

NEWS and Comment from our MEMBERS



(L to R) Lieut. Bayley, Capt. Lemaitre, Lieut. Henderson, and Capt. d'Oisy.

LIBERTY RACE, 1925

Claude A. J. Breguet, Paris, France

I am very pleased to send you a short note about the Liberty Race I attended in your country fifty years ago. I was a teenager in 1925 when I accompanied my Uncle Louis Breguet and my father, Jacques Breguet to the United States to participate in the race at Mitchell Field, Long Island. They brought with them two Breguet 19 biplanes. The one with a Renault 500 HP engine would be flown by Captain Henry Lemaitre, and the other with a Lorraine 450 HP engine would be flown by Captain Pelletier d'Oisy. The race would be run on the 8th of October.

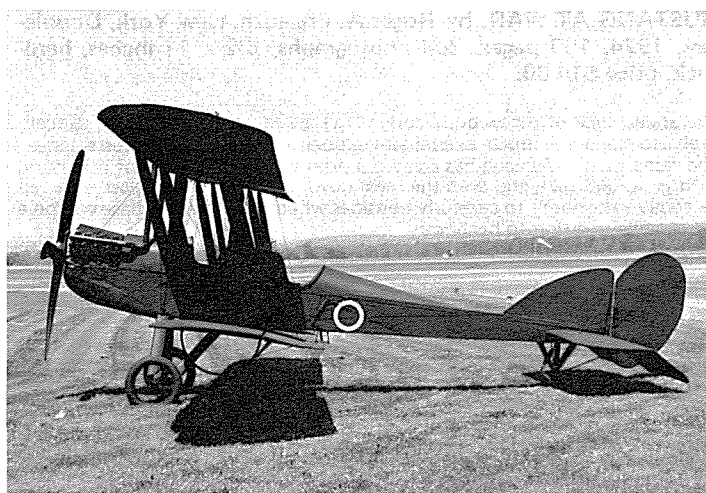
Captain Lemaitre was well known at that time for a record non-stop flight, and Captain Pelletier d'Oisy was known for his flight from Paris to Tokyo in 1924.

The Breguet 19 was developed in 1922 and approximately 4000 were built. Not only was the French air force equipped with the Breguet 19, but such European countries as Spain, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece and also in South America: Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil.

The Liberty Race was a test of observation planes (no pursuit planes permitted). The race course consisted of fifteen turns, each about 19 km (12 miles). The total distance was 288 km (180 miles). Featured in the race were the two Breguets with numbers 63 and 64, a Douglas powered by a Packard 600 HP engine, two Boeings, and eleven DeHavillands. The DeHavillands were modified for the race; prominent parts were smoothed off, the attack angle of the wings reduced, and the engines boosted to maximum output.

Delayed by customs, the two Breguets were late arriving at Mitchell Field, thus the mechanics had little time for assembly. There was no time for smoothing off; even the wheels, equipped with square cross section tires raced without fabric covering. The propeller of Lemaitre's plane was discovered to have been damaged, and with a bad mounting, the plane had a tendency to lean to portside and vibrate.

At the beginning Pelletier d'Oisy led the race, but on the ninth lap Lemaitre, feeling that he was outdistanced by Lieut. G. R. Henderson, gave full open throttle, and forged ahead of all other planes, and managed to lap his opponents. The race results are as follows: 1st — Captain Lemaitre with average speed of 206 km; 2nd — Lieut. E. B. Bayley, U.S. Army, flying 600 HP Douglas with speed 204 km; 3rd — Lieut. G. R. Henderson, U.S. Navy flying 600 HP Boeing with speed 203 km; 4th — Captain d'Oisy with speed of 202 km; 5th — Lieut Mac Reynolds, U.S. Army flying 500 HP DeHavilland with speed 201 km, and 6th — Lieut. R. H. Clark, U.S. Army also in 500 HP DeHavilland with speed of 200 km.

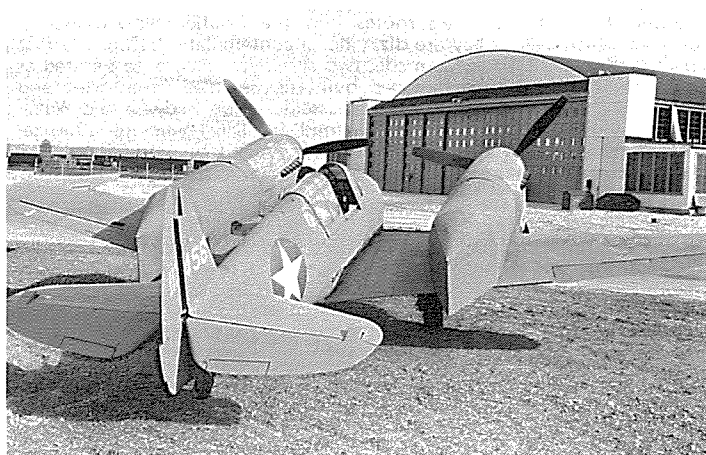


Canadian Armed Forces/National Museum of Man

ZEPPELIN ART IN DISPUTE

Dr. Douglas H. Robinson, Pennington, New Jersey.

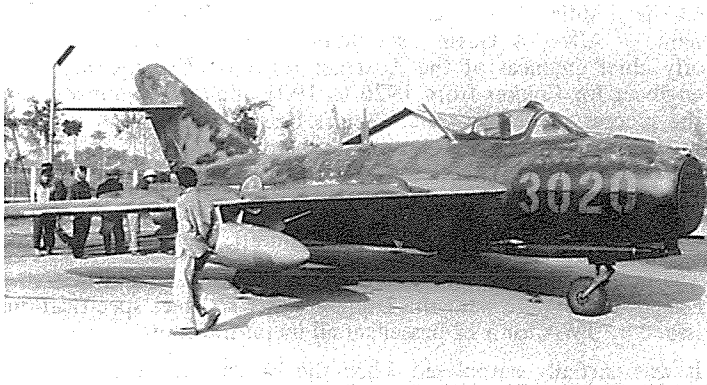
The back cover of the Winter Journal (Volume 19, Number 4) left me wondering how the artist could be so lacking in knowledge in WW I airship types. The actual L 25 was a German Army "p" class ship lengthened, and then turned over to the German Navy which between Oct. 1916 and Sept. 1917 flew sedately in the vicinity of Berlin as an experimental ship. The craft in the drawing however suggest the LZ 6 of 1909! Nor are the B.E.2cs right as night fighters; they would have been flown solo from the rear cockpit, with the front cockpit blanked off, and a single Lewis on a Strange mount on the top plane. The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa claims to have No 4112, the BE 2c which shot down in flames the L 32 at Billericay on the night of Sept. 23-24, 1916, I saw this ship in 1971 and the papers that came with it in 1919, and I am convinced it is authentic. By the time the B.E. had been sent to Canada as part of the Imperial Gift, it had been reconverted to a two seater and had no armament; but the finish was all dull black with narrow white circles where the cockades would have been painted.



A STRANGE BIRD

L.S. Casey, Curator, National Air & Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Here's one for your "Would you believe —" column. It is in fact a twin Curtiss P-40. A close look will give it away, but it was a serious mock-up and might have made it into production if Beaufighters and Mosquitos weren't so handy. If anyone knows more details about the development of this aircraft, I would like to hear from them.



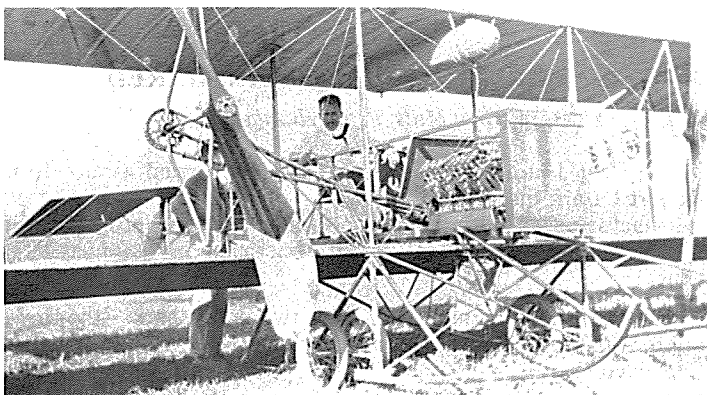
COMRADE TOON'S MIGS

Lou Drendel, Naperville, Illinois

Reference is made to Lieutenant David Erickson's fine story of the killing of the legendary Comrade Toon in his article VF-96's Finest. (Volume 19, Number 4) I am enclosing photos of both Migs (17 & 21) that Comrade T presumably flew. If you look closely you will see the 17 carries 7 kill markings, and the 21 is adorned with 13. I say 'presumably' because, based on the information I have, he was the only communist pilot with that many kills in the Viet Nam War. Those "secret intelligence sources" referred to in Lt. Erickson's article may one day reveal addition

communist "aces," but I don't think they have done so as of this writing. The enclosed photos are courtesy of Koku-Fan magazine, one of the foremost aviation publication in the world today. They were kind enough to share their resources with me (in the writing of "... AND KILL MIGS, reviewed Volume 20, Number 1), and deserve special mention for their generosity.

I was also interested in the spelling of Toon's name. I had never seen it in print and the pilots who related their stories to me affirmed my assumption that it was spelled, Tomb. I assume Lt. Erickson's sources were more explicitly than mine and, unless he says otherwise, I will go with Toon.



VOUGHT-WRIGHT TRACTOR PLANE

Arthur L. Schoeni, Dallas, Texas

This photo of a Vought conversion of a Wright plane was found in Chance M. Vought's personal photo album. That Vought redesigned a Wright is rather astonishing — a young aerial engineer taking the Old Masters' plane and changing it from a pusher to a tractor with bigger props. The man in the cockpit may be Andrew Drew, an instructor at Max Lillie's school at Cicero, Illinois, where Vought learned to fly and was an engineer-instructor himself. Actually, the man standing in the background may be Chance Vought himself — he always was a "dandy" in his dress and this fellow appears to be one. I never saw a photo of Vought in dirty clothes or unkempt. His albums had a dozen or more pix of him in different kinds of "mod" duds of that era — high collars, flop hats, etc.

ERRATA, VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

Serious errors discovered in the Spring (1975) Journal not only reflects adversely on the editor and staff, but also gave your editor a sickening gut feeling never experienced before. Despite a certain amount of proof reading (evidently not enough) three errors — one a whopper, is there to plague us like a family ghost escaped from the closet. About the compounded errors in The Grim Reapers we have a theory the typeset galleys may have been

numbered out of sequence; even so that doesn't excuse us. As a result of these unfortunate errors a new safeguard policy has been established. Following layout of the dummy sheets, zerox copies are sent to the author for close, personal proof-reading. Hopefully this precaution together with our watchful attitude will assure no further editorial nightmares for your editor and staff.

First, we ask our readers to take a pen in hand, cross out the word Frank in the Frank Armstrong in the editor's message (inside cover) and there inscribe Neil instead. Now the sentence makes sense.

The repeated paragraph on page 58 of North American Goes to War, is definitely a typeset error overlooked by us.

Author John Alcorn of The Grim Reapers has furnished us with proper corrections, which are:

The title and first paragraph of the section, THE ROYCE PHILIPPINE MISSION, were left out. On page 7, right hand column, following the words "... April, against Gasmata, New Britain.", add the following: "THE ROYCE PHILIPPINE MISSION".

"For Col. John H. Davies, his men, and the ex-Dutch B-25's, a high adventure was about to begin. Though less famous than Dolittle's 18 April Tokyo raid, it was scarcely less daring, and conceived with the same view — to mount an audacious token aerial offensive in order to bolster American morale and to warn the Japanese that the fight had just begun.

"The aerial commando raid, conceived by Brigadier General Ralph ..."

Also, some 69 lines from the section, THE PAPUAN CAMPAIGN, were transposed into the middle of the section, THE B-25 STRAFERS, so that the sense of both is lost.

Specifically, the nine paragraphs on page 14 beginning, "It was at this critical juncture ...", and ending with "... after surviving medium altitude B-17 and B-25 attacks." should have appeared in the section, THE PAPUAN CAMPAIGN between the paragraph ending "... (Kitty hawks)." and the one beginning, "A convoy moving down from the south coast ..." (page 13, lower left column).



CHARLES LINDBERGH'S GRAVE

John Underwood, Glendale, California.

Recently, while on a research project in Hawaii, my wife and I took the opportunity to visit Maui and the remote Hana coast which Charles Lindbergh had come to know and love so well. Lindbergh, a man who was privileged to see the world as few men have, could have lived almost anywhere he wished to. He chose to build his retirement home on Maui's Hana coast, and it is not hard to understand why once you have seen it.

Realizing that time was running out, Lindbergh told those attending him at Walter Reed Hospital that he preferred to live one more day on Maui, by the pounding surf, than another thirty on the mainland, and so he did. He was airlifted by lightplane from Kahului Airport to a little strip near Hana and from there driven the arduous 15 miles over a primitive road to his home. He died there on 26 August 1974.

The enclosed picture shows Lindbergh's unmarked grave in the little churchyard at Kipahulu. The church, built by natives in 1857, is situated on a cliff which drops straight down nearly 1,000 feet into the sea. The grave is an 8-ft square covered with li'i stones gathered by the airman's friends and neighbors.

MORE NORTH AMERICAN ADDENDUM

Charles Froesch, Oneonta, New York

As an old Fokker Aircraft engineer I read Ralph Oakley's North American story in the Summer 1974 Journal (Volume 19, Number 2) with much interest, and if I may, I would like to offer a few comments.

It was Fokker who designed and built the three Fokker F-10s used by Western Air Express in 1928 on the model airway selected as a result of a grant by the Guggenheim Foundation.

The caption on page 137 "The Fokker factory at Wheeling, W. Va. went into operation on the Super Universal with . . ." To my knowledge, as Gen. Service Manager for Fokker and GAMC from 1930 to 1935, no Super Univ. were built at Wheeling. The tooling was specially designed for the F-10A wings. All Super Wings were built at the Passaic, N.J. plant.

On page 138, "Fokker Aircraft built in America" table. The table is correct in that only one F-14A was built. Instead of the standard Townend ring engine cowl, it had a full NACA cowl. On the F-32s — only 5 of the 10 released for production. The prototype was destroyed by accident during its certification period. Two went to Western Air Express, 1 to Universal Airlines and another was purchased by Lawrence P. Fisher of the Fisher Body Co.

No mention is made of the single engine F-VII which, while imported from the Dutch Works, had to be rebuilt with an American engine and other equipment. It was sold to Standard Airlines operated by Jack Frye who later became president of TWA.

In the middle of the page, after discussing Bob Noorduyn, the name of Alfred A. Gassner should have been added. He was formerly chief engineer of the Austrian Albatross Co. and was chief engineer for Fokker from 1926 to 1931 and was responsible for the success of the "F" series aircraft. He replaced A. Francis Arcier in 1926 to start his own aircraft company.

No mention is made of General Motors' interest in the Dornier DOX flying boat that came to this country at their request in an effort to diversify the GAMC line of aircraft.

The General Aviation Manufacturing Company's GA-38 was conceived to compete with the Douglas DC-1 to meet specifications issued by TWA for a 12 passenger all metal transport.

It was partially completed when the Douglas DD-1 successfully demonstrated the single engine climb requirement at 5,000 ft. altitude, thus eliminated the trimotor from the transport picture until the Boeing 727 tri jet came along in 1963.

The GA-38 was to have been powered with 3 Pratt & Whitney SIDI-G Wasp engines of 550 HP each.

Photo caption on page 141 is in error. It states that no GA-43s were sold. Japan bought one, Swissair also bought one and another was leased to TWA.

On the photograph, the first Young was John and the last Young was Karl. Reyney should have been Pevney.

NORTH AMERICAN QUESTION ANSWERED

F. H. "Diz" Dean, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

The Spring Journal, 1975 issue, page 70, carried a note from Robert Casari, questioning the identification of the General Aviation factory near Baltimore as the former Curtiss-Caproni plant in Ralph Oakley's article on North American, in Summer 1974 issue.

I have in hand, from my Curtiss files, two documents — the first a publication and the other an 8 x 10 photo bearing on the Curtiss-Caproni question.

The document is "Curtiss and Associated Companies," 59 pages, dated March 20, 1929. It is dedicated to Clement Keyes. On page 27 starts a two page run-down on Curtiss-Caproni — one of about 22 associated companies. Excerpts: "Company organized January 1929. Frank Russell, President; Gianni Caproni, Board Chairman; Capt. G.C. Westervelt, General Manager." (Also list of directors, Capital Stock, Transfer Agents, etc.) A quote: The factory site, adjacent to both land and water airports on the Atlantic seaboard, will shortly be selected. A large, fully equipped factory will be constructed without delay and it is expected that many months will not elapse before the first of Curtiss-Caproni planes can be offered to the public." There is more, but that should suffice for now.

The photo is from an original negative (0-1453) and was taken by the Photo Division of Curtiss-Wright Flying Service, 1215 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. A notation on the back says "Curtiss-Caproni Factory, never used by Curtiss;" another says "Taken December 20, 1929." It has two stamps on the back, "Received Mar. 22, 1930, Curtiss-Caproni Corp."

The photo is an aerial view of the factory and adjacent grounds (including river in the foreground.) There is no doubt in my mind, after checking the picture of the factory in the Journal and "my" photo, that the factories are one and same. Though nowhere does my data say the factory is in Baltimore. However, the C-W Flying Service that took picture was located there.