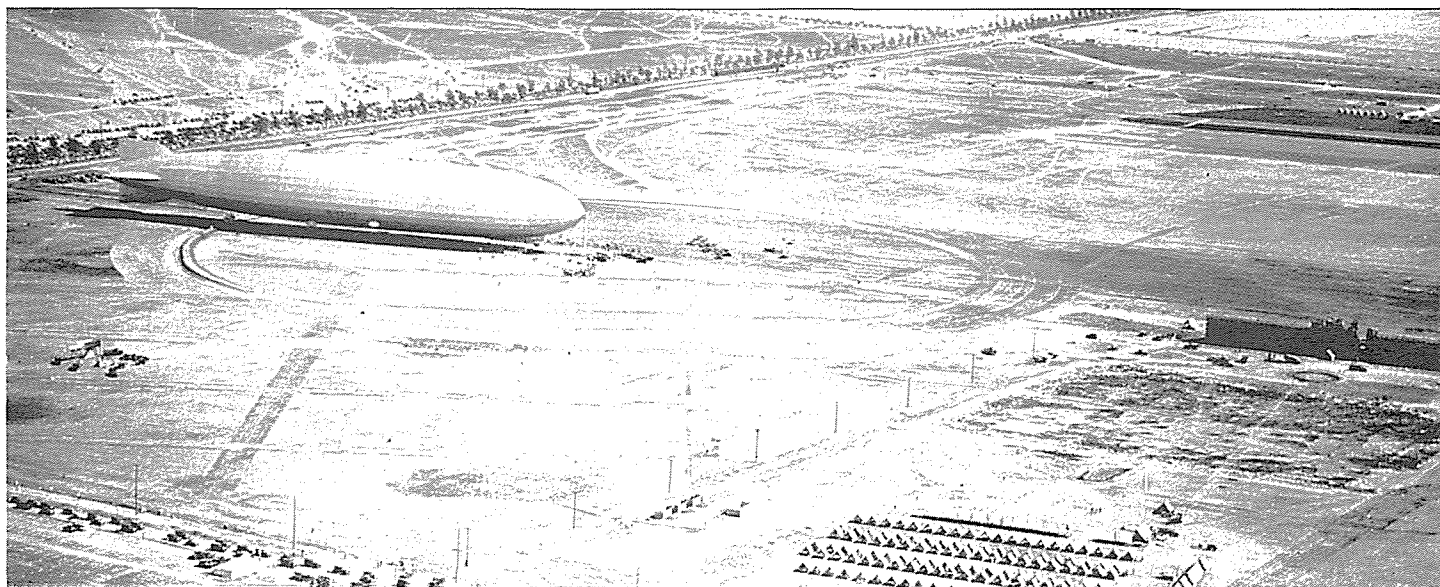
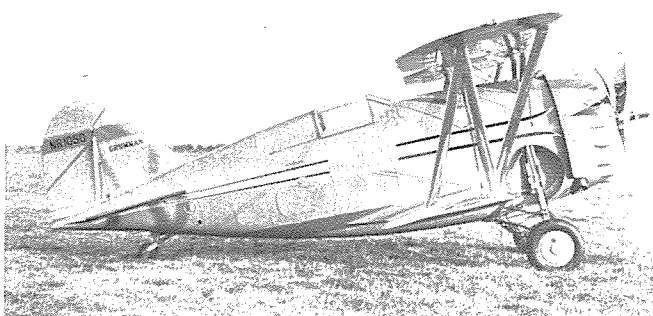




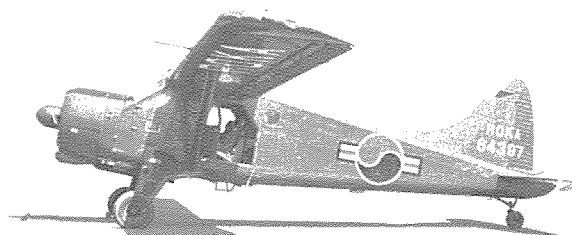
LZ-127 "Graf Zeppelin" at Mines Field, 1929

(R.R.Martin)



Grumman G-32

(W.Mayborn)



DeHavilland L-20

(A.F.Dorr)



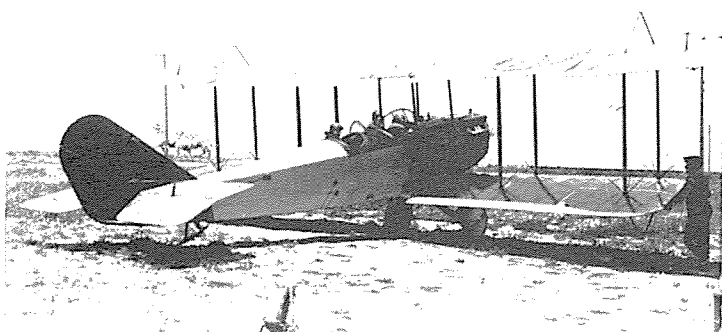
Fokker F-7c/3m

(Peter V. Bowers)



P-47D-40-RE

(P.T.O'Dell)



Standard Biplane

(Rudolph Brendt)



Curtiss JN-4D

(Brendt)

THE MAIL SACK*

"Some Marginalia on "The Southern Cross Complex'" -- Peter M. Bowers

Current FAA records list no manufacturer's serial number for the Fokker Trimotor "Southern Cross," which carried the identification number of 1985 issued in 1927 after registration and/or licensing was required of all US civil aircraft from January. No record of either a registration or serial number exists for the single-engine Fokker used by Wilkins as the "Alaskan" because that machine was permanently out of circulation before the registration requirement went into effect.

At the time of the introduction of the Fokker trimotors in 1925, a peculiar situation prevailed at the Fokker works in Holland. Up to that time, all the Fokkers, regardless of model, were given consecutive serial numbers in a series that ran clear back to WW-1. A plain F-7 in production in 1924 carried serial 4839 and one of the first F-7A's to go into airline service in 1925 was serial 4901. Since I believe that the Wilkins F-7A was the prototype F-7A, based on factory photos showing the prototype fitted with a Liberty, I am sure that its serial must be 4900 or a very close 48-series number. It would be interesting if someone could get to the Liberty Museum and search the fuselage for the nameplate and serial.

The trimotor, on the other hand, introduced an entirely new situation. The first one was built especially for export to the United States, and started a new serial number range set up specifically for the F-VII models which were built in Holland but shipped to the US for covering and final assembly in the American Fokker plant. The plane that became Byrd's short-wing F-7A trimotor was completed and tested in Holland, but it carried serial number 600, and was the first of a range of 17, all of which were built in Holland but completed in the US. These were licensed and marketed as American Fokkers, but were basically Dutch-built. All American-built commercial Fokker models had a different serial number series. The Standard Universals started at 400, the Super Universals at 800 after a false start with the one-shot "Skeeter" of 1926, the F-11's at 900, the F-10's and 10A's at 1000, the F-12's (Which were redesignated as F-32 to indicate passenger capacity) at 1200, and the F-14's at 1400.

Since the trimotor that became Byrd's (actually owned by Ford, and later given registration 267) carried serial number 600, and the first two F-7A trimotors of an initial batch of four delivered carried serials 602 and 603, it is entirely logical to assume that Wilkins' "Detroiter" was No. 601 and that the nameplate got lost somewhere without bothering anyone, since with no registration requirement at the time, the information on it was not necessary to the paperwork.

*Photos for the "Mail Sack" are on page 68.

As for later registrations on the "Southern Cross," it did NOT take Australian registration VH-USU, then British registration G-AUSU, and then jump back to VH-USU. G-AUSU was the ORIGINAL Australian registration. At the time it was applied to the trimotor, ALL British Empire (all right, Commonwealth) \) registrations began with the letter "G," followed by the first two letters of the particular country concerned. AU in this case stood for AUstralia, just as Canadian registrations of the time were G-CA-- for Can-ada. Late in 1929 or early in 1930, the system was changed, and the G followed by four letters was retained only by England. Australia, Canada, and many other countries adopted a TWO-LETTER prefix followed by THREE letters. Airplanes that had been registered under the old system retained the last three letters of the original registration but took the new prefix, so G-AUSU became VH-USU. Photos indicate that it got to England with G-AUSU still on it. The "Southern Cross" then went to the Fokker plant in Holland for a complete reconditioning as a gift from Tony Fokker, and emerged with new covering, slightly darker blue paint, and with considerable changes to structure and systems to bring it up to F-7B/3M standard. This designation was painted on the airplane at this time even though it had not existed when this second Fokker trimotor was built in in 1925.

Incidentally, the propellers were not steel, but were Westinghouse Mica, and were still on the ship when it left the factory after the rework of 1930. Steel props, including at one time a three-blader for the nose engine, were later fitted in Australia.

As for the supplemental names seen during the Endurance flight period, the "Fageol Flyer" was in the form of the trademark of Fageol Trucks, one of the Sponsors, and the "Chronicle" identified another backer, the San Francisco Chronicle Newspaper. An interesting sidelight on the endurance flights was the fact that time hung heavily on the pilots' hands, and one way of having something specific to do was to pick out the houses of various friends and fly over them at any hour of the day or night. One did not exactly pull what are now called "Buzz Jobs" in loaded trimotors, but straight-and-level passes at about 100 feet are well remembered by many residents of the Peninsula south of San Francisco. The sound of those three unsynchronized J-5's is something that I can hear to this day, even though I was only ten at the time.

Kingsford-Smith, Ulm, and Captain Pond were all friends of my family at the time, and Smitty, as everyone called him, slept for 36 hours straight in our guest room after one of the flights.

Peter M. Bowers
Seattle.

P. S. The Boeing photo files do NOT contain a single shot of the trimotor while it was at the Boeing factory.

"A ROK Beaver" -- A/2C Robert F. Dorr, USAF

Bob Dorr invites the Society "to be my guest" in printing this fine shot of a DeHavilland L-20 Beaver (#56-4397) assigned to the Korean Army. Airman Dorr notes: "Curiously this L-20, handed over to the Korean Army from the U.S. Army, is five years newer than any of the L-20's operated by the U.S. Air Force in Korea. I shot this one at K-16 Airport in Seoul, 3-6-59."

* * * * *

"Another Whatssit?" -- Robert T. O'Dell

Member Robert T. O'Dell asked for information concerning a two-sided aircraft in the last issue and has given us another to identify. The sturdy Thunderbolt (P-47D-40-RE, AAF Serial 45-49329) was shot at Wright Field in 1947. O'Dell would like to know the story behind the rather odd markings on the side of the fuselage.

* * * * *

"The Graf Zeppelin at Mines Field" --J. J. Sloan

The President of the Society, James J. Sloan, sent in this fine picture taken in 1929. He noted on the back of the photo: "Taken from a Fleet bi-plane by R. R. Martin, one of the early contributors of photos to the trade magazines and operator of a photo service in Hollywood in the 1930's. View is looking toward the Southeast and shows in the foreground the North boundary of present day Los Angeles International Airport. At the right are the grandstands used in the 1928 Air Races."

* * * * *

"The First San Francisco Airport" -- Willis L. Nye

The first San Francisco Airport has been considered by many to be the Marina along the north shores of San Francisco Bay. Actually, this is not historically true. The Christofferson Brothers Flying School at the foot of Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco was actually the first private airport within the city limits of San Francisco and was opened in 1913. This establishment was not truly an airport in any sense of the word but consisted of a runway of flat boards on the sands of the beach, facing in the direction of the prevailing winds off the ocean. But for the early pusher biplanes it served its intended function well for three years.

San Francisco was without an airport because no consideration was ever given to the coming importance of aviation as a medium of commerce. Flights were made by Art Smith, Lincoln Beachey, Sylvia Pettrossi, and

Charles Niles at the Panama Pacific International Exposition Grounds from the Marina, but this had actually never been intended as an airport area. At best it was a makeshift arrangement having a long strip of lawned area in the direction of the prevailing wind. To the east and west it was free of obstructions and the planes could climb against the prevailing wind to gain lift and land into the wind without danger of crosswinds. Hence this area of planted lawn along the north shore of San Francisco was actually the only area functioning as an airport.

After the closing of the great Exposition at the end of 1915, the vast array of buildings was demolished and the material salvaged. All that remained was the Marina which was planted in lawn and planned as a permanent park.

Before the site of the old Fair Grounds could be completely leveled, the nation plunged into the first World War. In the haste to arm the country for conflict, no thought was given to future air commerce and its impact on the economy. However during the duration of the war, pilots from Mather Field, Sacramento frequently landed on the Marina's open ground and took off again on practice cross-country flights.

When the war was over, a flock of airplanes began to collect at the old Marina and aerial operations commenced in earnest by a host of ex-wartime pilots. The now defunct Pacific Aero Club was active in organizing exhibition shows and other events to stimulate commercial aviation flights and passenger flights. It is of historical interest to review some of the kinds of planes that operated from this airport.

Captain Sam Purcell operated a Curtiss "R" biplane. This airplane was powered with a water-cooled 8 cylinder 200 H.P. engine. The front cockpit was enlarged to accommodate two passengers. The late Capt. Sam Purcell had a flair for the ornate and consideration for his women passengers. He installed metal stairs and a handrail leading to the front cockpit as a permanent fixture to his airplane for boarding and disembarking. This airplane made numerous flights from the Marina.

There was the inevitable Fokker D VII Biplane modified to take a 220 H.P. Hisso and a front cockpit. This airplane too made many flights and for a while the predecessor company of the Greyhound Bus Lines was interested in it. It flew well.

Another airplane that attracted much attention was a clipped wing Canuck. This airplane had the wings bobbed just outboard of the inner pair of interplane struts. It was a good flying plane although it glided like the proverbial stream-line snail.

The Curtiss Jennies were in profusion. Many of them were permanently

based at the Marina, the rest of them were simply gypsy aircraft and barnstormers. Most of them were powered with the OX-5 or OXX-6 water-cooled engines.

The De Haviland Biplane was also represented, there being two of these at one time. However, for commercial operation this airplane was too expensive to operate and they soon were discarded. But these planes had range and performance.

Several fliers flew OX-5 or Hisso powered Standard Biplanes. These were really beautiful airplanes and could carry a good payload. They had a better load carrying capacity than the Curtiss JN-4D but lacked the high speed of the Jenny.

And of course no post World War I airport would have been complete without the inevitable Avro Biplane 504-k. A few of them were based at the area. As for permanent hangars there were none. The planes were just tied down in the open on the rough ground which served as runways.

And how did all of these pilots trying to engage in commercial aviation make out financially. The truth is that most of them didn't. Starvation was a greater danger than flying over the Bay with a cranky OX-5 or Hisso engine. Soon one by one, the airplanes with their owners vanished. The land was to be sold for houses and stores and so San Francisco dispossessed itself of an airport until several years later when Mills Field down in San Mateo County was acquired.

* * * * *

"The Grumman G-32A" -- Mitch Mayborn

Mitch Mayborn has picked up a little operating data on Ben Bradley's G-32A (F3F, N-46110, USAAF Serial 42-97045, c/n 447). A shot of Bradley's plane can be found in the AAHS Journal, Vol. 4, No. 2, page 139. With the statistics on Bradley's plane, Mitch has sent along a photo of the famed Gulfhawk II (G-32, NR-1050) flown by Major Al Williams. The Gulfhawk II, now at the Smithsonian Institution, and Bradley's G-32A are the remaining two of three civil F3F's built by Grumman before World War II.

From Bradley comes the following statistics:

Manufactured: June 1938

Engine: Wright 1820-22-G5, 1000 H. P. @ 44 H. G.
950 H. P. @ 41 H. G.

Fuel Consumption: 45 G. P. H. full rich, 40 G. P. H. leaned out

Oil Consumption: 1 to 2 quarts per hour

Registration: N-46110, licensed standard, two place

Fuel Capacity: 130 gallons (83 main tank, 47 aux.)
Take-off run, no wind: Approximately 400'
Landing run, no wind: Approximately 1000' (with flaps)
Rate of Climb: 5000' per minute
Cruising Speed: 240 M.P.H. true at 10,000', @ 24 H. G. and 1850 R.P.M.
Terminal Velocity: 430 M.P.H.
Landing Gear: Fully retractable (chain driven, hand cranked)
Tail wheel also retracts.
Propeller: Hamilton Standard 3 blade constant speed
Starter: Electric-inertia
Empty Weight: 3371 Pounds
Total time: 595:00 Hours
Color: Black and Gold with 1/4" green trim between colors
Value: \$25,000 (but not for sale)

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The National Aeronautical Collections, by Paul E. Garber, p. 113-114
Smithsonian Inst., Washington, Ninth Edition.

Correspondence with Ben R. Bradley, 10/7/58.

Correspondence with Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corp., 7/25/59.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Air Force Museum Needs Aircraft:

The editor has received word that the Air Force Museum, Wright Patterson A.F.B., needs certain aircraft to round out its historical collection. Though many of the planes were produced in great quantities, like the Lockheed P-38, not one was saved or ear-marked for history. Members knowing where planes on the list can be found are asked to send information about condition, location (including those abroad), model, last time seen, and owner. The Museum will be happy to have the planes on loan if no other arrangements can be made. Information should be addressed to: The Director, Air Force Museum, Wright Patterson A.F.B., Dayton, Ohio. The twenty "most wanted" planes are:

Curtiss	JN-4D	Douglas	B-18
DeHavilland	DH-4	Convair	B-24
Standard	E-1	Martin	B-26
Thomas Morse	S-4C	Ford-Stout	C-3
Royal Aircraft Factory	SE-5A	Curtiss	P-6E

Sopwith	F-1 Camel	Boeing	P-12
Nieuport 28	C.1	Lockheed	P-38
Douglas	A-20		D-VII
Martin	B-10	Focke-Wulf	FW-190
Martin	B-12	Messerschmitt	ME-109

Canadian Grummans:

Member "Ted" Hooton, in his letter published in the winter issue (4:4), had some other information that is here passed along to the membership:

"William Green, the well-known English aviation writer is trying to obtain information on the Canadian-built Grumman FF-1 (G-23). Combining his data, and my own, this is the "potted" history of this aircraft:

During 1938 (this date is not positive), the Canadian Car and Foundry Company at Fort William, Ontario, re-built 52 ex-U.S. Navy Grumman SF-1 reconnaissance fighters (derived from the original FF-1 version).

12 of these entered service with the Royal Canadian Air Force in December 1940. Known as the "Goblin" they equipped a flight of 118 squadron at Rockcliffe, Ontario. In July 1941 the flight was transferred to Dartmouth (Halifax), Nova Scotia, where I believe the aircraft were occasionally used on anti-U boat patrols near Halifax harbor.

Shortly afterwards (in September) the aircraft were taken over by No. 31 Fighter Operational Training Unit. In May 1942 the aircraft were sent to Scoudoux, New Brunswick, but apparently at some later date the aircraft were sold to the Nicaraguan Air Force.

The remaining 40 of the original batch were ordered by the Turkish Government but never arrived there, ending up in the Spanish Air Force. They were re-designated as the R-6 "Delphin," and in 1956 one was still in an air-worthy condition in that country.

If any members can add anything to this history, especially any details of the Nicaraguan or Spanish aircraft, it might prove very intriguing."

Hooton, 1060 Dante Ave.,
Copiague, Long Island, New York.

The "Executive Mustang":

"I was very pleased with the article on The Executive Mustangs in the winter edition of the Journal. I have some information that was not included on one of the listed airplanes.

It was my pleasure to be maintenance officer of one of the last ANG units to retire the Mustang. Among these planes was TF-SID-25NT, S/N 44-84658 (the one in the listing with the ?). While on vacation in Florida this winter I chanced to cross paths with old 658 again. It now carries civilian registration number N815D and is owned by Lindsay Newspapers in Sarasota,

Florida. This, I presume is the same Lindsay that is connected with Trans-Florida Aviation. Apparently, the article was prepared before the Reg. No. was assigned; so, I thought I would set the record straight."

David Brazelton, 5007 W. Linda Curve,
Bartonville, Illinois.

"Ugly Duckling" Sikorsky S-38's:

Mitch Mayborn, P. O. Box 6701, Dallas 19, Texas, has turned up more information about the S-38's. He recently wrote: "Since the publication of the S-38 story, the following information has come to light. On page 191, the S-38 owned by the Andian National Corp has been identified as c/n 114-14. For c/n 114-2, owner for 1937 was The Dade-Miami Co., Miami, Fla. For 1938 the owner was the Aero Corporation, Miami, and Palm Beach Aero should be listed as owner from 1939 instead of 1941. 114-3 was owned by the Dade-Miami Co. in 1937 and the Palm Beach Aero Corp. from 1938. 14-9 is A-8090. The first S-38, 14A was named the "Washington" and was the flagship for NYRBA. 214-9 was the "Porto Alegre" for NYRBA. C/n 414-3 is an S-38C. From Walter Hellmann comes additional information on 314-3, while owned by Joe Sheehan of North Atlantic Airways. Walter writes, "Joe had bought it in late '37 or early '38 from Panagra for \$10,000 and had "North Atlantic Airways" painted on the booms. An old "boat" pilot named Harold 'Waco' Crowley was pilot. Primarily used for charter passenger flights around the New England beach areas. In August 1939 a party of hunters was flown to Moosehead Lake, Maine. After a stop for supplies, and while taking off the old 'San Juan Clipper' hit a submerged log and ripped a large hole in the hull which caused her to sink in a few minutes. Sheehan stayed with the plane for several weeks and salvaged it. It was moved to the Boston Trade School where it was rebuilt."

RE. "The Silver Dart" by H. Gordon Green:

One of our Canadian members has called the editor's attention to another view of H. Gordon Green's The Silver Dart. Reviewer J.H. Parkin, in the Canadian Aeronautical Journal, (April, 1959), has criticized the book in depth and concluded: "...the book may reasonably be expected to be accurate as to facts...Readers entertaining any such expectations will be disappointed...The author (Green) has done a disservice to Mr. McCurdy, Canadian aviation and the Coordinating Council in making such extravagant claims. It is a pity because Mr. McCurdy has so many claims to fame that exaggeration is unnecessary."

Roof-top Fighters:

"Scanning through my back issues of our Journal, I was reminded of something I saw some years ago. The prompt came from the Rev. Boardman Reed's photo of Art Lucey's "Bomber" gas station. (Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 207)

"In 1951 I flew in a DC-3 from Minneapolis to Cheyenne, Wyoming. From the field at Cheyenne I drove into the town of Cheyenne and in so doing
(Continued on Page 82.)