Translations from the Goebbels Diary

Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s partner in crime, kept a detailed diary during his Nazi years which was not completely translated into an English version. Here are some revealing entries which have been translated from the original edition by Dr. Larry D. Sall, Associate Library Director for Special Collections, UTD:

July 8, 1944: “In the near future our suicide pilots will be ready for operations. They have now progressed so far in their training that one may expect that perhaps within the next week this new weapon will be in operation. The suicide pilots are an audacious corps of men who, just as the Japanese suicide pilots, aim themselves and their machines at enemy ship units and find thereby certain death. Also the Navy’s so-called one man boats, which have caused the latest heavy losses to England’s naval units, belong to a certain degree to this bold guard. Certainly there are thousands and tens of thousands in Germany who would volunteer for such formations if the call went out. The idealism of the German people is entirely unbroken, and the fighting morale especially in the national socialist movement is not exhausted even on the periphery.”

August 29, 1944: “The V-1 weapon is to be manned with suicide pilots who will fly them against the English fleet at Scapa Flow. Considerable success could be achieved in that manner. The suicide pilots, who have volunteered in extraordinary numbers, are already being trained, and it is hoped that manned V-1s can be brought into action in about 14 days. It is high time.”

Sept. 28, 1944: “Skorzeny is training a group ready to die by flying V-1s against important enemy targets. A large number of volunteers have reported. However, even this training takes a certain amount of time, so for the moment we cannot expect much from them.”

November 23, 1944: “Hanna Reitsch, the famous aviatrix, paid me a visit and spoke particularly about the possibilities of using the V-1 as a manned suicide plane. Hanna Reitsch is a very energetic and temperamental lady, but she did not leave me with the satisfactory impression that I had actually anticipated. Indeed in general women should not be allowed to be the leading personalities in such important questions. Even with the best will there is lacking somewhere insight and intelligence, and above all, men of a certain stature would only with difficulty want to entrust themselves to the leadership of a woman.”

March 15, 1945: “Regarding the air war, now the so-called death units are supposed to go into action against the enemy bomber fleets. The Fuehrer has given his approval that about 300 Suicide Flyers should hurl themselves against the enemy bomber groups with a 95% certainty of self-sacrifice, and under all circumstances to bring one bomber down with each fighter. This plan was suggested months ago; unfortunately, Goering did not push it through.”

Max Immelmann

Evidence has been found in the HAC files that there truly was chivalry among airmen during World War I. It was shown when Max Immelmann, the German flyer who made the Immelmann turn famous, was shot down. On July 1, 1916, a British plane passed over the German lines to his unit’s airport and dropped a wreath by parachute. A handwritten letter was attached which said, “We have come over to drop this wreath as a tribute of the respect the British Flying Corps held for Lt. Immelmann. We consider it an honour to have been detailed for this special work. Lt Immelmann was respected by the British airmen, one and all agreeing he was a thorough sportsman.” It was signed by the pilot Alister M. Miller and his observer. The wreath also had a typed note attached:

In Memory of Lt. Immelmann. 
Our Brave and Chivalrous Opponent
From the
British Royal Flying Corps

The Immelmann turn is a maneau-
ver in which an aircraft completes half of a loop and then rolls over to an upright position, thus changing direction by 180 degrees with a simultaneous gain in altitude.

Retha McCullough

The McCullough Collection
Retha McCullough [Crittenden], the first woman in Texas to earn a pilot’s license, donated her papers, photographs, correspondence and memorabilia to the History of Aviation Collection at UTD in 1985. A fourth grade school teacher when she took her first lessons and soloed in 1928, her school supervisor took a dim view of her activities. “They thought it was unbecoming of a person in my position,” Mrs. Crittenden said when she presented her collection. “But the children loved it. I paid $20 per hour for lessons,” she added, “and the [flying school] paid me $20 for the publicity.”

Her only emergency during her flying days was a forced landing on a golf course in an OX-5-powered Waco-10 when the engine quit. She was unhurt and no golfers were endangered; the engine was repaired and she continued the flight. A dry goods store tried to capitalize on her fame by advertising the “Retha” shoe at $8.50 a pair.

Retha McCullough was a charter member of the 99s when the organization of women pilots was formed in 1929.

World War II Collections Wanted
Arthur H. Sanfelici, editor of Aviation History magazine, ran an editorial in a recent issue about the History of Aviation Collection and the Doolittle Library. “Many of those who served during World War II have retired and are moving to smaller quarters with less room for things they’ve collected over the years,” he wrote. “Or they find that the time has come to pacify those they live with by cleaning out old footlockers and attics full of military service artifacts. And increasingly, surviving veterans are being asked by the families of deceased wartime buddies what should be done with all that stuff they left behind.

“The problem for both the veterans and surviving family members often is to find a place that will accept the material—and will value it. Many museums and libraries do not have the staff, budget or room to accommodate such artifacts even if they would like to. Each time someone opts for the trash bin we lose another bit of our aviation heritage.”

Sanfelici recommends that the History of Aviation Collection at UTD (P.O. Box 830643, Richardson, TX 75083-0643) be considered as a repository for World War II memoirs, books, albums, diaries and similar written and photographic materials that could be used as reference sources by researchers and scholars. In the headline to his editorial, he states, “Call it ‘junk’ if you want, but don’t throw it away—aviation artifacts are pure treasures to researchers.”

The HAC cannot accept paintings, framed certificates, souvenirs, uniforms, flags, weapons, munitions, equipment, plaques or similar three-dimensional items. However, it is recommended that the Frontiers of Flight Museum at Love Field’s airline terminal building in Dallas be contacted for possible placement of such artifacts. Contact Olin Lancaster, Executive Director, at (214) 350-3600.

Aviation Books Sought and Sold
Do you want to downsize your collections of aviation books and magazines that may be taking up too much space in your house? Think of the HAC as the place to send them. They may fill a gap in our collections that further enhance the HAC’s status as one of the nation’s richest sources for aviation background materials.

If you think your collections would duplicate what is already on hand, you may be right but they are still valuable because we make duplicates available for sale or trade.

Philatelic Collections Full of Surprises
The Special Collections Department at UTD, under the direction of Dr. Larry D. Sall, is a repository for one of the nation’s richest sources of philatelic information. Known as the Wineburgh Philatelic Research Li-
brary, it contains a number of books for aerophilatelists on the history of air mail and the many stamps issued by the countries of the world.

One interesting story in air mail history concerns the rocket post in which mail was sent by rocket-propelled cylinders. One of the first examples was the delivery of mail from ship to shore in 1902 at Niuafou in the Tonga Islands necessitated by the extreme difficulty of shipping had when approaching the jagged volcanic coastline. Rockets were the only way to deliver the mail. At that time rockets were being used for life lines, rescues and signal flares. If rocket mail dropped in the water, special rewards were offered to powerful local swimmers to retrieve it.

The first person known to suggest the idea of propelling mail by some explosive means was Heinrich von Kleist, a German newspaper editor. In 1810, he envisioned a number of artillery batteries stationed between cities that would fire hollow shells loaded with letters and post cards instead of explosives. The mail loads would be propelled from one battery to another, retrieved, and fired to the next. Von Kleist was ahead of his time but after Dr. Robert H. Goddard fired the world’s first liquid rocket in 1926, many potential uses were forecast, including rocket mail. An air mail “first” was eventually achieved on July 2, 1936 when the first international rocket flights were made by Keith E. Rumbel and a group of American Legion members of Post No. 37. Five rockets containing 2,000 letters in five rockets were fired from McAllen, Texas across the Rio Grande to the outskirts of Reynosa, Mexico. One exploded in the air but four landed safely. One of these landed on a house and the mail was seized by Mexican authorities. The Legionnaires marched across the International Bridge, retrieved the letters and fired them back across the river. Two of the rockets were damaged in flight and the letters were scattered over the countryside.

**History of Aviation Collection Active on Internet**

Since the UTD History of Aviation Collection went on the World Wide Web on July 8, 1996, many researchers have found it invaluable to shorten search time. More of the vast HAC resources are being added. One large file soon to be added will be the records of the Second Yamamoto Mission Association (SYMA). This is the organization that fought to have the records of the U.S. Air Force to show that Colonel Rex T. Barber deserves full credit for shooting down Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto on April 18, 1943 over Bougainville. More information will be published in Air-Log when the file goes on line.

The HAC internet site can be found at www.utdallas.edu/library/special/aviation/index.html.

**Endurance Record Set by Texans in 1929**

The names of Reg L. Robbins and James Kelley have been mostly forgotten now but they are featured in the HAC files. On May 27, 1929, they completed an endurance flight over Fort Worth, Texas and set a new record by staying up 172 hours, 32 minutes, 1 second in a Ryan Brougham, similar to Lindbergh’s Spirit of St. Louis. Their record eclipsed the 150 hour, 40 minute, 15 second mark of the U.S. Army Air Service Question Mark, a Fokker tri-motor, set in January 1929. The flight ended when the wooden propeller split. Robbins and Kelley reportedly received $30,000 each from local businessmen.

Robbins was best known before the flight as a race driver who appeared at Texas “auto rodeo” shows. He looped an automobile as part of his act and said he found more fun in wrecking automobiles than racing them.

Robbins’ file includes a detailed log of the flight that includes weather, airspeed, altitudes flown, and times each pilot was at the controls. Robbins and another pilot planned to fly from Seattle to Tokyo in 1931 for a $25,000 prize offered by a Japanese newspaper but were forced down at Nome.

**Complete Sets of Aviation Magazines on Sale**

HAC has complete sets of a number of aviation magazines for sale that are duplicates of those already in the stacks. These include Aviation Quarterly (hardbound), AAHS Journal, Air Classics, Scale Modeler, Model Airplane News, Skyways, Air & Space, Air Force, and Aviation Heritage. Partial sets of those above and others are also available.

A number of aviation books are available for purchase, including a complete set of The Aircraft Yearbook dating from 1919. Inquiries about availability and price should be directed to HAC at (972) 883-2570. Funds that result from such sales are used to purchase new books or books that enhance the total collection as a nationally-known repository for aviation historical information.

Web Site: www.utdallas.edu/library/special/aviation/index.html