

NEWS & COMMENT FROM OUR MEMBERS

TRANSATLANTIC ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

Peter Berry, Ayr, Scotland

1 Sept. 1941. Consolidated *Liberator* AM915. Return Ferry Service. En route Gander-Prestwick. Due weather, diverted to Squire's Gate, Blackpool. Descended through clouds and at 700 feet hit Achinoan Hill near Cambletown on the Mull of Kintyre. All 10 persons on board killed. Capt. K.D. Garden.

30 Dec 1944. *Lancaster X* CF-CMU/KB702. Trans Canada. Departed Montreal/Dorval 292359 for Prestwick. At 0649 Goose Bay received a Mayday call. No trace found. Capt. M. Gauthier, three crew and passenger Sir Alfred E. Evans, Chief of the British Admiralty Technical Mission in Ottawa, lost.

18 June 1946. Lockheed *Constellation* NC88858 Pan Am. En route New York-London. Fire in No. 4, dropped off its mounts. Forced landing at Windham Field, Williamantic, CT. No injuries.

18 Sept. 1946. Douglas DC-4 00-CBG. Sabena. En route Brussels-New York proving flight (6th of 10). On approach in bad weather, crashed at Dead Wolf Brook, 24 miles SW of Gander, 0742Z. 27K. One crew plus 12 pax injured, one died later. Five uninjured. Capt. Ester.

26 July 1947. Lockheed 049 *Constellation* "Star of Dublin" NC86511. TWA. Right gear collapsed after landing on a wet runway in poor weather conditions and sliding off the end of the runway. No injuries. Repaired.

25 Dec. 1957. B377 *Stratocruiser G-AKGM*. BOAC. Capt. Val Croft. Westbound, some 500 miles east of Gander. Runaway propeller on No. 4 engine. With advice from Pan Am captain in an adjacent *Stratocruiser*, after closing the cooling gills and throttled back No. 1 engine, descent was held at 3,000 feet and 140 knots. Landed safely.

29 June 1969. DC-8-63. CP Air. En route Shannon-Canada. When 600 miles west of Shannon cowling from No. 3 engine broke away and punctured fuselage and damaged fin. Engine shut down, emergency descent and turnback. USAF C-130 rescue flight diverted to intercept, and KLM DC-8 training at Shannon set course, intercepted and escorted the CP Air flight to Shannon. 248 passengers and 12 crew safe.

18 July 1970. Antonov AN-22 CCCP-09303. Aeroflot. En route Keflavik, Iceland-Halifax, NS. Carrying relief supplies to Peru. 23 persons lost.

4 Nov. 1970. B747. Pan Am. En route New York-Paris. Suffered severe CAT one hour

after departure. 20 of 148 passengers injured, seven requiring hospital treatment. Aircraft returned to New York.

3 Nov. 1973. B707. Pan Am N458PA. En route New York-Prestwick with cargo of nitric acid. Cargo fire warning light, diverted to Boston. Smoke in the cockpit and fire. Destroyed. Three crew killed.

11 Dec. 1990. *Tristar* C-GAGI Air Canada. En route Montreal-London Heathrow at FL370. Cabin depressurization SE of Manchester, England. Emergency descent to FL100. Passenger oxygen masks deployed and worn. Landed without further incident, but three passengers received medical attention due head and earache. Localized rupture of the rear pressure bulkhead as a result of fatigue cracking. Due score defect in manufacture and stresses due bonded doubler buttjoint discontinuity. Vented design prevented further damage to tail structure.

4 Jan. 1991. *Concorde* G-BOAE British Airways. Section of lower rudder separated en route London-New York? Landed without incident.

15 Sept. 1991. B767 TWA N603TW. One engine failed at FL370. Descended to FL240 and diverted Shannon. Engine changed.

21? March 1992. *Concorde* G-BOA? British Airways. Section of rudder separated en route London-New York. Landed without incident.

FEET WET!

Jay E. Wright, Chico, California

In 1934 when I first met him, R.P. (Ray) Bowman was a Kinner Dealer at San Francisco Bay Airdrome in Alameda. He and my father were friends and, for friendship's sake, he hired me to wash airplanes for him in the summer of my 14th year. The pay wasn't all that great but I did get in a fair amount of flying time, almost every time there was an empty seat.

After WWII our paths again crossed when he was the Cessna Distributor/Dealer in Oakland. A few years later he retired and would occasionally come by my Oakland Airport office and we would go to lunch and talk airplanes. It was during one of these lunches he told me the following story:

In the late 1920s, Ray and a partner, D.C. Warren, were Keystone-Loening dealers and had a Loening *Commuter* as a demonstrator. This was a four-place amphibian with a Wright 350-hp engine mounted between biplane wings and above the cabin.

There had been a big earthquake in Japan and one of the S.F. newspapers hired them to fly out in the Pacific beyond the Farallon

Islands (30 miles west of San Francisco), there to meet a ship bringing in photos of the tragedy. They were instructed to land near the ship. A package would be thrown overboard which they were to pick up and bring back (this was prior to wirephoto, fax machines and satellite transmissions—the real olden days).

The weather was good and they sighted the ship without any problem. They buzzed it, landed slightly ahead and waited for it to catch up. As they waited they noticed water covering the floorboards (it was later determined that they sprung a seam in the hull). They neglected to bring a bilge pump along so they pulled up the floorboards, took off their shoes and used them to bail out the hull. While they were busy with this task the ship sailed right past them and no one threw any package overboard.

They hurriedly took off and returned to base, no package so no pay!

DEADLINE/SAMMEE

Ed Leiser, Chula Vista, California

During years of research of the aviation history of San Diego, California (up to 1927 so far), I have become acquainted with the aviation lexicon used during those years by contemporary publications including the newspapers. I have never read the term "flight line" in contemporary sources up to 1927 but several times found the term "deadline" in reference to the same place as early as 1922, including the most recent use on May 9, 1927, by the *San Diego Union*, e.g., "Many San Diegans admired the silver monoplane as it flew low over the city and as it stood on the *deadline* at Ryan Field." Another example was the use of the term "deadline" in the script of the 1927 motion picture *Wings*.

The omission of the term "flight line" in contemporary publications indicates to me that the term simply had not yet been originated. Would readers help me? What is the earliest use of the words "flight line" that you know of and the source? Do you know of the early use of the term "deadline" and, if so, in what sources?

This discussion seems appropriate to the JAAHS. Printing informative answers to my questions may be of value to all members.

Another term used in World War I comes to mind, although you may not want to report it. When Pershing arrived in France and marched some of his troops through the streets of Paris, the citizens called them "Sammee," and Sammee for Uncle Sam it became. Pershing officially authorized the

term for soldiers in the AEF on July 7, 1917. The soldiers over there and over here, and citizens disliked it. They wrote letters to the editors by the hundreds recommending many other terms, e.g., Braves, Yankees (Southerners disliked it), Eagles, Amexes, Glorians, Buffaloes, Beavers, USAs, Jonathans, and Gallants. The words in the George M. Cohan song "Over There" late in 1917 were, "The Sammees are coming and they'll be back when it's over over there." But the word "Sammees" has been changed since 1917 to the familiar "Yanks."

FLOATS ON POST-ROGERS LOCKHEED

N.M. Graham, Middlebury, Vermont

Many thanks to Lloyd Jarman for his article "Floats on Post-Rogers Lockheed" in Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1992. It is shocking how inaccurate and careless the Smithsonian continues to be.

Since the time of Langley and the Wrights it has been an entrenched high and mighty institution more focused on loyalty to itself than on historical facts and analysis, disgracefully partisan as Brewer pointed out years ago.

Someone should have corrected the misprint in Jarman's text, the Smithsonian series is *Annals* not *Annals of Flight*.

Wonderful reading in this issue. Keep going.

'Merphy' is everywhere . . . Managing Editor

FAIRCHILD / KREIDER-REISNER DESIGNATIONS

Hal Andrews, Arlington, Virginia

Kent Mitchell's continuing contributions on Fairchild's less well-known products are always appreciated, but none more than the current one (Spring 1992) on the XC-31. The come-as-you-are photos of its final assembly and initial and early flight activities are the sort of thing that rarely survives, and the rationale for its existence is well presented.

For this reader, it's a nostalgia trip to my first exposure to real airplane literature: *Flying for 1936* in our Junior High School Library. For reasons never fathomed, it and its contemporary Fairchild XA-942 amphibian caught my fancy. They appeared back-to-back in the transport three-view section.

Matthew Rodina's excellent article on the XA-942/Model 91 in the *Journal* five years ago (Summer 1987) was similarly appreciated. The two designs show the flexibility of Alfred A. Gassner, the engineer responsible for their design. They also show the "trade-mark" of airplane designers of that era: the similar configuration of their tail surfaces.

Another tie is less evident since Kent Mitchell doesn't mention that the XC-31 was initiated using the Army's XC-941

designation, which in turn was apparently also the basis for the amphibian's XA-942 engineering designation when it was initiated some months later. Individual examples of the Army X()-9() series of designations of the early 1930s are well recognized, but complete coverage is hard to find. Some time ago, Bob Cavanaugh and I undertook a still incomplete project to sort these out. Bob Casari generously shared the results of his earlier work on the subject, and from this information, the story of the XA-942 designation becomes apparent.

In early 1933, Wright Field sent both the Kreider-Reisner subsidiary of Fairchild and Bellanca an outline of proposed requirements for a new transport aircraft, requesting a reply regarding their interest in designing and building an airplane to meet these requirements. Both companies had built a prior satisfactory transport model for the Army Air Corps: the American Pilgrim YC-24 (originally designed as the Fairchild 100) and Bellanca C-27 series—the latter still in production at that time.

Kreider-Reisner responded with a proposed design. Under a program that came to be referred to as the Cooperative Airplane Program, the Kreider-Reisner project was assigned the XC-941 designation; subsequent actions led to the initiation of design, a mock-up, and construction of a prototype. Late in the year, the Air Corps identified funding for the prototype and the XC-31 designation was assigned for contract procurement in early 1934, prior to completion. Bellanca similarly indicated interest; the XC-942 designation was assigned for their project. However, studies and discussions were the extent of the efforts on this project before activities ended late in the year.

Meanwhile, with the XC-941 designation assigned for the first airplane to reach project stage at Kreider-Reisner's new Military and Transport Division, a second project was undertaken to build the amphibian for Pan American Airways. The need for a company

engineering designation for the new design could be met with a simple solution: follow the XC-941 for the cargo transport with the XA-942 for the subsequent amphibian. Rodina notes Fairchild's use of the T-943 designation for a proposed twin-engine transport version of the XA-942; this would tend to confirm the sequence. Kreider-Reisner's XC-941 design was generally publicized as the Fairchild XC-31, particularly after the division was renamed the Fairchild Aircraft Corporation. Early publicity for the "Baby Clipper" used the XA-942 designation before changing over to the more typical Fairchild Model 91.

B-17—SWITZERLAND

Eric W. Wagner, Alpine Lodge, Lower Road, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 0NL, England

The enclosed photo might be of interest to *Journal* readers. It was shot at Biel/Bozingen airfield in Switzerland on 28 August 1953. At the time I was 15 years old and was there on vacation.

My log records it as "238160" and it was on a tour of Switzerland. I recall being told that it had been on show at various Swiss airfields, and was on display at Biel only for a week or two. A temporary fence had been erected around it (hence the poor photo—it was in the days before wide-angle lenses), and there was a small charge to see the exhibit, which had only recently (1953) been recovered from the bottom of one of the Swiss lakes.

Here my memory becomes a little dim. The B-17 had certainly ditched into one of the Swiss lakes during the war, but which lake? I think it was Lake Konstanz on the Swiss /German border but I can't be certain. Maybe other AAHS members may have more details.

If any members would like a print I'd be pleased to supply.



THE TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT OF A CG-4A

Peter Berry, MRaE, Ayr, Scotland

In Richard Smith's review of "50 Years of Transatlantic Flight" (AAHS *Journal* Summer 1990, p. 97), he mentions the sole test crossing of a Royal Air Force *Dakota* (C-47A) towing a fully loaded Waco *Hadrian* (CG-4A) glider. This flight was made in July 1943 for a total time of 28 flying hours, completed in stages, from Montreal along the Northern Route to Prestwick, via Goose Bay, Bluie West 1 and Reykjavik. (All photographs with the approval of the Imperial War Museum, London.)

Photo 1—Sqdn. Ldr. R.G. Seys DFC, RAF, and Sqdn. Ldr. F.M. Gobeil RCAF, pilot and copilot of the RAF *Dakota* FD900 (C-47A-30-DL 42-23760), show their relief at Prestwick after the first towing of a *Hadrian* glider across the North Atlantic. (IWM. 10469)

Photo 2—The RAF *Hadrian* (CG-4A-PR) FR579, named "Voo-Doo," makes its final approach to land at Prestwick after the 28-hour crossing of the North Atlantic. (IWM.CH10470)

Photo 3—Fl. Lt. W.S. Longhurst RCAF (pilot), and Fl. Lt. C.W.H. Thomson, RNZAF (copilot/navigator), hitch a lift as their Waco *Hadrian* glider "Voo-Doo" is towed from the runway at Prestwick. (IWM. CH10472)

Photo 4—Unloading 3,000 pounds of military supplies at Prestwick after the first tug-glider crossing of the North Atlantic. (IWM.CH10475)

