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, including the airing of controversies, through the contribution of information to these pages. It serves to present information in brief form which Members might not feel moved to contribute as complete articles. Opinions are welcomed but such opinions, and the accuracy of the information therein, are the responsibility solely of the contributor. This Society is of, by and for the Members.

AND THEREBY HANGS MANY A TALE

That the subject matter in the photographs on the page opposite is not unusual we will admit. However, these pictures have not been published before and no information other than that stated below can be given by the editorial staff. What is unusual is that, according to our informant, one whole squadron of P-40's was so gaily decorated. We would like to know which one this was.

Member LeRoy Weber sent in the photographs, arranged for publication by Jim Dunavent. On being further questioned for details, LeRoy relates:

"The photos were taken by Henry Cavigli, now a supervisor for Standard of California, and a neighbor. He informs me they were taken in North Africa in 1943. He was in A.A.F. Intelligence at the time. The fin flash and mottled "desert" camouflage indicate that these P-4o's were probably produced on a British contract and acquired by the Army Air Force after delivery in the field."

Our Associate Editor, Kenn C. Rust, did some research on the possible units that may have had these aircraft and reports:

"They were probably from the 57th Fighter Group, which included the 64th, 65th and 66th Fighter Squadrons. They might, however, have belonged to the 79th, with 85th, 86th and 87th Fighter Sqdns. Both of these units went through the desert war with the British. A third possibility is that the 33rd F.G., with 58th, 59th and 60th Ftr. Sqdns., may have been with the British for a short time. This, I believe, is the full range of possibilities. "

Comment from Members is invited.

LIKE A LETTER FROM HOME

The Editor, Sir,

Having recently received my belated copy of the Fall 1962 issue of the JOURNAL I found the article about the 468th Bomb Group in the China-Burma-India theatre (Page 175) like a letter from home. I was in Karachi when this group first arrived in the CBI and have recently served under Col. C.C. McPherson, .(who)is now an instructor at the Armed Forces College, Norfolk, Virginia.

Recently Maj. Gen. James V. Edmundson, Commander of the 17th Air Force, Ramstein, Germany, visited our base and he was pleasantly surprised to read of his old outfit in the JOURNAL. We had a picture made. He was reading it and discussing some of the information in it with MSgt Alfred J. Ferrino, USAF, and Maresciallo Luigi Orsano of the Italian Air Force.

Edward J. Komyati, Major, USAF, 7227th Combat Supt., Gp. P.O. Box 392, APO 293, New York, N.Y.

See photo on Page 53

FAKE NUMBER

Enclosed is a photograph of a B-47 at Chanute AFB taken recently. The airplane is on exhibit in the base housing area with other relic category aircraft. It had been operated at Chanute for several years but this was the first time I had seen it with the current paint job. The original serial number was 46-066, still faintly visible on the fin. However it now carries a dummy number 3359 the insignia of the weather school unit at Chanute. It seems a shame that the Air Force, who should be interested in preserving the authenticity of this now fairly rare bird, would mar its historical value with a fake serial number, thus camouflaging its real identity.

Ralph I. Brown, 1337 N. Edward St., Decatur, Ill.

See photo on Page 53

JIM PETTY'S SPAD TO AF MUSEUM

Member Jim Petty, of Gastonia, N.C., began collecting material for his SPAD VII several years back with a notice in the JOURNAL, and the results of his handiwork are seen in the photo on Page . Jim recently loaned it to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB and it is shown with Col. Kimbrough S. Brown, now the director of the Museum. It is a beautiful restoration of a famous airplane.

Kioto on Page 53 courtesy of U.S. Air Force Museum.

HELP WANTED

The photo of the Keystone "Conmuter" (P.53)was taken sometime in the early 1930's at what is believed to be the Caldwell, N.J. field of the Curtiss-Wright Flying Service. Help is wanted in identification. Just below the "NC20E" is a small circle with "GN-No3". But what does the "3 November" pertain to, a record flight attempt, or...?

I also urge Members to make use of the negative loan service (A.A.H.S. Negative Library). I have borrowed quite a number of negatives and they are good quality. And particularly I recommend donating, or loaning, negatives for this service. It is an excellent opportunity for those who need photos to obtain them.

Henry Arnold, 521 G Street, Chula Vista, Calif.

See photo on Page 53.

STINSON'S V-77B RELIANT

Among the many types of aircraft that have been the subjects of official Navy flight test and, evaluation programs through the years, a small number of interesting and unexpected types show up in the reports of these tests.

One such is the Stinson V-77B "Reliant", a late WW II version of the V-77 (AT-19) using a 450 hp Pratt & Whitney R-985-AN-6 in place of the 295 bp Lycoming R-680-13. Other changes included reconverting the navigational trainer interior back to a comfortable four place passenger arrangement, in keeping with the standards of the pre-WW II Stinsons from which the V-77 had been developed.

Brief tests were run at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxant River, Maryland, on V-77B prototype NX-39414 in the summer of 1945, with emphasis on its suitability as a service type personnel transport. [1]

While not widely publicized at the time, from early in 1944 the aircraft manufacturers were devoting increasing efforts to development of aircraft which would be suitable for the post war civilian market when the war was over. This was done with the full knowledge of the federal government, since the pace of military aircraft production and development had by this time passed the wartime requirements and the potential problems of a post war aircraft industry were quite obvious. (2) Industry efforts included dusting off pre-war models, as well as designing completely new ones. Some of the designs with potential application for military use were sponsored by the Army or Navy; some other prototypes used government furnished engines and other equipment which were made available on bailment contracts by the military.

The V-77B was one of the dusted off models, being a modernized version of the pre-war SR-10 series Stinson "Reliant". The terms of the contract under which the engine and other equipment were furnished included making the airplane available for Navy evaluation at the Naval Air Test Center. Whether it was intended to convert the returned lend-lease AT-19's to this configuration as Navy utility aircraft or for civilian use, or if further production was anticipated is not evident from the report. It. is pointed out that the proposed utility airplane would have increased wing fuel tank capacity; the prototype tested was ballasted to simulate this proposed change.

With the airplane ballasted to weight and c.g. location equivalent to that of a pilot and three passengers , the maximum speed was found to be 167.5 mph at 5500 feet altitude. Service Ceiling was 19,700 feet. Temperature Survey Tests of the power plant installation showed some slightly excessive temperatures on the ground and in rated power climbs; cooling was satisfactory in all level flight runs. The need for a tail wheel lock was noted, as was a bouncing tendency during take off at speeds just below lift off speed. Stalls were satisfactory; with warning in the form of slight control buffet. The two position flaps, when lowered, required considerable change in longitudinal trim. Stability and control were generally satisfactory.

In general the V-77B was considered a satisfactory service type, with the incorporation of certain changes. These included the locking tailwheel, rearrangement of the instrument panel and relocation of the throttle quadrant from the left side to a position in the center between the pilots. An adjustable rudder trim tab, access handles to facilitate entrance, and a stronger seat adjustment mechanism with greater adjustment range were also considered necessary. Standard radio installations in place of the inadequate types used were also required.

With the many other types available, it is doubtful if the Navy seriously considered adding V-77B's to its inventory. Nor did the V-77B find its place in Stinson's post war sales line-up; it remained one of the many little known prototypes of the period.

[1] Flight Test Division, U.S. Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md.; Final Report on TED No. PTR 1603, "Flight Evaluation of Stinson Reliant Airplane with P & W R-98 5-AN-6 Engine", Sept. 1945.
[2] Eugene E. Wilson, Slipstream, p. 260.

Harold Andrews, 4022 - 25th Road N., Arlington 7, Va.

See photo on Page 54.

MORE ON F4F/FM's

From Roger Besecker, verified through F.A.A. records.

FM-2	N4629V	S/N 86564
FM-2	N90523	s/N 74560
FM-2P	NX55558	no longer registered

Roger also states that the F4F-4 listed as S/N 15392 or 15399 at the National Air Museum Silver Hill, Maryland storage area does not check out. Can someone verify this?

DON'T KILL THE GOOSE!

Many A.A.H.S. Members are engaged within the aviation/space industry as engineers, craftsmen, pilots, administrators, technical writers and illustrators, etc., and are occasionally called upon to assist the Public Relations Offices. One such Member, who has had opportunity to observe, has sent the following letter to the Editor as a commentary on D. W. Carter's discussion of photo collectors in the Summer Journal, and it is repeated here in full.

Letter to the Editor
AAHS JOURNAL

Sir:

Dustin Carter's letter (P.212) of the JOURNAL Vol. 7, No. 2, is very timely. We in the industry are becoming much concerned with the abuse of certain requests for photographs, drawings, and information. Our company has a fine collection of many pictures of aircraft built by manufacturers now out of business. Our company is usually willing to assist both the amateur and professional historian and writer within reason. We are, on occasion, willing to supply a photo to a sincere collector to fill a void, but our company is not willing or interested to stuff a collector's file. We are not in the photography business.

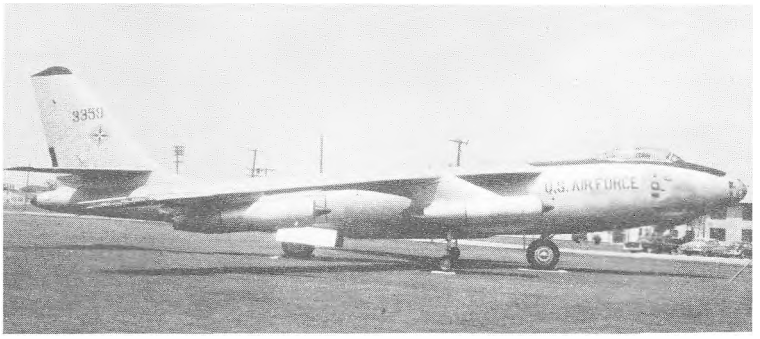
Regrettably, our photo file is poorly indexed and often requires hours of work to sort through books and drawers of photos to fill requests. All photographs are filed by a number which requires that the number be determined first before a print can be ordered. Many hours, days and even weeks can be spent trying to locate the number of a photo you know exists. The system is poor, but the company is not interested to spend the money required to maintain a proper indexing system. It costs our company about $15 a historical print; most of this cost represents the time to find it by high priced personnel. Result, requests for photos and information are allowed to accumulate for two or three months, when a day is taken to sort photos and dig through correspondence files in dead storage for data and information so as to reduce costs.

Our company has selected one amateur historian, an A.A.H.S. Member, to screen all requests for historical

(Continued on Page 55)

MAIL SACK PHOTO PAGE

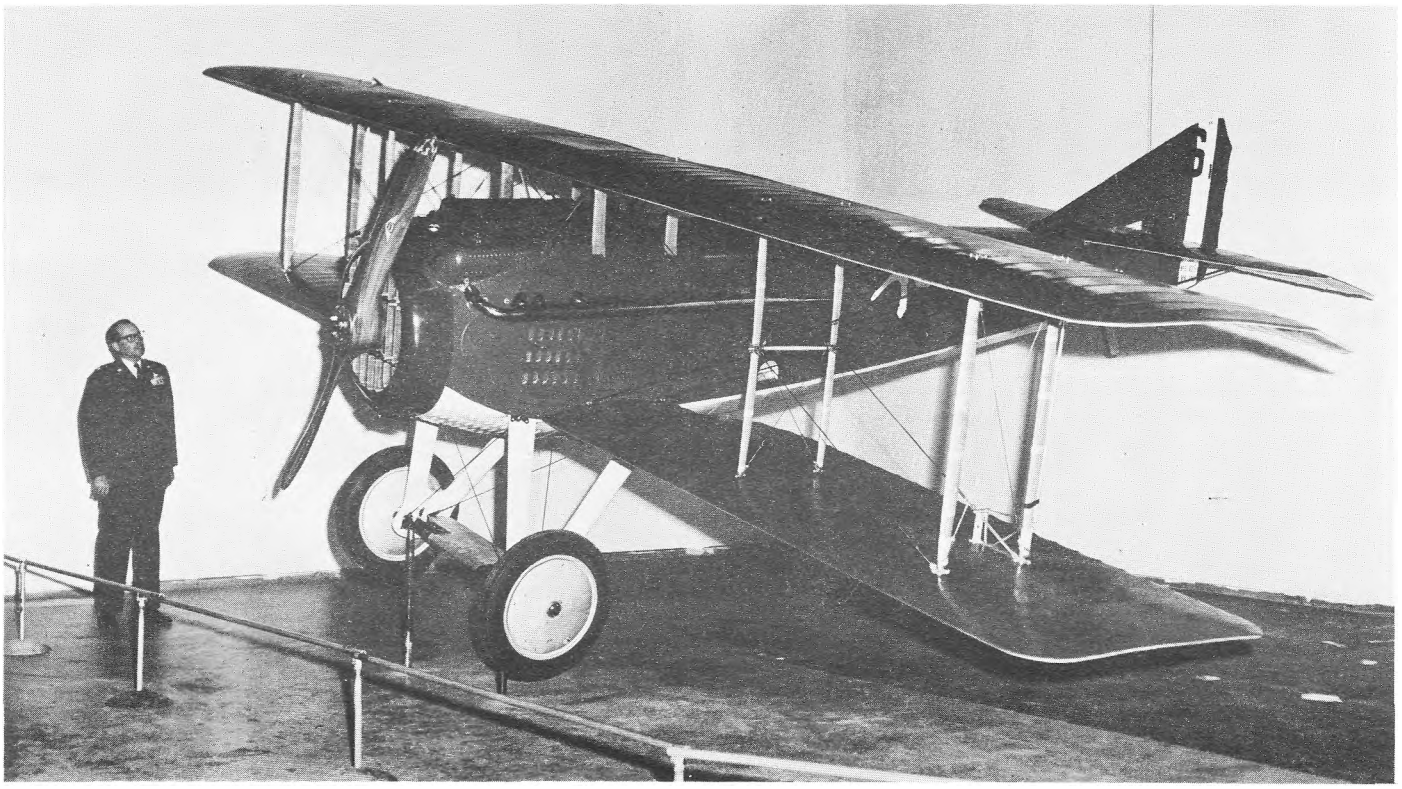
Maj. Gen. J.V. Edmundson, USAF, MSgt. Alfred J. Ferrino, USAF, and Marescialla Luigi Orsano, Ital. A.F. Photo submitted by Maj. Edward J. Komyati, USAF, Member A.A.H.S. See Page 51.

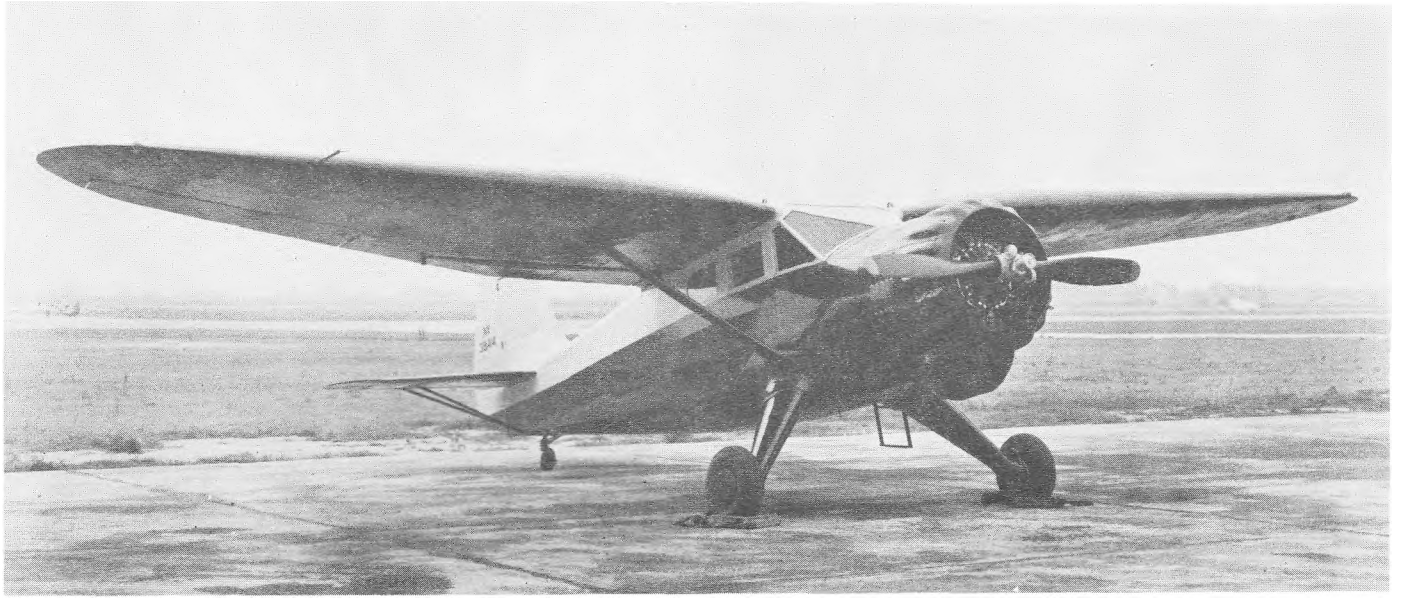


B-47, s/n 46-066, at Chanute AFB. See Page 51. Photo - Ralph I. Brown.

Keystone "Commuter". See Page 51. Photo from collection of Henry Arnold.

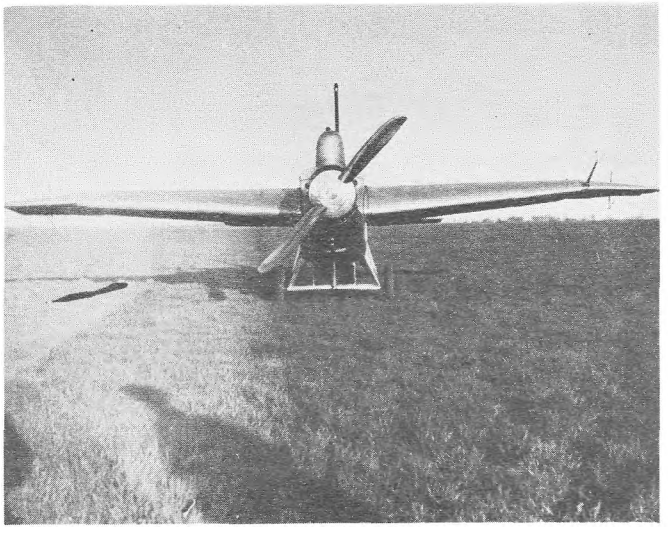
Lt. Col. Kimbrough S. Brown, Director of USAF Museum, and Member of A.A.H.S., with Member Jim Petty's SPAD VII. Photo - USAF Museum. See Page 51.

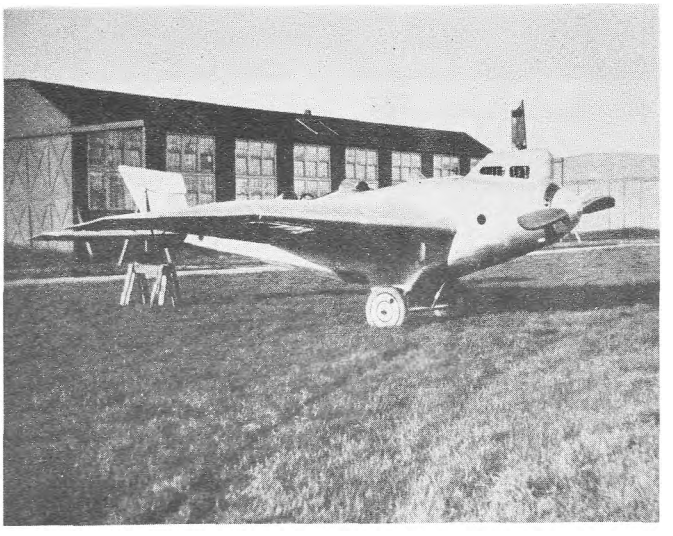


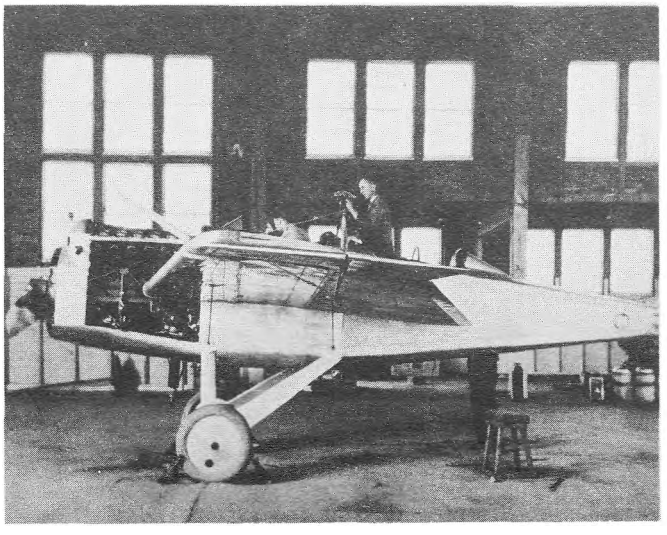


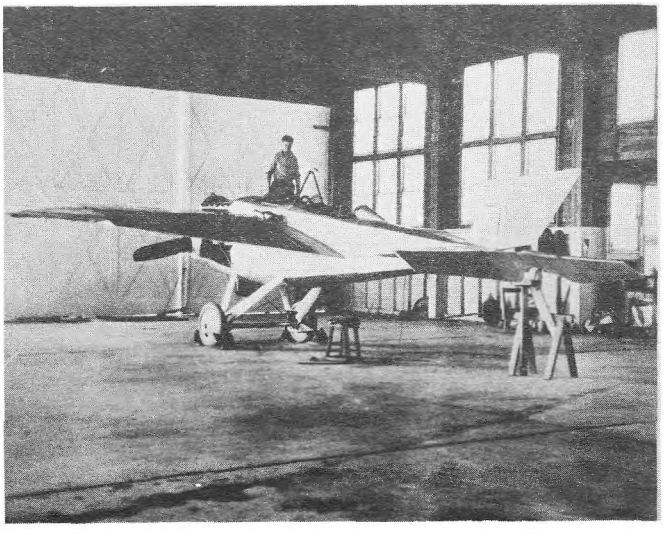
Stinson V-77B "Reliant" (late WWII) tested by the Navy as a light personnel transport. See Page 52. Photo - U.S. Navy PTR 28502 courtesy Harold Andrews.

The Dare Variable-Camber Monoplane. Story on Page 55. Photos courtesy of Henri G. D'Estout.









(Continued from Page 52)

photos and information. Irrespective of to whom the letter is written it passes through this individual for processing and coordination, and in return passes the information to the letter writer. This individual knows who the worthy requestors are and makes a sincere effort to assist them. The others are judged upon a calculated risk basis, usually giving them only a minimum of service until their sincerity is ascertained.

A growing list of personna non grata receive the polite brush off. An example of this is one individual who, operating under a phony letterhead, made several requests for pictures of certain types of aircraft addressed each time to different individuals and stating that he was writing a book on each type of aircraft. He could not be writing that number of books; he has to date no books on the market; but when we discovered a photo previously given him published in a magazine credited to him, we moved him permanently to the "brush off list."

The time has come when many companies are becoming annoyed and therefore more selective on who to help. In some companies the situation has gotten so bad that it takes a management approval to fill historical requests. Result, the Public Relations boys write a polite brush-off rather than bother the boss on such trivial matters. Companies are getting tired of stuffing collections, tired of the hordes of pseudo writers of books, and even for the Journal, who never publish or finish their books or articles, and tired of being "done", in the name of history. So take note, dear Member, don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs!

A CONCERNED MEMBER

THE DARE VARIABLE CAMBER MONOPLANE

The Dare Variable Camber Monoplane was flown for the first time at Selfridge Field, Mount Clemens, Michigan sometime in the spring of 1921. The pilot was named Mills, and no other information is available concerning him at the time of this writing.

The Dare Monoplane was designed and constructed to explore the principles of variable camber wings, the method of control being that fore and aft movement of the controls would decrease or increase the wing camber, thereby decreasing or increasing the lift with a reaction of nose down or nose up, to provide longitudinal control. Side to side movement of the Deperdussin-type controls would also increase and decrease the camber of the wings resulting a deflection and reaction similar to conventional aileron controls. For the first test flight conventional ailerons were installed as a safety precaution.

Ed Jakobi, who supplied the information for this article, was employed at the time as a mechanic by the Dare Company. This is the same Jakobi involved in the Stout Torpedo Bomber venture, which took place at about the same period of time on the same field.

The aircraft was designed and engineered by Melvin E. Dare and a Mr. Carns. No specific design or model designation appears to have been assigned to it. The construction was all metal with a metal covered steel frame and in some areas stressed skin design. It was powered originally by a German 4 cylinder 140 HP Benz engine. Being underpowered with this engine, it was replaced by a Liberty engine, 12 cylinder, 400 HP.

Only one flight was made with the Benz engine. The aircraft took off, cleared the field boundary and after traveling a distance of about one mile, landed in a farm field, washing out the landing gear. In Jakobi's words, this was typical of the varied problems, not the least of all financial, that plagued the early designers. Ed stated further:

"The airplane was prepared for test at Selfridge Field at the same time the Stout TB was being tested. It made its first and only test hop with the Benz engine shortly before the Stout ship crashed. It was so underpowered that the pilot barely cleared the trees forming the boundary of the field, after which he sat it down on a field washing out the under carriage with only minor additional damage. I went to work with this outfit after the crash of the Stout ship. By that time, Carns, the engineer had left the company, the working force at the moment being, Dare, Dan Rideout and myself; Ed Strobel came in later.

After the unsuccessful flight the airplane was towed back to Detroit. Dare, A Colonel Heckle and I drove out to Algonac, Michigan to Gar Wood's headquarters to look at a "Liberty" engine that was available. (Wood was a stockholder in the Dare company.) This engine had 500 hours of running time in one of Gar Wood's boats. It was a counter-clockwise rotation engine. I was not too happy with an engine with so much time on it because at that time Liberty's had an overhaul period time of about 80 hours, but since the engine was a gift we had no choice.

After the engine arrived at Dare's shop I changed the cams to the standard clockwise specifications and installed standard oil and water pumps. The engine bad no canpression to speak of. It was suggested that we grind the valves and install new piston rings. However, Dare did not care to go beyond a valve grind. The fuel line on the Benz, from the tank to the carburetor was 5/16" I.D. When I pointed out that the 5/16" I.D. line could not supply the Liberty's needs I was over ruled.

The standard radiator used for the Benz installation was for a Hispano Suiza engine; it was used on this Liberty with the addition of a French Lamblin, a cylindrical shaped radiator. After the Liberty installation the Dare was towed to Selfridge Field again. Between the time the airplane left after its first and only flight and the time we returned, Selfridge Field was re-activated as the base for the First Pursuit Group.

In trying to start the engine, I sat in the cockpit while Dare and Dan Rideout tried to turn the propeller. A group of soldiers were sitting around watching the show. It was obvious to them that the men on the cranking end had no experience in starting aircraft engines. Two of them volunteered to crank it. They went through the procedure of locking wrists and with a lunge gave the propeller a good healthy swing. They wound up flat on their faces. One said to me, "Do you have a canpression release on this thing?" I told him that the engine simply did not have any compression. After some fumbling around it started. Because of the small gas line we could not get any more than about 1000 RPM out of it. So off with the wings again and back to Detroit to install new piston rings and a larger gas line. After this the engine was taken to the Experimental Department of the Packard Motor Car Company and put on a dynamotor stand. It developed 402 HP.

Back to Selfridge Field. This time everything OK and ready for flight. Eddie Stinson and I made one short hop. I occupied the rear cockpit. My job was to work the wing camber control. During this flight Stinson felt it was not practical to have the camber controls in the rear. So, wings off again and back to Detroit, and camber controls installed in the front cockpit.

After this modification the ship made several flights. It apparently had no lateral control because Stinson flew it "flat", making flat turns. He figured that the ship, as it was, was an article not to be fooled with. He apparently was satisfied that the variable camber principle was successful. So after four or five hops, wings off again and back to Detroit.

By now Clarence Powell, a British Aeronautical Engineer, Mike Turin, a Russian woodworker hired to make a wood model of a proposed new aircraft, and I were the only ones on the payroll. All efforts to sell stock failed and the company never raised enough money to continue. The venture ended in bankruptcy."

Thus ended an interesting venture, like so many in those days due to lack of funds. Mr. Jakobi is with the F.A.A. at the Western Regional Office, Los Angeles. Members having additional information on this aircraft are invited to comment.

Henri D'Estout, 4-914 Richmond Ave., Fremont, Calif.

CRUSADERS and ASW

Enclosed are a couple of photos to supplement the article about "Crusader De-Tails" in the Summer JOURNAL (1962). Both of these aircraft are from NATC Patuxent River and carry Test Center special markings. The F8U-2N 147047 carries a modified "W" on the rudder, indicating "Weapon Systems Test". This aircraft is finished in standard Navy gray and white paint, the tip of the rudder is black, and the "W" is red. F8U-2 145557 carries a modified "S" for "Service Test". It is gray and white, with fluorescent red stabilator and rudder, black rudder tip, NATC letters, and rudder numbers, and the "S" is white with black outline.

The other photo shows an SA-16B 51-7204 modified for anti-submarine warfare. Modifications visible were an enlarged radar nose, a MAD-boom in the tail, and a sonobuoy rack inside the door. The paint was grey with white undersurfaces and all-white drop-tanks. No data was stenciled under the cockpit window, and the only information I could get out of a crewman was that it was an SA-16B ASW. This particular aircraft is only one of the modified SA-16B's that I've seen in USAF markings.

Stephen H. Miller, 4212 Belvieu Ave., Baltimore 15, Md.

Photographs on page opposite.

B-18 DUSTERS

Members planning a car trip along a route through or near Dalhart, Texas, may find it worth their time to drop by the old, nearly-deserted ex-USAAF base there. Only two of the old wood hangers still stand on this B-17 (and later, B-29) training field, One of them, I discovered during a recent visit, contains two Douglas B-18s, two Grumman "Avengers" and several Vultee BT-13s, including one which has been converted into a single-seater by skinning over the front cockpit. All are in flying condition, being the property Of Plains Aero Service. No one was around so I was unable to obtain specific information on these ships, but interested members might try writing to this company at Dalhart Municipal Airport. All of them are outfitted for dusting and spraying work.

Len Morgan, Box 14268, Dallas 34, Texas.

ASTRONAUT GLENN'S CRUSADER

In May, 1962, at Johnsville NAS, I photographed one of the two Crusaders stationed there, F8U-1P Navy Bu. No. 144608. Two weeks later, much to my surprise, I read in a local paper that the Navy after a long search had finally "found" at Johnsville Astronaut John Glenn's record-breaking Crusader used in Project Bullet. (See George Letzter's article "Crusader De-Tails" in the Summer 1962 AAHS JOURNAL.) In December 1962, an engineer friend at Johnsville confirmed that #4608 was Glenn's bird and was still flying. He relates the recon pilots consider it a real "clunker". The official Navy retort is: "If it was good enough for Glenn, it's good enough for you."

Robert J. Esposito, 1505 Porter St., Philadelphia, Pa.

CAPTURED FOKKER D.VII

On page 216-217 of the Fall JOURNAL (Vol. 7, No. 3) there is an open letter from Joseph Doerflinger to Capt. Eddie, and Rickenbacker's reply. In this exchange they mention the "capture" of a Fokker D-7. This aircraft was "captured" by Ted Curtis, then Lt. Edward Peck Curtis, 95th Aero Sq., U.S.A.S. An account of the incident was given in the Eastman Company newspaper, Kodakery on 4 October 1962.

Excerpt from Kodakery, Vol. 20, 1962:

In the Smithsonian Institution's National Air Museum there is a German Fokker D-7 on display. A neat plaque gives Kodak Vice-President Ted Curtis credit for its capture.

It all came about back in 1918 just about a week before the Armistice. The 95th Aero Squadron had moved up to an old airfield at Verdun. Bad weather had set in and they were grounded.

One day the men heard a plane overhead. They ran out to see a Fokker circling overhead about 50 feet off the ground. It soon landed and a German stepped out. In excellent English he asked, "Where am I?" Curtis said, "You're in Verdun." "Oh," the German replied, "I thought this was Metz." This Curtis doubts... but anyway the plane he was flying was a brand-new one. After treating their "prisoner" to lunch, a detail headed with him to a prison camp.

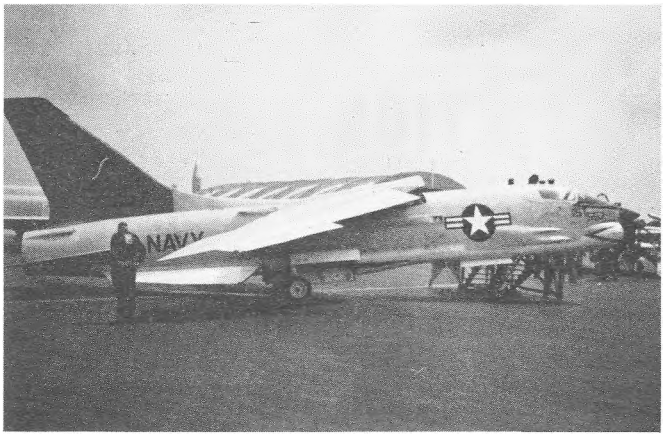
After the Armistice, Curtis set out to fly the Fokker to Paris and turn it over to the U.S. Air Service headquarters. He started with a wingman on each side "just in case somebody hadn't heard the war was over and tried to shoot me down." The Fokker had a "tricky" system to keep it lubricated which Curtis forgot about, and halfway there the motor "froze" so he made a dead-stick landing near Chalons. He left the plane there, then went on to Paris where he reported to Headquarters where he had left it.

He forgot all about the incident until somebody a few years later asked him if he knew that the Smithsonian had the Fokker and his name was on it as its captor.

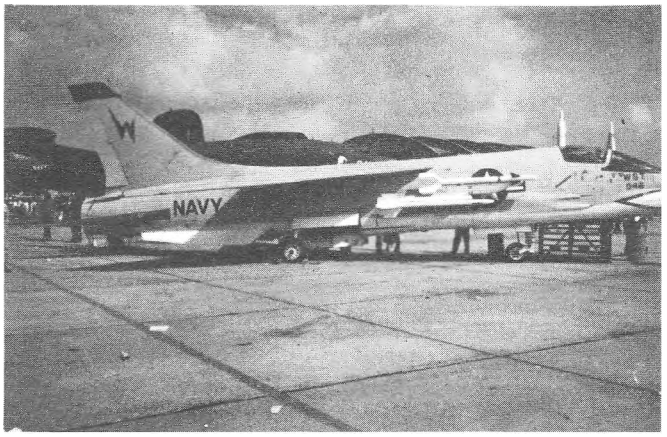
Later he dropped in at the Smithsonian to get a look at his prize, and sure enough, there it was. An attendant had some sort of a story about how it was shot down without a mark on it. Curtis didn't spoil his version by telling him who he was and how it actually happened.

Although there was no "shooting down" involved in this episode, Curtis actually did shoot down six enemy planes in World War I.

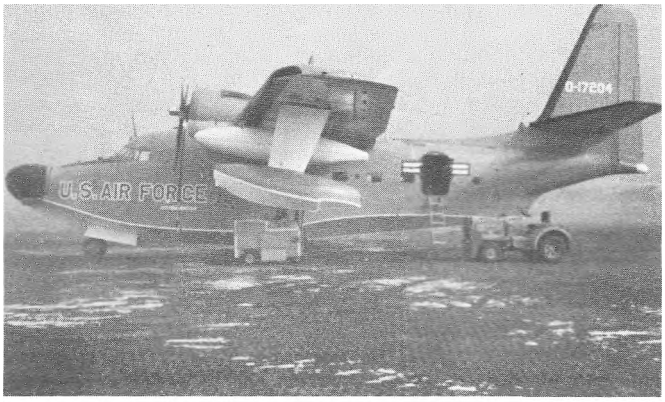
Submitted by Robert G. Hufford, 4908 Wortser Ave., Sherman Oaks, Calif.



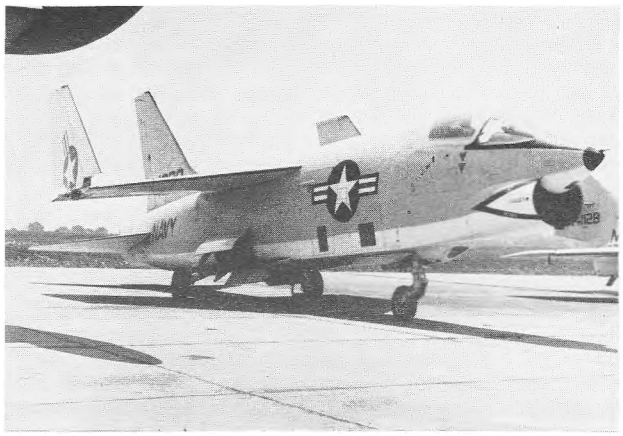
"Crusader's" at PAX River



Photos by Stephen H. Miller



SA-16B, s/n 51-7204 Stephen H. Miller



F8U-1P, BuNo. 144608 Photo - Robert J. Esposito

On Page 12 is related the story of the recent acquisition of the Laird "Solution" by the Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association. The photograph below was sent to us by Alderson Magee, of that organization, and is from the files of the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company. It is unretouched here, except that someone had scraped a spot at the left side of the negative. In this photograph the Laird "Solution had been rolled from the hangar only a few hours before the 1930 Thompson Trophy Race and the number "77" and "P & W Wasp" hastily painted on the side.