

NEWS & COMMENT FROM OUR MEMBERS

FLYING A TIGER

Perry Minton, Rosemead, CA

I have just finished reading "Flying a Tiger" by L. Dan Sheridan, Jr., Summer 1990 *Journal*, and was very pleased with the article.

In the interest of nitpicking I wonder if Mr. Sheridan didn't allow an extra 100 knots to creep into F7F performance specs. He mentions 480 knots at one point and 450 at another, both of which sound a bit high. Other sources credit the F7F with a top speed of well over 400 mph, but not 518 to 553. Also he says he recovered from a spin indicating 550 knots, which is somewhere between .8 and .9 Mach. Wow!

But that's just nitpicking, as I said. I wonder if the author has an opinion as to why Grumman didn't try four-bladed props on the F7F to improve ground clearance. The change might have prevented damage to one of the aircraft mentioned in the article.

Mr. Sheridan's comments on the controllability of the F7F were clear and interesting. It's obvious he is one of those few who were born to fly well. Incidentally, the ability of the *Tigercat* was proved to me one day in the late summer of 1945 when an F7F from Quonset Point NAS (I think) made a low pass over my PT boat as we approached Narragansett Bay from the Atlantic. Probably noting we had tracked him with our guns, he feathered a prop and made another low pass, doing a roll or two over the boat, then climbed away gradually while he fired up the dead engine. I would guess his speed at 200 knots or so and altitude at 200-300 feet. Quite a show!

NIGHTMARE OF THE KOREAN HILLS

Dr. Theodore R. Jamison, Papillion, NB

Regarding Mr. Jerome J. McAuliffe's critique of my article on B-26s in Korea, 1950-53, I offer the following comments:

1. Unfortunately, Mr. McAuliffe read only the narrative, not the footnotes, and assumed conclusions about sources, namely Frank Futrell's credible book, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953*; a work Mr. McAuliffe claims is full of errors. Certainly, Futrell himself can defend his celebrated work, and it will long stand as the study of the Air Force in the Korean War. On the other hand, I do not deny reading Futrell's book "cover to cover" before writing "The Nightmare of Korean Hills," and did not hesitate to nominally reference it in

the article, despite the fact that it is a secondary source. Futrell's work was especially valuable in capturing the "big picture" of the air war. But Mr. McAuliffe would do well to review the footnotes to ascertain sources used before commenting on any published scholarly work. In this case he would discover that, at a *minimum*, I cited secondary sources such as Futrell's book, and that the article's fundamental scholarly integrity rests on primary sources—wing histories, eyewitness accounts (yes, including my own recollections), contemporary messages, letters, and briefings, and General Barcus' *Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the United States Air Force in Korea* which is in seven volumes.

2. I will not attempt to respond to all comments in Mr. McAuliffe's letter, but will simply say that the majority of my research was in 3rd, 452nd, and 17th Bomb Wing histories and the Barcus study. I trusted those sources and stand by my scholarship. Here is an example: The 17th Bomb Wing's history covering the period July-December 1952, pp. 62-63, specifically covered the center-of-gravity issue and "teeter-tottering" problem with *Invaders* at K-9, but Mr. McAuliffe refutes that record of history, labeling it "this cannard," a word that is not in any dictionary I own.

3. I do appreciate Mr. McAuliffe pointing out some areas in the article that could have been improved for clarity. For example, I meant to say that no B-26Cs arrived in Korea with guns located in the nose. I *knew* that they had been equipped earlier with nose guns, and simply did not explain it well. Second, regarding the changeover of the 452nd Bomb Wing to the 27th Bomb Wing, I probably was not clear in my meaning. In fact, the Air Force could have kept the 452nd designation for the duration of the war had it wanted. But Mr. McAuliffe was wrong in asserting that a federal requirement forced the inactivation of the 452nd Bomb Wing (most of the 452nd's reservists who were called up in 1950 had already rotated to CONUS by May 1952), but Headquarters USAF decided to redesignate the wing as the 17th Bombardment Wing (L) during a FEAF organization—a unit designation choice that was predicated on lineage and honors, and a practice that continues to this day. Regrettably, that section did not convey the intended message to the reader. Perhaps I should have provided more explanation, and will take Mr. McAuliffe's hit on that one. In fact, the 452nd was activated again in June 1952, stateside, as a reconnaissance unit. Today, the 17th is located at RAF Alconbury in England, belongs to SAC, has one squadron (the old 95th "Kicking

Mules"), and is a reconnaissance wing (U-2/TR-1s). The 452nd, on the other hand, is now an air refueling wing in the California ANG.

4. Mr. McAuliffe has asked for "a highly accurate *Journal* article" on the *Invader*. Those sources that were available to me are likewise available to him; most of which are located at Maxwell AFB. Perhaps he would like to remove himself from the critic's chair and attempt some research and writing. Actually, I feel that he has already read a "highly accurate" account, and did not recognize it. Certainly, Douglas Aircraft Company thought enough of the article's accuracy to reprint it in their own publication this year, and the editors of the *Journal* obviously considered it worthy of publication as their lead article in that issue.

5. Finally, I must passionately disagree with his final statement that "the B-26 had many detractors during 1950-53 because it wasn't a jet bomber, therefore, a lot of distorted history has evolved." Aside from a convoluted logic in the sentence, I doubt that Mr. McAuliffe can accurately document his existence of "many detractors." Frankly, for its nighttime missions in the narrow valleys of Korea, and for its general purpose in the war, the plane was not considered limited because of its reciprocating engines, but for a lack of sophisticated avionics and some aging problems. If anything, the *Invaders* were ideal for their mission of low-level bombing and strafing of convoys, trains, airfields, and troop concentrations. There were indeed some early lamentations at Fifth Air Force and FEAF because the Air Force did not have a newer, advanced aircraft for night interdiction and other missions in which the *Invaders* were used. They selected the aircraft, nonetheless. Irrespective of early concerns, the B-26 exceeded *all* expectations both at Fifth Air Force and FEAF Headquarters, partly because of the skilled and dedicated air crews and ground crews, and partly because it was a reliable, tough weapon system that did the job. To loosely paraphrase, Will Rogers' quote, I have never met a man who did not like the B-26. We who were with the 3rd and 17th Bomb Wings in Korea considered the *Invader* a truly great airplane.

U.S. CIVIL AIRCRAFT REGISTERS

Ed Young, Burbank, CA

Re: the article "U.S. Civil Aircraft Registers" by Robert K. Parmerter in Vol. 35, No. 3, Fall 1990 issue of the *Journal*. He mentions *Air Transportation—The Trade Journal of Commercial Aviation* and how

the April 7, 1928 issue included a 20-page list of U.S. aircraft registered with the Department of Commerce.

I have an original copy, minus front and rear cover, and thought it might be noted that besides the 20 pages of registered aircraft, it includes schedules, officers' names, etc., of all major airlines then in operation, taxi airplane services, the names and addresses and license number of *each* licensed aircraft pilot and *each* licensed mechanic (I found my dad as No. 559), schedules of foreign airlines, addresses and key personnel of aircraft manufacturers, specifications of about 80 aircraft, airplane engine manufacturers (and specifications), list of air schools (with names of the instructors), photographers, distributors, dealers. An awful lot of detailed info in 128 pages.

Reason I'm submitting this is that if any AAHS member has a specific question that this document could answer, I might be able to look up the info for him or her as long as the volume is minimal. —Ed Young, 640 S. Parish Pl., Burbank, CA 91506.

TRANSOCEANIC AVIATION FATALITIES

Matthew E. Rodina, Jr., St. Croix,
U. S. Virgin Islands

The two articles by Dr. Richard K. Smith which appeared in the Fall 1990 issue of the *Journal* were most interesting and are worthwhile in that they provide a study of factors which impact a particular field of aviation over a long period of time. Often historical articles concentrate on a particular event or era and do not portray the impact of that event or era in the overall development of aviation. Fortunately Dr. Smith's articles help provide a true historical perspective of the subject of transatlantic flight.

I have one comment on "Transoceanic Aviation Fatalities," that being that the Keystone *Pathfinder* NX179 in which Davis and Wooster were killed was later rebuilt as N1612 of West Indies Aerial Express, the company which was formed by Basil Rowe and was later absorbed by Pan American.

On the subject of flight losses over the Atlantic, Smith may be correct in the relatively small number of flights actually disappearing or forced to land over water but if the record is examined and expanded to include any segment of a transatlantic flight, the safety record becomes less remarkable. I'm sure that from the point of view of a passenger on board an aircraft the chance of being killed by a forced landing at sea on a transatlantic flight is just as undesirable as being killed during another route segment of that flight. Attached is a listing of fatal accidents covering the period 1946 through 1970 for transatlantic flights and the origination or continuation thereof. There may have been some which were missed once

they proceeded significantly away from the Atlantic even though still using the flight number with which the ocean was crossed. As may be evident, the safest portion of the journey may be over water.

ADDITIONAL FATAL ACCIDENTS IN TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT (Includes scheduled and charter 1946 to 1970)

02-21-46 BOAC, Liberator, G-AGEM, forced landing Charlottetown, PEI, in storm, 1 killed.
09-17-46 Sabena, DC-4, OO-CBG, crashed 27 mi SW of Gander, 27 k.
09-07-46 BSAA, York, G-AHEW, cr. on takeoff Bathurst, Gambia, en route London-Lisbon-South America, 24 k.
10-03-46 AOA, DC-4, N90904, cr. on approach Stephenville, Newfoundland, 39 k.
12-28-46 TWA, L-049, N86505, cr. on approach Shannon, ? k.
03-11-47 TWA, L-049, astrodome blew out over water, navigator k.
04-13-47 BSAA, York, G-AHEZ, cr. at Dakar in fog, ? k.
09-05-47 BSAA, Lancaster, G-AGWK, cr. Bermuda in bad wx, ? k.
10-20-48 KLM, L-049, PH-TEN, cr. Prestwick when hit wires in fog or go around, 40 k.
08-15-49 Transoceanic, DC-4, N79998, ditched off Ireland when ran out of fuel, 8 k.
02-11-50 PAA, B-377, N1031V, door opened over Long Island on approach NYC and steward lost
06-22-51 PAA, L-049, N88846, cr. 50 mi. NE of Monrovia, Liberia, 40 k.
06-18-53 PAB, L-049, PP-PDA, cr. Sao Paulo en route from London, hit 4 mi. short, 17 k.
08-03-54 Air France, L-1049C, F-BGNA, force landing Preston City, Conn., out of fuel after diversion from NYC and BOS, one crew and one passenger serious injuries.
08-09-54 Avianca, L-749A, HK-163, hit mountain after takeoff Lajes, Azores, 30 k.
08-23-54 KLM, DC-6B, PH-TFO, cr. into North Sea on NYC-Shannon-Amsterdam flight, 21 k.
09-05-54 KLM, L-1049C, PH-TFY, cr. on takeoff Shannon en route Amsterdam-NYC, 28 k.
12-18-54 LAI, DC-6B, I-LINE, cr. on 4th appr. to Idlewild in rain and fog, 26 k.
12-25-54 BOAC, B-377, G-ALSA, cr. on approach Prestwick, 28 k.
06-15-55 PAB, L-149, PP-PDJ, cr. Asuncion, Paraguay, en route London-Buenos Aires, 16 k.
08-11-57 Maritime Central, DC-4, CF-MCF, London-Toronto charter, cr. in severe weather near Issoudan, Quebec, 79 k.
01-11-59 Lufthansa, L-1049G, D-ALAK, cr. on approach Rio de Janeiro 36 k.
06-26-59 TWA, L-1649A, N7313C, cr. near Milan, Italy, lightning strike caused explosion in fuel tank, 68 k.
09-10-61 President, DC-6B, N90773, cr. on takeoff Shannon, charter, 83 k.
11-01-61 PAB, DC-7C, PP-PDO, cr. on approach Recife en route Lisbon-Rio de Janeiro, 45 k.
06-03-62 Air France, B-707-320, F-BHSM, cr. on takeoff Orly, charter, 130 k.
06-22-62 Air France, B-707-320, F-BHST, hit mountain on Guadeloupe, 112k.
09-23-62 Flying Tiger Line, L-1049H, N6329C, ditched in N. Atlantic after two engines failed, military charter, 28 k.
03-05-68 Air France, B-707-320, F-BLCJ, hit mountain on approach Guadeloupe, 63 k.
01-13-69 SAS, DC-8-62, LN-MOO, cr. into Pacific 8 miles short of LAX, 20 k.

"WEDDELL" -WILLIAMS

CM. Daniels, San Diego, CA

Re: Fall 1990 *Journal*; incredibly, in the rear cover painting of the Wedell-Williams No. 92, is the name "Weddell" on the plane misspelled? (*It's misspelled.*) Also, I believe the pilot's name was Errett Wil-

liams, not "Evrett" Williams as it appears in the blurb on the contents page. The *Home Pylon News* of the Wedell-Williams Memorial Aviation Museum of Louisiana consistently calls him "Errett."

Artists are traditionally better painters than spellers. Therefore, historians of merit will give little credence to paintings as historical documents. Photos alone are accepted, as cameras can't misspell. And 'Errett' Williams is correct. I should have known, being a Williams myself. But then I started out as an artist. —Managing Editor

BELL AIRCRAFT FIRST FLIGHTS

Harry F. Kelsey, Santa Maria, CA

The Winter 1989 issue of the *Journal* with its cover picture of the Bell *Airacobra* and the article about the first flights of Bell aircraft prompted the recollection of all sorts of miscellany about planes and people in the Bell scene circa 1940-1944. There are some errors in the writeup about the XP-77 which I would like to point out so as to set the record straight.

Some time or other, someone worried about bombing attacks against U.S. cities. The reaction to this almost imaginary threat was a contract to Bell to design an aircraft which used a minimum of war strategic material and performed only one function, as an interceptor against non-escorted bombers. The result was the XP-77. It was small (100 square feet of wing area), had minimum armament of two, or at best four, .50-cal. machine guns, was made of wood and used a relatively small powerplant, the *Ranger* inverted inline engine. Another engineer and I were the performance estimators for this airplane and we started from square one using whatever data we could find for this unusual design. I left Bell to go into the Navy in May 1944 before all the results were in but I heard we missed the top speed by two knots. We had made arrangements with the flight test group to be kept informed and one day they called and said they were about ready to fly so the two of us ran out of the main building and out toward the active runway just in time to see Jack Woolams on his takeoff run. He rotated before he got to us and passed us at about 200 feet with the rudder swishing back and forth. He said later the airplane was not impressive and had only one flying flaw, marginal rudder authority which accounted for the rudder movement I saw on climb-out. Bell had many wood bonding problems on this airplane and that plus a not very realistic requirement resulted in a lethargic program.

For the record, the XP-77 had only one purpose, as an interceptor, and it just barely could do that. It was never considered as a bomber. And the first flight was made by pilot Jack Woolams at the Niagara Falls airport, not at Muroc. I was there.

And incidentally, Woolams' name is **incorrectly** spelled in the *Journal* article. (Look at the name tag on the left side of his leather flight jacket in his picture on page 195.)

FAIRCHILD PORTER/TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHTS

John Wegg, Pollock Pines, CA

I thoroughly enjoyed the Fall 1990 issue. With regard to the article on the Pilatus/Fairchild *Porter*, I seem to recall there was a lawsuit some years ago filed by Fairchild against the CIA. Evidently enough spare parts had been ordered for its PC-6s that it was actually building them in Southeast Asia! On the same subject, I have attached a list of more US-registered PC-6s plus filled in a few gaps in the published listing.

In the story, "Fifty Years of Transatlantic Flight," Dr. Richard K. Smith states that the Boeing 707 incident on 3 February 1959 set an unbeaten—to date—subsonic airliner "record." However, on 21 August 1961, during a test flight over the Edwards AFB Askania Tracking Range, a Douglas DC-8-43 achieved Mach 1.012 in a 20-degree dive. Earlier, on 8 May 1961, a Convair 30 (990 *Coronado*) reached Mach 0.97 on a test flight, and I understand it was routine to take all production 990s up to this speed on pre-delivery tests.



Two photos of the Douglas DB-7 crash into the parking lot of the North American Aviation plant,

Mines Field, Inglewood, California, January 1939. The French officer aboard broke a leg. Pilot Johnny Cable was killed attempting a parachute escape at a low altitude. The airplane had been demonstrating single-engine performance.

THE AMERICAN PORTERS

MSN	Model	Registry	Owner/Operator*
514	PC-6/C	N12450	ex-HB-FAE
521	PC-6/C	N62148	
517	PC-6/B1	N62150	Continental A/S
523	PC-6/B1	N62158	Continental A/S
539	PC-6/C	N748N	Air America
543	PC-6/	N4911	Lester Kipperhan, Spenard, AK
544	PC-6	N4912	Roger Nordlum, Kotzebue, AK
545	PC-6	N4913	
558	PC-6/B1	N62403	Dale Williamson, Bellevue, WA (ex-JA3201)
565	PC-6/C	N285L	ex-HB-FBN
569	PC-6/B1	N2851T	Alaska Inc., Minneapolis, MN
599	PC-6/C	N394R	
631	PC-6/B1	N62148	Continental A/S
632	PC-6/B1	N62153	Continental A/S
669	PC-6/B1	N62161	Continental A/S
685	PC-6/	N4926	Frank Geert, East Kingston, NH
704	PC-6/B1	N62160	Continental A/S
705	PC-6/B1	N62162	Continental A/S
724	PC-6/B1	N2386	Arizona Helicopter Applicators, Chandler, AZ
726	PC-6/B1	N30TU	Jungle Avn. and Radio Svce., Waxhaw, NC

Additional Information

N4915	MSN 536	
N184L	MSN 557	
N185K	MSN 563	Later to Air America
N187H	MSN 564	

MORE ON THE 7B CRASH

Mauno Salo, Lake Elsinore, CA

Lloyd Royer, a man in aviation for 48 years, was an eyewitness with many others to the Douglas prototype 7B attack bomber demonstration flight which ended up in a total washout at Mines Field, Inglewood, California.

Having heard Royer's story over several times, I can state with confidence that Ken Hamilton's version is quite correct. Not only was Royer outside, but he had another reason for viewing the flight demonstration by his friend, Johnny Cable. You see, the evening before, the two couples, husbands and wives, had had dinner together and Cable had informed Royer of the demonstration flight. Royer's estimation of the altitude was 300 feet and that when Cable popped out through the upper hatches, he sort of drifted out over wing with the chute beginning to stream out before the airplane went into the deadly spiral.

Royer had a bungalow house near the United Air Terminal in Burbank and various pilots would stop by sometimes overnight including Cable who flew Fords earlier in the 1930s. Royer died in 1982 at the age of 85 and had been an AAHS member for many years.



Johnny Cable shown here in 1933 at Lloyd Royer's front yard. Royer's house was located near the United Air Terminal, Burbank. Cable was flying a Ford Trimotor for the Department of Commerce, the aviation department then under Colonel Young.

LEND-LEASE DB-7B/A-20s TO RUSSIA

In the Spring edition, 1990 AAHSJ, Mauno Salo, our good editor/author on p. 12 has the figure 3600 aircraft as having been received by the Russians. I'd like to comment on this number. Maybe so, but the factory release numbered 3125 according to a State Department document; 2908 was actually turned over to the Russians, the rest being lost in crashes and at sea. It must be assumed that some of the Boeing-built airplanes, reported by Pete Bowers as 16 DB-7Bs and 103 A-20Cs are in those factory releases. The ALSIB route was the main delivery via flyaway to Alaska-Siberia. There was a goodly number ferried across the South Atlantic from Brazil and the Ascension Island through Africa to Abadan. Hundreds more went by ship to the Persian Gulf braving the U-boats along the way. The smallest bunch went via the Northern Route to Murmansk.

However, the British turned over some of their *Bostons* that were shipped from Britain. Before the U.S. entered the war it was agreed that 300 aircraft of the type would be shipped from British contracts to be later replaced from U.S. stocks.

And as for what the *A-20/Bostons* were used for, they were a jack-of-all-trades aircraft including torpedo bombers and high-flying courier planes.

EARLY NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD AVIATION

Lloyd Royer (Deceased)

In June 1916, while operating an electric light plant in Haigler, Nebraska, I learned that the Nebraska National Guard was about to organize an Air Division. On contacting the State Adjutant General, I was advised to report to Capt. Ralph McMillan in Lincoln, Nebraska. Along with about 60 other would-be fliers I so reported.

The Nebraska Guard had been called up at that time to help catch Pancho Villa, and

was quartered at the State Fair Grounds, so we were put up in the local armory while it was decided what to do with us.

We never actually were inducted but were fed at a local restaurant. While waiting for the state to decide what to do about us, several of us helped McMillan repair his personal plane which had been slightly damaged in a windstorm sometime earlier. Ralph had built it himself and was known at the time as a Curtiss Headless biplane, with elevators in the rear. He had a Model O Curtiss motor, about 65 or 70 hp. Quite snappy for those days. He had learned to fly at North Island in 1911 at the Glenn Curtiss school.

The State National Guard entrained for Texas on July 4, 1916, and soon the state decided it could not afford an Air Force so we were all sent home.

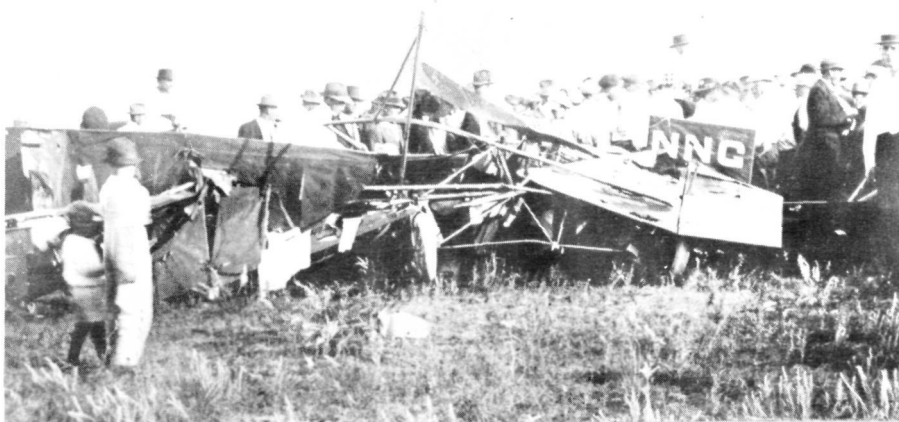
The fatal crash of the Curtiss at St. Francis, Kansas, September 1916, killing McMillan instantly.

Early in September 1916, McMillan came to St. Francis, Kansas, a few miles from Haigler, to fill an exhibition date. I went down and helped him assemble the plane. He made two short flights on the first day of their fair. Then on the second day he stalled on takeoff, landed on the nosewheel with the radiator and motor on top of him, and was instantly killed.

Sent by Mauno Salo from Lloyd Royer's archive. —Editor



1916, Captain Ralph McMillan flying his own homebuilt Curtiss pusher. Place unknown, possibly at Lincoln, Nebraska.
NNG = Nebraska National Guard.



A-20G-45-DO (43-21891) of the 51 MTAP, Baltic Fleet.

