HAC Obtains Famous Ferko Collection

A. E. 'Ed' Ferko

The History of Aviation Collection obtained one of the most extensive German World War I collections of aviation books, photographs, scrap books, maps and periodicals ever assembled in the United States and perhaps the world. It's the collection of the late A.E. 'Ed' Ferko, a Salem, Ohio native, which was recently acquired from his estate. Ferko was internationally known as an authority on every phase of World War I combat aviation, especially the German aces and leading fliers. This material is particularly rich in photo albums from the war and German language books and periodicals published during and shortly afterward. His passion was for the details of the war in the air. He wanted to know every unit's move and be able to trace the trajectory and note the impact of every shot fired.

Among Ferko's many related projects was the accumulation of a complete list of the serial numbers of all World War I German aircraft. However, his research was not limited to World War I. He also researched the political and technical aspects of the Spanish Civil War, World War II and the Korean War. While his interest was overwhelmingly World War I, he also collected many books dealing with German aviation in WW II as well as books about the aviation activities of the other belligerents.

Southwest Aviation Council Hosted

The History of Aviation Collection hosted the second organizational meeting of the Southwest Aviation Council (SWAC) in August. The council consists of representatives from the C.R. Smith, Frontiers of Flight, Aviation Heritage, CAF Lancaster, Cavanaugh, Pate, Silent Wings, Texas Air Command and Vintage Flying Museums, in addition to UTD's History of Aviation Collections and the Northrop Grumman Corporation. Purpose of the council is to publicize the museum network and the associated research and aerospace industry facilities in Texas.

Dick Atkins, retiree from Northrop Grumman Corp., was selected as chairman. A board of directors will be elected from the museum community. Short- and long-term and strategic plans will be developed at future meetings.

Doolittle Library Acquires Famous Invitation

Just before departing the carrier Hornet for the raid on Japan on April 18, 1942, Jimmy Doolittle promised his men that he would host a party for everyone when they arrived in Chungking, China. He couldn't keep his promise then because they all didn't get there but when the war was over, he wrote to each survivor inviting them to Miami for a weekend at his expense. One of these letters, dated November 1945, has been donated to the Doolittle Library by Capt. Charles L. McClure, one of the crew members portrayed in the famous motion picture, Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo. Doolittle wrote, "Now seems to be the right time to have our get-together and I, for one, would appreciate nothing more than a chance to swap handshakes, yarns and toasts with the old, original gang...I plan to throw a dinner with all the food you can eat and whatever liquid you choose to float the food on."

The reunion took place in December 1945 and established a precedent that became an Air Force tradition. Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders have held subsequent reunions annually during the anniversary week of their famous
mission. A toast to their departed comrades is made using silver goblets inscribed with each Raider’s name upright and inversely. When a Raider dies, his goblet is turned over during the next reunion.

The goblets are on permanent display at the Air Force Academy and are brought to the reunion site accompanied by two cadet honor guards. There are now 33 surviving Raiders of the original 80.

McClure also donated a letter from Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, skipper of the Hornet, dated 29 March 1946, in which the admiral extended warmest regards and enclosed a folder of photographs taken on the ship before their departure. “To Americans, grimly facing reverses on every front,” he wrote, “[the raid] brought an electric shock of hope. To an arrogant enemy, it foreshadowed inevitable defeat.”

Britain’s Queen Opens American Air Museum

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and U.S. Air Force Secretary Sheila Widnall officially opened the $17 million American Air Museum in England on August 1, 1997. The museum, located at Duxford, 50 miles north of London, is the aviation branch of the state-run Imperial War Museum where about 140 other aircraft are displayed.

The new facility is a 70,000 sq. ft. exhibition building designed to house Europe’s finest collection of historic American combat aircraft. The building is the largest pre-cast concrete structure in Europe and features the largest collection of historic American combat aircraft outside the United States. The twenty-one American aircraft on display span the wars from a World War I biplane to the giant B-52D Stratofortress. The queen called the futuristic concrete-and-glass dome which resembles a jet fighter wing, “a new symbol of Anglo-American friendship.”

The aircraft and supporting exhibits explain the significance of American air power and its part in twentieth century history. Among the themes explored are aviation’s role in the two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War and the Gulf War. The new museum joins a formidable number of military exhibits in Britain that includes more than 150 military and military-related museums.

Mighty Eighth’s Museum in Georgia Continues to Grow

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum that opened at Savannah, Georgia on May 13, 1996 has become a Mecca for the more than 350,000 former Eighth Air Force men and women who served during World War II and is continuing to grow. There are now 14 individual unit exhibit cases on display and a fourth theater is now in operation. The museum also features a 100,000-volume library, large archives, memorial gardens, an art gallery and study rooms.

The 90,000 square foot museum is located at the intersection of Interstate Highway 95 and U.S. Highway 80 west of Savannah at 175 Bourne Ave., Pooler, Ga. It is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week except New Year’s Day, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Telephone: 1-800-421-9428.

CAT/Air America’s E.C. Kirkpatrick Dies

E.C. “Kirk” Kirkpatrick, well-known China hand, died on April 15, 1997. His documented 302 flights over the infamous Hump while flying for CNAC (China National Aviation Corporation) were an unsurpassed record. He flew for Pan Am Ferries early in World War II and then for Pan Am Africa. Later he flew for CNAC, a Pan Am subsidiary.

During the early 1950s, Kirkpatrick was involved in Operation Cognac and in the operation at Dien Bien Phu which were carried out by CAT (Civil Air Transport). Later, when he couldn’t fly due to physical limitations, he worked at administrative assignments for CAT in Hong Kong and later for Air America in Taipei. He left the company in 1965 and retired to Latrobe, Pennsylvania where he remained until his death.

George Williams presents Service Award to Dr. Larry Sall

Dr. Larry Sall and HAC Volunteers Honored

Dr. Larry D. Sall, Associate Library Director for Special Collections, his staff and the dedicated volunteers of the History of Aviation Collection were honored with a luncheon on May 3, 1997 by the founders and generous benefactors of the Collection. Dr. Sall and the volunteers were noted for together creating “in two decades an Aerospace Library of global significance, a national treasure of inestimable value to this and to future generations. Under Dr. Sall’s
expert guidance, the Collection has expanded and grown into a research facility for writers, researchers and historians that has become internationally recognized. He has encouraged the development of a web site on the Internet that has made the Collection’s materials available to researchers on a world-wide basis.

Present at the luncheon was Mrs. Moya Olsen Lear, widow of William P. Lear, avionics genius and manufacturer of the famous Learjets. As her husband’s partner, she took over the company upon his death in 1978. Mrs. Lear was given a tour of the Special Collections Department and upon completion of the luncheon donated $10,000 to the HAC to help continue the work of preserving American aviation history.

Wineburg Airmail Collection Extensive

The Wineburg Philatelic Research Library, one of the major special collections in addition to the History of Aviation Collection, has hundreds of special reference volumes relating to airmail. There are rare books on such subjects as balloon posts, Zeppelin cancels, glider and hover mail, rocket and missile mail, and crash mail from the Hindenburg.

Air America Association Honors Bludworth

At the annual reunion of the Air America Association in Cocoa Beach, Florida, Milton Bludworth, long-time volunteer who works on the CAT/Air America Archives, was made an Honorary Member and honored with a plaque. The award was accepted by Dr. Larry Sall in his absence. In response, Milton wrote, “the dedication and resolve with which individual members performed extraordinary deeds for our country never ceases to fascinate me. It truly is an honor to work on the CAT/Air America Archives.”

The Air America Association donated $7,500 to its endowment fund that helps underwrite the cost of maintaining their archives. About 350 people attended this year’s reunion where Major General Richard Secord was the guest speaker. The CAT/Air America pages on the UT-Dallas web site were demonstrated and work continues with the effort to obtain a postage stamp honoring Air America.

The 1997 CAT Association reunion will be held September 11-15 in New Orleans. Dr. Sall will discuss his translation of a book by Max Springweiler, a German national who worked for CAT for many years. Entitled Aviation Pioneer in China, it is a personal memoir covering his life in the Far East beginning in 1930.

New Meeting Date Set for Advisory Board

At the January 1997 meeting of the HAC Advisory Board, the decision was made to change the date of the annual board meeting to the fall of each year instead of January. The purpose is to enable the fiscal and committee reports to reflect a financial and activity summary at the close of the university’s fiscal year which ends August 31. In addition, a fall meeting will allow for better travel conditions for out-of-town board members. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 20, 1997.

Brannon Collection Received

The files of John G. Brannon, one of the American lawyers who defended the Japanese accused of war crimes during World War II, have been obtained from his estate through Joseph Pruett, a life-long friend. The files contain transcripts of the testimony of the men Brannon defended, his trial notes and photographs. A lawyer and life-long resident of Kansas City, he was commissioned in the Navy and assigned to General MacArthur’s legal section as defense attorney and chairman of the law commission for the trials.

Some Doolittle Reflections

During his busy lifetime, General James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle expressed his observations on various subjects that reflect his character and his varied experiences. The Air Log will present his thoughts in this and future issues which have been gleaned from his talks, writings and interviews:

“I feel that a person should so comport himself as to do no one harm, afford others happiness, extract such personal happiness from life as he can, and make the world a little better place as a result of having lived in it.”

“Flying must be learned from the ground up. In no other vocation is ground work or preliminary training more important.”

“You come to think of airplanes as forgiving and unforgiving. A forgiving airplane is one which corrects a fault if you make it. An unforgiving airplane is one that amplifies a fault.”

“Worry about those things you can fix. If you can’t fix it, don’t worry about it; accept it and do the best you can. It is possible to worry about something until you lose your effectiveness.”

“I have supreme confidence in the efficacy of prayer and believe, wholeheartedly, in the Golden Rule.”

“I’m glad I was born an American. I never had any desire to be anything but an American.”

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