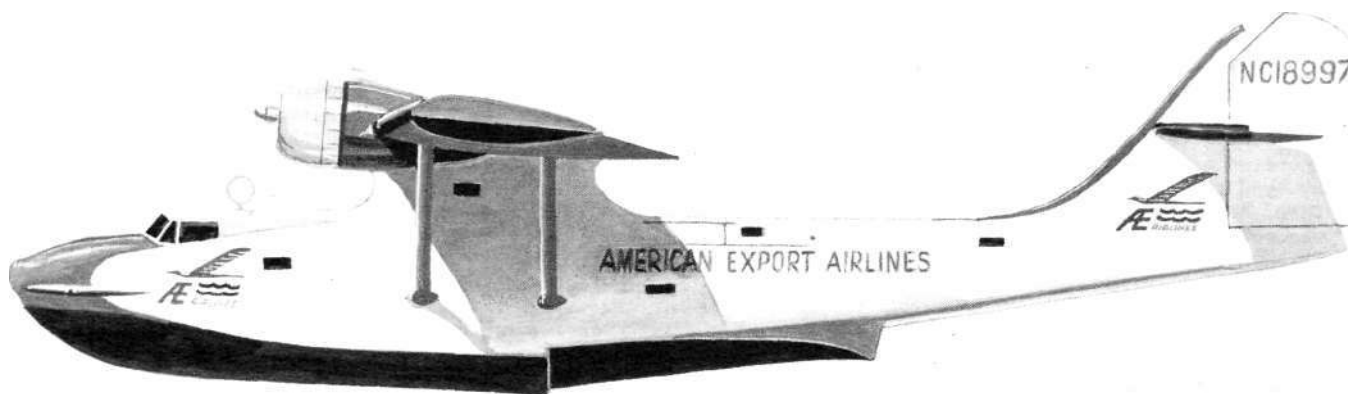




AEA Consolidated Model 28

AMERICAN OVERSEAS AIRLINES

Written by J. ROGER BENTLEY

Illustrations by LeROY SKIDMORE

American Export Airlines was incorporated in 1937 in Delaware as a subsidiary of American Export Lines, Inc., and transatlantic survey flights began at once. During the next three years a very careful log of weather, and other meteorological and navigational aids was recorded. The airline ordered its first aircraft in September of 1938, a 15-ton semi-cantilever Consolidated Model 28 (PBY-4) flying boat. The plane, costing \$200,000, was the first of its type to be built for commercial service. It had a maximum speed of 199 mph at 7,800 feet and a cruising speed of 179 mph at the same altitude while the landing speed was 69 mph. Rate of climb at sea level was 920 feet per minute and usable ceiling was 24,000 feet. With a crew of six and a payload of 2,000 pounds its cruising radius was 4,000 miles.

Plans called for transatlantic flights to be started from New York to principal European countries with later expansions to North Africa and the Middle East. The routes to be flown were selected to supplement the services of American Export Lines, for 20 years operators of American flag steamships to Mediterranean and Black Sea ports. In July 1940 the company received a temporary certificate authorizing the carrying of passengers and mail and property service between New York and Lisbon. The authorization was prompted by the premise that Pan American Airways' transatlantic monopoly was not in the public interest.

The first non-stop transatlantic commercial flight was made in June 1942 with American Export's new Vought-Sikorsky VS-44 flying boat. It was also in this year that the C.A.B. required that the shipping company divest itself of controlling stock.

All during the war from 1942 to 1945, AEA continued service using VS-44 flying boats and operated a fleet of four-engine Navy flying boats across the North and South Atlantic on a four continent route for the Naval Air Transport Service. On October 23, 1944 one of the American Export Airlines' planes, the VS-44A "Flying Aces", set a new commercial flight record from New York to Europe of fourteen and one-half hours. Other "firsts" included trained nurse-stewardess service on all flights and cooked full-course meals aloft.

In July 1945 American Airlines acquired 51% of all

the company's stock and in November the name "American Overseas Airlines" was adopted. At the same time American Airlines took controlling interest, the C.A.B. awarded the company a seven year certificate for a route over the North Atlantic from Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston to 11 northern European countries and Russia. In October of 1945 four-engine Douglas C-54s replaced the VS-44s and service was begun under the new certificate from New York to London via Gander and Shannon.

American Overseas Airlines inaugurated service to Scandinavian countries and Germany in 1946, to Iceland in March 1947 and to Finland in June 1947. By the middle of 1948 the company was serving ten countries: England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. Although routes to Poland and Russia were authorized, they never became operational due to the lack of landing rights.

In 1948 AOA's fleet included seven Lockheed L-049 Constellations, five C-54s and one DC-3, and the next year they took delivery of eight Boeing B-377 double-deck Stratocruisers. On December 13, 1948 an agreement was reached between American Airlines and Pan American Airways providing (subject to C.A.B. approval) for the sale and transfer of American Overseas' routes and equipment and other assets to Pan American. Prior to the purchase talks American Airlines owned 61.9% of the stock and American Export Lines owned 20%. The latter opposed the sale. In fact, a group of AOA employees tried to purchase the company.

On September 18, 1950 a stockholder of American Airlines filed suit in Federal District Court in Chicago to enjoin the sale of American Overseas to Pan American. The suit charged that the proposed price of \$17,450,000 was about \$12,000,000 under the actual value of the properties. Following months of extended public hearings and deliberation, the C.A.B. held, in May 1950, that the public interest required denial of Pan American's application to acquire American Overseas. Its decision was presented to President Truman who, late in June, sustained the Board's decision. As the decision was being prepared for publication a few days later, the President reversed his position and demanded the Board ap-

prove the sale. C.A.B. Chairman O'Connell resigned in protest over the President's action. The sudden reversal was ascribed to political pressure unparalleled in U. S. air transport history.

During its relatively brief life, AEA/AOA owned and operated a number of aircraft and these are listed below by type and indicating Constructor's Number, Delivery Date, Registration Number and Aircraft Name (with subsequent names in brackets).

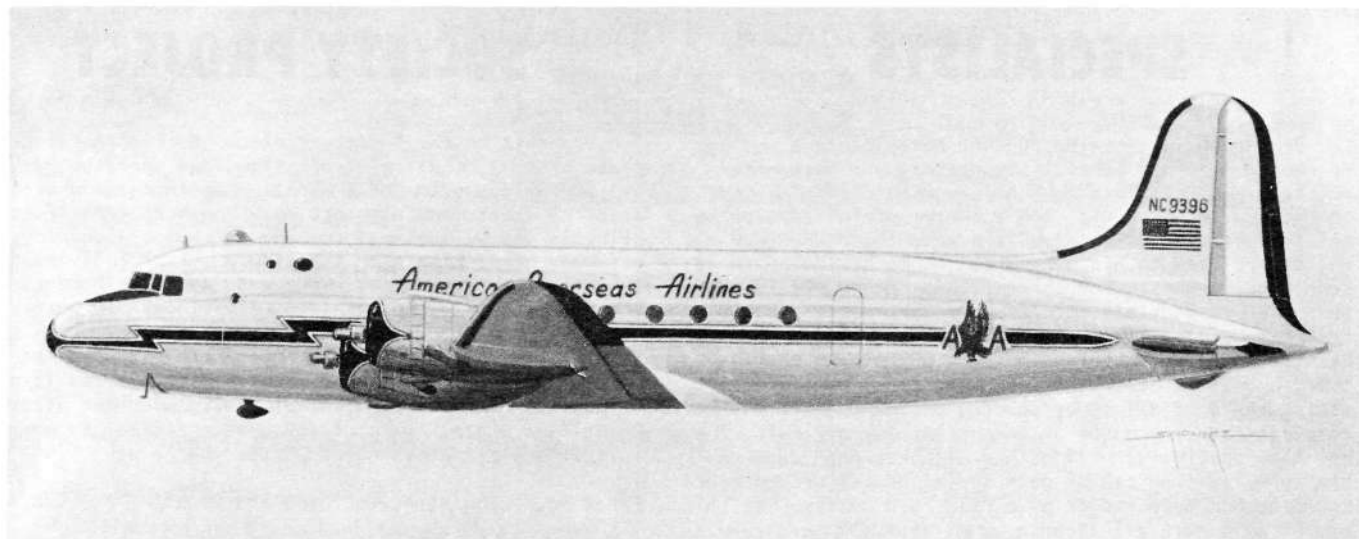
prove the sale. C.A.B. Chairman O'Connell resigned in protest over the President's action. The sudden reversal was ascribed to political pressure unparalleled in U. S. air transport history.				27310	...	N90906	Flagship	Copenhagen
					—	N90907	—	
					—	N90909	Flagship	Keflavik
				35984	—	N90910	Flagship	Shannon
				35978	—	N90911	Flagship	Reykjavik
				35986	—	N90912	Flagship	Prestwick
				35983	—	N90913	Flagship	Amsterdam
During its relatively brief life, AEA/AOA owned and operated a number of aircraft and these are listed below by type and indicating Constructor's Number, Delivery Date, Registration Number and Aircraft Name (with subsequent names in brackets).					—	N90914	—	
				35929	—	N90915	Flagship	Gander
				43110	—	N90886	Flagship	London
C/N No.	Del. Date	Reg. No.	Aircraft Name	Lockheed	L-049	Constellation	(AOA)	
Consolidated Model 28		(AEA)		2051	4-9-46	N90921	Flagship	Sweden
							(Mercury & London)	
...		NC 18997	...	2052	3-25-46	N90922	Flagship	Denmark
							(Oslo & Copenhagen)	
Vought-Sikorsky VS-44		(AEA)		2053	3-27-46	N90923	Flagship	Great Britain
							(Stockholm & Oslo)	
4400		NX 41880	Flying Ace Excalibur	2054	4-4-46	N90924	Flagship	Holland
4401		NC 41881					(Shannon & Amsterdam)	
4402	...	NC 41882		2063	5-15-46	N90925	Flagship	America
4403		NC 41883					(Copenhagen)	
				2064	5-15-46	N90926	Flagship	Eire (Amsterdam)
Douglas DC-3	(AOA)			2065	5-20-46	N90927	Flagship	Glasgow
2217	—	N25686	Flagship Helsinki	Boeing	B-377	Stratocruiser	(AOA)	
13783		NC 90908						
				15957	6-13-49	N90941	Flagship	Europe
Douglas C-54	(AOA)			15958	7-30-49	N90942	Flagship	Great Britain
				15959	8-20-49	N90943	Flagship	Holland
27353		N90901	Flagship Stockholm	15960	9-17-49	N90944	Flagship	Ireland
27338		N90902	Flagship London (Frankfurt)	15961	10-6-49	N90945	Flagship	Norway
		N90903	Flagship Oslo	15962	11-10-49	N90946	Flagship	Sweden
27290		N90904	Flagship New England	15963	11-18-49	N90947	Flagship	Denmark
27344		N90905	Flagship Glasgow (Berlin)	15964	1-5-50	N90948	Flagship	Scotland



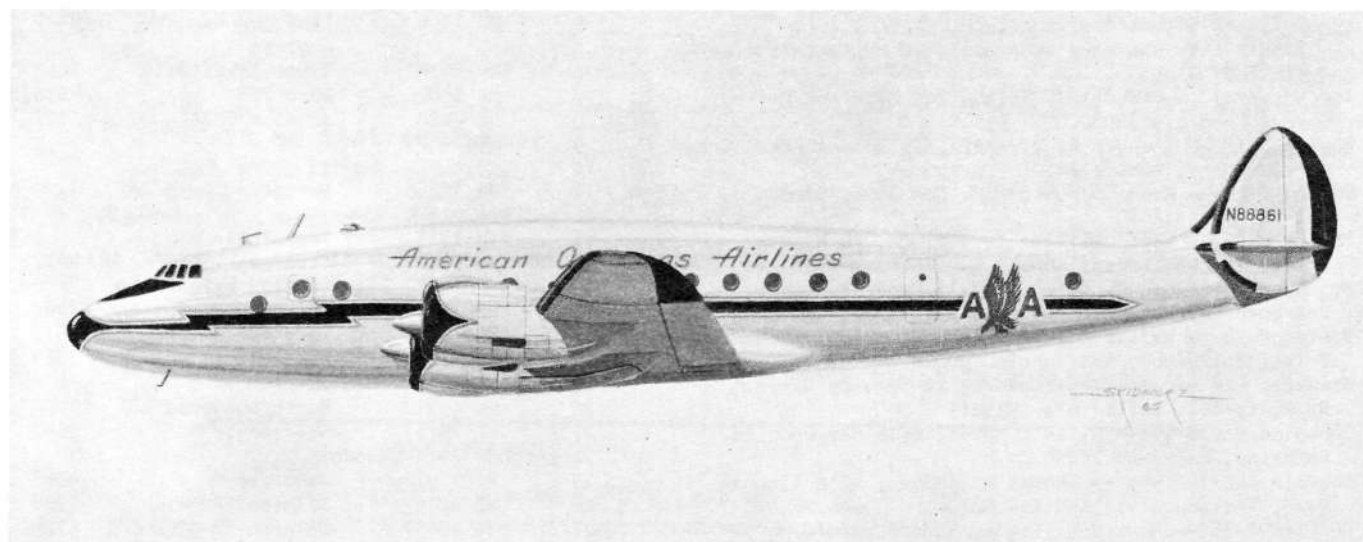
AEA Vought-Sikorsky VS-44 - Above

AOA Douglas DC-3 - Below

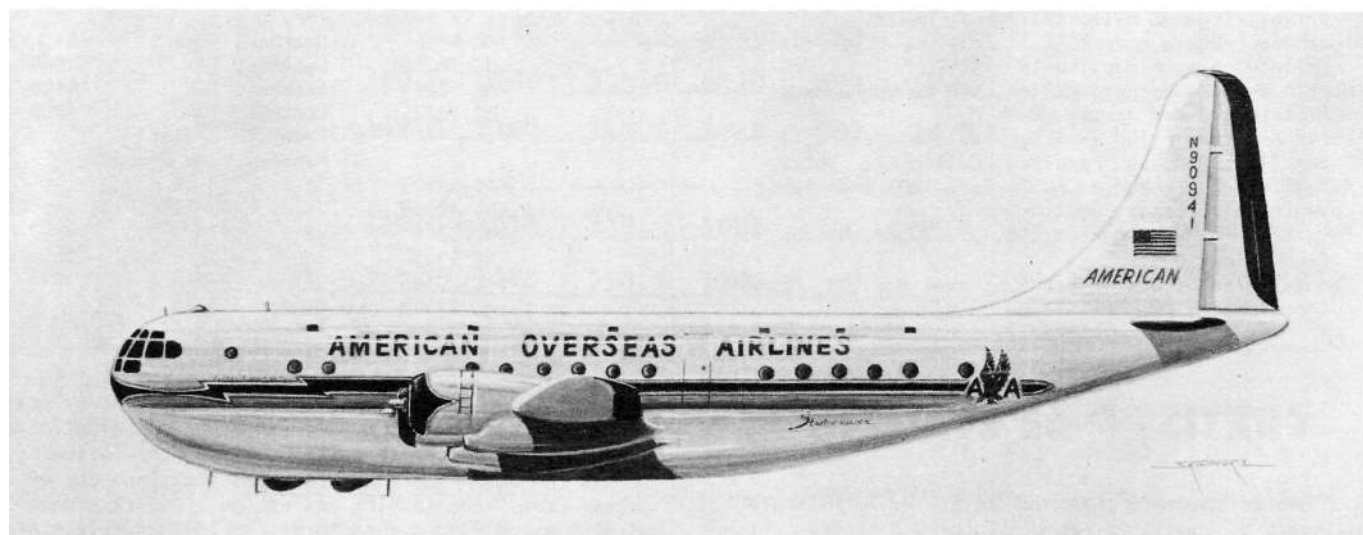




AOA Douglas C-54



AOA Lockheed L-049



AOA Boeing B-377