LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Air Mail Planes:

"I was pleased to see my photos of the Air Mail planes in the current issue of the A.A.H.S. Journal (Spring, 1960, p. 67). There is a correction, however, that needs to be made. According to James A. Morrow, the Boeing NC832M should be model 40-B4 instead of 40C, as I had identified it." Jack McRae, 34 Westcliff Dr., Huntington Station, N. Y.

Aircraft Armament:

"In the interest of historical accuracy, may I offer a few comments on Mr. G. B. Jarrett's article, "Aircraft Armament, the Beginnings," which appears in the Winter, 1959, issue of the Journal. This interestingly written material is, of course, very brief and not intended to be a detailed discussion so I hope that I am not being overly critical.

"There appears to be no concisely defined interpretation of 'interrupter' and 'synchronizer' and the two are used constantly interchangeably. However, where they are used to distinguish between types of gun operating devices, there are clear meanings which are generally accepted. 'Interrupter' is used to describe mechanisms which allow a gun to operate at its natural free rate of fire and merely stop or interrupt the firing while a prop blade passes in front of the gun barrel. 'Synchronizer' is used to describe devices which fire the gun at a definite point in the engine cycle when the blade is clear. Mr. Jarrett is very definitely using these definitions in his discussion.

"The Fokker gear was not an interrupter as stated but was a true synchronizer, with the shots being fired individually by the mechanical linkage in time with the engine. Likewise, the statement that interrupter gears were "on all German planes until the close of the war" is not correct. If anything, all were synchronizers, since Fokker had a virtual monopoly on production. The main fault of the Fokker firing device was that practically the whole linkage operated constantly, regardless of whether the gun was being fired or not, and was subject to excessive wear which threw it out of adjustment. The official British history refers to it several times as an interrupter.

"'Other interrupter gears were developed and used on many Allied planes' is misleading, since British designs were used by all the Allies almost exclusively and all but one of theirs were definitely synchronizers. I have never been able to find enough detailed information on this one exception, the Sopwith-Kauper gear, to prove that it was not an interrupter as described.

"Also, it would appear that the basic problem with timing a machine gun is not whether it is a loaded chamber or unloaded chamber design, since this really only affects the first shot fired. Rather, it is whether the gun is fired mechanically (rather than gas operated) which allows a mechanical gearing to the engine.

"The official British history states that the first aeroplane fitted with a synchronizer (Vickers design) was a Bristol Scout delivered on 25 March

1916, though it does not clearly state that it was used in action. The planes which Mr. Jarrett states went into action in May, 1916, were Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutters and were the first machines with synchronizers used in any quantities on the Allied side. The gear fitted was, however, not the Sopwith-Kauper as he states, but the Vickers synchronizer. Again, the British history is emphatic on this point."

Robert Casari, 25 North Fork,Dr., Chillicothe, Ohio

Finishes and Markings of USAF Aircraft:

Member David Brazelton of Bartonville, Illinois has sent in some interesting addenda to George Letzter's article "Finishes and Markings of USAF Aircraft" which appeared in the Spring 1960 (5:1, p. 25) issue of the Journal.

"Conspicuity Marking: High visibility markings are applied to all USAF aircraft except combat "strike" aircraft, rotary wing aircraft, century series fighters and delta wing aircraft, refueling tankers, Air National Guard fighters, RB-57's, and SA-16's.

"Markings are applied in bands 4 or 6 feet wide, depending on airplane size. These bands are on the nose, the wing tips and the aft fuselage extending forward from the leading edge of the horizontal stabilizer.

"If an air-sea rescue airplane is to be marked, the wing markings are placed inboard of the orange-yellow wing tips and aft of the orange-yellow fuselage band. Aircraft with solar white on top will have areas that extend into the conspicuity marking repainted with the high visibility orange.

"Aircraft equipped with centerline tip tanks or pods have those pods or tanks painted. In the case of larger aircraft, this is in lieu of the wing tip band. On fighters and trainers, only the tiptank or pods will be painted.

"Markings on Air National Guard Airplanes: Air National Guard planes are finished to the same specifications as USAF aircraft with some exceptions.

"The wings are decorated with the national star and bar insignia only. No other letters or numerals are applied. The state name or abbreviation and the words "Air Guard" are painted in the same place on the fuselage as the marking "US Air Force" on USAF aircraft. If the state name or abbreviation is more than two letters, a slightly smaller size is used. The "Buzz Number" is not used.

"The serial number included in the data stencilled on the left side by the cockpit is suffixed with an "N" (viz. F-84F-40RE, 52-6522N). Unit insignia are authorized but must be of the smallest practical size.

"Variations of Markings: Since the marking specifications, as is the case with all directives, are interpreted by the human mind, variations are inevitable. This is particularly true with the conspicuity marking. Endless variations are possible. Some are for simplicity and ease of maintenance and some are almost spectacular. Nevertheless, you can be sure that anytime you give a GI a paint brush, 20 gallons of orange paint, and an airplane, it will eventually look like no other airplane in the world."

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

The Two-Sided Whatssit:

"Concerning the 'Whatssit?' on page 310 (Winter, 1959-60) of the A.A.H.S. Journal, I have one clipping about it, cut from a late 1930 issue of Popular Science. The caption is none too informative, but it might be of use:

Down Is Up For This Upside-Down Plane

> It makes little difference to Michael Murphy, stunt flyer, and his mechanic, Eddie Leach, whether they land their new plane right side up or upside down. For the novel monoplane is fitted with two sets of landing wheels, one in the usual position and the other on top of the plane. Two cockpits are also provided so that one pilot is always flying upside down. Incidentally, can you tell by the photograph whether the craft is a high-wing monoplane right side up or a low-wing monoplane upside down?

"The photograph accompanying this caption does not show anything that isn't in Mr. O'Dell's photo . . . ."

Gary Fisk, Route 1, Box 281, Allegan, Michigan

Japanese International Flights -- II:

"The really monumental job undertaken by Chalmers Johnson in his article "Japanese International Flights of the 1930's" can certainly be appreciated by anyone who has tried to translate aviation history into English from any language, much less Japanese. It isn't easy -- and it requires three heads: aviation buff, author and translator in that order. Fortunately for the A.A.H.S. "Chal" is all three.

"Fortunately, again for A.A.H.S., "Chal" has revealed a problem that nags collectors all over the world. Actually, two problems were brought to the front in this article; the difficulty in avoiding errors in an original source, and the hash that was made of aircraft designation and identification on our side during the war years.

"Gregory Kohn's letter published in Vol. 5 No. 2 of the Journal seems to provide a reasonable answer to what appears to be an original source error. I also have some additional notes that serve to back up Kohn's contention. The problem of designation error is also one of original source, in this case from the book Japanese Aircraft (London: Harborough, 1945) by John Stroud referred to by Mr. Johnson in his footnote #21 of his article, page 285.

"In hopes of clarifying some of the unknowns (at least to some degree) and straightening out a designation problem at the same time, the following notes are submitted. They are keyed to the footnote numbers indicated by Mr. Johnson in his "International Flights" article.

"Footnote #10 (page 279): The Mainichi-owned Lockheed Altair J-BAUC (They designate it as Lockheed 8E) was still in service in 1942. Photos, drawings, and data for the type appear in the "current" civil aircraft listing

in the 1941 issue of Nippon Hikoki Zensyu (Japanese Aircraft Yearbook) and the 1942 issue of Nippon Minkanki Zenshu (Japanese Civil Aircraft Yearbook). I have no data on the ultimate end of this aircraft. Did any readers ever see, or hear of it, after the war in Japan?

"Footnote #16 (page 281): The third civil Ki.15I referred to in the article was the J-BAAM Sachikaze. A good illustration appears in the April 1940 issue of Sora, a pre-war Japanese magazine.

"Footnote #20 (page 284): I wonder if some of the German civil registered Me. 109 fighters--or other types--were not the first civil impressments in World War II. This is probably difficult to answer.

"Impressment in Japan, however, seems to have worked two ways. This in itself is unique. By July 1942 the Asahi Press fleet of aircraft included:

J-BAAN Seversky 2PA-BA Shiokaze (Asahi #120) -- Former JNAF A8V1 Type-S Fighter
J-BAAQ Seversky 2PA-BA Umikaze (Asahi #123) -- Former JNAF A8V1 Type-S Fighter
J-BAAP Mitsubishi MC-20 Asagumo (Asahi #122) -- Civil JAAF Ki.57-I "Topsy"
J-BAAL Mitsubishi (Karigane) Asakaze (Asahi # unknown) -- JAAF Ki.15-I
J-BAAI Mitsubishi (Karigane) Kamikaze (Asahi # unknown)-- JAAF Ki.15-I
J-BAAM Mitsubishi (Karigane) Sachikaze (Asahi # unknown)-- JAAF Ki.15-I
J-BAAO Mitsubishi (Karigane II) Amakaze (Asahi #121) -- JAAF Ki.15-II
J-BAAS Mitsubishi (2-Motor Transporter) Asanagi (Asahi # unknown)-- Former JNAF L3Y1 "Nell"

How many of these aircraft entered military service, or the number of additional military types acquired by Asahi during the war years, are unknown to me.

"Footnote #21 (page 285): The aircraft mentioned is quite probably the experimental G1M1 8-Shi Reconnaissance Monoplane, a Mitsubishi prototype developed from Army bomber types. This incline-powered monoplane was the forerunner of the later radial powered G3M1-3 "Nell" series.

"Footnote #22 (page 287): The correct designation of the civil "Nell" monoplanes was Mitsubishi Twin-Engined Transporter. The aircraft does not appear to have received a type number or manufacturers designation other than this somewhat less exotic name.

"The MC-21, on the other hand, was a civil version of the JAAF Mitsubishi Ki.21-IC "Sally." It was in no way similar to the Nippon series of aircraft derived from the Navy G3M-L3Y series of bombers and transports.

"Incidently, the civil "Nell" transports made a number of other noteworthy international flights in the 1930's that were not mentioned in the Japanese article. Two of the important ones were the goodwill flight to Rome and Iran by the J-BEOC Yamato in the summer of 1939 and the 12,090 Km flight to Teheran and return via India by the J-BEOA Soyokaze in the spring of 1939.

"Quite a number of civil "Nell" passenger and freight transports were used by Japan Air Transport in the 1939-1941 period. Some of the registrations I have been able to identify are as follows:

J-BAAS	Asanagi	J-BPOE	Amatsukaze
J-BACI	Nippon	J-BJOD	Isokaze
J-BACS		J-BJOE	Hamakaze
J-BAOY		J-BJOF	Okikaze
J-BEOA	Soydkaze	J-BJOG	Namikaze
J-BEOB		J-BJOH	
J-BEOC	Yamato	J-BJOI	Yakaze
J-BEOD	Harukaze	J-B###	Tokitsukaze
J-BEOE	Tatsukaze	J-B###	Hokaze
J-BEOF	Urakaze	J-B###	Yukaze
J-BEOG	Matsukaze		

Richard M. Bueschel, 414 N. Prospect Manor Ave., Mt. Prospect, Illinois.

****

Fortress Genealogy -- Addenda:

There are some designation errors in the Fortress Genealogy (Spring 1960, 5:1) that have been around for some time and which no one seems to have taken the trouble to clear up. No discredit to author Balzer is intended in the following corrections--some of the errors are "Official."

First, there never was an official Army Air Corps designation of XB-17 assigned. The number didn't even exist at the time the Boeing Model 299 made its spectacular flight to Wright Field in August, 1935. The plane was built as a Boeing private venture for the bomber competition. Despite carrying Air Corps markings, it was a civil airplane, registered X-13372, and was called the 299. The B-17 designation was assigned when later service test models were ordered in 1936. Many collectors, and even official documents of later years refer to this first plane as the XB-17 on the logical reasoning that it was the prototype of the entire B-17 series. But the peculiar situation of a competition among privately-owned planes, with the Army to give orders to the winner, cancelled the logic.

Next, the Service Test Models are called YB-17 in the text, and Y1B-17 in the photo captions. In a way, both are correct, but it's a matter of timing. The designation as originally assigned was YB-17, but this was changed to Y1B-17 on November 20, 1936, two weeks before the first airplane flew. The added number 1 was a budgetary term to indicate that the ships were purchased with F-1 funds. Many Official U.S. Army photos of the ships in flight carry the label of YB-17, however, and many Boeing records were not corrected to reflect the change.

The PB-1G picture is of the last of the many to remain in regular service. It was photographed at Boeing Field in September 1959, while on its last mission for the Coast Guard. Air Force B-17's still in operation were used as target drones. About six still in useful configuration were auctioned off by the government in April 1960.

Peter M. Bowers, Seattle, Washington

Flying Pioneers of Aviation (Continued from p. 243)

Kastory, as well as several other students, including E. Hamilton Lee and C. C. Eversole, both of whom later became famous early U. S. Air Mail Pilots. That season Pallissard also went out on exhibition engagements as a pilot-mechanic with other Cicero pilots. Cicero flying field was abandoned late in the fall of 1915, so the group moved its school operations to the newly formed Ashbourne Field in the spring of 1916. There they continued to operate the school, and Pallissard added considerably to his flying experience. During the early fall there were indications that the U. S. Signal Corps planned to start extensive student training operations at Ashbourne Field, so the Pallissard and Co. School was dissolved and he joined the government service in this program as a Cadet and aviation mechanician.

The government school was officially opened October 28, 1916, with several planes and instructors. Late in January, 1917, the entire outfit moved south to Memphis, Tenn. for the winter months. While with this group, Pallissard received further training on Curtiss JN-4 training planes with OX engines. On July 7, 1917 all training operations returned to Ashbourne Field. Later that summer the group moved to Chanute Field, Rantoul, Ill. He remained in the Government Training Field Service as Mechanician and Crew Chief for the duration of World War I.

After the war Pallissard was stationed at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio, for a time in engine repair and overhaul work. While there, he obtained his Pilot License, No. 391, in April, 1919. This was one of the new series of numbers issued by the government after taking over the licensing from the Aero Club of America. He then had a tour of duty at Fairfield Air Intermediate Depot, Osborne, Ohio; Morrow Field, Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn; Houston, Texas; Wabash, Ind. and Service Aviation Corp., Mt. Clemens, Mich. During this period he was Crew Chief principally on large two- and three-motored bombers, including the then new Martin, Caproni, Gax and LePere planes. In September, 1920, Pallissard was assigned by McCook Field to accompany Major R. W. Shroeder to France, as his Chief Mechanic with the special Air Force Verville-Packard Race Plane entered in the annual Gordon Bennett Races.

Pallissard returned to civilian life in 1928, and for a time made his residence in his home town of St. Anne, Ill. After a time he was employed by the Electro-Motive Div. of General Motors Corp. at LaGrange, Ill., where he remained for ten years. During that time he continued to fly occasionally by renting a plane for practice at a local flying field. He retired at age 68, but kept his flying license and flew occasionally, just for the sport of it. For some time he had made his residence at Broadview, Ill., and there he passed away very suddenly on May 24, 1960.

An Early Bird and flying pioneer, he devoted the majority of his life to aviation. During his active career, he worked and flew with "many of the great" among early Air Service officers, and is deserving of a full measure of credit for his faithful contributions to the pioneer days of aviation. Possessed of a keen understanding of mechanics, his was a valued career of service to his country and the industry.