History of Aviation Collection

Now on the Internet

The UTD History of Aviation Collection (HAC) was put on the world wide web on July 8, 1996 when a site was designed by Kenneth G. Madden of the University of North Texas. The first collection made available was the extensive Admiral C.E. Rosendahl lighter-than-air file. Other files on line include the Braniff Photo Archive and Doolittle Remembered, 1896-1993. Soon to follow will be guides to the CAT-Air America Archives, the George H. Williams World War I Collection and Doolittle correspondence files. Guides to other Special Collections are in work.

The HAC is indebted to the Aviation/Space Writers Foundation for a special grant of $5,000 to install a site and purchase a scanner which provides the capability to enter all the files that have been accessed over the years.

The HAC internet site is www.utdallas.edu/library/special/aviation/index.html

Quote from the HAC World War I Collection

The following item was found in one of the many interesting World War I periodicals in the HAC files:

"Preceding mention has been made of the French mustache, although of a somewhat detrimental nature. Its virtues must, however, be enumerated, especially since the C.O. has advised their cultivation by young lieutenants and other fliers. It has been found that if a little strong cheese is rubbed into the mustache each morning, the resulting stimulation of the sense of smell will lend to the wearer an air of haughtiness and distinction, most fitting to the birdman. The mustache also makes an excellent carrier for an emergency ration. On long flights one may, by careful use of one's tongue, remove the frozen food particles and small soup icles, thereby gaining considerable nourishment."

Doolittle Squadron Growing

The Doolittle Squadron, in the quest to enlist 500 members, now has 225 members. Those who donate $100 (tax deductible) to the Doolittle Endowment Fund receive a unique certificate suitable for framing. No more will be issued after the 500th squadron member is enlisted.

Air America Association's 1996 Dallas Meeting

Over 300 Air America Association veterans reunited in Dallas on May 31-June 2, 1996. A major reason for meeting in Dallas was so the 300 members attending could visit the association archives in the History of Aviation Collection. One of the highlights during the library visit was the talk by James Parker, a former "customer" of Air America services and author of Code Name Mule, a book about his experiences in Laos. Milton Bludworth, an HAC volunteer who is a curator for the Air America archives, expressed his high regard for the former Air America employees with a heartfelt personal tribute for their bravery, dedication and patriotism.

At the banquet, Association President Brian Johnson presented a donation of $5,000 to the CAT/Air America Endowment Fund which is used to maintain the archives. Highlight of the banquet was a powerful, insightful talk by former Ambassador to Laos, Thomas Sullivan. He gave background and context to the American effort in Southeast Asia and explained how decisions were made amid the complexity of the situations that arose in the diplomatic world.

Dr. Larry D. Sall, Associate Library Director for Special Collections, expressed the University's gratitude and his personal appreciation for the support provided by the Air America Association and its members. The Association will meet next year in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Glen Gilbert Air Traffic Control Records

Sixty boxes of writings and research data of the late Glen A. Gilbert, founder and first director of the Civil Aeronautics Authority (now Federal Aviation Administration) air traffic control system, were donated by his son Gordon Gilbert in the 1980s. These important papers, not yet cataloged record the history of air traffic control for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft from the 1930s.
RFC Accident Report, 1917

A Royal Flying Corps major damaged a Nieuphor Scout extensively during a takeoff, and the court of inquiry found that the pilot was guilty of carelessness and poor airmanship. The Commandant General was not so convinced and ordered the board reconvened. An exhaustive inquiry into meteorological conditions on the day of the accident revealed that the pilot had unfortunately been authorized to fly his aircraft on a day when there was absolutely no lift in the air and therefore could not be held responsible for the accident.

In its new report, the court congratulated the major on his reprieve and also on his engagement to the Commandant General’s daughter, which had been announced shortly before the accident.

Bill Lear’s Papers On Hand

One of the major additions to the History of Aviation Collection was the gift from Mrs. Moya Lear of the personal papers and records of her late husband William P. “Bill” Lear. These documents contain information about Lear’s important avionic developments, his more than 150 patents and designs of the Learstar, Learjet and Learfan aircraft, as well as the original design of the Challenger.

Among Lear’s inventions were the first practical direction finder for airplanes, the first automatic pilot for jets, an automatic landing system, for jets and the eight-track tape.

Aviation Book Sale

The History of Aviation Collection has hundreds of WW I, WW II and general aviation books on continuous sale, many of them rare. These are duplicates of books already on the HAC shelves. The income is used to purchase archival supplies and newly-published aviation books.

Two catalogs listing the books for sale are available. One lists the WWI books; the other, WWII and general aviation titles. Send $2.00 for each or $3.00 for both.

The Clara Adams collection consists of news clippings, photos and letters. An avid philatelist, there is a collection of first flight and first day covers, the itinerary of her round-the-world flight, and copies of speeches about her first flight adventures. The materials span the years from 1919 to 1967.

The Goebbels Diary Reveals Early Atomic Research

The diary of Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister, reveals an interesting entry that is in the original German language and was not translated into an English version. In the entry for March 25, 1942, he wrote:

“I have received a report about the latest results of German science. The research in the field of atom smashing has progressed so far that its results, under certain circumstances, could have an effect on the conduct of the war. With the smallest amount of matter such an immense destructive effect can result that one could regard the course of the war, if it lasts longer, and later wars, with a certain horror. Modern technology gives man access to means of destruction which are unimaginable. German science is here in the lead, and it is also necessary that we are first in this area, for whoever brings revolutionary new technology to this war has a greater chance of winning it.”

Wineburgh Philatelic Collection Includes Air Mail Materials

The late H. Harold Wineburgh, a well-known Texas advertising pioneer, established the Wineburgh Philatelic Research Library at UTD in 1976. Its purpose is to promote not only philatelic research but also to inspire a love of learning through philately. Wineburgh’s initial donation of his collection of valuable stamps was sold to obtain current subscriptions to over 100 philatelic
periodicals and establish an endowment fund.

Researchers with supplementary philatelic interests will find books and journals that feature first day covers, 1st class mail cancellations, cachets, machine cancellations, postmarks, meter stamps, World War II censor markings, picture post cards, duck stamps and pacquebot marks of the Americas (mail posted from commercial vessels). Collocated with the aviation collections, the Wineburgh Library includes many books on air mail that are available for study and reference. Many annual reports and postal regulations of the U.S. Post Office Department and postal histories of other nations are on file. There are also many interesting special holdings on hand, such as Ice Cap News, Confederate, Holy Land, Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii, state postal and United Nations histories and stamp references. Coin catalogs are also available. The oldest reference book is the First Report of the Postmaster General in London, dated 1855. Scott Postage Stamp Catalogs date from 1912.

**HAC Members Attend WWI Historian Seminar**

UTD’s Associate Library Director for Special Collections Dr. Larry D. Sall and HAC volunteers France McCoy, Ken Rice and George Williams attended the Fifth Biennial WWI Historian Seminar and Model Exhibition in Washington D. C. last June. Organized by The League of World War I Aviation Historians, this year’s three-day event was hosted by the Atlantic Coast Chapter. Over 150 members attended.

Guest speakers from overseas included Colin A. Owens from Australia; Judy Robinson from New Zealand; and Alex Revell from England. Donald S. Lopez, reappointed Deputy Director of the National Air & Space Museum, fighter ace and author, made a presentation on the museum’s World War I aircraft. Tom Crouch presented his views on the Wright patent suits.

The group toured the NASM’s Paul E. Garber Preservation, Restoration and Storage Facility at nearby Suitland, MD. Awards were presented for the best models of World War I aircraft after judging by a panel of experts.

The next meeting of the League will be held either in Pensacola, Florida or Dallas, Texas in 1998. The last one held in Dallas was in 1988 and featured the three surviving aces of “the war to end all wars.”

**Business Aviation History Center**

In 1983, the Brigadier General D. Harold Byrd Business Aviation History Research Center was established as a part of the History of Aviation Collection. Byrd pioneered the use of business aircraft in the petroleum industry which is largely credited for the early growth of the use of aircraft in business and industry. Born at the turn of the century in Detroit, Texas, Byrd’s life was linked to the East Texas oil boom. He “wildcat” and drilled 56 dry holes in a row and thus earned the nickname of “Dry Hole.” He overcame these losses by dealing in oil leases which he bought for $1 per acre and sold for several thousand dollars per acre to become a millionaire at age thirty.

Byrd branched out into other ventures and was one of the founders of Temco Aircraft Corp. He was responsible for 58 business aircraft between 1926 and 1976 and participated in the organization of the Civil Air Patrol and served as the Texas Wing Commander for three decades. During this period he donated nine aircraft to the CAP and was deeply involved in the development of Love Field as a major terminal at Dallas. General Byrd, a fourth cousin of Admiral Richard E. Byrd, was a substantial backer of his expeditions to the South Pole. The D. Harold Byrd Room in the Special Collections area of the McDermott Library building is the repository for the HAC business aviation historical materials.