

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research Projects are instituted for the research into some portion of aviation history, with the results eventually to appear in the Journal of AAHS. Numbers are assigned by the Editor. In each case the researcher requests assistance from other Members, and leads to information concerning the subject. It is understood that all material provided on loan will be carefully handled and promptly returned to the owner.

RP 7109 NEW GUINEA AVIATION

In constructing the history of aviation on the Island of New Guinea, Allan Bovelt and the Pacific Islands Aviation Society have encountered many items involving American aircraft and personnel. Further information and clues as to other sources from the A.A.H.S. will be appreciated.

The Sterling New Guinea Expedition, also called the Netherland-American Expedition, arrived at the mouth of the Mamberamo River in May 1926 with some biplanes. One was called the ERN. These were floatplanes with corrugated metal sides. Dr. M. Athen Sterling was the leader of the Expedition and Hans Hoyle was chief pilot.

The New Guinea Sugar Expedition, whose leader was Dr. E.W. Brandes, was in New Guinea from June to September 1928, operating a Fairchild floatplane, NC4770 or NC477D. The pilot was R.K. Peck.

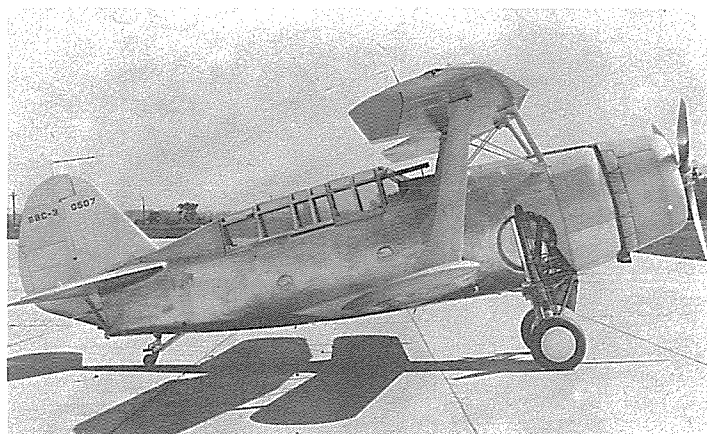
Islands Exploration, Ltd., obtained permission to operate two Douglas Amphibians and a Fokker Trimotor in Australian New Guinea. Their application to the Australian D.C.A. stated that the airplanes were owned by KNILM. The organization was coordinated by Oil Search, Ltd. of Sydney, and the pilots were Aubrey Koch and F.E. Secor. The engineers were Carl Isler and J.R. Lund. M. Reynolds is mentioned as photographer. The Fokker crashed in Australian New Guinea, and perhaps one of the Dolphins also. The other, NC14286, was presented to the RAAF as a gift in June 1940.

The American Museum of Natural History operated a Fairchild 91, NR777, named KONO, prior to the arrival of the Catalina flying boat GUBA. The Fairchild arrived in Brisbane in February 1936 but overturned and sank in Port Moresby harbor in July.

Information concerning these aircraft may be sent to Allan Bovelt, Pacific Islands Aviation Society, P.O. Box 1401, Lae, New Guinea.

RP 7031

N. Alexander Parks



SUMMER 1971

RP 7031 - CURTISS SBC-3 & -4

Nearly forgotten in the new tactical designs coming to the fore in the late 1930's were the Curtiss Model 77 "Helldivers." Sired by the design team headed by Raymond C. Blaylock of Curtiss, the prototype was developed for the Navy as a scout and dive bomber in late 1935. Blaylock had been on the engineering team that brought out the first Helldiver, the Curtiss F8C, and was considered one of the most learned engineers in dive bomber design.

The SBC was in keeping with the modern concepts during the late 1930's, being constructed of metal semi-monococque fuselage, with enclosed cockpit, fully retractable landing gear, and fabric covered control surfaces. At its time it was the epitome of aerodynamic refinement for biplane configurations. It had the full NACA pressure engine cowlings, split trailing edge, hydraulically operated flaps, and a yoke to swing the 500 pound bomb away from the propeller when dropped in a dive.

The U.S. Navy obtained 83 SBC-3's and 174 SBC-4's, delivered into 1940, and which remained in current service with Navy and Marine reserve flight training units well into 1942. With the war in Europe in full swing, Allied purchasing agents visited the U.S. seeking all types of aircraft. France, without a suitable dive bomber, obtained 100 SBC-4's declared "surplus to the Navy's needs," forty of which were enroute aboard ship when the Germans overran that country in May and June 1940. These were diverted to the island of Martinique, in the Caribbeans, where they "sat out" the duration of the war.

Great Britain, also desperately in need of aircraft, absorbed a portion of the French group, five of them delivered by the method of towing across the Canadian border to circumvent the Neutrality Act. These eventually reached England for service with the Fleet Air Arm as the "Cleveland." They were obsolete by then comparative standards of the times, and were relegated to duty as teaching aids for aspiring mechanics.

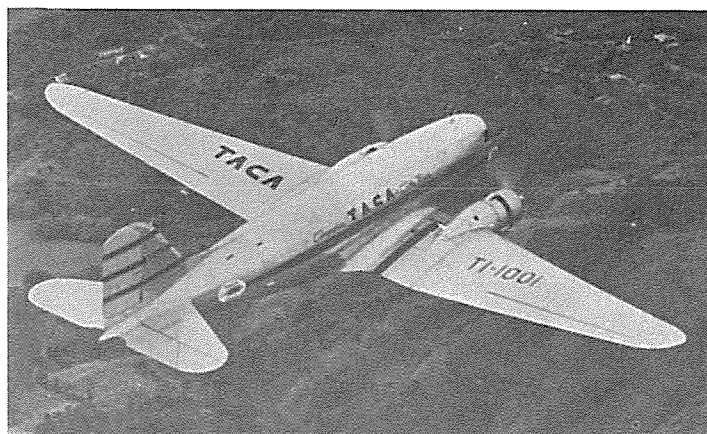
Information is still being sought by N. Alexander Parks, of P.O. Box 172, Eastsound, WA 98245 concerning the actual usages of both French and British SBC-4's.

RP 7003 - T.A.C.A. AND LOWELL YEREX

Among the many photographs collected in the research of the career of Lowell Yerex is the accompanying one of a Douglas DC-3, flown by T.A.C.A. in the years prior to

RP 7003

Harry Yerex



World War II. Harry Yerex, a distant relation of Lowell, initiated this project in 1970 and is primarily seeking anecdotes and memorabilia concerning Lowell Yerex in the barnstorming days of the early 1920's.

Lowell Yerex had been in the RAF during World War One, and after the war had a part in the Presidio Flying Circus, of San Francisco, and in the Gates Flying Circus, also California based but more nationwide in activity. He later was the driving spirit in the Central American airline, T.A.C.A., and in particular, information is needed concerning C.A.T., the Compania Aeronautic de Transportes, for whom Lowell Yerex worked in the years 1929-32 before founding T.A.C.A.

Additional data may be sent to Harry Yerex, 4910 Castana, Apt. 25, Lakewood, CA 90712.

RP 6905 - XB-30 and XB-31

In January, 1940 specifications were drawn by the Army Air Forces for a four-engined, long range heavy bomber to use the R-13350-13 engine. "Requests for Data" were sent to Boeing, Consolidated, Douglas, and Lockheed, and by May all of the companies had submitted proposals. These were to be the designated XB-29, XB-30, XB-31 and XB-32. A board appointed for evaluation of the proposals resulted in three projects to be carried further, those of Boeing, Lockheed and Douglas, but with a later ramification: the Consolidated XB-32 was to become a standby project.

In June the Acting Secretary of War approved the Board's recommendation that Boeing and Lockheed receive contracts leading to the mockup stage. Douglas' XB-31 was eliminated. Between June and September, Lockheed decided to concentrate on fighter design and production, and the XB-30 mockup was cancelled. On 6 Sept. 1940 contracts were issued for development of the XB-29, with the XB-32 as the standby design in the event of failure of the XB-29 project to meet its requirements.

The XB-30 was to have been based upon a version of the C-69, Lockheed's new Constellation, with a twelve-man crew, gross weight over 94,000 pounds, and top speed above 380 mph. The Douglas design was to be a version of the C-54. Several design studies were made, including Design 423, with an empennage similar to the A-26, a slender fuselage, and side-by-side bubble canopies for pilot and copilot.*

Further information on these very interesting approaches to the heavy bomber by Douglas and Lockheed is desired, the persons involved in their original concepts, the evaluations of designs, relationship to current programs then in being, and data such as photographs or drawings of mockups.

RP 7013

Deane R. Brandon



Send to Eugene Souberman, 150 E. 182nd St., Bronx, NY 10453.

*Ref. Jones, Lloyd S. *U.S. Bombers, B-1 to B-70*. Aero Publishers, Inc. c. 1962, pp. 101-105.

RP 6914 - USAS/USAC SERIAL NUMBERS

Jesse D. Thompson has raised the question, prompted by his research into US Air Service and Air Corps serial numbers, that the Dayton-Wright DH-4 seen in photographs as "Ship No. 1000," may actually have been of a greater number. The serial number assigned was A.S. 33058, and a photograph of it, taken at South Field, Dayton, shows "Ship No. 1000" painted on the side of the fuselage. However, we know that Dayton-Wright DH-4 serial numbers began as early as number 30088. It is surmised that, since early production aircraft from the Dayton-Wright plant were considered unsuitable for action in France, and were used in the U.S., therefore the A.S. 33058 was the 100th sent to France and not necessarily to 1000th built.

Related to this project was a letter to Thompson from Bill Stubbs, of Goulds, Fla., who wrote: "A B-25, Serial No. 33642 arrived at Algiers while a C-52, also Ser. No. 33642, was already on the base. While 33642 was easy to establish for the B-25 serial number, no firm data existed on the C-52. It was modified to 133642 just to avoid confusion, but only after the war was it discovered that United Air Lines Douglas DST, NC33642, had been requisitioned by the Defense Supplies Corp. along with a dozen other DC-3/DST airplanes, and presumable NC33642 by having the NC painted over. It is wondered how many others might have been used by the USAAF with serials which are now unlisted."

Additional data may be sent to Jesse D. Thompson, P.O. Box 248, Clarksville, AR 72830.

RP 7013 PROJECT ALSIB

Further to his research in the delivery of airplanes to Russia during WWII, Deane Brandon forwarded the following list of aircraft. The "reasonably accurate" list of those that were sent through Ladd Field at Fairbanks, Alaska is:

P-39 2,624	B-25 736	AT-6 55
P-63 2,412	C-47 735	P-47 3
A-20 1,368	P-40 48	C-46 1

The photograph shown here is of the P-63's of Flight Officer Andrew Traverso, Lt. Alfred N. Young, and F/O William C. Keller over Yukon Territory.

The author, Deane R. Brandon, of P.O. Box Q, College, Fairbanks, AK 99701, is in need of contact with personnel who served in PROJECT ALSIB and information concern-

RP 7017

Bo Kallqvist



ing pilot experiences and impressions, mechanics' problems in cold weather operation, search and rescue operations, etc.

RP 7017 - AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IN ESTONIA

In the year 1940 a strange view could be seen on an abandoned airstrip in the northern part of Estonia. Together with a Junkers JU 52/3m, and airliner from the AGO company, and the PN-3, a fighter that the Estonians had named ISAMAA PAASTJA (for the savior of their country) was a twin-engined cabin airplane, without registration or other identification. These were three airplanes to be flown to the USSR as a part of the military and civil vehicles overtaken by the Russians in the seizure of Estonia. The crew assigned to fly them were part Estonia and part Russian.

The twin engined airplane was a Lockheed Model 14 Super Electra, an L-14-05, with Pratt & Whitney S1EG Hornet engines, and it had been through quite a lot before this last flight.

The Polish airline, Polskie Linje Lotnizel, LOT, bought ten Model 14's from Lockheed Aircraft Co. They had operated ten Model 10's prior to this and their experience with them had been fine. The L-14's began delivery flights in 1938 over the South Atlantic from Natal to Dakar to Warsaw.

C/n	Polish Regist.	Delivery Date	Later Regist.	Disposition
1420	SP-BNE	3-19-38	G-AGAB	Unk.
1421	SP-BNF	3-25-38	G-AGBG/ SE-BTN	Crash, 1951
1422	SP-BNG	4-4-38		Crash, 1938
1423	SP-BNH	4-4-38	G-AGAC	Unk.
1424	SP-BNJ	4-11-38		Crash, 1938
1425	SP-LMK	5-12-38		Unk.
1492	SP-BPK	3-20-39	G-AGAA	Unk.
1493	SP-BPL	4-3-39	G-AFZZ	Unk.
1494	SP-BPM	5-1-39	G-AGAV	Scrapped, 1946
1495	SP-BPN	5-12-39	ESTLAND	Crash, 1940

SP-LMK was flown by the Director of LOT, Mr. Makowzki, and a Mr. Z. Wsiekiński, from Los Angeles to Buenos Aires to Warsaw. LOT was planning to start service over this route in 1940. Beginning in June 1938 LOT operated the L-14's on their regular foreign and home services. The pilot on one of these was the famous Polish pilot, Klemens Długasiewicz. From his name, he was called "Mr. Double Whiskey" by his English friends, though he never touched the stuff. He was employed again by LOT after the War and

may still be found, though retired, around the airfield at Warsaw.

SP-BNG was written off almost immediately in a fatal crash; it had technical trouble with the rudders. SP-BNJ burst a tire on takeoff at Bucarest and was completely burned. After the German assault in September 1939 the Polish used them in courier service to Stockholm, Helsingfors, Budapest and Bukarest. Although SP-BNE, -BNH, -BPK and -BPL received English registrations, shown above, they were seized by the Roumanian authorities and held there.

SP-BNF, -BPM, and -LMK were flown to Great Britain, via Stockholm, and -BNF and -BPM were used from February 1940 by the RAF Ferry Command taking part in the evacuation from France in mid-1940. They had received British registrations but still showed their Polish names, LUBLIN and LOWICZ.

G-AGAV was scrapped in 1946 because of severe corrosion. SP-BNF/G-AGBG was returned to LOT after the War but the airline refused it and it went to Sweden where it became SE-BTN and was flown as what the Swedish call "a newspapercarrier," by the airline Airtaco until it crashed and burned at Bromma 14 July 1951.

Finally, SP-BPN was flown to Tallinn, Estonia, in October 1939. The Estonians took the opportunity and seized it — illegally, as the Polish airline states it! It was used as a VIP aircraft during the Phony War. A former Estonian Air Force pilot said of it, "... A little bit tricky to get into the air, but once there it was a good machine." It was painted all aluminum, with Estonian colors blue, black and white on the rudder.

And so we are back at the airfield Jagala in September 1940. The Russian crew boarded the airplane, and tried to get it to Riga. There it was said to have crashed outside the town, all aboard being killed. This information was obtained with the help of Russell F. Pete, of Lockheed Aircraft Co., Jerzy Rogalewicz of SFF Sweden, and Mrs. Kalina Kossko, Public Relations, LOT.

In the photos shown here, SP-BNE is at Warsaw, SP-LMK is at Burbank Airport (Lockheed) and the last one, in Estonian markings, was at Jagala, Sept. 1940.

Further information on the history of Estonian aviation from 1919 to 1945 would be appreciated for his Research Project 7017 by Bo Kallqvist, Vinterbrinksvag 41, 133 00 Saltsjobaden, Sweden.*

*Bo Kallqvist is Editor of the aviation enthusiast paper, Aviation Letter, printed monthly in Sweden.

Kallqvist



RP 6910 MEDAL OF HONOR AIRCRAFT

The information on Medal of Honor aircraft continues to filter in. At this time we take the opportunity to catch up in giving the citations of several of the airmen whose aircraft were described in previous issues. Citations were omitted for lack of space, except for Lt. Corry's, which should have followed chronologically after those of Goettler and Bleckley, Talbot and Robinson. Bringing these current we have the description of the airplane used by Corry, but not yet shown here and have added that of Byrd and Bennett, winners of the Medal of Honor in the JOSEPHINE FORD for their epic journey to the North Pole and return in May, 1926.

The citations for the following airmen were extracted from *Medal of Honor, 1863-1968**

GOETTLER, HAROLD ERNEST

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, pilot, 50th Aero Squadron, Air Service. Place and date: Near Binarville, France, 6 October 1918. Entered service at: Chicago, Ill. Birth: Chicago, Ill. G.O. No.: 56, W.D., 1922. Citation: Lieutenant Goettler, with his observer, Second Lt. Erwin R. Bleckley, 130th Field Artillery, left the airdrome late in the afternoon on their second trip to drop supplies to a battalion of the 77th Division which had been cut off by the enemy in the Argonne Forest. Having been subjected on the first trip to violent fire from the enemy, they attempted on the second trip to come still lower in order to get the packages even more precisely on the designated spot. In the course of this mission the plane was brought down by enemy rifle and machine-gun fire from the ground, resulting in the instant death of Lieutenant Goettler. In attempting and performing this mission Lieutenant Goettler showed the highest possible contempt of personal danger, devotion to duty, courage and valor.

Bleckley's citation was almost identical except in the introductory specifics:

BLECKLEY, ERWIN R.

Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, 130th Field Artillery, observer 50th Aero Squadron, Air Service. Place and date: Near Binarville, France, 6 October 1918. Entered service at: Wichita, Kans. Birth: Wichita, Kans. G.O. No.: 56, W.D., 1922. Citation: Etc.

TALBOT RALPH

Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, U.S. Marine Corps. Born: 6 January 1897, South Weymouth, Mass. Appointed from: Connecticut. Citation: For exceptionally meritorious service and extraordinary heroism while attached to Squadron C, First Marine Aviation Force, in France. Second Lieutenant Talbot participated in numerous air raids into enemy territory. On 8 October 1918, while on such a raid, he was attacked by nine enemy scouts, and in the fight that followed shot down an enemy plane. Also, on 14 October 1918, while on a raid over Pittham, Belgium, Lieutenant Talbot and another plane became detached from the formation on account of motor trouble, and were attacked by 12 enemy scouts. During the severe fight that followed, his plane shot down one of the enemy scouts. His observer was shot through the elbow and his gun jammed. Second Lieutenant Talbot maneuvered to gain time for his observer to clear the jam with one hand, and then returned to the fight. The observer fought until shot twice, once in the stomach and once in the hip. When he collapsed, Lieutenant Talbot attacked the nearest enemy scout with his front guns and shot him down. With his observer

unconscious and his motor failing, he dived to escape the balance of the enemy and crossed the German trenches at an altitude of 50 feet, landing at the nearest hospital to leave his observer, and then returning to his aerodrome.

ROBINSON, ROBERT GUY

Rank and organization: Gunnery Sergeant, 1st Marine Aviation Force, United States Marine Corps. Place and date: Pittham, Belgium, 14 October 1918. Entered service at: Illinois. Birth: New York, N.Y. Citation: For extraordinary heroism as observer in the 1st Marine Aviation Force at the front in France. In company with planes from Squadron 218, Royal Air Force, conducting an air raid on 8 October 1918, Gunnery Sergeant Robinson's plane was attacked by nine enemy scouts. In the fight which followed, he shot down one of the enemy planes. In a later air raid over Pittham, Belgium, on 14 October 1918, his plane and one other became separated from their formation on account of motor trouble and were attacked by 12 enemy scouts. Acting with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in the fight which ensued, Gunnery Sergeant Robinson, after shooting down one of the enemy planes, was struck by a bullet which carried away most of his elbow. At the same time his gun jammed. While his pilot maneuvered for position, he cleared the jam with one hand and returned to the fight. Although his left arm was useless, he fought off the enemy scouts until he collapsed after receiving two more bullet wounds, one in the stomach and one in the thigh.

BYRD, RICHARD E., Jr.

Rank and organization: Commander, U.S. Navy. Born: 25 October 1888, Winchester, Va. Appointed from: Virginia. (19 February 1927.) Other Navy awards: Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with gold star, Distinguished Flying Cross. Citation: For distinguishing himself conspicuously by courage and intrepidity at the risk of his life, in demonstrating that it is possible for aircraft to travel in continuous flight from a now inhabited portion of the earth over the North Pole and return.

BENNETT, FLOYD

Rank and organization: Machinist, U.S. Navy. Born: 25 October 1890, Warrensburg, N.Y. Accredited to: New York. Other Navy award: Distinguished Service Medal. Citation: For distinguishing himself conspicuously by courage and intrepidity at the risk of his life as a member of the Byrd Arctic Expedition and thus contributing largely to the success of the first heavier-than-air flight to the North Pole and return.

**Medal of Honor, 1863-1968*. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (\$4.00)

MEDAL OF HONOR AIRPLANE

The photos and information on the Fokker F7B/3m, the JOSEPHINE FORD, were supplied by Peter M. Bowers, Stephen J. Hudek, and William J. Bennett to depict the color and markings of this famous airplane. The JOSEPHINE FORD is today in the Henry Ford Museum, Greenwich Village, Dearborn, Michigan.