

Bibliography Section

Edited by ROBERT B. CASARI

WRITING DEFINITIVE HISTORY

A few A.A.H.S. Members actively write definitive histories, others attempt to achieve this level of writing, while many prefer for various reasons, to confine their work to a more readable and much less difficult style. In the belief that many would like to raise their level of research to the highest attainable but are unaware of some of the essential requirements for compiling this type of information, the following brief discussion of the problem is presented.

There is no concise definition of what constitutes definitive writing, but to properly be in this category it must be both as complete as possible and, above all, accurate. It is, of course, necessary to gain access to authoritative information in order to compile the most accurate material possible, but there is more to it than that. Any work of lasting value contains not only the author's interpretation of history, but also a listing of his sources in the form of foot notes and/or a detailed bibliography which clearly and completely indicates the source from which the information comes.

Regardless, of whether you wish to go into this detail in your final writing, some form of collecting, organizing and referring to your notes is necessary if you are undertaking anything beyond the simplest of essays. It is not only discouraging but leads to inaccuracy when some pertinent fact is forgotten or cannot be located at the time it is needed. It is not just carelessness in taking notes that leads to sub-standard results but the failure of many to even recognize that a sound approach is fundamental to the final results.

Historical methodology encompasses much more than mere collecting and using facts. It includes locating the archives, personal collections and other sources of material as well as a basic knowledge of how to record properly and clearly the final result. In short, the subject covers from beginning to end the work necessary in compiling definitive history. Few of our Members realize that a variety of excellent publications exist which discuss in detail the entire subject or some phase of historical methodology. In view of their ridiculously low price, there is no reason for anyone interested in recording history, whether for his own use or for publication, to not have several for constant reference. Certainly, anyone writing for the A.A.H.S. JOURNAL should have one or all at hand. Three current and excellent references are described below:

HISTORIAN'S HANDBOOK - A KEY TO THE STUDY AND WRITING OF HISTORY

By Wood Gray and others, 1959. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 58 pages, no index. Paperbound. About \$1.00.

This publication is intended for the college student and reader of general history, but virtually all of what is said is pertinent to the aviation historian. Beginning with a discussion of the choice of a subject, each phase of the preparation is detailed, including how to locate evidence, taking notes (a science in itself), criticism of sources, construction of the final work, and the problem of communicating clearly and accurately your findings to the reader.

The chapter on locating sources is of limited use to the aviation specialist but contains a 20 page biblio-

graphy of world history. Several accepted methods of taking notes are discussed with examples shown. The most valuable section of 19 pages covers organization of the material, describes each part of the book from the title page to the index and indicates in great detail how all sources are correctly referenced. It closes with a short discussion of style, typical pitfalls and proof-reading.

This pamphlet's prime value is in presenting a picture of an historian's goal and the method of attaining it.

THE WRITING OF AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY - A GUIDE

Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 20-200; 1956. 145 pages, index. Hardbound. \$1.50 postpaid. Order from the Supt. of Documents, U.S. Gov. Printing Office Washington, D. C. 20402.

More specialized than the above work, this volume is intended to guide the soldier in studying and writing military history. The most valuable chapter lists sources of material in great detail, covering archives; government, state and local libraries; location of military records; standard published references from the Congressional Record to Service School studies; manuscript collections; museums and historical films. A second excellent chapter describes researching note taking and writing.

Appendix A, of 19 pages, is a Style Manual indicating proper methods of designating reference material and military units of all kinds. Last is a 45 page bibliography of military history divided into chronological groups with a small number of aviation books included. Covering somewhat the same ground as HISTORIAN'S HANDBOOK, this volume is more detailed and related to A.A.H.S. interests.

DOCUMENTARY COLLECTIONS RELATED TO THE U. S. AIR FORCE - A GUIDE FOR MILITARY WRITERS

By Major James F. Sunderman, 1961. Air University Quarterly Review, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Summer 1961. 17 pages.

Reprint available from USAF Book Program, Office of Information, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington 25, D. C. No charge.

This small pamphlet covers only one phase of definitive writing, locating the reference material, but it is excellent and is devoted solely to aviation sources. It lists all principal collections of military aviation reference material in the U. S., their location, and describes in considerable detail their contents. Included are archives, libraries, still and motion picture files, Library of Congress, U. S. Army Photographic Agency, etc. This is invaluable to military aviation writers seeking source material.

Robert B. Casari.

TRACKS ACROSS THE SKY - The Story of the Pioneers of the U. S. Air Mail

By Page Shamburger, 1964. New York/Philadelphia: Lipincott Company. 179 pages, 59 photographs. \$4.95.

Few writers writing about aviation have the knowledge and ability to make flying come alive to the reader. Miss Shamburger is one of the few. Her descriptions of air mail flights are lyrical and compelling,

fused with the sensations of flight, the cold, the sounds from an open cockpit and the idiosyncracies of Jennys, DH-4s, Junkers JL-6s, Stearman "Bull of the Mountains" and Pitcairn Mailwings. It is this which makes her book a delight to experience and read.

TRACKS ACROSS THE SKY is concerned with the development of the air mail from 1918 until 1934 and concentrates on the period from 1918 to 1929. Carefully, it details the birth of the U. S. Aerial Mail Service with military pilots, moves on to the gallant years from 1918 to 1926 when civilian pilots blazed mail routes across the country under the Post Office Department, and then moves to the era from 1927 to 1934 when the Air Mail Service turned to commercial operators and so gave birth to the small air carriers that would grow and amalgamate into the great air lines of today. In less detail, the book treats the winter of 1934, when the air mail was turned over to the Army Air Corps, and the succeeding growth of the major air lines.

From the stories emerge such unforgettable characters as W. L. Smith, "Dog" Collins, Joe Taff, "Skinny" Knight and "Mountain-Buster" Kytile. Enhancing the narrative are a great many fine photos of early mail planes and of the Army planes that carried the mail.

The historically oriented reader will find that the book has been written for the general reader and that it thus skips over details which would be of considerable historic interest. However, there is still a good deal to get one's teeth into, despite some technical errors, and this book can be well recommended for all general aviation libraries, small or large.

Kenn C. Rust

CHALLENGE TO THE POLES - HIGHLIGHTS OF ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC AVIATION

By John Grierson, 1964. Hamden, Conn: Archon Books. 695 pages, 108 photographs, bibliography, appendices, index. \$15.00

On rare occasions, a history appears which rises far above the mediocre flood of other volumes reaching print, presenting the finest possible definitive account. CHALLENGE TO THE POLES is certainly one of these. The author has, himself, flown in the regions about which he has written and speaks with authority; some of his flights of several decades ago being included. Painstaking research and thorough analysis are evident throughout and every identifiable flight in the polar regions is included. Aside from being the only book on this unusual subject, it certainly will remain for a considerable time to come, the most complete.

Beginning with the Andree free balloon flight of 1897, the author traces each one chronologically up to 1954, when trans-polar air service was initiated by the Scandinavian Airlines System, marking the end of the pioneering phase of exploration of the ice caps. Within this interval fell Wellman's airship attempt to reach the Pole, the U. S. Army Round-the-World Flight, Nobille's excursions in the airship ITALIA, numerous sorties by Byrd, isolated flights of interest such as the Wiley Post-Will Rogers tragedy, several Russian enterprises, and many others. Each is discussed in detail. Included, for example, are the results of a 1949 investigation by a Danish doctor which indicates Andree's party of three died from trichinosis.

The appendices contain a number of documents such as a discussion by the Royal Geographic Society of Wilkins' spurious claims regarding Graham Land and a 1934 report by Lindbergh on an Arctic air route. It is only in regard to Russian flights that the author has been forced to compromise, for no assistance could be obtained from the Soviets in furnishing factual material.

The photographs are beautifully reproduced, even though a few have been retouched, and several maps help to orient the reader. Lastly, there is included a chronology summarizing all the polar flights in conven-

ient list form for easy reference.

Grierson has written more than just a detailed account of the facts as they occurred for he has with rare perception thrown aside the erroneous public conceptions of many of these undertakings and has correctly analyzed the reasons for their failures and successes. The foolishly inadequate equipment of the Andree expedition, Amundsen's polar attempt absolutely dependent on ideal conditions throughout the flight, and a refutation of the scurrilous attacks on Nobille are all discussed.

This volume is more expensive than those the majority of Members invest in, but it is well worth the price, both as an exciting story of man's exploration of the most inaccessible regions of the earth, and as reference history. If one is interested in the subject, this comprehensive study will provide more material than a small collection of other books.

Robert B. Casari

I FLEW WITH THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE

By Edwin C. Parsons, 1963. Indianapolis: E. C. Seale & Co., Inc. 335 pages, 78 photographs, 2 three-view drawings, no index. \$8.50.

Originally published in 1937, as THE GREAT ADVENTURE, this rare and much sought book has now been reissued under a new title. Due to the popularity of the Lafayette Escadrille, there have been many tales written about these early American Fliers, some prepared by those who were there, others by writers who never knew the blast of wind through an open cockpit. With rare exception, few have managed to recreate so vividly the character, experiences and emotions of the men who fought and died for France.

The author, who was in the initial group, flew from the squadron's inception to the Armistice, choosing to remain with the French when the Escadrille became part of the U. S. Air Service. He knew intimately each of the heterogeneous collection of men and presents not only a character study of each but relates in detail the life of the squadron from 1915 to its transfer in early 1918.

The many photographs are very well chosen and accurately captioned, being taken primarily from the Soubiran and Paul A. Rockwell collections especially for this edition. While the choice of sepia ink, instead of black, detracts slightly from the illustrations, they are above average and well reproduced. Three-views of the Spad 7 and Nieuport 17 are included and the binding will last a lifetime.

In contrast to the many varied stories of the Lafayette Escadrille, the author traces the life of the squadron and its members with poignancy and a human touch possessed only by one who lived through the experiences. Of the countless books about this era, none does a finer job of portraying combat flying in World War I so realistically.

Robert B. Casari

THE AEROPLANE, AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

By C. H. Gibbs-Smith, 1960. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 375 pages, illustrated, index. £ 1. 15s (\$4.90) plus handling charges.

A new book dealing in detail with the over-all development of the aeroplane has been badly needed for some time. This volume fills the requirement by a methodical study of the machine as a whole, as well as the history of some of its components.

The book is comprised of two main parts. The first, entitled "The History", is the story of the development of the airframe over the years and is presented in 146 fact-filled pages. This section is separated from the second by a few well chosen quotations from aeronautical

writings which give some sense of prospective to the reader. Part 2, entitled "The Commentary", deals with the history of specific portions of the aircraft and its equipment, as well as the work of notable pioneers.

Some of the various items included are as follows: The origins of the kite, of the rocket, of the parachute, and of the aero engine; the invention of flying control systems, claims to the first powered flight, and a good summary of the work of the Wright Brothers. This material is supplemented by a table of the earliest efforts to fly, a good chronology outlining most of aviation's "firsts", and a glossary of aviation terms together with an excellent index.

In presenting this history, Mr. Gibbs-Smith has given an unbiased account of aircraft development and the contribution of experimenters in various countries of the world. He has succeeded in presenting a wealth of information that is not even approached by any previous volume on the subject. Indeed, it would be this reviewer's opinion that, if space or financial restrictions restricted one's library to a single book on the history of aviation, then this should be it.

From the above, the reader may wonder whether this at last is the perfect book that is complete in all respects and having no errors. Such a volume is not of course possible, especially when it is as fact-filled as this one. There are errors, but they are few and the only way to avoid them in a work of this sort, would be to have it run to many editions, correcting them as they become apparent to the author. About the only other criticism that one could offer, is that the illustrations would be improved if they were larger.

K. M. Molson, Ottawa, Canada

HUNGRY TIGER The Story of the Flying Tiger Line.
By Frank J. Cameron, 1964. New York: McGraw Hill.
270 pages, 29 photographs, index. \$4.95.

Burma...China...The Hump...Japan...Iceland...South Africa...the Timor Sea...the Arctic Circle...Twin Falls...Morocco...Bombay...Port Darwin...Berlin...

Shingles...sailors...orchids...Yemenite Jews...electronic equipment...Hungarians...summer students...war brides...auto parts...guinea pigs...jet engines...

1945...1950...1955...1957...1958...1961.... To paraphrase the author, the years of the Tigers have peeled off. Their planes have grown bigger, cargoes heavier, passengers more cosmopolitan, and as you read this book the pages will fly by at supersonic speed, like the years of the Flying Tiger Line. Here is the fascinating and oft times incredible story of the spirit of a handful of people who were determined to operate a certified "All Cargo" airline.

Interwoven with the story of the Flying Tiger Line is the story of Bob Prescott, president of the airline, from his early childhood days, his fighter days in China during World War II as a member of Maj. Gen. Chennault's Flying Tigers, through his days as a transport pilot for the International Division of Trans World Airlines to his dream of an "All Cargo" airline and the way in which he made it a reality.

HUNGRY TIGER is written with a frankness that may make the reader wonder how they ever found success. Almost every move the Tigers made in their bid to become a certified cargo airline was blocked by the organized all-passenger air carriers and a somewhat indifferent Civil Aeronautics Board.

Succeed they did, however, and here is the story of sixteen years of fascinating aviation history, spiced with many anecdotes, some amusing, some heart-warming, and some hair-raising. One cannot help but catch the Flying Tiger Spirit after reading Frank Cameron's book. It is a must for those interested in the development of air transportation, and can also be recommended for the general, aviation bookshelf.

Roger S. Myers, Tarrant, Alabama

THE PLANES THE ACES FLEW, Volume 1.

By Len Morgan and R. P. Shannon. Dallas, Texas: Morgan Aviation Books. 54 pages, 24 drawings. \$2.95

This is the third book in the Famous Aircraft Series and, unlike the first two (on the P-51 and P-47), it is a very poor effort, resulting from the bad technical quality of the drawings. Artist R. P. Shannon consistently shows that at this time he does not have the proper technical knowledge to render an aircraft accurately, and that is a major purpose of the drawings in this book.

THE PLANES THE ACES FLEW consists of individual drawings for the aircraft of 24 aces (13 from WW I, 9 from WW II and 2 from Korea) with a page of text including markings detail for the individual aircraft. The text is well written but seldom devotes itself to the Ace or his plane. Rather it settles for setting the mood and relating the era to other eras.

There is reason to question some of the markings details, certainly those for Gentile's Mustang and also those for several of the World War I types such as Collishaw's Sopwith Triplane. Meyer's Mustang is about the worst drawing to be seen in some time. Before buying this book, one would be well advised to study it closely to see if it offers anything that he might want. Otherwise, it is not possible to recommend the book for any aviation bookshelf.

Kenn C. Rust

ITEMS OF INTEREST

I) The Kennikat Press, Inc. has announced that it is planning to reprint, THE LAFAYETTE FLYING CORPS by Hall and Nordhoff. The edition will be identical to the original, complete with all the colored and black and white illustrations, except that the margins will be a trifle smaller. Price will be \$45.00 (originals now sell for several hundred dollars), but from now until publication, about 15 November, a prepublication price of \$39.50 will prevail. This set will be reviewed in the JOURNAL as soon as it is received. Address is: P.O. Box 270, Port Washington, N. Y.

II) A worthy offering of early aviation photos is now being made by Air Pix, 1111 Nicholson Road, Jacksonville 7, Florida. In the collection of Leslie Gillette are some 1000 different photos of aircraft and pilots up to about 1920. The photos are listed in a catalog (priced at \$.25) which identifies the photos for each type by: number of views available, year produced, type and number of crew, engine, action in photo, position of aircraft, special details in photo, quality of photo (excellent to poor) and degree of retouching, if any. Photos sell at \$1.00 each (8 x 10) with a specially written story on the photos available at \$2.00 each. A catalog must be used for ordering. All in all, this is an excellent offering.

III) Member E. T. Smallwood informs us of the following record: "World War I--Fighter Planes in Action" by Riverside Records, 235 West 46 St., New York 36, N.Y. Price \$5.98 P.P. Record No. 5508 (Mono) No. RLP95508 (Stereo). With record and album is a two page printed section giving data on the record and also on the WW I air war. Sounds include dogfights, machine guns firing, Camels, Pfalz D-12s, Libertys, OX5s, Gnome-Rhone Rotarys and many other sounds.

IV) A complete search of Federal Aviation Agency records on both active and inactive airplanes is furnished at a reasonable charge by Federal Aviation Title Company, 1015 Classen Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Okla. The company can also furnish photocopies of any instruments in the FAA files and a complete history of airplane ownership. Those interested in this very useful service should write to the company which will be helpful in giving further details.

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