



SOCIETY AFFAIRS

EDITORIAL -- WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Let me throw away the editorial "we" for the moment and use some plain talk. I have frequently reminded you, the Members, that this JOURNAL is yours. You contribute the articles, you pay the dues, and you determine, by your letters, what you want in it. Literally, this is true, that if you only pay your dues then you don't have much to say about it.

Is there too much on WW II, or not enough; are the articles too long, or not enough; is it too impersonal, or not enough? Should our recording of history be back of 20 years ago, or does history begin only a second ago? What is of historical import, and what is trivia?

As the former editor of this publication, I tried to keep the editorial policy closely tuned to the many and varied wants of the Members. Over the broad spectrum of history it is not possible to please everyone and there are bound to be some differences of opinion. Mr. Kenn Rust, as your Editor now, needs your thoughts on this matter. You may rest assured that there can be no more diligent effort or thoughtful consideration given to JOURNAL content than he has given and will continue to give.

During this year of change the JOURNAL has had a fairly well balanced coverage of all types of material beginning with Borden's article on the pioneer flyer John B. Moisant clear through modern events in Mikes's "Presidential Aircraft". Remember that, for the most part, we are not professionals and the writings of us, the Members, are simply because we wish to share our research with others.

I think that any description of the JOURNAL as it is now would sound much like its description when Bill Larkins started it eight years ago, a gathering of source material by people sincerely interested in the subject of aviation and without ulterior motives. If there is too much of any one part of aviation history in a given year, that's just how it turned out, and not because we are oriented toward air racing or WW I or serial numbers. Looking back on eight years of publication there is hardly an area that has been neglected except perhaps space vehicles. And I think this is because, with the exception of a few outstanding figures, space vehicles and astronauts are the product of vast teams of people, and gigantic technical solutions, and therefore, greatly impersonal.

One Member writes that all this jet stuff is too modern for history; "Crusader" markings should be left out; air racing didn't promote safety, and serial numbers are secondary trivia. Another says this is supposed to be "American aviation history" and how come we publish "The German Jets"?

Now, these may be valid arguments from a single point of view, but let me propose from the broader view point of reading letters from many Members. When does an event become history - only an instant ago. What is fresh in your mind from reading newspapers and magazines last week will fade and a year from now, when you are trying to piece together some facts, where will you go for the information? Let us hope that some Member has been interested enough in the event to collect the data and thereby provide a source for information. Let us also hope that he has also taken the step of having his material published. Look inside the front

cover of this JOURNAL - the upper left hand corner gives a capsule description of our purpose, quote, "dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of the recorded history of aviation." A good slogan might be - what is news today, is history tomorrow.

Suppose you are a student of naval aviation affairs. The "Crusader" is today's first line weapon. What Crusader pilot from what outfit took those vitally important pictures over Cuba in the Fall of 1962? Future historians may find the unit markings of George Letzter's "Crusader De-Tails" invaluable as source material in documenting a point. Today's model builder can find no more authentic information for his color scheme.

The argument that air racing is not historically important because it didn't promote air safety is beside the point. If it happened in the air with an aircraft, piloted or not, safe or unsafe, then it is aviation history. I grant that it may not be important. But if we are to concentrate only on what is historically important we not only overlook a great deal that is interesting, we leave ourselves open to endless argument as to the relative importance of any two or more events.

To answer an oft repeated comment about this being the JOURNAL of the American Aviation Historical Society and on which word do you put the emphasis, there can be only one word - aviation. I have discussed this many times with our Directors and Officers and can state this as the official policy. In reverse order, we are an organization which we deemed to call a Society. Historical we have just answered - if it happened, it's now history. Aviation is our concern, not steamboats, railroading, or stamp collecting. As to American, we started this in America and for the most part, as stated in the very first issue, we will concentrate on American history simply because there is so much to be done here. But not to the exclusion of other aviation information, as witness many, many articles on other than United States airmen or aircraft. In fact, the full title of the German Jet article is "The German Jets and the U.S. Army Air Force".

Finally, what is trivia? The shape of the tail-plane fitting on the Wright Brothers first airplane? Not if you're building a replica. Let me call your attention to the announcement, overleaf, of Project 60. Major General Marvin C. Dember, USAF, President of the National Capitol Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics says "...stepping back sixty years, to build the (Wright) plane exactly as it was constructed then ..., is a real challenging venture."

That replica, now under construction, will be viewed by millions of Americans in the years to come. I remember quite a bit of concern over the markings on the F4B-4 now in the Navy's Museum at Pensacola. In the future thousands of boys and young men will be impressed by the markings, right or wrong, on that airplane and their significance in identification of the airplane and its position in the formation. Is it trivia to get these things correct?

Serial numbers of aircraft are perhaps unimportant. They are also useful. Useful in identification of specific aircraft at specific times and places. Many an experimental airplane has been modified over and over and sometimes only the serial number maintained the thread throughout the entire chronology. It can be stated, in complete honesty, that a sizeable percentage

of your Editor's mail from Members concerns serial numbers. If we relegate these to the realm of insignificant trivia, we overlook the interests of you, the Members. On the other hand this does not mean that we have become the Society of Bird Watchers. And, please, no offense is intended if there is indeed a society by that name.

The controversies we have had in this JOURNAL prove again and again Parkinson's law of the ratio of inverse importance. A case in point is Casari's recent letter. This is not the official policy of the A.A.H.S. Bob presented his view, and from the associate editor for the Bibliography Section, it was printed. Editor Rust has presented the other side of the coin in printing the letter from Aero Publishers in this issue. Also, former Regional Vice President Len Morgan, himself a dealer in new and used aviation books, states that if a person buys only from foreign sources he is overlooking much material of use and of value to one's library that is printed here in the U.S. Willis Nye advocates "Buy American" and gives many good reasons. The point is, these are the opinions of A.A.H.S. Members and should be considered as such, not official A.A.H.S. policy.

I think (here again, an opinion) that we shall all gain much more from letters to the Mail Sack Section if they present the facts of aviation history and stimulate thought, research and further comment. I would like to see this part of our JOURNAL rise to the par of the "Comment and Discussion" pages of the U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings. Where do you stand?

This is a black day. As this is being written we have word of the assassination of the President of the United States. This solves nothing, and only increases strife. In countless ways it has been said that this country, this world, needs not further division. We must work even harder to draw people together in good will. Mutual interest in aviation history is one means.

In our correspondence of recent weeks there appears a groundswell of projects being launched by Members; research into the lives of early pioneers, a documentation of the relative position of one Lyman Gilmore, compilation of rosters of airmen who served in WW I, tape recordings of the experiences of men and women of many and varied aviation careers, and many more. From these efforts come the source material of history from which, in turn, the interpretation is made. Quoted very succinctly, "History is a full account of the past, with interpretive and explanatory comment that distinguishes it from mere annals or chronology."

Let's face it. The most of us will not become professional historians, but we shall continue to compile and document the events and to contribute to the efforts of the hardy few who persevere to the point of publication. Take, for instance, Frank L. Greene's memorable article in the Winter 1961 JOURNAL, "The Wildcat Story", or Hud Weeks' "Lincoln Beachey Story", Mitch Mayborn and his "The Ugly Duckling", or Chal Johnson and "30 Years of Lockheed Vegas". Each one brought to print the results of much personal effort, with assistance from other Members in the form of drawings, photographs, anecdotes and documents. Good will can do this and much more.

In any scholarly group there are those who write for the love of the subject, or a desire to bring their work into more widespread use, or even perhaps the prestige of having authored definitive works. With careful selection of publisher such efforts can be highly rewarding in terms of satisfaction and even moderately remunerative.

However, an irresponsible publisher can take the joy out of writing, as well as bring on some headaches. A.A.H.S. Members Paul Matt, Maj. Edward Heyn (USAF) and Lt. Col. Kimbrough Brown (USAF) have recently remarked on this in acid terms. In their cases there were photos and documents lost or retained by the publisher, no

payment for out-of-pocket expenses and no royalty or other payments at all for work accomplished.

Even with beforehand investigation, a signed contract may not be of much help if the publisher is not completely scrupulous, and if he is not within reach, such as in another country. The following is quoted from a letter from Paul Matt:

"As an active Member of this Society I receive many letters from other Members all over the world. Lately their comments in regard to a publishing firm indicate that what happened to me has also happened to others. I will speak of my problem, but it goes for others.

"I had a written contract with this firm before I started to work on the book, and, as since acknowledged by the publisher, I delivered all material to the firm ahead of schedule. According to the contract all loaned material was to be returned in good condition within two months after publication and all remuneration was to have been paid upon publication date.

"To date not one of the contract terms has been met by the publisher. Such material as was returned was mutilated and much valuable material is now supposed lost. Checks sent as installments have since been returned from my bank marked "Insufficient funds". Letters to the publisher have been met either with silence or replied to with excuses, including a loose term, meant to be of international diplomacy, 'We must trust in each other'.

"There is no denying that this publisher puts out very useful and attractive books, but it is at the expense of the unsuspecting author. I may not receive my remuneration, but I want to let other Members know that 'lend-lease' is over, or should be."

There had been warnings previously. This publisher was known to visit people, invite himself to stay for several days as a house guest, "borrow" material from his host and fail to return it, and, when things did not go to suit him, become abusive of language. Certainly not a way to build good will.

One after another, the authors associated with this publisher have given up because of the many and varied troubles.

While the A.A.H.S. does not wish to make a crusade of decrying unethical practices, we have felt compelled to touch upon it once in a while, even in the first year of this JOURNAL. We can recommend to would-be authors that they discuss plans with other authors - there is no substitute for experience. Obtain written agreements with the publisher with the help of an attorney. Consultation with the Armed Forces Writer's League or the USAF Book Program Office would be helpful. And valued photographs and documents should not be loaned; have them copied and send prints. In summation - know your publisher.

Close examination of what makes an organization tick has never entirely dispelled a certain mystery - that of motivation. For instance, why do we organize local meetings? There is always a good purpose behind these, but are good purposes enough to warrant the effort in these days when everyone has many demands on his time? We Members are extremely varied in our specialties, and usually concerned only with adding to our own knowledge or collections, air racing that appeals to a few doesn't at all to the many, or the WW I student may not be remotely interested in WW II history. And yet, all types turn up at these functions in the knowledge that they will meet with someone else of parallel interest.

To some extent the Cross & Cockade (The Society of WW I Aero Historians) has the advantage over the A.A.H.S. in that they have a single narrow period in history in which to delve. However, there are all shades of interest in that narrow band of time - some persons are

particularly involved in the construction of a SPAD, while others are deeply concerned with color and markings of an Albatross.

We think the catalyst here is the organizer type - the civic minded fellow, perhaps not a collector himself, but who sees the need to bring to attention the many facets of aviation history. Indeed, Lippincott says that the prime movers in the C.A.H.A., who have been so successful in getting an aeronautical museum started in Connecticut, are not the specialist types at all.

Therefore, response to a meeting notice should not be measured in numbers of bodies that show up, but in the accomplishments, the interest, the enthusiasm aroused.

JAMES J. SLOAN, President

CANADIAN HISTORIANS LAUNCH NEW PUBLICATION

William Wheeler of Toronto has forwarded two interesting magazines--Vol. 1, No. 1 of "The Early Bird Enthusiast, 1909 - 1939" on the cover of which is stated, "by and for the members of the Early Bird Club," and Vol. 1, No. 2 of the C.A.H.S. Journal, published by the Canadian Aviation Historical Society. Both of these issues are from the same organization, the Early Bird Club having changed its name a year ago due to its similarity to another, well known organization, and it is now known as the Canadian Aviation Historical Society.

Progress of the renamed organization is quite apparent in the improvement visible between the first two issues of its publication. The Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1962) issue is edited by George Morley, with a staff consisting of Jill and Jeffrey Burch, Frank C. Taylor, Al Martin, Russell Maebus and Ernest Harrison, with Harry Creagen as WW I editor and Wheeler as art director. It is mimeographed, with 27 pages and 7 photos. The masthead states it is published quarterly, and the subscription rate is \$2.00 per year.

The address of the new Canadian Aviation Historical Society is 19 Franson Cres., Weston, Ontario, Canada.

GERMAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This year a second new foreign aviation historical society has come into being, with likewise promising results. This is the German Aviation Historical Society and, under the editorship of Walter Loetje, of Hamburg-Langenhorn I, Neukoppel 19a, Hamburg, Germany, a monthly mimeographed bulletin is issued. They have not yet gotten to the stage of illustrations, other than those that can be drawn on mimeo-stencils, but will no doubt persevere to that point.

The description of DAL, as it is known (short for Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Luftfahrtgeschichte) states that it encompasses research in the fields of military and civil aviation, ground facilities and aviation industry. For those who do not read German there are abbreviated supplements in English and Spanish, and correspondence can be conducted in these languages plus French and German.

Membership fee, including the monthly bulletin, is 18 deutch marks, about \$3.50 U. S.

TAHS NEWS

The Texas Aviation Historical Society has officially been incorporated in the State of Texas as a non-profit organization, with full tax benefits.

Officers and directors for the remainder of 1963 include President H. G. Anderson, Secretary-Treasurer James Sage, and Recording Secretary Norman Ross. Directors include Dick Atkins, John Hopkins, Duane Smith,

Ray Wojnicz, Fred Maupin and Mitch Mayborn, Chairman.

Work is underway to enlarge the membership through a steady program of publicity on worthwhile projects, and to enhance the local knowledge of the TAHS. Two aircraft, a Chance Vought F7U "Cutlass", and a Marine TO-1 have been acquired from the Navy. A third aircraft, an American Eagle, has been given by Museum Curator Fred Maupin. The two Navy aircraft are currently kept at Hensley Field in anticipation of eventual restoration for exhibition.

DR. GARBER PRESENTS 60TH ANNIV. WRIGHT BROTHERS LECTURE

On 6 December, Dr. Paul Edward Garber, Head Curator and Chief Historian of the National Air Museum will present a memorial lecture before the Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association at East Hartford, Conn. Dr. Garber's lecture will be illustrated and will commemorate the 60th Anniversary of powered flight by the Wright Brothers. The lecture is to be given in the Auditorium of the United Aircraft Corporation Research Laboratories, Silver Lane, East Hartford, just off Wilbur Cross Highway.

Mr. Bernard Whelan, pioneer airman, long-time pilot and retired General Manager of Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. will also speak on his experiences in flying the Wright Model B. On display will be the Wright Brothers engine used in the Navy's airplane, B-1, and a large model of the 1903 Wright airplane.

The C.A.H.A. also reported a very fine turnout at their Open House held at Bradley Field, Hartford on 27 October 1963. This was highlighted by the presentation of the K-225 Helicopter to C.A.H.A. by Charles H. Kaman, President of Kaman Aircraft Corp.

On display also were the Laird "Solution" (1930 Thompson Trophy winner), a 1912 Curtiss Pusher, Fokker "Universal", Sweitzer Glider, Hodge 18-cyl. rotary engine plus other loaned exhibits.

PROJECT 60 - BUILD HISTORIC WRIGHT PLANE REPLICA

Scientists, engineers, pilots, mechanics, and some industrial organizations have combined resources to build an authentic full-scale copy of the Wright Brothers' wood and cloth biplane which made the first powered flight by man, December 17, 1903.

The program, called Project 60, is sponsored by the National Capitol Section of American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Its President, Maj. Gen. Marvin C. Demler, in announcing the project said: "Believe it or not, it's harder to build the Wright plane today, than it was in 1903. The project is demanding every talent of our space and jet-age experts. All of the materials and techniques available to the Wrights, crude as they may seem today, have long since been replaced by more modern machines and methods. Consequently, stepping back sixty years, to build the plane exactly as it was constructed then with the same materials, is a real challenging venture."

Rare spruce woods, fabrics, wing fittings, control systems, instruments, engine drive chains, etc., are being made from scratch. The Smithsonian Institution's plans for the Wright plane are the only guide. Demler said, "The Washington section undertook the task because its members felt that the Kill Devil Hill Wright Memorial Museum, which is visited by thousands of persons annually, should have a replica of the famous plane."

Presentation will have taken place on 16 December as part of a national 60th Anniversary Program, sponsored by thirteen aviation organizations.

Co-chairmen for Project 60 are Hal Andrews, of the Bureau of Naval Weapons and Regional Vice-President of A.A.H.S. and John Attinello of the Institute for Defense Analysis.