



This photo was taken to celebrate the return of "Whitey" Dahl (left kneeling) to the Lacalle Squadron after Dahl was shot down on February 19, 1937. Frank Tinker is on the right (sitting) and "Chang" Selles is in the center (sitting). Standing behind the pilots are their respective mechanics. The plane in the background is Selles' Chato number 57. (photo courtesy "Chang" Selles)

American Pilots In The Spanish Civil War · Addenda

by Allen Herr

In response to numerous letters concerning the article, "American Pilots in the Spanish Civil War" in the Fall 1977 Journal, it is necessary to make the following corrections and additions.

The noms de guerre are unclear. Manuel Gomez Garcia (p.170) was the nom de guerre for Col. Miguel Garcia Granados and Vincenza Bocalare was the nom de guerre for Vincent Joseph Patriarca (p.176).

The following locations and pilots' names were misspelled: Rosemarin should be Rosmarin (p.163).¹ Jarma should be spelled Jarama as in the Battle of Jarama and the Jarama River (p.165).² The Yugoslavian pilot Krissay (p.176) should be Joze Krizaj (b. 1911-d.1950).³

The following photo captions were mislabeled. The names Dahl and Castaneda should be reversed on page 168. Dahl is on the left.

The photo at the bottom right of page 168 has an incorrect caption. Albert Baumler is not in the photograph. The original caption from Col. Lacalle's book, *Mitos y Verdades*, reads as follows, "Jose Bastida Porres (left), an unknown Russian aviator (center), and Kosokov (right), commander of the Russian Chato squadron to which Albert Baumler was assigned."⁴ The author apologizes for a gross error in translation.

Anthony Impolitas Marozas lives in upstate New York and not New York City (p.176).⁵

A report in the Spanish newspaper, "Diario De Navarre" of 15/1/37(p.6) reports that Edward Schneider (p.163) claimed to have arrived in Valencia on November 17, 1936. Since Schneider traveled with Lord, Berry, and Acosta, Schneider's claim would put the entire group in Spain three days earlier than previously reported.⁶

According to Hiliare du Berrier the bonus paid to Olof DeWet for recruiting him (du Berrier) was 20 pounds or \$80 (p.163).⁷

The ship on which Michael Hondorf (p.176) died was the "Ciudad de Barcelona."⁸

New information from Jesus Salas Larrazabal states that the Polikarpov R-5 (p. 179) was known in Spain as the "Rasante" and the R-Z or R-Zet as the "Natacha."⁹

"Pete" Peters (p. 176), thought to be an American, was actually an Englishman named Bernard C. Peters, a Flight/Sergeant who flew with 249 Squadron in the summer of 1942. (This is the same squadron of which "Pete" Peters was supposedly a member.) Stationed on Malta, F/Sgt. B.C. Peters was killed in combat on Sept. 15, 1942.¹⁰

"Volunteer for Liberty," June 10, 1938 (p.7), issue lists the following American International Brigadiers as pilots who took other duties upon arrival in Spain (the Government had ceased to employ foreign pilots):

Pat Roosevelt, a commercial pilot.

Bill Reed, an ex-Marine Corps aviator.

Jerry Ferogiaro, a former barnstorming pilot.

Ed Fliegle, a mailman with 200 hours.

Alvah Bessie, a writer, had 25 hours.

Luke Heinman became chief scout of the Brigade.¹¹

Herbert Hunt Searl, a pilot, was assigned to the Abraham Lincoln Battalion as a training officer. Searl went to Spain in September 1937, and returned May 31, 1938.¹²

Preston Hill was reported in *Southern Flight* magazine Vol. X No. 5 (9/38), as having just returned home after serving 18 months in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion.¹³

Evidence has been uncovered in the Public Records Office, London, that Edwin Semons (p.166) was involved in attempting to obtain aircraft for the Spanish Government during March 1937, in England.¹⁴

In his book, *Some Still Live*, Frank Tinker stated that his friend and squadronmate, "Chang" Selles had suddenly disappeared



This Vultee V1A (c/n 24 NC17325) was the Vultee sent to England by E.L. Cord and then loaned to English businessman Victor Ricketts who had obtained the concession for the oil under most of Ethiopia in 1935. The ship sat in England and was eventually sold to Spanish agents in October 1936, and taken to Paris. It sat there until February 10, 1937 when it was flown to Spain by parties unknown. The "theft" of the Vultee is attributed to Schmidt. A French newspaper confirms the "theft" of the Vultee. (Courtesy Richard S. Allen via John Underwood)

from the Lacalle Squadron. Some time later, Tinker asked a Russian officer what had become of Selles and was led to believe that Selles was shot as a spy for the Japanese Government. Selles was part Japanese and wrote many letters to his sister in Tokyo.¹⁵ Fortunately, Selles was not shot; and as a result of reading the article in the AAHS Journal, Mr. Selles recently contacted the author, contributing the following information.

Selles confirms Charles Koch's victory over a Nationalist Fiat 32. Selles states that James Peck's service as a fighter pilot in Spain was utterly impossible. He further states that Derek Dickinson was offensive and extremely prone to exaggeration. Selles supports Frank Tinker's facts as to the great dogfight of Feb. 18, 1937, in which three out of the four Americans in the Lacalle Squadron were shot down. Selles also agrees with Tinker as to the demise of Ben Leider. Selles held transport pilot Joe Rosmarin in the highest esteem. Selles also claimed that Charlie Koch was a veteran of WWI having trained with a group of 210 American pilots in England. Selles states that Lacalle flew Chato number 50, Tinker number 56, Dahl number 54, and he (Selles) flew number 57.¹⁶

New information from J.W. Priddy, a captain with Pan American Airways, claims that Paul Williams (p.172) was in actuality Paul G. MacWilliams of Cincinnati, Ohio. Priddy met MacWilliams on the boat going to Europe and nearly went to Spain with MacWilliams. MacWilliams went to Spain in August 1937, and, according to Priddy who received occasional letters from MacWilliams, left Spain in November 1937. MacWilliams claimed to have had flying duties in Spain. According to Priddy MacWilliams was Caucasian.¹⁷ This new information makes Jim Peck's claims even more suspect.

Paul G. MacWilliams owned and flew a Waco F out of the old Lunkin Airport, Cincinnati, Ohio. If anyone has any information about Mr. MacWilliams, this writer would appreciate receiving that information.

H. Allen Herr

FOOTNOTES

1. Letter from Bunny Rosmarin to Author, June 1, 1978.
2. Letter from Alvah Bessie to Author, December 19, 1977.
3. Letter from Victor Berch to Author, December 29, 1977.
4. Letter from Brian Bridgeman to Author, January 23, 1978.
5. Letter from Victor Berch to Author, December 29, 1977.
6. Letter from Brian Bridgeman . . . January 23, 1978.
7. through 14. *Ibid*.
15. Frank G. Tinker, Jr., *Some Still Live* (New York, 1938) p.227.
16. Letter from "Chang" Selles to Author, February 22, 1978.
17. Letter from J.W. Priddy to Author, January 10, 1978; J.W. Priddy telephone interview with Author, January 13, 1978.

NEWS & COMMENT

FROM OUR MEMBERS

XF4D SKYRAY

Author Nick Williams has taken some good-natured lumps from fellow Director Bob Lawson, as Bob spotted an error in Nick's article on the XF4D-1s (JAAHS, Winter 1977): the first flight of BuNo 124586 occurred on January 23, 1951, not the 21st as reported.

"MISSING MAN" FLYOVER

Donald J. Barrett, Air Force Academy, Colorado

The Academy Library periodically is asked about the "missing man" flyover used at funerals, etc. Research at the Academy has produced no definitive evidence as to the country, place and date the custom originated and the originator's name. The general response is that it probably is similar to the Army's riderless horse tradition.

If any of your readers may be aware of the origin of this custom, we would appreciate any information on its origin, with source citations for the information. Please address replies to: Library (DFSLB), Attn: Mr. Barrett, USAF Academy, CO 80840.

I will be pleased to let you know if the request produces any positive information.

FERRY FLIGHT

William E. Mayer, Jr., Painted Post, NY

Having just read through C.H. Laughlin's "Ferry Flight" in the Spring, 1978 JOURNAL, I noticed his reference to the air raid on Fort Lamy in early 1942. I remembered reading of this raid in some detail in Paul Carell's *The Foxes of the Desert*, E.P. Dutton and Co., 1961, pp. 136-149, so I looked it up in my personal copy. According to the author, the raid was made in two stages by a Heinkel He 111 which took off from Hun Oasis airfield, landed at a desert landing ground known to the Italians as Campo Uno, took on sixteen bombs and 1,000 gallons of fuel and took off for Fort Lamy, bombing it at 14:30 hours, Wednesday, January 21, 1942. The Heinkel's call letters are said to have been VQ+BJ, and aboard were the pilot, Lieutenant Franz Bohnsack, Captain Theo Blaich, the originator of the idea, Sergeant-Major Geissler, engineer, Sergeant Wichmann, wireless operator, and Lieutenant Dettmann, a war correspondent, as well as Major Roberto Count Vimercati-San Severino, the desert expert of the Italian Army in Africa, according to Carell. Due to false weather information given by a British agent, the aircraft ran short of fuel and landed in the desert, where after sending signals for six days, the crew was finally reached by an Italian Ghibli aircraft, fuel later arriving via Ju 52 from Agedabia to put the He 111 back into the air. The entire crew arrived back at Hun Oasis with their aircraft nine days after their takeoff on the mission. In this account, Lamy airfield is described as possessing "two large hangars, surrounded by workshops. . . Huge white patches with semi-buried oil storage tanks." I trust this information might be of interest to Mr. Laughlin and the other members.