

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir:

At last! An organization for aviation historians! It's been a long time in coming, but I won't waste time on that. Here is my membership fee of \$3.00 and I hope you still have a copy left of the number one issue of the Journal - I'm very anxious to see it. Greg Kohn told me about it over the phone today, so I've decided I'd better act promptly so as to get in on the ground floor.

It's been my pet peeve these past ten years that no one has seen fit to promote an organization of this type. I've followed aviation for the past 25 years and more, as a hobby interest, never got into the business. In fact, I've never taken pilot lessons or done much flying, just followed the technical developments. These past few years I've really gotten into the history, concentrating my efforts mostly on the Milwaukee area, leading into national history as well.

This activity has pointed up the need for encouraging more original research in the field to obtain the true and complete history of the development of aviation in this country. Most of the interesting and important stories haven't been written yet - they still live in the memories of the men who actually participated in them. Any visit to a gathering of Early Birds will convince you of that fact in a hurry. Only trouble is that these men are gradually dying off and their stories and memories with them. It's too big a job for a few historians - what's needed is a veritable army! Two or three per pioneer is barely enough. There's work for all if we can get organized and plot our course efficiently.

It's a tragic fact that existing organizations such as the I.A.S., the Library of Congress, National Air Museum and others, have neglected this important task. I visited the above-named while on a recent trip to New York City and Washington, D.C., and was very disappointed with what I found. I sincerely hope that the founding of this Society will bring about a desirable approach to the problem of preserving the complete history of aviation before much of it is lost forever. You can count upon my complete and whole-hearted support in endeavoring to make it a success.

Sincerely,
George Hardie, Jr.
5521 West Ryan Road, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Dear Sir:

You have asked for comment on what should be considered a homebuilt airplane. I would suggest holding to the current C.A.A. definitions, primarily by intent for use. These are covered in the following excerpts from CAM-1:

"CAR 1.73 Experimental certificates. Experimental certificates are issued for amateur-built aircraft and for aircraft which are to be used for experiment, for exhibition, for air racing, and to show compliance with Civil Air Regulations for the issuance of type certificates and related purposes."

"CAR 1.73-1(c) Amateur-Built Aircraft. Amateur-built aircraft will be eligible for an Experimental Airworthiness Certificate when the applicant presents satisfactory evidence that the aircraft was designed and/or fabricated by an individual or group of individuals, the project having been undertaken for educational or

recreation purposes and the C.A.A. finds that the aircraft complies with the amateur-built aircraft requirements set forth in section 1.74-3."

There are three for four additional pages which deal with test requirements etc., but the above generally qualifies the C.A.A. interpretation of the home-built category.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Longo

1318 Beaumont Drive, Wichita, Kansas

Dear Sir:

It was a privilege to receive Vol. 1 No. 1 of your Journal. I receive many aviation publications in the mail but find yours the most unique in the field.

On page 8 your Photo Caption for Figure 3 re Vultee V-1A registration; HP-158 is serial number 25. It is named "Jungle Queen" which is painted on the right hand side below the cockpit window. An airport attendant told me it is used to fly monkeys up from Panama's Jungles to be used in medical experiments. There are all indications that this is true since there are no seats in the ship. There was a small wooden cage large enough for a monkey in the ship plus straw and a strong animal odor was present. This ship is at Whitman Airpark, Pacoima.

The last time that I saw this ship it was at Clover Field Airport, Santa Monica, in 1936 when it was owned by Mr. William R. Hearst. At that time it was painted gold color but now it is painted red and white. It was a pleasant surprise to see this ship again after twenty years as it is probably the only one still flying.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Barry

11856 McDonald Street, Culver City, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Your question about the Vultee that was sold to Russia is a good one. The data I have on this ship may help some. I have a photo from International News Photo which shows the plane at Alameda, California. Your information on the registration is wrong as the photo I have shows the underside of the right wing and the letters URSS are plainly visible. The complete registration is URSS-N-208. The vertical fin was redesigned and additional area added. A winter cowl was installed on the plane for cold weather flying. As far as my records show this plane was flown from California to Moscow by Levanevsky and Levchenko along the route on the North shore of Asia checking the possibilities of safe U.S. to Russia air travel. This flight took place on August 6th, 1936. As far as I know the plane arrived in Moscow.

The plane which later disappeared in the Arctic was a four engine Russian bomber converted I believe for the flight. The registration on this ship was URSS-H-209. Again I have a picture showing the URSS under the wing.

I also have a photo of Vultee V-1 NR-12293, which you listed as X-12293, for American Airlines. Evidently this picture was taken after A.A. disposed of it and since it bears a restricted registration it may well be loaded with cabin fuel tanks. I noticed the difference in the wheel well cover design and also the different unbalanced fin and rudder combination.

Did you know that two Vultee V-1A's were entered in the 1934 MacRobertson Race, but they did not show up for the race? I don't know which ones they were but I suspect that it is possible that American Airlines prepared NC-13770 for this purpose, and perhaps the Vultee NR-12293 was the other plane. This is worth checking into. It could be the one entered in the 1936 National Air Races although that is almost two years after the MacRobertson Race was over. This is unlikely but it could be the same plane.

Sincerely,

Gregory C. Kohn

3944 North 67th Street, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Editors Note:

As a result of Mr. Kohn's fine cooperation it has been possible to pin down the information concerning the Russian Vultee V-1A that was vague and unknown in the last issue. (See page 7).

The Russian registration is indeed URSS rather than CCCP as stated before. This shows clearly on photographs, including the one reproduced on page 38 of this issue.

The following references for the New York Times daily newspaper give the full story on this plane and are well worth reading; (All are for the year 1936)

- August 3, page 9. S. Levanevsky and V. Levchenko delay their California to Moscow flight, via the Polar Regions, for repairs.
- August 6, page 7. Arrive in San Francisco Bay area, aircraft tied up at old Pan American base at Alameda. Engine is 850 h.p. Cyclone.
- August 8, page 4. Delayed in Seattle by weather.
- August 9, II, p. 5. Forced down in British Columbia by fog.
- August 11, page 23. Arrive at Juneau, Alaska.
- August 12, page 12. Arrive at Fairbanks, Alaska.
- August 14, page 2. Arrive at Nome, Alaska.
- August 15, page 17. Flight to Siberia delayed by fog over the Bearing Straigh
- August 17, page 2. Arrive at Welen.
- September 14, pg. 9. Arrive near Moscow after 12,000 mile flight. Crew and plane welcomed by Premier Molotoff etc.

(Note: There is a good story on the Vultee "Lady Peace" leaving England for New York on page 1 of this same issue.)

One additional reference is the San Francisco Chronicle, August, 6, 1936, page 3. This is illustrated with a good photo. The article states that "the blue and red floats will be replaced with wheels at a base in Siberia". The purpose of the flight is to test a route for possible future airline transportation between the two countries. It is interesting to note that the flight was purposely made during a period of bad flying weather in order to test the blind flying instruments and radio equipment aboard the aircraft. The pilots were considered to be the finest in Russia at the time. The aircraft was specially modified to their requirements at the Vultee factory and was built specifically for the flight.