

MAIL SACK

The MAIL SACK columns are open to all Members of the Society for comment on any aspect of aviation history, or expressions regarding the affairs of the Society. The chief purpose is to bring forth the facts, to air controversies, and to contribute information in brief form which the Members would not otherwise send as complete articles. Opinions are welcomed but such opinions, and the accuracy of the information presented, are the responsibility solely of the contributor. This Society is of, by, and for the Members

THE ARCUATE CONTROL SYSTEM

This system was invented and patented by R.C. Stroop at Jacksonville, Alabama in 1932-33.

The writer watched the work and helped (as much as a ten year old would be allowed) in the conversion of a WW-I Thomas Morse Scout biplane to a high-wing, parasol type with wing and empennage of Mr. Stroop's design, incorporating his arcuate controls. "Arcuate" is Webster's definition of a bow shape, or curved horn figure, this giving him a name for the system.

The inventor was looking forward to high sub-sonic speeds in aircraft and reasoned that the old hinge type control surface had too many drawbacks, which it did, in the interest of smooth airflow and drag.

To reduce drag, burble, and flutter, all the misgivings of the hinge and crack associated with conventional control surfaces was eliminated. Instead of a surface with the abrupt break and turbulent air flow, he got a smooth curve with favorable pressure gradients.

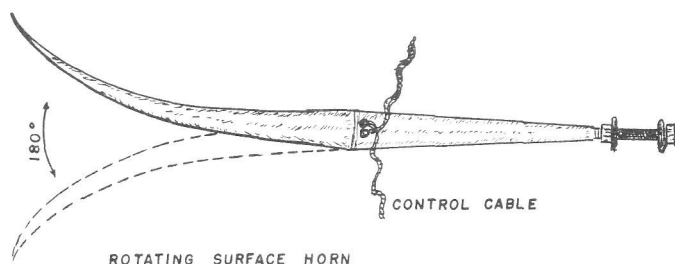
This photograph shows the smooth curve attained with the Stroop Arcuate Control System. Notice the elevator turned up and the aileron turned down in the foreground. Shown in picture is Mr. W.I. Greenleaf who backed Mr. Stroop and was one of the first executives in the country to use an airplane in his business travels,

MAIL SACK

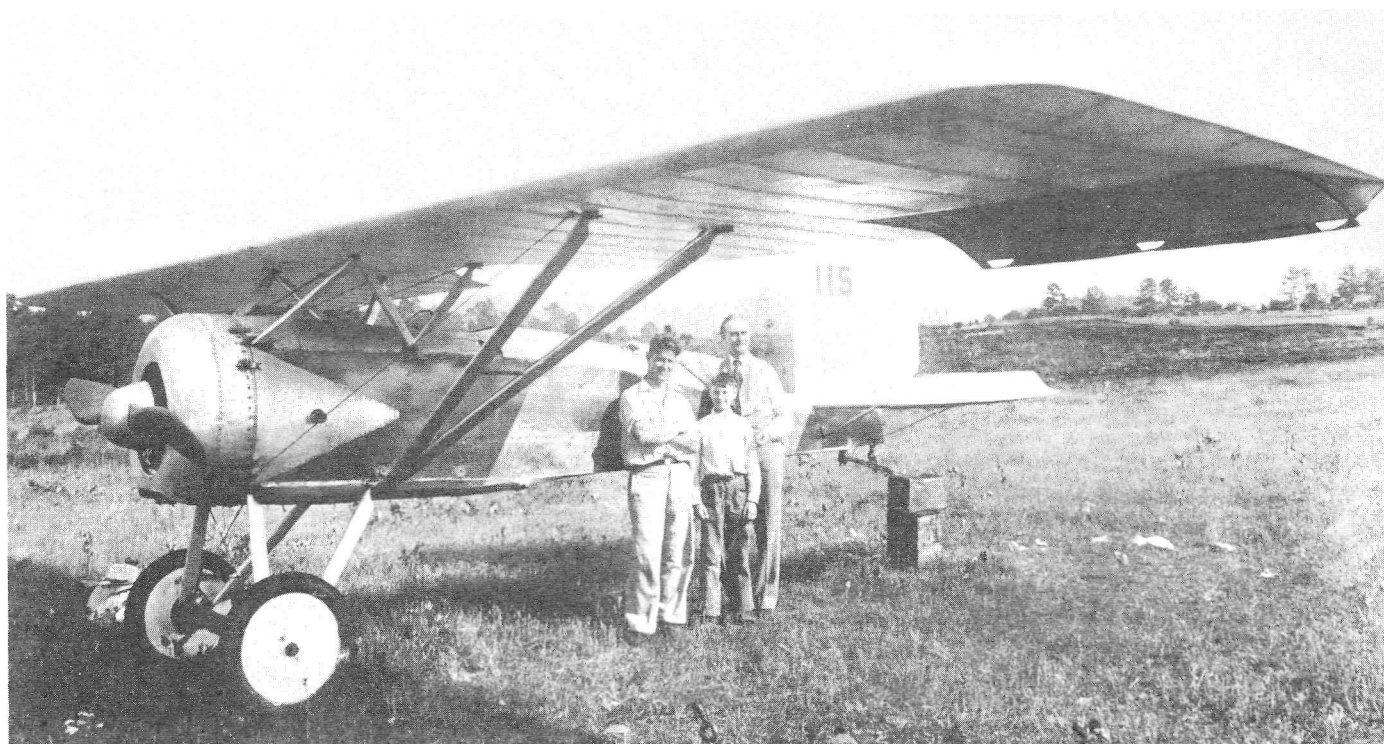
Although the rotary-powered Morse would not fly fast as we know speeds today, the speed was increased and control response was good.

The inventor is still experimenting, and an active pilot. He has built and converted about two dozen airplanes in his day, started out with building and learning to fly his own machine in the early days. He is a highly competent self made engineer with an uncanny eye for structures and airfoil design.

John D. Pruett, Box 265, Crosby, Miss.



Each control surface had a series of these horn shaped ribs attached to the spar. A cable was connected to each horn in such a way that the row of horns could be rotated a full 180 degrees to present up and down travel. The surface skin was flexible and followed the curve caused by the horns changing direction inside.



QUESTION: WORLD SPEED RECORD

This is in reference to the story, "The Flying of Racing Seaplanes," which appears in the Summer '62 issue of the JOURNAL.

The box on page 97, listing A.H. Orlebar's background, states that "In September, 1929 S/L Orlebar gained the World Air Speed Record at 357.7 mph in the Schneider Trophy Race..."

I have just completed a comprehensive book about air racing (it will be one of the titles of the MODERN AIRCRAFT SERIES, published by Sports Car Press and distributed by Crown Publishers, Inc. -- due for Feb. '63 release), and although I thought that I'd covered my research tracks pretty well anent the Schneiders, the above quote leaves me completely mystified. If Orlebar flew in the '29 Schneider I certainly have some re-writing to do -- and if he set a world speed record in the '29 Schneider Trophy Race, I've got to throw away about 30 pages of Mss. (which have already gone to publisher) and do some furious re-research! Please, say it isn't so.

According to my sources, the 1929 British team consisted of F/O Waghorn in an S-6; Flt. Lt. d'Arcy Greig in an S-5, and Flt/Off Atcherly in a second S-6. Each country was allowed to enter but three aircraft.

Joe Christy.

The WHATSS1T IDENTIFIED

In regards to the WHATSSIT?? that I sent in and that appeared in the Spring JOURNAL, I thought some curious members might be glad to learn that the machine is a Burgess-Curtis 1909 and reputed to be the first built in Massachusetts. The photo is one of the later configurations. (1)

This information was sent to me by Mr. L.S. Casey, the Curator of the Flight Craft Division of the National Air Museum. I've sent him a note of thanks, and I really appreciated this information.

Since requesting leads on Burgess-Dunne aircraft information I've received quite a few letters from Members here and there. It speaks well for the Society that so many Members are willing to take time and trouble to write another Member in such a spirit of cooperation.

Bartlett Gould.

(1) Vol. 7, No. 1, Page 56.

WHATSSIT EXPLAINED

In May of 1951, Emil Strasser, Warren Bodie and I stopped by Ontario Airport on a photo trip. We discovered an aircraft that was apparently a mystery as no one at the airport knew anything about it. A picture, sent in by Art Kreiger, was published in Volume 1, No.1



of the JOURNAL asking if any members knew the identity of it. Apparently there was no response and the identity remained a mystery. Just recently, quite by accident, I ran into a person who had worked on the project who gave me the following details:

Name: Curtis Wright 21
Engine: 125 Lycoming
Type: 4-place, mixed wood and metal construction
Built: February 1947
Manufacturer: Curtis Wright Industries

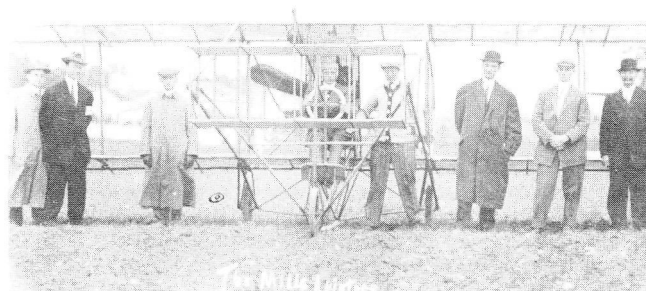
It should be noted that there was no connection between this company and Curtiss-Wright. Curtis, spelled with one s, was the first name of the gentlemen, Mr. Wright, who owned the company.

Harry Gann.

THE MILLS AVIATORS

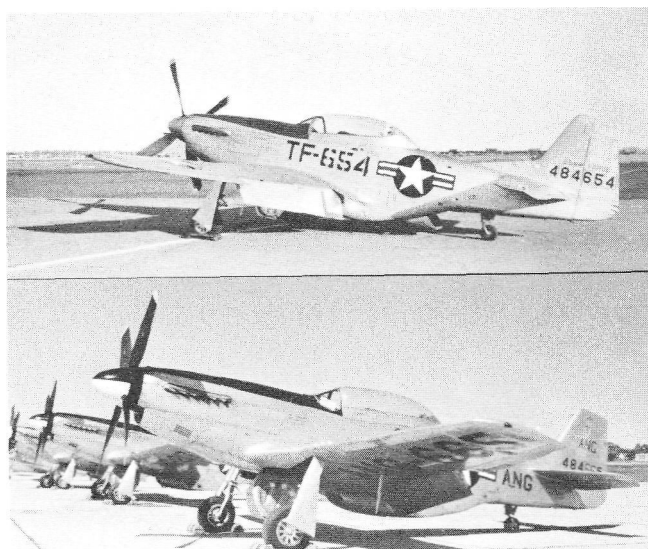
The writer, an aviation pioneer, being interested in the collection and the dissemination of information relating to the work and progress of early aviation, makes application for membership in the A.A.H.S. I have received three copies of your JOURNAL, all interesting. Having had the history of aviation unfold before me, it seemed that it was like getting a letter from home.

James R. Mills.



The Mills Aviators, Cicero Aviation Field, 1911.

TP-51D OR NOT?



In his letter Dave Brazelton states that the Mississippi ANG Mustang is not a TF-51D; he bases his conclusion on the fact that this particular ship is a single seater and therefore couldn't have been assigned a IP-designation. (Ref. Mail Sack, Winter, 1961, p.119) The Mississippi ANG ship was a single seater, but being used for pilot proficiency training was assigned the TP designation. To sum up, the USAF and ANG fighter units used Mustang types for training duties and even though they were the single seat variants, they carried training markings (TP). The 2 photos show clearly the 2 seater version of the P-51D with its long humped canopy which gave head room to the man in the back seat. Both these aircraft were designated TP-51D-25-NT. The airplane in ANG colors was used by the Wisconsin ANG. Note the IF "Buzz Numbers" on the USAF TP-51D. In closing, I'd like to say that the Wisconsin ANG P-51D-30-NT on page 119 was not designated as TP-51D as Dave Brazelton suggested.

Robert T. O'Dell.

USE OF JOURNAL SPACE

I have noted various comments concerning use of the space in the JOURNAL and would like to add my thoughts.

First, because of space limitations, the Introductions section should be kept to a minimum but I do not believe a single listing of the names and addresses is sufficient. A one- or two-line description of the member's interest or background is well worth the space.

Next, the Wants & Disposals section. Having used it a couple of times, with good results to date, I feel it is a very important part of the JOURNAL. In fact, it is the first page I read in every issue, and in many cases I have written from one to five letters to various members listed on that page on the day that I have received the JOURNAL. It is the best way that members interested in historical information can get together concerning their needs and wants. To quote a phrase from the letter sent to all applicants by the Directors of the Society, "to encourage fellowship and aid the exchange of materials between members, etc.", how else could this exchange of materials be placed if the Wants & Disposals section were eliminated?

Re: the AAHS Negative Library. I believe this is an excellent idea and feel that it is just barely getting off the ground. It is bound to increase over the next few years. This is an excellent method of spreading information, especially for those of us who become involved in trying to research a particular project.

To keep down duplication of effort, I believe it would be helpful if one page was taken in the JOURNAL each month and the names of the members working on various research projects be listed together with their particular projects. This would serve as a notice to all other members to either collaborate with the individual if they were interested in the same subject or send them any material which they may have on the particular subject. Think of what happens when two Members find out they have each spent countless manhours digging out identical information on a particular subject.

Robert H. Schepler

INTRODUCTIONS - A NEED

I do think it is a good idea to print a little more than just the name and address of new members in each issue of the JOURNAL. As an example of the use to which this information can be put, let me cite an experience of mine. In the spring issue I noticed that a new member was a pilot for EAL. Since Martinliners are

FALL - 1962

still flown by EAL, I wrote him and asked for help on any details which might come to his mind. It turned out that he had over 5000 hours in the 404's and was able to give me many interesting bits of information about the ships handling characteristics that I did not know. He has also promised to dig up an EAL flight manual on the 404 as well as a repair manual.

He is also planning to visit a brother here in San Mateo next summer, so here is an opportunity both for him and us to meet new members that might not have happened had not supplemental data been published in the JOURNAL. I vote for retaining the service.

Charles Anderson.

INTRODUCTIONS - A CODE

In response to the query regarding space in the JOURNAL taken up by membership introductions, I have just spent an hour trying to devise a code to fit the members listed in this issue. Unfortunately, it is impossible to cover every thing, but a lot could be done in many cases.

CP	Commercial pilot
TP	Transport pilot
USNP	United States Navy pilot
USMCP	
USNGP	
USAFP	
P	"jes' plain ol' pilot"
ACM	Aircraft Mech.
MB	Model Builder
C	Collector
b	books
p	pictures

All this might add up to something like this -
 George Egroeg.P-C(WW1)b/p., or Henry
 Yrneh.USAF/ACM-MB.
 Well, it would work in some cases.

Ernest True.

CERTAIN ELEMENTS

I would like to pass on some remarks regarding a certain element of our Society. I have listened at some length to the public relations types at my company and they relate situations where some of our Members are making most unreasonable requests for photos, factory serial numbers, and military serial numbers. In one instance one of our Members managed to obtain some data as to the location of obsolete photo files. As a result he noted the location, box number, and so on, on his request for a batch of photographs. There was a lot of explaining to do.

This is not the only case, but one of the most brazen. The A.A.H.S. should not be characterized by this type of "button collector"; soon the doors will be closed to the serious researcher. I have no solution to this problem, for if these button collectors continue their hobby in this fashion I am sure that any word of naming would be interpreted as applying to "the other fellow."

Dustin W. Carter

MISDIRECTED RESEARCH

A while back I wrote a letter to the effect that I thought a lot of effort in aviation historical matters was misdirected or ignored. I have listed here some of the things that come to mind which I (as an individual that lived through 27 years of aviation as a pilot) feel should be matters the historians should be determining. These are matters around which history is recorded: significant things which produce such books as "The Narrow Margin", which will probably be the ultimate definitive book on the Battle of Britain.

Ergo: 1. For any particular airplane, what was the mission for which it was designed? What was its range, altitude, airspeed and "G" envelope? Did it succeed after it was developed, and if so what other matters contributed to its success? If unsuccessful, why? (S03C-1, BF2C-1, SB2A-1, F2A-1, ad infinitum.)

2. How was any particular aircraft looked upon by its users? Was it docile, soggy, snappy or neutral in its personality? How long did it stay useful, and what contributed to this (salesmanship, ignorance of maker and buyer, appropriations, cost, politics, etc.). Why are some serials better or worse than others?

3. Who (i.e., what groups, military, individuals famous or pedestrian, etc.) used it and how long? What did it accomplish in the advancement of aviation? Did it accomplish this because of the operators, or in spite of them, and why?

Some examples of these case histories are: The Sopwith "Camel". It was credited with more enemy aircraft destroyed than any other allied plane of WWI. Because of its merits? Its pilots, or because there were more "Camels" built?

Why wasn't the Martin-Baker fighter produced in numbers for Britain? Previous commitments to "Spits" and "Hurries"? Official disfavor, as for the Bristol Monoplane in WWI? Lack of communications from tester to procurer? Manufacturing difficulties? Salesmanship?

Why was the P-40 continued in production well into WWII, when this airplane reached its peak of usefulness rather early and was obsolete by 1942.

This could go on for pages.

Somewhere, today, some person is still alive who can answer, or bird-dog to the people with the answers for all of above questions and the questions that such an approach raises. SIGNIFICANCE.'

Serial numbers are apparently important (I really fail to see it, but this could be because I don't understand their significance) but not as important as the matters I have tried to get across here.

H.S. Packard,

USAF INDEX OF SERIAL NUMBERS

I recently acquired a copy of the index of serial numbers allotted to USAF aircraft from 1920-1958. A number of Members I correspond with have indicated the scarcity of serial listings, so I've been compiling listings of individual aircraft models from the book and supplying these listings to those who desire them. I'm sure there are many AAHS Members who are in need of this data. I will gladly give help to any member in the serial number respect. If a member desires any listing of any Air Service, Air Corps or Air Force aircraft which the book covers, just drop me a line and indicate what listing - or listings - he wants.

Airmail postage should be used if prompt return of the serial listing(s) is desired. All listings are in serial number sequence.

John T. Wible.

Lake Zurich, Illinois

To Douglas Aircraft Company
Long Beach, California

Sirs:

I want to thank you for the 50th Naval Aviation Souvenir Issue. I enjoyed some of the pictures, for I taught myself to fly in Illinois in 1909, and joined Glenn Curtiss in 1910-11-12. Winters at North Island and summers in Hammondsport, New York. I worked on the first square-float and the two-propeller job at North Island. We put a long-float on our regular ship and Curtiss flew it and so did I. . . . landed on North Island. Then we monkeyed with a boat-type. It was so out of balance that every time I put on power it would nose down into water. So I had to have Doctor Wildman lay on the tail and off we went!

I have all these pictures in my 49-pound scrapbook that Paul Garber asked me to will to Smithsonian Museum. Also have pictures of Eugene Ely flying on battleship, Lieutenant Ellyson flying off 3 wires, and first hydro with box-control in front. I helped instruct Jack Towers on our first hydroplane, Mohan Seeig (first Hindu pilot), McClaskey, and Captain Capsciua (first Greek Army man to fly).

After I quit flying I had charge, as field-chief, at 43 air shows, so I knew many of the old-timers. I still hear from Blanche Scott. She and I were flying at Squantum, Massachusetts, when Harriet Quimby and Willard were dumped out of the Bleriot and Harriet landed near the island. I rushed out in the water up to my neck and got her. We worked... but she was dead. The mob was on the field and Blanche was still flying around up there. I got worried that maybe she would have to land in the mob. I said, "Boys, lets take the body to the other end of field." The mob followed. Blanche's motor quit but she landed o.k. She always introduces me as the man who saved her life.

I could go on for hours with my experiences, for I am 81 years of age—have sure spent some time in aviation.

It is also so wonderful to get the American Aviation Historical Society's magazine (AAHS)—has lots of pictures too. I still belong to all the aviation clubs: OX-5's, Silver Wings, etc. Never did join the Early Birds.

George M. Dunlap

AMELIA EARHART COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

A campaign is being waged to get an Amelia Earhart Commemorative Postage Stamp issued this year, and we

A.A.H.S. JOURNAL

wonder if the American Aviation Historical Society would like to help. This stamp has been under consideration for some four years, and now the Post Office Department says that "there is not enough public interest" in it to merit its issuance.

A postage stamp is the highest post mortem honor our nation can bestow upon a great citizen, and we must overcome the unaccountable resistance of the Post Office by sending thousands, millions, of letters to the
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
Post Office Department
Washington 25, D.C.

to show them just how great is public interest in this honor for Amelia Earhart. It seems they weigh the letters; we can bring it up to tons if only the word can be gotten around!

Notes to congressmen and senators requesting their support for the stamp would also help.

Miss Gretchen Roy.

AN OPEN LETTER ON THE NEGATIVE LIBRARY

The two letters in the JOURNAL, Volume No. 2 resulted in renewed interest in the Negative Library and some donations. As soon as possible a catalog will be available listing all photos. Peter Bowers commented regarding the lack of information in the lists. This was a valid comment. Space alone prevented more information being presented in the JOURNAL. All that is known on each negative is written on the front of the negative container along with the name of the donor or loaner.

One question was raised which deserves a public reply. I admit I'd not seriously considered this condition. The question was, "What happens to the negatives if I give up the library". The answer is quite simple. All donors will be immediately contacted. If they wish their negatives returned all will be at my expense. Those who loaned items will of course have them returned immediately. Since I had no thoughts of procuring anyone else's negatives for my own file this question was a surprise. Nevertheless I see where this doubt has arisen and I welcome this chance to set any doubtful minds at rest. And, to the one who raised the question, my thanks.

A.A.H.S. members are requested to observe the limits on negatives to be obtained at one time. The numerical limit is 10 and the time limit is 14 days from receipt of the negatives.

To those who wrote their encouragement and comments my thanks.

Roger F. Besecker.

THE MR FORCE ACADEMY LIBRARY

During a summer vacation trip to Colorado I took time to visit the Air Force Academy - and I recommend this to any A.A.H.S. member who finds himself in the vicinity. Visitors may drive right onto the grounds through the South Entrance or Main Entrance, both of which are on the Colorado Springs-Denver Freeway. A map will be provided by the gate guard which will help in finding the way around the vast (17,900 acres) reservation. The Academy is impressive from any viewpoint. Fortunate indeed is the air-minded young man who can earn an appointment to this institution!

High point of the visit was the Library. Lt. Col. George V. Fagan, Director of the Library, very kindly spent the morning showing us about. He is proud of this place (which he helped design and equip) and so he should be. All books and other literary materials are out in the open, available to the browser or serious reader instantly, nothing is hidden away in the base-

ment. Some 150,000 items now occupy the shelves - and there is room for as many more. In addition to books, the Library subscribes to scores of magazines and newspapers printed in all languages, all of which are arranged according to subject. There is a sizeable collection of microfilms, including coverage of both the London Times and The New York Times, the only two newspapers which are fully indexed from Volume 1, Number 1.

A well-thumbed copy of the A.A.H.S. JOURNAL in the magazine room; this publication has many regular readers among the Cadet group. (Colonel Fagan has contributed book reviews). While the regular curriculum does not afford the average Cadet a great deal of free reading time, there is a keen interest present in aviation history - and specific incidents are often the subjects of student papers.

The Library collection grows at the rate of about 20,000 items a year - and some 3000 items are donated. I was rather surprised to learn of these donations, imagining that such a huge federal facility could well afford to purchase what it needed. Col. Fagan advised that he works on a tight budget and that many years will pass before he can round out the collection with titles still needed. Obviously, the Library welcomes donations in books.

Are these facilities available to writers and historians who have no connection with the Air Force? Yes, but interested individuals should write to the Director and make suitable arrangements to use the materials. Collections of papers of such famous persons as General "Billy" Mitchell are now reaching the Academy to be preserved as a part of USAF history.

Looking through the wealth of material available and in walking about the grounds, one is impressed by the opportunity for a writer to put together an excellent book about this amazing military academy! Oddly enough, no one seems to have thought of it.

Len Morgan,

KREIDER-REISNER and WACO

Many thanks for bringing Glenn Buffington's letter to my attention. I did not intend to imply that Ames Kreider and Louie Reisner were "affiliated" with "Waco Aircraft", because they were not, but they were "associated" with WACO "airplanes" as dealers.

To review the original text, it reads as follows: "Kreider & Reisner's happy and even profitable association with Waco airplanes in the years just previous, left them with some indelible memories and apparently this had influenced them a good deal towards investigating the attractive possibilities that were becoming apparent for the manufacture of commercial-type airplanes and spurred them hastily on in the designing and developing of their own "Challenger" biplane."

Sometimes when text is condensed and edited to fit a certain space, it doesn't always convey the meaning intended.

I'd like to make a note that photo-credits were omitted in Vol. 7, #3; photos for ATC 18, 20 & 21 were submitted by Member Stephen J. Hudek and photo for ATC 19 was from Fairchild Aircraft Div. Likewise, photos for ATC 11 & 13 (Vol. 6, #3) were submitted by Charles W. Meyers.

Joseph P. Juptner.

HOOK-ON to the HINDENBURG

I have followed with great interest the several articles which have appeared in the A.A.H.S. JOURNAL regarding American, British, and German airship skyhook experiments, and you seem to have covered the field quite thoroughly - with one exception. I am referring

to the "hook-on's" carried out by Ernst Udet of the Luftwaffe early in 1937 to a temporary trapeze fitted to the LZ-129, HINDENBURG. These tests are mentioned only in passing in the few Zeppelin histories that mention them at all, and to my knowledge no photographs have ever been published. I do not even know the type of aircraft used, as Vaeth only refers to it as "a small biplane" on P. 192 of his book GRAF ZEPPELIN. I am writing in the hope that perhaps you can contact one of the authorities in this field regarding the possibility of preparing an article on this final attempt at mating HTA with LTA, or at least include this letter in the "Mail Sack" section of a future bulletin to see if anything turns up. Judging from the interest shown in past articles along this line, I am certain I am not alone in desiring more information regarding this matter. At any rate, I thought I would bring this to your attention and shall look forward to seeing what, if anything, develops.

Zemon Hansen.

MARINE CORPS MUSEUM

The Editor, Sir,

We are compiling a pictorial history of all aircraft used by the Marine Corps. This is to become part of the Marine Corps historical records held by the Museum here at Quantico. We have a list compiled by the Historical Section showing the 411 aircraft types used between 1913 and 1960. There are now photos of 319 of the 411 aircraft in our files, however, other official files have been well screened without turning up any of the missing "links". This has brought us to the point of writing to all of the "old timers" we know for assistance, as well as other Members of the American Aviation Historical Society, with very good results so far.

We will appreciate your including this information in a future issue of the JOURNAL. Photos would only be needed long enough to have copies made in the Headquarters Marine Corps Photo Lab and then would, of course, be promptly returned. Also, there are many Members, I am sure, who would like a list of USMC aircraft even though they may not have any photos. I will be happy to send one if they will include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. All requests and offers of photos should be sent to:

Captain J. M. Elliott, USMC
SOES MCAS
Quantico, Virginia

Participation of the Members now seems to be our only hope of completing this project, and filling the voids in the records. Any assistance you can give in passing the word along on this project will be greatly appreciated.

J.M. Elliott, Capt., USMC.

TOOLS OF RESEARCH

Have you ever been working at this hobby (or profession) of researching some part of aviation and then just as you think you have it all, some thing else pops up? This is the interesting part of it, but on the other hand it can be overwhelmingly discouraging, especially when it turns out to be an elementary fact.' It has caused me to do some evaluating, as others have done and written about, as to just what are we, as researchers and historians, working for as a constructive objective of our AAHS?

I have probably thousands of minute details and facts concerning aviation history. Most every member of our Society does. Wouldn't it be ideal if we of the AAHS could correlate and record all this data; tie

a big blue ribbon around it and say here it all is! This is almost fantasy, but might it not be an objective?

As an example, AMC published a document entitled, U.S. ARMY AND AIR FORCE SERIALS THROUGH 1958 (or something close to that). For Air Force serial numbers there is no document more valuable to the aircraft historian when it comes to this subject. Yet I hear many of us criticize it because of irregularities or errors that they have noted. That is fine for the individual who has found the errors, but how about us who are unaware, and use this data as fact? How about the historian ten years from now using the same tool?

This is just one document, just one of the many standard tools that the average aviation historian should be able to have in his possession, and to depend upon as being accurate. Such books as a manual type publication, of AF serials, Navy serials, etc., should be available to all. Then go into material in the aircraft manufacturers, listing every type. Many small fragments of this has already been done along this line as far as research by individuals is concerned. Outstanding examples have already appeared in our JOURNAL. And, too, much has already been published somewhere in periodicals, but then, just try to find some of it now. And then how about the years to come?

We all have different interests in aviation and that is ideal. Those interested in AF serials, as an example, could be organized into a committee to correct this present "tool" of AF serials, etc. People interested in various manufacturers could work together on this one common interest subject, and could come up with outstanding results. These groups or individuals couldn't be expected to do it all to perfection without outside help, but our JOURNAL is an excellent form of communication to find the person who knows the mission link. To expedite the request for added help on information, perhaps a bi-quarterly supplement to our JOURNAL could be circulated just concerning this project.

Publication of all this data after it is completed, cost, etc., are very important, but at this stage with years of work ahead for just the correlation, these are minor details at this time. If these ideas are accepted, organization would be the important factor. Major subjects of research would have to be decided upon; then one individual who is particularly interested in a subject, selected to see it through. When each project is done, publication of a standard size and format would be ideal. We know from experience that more data or corrections would continue to come to light for most subjects that would be published. Correction or supplement sheets could be published, so that these basic documents would never need to become obsolete. In this, all the data for these subjects can be consolidated under one cover for those who are interested to maintain their library. For material that has already been commercially published on a subject that is considered up to the standards we are striving for, this item could be considered and listed as the basic document. This could hold true for future commercial publications of the future, many of which are in the development stage now. What a windfall for an author to be given the stamp of approval on the authenticity of his material, and selected as the authority of the subject. Maybe this in itself will increase the quality of some of the published material. These publications too, could be corrected and kept current in the same manner as outlined above. It would be the responsibility of all members to inform our collecting agencies of new data, corrections or reference sources, so that these supplemental sheets could be prepared for the basic document.

Let's not be over optimistic, this project would take years of work to see it completed or well on the way, but wouldn't it be a worthy contribution to aviation? New subjects would continue to be added. I foresee such a project considered the standard source of information for these selected basic subjects, all

others would fee in support of it. We then would have common working tools. Might this be the something that we of the AAHS could "give" to aviation instead of just the "taking"?

Robert C. Mlkesh, 5612 Elmendorf Dr., Washington, D.C.

BISSELL and ARNOLD

On Page 36 of (vol. 7, Ho. 1, Spring 1962) I was surprised to see and learn that Clayton Bissell was with the 148th during WWI. I was in his photo section in Delhi for a while. He was quite a guy. At that time he didn't appear old enough to have been in the first one. Have a picture of him and General H. H. Arnold taken in Delhi. H. H. ordered the negative destroyed, as he didn't like it. He inspected all photos and those he didn't like went out. I remember I got the job of delivering a folder of 8x10's to his office and waited outside the door until he checked and returned those he liked. This one he didn't.

K. M. Sumney, 311 Ryan Drive, Pittsburgh 20, Penna.



Generals Bissell and Arnold

CURRENTLY REGISTERED "WILDCATS"

FM-2, N20HA(R)



After reading over Prank Greene's excellent article, "The Wildcat Story", in the JOURNAL, I was prompted to submit the following photographs and information on currently registered Grumman "Wildcats".

Many of the members are probably aware of the fact that a number of "Wildcats" are still flying. The F.A.A. publication, Statistical Survey of U.S. Civil Aircraft, dated January, 1958, listed sixteen as being "on the list", while only five were listed as "active". A few have been modified for agricultural work. Some of the registrations seem to indicate that the aircraft concerned has been registered or re-registered recently.

Descriptions of the "Wildcat" photos are:

- N20HA(R) FM-2 Sprayer, four tanks. Paradise Airport, Phoenix, Arizona, on 3 May 1958.
- N777A PM-2 This FM-2 has been modified to include a small cabin aft of the cockpit, seating three persons, probably the only FM-2 to be modified in this manner. Orlando, Fla., 11 Aug. 1955.
- N29B(R) FM-2 Sprayer, four tanks. Arizona registration. Safford, Arizona. 4 July 1958.

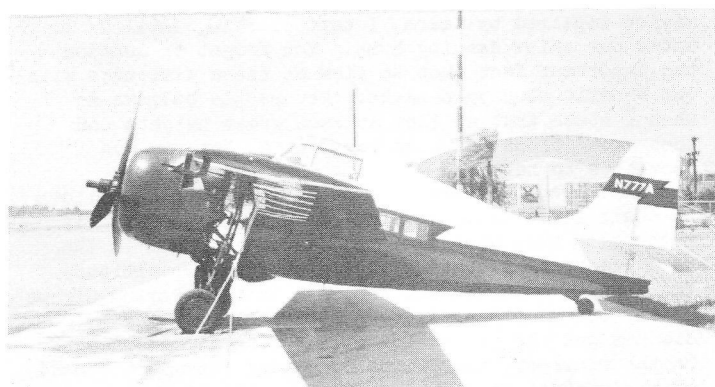
Others recently photographed were:

- N58918(F) FM-2 Sprayer, two tanks. Carries Montana Agricultural registration #386. Phoenix, Arizona, 10 June 1958.
- N4629V FM-2 Standard version, Bakersfield, Calif., 9 September 1956.

Brian R. Baker, P.O. Box 116, Bankstown, New So. Wales.

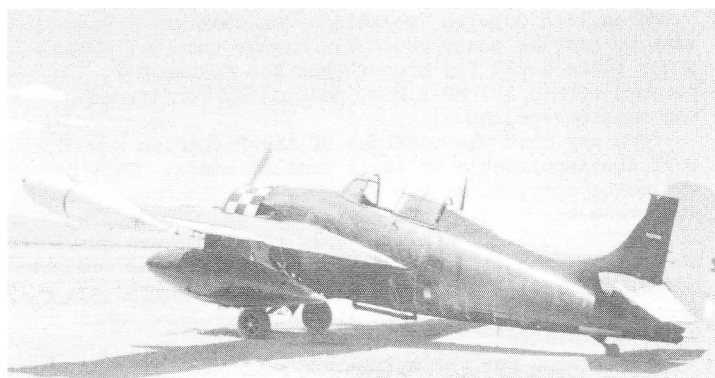
In response to the request for additional data on "Wildcats" in existence (JOURNAL, Spring 1962, p. 46) Member David Menard submits:

FM-2 Reg. No. N35MK Owned by Lyman Rice, Laconia, N.H., May 1959



FM-2, N777A

FM-2, N29B(R)



FROM THE OTHER SIDE

One of the popular best sellers in the years immediately following World War I was the book Fighting The Flying Circus by America's Ace, Captain E. V. "Eddie" Rickenbacker. Now, over 40 years later, a member of that "Flying Circus", who flew for a short time with Jasta 10 of the famous Richtofen Jagdegeschwader, reminisces after reading the book. A.A.H.S. Member Joseph Doerflinger has written an open letter to "Captain Eddie" in which he compares his experiences with Rickenbacker's account in his book. There is a possibility that Doerflinger may have encountered pilots from the American squadrons in the air battles in which he fought. Doerflinger, incidentally, also has published a book on his flying experiences, titled Step-child Pilot, which was reviewed in the Winter 1959 Journal (Volume 4 Number 4). Here is his letter:

Dear Captain Rickenbacker:

A few days ago I completed a first reading of your excellent book, Fighting The Flying Circus. Although all this happened more than 40 years ago, your tales and experiences of fighting in the air in that Great War, so ably expressed in your book, brought back many memories to me.

I too was a fighter pilot in World War I in 1918, but unfortunately not on your side. I flew with the "Flying Circus", as you call the Richtofen Squadron, and later with Jagdstaffel 64 of the German Air Force. It's even possible we met in the air, if not while I was flying with the Richtofen Squadron, then perhaps when I was with Jasta 64, located in the S. Mihiel sector.

Yes, it sure was cold at 20,000 feet. I became aware of this fact on my very first flight to the Front. We left the ground under a scorching summer sun. When we reached 20,000 feet the cold was biting. To make matters worse, my goggles did not fit well and the icy wind got underneath them to start my eyes watering. When enemy planes appeared, I was in bad shape. My vision impaired by tears, I kept circling until I noted our ships heading home. You forgot to mention the important fact that we flew at these altitudes without benefit of oxygen masks. Few people believe me when I state that we flew at such great heights under those conditions in those early days, but you and I know this to be true.

I admired your practice of accompanying new pilots on their first trip over the enemy's lines, actually protecting them when aloft and assisting them in the hard practice of battle, flying at a higher altitude than they. Such was not the case in the "Flying Circus", or any other German fighting squadron. The new pilot did not get the protection of the flight commander. On the contrary, the flight commander flew at the head of his staffel while the rest of us strung back to form the legs of the "V", each plane flying a little higher than the plane ahead. I was always the last and the highest on the right. It was in this position on September 5, 1918, flying at 20,000 feet over the Allied lines in the region of St. Amand, that I was shot down by an English Sopwith "Dolphin". On that day I was sure no hostile plane could fly higher than we. What other plane could fly higher than the Fokker D-7, powered with a 185 HP B.M.W. motor? My confidence was soon dispelled.

You say that the machines of the Richtofen Squadron were distinguishable by their scarlet noses. This is not quite correct, as you probably have learned since you wrote the book. The "Flying Circus" was made up of Staffeln 4, 6, 10 and 11. Only the airplanes of Staffel 11, the original Richtofen Staffel, had red noses. Staffel 4 had black motor hoods, Staffel 6 a vertically banded fuselage, Staffel 10 yellow motor hoods and Staffel 11 red hoods.

The reason for the multi-colors of the various Jagdstaffeln was to enable pilots to tell them apart



Joseph Doerflinger

in the air. The special insignia of the individual pilot told at once who was flying the plane. Thus it was no fancy of the leaders of the squadron or staffel to have their planes painted in one single color. In combat, when one saw an all white Fokker, one knew it was Goering at the controls; an all yellow one was Loewenhardt; an all red one, Udet, and so on. In a dog-fight it was very important to know where one's leader was.

I was surprised to learn that you and your fighter pilots flew night missions. This was something unheard of in the German Air Force at that time. Night missions were flown exclusively by two or four motored bombers and sometimes by observation planes like the Rumpler, Hanoveraner, or Halberstadt, but never a fighting plane. We were constantly on the move from one small field to another, and the fields were not equipped for night flying. It would have been impossible for a fighter pilot to find his home port after a night mission, and besides the field would be too small to make a safe landing.

Equally I was surprised to learn that you were not equipped with parachutes. To be sure, only front line pilots were given parachutes in the German Air Force. I never saw any at the training schools of Hanover, Halberstadt or even at the pursuit school at Valenciennes. Parachutes were still in the experimental stage at that time. We sat on them. Wearing them made it hard to get clear of the ship if we needed to jump, so the plan was to jump and pull the 'chute' after us. In most instances, however, the parachute caught on the angular rudder, tearing it to pieces or pulling the pilot down to his doom. In some cases, of course, parachutes did save pilots' lives.

I agree with you that parachutes may have saved the lives of Lt. Smyth and Lt. Alexander B. Bruce, who collided at high altitude. Just ten days before the Smyth and Bruce catastrophe occurred, I saw Lt. Wentz collide with Lt. Loewenhardt, leader of Jasta 10 of the Richtofen Squadron. Lt. Wentz saved himself by use of his parachute and still lives today in Germany. Lt. Loewenhardt's 'chute' did not open soon enough to save him and he was killed.

I have read with great interest your story about

the captured Fokker D-7 landing on your field at Verdun, the pilot stating he had become lost in the fog. This D-7 is the famous "U.10" on display in the Smithsonian Institution. At the time of the "U.10" incident, I was with Jagdstaffel 6k and therefore in a good position to know some of the facts about the flight. Here is what we pilots of Jasta 6k knew to be facts and how we felt about the whole affair.

The "U.10" was captured (?) by three American lads from the 95th Aero Squadron on November 9, 1918, two days before the signing of the Armistice. The plane belonged to Jasta 65, whose aerodrome was close by that of Jasta 6k. The name of the pilot who flew it was Lt. Heinz Freiherr von Beaulieu-Marconnay, whose brother Oliver, commander of Jasta 19, had been killed two weeks previously.

November 9 was a perfectly clear day as I recall - no fog and not a cloud in the sky in the Conflans, Mars-le-Tour area. If Lt. Heinz got lost, he did it on purpose. When we pilots of Jasta 6k later heard of his getting "lost", we all had a good laugh over it.

"C'est le finis de la Guerre!" How well I can understand your Job, your celebrations and hilarity at the declaration of the Armistice. Let me quote Ernst Udet on the happenings on this memorable night:

"While the sentries marched up and down outside, the officers sat in the mess. Their faces bore signs of weariness but no bitterness. That night they did not speak of the lost war. None of them was older than twenty-three or twenty-four and they discussed the inconsequence of youth, for whom the question as to what they were dying for did not exist. They had killed in order not to be killed themselves. They knew that they had not spared themselves. The thought of the end had no terrors for them... For they had won, so to speak, because they were still alive."

Joseph Doerflinger, 2768 N. 7th Lane, Milwaukee 6, Wisc.

EASTERN AIR LINES, INC.
Eastern Air Lines Building
New York 20, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Doerflinger:

Thanks so much for your letter of March 28 enclosing the "Open Letter" addressed to me, which is to be published in the Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society.

I appreciate very much the "Open Letter" and have one outstanding comment that I wish to make. Years later, I had the good fortune of meeting Ernst Udet and found him to be exactly what you describe him, a great fighter pilot and the perfect gentleman, human in every respect toward the high and low alike.

In 1922, I had the privilege of being entertained by Herman Goering, Ernst Udet, Milch and two other pilots whose names I do not remember in a restaurant in the cellar in Berlin because it had to be done in secret, since all officers and particularly pilots were supposed to be warmongers. Nevertheless, we discussed our past, present and future very freely and factually.

Then in 1935, I again had the opportunity of meeting Goering, Milch and Udet. Udet was assigned as my guard, so to speak, and he showed me around and I found the accomplishments of the intervening years were true to form and in accordance with the discussions at dinner that night in 1922 in the little restaurant in the cellar in Berlin.

This is your permission to use the letter and I am grateful for your review and forthrightness. Also, I am sending a copy to Mr. George Hardie, Jr., President of the American Aviation Historical Society, so that he may be familiar with my approval.

Most sincerely,

E. V. Rickenbacker
Chairman of the Board

ADDENDUM - GERMAN WWI SERIAL NUMBERS

It is with some reluctance that this letter is written because I know that the problem of German W.W.I army aircraft serial numbers can not be easily solved; and the scant information available is more likely to lead to confusion than clarification. However, I can clarify the R - Plane (Riesenflugzeug or giant aircraft) numbering system which was mentioned in both previous letters to the Editor on this topic [1] [2]. During the study for our forthcoming book [3], I was very fortunate in discovering a complete list of all R - Planes ordered by the German Army. Rather than wait until the book is published, I feel it will clarify matters if I impart some of this information now for the benefit of AAHS Members. But let me warn the members that even the R - Plane numbering system contains several exceptions and inconsistencies which will disappoint those who are looking for a "fool-proof" numbering system.

At this point I should like to take time-out for a moment to describe the rationale behind the German Army aircraft numbering system. It has been explained before [4], but perhaps not from official German documents from which the following information is taken. Furthermore it will confirm the correctness of the Editor's choice of presenting German aircraft numbers [5]. From an Idflieg document titled "Abbreviated Aircraft Designations" [6] comes the following translation:

"The complete designation of an aircraft type consists of:

1. An abbreviation of the manufacturer's name.
2. An abbreviation of the class of aircraft.
3. A Roman numeral which identifies the development sequence of that class.
4. An Arabic number taken in sequence from the batch numbers of the contract.
5. An abbreviation of the year in which the contract was placed.

For Example: Alb.B.II.357.15.
LVG.C.I.49.15."

That is how it was done in late 1915. By 1918 the format of the designation was changed in appearance but not in content. The following can be found in BLV for 1918 [7]:

"Identification of the Aircraft and its Component Parts."

"... the metal shield (placed in three locations on the aircraft) shall carry the military designation and acceptance date. The military designation shall adhere to the specifications published in a special list by Idflieg and consist of the following:

- a. Parent manufacturer, ie: "Alb".
- b. Class designation consisting of a letter and identity number, ie: "Blla".
- c. In case the aircraft was built under license, the license manufacturer, ie: "(Mer)".
- d. The aircraft serial number taken consecutively from the batch ordered, ie: "4038".

- [1] Lt. Col. Jesse Thompson's Letter to Editor, AAHS JOURNAL, Vol. 6, No. 2, (Summer 1961), p. 125.
- [2] Peter M. Bower's Letter to Editor, AAHS JOURNAL, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Spring 1962), p. 61.
- [3] Haddow, G. and Grosz, Peter M. The German Giants, Putnams, 1962.
- [4] Bowers, Peter M., "World War One Aircraft Designations", Aeronautica, Vol. 4, No. 3 & 4, July - Dec. 1952.
- [5] AAHS JOURNAL, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Spring 1962), p. 62 (Editorial Comment).
- [6] Letter to Army Squadrons, "Inspektion der Fliegertruppen, Sekt. IIIa, B. Nr. 88651 Kr., Berlin-Schöneberg, 8 August 1915."
- [7] "Bau und Liefervorschriften für Heeresflugzeuge (BLV) 1918", (Construction and Delivery Specifications for Army Aircraft), p. 27. Inspektion der Fliegertruppen, Berlin, 1919.

e. The year the aircraft was ordered, ie: "/17". The military designation then shall read as Alt B IIA (Mer) 4087/17."

These are the only official regulations I have been able to locate and I would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have additional information. So we see that either B.II or B II is correct, but I prefer the former because the period behind the letter automatically assures a space between letter and Roman number.

At any rate German designations written as D-3, G-II or C3 are incorrect according to the BLV of 1918 and should be discarded once and for all. It is rewarding to see that the Editor has taken the step to standardize German designations in a correct manner and I hope that this step will convince other AAHS members to follow suit.

Admittedly exceptions to the rule exist as exemplified by the Fok. D.7 (O.A.W.) 2009/18 mentioned by the Editor (5) and there are others on record, but we cannot go wrong by following official regulations, that were used on the majority of German aircraft as shown by an analysis of photographs and documents.

Now that the "system" has been explained let us investigate the problem of the elusive batch, serial or order numbers. The reason that these interest us is because a complete list of batch numbers could provide a clue to production figures and a breakdown of types ordered. Lacking a complete list, the only possible method of arriving at production figures is to compile number lists from photos and documents in hopes that the total quantity in a batch can be deduced. For instance, if we found reference to a Fok. E.V 120/18 and 136/18 we could assume that the numbers in between were also Fok. E.V. machines. The problem is that not all 48,500 aircraft produced during World War I by the Germans were photographed nor are the serial numbers always intelligible. Furthermore we need to know the first and last number in any batch to arrive at a definite production figure. In my opinion, batch numbers will always remain a mystery until we discover German source material that will clarify the situation. Perhaps the portion of the German Luftwaffe archives which the British received (8) (purported to be operational material as opposed to technical material, most of which was sent to the USA) and is now in the hands of the Air Ministry, will throw some light on the problem; but up to now the WWI portion has been unavailable according to my information.

Now back to the R-plane numbering system. Peter Bowers is correct in assuming that R-plane numbers were given sequential airframe or serial numbers, and as a matter of fact they were generally referred to as such, i.e.: R.39, R.52, R.21, etc. This was due to the fact that R-plane serial numbers were assigned consecutively without regard to the year in which the aircraft was ordered. R-plane numbers began with the Siemens-Schuckert R.I 1/15 and ended with the Staaken R.XIVA (Schul) 86/18 (we are not certain about the /18.). In other words R-plane numbers did not begin with the number "7" every year. There was no R.1/16 or R.1/17 for instance.

It will dismay those who are seeking an answer to a fool-proof numbering system, such as the "methodical" Germans are popularly touted to be so fond of, that some very high R-plane numbers were assigned in 1916 entirely apart from any numbering sequence! The serials R.201/16 to R.206/16 were set aside for, we surmise, long-range project studies. We know these types to have been planned as all-metal bombers of prodigious size. None of these were completed during the war.

Another example of the numbering system being flexible is in the case of the DFW R.II of which six were ordered in 1916 (R.15/16 to R.20/16) and indeed R.15/16 and R.16/16 were delivered as such, yet the R.17/17 received a 1917 order number. We don't know exactly why; perhaps the contract was revised in 1917 to include the installation of a supercharger which was fitted to the R.17/17.

I would like to propose a theory that may be amendable to confirmation. Initially in 1911 or 1912, when the numbering system seems to have been introduced starting with one-digit numbers, it was easy and convenient to continue with higher and higher numbers. But the war brought a great increase in aircraft production and the numbering system began to get unwieldy. It was simple to keep R-plane numbers in sequence because production runs were low. However, in other classes, numbers like 24,382/17 would seem to be very impractical and lead to bookkeeping problems. There is no question that it is more efficient and time-saving to write, paint, stamp, and emboss a three or four digit number.

Furthermore with license manufacturers producing in quantity the designation could become excessively long. Consequently, some time during the war, the decision was made to renew the serial numbers on a yearly basis, perhaps beginning with a three digit number as proposed by Peter Bowers (2). Even so production runs for 1917 and 1918 were high due to the "Amerika-Programm" and serial numbers did turn into five-digit figures, i.e.: Rumpler C.Ic (Germ.) 14177/17, Hannover C.II 13264/17, Hannover C1.III 16052/17, Zeppelin C.II 15803/17, and SSW D.IV 11501/18. It is not unreasonable to assume that over ten-thousand D-Class fighters were ordered in 1918. The Germans fully expected war to last into 1919 and were preparing a vast production program designed to achieve air superiority, particularly in fighters, in 1919. These types had to be ordered in 1918 for delivery in 1919. In this regard I agree completely with Pete Bowers that the Fok. D.VII 7776/18 was the 7776th D-type ordered in 1918. This emphatically does not mean 7776 D-types were delivered in 1918 (actually 5132 were delivered up to the Armistice), but it does mean contracts for late 1918 and 1919 delivery were placed in 1918.

Inspection of yearly production figures leads me to one further theory. Taking yearly production runs of C-class aircraft (and these include C1 and N-classes because their serial numbers were considered to be in the C-class) as listed in Hoff's article (9) we have the following tabulation:

YEAR	NUMBER-BUILT	TOTAL
1915	2,674	2,674
1916	4,826	7,500
1917	10,430	17,926
1918	7,330	25,260

We have record of a Hannover C1.III with serial number 18000/17. Comparing the tabulation with the serial number leads to the conclusion that very possible C and C1 numbers ran sequentially from 1914 until the end of 1917. The year 1918 saw a return to three digit (or possible even one or two digit) serial numbers for C and C1-classes.

I would agree with Peter Bowers that sometime in 1917/1918 the German system of serial numbers was revised and I would be willing to bet all serial numbers were started with low numbers in 1918.

One final point, the Staaken R.XVI (Av.) 49/16 designation is correct, for the type was ordered in 1916, but it is possible the designation was later changed to 49/17 to account for the installation of 500 H.P. Benz B2 VI engines which were not ready until 1918.

In closing, I would like to say that one should not expect too much of "The System". The Germans are not nearly as methodical as the world thinks they are, and one should keep an open mind until proof can be found.

If members desire, I would be happy to assume the task of a clearing house to gather and eventually distribute serial number lists.

Peter Grosz, Pretty Brook Road, R.D.2., Princeton, N.J.

**Every Member get
a new Member this year**

A.A.H.S. JOURNAL