

RESEARCH PROJECTS

For complete details see Newsletter No. 12 (October 1969)

- No. 6913 — Curtiss Hawk III and BF2C-1. Clark Macomber, 922 Oak St., Winnetka, IL 60093.
 No. 6914 — USAS/USAC airplane serial numbers. Jesse Thompson, P.O. Box 248, Clarksville, Ark. 78230.
 No. 6915 — Use and disposition of Howard airplanes. Thomas M. Emmert, 4D Andover Dr., Peabody, MA 01960.
 No. 6916 — Lockheed Sport Biplane S-1 of 1919. Cedric E. Galloway, 1710 N. Brighton, Burbank, CA 91506.
 No. 6917 — Fairchild Air Sedan Model 45/JK-1. Ernest L. True, 2440 Ione St., Sacramento, CA 95825.
 No. 6018 — Airline use of Sikorsky S-55 and S-58. Lennart Lundh, 7956 S. Menard Ave., Oak Lawn, IL 60459.
 No. 6019 — Crashes of WWII a/c in England. Ian McLanchlan, 51 Northgate, Beeches Est., Lowestoft, Suffolk, England.

- No. 6920 — Consolidated PT-1, Hisso engine data. Bob Alexander, 13399 E. Nevada Ave., Aurora, CO 80010.
 No. 6921 — High speed research A/c, D-558-1 to B-70. E.A. Lichtman, 11301 Monticello Ave., Silver Spring, MD.
 No. 6922 — Benoist pilots or airplanes of Benoist. Reginald Woodcock, 117 Hillside Rd., Strafford, PA 19087.

New since NEWSLETTER No. 12 (October 1969)

- No. 6923 — Information of all kinds needed for JOURNAL Research Project on the Douglas F4D-1 or F-6A. Manuals, books, clippings, photos, drawings, no item too small. Carefully handled and promptly returned. Nicholas M. Williams, 813 Bungalow St., El Segundo, CA 90245.
 No. 6924 — Contact with personnel connected with programs for weather research and hurricane hunting needed for research on Boeing PB-1W (Navy version of B-17). Photos and other data required, will be returned. Bruce Orriss, 712 Glasgow St., Apt. 3, Inglewood, CA 90201.

AEROVIGNETTS by D.D. HATFIELD

THE SAGA OF GUS

Of all the pelican population inhabiting the San Pedro harbor area in 1922 only Gus was fascinated by the HS-2-L flying boats which were flown daily to Catalina Island by Paul Haaron and Art Burns for the Pacific Marine Airways.

In order to be closer to the big man made birds Gus moved in and took up residence on the deck of the San Pedro terminal of the airline. Here he was able to climb about on the flying boats and examine them to his heart's content, spending many hours on the upper wing and diving on unsuspecting fish as he spotted them. He took up position near the line of passengers as they filed down the dock to board the boat, examining each with one eye and a very dignified expression which gave each passenger the feeling that he was indeed fortunate to be allowed aboard.

As the flying boat taxied out in the harbor Gus would be standing on the bow ostensibly to watch for floating logs or debris. As the HS-2-L swung into position for take-off Gus would fly back to the dock to await their return.

Gus showed better airmanship than the other pelicans, which he seemed to gather from watching the local aviators and their antics in the sky. The ordinary pelican would spot a fish while in flight over the water and, following the accepted pelican flight procedure, would nose down with folded wings. The dive would carry him under the water; with his enormous open beak the fish did not have a chance. Gus, however, when spotting the fish would make a half roll into his dive as fighter planes did when peeling off.

Gus visited a local airstrip occasionally. On these trips he would follow the flight pattern in landing. On the final approach, if he wasn't in line with the center of the runway he would lower a wing, gracefully slip into position and flare out to a perfect two point landing. After visiting the airport shack and accepting some tidbits he would taxi, in a waddling fashion, back to the runway. With a sidewise observation each way for approaching aircraft he would make his take-off.

One very hot day in the harbor area the pavements were shimmering with heat waves and from Gus's position, almost 100 feet above San Pedro, the streets appeared as beautiful canals. Whilst observing this phenomena* he spotted what appeared to be a fish lying in the street. Gus did his half roll and folded his wings intending to pursue the fish under the water.

This error in judgement while in flight brought Gus's career to an end which was difficult to realize by those who

knew him. He had shown such an exceptional knowledge of aeronautics during his stay with the aviators. He was a phenomenon.**

For years afterward tales of Gus's feats continued around the hangars; however, Gus wasn't around to prove them. Some claimed to have seen him do a slow roll on take-off while others stated he could do a smoother Immelman than any pilot, but it was agreed by all that Gus was the reincarnation of some famous pilot now passed on.

*In scientific usage, any fact or event of scientific interest susceptible of scientific description and explanation. **An exceptional or abnormal person, thing, or occurrence; prodigy. (Webster).

