

A WORLD WAR I VETERAN RETURNS TO LOVE FIELD

Just after Veteran's Day 2011, a restored Curtiss JN-4D trainer from World War I returned to Love Field, where it was used to train Army pilots over ninety years earlier.



The aircraft, shown above and at right, was the subject of a meticulous two-decade restoration by Phil Mintari of Ingram, Texas, his sons, and family friends. It will remain on display in the Museum for several months.

The Curtiss JN-4D “Jenny” was designed in World War I as a training aircraft, and the majority of American pilots headed to combat in Europe trained in the airplane. This particular “Jenny,” number 4072, was built by the Liberty Iron Works in Sacramento and was then shipped to Love Field.



(Color images courtesy of Danny Mintari)

Love Field was established by the Army in 1917 as a pilot training base, and the first flights from the new airfield took place on November 23 of that year. Between then and the Armistice on November 11, 1918, several hundred students flew in Number 4072 and the other “Jennies” at Love Field, completing their training and earning their pilot’s wings.

Few original JN-4Ds survive today, and even fewer are certified for flight, as is the Mintaris’ restoration. **Come and view a true icon of Texas aviation history!**



At left, Lt. C.G. Brenneman stands proudly by his Curtiss JN-4D “Jenny” at Love Field sometime in 1918.

(Frontiers of Flight Museum)

Scroll down to view the Museum’s “Jenny” Image Gallery!



CURTISS JN-4D “JENNY” IMAGE GALLERY

(All images from the Frontiers of Flight Museum Archives)

*Sunday, November 13, 2011—
the fuselage of JN-4D #4072
arrives on a flatbed trailer...*



*...and the left and right wing
sections come as “box” sub-
assemblies in two enclosed trucks.*



1918—The pilot of #4045, sister ship to #4072, waves during takeoff from Love Field.

1918—A Love Field JN-4D “flying ambulance.” The “turtleback” is hinged to allow a stretcher patient to be carried behind the front cockpit.



Monday, November 14, 2011—the major components are moved into position...

...and the assembly process begins. Attaching the wing sections to the fuselage was relatively simple compared to the task of connecting and adjusting the control and bracing wires.





The Curtiss JN-4D had a complicated and extensive array of bracing wires, as shown in this close-up of #4072's rigging (left) and the remarkable 1918 air-to-air photo below. One "Jenny" instructor was known to characterize the complexity of the plane's flying wires by saying...

... "If you release a pigeon from the front cockpit, and it can find its way out, you probably have a wire missing somewhere..."



Cockpit detail of #4072. Those are NOT cans of beer for the instructor pilot, but reproductions of the two Western Electric batteries that powered a rudimentary cockpit lighting system.



Noon, Tuesday, November 15th—the finished product, scheduled to be on display for several months.

Royce Peterson of Dallas displayed his 1917 Ford Model T Runabout during the assembly process to allow a comparison of state-of-the-art auto and airplane technology during World War I.



November 1918—Major Albert Sneed, Love Field's Commanding Officer, poses in his JN-4D on the "dead line." The term "flight line" did not come into use until years later.