart just West of Gainesville, Texas.

For Drivers: From Interstate Highway 35 in Gainesville take Highway 82 West about two (2) miles until the airport entrance sign on the North side of the highway. Follow the Airport Road North and the Tomlinson Hangar will be on your right.

2012 Meeting Locations: Please contact the Activities Coordinator now to volunteer your place for a meeting during 2012. The position of Meeting Coordinator is difficult enough, without having to call around and beg members to sign up for a meeting location. If you don't volunteer early enough, it is possible a monthly meeting may not happen.

Fly-Ins of Interest 2012:

Mar 2 & 3: Arizona Chapter AAA Annual Fly-In, Casa Grande, AZ

Last Submission: As the outgoing Secretary, it has been my pleasure to support the Chapter by submitting these Calendars of Events the past couple of years. Please support the next Secretary by furnishing the information required in a timely manner. Dick Ramsey

Submitted by Richard Ramsey for Darrell Irby and Terry Doyle, Activities Coordinators



TEXAS CHAPTER ANTIQUE AIRPLANE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the General Meeting held: 19 November 2011

The General Meeting was held at Randy and Maybeth Nunns on Propwash Airport and was called to order at 12:40pm by Vice President Clare Wright. There were 49 members and guests in attendance. The attendance list is in the Chapter Records.

Clare thanked Randy and Maybeth for hosting the meeting location.

AGENDA:

Announcements

President Terry Wallace was not able to attend as he was in Canada.

A few members fibbed terribly about their ages when asked about Birthdays.

The next meeting will be the Christmas Party in Gainesville on Dec 17th. Make plans now and bring Non Perishable food items. The meal will be catered.

Clare mentioned the Annual Sale at Dallas Air Salvage in Lancaster which will be held on 10 December 2011. Lots of stuff and very nice discounts.

Treasurer's Report

Joetta presented the Treasurers Report and a well documented report on the Fly-In expenses. They were approved by vote.

Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Meeting on 17 September 2011 were approved by vote.

As there was no formal meeting held during the Fly-In, there will not be any minutes from October.

Old Business

Clare thanked Dick Ramsey for making arrangements to have WASP Mary Alice Vandeventer attend our October Fly-In. Clare also thanked those who worked to restore the tables prior to the Fly-In, and those who volunteered at the Fly-In.

New Business

Don Pellegrino presented the Nominating Committee recommendations for Chapter Board Members to be elected at the December meeting.

President: Phil Cook

Vice President: Stan Price

Secretary: Don Pellegrino

Treasurer: Joetta Reetz

Newsletter Editor: Barry Wallace

Activities Coordinator: Terry Doyle and Darrell Irby

Historian: No Nomination

There were no nominations from the members present during the meeting.

Dick Ramsey presented the cost factors involved in mailing Newsletters to each member. The cost is \$20.70 per member/per year. Some discussion was made about using email to send out newsletters as a way to save the Chapter some of that expense. Most members present indicated by show of hands that they would accept the newsletter being emailed. This was tabled, to be brought up later.

Dennis Price brought several photos of planes taken recently at our fly-in and also two CD's, one from Blakesburg and one from Gainesville Fly-In.

Several nice door prizes were won by members.

A motion to adjourn was made by and seconded. The meeting ended at 1:10pm.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Ramsey

Secretary, Texas Chapter



AAA

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE - 1950 Bellanca Cruisemaster 14-19. 190 Lyc., 80 hrs.. SMOH. 2987 tt. \$20,000. Contact: Sherman Oxford at (972)874-5050 or (214)704-1535.

FOR RENT T-HANGARS available at Bird Dog Airfield (TE58). Three left. Water, electricity and fully enclosed. Contact Scott Sackett (940) 367-1992 sackett@pobox.com 11/09

FOR SALE - 1 Jacobs R-755-9 245 Hp 165 Hr smoh, 1 Stearman 220 Cont. motor mount, 1 Leise neville 50 amp gen. Contact at 940-367-4480 Bob Landrum 11/09

FOR SALE - 1941 Fairchild 24, 15 hours on a 185 Warner, with an Airomantic or Curtis Reed prop. Beautiful airplane, good fabric. Asking 85K with 185 Warner or 65K with 165 Warner. Contact Tom at 817-790-3190 11/09

FOR SALE - 1932 Fairchild 22 C7B. It has a 145 HP Menasco engine with a high wing and 2 open cockpits. This is a 100% rebuild of every piece of the aircraft. Asking 45K. Contact Tom at 817-790-3190. 11/09

FOR SALE: Building site for house & or hangar 2.39 Acres - North-South 2400' grass runway New Residential Airport-FLATBUSH ESTATES-Decatur- \$49,900 Sharon Sanden, Owner/Realtor - Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage ssanden@airmail.net - 817-676-7458 8/10

FOR SALE: 1959 Cessna 150 for sale. An inexpensive time builder that runs great. 230 SMOH, 4430 TT, always hangared, last annual 8/11 Original logs signed by Cessna test pilot on first flight. \$18,000.00 OBO. Terry Wallace, wallacete@cs.com or cell 817-706-3173. 4/17

FOR SALE- 1936 Taylor Aircraft Company (built before Piper changed name of Company) J-2 Cub, with a Cont 65 HP engine and Univair sealed struts. Air-frame has 2180 hrs and recovered with Stitts Polyfiber in 1977. Engine has 848 total hrs and 60 since overhaul. Last annual was in February 2011. EAA auto gas STC. Located in Westlake, Texas. \$25,000. Contact Gary Sublette at 817-791-6602. 5/13

FOR LEASE: 3 miles from Bird's Nest Airport/ Austin Executive Airport off FM 973: 2.11 acres with large workshop (25'x65') , and 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath mobile home for lease. Currently being renovated, will be available soon. Contact Bill and Shirley Girard: Shirley@mudflap-aviation.com.

Maybeth Nunn, Broker, REALTOR

CROSS TEXAS REALTY

Looking for airport property? View my website: www.airportsoftexas.com

Hangars, hangar/homes, hangar lots for sale 214.356.0383

2230 Airport Dr.
Gainesville, Texas 76240

BILL MORROW
E-mail: billm@tomlinsonavionics.com



Phone 940-612-2044
Fax 940-612-2011

TOMLINSON AVIONICS OF TEXAS INC.

FAA Approved Repair Station #T3TR390N

Are you looking for airport properties?
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Maybeth Nunn, Broker
Cross Country Realty
214-356-0383
nunn3@verizon.net.

Need Aviation Hardware?
HAIRE AVIATION LLC
Jerry T. Haire / Richard N. Haire
haireav@haireaviation.com
www.haireaviation.com
Bus 940-458-4603 Fax 888-275-3149

Wanted: Continental A-40 or A-64 engine. Would like to trade a Spencer Marston Billiards Table plus cash. Table is worth \$2600 - \$2800. Will sell the table separately for \$995 cash. Contact John Greenlee 940-872-1359, or email jmgreenlee@sbcglobal.net.

FOR SALE: CESSNA 170B - Call (985) 643-3587 for details.

Updated 7/26/2011



MEMBERSHIP AND DUES OWNERSHIP OF AN AIRPLANE IS NOT REQUIRED.

The only Requirement is a Love of Airplanes and the Fellowship of those who share that Passion. **Membership and Dues** for the Texas Chapter of the Antique Airplane Association are \$25.00 per year. Visit our Website at www.texasantiqueairplane.org or www.txaaa.org for details and an Application Form.

NOTE: Membership expires on the date next to your name on the mailing label of your Newsletter.

**Please send dues and address changes to:
TXAAA Treasurer - 5209 Glen Canyon Dr., Fort Worth, TX 76137**

The Texas Chapter supports and encourages membership in the National Antique Airplane Association.

For Information about joining the National AAA, Visit their Website at www.antiqueairfield.com or Email antiqueairfield@sirisonline.com or you may write:

**Antique Airplane Association - Antique Airfield
22001 Bluegrass Road - Ottumwa, IA 52501-8569**

**See a color newsletter on our
website at www.txaaa.org** □

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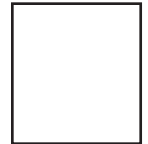
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"KEEP THE ANTIQUES FLYING"