

MARCELO MIRANDA

## The History of The ARGENTINE AIR FORCE



FABRICA MILITAR de AVIONES 1A-35-II "Hanquero" Light Transport. An S.I.A. photo. The "Hanquero" is now produced in three versions, the -Ia and -Ib Crew Trainers, and the -II Light Transport. The latter are occasionally used by Argentine Army airborne troops, and the -Ia and -Ib are in service with the Fourth Air Brigade.

During this year, (Editor's note: 1960), the members of the Argentine Air Force will celebrate the forty-eighth anniversary of the creation of the Military Aviation School, the nucleus around which the military aviation was formed.

### The first steps

The first aeronautical activities took place in Argentina on December 25th, 1907, when the balloon "Pampero" made an international flight from Buenos Aires in Argentina, to Las Conchillas in Uruguay, carrying Mr. Araon de Anchorena and Mr. George Newbery.

The success achieved by this flight was such that on January 13, 1908, Mr. Newbery and a group of aviation enthusiasts formed the Argentine Aero Club, and several members of the Army who were interested in aeronautics were immediately incorporated to it.

Amongst the officers and petty-officers who were made members of the Aero Club, Sgt. Edward Romero is to be especially remembered, because on October 17th he was killed together with the civilian Ing. E. New-

bery when the "Pampero" disappeared forever and probably crashed, Sgt. Romero thus becoming the first member of the Army to be killed in an aerial accident.

In the following years several other Army officers received flying instruction at the Aero Club.

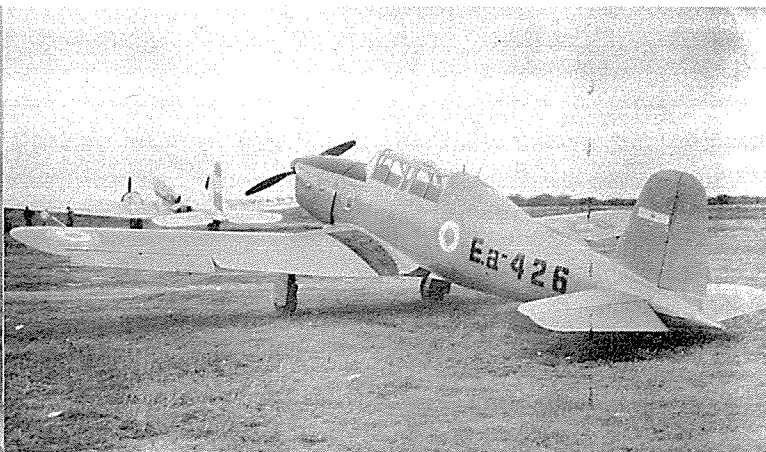
### 1912-1913

In this way we reach the year 1912 during which the Mayor Arthur P. Luisoni suggested the acquisition of a military airship with funds which would be provided by all those who wanted to collaborate.

However, when the Ministry of War, General Gregory Velez came to know about this project, he immediately advised the Mayor Luisoni that, because of their better use as military weapons it would be better to acquire an escadrille of aircraft. The suggestion of the Ministry was received with a lot of enthusiasm by the President of the Aero Club, Mr. G. Newbery and by the Baron De Marchi who decided to begin a campaign with views of creating a Military Aviation School. The first step was to require the collabora-



AVRO "Lancaster" of Argentine Air Force, taken at Ezeiza International Airport, Buenos Aires, May 1960. This one belongs to the Fifth Air Brigade, based at Villa Reynolds, Province of San Luis. It is named "Camé". Others are used by the "C.A.M.E.", or Military Air Mail.



Fiat G-46-5 at Malpaso Aerodrome, Santiago del Estero, April 1958. This belongs to the Military Aviation School, used by the "Grupo Aereo Escuela". Others (E-453, -451 -448, -441, -443, -470) are used by First Photographic Sqdn. at Paraná and E-418 & -424 by VII Air Brigade. Photo - Gallindo.

tion of all the members of the Aero Club and it was obtained when a commission, which would eventually collaborate with the military authorities, was formed as follows: President Ing. G. Newbery, 1st Vice-President Mayor W. Correa, 2nd Vice-President Ing. H. Anagasti, Secretary Mr. L. Billingham, Treasurer Mr. S. Vaccaro, other members being: baron De Marchi, Ing. J. Duclout, Dr. A. Palacios, Ing. A. R. Mascias, Ing. Ernest Newbery, Mr. G. Videla Dorna and Ing. A. R. Amoretti.

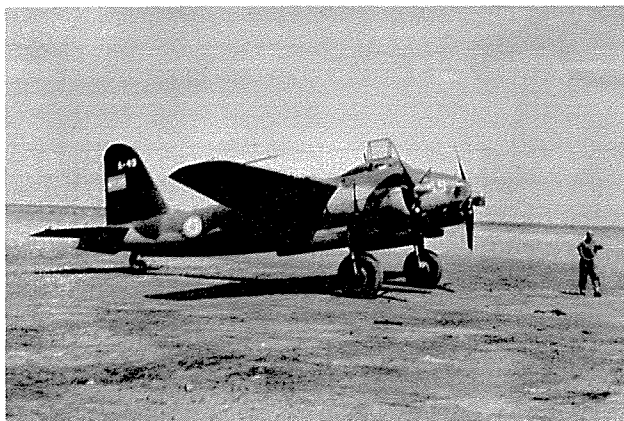
General Velez followed their activities with great interest, but as the economical situation of the government did not permit the expense of the sum needed for such a project, the Commission for recollecting funds for the creation of a military air flotilla had to be formed on June 1st, 1912. Its Presidents were Ing. G. Newbery and baron De Marchi and the rest of the members were: General R. Ruiz, Mayor Luisoni and Colonels C. R. Sarmiento, J. Uriburu and R. Rodriguez, Contraalmirantes, M. D. Garcia and J. A. Martin and Capitanes de Navio J. Durand and J. Urizar, Ing. E. Hunter, Ing. J. Duclout, Ing. C. Aubone, Mr. S. Vaccaro, Mr. F. de Alzaga, Mr. R. Vinot, Dr. A. F. Orma, Mr. J. Rongo, and Mr. J. F. Zuanich.

Several important commercial firms and the public provided the funds while other firms acquired air-

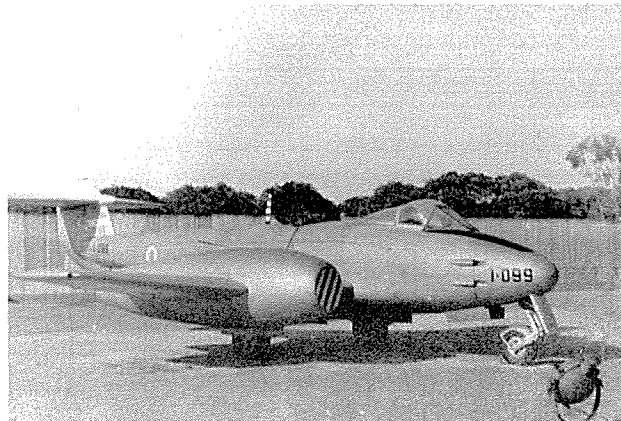
craft for the use of the Military Aviation School (M.A.S.). And finally on August 10th, the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar" was officially created by a decree signed by the President of the Argentine Republic, Roque Saenz Pena.

The school's inauguration took place at El Palomar aerodrome in Buenos Aires on September 8, 1912 with the attendance of a crowd of spectators anxious to see the novelty. A large number of personalities were present, amongst whom was General Velez, who on that day flew for the first time with Mr. Paillette on board the Henry Farman of the M.A.S.

The first aircraft of the school were a Nieuport M.IV acquired by Mr. E. Castex, powered by a 100 HP Double-Omega engine, which had been named "La Argentina"; a Nieuport 2G powered by a 50 HP Omega engine and named "America"; a Bleriot XI powered by a 50 HP Rotary Omega and named "Centenario"; a Henry Farman bi-plane powered by a 50 HP Rotary Omega which as the two latter types had been acquired for the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar" by the "Compania Argentina de Tabacos Ltda.," together with the full payment of a month's flying instruction by Marcel Paillette; a Morane Saulnier Parasol; a Bleriot XI-2 acquired with the funds collected by the Aero Club; a Rumpler Taube named "La Paloma," powered by a 100 HP Argus or Mercedes engine, provided by the Germans living in Ar-



FABRICA MILITAR de AVIONES IAe-24 "Calquin" Light Bomber at Malpaso, September 1955. It belongs to Fourth Air Brigade. S/N A-049. Photo - Gallindo.



Gloster "Meteor" F-Mk-4-2. Only 30 of original 100 "Meteors" are still in service with 1st, 2nd & 3rd F./I. Sqdns of VII Air Brigade. Photo - F.A. Giro.

gentina; a Santos-Dumont "Demoiselle" powered by a 35 HP Clement-Bayard engine, acquired for the M.A.S. by the Jockey Club of Lomas de Zamora and a Marischal Estudiantil powered by a 35 HP Anzani engine which had been acquired with funds collected by High School students of Buenos Aires. Besides it is interesting to note that this latter airplane had been completely built in Argentina.

But of all these aircraft only one of the Nieuports, the two Bleriot and the Henry Farman were at the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar" on September 8th, the rest being delivered in the following months of 1912. A private plane was also at El Palomar on that day. It was an Argentine-built Castaibert on which several Army officers such as Tte. Tomas Alegre, flew for the first time.

It is interesting to note that the military pilots could also use the seven balloons of the Aero Club. The officers, petty-officers and conscripts who entered the M.A.S. received at first the title of Aircraft Pilot and when the course finished they graduated as Military Aircraft Pilot. Besides, they could also receive instruction on aerostats and then graduate as Military Aerostat Pilot and although provisions were made for the opening of an Aerial-Observers course, it was not until 1922 that the first twelve ones graduated.

The first officer in command of the Argentine military flying school was the Tte. Raul Goubat who immediately requested the collaboration of the Aero Club to organize it. Thus, Ing. G. Newbery was appointed Director of the Technical Department assisted by three Army officers, while the first instructors were also provided by the Aero Club, these being: Mr. Marcel Paillette, Mr. C. Imrscher, Mr. W. Davis, Mr. G. Schulz and Mr. E. Bradley.

On December 7th, the fledgling Argentine military pilots obtained their first international record when T. Fells crossed for the first time in history the Rio Plata in an airplane, a Bleriot XI, and obtained a new record of flying over water.

The year 1912 ended with this happy event and 1913 was even more favorable as more aircraft were delivered to the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar", amongst which there were an early Breguet design powered by a 100 HP Gnome Double Omega acquired with the funds collected by the Aero Club and a Castaibert trainer powered by a 50 HP Omega engine, which had been completely designed and built in Argentina by Paul Castaibert. (Several other Castaiberts were also delivered to the Uruguayan military aviation.)

Also during this year the second course of Military Aircraft and Aerostat Pilots was opened at the M.A.S., and the first aerial collision took place at El Palomar, when the Marischal Estudiantil flown by Tte. Goubat collided in mid-air with the Bleriot flown by Tte. C. G. Kramer, on November 21st.

#### 1914-1918

The year 1914 was received with great enthusiasm by the young Argentine military fliers as no serious problems had been yet encountered, and as the activities of the Military Aviation School were running on a firm basis the future seemed even more favorable. But during August, World War One broke out and no more repairs or new aircraft were sent from Europe during this, and the two following years.

The "Escuela de Aviacion Militar" was at that moment operating the initial Bleriot, Henry Farman and a few more examples of both these types which had been recently received, a few Nieuports and Breguets and other assorted types of aircraft and many had to be cannibalized due to the shortage of repairs. Thus, the number of hours flown during

this year by the military aircraft was drastically reduced compared with the total of previous years, and only 2127 flights with a total of 413 hours flown were registered during 1914.

On the following year the number of flights was 2272 with a total of 433 hours flown.

In the meantime the activities in the aerostatic field had not decreased and on October 22, 1915, the Military Pilot A. M. Zuloaga obtained the world record of endurance, having remained 28 hours in the air, together with the civilian Mr. E. Bradley on board the balloon "Edward Newbery" and seven days later they obtained the record of distance with a flight of 990 kilometers.

1916 was the most terrible year of this period as only 2503 flights with a total of 331 hours were made on that year.

But we must also remember that one of the most glorious feats in the history of military aviation took place on June 24th when A. M. Zuloaga and Mr. E. Bradley crossed The Andes Chain by air for the first time flying the balloon "Edwardo Newbery," obtaining during the flight the record altitude of 8,100 meters.

On the following year a Voisin powered by a 140 HP Salmson AE-9 and four 50 HP Omega engines were considered useless. The four Omegas were used to equip a few Henry Farman biplanes which had been built at the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar" during 1916. 3283 flights with a total of 677 hours were registered during 1917.

During 1918 war finally finished, but this did not mean any change in the situation of the Argentine military aviation as only one plane, an experimental Deperdussin powered by a Rotary 80 HP LeRhône engine was delivered, which in Europe were already considered useless. Thus the number of hours flown again decreased to 362 (1624 flights). However, in this year Tte. Candelaria crossed the Andes Chain in an airplane for the first time in history on April 15th, flying a Morane "Parasol".

The Military Aviation School was at that moment in complete crisis, the bulk of its equipment comprised Bleriot XI-2s and Henry Farman which in Europe were already considered museum pieces!

#### 1919

In this way we reach the year 1919 which may be called the "renaissance" of the Argentine military aviation although 392 hours were flown during that year. The first of the very important events which took place during this year was the arrival of Mr. Frank P. Scott with an Avro 504-K trainer. This plane was publicly demonstrated at El Palomar on March 2nd, but as Mr. Scott was on his way to Chile he stayed in Argentine only for about one month. Nevertheless during this short period he proved the extraordinary characteristics of the Avro by converting the Army officer Tte. Abel M. Lopez into a full aerobatic pilot in only 22 days!

In the meantime (on March 13th) an Italian Air Mission had arrived to Argentina. Its members were the Baron A. De Marchi; Capt. E. Giovanardi and G. de Luca, Ttes. A. Locatelli, S. Scaroni, E. Bruio, J. Michetti and E. Gaio; Tte. de Navio, L. de Riseis and petty-officers N. Bo, M. Argenta, V. Valeriano, M. Liverani, A. Merola, J. Cherri, E. Mattiello and M. Conforti.

This mission brought four Caproni Ca-33 tri-motor bombers, six Ansaldo SVA-5 single seat fighters, two SVA-20 two-seat reconnaissance aircraft, two Fiat R-2s and two Savoia-Farman trainers. They stayed in Argentina until the first days of September and when they returned they presented most of their

equipment, including the SVA-5 fighters to the Argentine Military Aviation Service.

In the early months of 1919, three surplus fighters had been sent from France, two Nieuport 28s and a single S.P.A.D. S-VII. These aircraft were used by Ttes. Zanni, Parodi and Matienzo in an attempt of crossing the Andes Chain on May 28th, but after having done the most dangerous part of the trip they found bad weather in the Chilean zone and Zanni and Parodi decided to return. The Tte. B. Matienzo continued alone and crashed. However he was unhurt and returned by foot but died in the attempt. His corpse was found on November 28th, 1919 and his aircraft almost forty years later. (The Tte. Matienzo was flying one of the Nieuport 28s).

In the meantime several Caudron G-IIIs had been obtained for the military aviation. And, finally during the last months of this eventful year, a British Air Mission comprising representatives of Bristol, Avro, Handley-Page, and Vickers arrived to El Palomar. Several members of the Royal Air Force also came to Argentina: Colonel E. E. Hodgson; Capt. C. E. Wilmont, R. Clowes, J. A. Hinds, and E. Steward; and Lieutenants H. P. Hussey and J. F. Bremmer. This mission returned to England during 1920, but before continuing with our history, it would be interesting to say a few words on the foreign Armies' officers who were incorporated to the "Escuela de Aviacion Militar."

The first of them were the Uruguayans, 2nd, Tte. Berisso and the Alferez Cristi who arrived during 1915. On the following year the first three Bolivians: R. Pareja, J. de Alarcon and H. Vazquez were incorporated together with the Norwegian polar explorer C. Doxrud who although being a civilian was given permission to be trained at the M.A.S. because of his interest in the use of aircraft in his explorations. And in 1917 Peruvian officers began their courses.

#### 1920-1925

During 1920, a French Air Mission arrived to Argentina, it was commanded by Lt. Colonel Maurice Precardini and it was responsible for the reorganization of the military aviation.

On March 9th, of the same year, the Military Pilot Anthony Parodi succeeded in crossing the Andes Chain from Mendoza in Argentina to Santiago in Chile and back again to Mendoza without any stops, using an SVA-5 fighter. In the meantime large stocks of surplus aircraft were available in Europe and the Argentine Government made profit of this situation and acquired between the years 1922 and 1925 a number of Bristol F2B fighters as well as 25 brand-new Breguet Br-19-A-2 and several Dewoitine D-21-C-1.

In 1922 the Military Aviation School was renamed Aviation Group Number One comprising fighter units equipped with SVA-5s, F2Bs and afterwards D-21-C-1s; reconnaissance-bomber units using Br-19-A-2s and F2Bs; training aircraft; aerial survey aircraft probably F2Bs; an aircraft park and many "one of the type in service" aircraft such as Nieuport 28, S.P.A.D. VII, etc.

On the following year three Fokker C.IV observation seaplanes were acquired with funds provided by the public. One of these aircraft was used by the Mayor P. Zanni and the mechanic F. Beltrame in a flight around the world which began at Schipol in Holland on July 26th. After having flown over France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, India, Indochina, China and Japan the flight ended at the lake Kasumigama near Tokio on May 14, 1925 when the Fokker C.IV was destroyed during take-off maneuvers.

Previously, on January 26th, the Aviation Group

Number one recovered its original name of "Escuela de Aviacion Militar."

#### 1926

On January 1926, Aviation Group Number 3 was formed at the new base "Gen. Urquiza" at Parana in Entre Rios. On June 11th, the Government's Administration of Railways required the collaboration of the Military Aviation Service for the laying of a new line between Calante and Avia-Terai, two small villages situated in the Chaco, the northwestern region of Argentina. As the new line was to be laid in unexplored regions, aircraft were needed to make survey flights and take aerial photos of the landscape.

The Military Aviation Service decided to collaborate and thus, on July 1st, Tte. Colonel Albert Daguerre, who was to be assisted by the First Class Mechanic John Valentini and the aerial photographer Military Aircraft Pilot Sgt. John Morris, received orders to leave immediately for a little village called Pres. Roque Saenz Pena, where there was a civil aerodrome which was to be their base.

Tte. Colonel Daguerre took off from El Palomar on August 11th, flying the Breguet Br-19-A-2 number 13, but because of the weather he had to land at the Third Aviation Group's Base at Parana, where he stayed until the 17th. This day he took off again, but he had trouble with the engine and had to make a forced landing at Charandai, a place only 35 minutes' flying time away from their destination. He finally arrived to Pres. Roque Saenz Pena three days later.

Immediately after his arrival, survey flights began. On August 22nd, the first one was made, Lt. Colonel Daguerre carrying for the occasion the civil engineer Bierregard from Avia-Terai to Calante and back again without any stops, staying in the air for almost six hours.

On the 24th, a photographic reconnaissance flight was made during which Sgt. Morris took 62 photos which were to be of great help to the Railway's technicians. The return trip to El Palomar took place on the following day and only 4 hours and 50 minutes were used by the Br-19 number 13 to cover the one thousand kilometers which separate Pres. R. S. Pena from Buenos Aires. During these operations the airplane "13" flew nearly 4000 kilometers, the only mechanical trouble being that of the 17th at Charandai.

#### 1927-1933

On May 4th, 1927 the Military Aviation Service was renamed General Directorate of Aeronautics, Colonel A. M. Zuloaga being appointed General Director of Aeronautics.

In the meantime the Argentine Government understood the great importance that aviation had in the undeveloped territory of Argentina and on June 8th, it was decided to create a Military Aircraft Factory in "Fabrica Militar de Aviones." The "F.M.A." was inaugurated at Cordoba on October 10, 1927. Its first director was Ing. Mayor Arteaga, the first production of the factory being that of 100 Avro Gosport 504-N trainers under license, the first of these aircraft flying on October 2, 1928 at the hands of the Military Aircraft Pilot S. A. Yubel.

On 1929 the first 450 HP Lorraine-Dietrich engine built under license was furnished and during the following year the first examples of Argentine-built Bristol F2B-Mk-2 reconnaissance aircraft and the first one of the Dewoitine D-21-C-1 French fighter were delivered, forty F2Bs and forty D-21s being built in total. Besides several Junkers K-43

and Avro 626 had been acquired for the military aviation.

After the completion of these series of foreign aircraft built under license the "F.M.A." changed to domestic design and on October 29, 1931, the Ae-C-1, the first aircraft to be completely built and designed in Argentina took off for its maiden flight. The Ae-C-1 was named "Prototipo," and it was a two-seat primary trainer built in metal and wood and powered by a 135 HP Armstrong-Siddeley Mongoose engine. The first of these aircraft were delivered to the General Directorate of Aeronautics during 1932.

After the success achieved by the "Prototipo", the Ae-C-2 "Tenga Confianza" flew on April 23, 1932. As its predecessor it was a two-seat primary trainer powered by a 240 HP Wright-Whirlwind J-6R engine. The Ae-ME-1 was a modification of the basic Ae-C-2 and it was produced in substantial numbers powered by a 165 HP Whirlwind. Also the Ae-C-3 and the Ae-C-4 were produced for civil flying clubs.

In the meantime the Ae-C-2 had proved the good handling characteristics of Argentine-designed planes with a flight through the 14 provinces and another to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

In this way we reach the year 1933 during which the excellent Ae-T-1 was built. Powered by a 450 HP Lorraine-Dietrich engine also built in Argentina, the prototype Ae-T-1 flew for the first time on May 18th.

In the meantime the President of the Argentine Republic had been invited to visit Brazil. It had been decided the General A. P. Justo was to travel on board the dreadnought "Moreno" escorted by many other vessels, but the General Director of Aeronautics, A. M. Zuloaga, knowing that a formation flight to Brazil would give an important boost to aviation in Argentina, decided to offer an aerial escort and as his idea was accepted the "Sol de Mayo" escadrille or May Sun escadrille was formed comprising aircraft designed in this country.

Three groups were formed as follows: the 1st Group comprising the Ae-ME-1s number 2, 5 and 4; the Second Group formed by the Ae-ME-1s number 6, 3 and 1, and the Third Group which comprised the Ae-C-2 number 7, the Ae-C-1 number 8, and the Junkers K-43 number 102. The escadrille was commanded by Capt. E. Sustaita and Colonel A. M. Zuloaga would travel on board a staff-plane, the Ae-T-1 called "Gen. San Martin."

The formation took off from E. Palomar on October 4, 1933 and two days later they landed at Rio de Janeiro after having made stops at Pelotas, Florianopolis and Santos. During the return trip they also landed at Montevideo, Uruguay and the flight was completed with a great success.

It is interesting to mention the fact that also during 1933 an Avro C-30 "La Cierva" autogiro was acquired.

In 1932, war broke out between Paraguay and Bolivia, and Argentina, being a neighbor of both these countries, formed the "Comision Militar de Neutrales" in order to maintain neutrality.

This commission comprised several military units as well as military aircraft and the excellent work done by the Aeronautical Detachment at Las Lomitas where the "Base Aerea Frontera Norte" was formed, is to be especially remembered.

During two months from October 4th, till December 8th, 1932 the four D-21-C-1s from Parana and the Avro 626s from El Palomar based at Las Lomitas made continuous survey and reconnaissance flights. It is also interesting to remember that all flights took place in the early morning, because in the afternoon the temperatures rose to nearly ninety degrees!

#### 1934-1939

By 1934 the military aviation comprised the Reconnaissance, Light Bombing and Fighter Groups Number 1 based at El Palomar; the Reconnaissance Group Number 2 located in Parana and the Light Bombing and Fighter Groups Number 2 based at El Plumerillo in Mendoza. During this year the experimental airline SETA or "Servicios Experimentales de Transportes Aereos" began operations which lasted two months. The Ae-T-1s "Gen. San Martin," "Gen. Paz" and "Dean Funez" were used while its personnel was comprised only of members of the military aviation.

On June 9th of the following year the first Ae-MB-1 bomber-transport was delivered. This aircraft had been completely designed and built at the "F.M.A." and two years later an improved version, the Ae-MB-2 "Bombi" which remained in service until 1945 was produced.

In 1936, a number of Focke-Wulf FW-58 Weihe advanced twin-engined trainers were received by the military aviation. In the meantime negotiations for the acquisition of the production licenses of several foreign aircraft, had begun. Finally, during 1937 the license of the FW-44J Stieglitz trainer and the one of the Curtiss 75-O fighters were obtained; the first Stieglitz being delivered in 1939 and the first 75-Os in 1940. Five hundred FW-44Js and two hundred Curtiss fighters were built in total. Also a number of Stearman 76-D-1 biplane trainers powered by a single P & W JRT-13 Wasp engine were procured.

A contest for the acquisition of a medium bomber was organized by the Argentine government on the same year, the Savoia Marchetti SM-79B being the winner, but 35 Martin 139-W (B-10 with the USAAC) were acquired instead, because it would be easier to obtain repairs for these aircraft, in the case war broke out in Europe. A number of North American NA-16-P-1 multi-purpose aircraft were also bought.

On 1938 the military aviation was reorganized into Air Regiments: Air Regiment Number One at Palomar comprised Fighter and Reconnaissance Groups Number One; Air Regiment Number Two comprised Light Bombing Group Number One and Reconnaissance Group Number Two and was located at Parana and Air Regiment Number Three at Mendoza comprised Light Bombing and Fighter Groups Number Two. Besides Air Regiment Number Four was formed at a new base in Villa Mercedes, San Luis. Three was also a transport unit at El Palomar and the Military Aviation School which had been relocated in Cordoba.

A small number of Lockheed 12-B transports was also procured in 1938.

#### 1940-1944

In the meantime, Junkers Ju-52/3ms transports had been obtained for the military aviation.

During September 1940, LADE or "Lineas Aereas del Estado" (State's Airline) was formed to operate in desolated areas where traffic was insufficient to permit operations on an economic basis. LADE used Ju-52s and Lockheed 12-Bs until 1945 when these aircraft were replaced by C-54s, C-47s and Vikings.

During the past twenty years, LADE has grown to have a tremendous importance in the field of aerial transportation in Argentina and during the 1941-1954 period its aircraft carried not less than 184,437 passengers and 1,500,000 kilos of freight and flew 11,303,406 kilometers. Nevertheless during the past few years it has passed some of its lines to Aerolineas Argentinas and other airlines.

Continuing with our history, we must remember that during 1940 the prototype of the IAE-A-20 "El Boyero" touring and A.O.P. light plane was constructed; however the "Boyero" was not produced at the "F.M.A."

until the early fifties. Little expansion took place during World War II and the only foreign aircraft procured were a number of Douglas C-39 transports obtained in the USA.

Thus, the military aviation (which had been renamed Army Aviation Command) had to rely on domestic production and in the early forties the prototype of the IAE-21 primary trainer was produced, but it was abandoned in favor of the wooden IAE-DL-22 which flew during May 1943 because of the shortage of light metals.

An order for 100 "Dele-Dele," as the plane had been dubbed by its pilots, was passed by the Army Aviation Command.

On the following year the prototype of a troop carrying glider, the "Manque" was produced.

In the meantime, several high-ranking officers had begun a campaign favoring the creation of an Argentine Air Force and in 1944 the A.A.C. was finally given the title of Air Force emerging in this way as an independent service.

#### 1945-1949

In 1945 the "F.M.A." produced a ground-attack version of the basic DL-22 (450 HB IAE-16 "El Indio" engine), designated IAE-DL-22C and powered by a 475 HP Armstrong-Siddeley Cheetah 25 engine, 120 being ordered by the recently created A.A.F.

Also on this year work began on the prototype of the IAE-24 "Calquin" light bomber. The first of these aircraft, which were evidently inspired by the D. H. Mosquito, flew during June of the following year and although Rolls Royce Merlins were proposed for the production version, the 100 "Calquins" ordered by the A.A.F. were powered by two P & W R-1830 radials, the first of these bombers being delivered in 1947.

Other domestic designs of the same period were the IAE-31 primary trainer and the IAE-30 "Nancu" neither of which was produced in substantial numbers although the "Nancu" was an excellent night fighter powered by two Rolls Royce Merlin 130 series of 1800 HP each, which gave the IAE-30 a maximum speed of 435 mph.

In the meantime very important orders had been placed in foreign countries and thus, during 1946, 1947 and 1948 the Argentine Air Force received large numbers of modern aircraft. They were: 8 ex-USAF Douglas C-54s and several C-47s; Avro Lincolns and Lancastrians; 100 Fiat G-55 Centauro fighters; 30 Beech AT-11 navigational trainers; 30 Fiat G-46s; 200 Percival Prentices; 50 D. H. Doves; 30 Vikings; 30 Bristol 170 freighters and 100 Glister Meteor F-Mk-4-2 jet fighters. Argentina was the first foreign purchaser of the Meteor and the only Air Force of Latin America to comprise jet fighters.

Thus, the Argentine Air Force became the third most important Air Force of America surpassed in strength only by the USAF and the RCAF.

The Argentine territory was divided into six aerial zones and six regiments were based one at each zone. The regiments had under their jurisdiction all bases and installations and were subordinated to Air Command.

From 1947 till 1954 the German General of Fighters Galland was employed as adviser of the A.A.F., while several Me-262 pilots came as instructors. And it was according to Galland's instructions that the Air Defense, Strategic Air, Tactical Air and Air Transport Commands were formed.

#### 1950-1954

In the meantime, the design of indigenous aircraft had continued at the "F.M.A." and on August 9,

1950, the IAE-27 "Pulqui I" designed by Emile Dewoitine flew for the first time. The "Pulqui I" was followed by the IAE-33 "Pulqui II" designed by Kurt Tank which flew on June 27, 1950. Both of these aircraft were jet fighters and neither of which was produced for the A.A.F., the only production of the period at the "F.M.A." being that of 150 "El Boyero" light planes. In 1952 the Military Aircraft Factory was incorporated to the IAME and aircraft production came to a stand-still. Nevertheless the prototype of the IA-35 "Huanquero" multi-purpose plane was constructed but not ordered until 1955.

In the meantime, in the political field, the Peronista Regime had become a terrible dictatorship and on June 16, 1955 the Navy and the Air Force tried to pull Peron down from the Government by means of a revolution.

At 10 o'clock in the morning, rebel Marines captured the National Airport at Ezeiza and the VII's Air Brigade Base at Moron and early in the afternoon aerial attacks were carried on against the Government Building in an attempt to kill the dictator.

The first aircraft to fly over Buenos Aires belonged to the Naval Aviation (the operations of these aircraft will be described in a history of the Naval Aviation) and at 15.15 P.M. Gloster Meteors appeared over the big city. These jet-fighters made several attacks and great damage was done by their cannons. The second attack made by Air Force planes took place 17.25 P.M. when Meteors and other aircraft (probably DL-22Cs) strafed the Government Building and the Ministry of War Building.

In the meantime, loyal Army troops had recaptured the Moron Base and rebel aircraft escaped to Colonia and Montevideo in Uruguay. Nevertheless, a few minutes after the Government announced the situation was under control, a single Viking transport appeared over the city and attacked anti-aircraft guns with machine guns placed on the windows and operated by several officers. The only losses of the rebels during this revolution were a Meteor which ditched in the River Plate (its pilot was rescued by the Uruguayans) and another jet-fighter which made a forced landing in Colonia, (a naval patrol-bomber was also shot down in flames during the first attack). The revolution had failed, but three months afterwards the Army, Navy, and Air Force began another one which was to be successful.

Early in the morning of September 16th, the revolution began at Cordoba and Commodore Krause was appointed Commander of the Rebel Air Force.

The rebel forces captured on that day the "F.M.A." the Military Aviation School, the Air Force Petty Officers School and the Paratroopers School and during the afternoon G-46s, DL-22s and Percivals began reconnaissance flights.

In the meantime three Gloster Meteors had been found under reparations at the "F.M.A." and flown in turns by the Tte. Possi, Tte. Primeros Balado, Herrero, Hellmuth, Weber, and Morandini and led by Capt. Suarez the three jet fighters began operations against the rebel forces on the 17th. But because of the lack of kerosene these aircraft had to be flown on common fuel and on the 18th, the Meteor flown by Tte. Morandini exploded in the air as the Derwent engines had become overheated due to the use of that kind of fuel.

Besides, "Calquins" from Mendoza had arrived to Cordoba to help the rebel troops. In the meantime, the loyal Air Force had been reduced to a number of Meteors and Lincolns based at Moron. These aircraft attacked the Rio Santiago Rebel Naval Base on the 16th, and one of the jet fighters was shot down. It is also interesting to remember that on the same day

four Meteors attacked the destroyers ARA "Cervantes" and ARA "La Rioja" on board of which rebel naval cadets were being evacuated from Rio Santiago. Four men were killed and 34 other ones were seriously wounded by the loyal pilots; however the anti-aircraft gunners of the "La Rioja" showed great skill and hit one of the fighters in one of the engines.

Besides, Lincoln bombers which had left Moron on the 16th with orders of attacking Rio Santiago were turned over by their pilots to the rebels by landing in Cordoba, on the following days other pilots did the same thing and six Lincolns from Moron were delivered to the Rebel Command. Other heavy bombers also arrived from San Luis.

We must also remember that nine pilots of Aerolineas Argentinas turned over their CE-3s to the rebels, these aircraft were used as bombers together with a number of Air Force C-47s and Vikings by launching bombs through the windows.

On the 20th, loyal troops finally surrendered and Vice-Commodore Abraham was appointed Ministry of Aeronautics while Brigadier-General G. S. Hermansson received the title of Commander in Chief of the A. Air Force.

#### 1956-1958

On June 11th of the following year, several Peronista Army officers began a revolution against the democratic regime established by Gen. Aramburu, but thanks to the valuable collaboration of the Air Force this attempt was a complete failure.

Early in the morning of the 11th, three formations of Gloster Meteor fighters from Moron attacked the 7th Infantry Regiment Barracks at La Plata completely destroying the buildings; while Avro Lincolns from San Luis attacked the rebels at Sta. Rosa, and although all bombs were dropped on open country, the Peronistas immediately surrendered.

Also on this year preparations were made for the construction of 100 IA-35 transport-bomber-trainers at the "F.M.A." and 36 Canadair F-Mk-6 Sabres were acquired but this order was cancelled because of Argentina's lack of foreign currency.

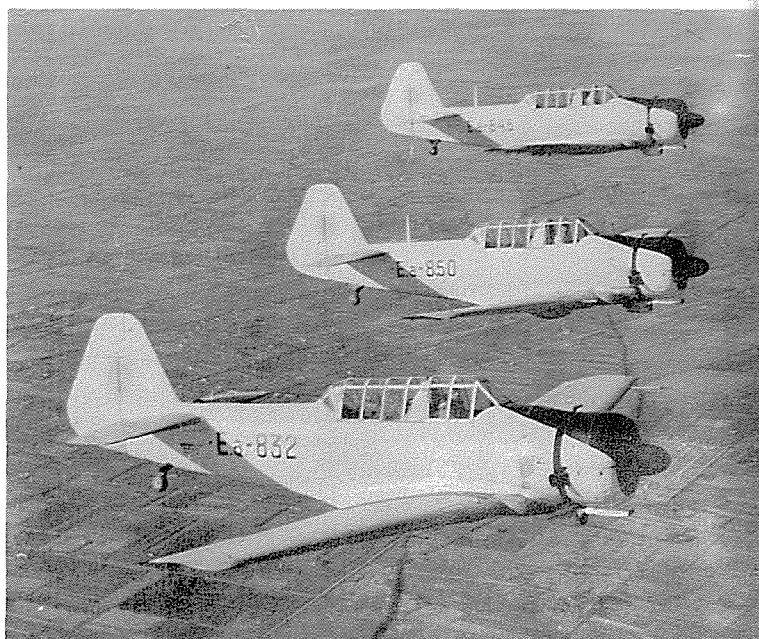
During 1957 90 Beech model 45 Mentor trainers of which 75 are being assembled in Argentina and 48 Morane Saulnier MS-760 Paris light-attack and training twin-jet aircraft were ordered, the Paris are also being assembled in the "F.M.A." And in 1958, the first examples of Argentine-built Mentors and IA-35 "Huanqueros" were delivered to the Air Force.

#### 1959

During this year the River Plate overflowed and

Right - Vickers "Viking" Transport, soon to be sold to civil owners. Photo by S.I.A.

Below - Avro "Lincoln" Heavy Bomber. Others are B-024, -028, -004, -026. Photo by F.A.Giro

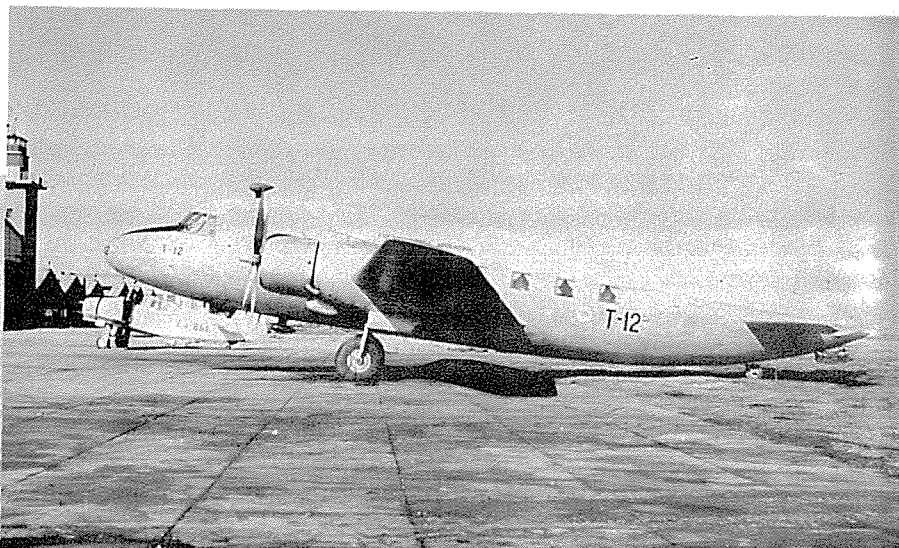


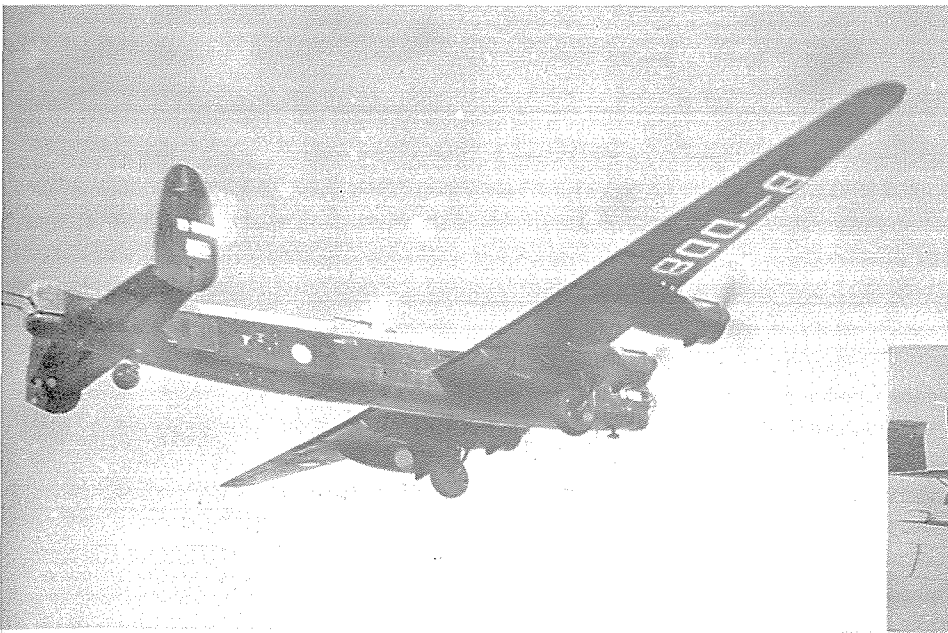
FABRICA MILITAR de AVIONES IAe-DL-22 "Dele-Dele" trainers of Military Aviation School. Photo - S.I.A.

many of the nearby cities were flooded. Thus, the collaboration of the Air Force Rescue Command was required and on April 18th, Sikorsky S-51 helicopters of the National Direction of Civil Aviation operating in accordance with the Air Force, began rescue flights from the city of Zarate. Besides C-47s and Vikings made continuous flights dropping supplies and medicine.

In the meantime, far away in Antartica, an Army patrol had left the Military Detachment "Esperanza" with the mission of establishing new refuges and exploring the Weddel Sea Ice Barrier. But in the first days of May, radio contact was lost and as when this month ended the fate of these men was still not known the Army required the collaboration of aircraft to search them.

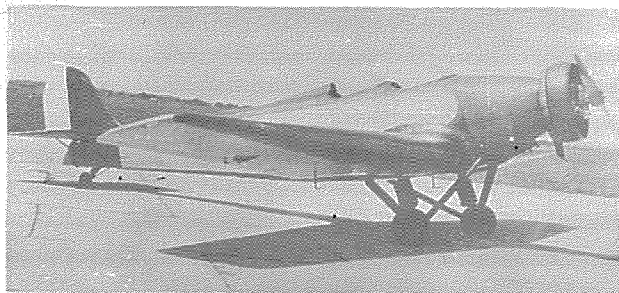
The Air Force immediately formed an Antarctic Task Air Force with which the Douglas R-5-D CTA-2 would also collaborate (this transport belongs to the Naval Aviation). This Task Force or "FATA" (Fuerza Aerea Tareas Antarticas) comprised the C-54 T-45 of the A.A.F., the Lincoln B-024 also of the Air Force, the DC-6 LV-ADS "Mariano Moreno" of Aerolineas Argentinas and manned by an air force crew and the SC-54 72555 of the USAF.





Left - The Avro "Lincoln", several of which are in service with the 1st Heavy Bomb Group (Fifth Air Brigade) at Villa Reynolds. Photo by S.I.A.

Below - An Ae-C.3. Photo by F.A.Giro.



The Rio Gallegos Aeronautical Detachment was selected as the base of these aircraft and the first of them, the R-5-D arrived on June 7th. Five days later the DC-6 took off from Ezeiza National Airport and on the following day the DC-4 (C-54) T-45 landed at Rio Gallegos; the rest of the aircraft arriving on the following days.

On the 13th the DC-6 made a test flight and reached 59° of southern latitude. On the following day the SC-54 made a flight with the same purpose, but during the return trip one of the engines caught fire and the Commander of the FATA, Commodore Abreu, ordered the DC-6 LV-ADS, and the C-54 T-45 to take off and escort the USAF aircraft number 72555 back to their base. The SC-54 landed safely at Rio Gallegos at 15.48 P.M. after having flown the major part of the trip with only three engines.

On the 15th, the CTA-2 flown by Capt. Campbell found the patrol in perfect condition and dropped a radio. The T-45 and the LV-ADS which had taken off afterwards arrived to the spot at 12.50 and 13.05 and contacted the patrol by radio. Operations finished on that day leaving an example of efficient collaboration between the Argentina Air Force, the USAF, Aerolineas Argentinas and the Naval Aviation.

Besides, during the same year, negotiations for the acquisition of 28 surplus F-86-F Sabre fighter-bombers and two Lockheed T-33 advanced trainers from

the USAF were very advanced and on December 23rd, the Secretary of Aeronautics said that these aircraft may arrive in ten months. Besides we must also remember that in 1958 the Ministry of Aeronautics was changed into Secretary of Aeronautics depending from the Ministry of Defense.

#### 1960

On January 30th of this year, a vessel of the Argentine Navy located an unknown submarine submerged in Argentine waters in Golfo Nuevo. This event marked the beginning of a long search for this submarine which ended 26 days later when it finally was able to escape. Although the bulk of these anti-submarine operations was carried on by the Naval Aviation, its work will be described in a history of the Naval Aviation, it is interesting to note that Lincoln bombers also collaborated in the search.

Operations began on February 10th when the Lincoln B-029 made a patrol flight from Trelew to the Golfo Nuevo and San Matias. On the following day another bomber began to operate from Pto. Madryn N.A.S. and another one, the B-020 arrived to Trelew and after refuelling took off for Comodoro Rivadavia Aeronautical Detachment which, as Mar del Plata A.D., had been selected as the base of operations. But the usual interservice rivalry emerged on the 15th when the Secretary of Aeronautics announced that in view of the lack of coordination between the Air Force and the Navy and knowing that the Naval Aviation considered the help of the Lincolns to be an interference, it had been decided to decrease operations in the Golfo Nuevo Zone and continue flights from Mar del Plata to Comodoro Rivadavia with complete independence.

On the 17th, the Lincolns B-016 and B-024 arrived to Mar del Plata Aeronautical Detachment and began patrol flights to C. Rivadavia, covering a distance of nearly 800 miles. Commodore Crocci was appointed commander of these operations, patrol flights lasting until the last days of February.

It is also interesting to note that the Lincoln crews had already gathered experience in this kind of operations during the "TRITON" maneuvers which took place at Mar del Plata during March of the year before, the Lincolns frequently made patrol flights of 300 kilometers deep into the sea.



Beech AT-11 "Kansan", at Aeroparque Bs. As. October 1958. An example of the types of aircraft used by the School of Naval Aviation, to be described in a later article by Mr. Miranda. Photo by F.A. Giro.

Continued on Page 71

## ARGENTINE AIR FORCE (Continued from Page 30)

### The Present Situation

The Argentine Air Force actually comprises an Air Defense Command with H. Q. at Moron, which is responsible for everything concerning active defense, including radar and other installations and which comprises three Fighter-Interceptor Groups equipped with Gloster Meteor F-Mk-4-2, such as the First F-1 Group based at Moron. But of the initial 100 Meteors only 40 or 50 are currently airworthy. There is also an Air Tactical Command with H.Q. at Parana, responsible for reconnaissance; Army cooperation and ground attack operations, which comprises Fighter-Bomber Groups based at Mendoza, Moron and Parana. These units were initially using DL-22Cs and "Calquins" but these aircraft are actually being replaced by the IA-35 and even the MS-760, as a matter of fact, the first Paris flew with Fighter-Bomber registration: A-01. Besides there was only one "Calquin" left at Mendoza when I visited the base in July. We must also remember that G-46s are still used for observation missions in Moron.

Air Strategic Command is responsible for bombing and maritime reconnaissance operations and comprises Heavy-Bombing Groups with bases at San Luis and Moron.

There is also a Rescue Command operating a few Sikorsky S-56s and the S-51s of the National Direction of Civil Aviation.

An Air Transport Command which comprises three Transport Groups most of them based at El Palomar and using C-47s, C-54s, Vikings, Doves, Lancastrians and Bristol 170s. Besides paratrooper units use the

huge Bristol freighter as well as the transport Douglas C-47.

Finally there is an Air Combat Command actually headed by Brigadier A. C. Alsina, which coordinates all operational activities of Air Force aircraft.

The Military Aviation School is actually at Cordoba where it uses Mentors which are gradually replacing the Prentices, MS-760s and IAe-DL-22s. All advanced trainers such as AT-11s and AT-18s are based at Moron. Besides there is a Technical Specialists School and the "F.M.A." which is actually working on civil aircraft such as the IA-46 and IA-45 has been incorporated to the DINFIA group.

The Argentine Air Force actually comprises about 200 operational aircraft (excluding transports and trainers, of course).

Air Force elements have been divided into Air Brigades:

Air Brigade Number One based at EL PALOMAR in the province of Buenos Aires;

Air Brigade Number Two based at GEN, URQUIZA at Parana in the province of E. Rios;

Air Brigade Number Four based at EL PLUMERILLO in Mendoza in the province of Mendoza;

Air Brigade Number Five based at VILLA REYNOLDS in Villa Mercedes in the province of San Luis;

Air Brigade Number Seven based at MORON in Buenos Aires in the province of Buenos Aires.

There are other bases at Tandil and Rio Cuarto and Aeronautical Detachments at Comodoro Rivadavia, Mar del Plata, Rio Gallegos, Reconquista, etc.

## YC-125 "RAIDER" (Continued from Page 41)

48-640 YC-125A (probable c/n 2525) N2577B

This aircraft was purchased by Frank Ambrose Aviation in 1955, registered as N2577B, and flown to Miami, where it was noted in June, 1959.

C/N NOTE: From the few construction numbers available for the YC-125 it is apparent that one number has been omitted in the assignment of these. It is likely that this number was omitted between the ten YC-125B models and the thirteen YC-125A models; the c/n 2512 not being assigned. The known c/n are quoted above without brackets, the others being listed as probable. (See Footnote).

The author must acknowledge that a great proportion of the work for this article was begun by Mr. Francis J. Caffrey who first became interested in the Northrop YC-125 Raider history. Unfortunately, other matters rendered Mr. Caffrey unable to complete the article. In addition to Fran Caffrey, the following AAHS members have been very helpful in the preparation of the article: Mitch Mayborn, Mike Graddidge, Warren Eberspacher, Jose Villela, and Merle Olmsted. It is hoped that no one work-

ing with Mr. Caffrey has accidentally not been mentioned.

Many of the Northrop "Raiders" have not yet begun to move from owner to owner in the remote corners of this hemisphere that the aircraft was designed to operate in. It is hoped that members will send in to the JOURNAL additional news pertaining to the YC-125, as well as answering certain questions and information gaps left by this article. The YC-125 will probably continue to be employed for certain specific uses for quite a number of years, and it will be interesting to read of these in the AAHS JOURNAL.

Gary Kuhn

FOOTNOTE FROM EDITOR: The missing C/N was referred to Member G. H. Balzer who writes: "A transcription of data from Northrop Contract Administration in 1956 indicates the number was unassigned. If so it would be between the YC-125B and the YC-125A. The "B" models were built first. N-2501 was the N-123 "Pioneer". N-250R through N-2511 were YC-125B's, (AF S/N 48-618 through 48-627); N-2513 through N-2525 were YC-125A's (AF S/N 48-628 through 48-640).