



The Landing Field



NEWSLETTER of the Friends of Jenny educational organization

Issue 002, Spring 2016



From the Cockpit by C. Dorian Walker, Jenny Aviator

The view from the cockpit metaphorically suggests 'the best view in the house', and this regular feature plans to support that notion as best as this writer can accommodate.

With April looming on the horizon, this seemed a good time to remember what we

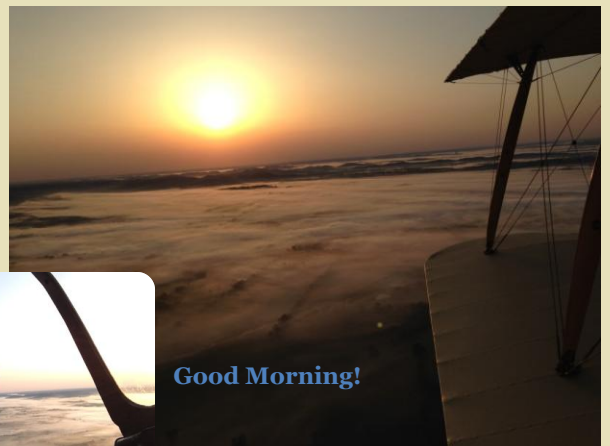
were doing just a year ago. FOJ was about to embark on the longest cross country in Jenny history this century. One thousand five hundred and two miles, 25 flight hours, 23 take-offs and landings, 4 days, and one Sun-N-Fun Pioneer Age Champion Award later, our 'ole girl' breaks any known Curtiss Jenny Florida to Kentucky or Kentucky to Florida records since 1920. We didn't know it might be record-breaking, we didn't know if we'd even make the entire route, since the last time



we found record of such a trip in a Jenny was 1920 and it took a month. But after careful and meticulous prep by our BG Crew Chief Gary Wickliff and Myron Callaham, FOJ's JN4 #38262 was ready for a dawn launch, Tuesday April 21st. They would pick up the extraordinary Jon Foote in Tennessee to round out the talented crew. BG JN aviators Terry Richardson and Dorian Walker climbed into the rather cold open cockpit and turned that big,



beautiful, eight foot wooden prop until it sprang to life. Amidst a farewell of well wishers... the Friends of Jenny took off into the cold, clear sky. Besides being Cold!, our Flight plan allowed us to travel somewhere between an hour to an hour and a half legs. The Jenny has a 24 gallon fuel tank, allowing for about 11 gph, we figured we'd be ready to step out of the wooden seats in the



Good Morning!

wooden airplane after that length of time. Without wind, we expected to cruise at about 70 miles per hour. The first leg from Bowling Green took us right across our Tennessee JN Aviator Steve Sachs grass strip (we waved) and on to Murfreesboro, the home of the MTSU flight program. Quick hello's and refueling put us back in the air on our way to a real high-light. It wasn't the freshly brewed coffee that we both were longing, but rather the eye-brow lifting scent of a rather infamous local resident by the name of Jack Daniels and his home brew... It was the pick-me-up we both needed.



A view of the Jack Daniels distillery from above. Note the tail wind we've picked up.

Our trip was designed to keep us away from the Appalachian Mountains, certainly no friend to a Jenny, now or back in the day. We continued south, our engine just purring in sync as we shook (yes, we were vibrating from both the engine and the cold) to our next stop, the anticipated Moontown Airport. All grass, it's legendary among tail dragging and vintage aero plane folks. Tucked into the foothills just east of Huntsville, the airfield lived up to its reputation. Cordial, friendly, and beautiful.

At this point we began making our way south east, on to Auburn University. The school, alma mater to our Myron, has a fantastic flight program and so we were looking forward to our stop there. After all, education is the foundation our program rests on. Our visit was made very special when a group of grade school children showed up to take a close up look at what they were studying... WW1.



WW1 trainer taxis by AU trainers

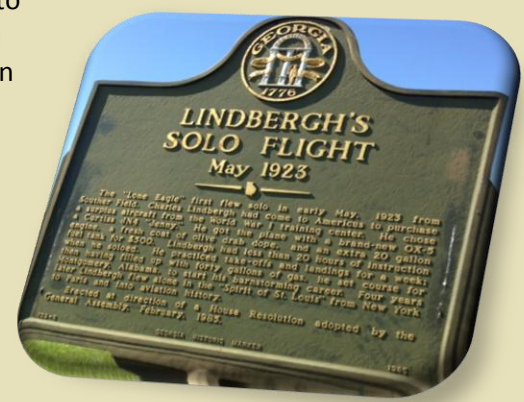
On to our next stop... Georgia. What is listed on the sectional as Jimmy Carter Municipal Airport at Americus, Georgia was to be both Terry and my

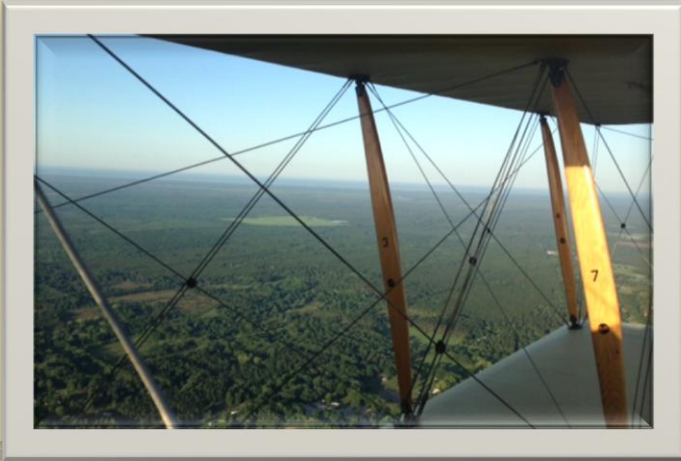


highlight of the day. From the great welcome we received, we came to find out that we were the first Jenny that anyone had seen fly into this airfield in nearly 90 years. The significance of that statement was that this was both a former WW1 training airfield named Souther Field, and second, it is the field that Charles Lindbergh bought a Jenny and learned to fly! We were originally planning to spend the night here, but were anxious with the weather still reasonably good, to push on and with great sadness in our hearts, we waived farewell and rose into the sky, 80 miles to Thomasville. There, safe on the ground, we spent a well deserved evening of deep sleep!



At day break we were back at it, moving on in to Florida. Generally, we flew at between a thousand and twenty-five hundred feet, depending on winds aloft. Our first





view of the Gulf of Mexico brought the size and length of our journey into a beautiful reality. We were actually still in the air, slowly churning mile after mile beneath us and finally believing we might just make it to Lakeland after all.

And we did! And, we weren't shivering anymore!

Our Lakeland Sun N Fun stay was just terrific. We were visited by lots of folks, Jenny stories abounded,



Dorian and Terry stand on terra firma upon arrival at SNF

visitors could not believe we had flown all the way to Florida.

We flew in the showcase which really was enjoyable because as all those assembled could attest, a Jenny in the air is truly a work of art! Poetry in motion...

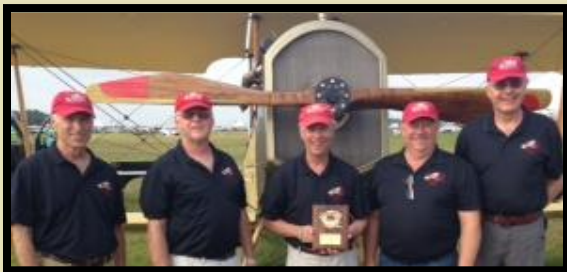


A view of the Florida swamps looking out left cockpit down

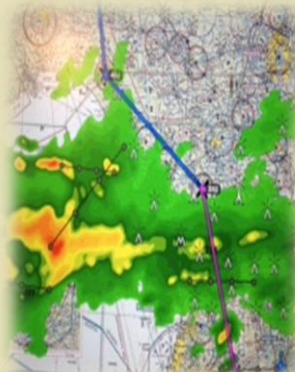


Tom of the famous Tiger Boys of Canada presented us with a Johnson ASI that he crafted.

And a wonderful surprise for FOJ as we receive the 2015 Sun N Fun Pioneer Age Champion Award. Sun N Fun is truly a dream come true for the entire team. After six great days...



It's time to work our way back north and wouldn't you know it, weather decides to offer a challenge. Our first leg north, we flew under and around the storm, but our ground speed was a whopping 38 mph. And yes, Jenny pilots of yesteryear and today, get wet when it rains.





The latest member of our team is Aviator Steve Guenard, who wanted to see if the stories he'd heard about flying the Jenny from his Great Uncle, were true or not. He wasn't disappointed!

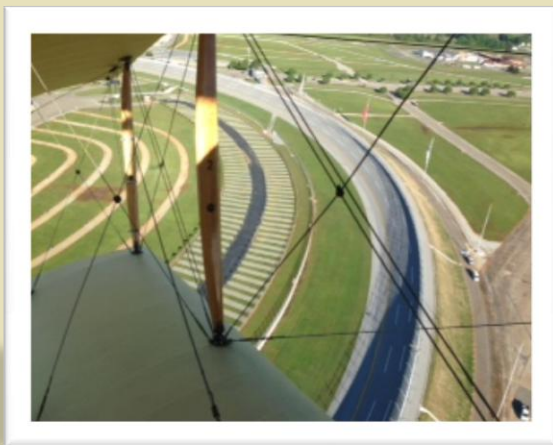
At 500 feet, these rural Georgia cross roads look like the same ones that a certain 1920's Blues singer sold his soul to the devil for his success!

We just couldn't resist the opportunity to 'Fly the Talladega' Speedway. The track is built on the grounds of a WW2 triangular airfield. It was a blast.



And finally, a week to the day that we departed Bowling Green, we returned!

What a trip, what a memory!



Family Stories

This section of our Newsletter focuses on real life stories, gathered and submitted by people who have had or known someone who has had a past experience with the Jenny.

"That's my Dad on the left..."

Bob Thompson stated with a picture attached. "That's him standing on the left". Colonel Thompson's father is none other than Stephen W. Thompson (March 20, 1894 — October 9, 1977) who was an American aviator of World War I, and the *first* member of the United States military to shoot down an enemy aircraft.

On February 5, 1918, the 1st Aero Squadron had not yet begun combat operations in France, but Thompson visited a French unit with a fellow member of the 1st





Aero Squadron. Both were invited to fly as gunner-bombardiers with the French on a bombing raid over Saarbrücken, Germany. After they had dropped their bombs, the squadron was attacked by Albatros D.III fighters. Thompson shot down one of them. This was the first aerial victory by any member of the U.S. military. He was awarded the Croix de guerre with Palm for the action.

In May, Lt. Thompson was assigned to the new 12th Aero Squadron at

Ourches airdrome, France commanded by Capt. Lewis H. Brereton. On July 28, now flying from a farm field near La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, he was in another memorable battle. While doing artillery spotting during a battle near Château-Thierry, his Salmson 2 A2 was attacked by four Fokker D.VIIs from what had been Richthofen's Flying Circus but was then under the command of Hermann Göring. Thompson shot down the first two planes that attacked him, but a bullet from the third hit his machine gun and disabled it. He was then hit in the leg, and his pilot was hit in the stomach by an exploding

bullet. The pilot managed to crash land the plane before he died of his wounds. Thompson dug the bullet out of his leg with a pocket knife. The pilot who shot them down was the famous German ace Erich Löwenhardt, who at the time was second only to Richthofen in victories.

The uniform that Thompson was wearing when he shot down the Albatros D.III and the bullet he dug from his leg are on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.



Did you know?

1916: Eight Curtiss "Jenny" planes of the First Aero Squadron take off from Columbus, New Mexico, in the first combat air mission in U.S. history. On March 9, 1916, more than 1,000 of Pancho Villa's horsemen crossed the border at Columbus, New Mexico and raided the town. 17 Americans were killed as they looted and burned the town. President Wilson immediately asked permission from President Carranza of Mexico to send troops into Mexico. Carranza reluctantly gave permission, "for the sole purpose of capturing the bandit Villa." With that permission, Wilson ordered a "Punitive Expedition," and told General Pershing to "pursue and disperse" Villa's forces. Pershing thought this would be a good opportunity to use airplanes, and ordered the 1st Aero Squadron to Columbus to set up operations. He planned to use the aircraft for observation support of the ground forces. The greatest weakness of the Squadron was its lack of airplanes. Those observing operations in WWI in Europe, understood that an aviation squadron needed a minimum of 12 operational airplanes, 12 replacements, and a reserve of 12, 36 airplanes in all. The 1st Aero Squadron



had only 8 Curtiss JN-3 airplanes, and was desperately short of spare parts. The Squadron arrived in Columbus on March 15, only with 8 airplanes, 11 pilots, 82 enlisted men, and flew their first reconnaissance sortie on the 16th. That was the first time American aircraft were used in an actual military operation. *Source: firstaerosquadron.com*

Maintenance Hanger

We have just completed our 'conditional' annual inspection. Every flying and control surface has been disassembled and reassembled to check stress, pressure and tension. Upgraded new roller rockers with poly lock assemblies have been installed by Turner Performance Engines. The tail skid has been pulled, refinished with brass and copper by Myron, and



reinstalled. Gary and Myron have created a second and improved tail wheel frame to hold the new Scott tail wheel. All the flight crews are eternally grateful to these two... Thank you Gary and Myron, we are not worthy! Jon and team are coming down the back stretch of manufacturing new side cowls to install on our engine compartment. After reassembly later next week, new bungee cords will be added to the main landing gear and then... off into the wild, blue yonder!



Who's that sitting in the Jenny?

There are a lot of folks who claim that sitting in a Jenny is on their bucket list, so we thought we'd just take a look at some of those future Jenny flyers.



Major General Arnold Fields, USMC, Ret., Deputy Commander, USMC Forces, Europe. Major General Fields retired after serving as the Deputy Commander of Marine Corps Forces in Europe. During Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, General Fields commanded the 3rd Infantry Battalion of the 6th Marine Regiment in operations against Iraqi Armed Forces. Here he is an honored guest of the "Salute to Veterans" Air Show, Columbia, Mo. For more information about this special event go to www.salute.org