

AVIATION LITERATURE

Edited by ROBERT B. CASARI

THE CHALLENGING SKIES--THE COLORFUL STORY OF AVIATION'S MOST EXCITING YEARS 1919-39.

By C. R. Roseberry, 1966. Garden City, N.Y.; Doubleday & Co. 533 pages, over 300 photographs. \$9.95.

Here is a chronicle of aviation's coming of age, the 20 years when, in varying degrees of awareness, the world of flight touched everyone from affluent industrialist to depression-ravaged apple vendor.

The author is a man who lived through these two decades and witnessed their impact on his daily work in a newspaper office. He has dared to attempt the recounting of a vast segment of aviation history and has succeeded admirably. Here is one book where flights and personalities are not ticked off 1-2-3 in bare bones fashion down to and including the gap setting of the engine's spark plugs. Instead, the narrative form of *THE CHALLENGING SKIES* evokes a sense of swaying compass, hot exhaust stacks and taut control wires. Its characters become real people, touched with both heroism and ordinary human frailties.

It is a good guess that every aviation historian, specialist or amateur will find something new in Mr. Roseberry's wonderfully researched text. The full coverage on pioneer trans-Atlantic flying success and failure is particularly impressive, as are the accounts of Billy Mitchell, the Dole Derby, gliding, Arctic adventurers, dirigibles, racing and Pan Am's Clippers. A chapter titled "Antics of Mr. Levine" proves once again that straight factual reporting can be far more colorful than hoked-up semi-fiction which masquerades as "history" in some contemporary publications. Factual errors in *THE CHALLENGING SKIES* are practically non-existent.

Good quality illustrations are mostly from press sources, including an enormous number which will be new to the specialists who think they have covered the subject well. Many are alternate shots from the photo services, unused at the time of release by subscribing newspapers. An appendix contains brief descriptions of 27 typical aircraft of the period and is followed by a good listing of "Background Books" and a 25 page index.

In this day of slim volumes at inflated prices, Mr. Roseberry and Doubleday have produced a BIG book, more than worth its \$9.95 price tag. With comprehensive factual coverage, sprightly writing and carefully-chosen illustrations, *THE CHALLENGING SKIES* is the best thing rumbling off a publisher's runway in a long time. Richard S. Allen

Coverage in *THE CHALLENGING SKIES* is generally chronological, but there is of necessity some jumping back and forth to give relatively simultaneous events separate treatment. A most refreshing feature to the jaded reader of the traditional aviation history books is the treatment. History isn't approached with a reverent hat-in-hand attitude. Some of the people discussed were out-and-out screwballs, and they are called such even though they did make some history. The author has gone to great length to make these historical figures altogether human and believable. The fact that he managed to come up with so many new photographs of oft-reported events is a tribute to the depth of his research.

The use of photographs throughout the book rates special mention. They make a very well-balanced mixture of the usual mug shots, sitting-duck views of some of the planes, and a lot of very good action shots. Presentations are quite dramatic at times, as a full page

devoted to the flames and smoke of a crashed trans-Atlantic contestant or a full column of a two-column page used to show an airway beacon. The publisher's layout man deserves a bouquet for this one.

Keep this book in mind as a 1967 Christmas present for anyone with an interest in aviation. Those who figure that they have enough aviation history books of this era will do well to consider this as an addition. It's just about the best general history that this reviewer has seen.

Peter M. Bowers

FLIGHT TO ALASKA - 1930.

By Laurence M. Lombard, 1966. Dow Jones & Co., Inc., Book Division, P.O. Box 300, Princeton, N.J. 08540. 139 pages, 16 photographs. \$3.50.

This is an interesting story of two Bostonians and their round trip flight from Boston to Alaska in their Gipsy Moth "Flit." The journey was made during an era when it was normal procedure to phone ahead for a weather report and aircraft maintenance proved to be a do-it-yourself project at intermediate stops.

Although this account was written shortly after the flight, it was only last year that the book was finally published. The reader is able to relive the flight over the route of the old Boeing Air Transport, with the switch to floats at Seattle for the hop northward to Juneau. Bear hunting and fishing descriptions make for enjoyable reading, as does the return trip down the West Coast to San Diego and then to Massachusetts.

The story recaptures some of the feeling and adventurous enthusiasm of private flying in the early days. It makes the reader want to strike out x-c once again. H. Glenn Buffington

AEROMARINE ORIGINS

By H. F. King, 1966. London; Putnam and Company, Ltd.; Aero Publishers, Fallbrook, California. 93 pages, 61 photographs and sketches, index. \$4.95.

This well-known historian wants to "rescue from oblivion some of the most curious heavier-than-air devices ever constructed." He does so with detail and beautiful writing in this chronicle of marine aircraft, winged hulls, air-cushion and air-lubricated craft, planing boats and hydrofoils--all predating 1914!

King explains why so much of this early development was undertaken on and over the water. He talks of the interplay of great ideas, of dreamers and doers, famous and obscure--Ader, Baden-Powell, Langley, Curtiss, Voisin, Guidoni and Moy. The eminent Cayley studying streamlined hulls in 1809 made drawings of a boat based on measurements from a trout, "a well fed fish... (designed by) a better architect than man." The book has many such interesting asides on the way these men worked and thought.

In 1853, a New York to New Jersey ferryboat had an air-lubricated hull and became known as "The Smoothing Iron." And, in 1872, a proposed high speed planing rocket ram would, if developed, "sweep away all existing navies."

This is a book to be read again and again for its fascinating vignettes. Some of the stories are quaint and humorous--the French Marquis who set out across the Seine in 1740 "with some wings of his own invention." Or the retired French general who, at 72, launched himself

from a rampart 80 meters above a river with a "gliding apparatus which he attached to his person as a kind of corset."

Picture the forthright Hargrave who said "the method of procedure...is to float the machine on the water, drive the engine for all it is worth, put the horizontal rudder in the lifting position, and then it either flies or it does not." Of the dogged, hard luck man named Kress, Octave Chanute wrote, "It seems to me (his flying boat) may actually fly if a motor lighter than the present one can be obtained. The latter is a Daimler weighing some 30 lbs. per H.P." To this King adds simply, "Poor Kress...."

The photographs are truly collectors' items. With one of a 1911 flying boat over an English lake is a quote from an observer, "Almost everyone who has seen it flying agrees that it adds a great natural beauty like a fine bird, between water and sky in the changing light." Perhaps King is thinking of poetic words like these when he writes. If you, as he does, feel a deep regret at the secession of the flying boat, then this book is for you.

Lesley N. Forden

THE ALLIED ACES OF WORLD WAR II

By William N. Hess, 1966. A Len Morgan Book, New York, Arco Publishing Co, Inc. 64 pages, 51 photos. \$2.95.

Although a considerable amount of interesting and new material on World War II has appeared during recent years, there has been too little telling of the many aces of that conflict. Certainly, there has been no attempt to record the names and accomplishments of all the aces of the involved nations--until now.

William N. Hess, long an expert in this field, has produced the first in a series of three books that will attend to the job. His first volume, in soft cover, devotes itself to all of the Allied Aces by country of origin. Covered are the aces from: Belgium, the Royal Air Force, Americans of the Royal Air Force, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, France, Norway, Poland and Russia.

Each group is treated initially with a narrative, giving pertinent background information and highlighting the deeds of some of the most outstanding aces. There then follows a tabular list of all the men (and women, in the case of Russia) who became aces, with information on the squadrons or units with which they flew, total victories, rank awards and pertinent remarks, including dates of death and special achievements. In the RAF list, all those who flew in the Battle of Britain have their names followed by an asterisk.

The scope of the presentation is overwhelming, its value as a reference source is beyond question, and the writing is fresh and interesting. The author also makes an incisive summary of the subject of aces, their scores and qualifications in his Introduction. Photos are of the men, sometimes with their aircraft.

THE ALLIED ACES OF WORLD WAR II is a must for everyone interested in or having a library on the Second World War as will be the two succeeding volumes--on the aces of the United States and the aces of the Axis countries. Kenn C. Rust

THE PLANE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

By Douglas J. Ingells, 1966, Fallbrook, Calif., Aero Publishers, Inc. 256 pages, 236 photos. Index. \$9.75.

Another eulogy to the ubiquitous Douglas DC-3. In 20 chapters the author, one of the country's senior aviation writers, digs into the technical, political and economic circumstances that brought about the development of the Douglas DC series and then carries it through to the current DC-8. The story begins with the crash that killed Knute Rockne and ended the supremacy of the Fokker Trimotor on America's airlines. TWA, the

airline involved, needed new equipment and tried to get the new Boeing 247. However, the total production was committed to United Air Lines, so TWA turned to Douglas to develop a competitive design. By using newer and larger engines and not having to break new ground with a revolutionary design as Boeing had to do, the Douglas firm did come up with a better plane, the DC-1. In its production, DC-2 form this eclipsed the 247. By the time it matured into the DC-3 in December 1935, the world had its first money-making airliner. The book tells the story in all its possible facets, digging into the personal histories of designers, airline officials and the effects of various politico-military situations on the airline business in general and the DC-3 in particular. It also covers the military derivatives of the DC's, the B-18 and B-23.

The technical differences between the military versions of the DC-3, the Army C-series and the Navy R4D's, are limited mainly to a table, but many of their adventures and misadventures are described in interesting detail, many as first-person quotes from the people involved.

The photo coverage is good and can almost be called an album of the airline business from 1926 to date. New students of aviation history will be delighted with all of these, but the older book collectors will be disappointed at seeing many of the same old shots that have been used over and over. The author used the working newsman's standard sources, and all of the photos are either factory, military or airline handouts. Many photographer-members of A.A.H.S. have their own photos of DC-3 variants that would have enhanced this book.

Although the main story is factual and well-researched, the author has let some minor errors creep into the supporting material. Knowledgeable readers will be surprised to learn that the American Fokker factory was in St. Louis, that the De Havilland COMET that beat the DC-2 in the London-Melbourne race was a biplane, etc., but these are very minor distractions in a book that succeeds admirably in eulogizing the world's most widely used airliner without getting sticky about it.

Peter M. Bowers

THE SKY ON FIRE--THE FIRST BATTLE OF BRITAIN

By Major Raymond H. Freddette, USAF, 1966. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 289 pages, 64 photographs, 8 maps, appendices, bibliography and index. \$6.50.

The dirigible attacks on England during the First World War so captured the imagination of the public that only recently has much been written on the operations of bombing planes over the United Kingdom. THE SKY ON FIRE brings together most of what is known on this first attempt at strategic bombing, in 1917-18.

Beginning with the early daylight raid of Lt Ilges and Deck Officer Brandt in November 1916, the author traces the entire history of German bomber attacks on England up to the Armistice and its effect on the formation of the Royal Air Force. The first raid in which the twin-engined Gothas participated was that on Folkestone, May 25, 1917. It left 300 casualties and cost the Germans only two bombers. As their capability increased during the summer, London was often the bombers' target, and apparently unchallenged attacks caused both a wave of terror in England and vociferous complaints against the lack of any defense.

By 1918, public demands forced the government to maintain nearly a dozen fighter squadrons in England to protect the islands against these raids, a defense out of all proportion to the actual damage inflicted.

In contrast to THE GERMAN GIANTS (JOURNAL, Vol 8, No 1, p 58), Freddette has not compiled a history of the aircraft which participated. Instead he presents a very readable story of the raids in all their aspects. This volume is comparable with, though more accurate than, THE GERMAN AIR RAIDS ON GREAT BRITAIN by Morris, 1920,

in its broad scope and concern for non-military aspects.

The photographs are well above average, being excellently reproduced and unusually well selected. There are numerous illustrations of the Giants, of ground preparations and airdrome scenes in Germany, as well as damage in England.

With the appendices, the detailed index and bibliography, *THE SKY ON FIRE* is a most comprehensive story of the German bomber offensive against England and is complementary to Robinson's *THE ZEPPELIN IN COMBAT*, though less technical. It is certainly not an exhaustive study but is well prepared and will make most interesting reading for anyone following this subject.

Robert Casari

CLASSIC MONOPLANES

By Page Shamburger, 1966. New York: Sports Car Press, Crown Publishers. 114 pages, 53 photographs. \$1.95.

CLASSIC MONOPLANES is an excellent value for under two dollars, with high-quality pictures. Superior to *CLASSIC BIPLANES* in the same "Modern Aircraft Series" of paperbacks, it generally approaches the standard of Bowers' *CLASSIC MILITARY BIPLANES*. In the first chapter the author shows a good grasp of historical origins and development of pioneer monoplanes, outlining the initial 20 years in an interesting manner. The chapter then develops into a recitation of miscellaneous types, lacking continuity. The reader loses historical perspective trying to follow the alphabetical sequence as next some transports are discussed and finally more light planes finish an untidy formation. A lack of "feel" for the vernacular of the era is sometimes evident, such as speaking of a "tri-engine" Ford and the failure to at least mention the popular and famous Fokker F-VII trimotors.

The succeeding chapters, on eight major monoplane-producing companies, again return to a high standard. The author did her homework well, researching in detail the people, planes and events. Nit-pickers and antiquers will howl at such slips as the claim on page 68 that the Fairchild 22 had retractable landing gear and "the cabin sported enclosing walls", but they will do well to include this otherwise fine book on their bookshelves. *CLASSIC MONOPLANES* is a well written and valuable book for minimum money.

Boardman C. Reed

RACING PLANES AND AIR RACES, Vol. 1, 1909-1923.

By Reed Kinert, 1967. Fallbrook, Calif.: Aero Publishers, Inc. 96 pages, 127 photographs, 14 drawings, 9 three-views, tables and index; 7" x 10" heavy paper binding, \$3.00.

Opening this publication was one of the most pleasant surprises in many months, for it is certainly the best illustrated on racing for its size I have seen. Successive chapters deal individually with the first international air meet of 1909, the 1910 through 1920 James Gordon Bennett Cup races, Schneider Trophy races from 1913 to 1923, and the Pulitzer competitions of 1920 to 1923, sixteen in all.

The author has obviously spent much time researching before attempting this history and it shows in the text. He speaks authoritatively of the participants, the planes and the results, with the ability to be both factual and a most interesting writer. His descriptions of the early fliers and the colorful presentation of the races will make anyone feel they have just returned from the event. To complete the picture, tables list pilots, aircraft data, speeds and position for all the Bennett Cup events, the Schneider Trophy races to 1931, and the Pulitzer races to 1925.

By far the most unusual feature is the illustrations. The three-views, neatly done (if not highly detailed) by Dustin Carter, cover many a rare design--the 1911 Baby

Wright, the 1913 Ponnier, and others. Photographically, this collection is outstanding, both for the rare selection, containing many never before published in this country, and for the unusual sharpness and tone of most. The glossy paper makes even the few poorer pictures look fairly good. Sprinkled in are many which vividly show more than the best imagination can conjure up, such as the four men straining to hold the tail of Crombez' 1912 Deperdussin while a blast of exhaust fumes and castor oil swirls around them. Most of these early prints of the European races are from the files of the Musée de l'Air. Supplementing these are shaded drawings by the author which show from one to three planes in each, reasonably accurate and attractively done.

Certainly, anyone who seriously studies the subject can find errors and omissions in this history, but they will be far fewer and much more difficult to locate than in similar volumes. This reference delivers what it promises--with quite a few beautiful pictures left over.

Robert Casari

NORTH AMERICAN B-25

By Challenge Publications, Hollywood, Calif. 48 pages, 92 photos, 5 tone drawings. Paper bound. \$3.95.

The B-25 is well introduced with background history of the B-15, B-17, NA-21 and the NA-40, leading to their ultimate bearing on the B-25 concept. The North American approach of integrating guns and airplane into a true weapons system is significantly mentioned. The commentary of Rev. Boardman C. Reed is especially refreshing, new material and one of the best parts of the book.

Photo coverage includes well selected if not rare pictures. Unfortunately, some did not reproduce with sufficient clarity for good modeling detail, and the work cannot be particularly recommended for the detail modeler. The later B-25 technical developments involving increased armament as spearheaded by "Pappy" Gunn and Jack Fox are well recorded elsewhere and are repetitive here as are the Doolittle raid photos.

Conspicuously absent are many detail and technical differences and the serial numbers of subject airplanes, as well as major dimensional data. There is little information regarding the 4 and 8 gun nose configurations or the 75 mm cannon installation. Mere mention is made of rare, single experimental versions, and no particulars are given.

NORTH AMERICAN B-25 is basically a good book for the youthful B-25 fans but is inadequate for the experienced B-25 enthusiast. No true research is evident. It is primarily a compilation of loaned material and falls far short of documenting the Mitchell.

N. L. Avery

THE USED BOOK PRICE GUIDE of Rare, Scarce, Used and Out-of-Print Books. Part 2.

Compiled by Mildred S. Mandeville, 1963. Price Guide Publishers, 525 Kenmore Station, Kenmore, Washington. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 164 pages. Paperback \$6.00, hard covers \$8.00 net.

THE BUYER'S REFERENCE. Part 2.

(Supplement to the above by the same publisher). 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 29 pages. Paperback \$2.00 net.

This publisher has compiled three different Price Guides as follows: Part 1 emphasizing County Histories and Genealogies; Part 2 concentrating on Sea and Aviation; and Part 3 with emphasis on Indians and History. This review concerns only Part 2 which contains over 12,000 entries showing book condition, price, a coded designation for the dealer, etc. The smaller supplement, *THE BUYER'S REFERENCE*, explains the code designations, listing the dealer's name and address, their catalog numbers

and the dealer's specialties, covering both U. S. and Canadian outlets. It also explains abbreviations and codes used by dealers on book condition, size, etc., valuable information in using any book catalog. Each Part has its own supplement, as noted above, which should be purchased with the Price Guide.

The compilation uses retail prices for the period April 1962 to April 1963 to assist dealers, collectors and libraries to evaluate used and rare books. The reason for so many aviation book prices in Part 2 is that the compiler loves aviation. She soloed in 1939, has a private ticket for single engine land and sea ratings, is past Chairman of Western Washington Chapter of the 99's, flew in the Powder Puff Derby and local races, and won 1st place in the annual N. W. Air Regatta Race.

It was a monumental task to research and compile this material and Part 2 will be of great value to serious aviation book collectors.
E. T. Smallwood

WARPLANES OF THE WORLD

By J. W. R. Taylor, 1966. New York; Arco Publishing Co., Inc. 210 pages, index, 5" x 7". \$4.95.

This book is billed as the only one on the market with details of all aircraft in current military service listed in one compact volume. There are 131 first line aircraft, each on a separate page with a three-view drawing and photograph. Description of each includes powerplant, armament, length, span, gross weight, speed, range and crew complement. A "Development and Service" paragraph lists first flight dates, customers' uses of the aircraft, and other details.

Helicopters are included and another 136 second line aircraft are listed in much less detail. Photographs and three-views obviously are small, but the book is attractive and the author's background as editor of JAMES ALL THE WORLD'S AIRCRAFT gives it an authority lacking in many similar publications.

WARPLANES OF THE WORLD is certainly a reasonably priced and handy quick reference for keeping track of all the modern warplanes so much in the daily headlines.
Lesley N. Forden

CHANCE VOUGHT F4U CORSAIR, Aero Series, Vol. 11.
By Edward T. Maloney and Uwe Feist, 1967. Fallbrook, Calif. Aero Publishers, Inc. 51 pages, 79 photographs, plus three-view and 4 side views in color, heavy paper binding. \$3.00.

Besides being one of the most famous U. S. Naval aircraft to come out of World War II, the F4U enjoyed one of the longest production runs in history--a tribute to its versatility and fundamental soundness as a combat machine.

Volume 11 of the Aero Series tells pictorially the story of the Corsair from the 1939 prototype to the F4U-7, AU-1 and the Goodyear F2G-1. The large photographs are well selected and excellently reproduced. Most of the close-ups are of the Ontario Air Museum's FG-1D and, while there are a few often-printed pictures, most will be new to Corsair fans.

The three-view air brush drawing in color is of the F4U-4 with four profiles of various -1 models, ridiculously marred by the center binding running through the plan view.

The text is limited to about three pages, briefly describing the Corsair's evolution and is capped by a short data table and list of all versions. Historically, few of the rarer models are illustrated, but this book is not intended to be a deep study and does succeed in giving a broad photographic coverage including half a dozen postwar racers.

Robert Casari

A DORNBUSCH ADDENDUM

By MARC NORMAN, C. E. DORNBUSCH and KENN C. RUST

Monumental--and for the collector, invaluable--C. E. Dornbusch's bibliography of U. S. Air Service and Army Air Force unit histories of World War I and World War II (UNIT HISTORIES OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCES, Hampton Books) was never intended by the author to be the final word on the subject. The unofficial nature of these histories is the obstacle to a definitive list. Published only for the members of a given organization, it has taken, in many cases, years for the existence of a specific history to become known outside the circle of the unit's members.

The authors have pooled their listings of histories which have been located after the publication of the unit histories bibliography and here present them as an addendum to that work. It is desired to create as complete a list as possible, and anyone with information on a history not found in the bibliography or here is invited to pass word of it on to one of the authors.

WORLD WAR I

- 11 11th Aero Squadron, 1917-19, history. (n.p., 1922)
- 13/103 Biddle, Charles J. 1890-
The Way of the Eagle, by Major Charles J. Biddle, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1919. 297p. 5 illus., plates (illus., ports.) 21½cm.
The author served with the French Escadrille n. 73; with the Americans in 103rd Squadron; then as CO of the 13th Squadron and later the 4th Pursuit Group.
- 89 The Zoomer, Frank L. Mangan, Editor-in-Chief. An illustrated annual year book of the 89th Aero Squadron in the First World War. Council Bluffs, circa 1918.
- 95 Archibald, Norman
Heaven High, Hell Deep, 1917-1918, by Norman Archibald. Illustrations by Allen Palmer. New York, Albert and Charles Boni, 1935. 350p. illus., chapter headpieces. 22cm.
- 96 Codman, Charles
Contact, by Charles Codman. Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1937. 247, (1)p. 21½cm.
- 11 Corps "The Battle of Chatillon", a graphic history of the 2nd Corps aeronautical school, American expeditionary forces, France. Grand Rapids, printed by the Dean-Hicks Co. under the direction of Lieut. Donald B. Wurtzberg.
- Bingham, Hiram
An Explorer in the Air Service, by Hiram Bingham, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1920. xiv, 260p. plates (illus., plan). 22cm.
The author served at Aviation HDQ, Washington, May 1917-March 1918; assigned to Chief of Air Service in A.E.F., April-August 1918; CO Third aviation instruction centre, Issoudon, August-December 1918; returned to Washington HDQ.
The "Plane news", p. 180-9. Two front pages of the periodicals are reproduced.

WORLD WAR II

- 21 "A.P.O. time", Twenty-first engineer aviation