

TEST PILOT

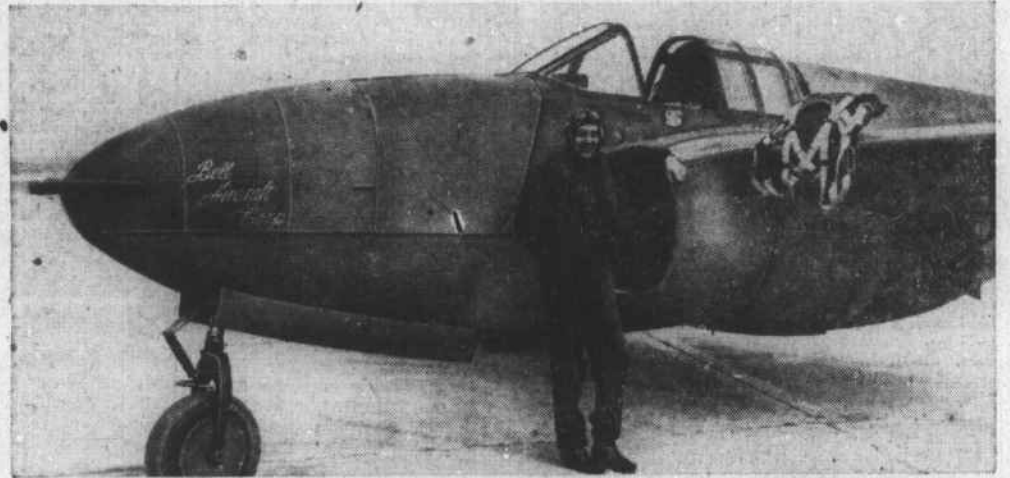


A. M. "Tex" Johnston, 38-year-old veteran test pilot, probably has put more different types of airplanes through their paces than any other living pilot. His big job today is flight testing Boeing Airplane Company's huge new eight-jet B-52 Stratofortress. Last April he took the swept-wing airplane on its maiden flight. Now every few days or so he takes it up on what are termed "routine" flights.

It was during World War II, as a test pilot, that Johnston began to score his string of "firsts." He flight tested the first U.S. jet engine; radio controlled the flight of the first U.S. jet airplane, the Bell P-59; radio-controlled the flight of the Grumman F-7F for the Navy; conducted early ram-jet engine tests for the Air Materiel Command; conducted early pressure cabin tests and piloted the Bell L-39, first U.S. swept-wing airplane.

In addition he had flight tested miscellaneous helicopters and a score of experimental U.S. fighters and bombers. Prior to joining the Boeing flight department in 1949 he had flown every jet airplane type in the U.S. Air Force and now has more than 1,200 flight hours in jets—close to 9,000 testing all types of airplanes.

Johnston lives with his wife, DeLores, and three children, in Bellevue, a suburb of Seattle, Wash. His hobbies are building furniture and racing his small cabin cruiser on a nearby lake.



WAR PLANE. "Tex" poses alongside Bell P-59, first U.S. jet plane, which he tested in 1943.



GIANT. B-52 Stratofortress lands on Seattle field after test flight. "Tex" is at the controls.



ROARS OFF. The Stratofortress leaves Seattle runway during test flight.

GOING ALOFT. Tex Johnston prepares to climb the ladder into the cockpit of a B-47 Stratojet bomber during his earlier role as flight test pilot for that plane.



MAN FROM MARS? Wearing high altitude "space suit," "Tex" gets ready for Stratofortress flight.



"LIKE THIS, SON." Using replica of Thompson Trophy as pylon, "Tex" shows son, Gary, how he made turn in race he won at 1946 National Air Races.



AT HOME. "Tex" spends some quiet moments with his wife and three children, Judy, 15, Gary, 10 and baby Barbara, in their Seattle suburban home.

This Week's PICTURE SHOW—AP Newsfeatures.

