

Chiltern Airwords



CASA Built 'Bucker 131D Jungmann' of the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden in 2006.
Since 2012 it has been on display at the Fantasy of Flight Museum, Polk City, Florida

Photo by Lawrence Hayward

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CHAIRWORDS

Musing on the forthcoming massed Dakota formation flight to northern France in June this year to commemorate the D-Day landings I am reminded of the early BEA days and the large fleet of 'Daks' that were based at Northolt. At the BA Heritage Centre, I am quite surprised that so many younger visitors have never heard of the venerable Douglas DC-3 Dakota. Living in Ruislip I will always remember one particular incident in the late 1940s when I was awoken early one Sunday morning by the familiar sound of two vibrant Pratt & Whitney radials. A BEA Dakota was circling at a low altitude in the vicinity before heading off in the direction of Northolt. It was later revealed that a certain notorious BEA captain had been asked to air test a Dakota early that morning. He somehow found the excuse to extend the test and fly around Ruislip Lido at quite a low altitude in order to impress a certain very attractive BEA traffic girl (whom I knew quite well and shall be nameless) who lived in a very exclusive house at the bottom of Ducks Hill in Ruislip! Somehow, I don't think that he would have got away with that nowadays. **Keith Hayward.**

EDITORWORDS

Note to contributors; please send any emailed articles with words and photos separately, words in one file and photos with captions in another, as it greatly helps with formatting and setting out Airwords. Thanks **David Kennedy.**

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THE CHILTERN AVIATION SOCIETY (CAS); Founded in 1968. Associate member of Air Britain Historians Ltd. **President;** Philip Birtles. **Patron;** David F. Ogilvy OBE FRAeS. Please note Airwords is produced purely for CAS members' own private study and enjoyment and it is not for sale. Opinions expressed in Airwords are those of the author and not necessarily those of the CAS Committee. CAS Membership £15 PA. Non-Members welcome at our monthly programme of events for a small contribution of £2 per event.

MEETINGS: Fourth Wednesday of the month (third in December) 8pm to 10 pm at *Ruislip Methodist Church Hall, Ickenham Road, Ruislip, Middx, HA4 7BX.* Plus, our Mid-month Pub Socials, Wednesdays, 8pm *The Coach & Horses Pub, 1 High Rd, Ickenham, Uxbridge UB10 8LJ.* Please contact CAS for exact date of the mid-month.

2019 PROGRAMME;

WED March 27th – AGM (with photos from **John Roach**)

WED April 24th – George Holt Thomas – Aviation Pioneer - **Dave Scott** (Confirmed)

WED May 22nd – The Dornier Do17 'Flying Pencil' - **Chris Goss** (Confirmed)

WED June 26th - The History of Brooklands - **Tim Morris** (Confirmed)

When His Pulse Rate Went Up – Captain Eric Poole, BEA by Keith Hayward



Thursday 10th June 1965 was a clear day over the United Kingdom. At Heathrow business was brisk as always with aircraft taking off and landing every few minutes; however, this was to be special day. At around 12 20 British European Airways' Hawker Siddeley Trident 1 G-ARPR operating flight BE343 from Paris Le Bourget lined up over Windsor for its approach to Runway 10R (as it was then designated, now 09R). Minutes later the aircraft touched down firmly – as the Tridents always did – and taxied to a stand in the Central Area. Eighty passengers including a reporter from BEA's Press Office and a photographer were preparing to disembark when over the public address came a dramatic announcement - “Ladies and gentlemen, this is your

Captain speaking. You are the first passengers in the world to be landed by an automatic system.” There were gasps of surprise followed by spontaneous cheering at the news; the cabin crew then presented each passenger with a certificate confirming his or her participation in the historic event. In addition, each male passenger was presented with a special tie whilst each lady received a brooch. Trident 'PR was commanded on that auspicious day by Captain Eric Poole (Manager Flight Development), assisted by Captain Tommy Atkins (Chief Training Pilot) and Captain Mike Mitchell (Development Pilot). Privately Captain Poole later admitted that during the approach his pulse rate went up somewhat!

Born on 2nd July 1917, Eric Poole joined the Royal Air Force in January 1934 as an Aircraft Apprentice and passed out as a Fitter in 1936. In 1937 he was posted to 54 Squadron and in 1938 moved to 65 Squadron. He applied for pilot training in 1939 and once qualified he was posted to 604 Squadron on Blenheims. During the Battle of Britain, he was credited with damaging two enemy aircraft, one at night. He later flew Beaufighters and Hurricanes and after a period as an instructor he was posted to 1449 Flight in the Scillies in May 1942 on escort duties involved in air-sea rescue operations. He applied for early release from the RAF in December 1944 to join Scottish Airways, part of the wartime Associated Airlines Joint Committee operating internal services, mostly with de Havilland Rapides. The AAJC evolved into BEA's domestic operation in February 1947 by which time Captain Poole had moved on to DC-3s and then Vikings. In the early 1950s he was flying Elizabethans becoming Flight Manager by 1957. With BEA moving into the jet age he was posted to the Tridents, later becoming Manager Technical Development. He retired in 1976 having been awarded The Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air. A quiet and friendly character, Captain Poole passed away on 13th December 2002 at the age of 84. He could be described as one of life's achievers in the world of aviation, and he will be remembered as such.

Emiliano Sala: Who owned Piper Malibu N264DB by Lawrence Hayward (Source BBC)



The obscure world of plane ownership is under the spotlight following the death of Cardiff City player Emiliano Sala. While the wreckage of the aircraft rests at the bottom of the English Channel - holding, investigators hope, at least some of the answers as to how this tragedy unfolded - parallels could be drawn with the impenetrable trail of ownership and registration enveloping this plane. This story has dominated the headlines for more than two weeks and has fuelled speculation in some circles about safety and regulatory issues in this area of aviation. Cardiff's record signing

agreed to join the ‘Bluebirds’ for £15m on 19 January - their great hope in a fraught season fighting to stay in the Premier League - but fate conspired that he would never kick a ball for the club. Two days later, after a quick trip to his previous club Nantes to say farewell to friends, the 28-year-old Argentine boarded the Piper Malibu N264DB (pictured).

The flight took off for the UK in the dark at 20.15 hours (local time). Football agent Willie McKay, whose son Mark was acting for Nantes in the transfer, arranged the flight, which was piloted by David Ibbotson, from Crowle, North Lincolnshire. It lost contact with air traffic control north of Guernsey after requesting permission to descend from 5,000ft to 2,300ft. Wreckage of the plane was found on the seabed two weeks later by a private underwater search paid for by a fundraising appeal. The body of Sala was later recovered but the pilot, Mr Ibbotson, a 59-year-old father of three, has not yet been found.

The N prefix on the plane means it was registered in the US, but it is thought it was based in Britain - often flying out of Retford Gamston Airport in Nottinghamshire. It is not unusual for US-registered aircraft to be based elsewhere. A source has told us that this might be done for legal or pragmatic reasons, the maintenance, and regulatory regime in the US being perceived as less stringent than in Europe. This is entirely lawful and it is estimated there are hundreds of planes flying out of UK airports registered this way. Documents from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in the US reveal the aircraft was registered in the name of a "trustee" firm - Southern Aircraft Consultancy (SAC), based in Bungay, Suffolk. This serves as an administrative "screen" and obscures the true beneficial owner or owners of an aircraft - the people with ultimate control and use of it. On its website, SAC says: "We specialise in providing individual trust agreements to non-US citizens to enable them to legally register their aircraft on the American 'N' register." SAC said it could not divulge who the owners were due to data protection laws, but had passed this information to the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB). The registration document can be found on the FAA database, stating the fixed-wing, single-engine aircraft's year of manufacture was 1984. But an associated document disclosing more ownership detail, including any associated companies or individuals, appears to have been removed from the database. One person who is known to have a connection to the aircraft is David Henderson. Mr Henderson, 60, from York, is an experienced charter pilot who was filmed by the BBC with the plane at Retford Gamston Airport in 2015 for a feature about ferry flying - the perilous but lucrative activity of transporting small planes across continents to new owners. In the hours after the disappearance of N264DB, he was reported by French media as having been on board the plane - it is thought because his name was on Nantes airport documentation relating to the flight. Mr Henderson posted a Facebook message early on the morning of 22 January stating that rumours of his death were 'slightly exaggerated'. In an interview with a French newspaper, Willie McKay, whose family organised the flight, has been reported as saying that he asked Mr Henderson to fly Emiliano Sala. It is believed that Mr Henderson was unable to do the trip and Mr Ibbotson flew the plane instead. The BBC has tried to speak to Mr Henderson but he has not issued any comment.

There are restrictions on the use of US-registered aircraft anywhere outside of the country. BBC understands that in order to fly a US-registered aircraft outside the US with paying passengers, the owner, or operator must hold an Air Operators' Certificate and the pilot must have a commercial licence. Both UK and US law state private pilots cannot make a profit by carrying passengers. Many pilots who only hold a private licence are signed up with online flight-sharing platforms such as *Wingly* - which has been described as "the Uber of the skies" - connecting passengers with pilots. As flying is an expensive pastime, this allows pilots to notch up their flying hours while sharing the cost of fuel, landing fees and other expenses with passengers. In a blog post in May 2018, Tony Rapson, head of Civil Aviation Authority's general aviation unit, warned: "It is important that the risks and the nature of the flight are understood by both parties." The complex nature of pilot licensing and the opaque nature of the aircraft ownership make for many unanswered questions about where liability rests in the event of a disaster such as this. If any illegality is established around the flight carrying Sala from France to Wales, the aircraft's insurers may ultimately question their liability - this could potentially leave the plane's third-party liability insurance null and void. The company that insured the plane is understood to be specialist aviation insurers Hayward Aviation, who declined to comment. An Air Accidents Investigation Branch spokesman said, "We will be looking at operational aspects of the flight including licensing and flight plans." Its safety investigation "does not apportion blame or liability" and any separate inquiry into licensing matters would be instigated by the CAA's enforcement division. David Ibbotson was a keen amateur pilot who worked as a gas boiler engineer and sometime DJ.

The CAA confirmed he held a private pilot's licence in the UK. He also held a US private pilot's licence, issued in 2014, for which he passed a medical in November. It is not known if he held a pilot's licence in any other country. Described by one friend as a man who "lived for flying," he flew parachutists and skydivers from Hibaldstow Airfield in North Lincolnshire. A former member of the British Parachute Association's council, he was well-known in skydiving circles in the north of England. It is thought that he was flying parachutists on a non-commercial, voluntary basis for expenses only. Posting on a skydivers' forum under his nickname of Dibbo in October 2012, he refers to having more than 3,000 hours flying experience, including 2,000 flying parachutists. He said he was "available at short notice, and very reliable, just back recently from six weeks flying in Norway". As well as being a man who had a passion for flying it is also known that Mr Ibbotson faced challenges. He had £23,400 worth of county court judgements against him - at least one of which is thought to be related to his work as a gas boiler engineer. The most recent, for £4,412, was imposed just 10 days before the fatal flight left Nantes. While it is known that Sala did not pay for the flight what is not known is whether Mr Ibbotson would have undertaken such a journey without payment in line with the constraints of his licence. Mr Ibbotson's family have yet to speak publicly about their loss. The pub where he was a regular, The Red Lion in Crowle, has opened a book of condolence and family and friends have been laying flowers and tributes in the centre of the village. In a statement released on Friday, Sala's family said their thoughts went out "to David Ibbotson and his family, hoping that the authorities will do their best to find him". While the grieving process for the Sala family can begin, the agony and uncertainty for Mr Ibbotson's loved ones goes on.

Argentinian aeronautical expert Commander Jorge Polanco told national television network TyC Sports he was "surprised" the plane was being flown at night and in winter. And one experienced ex-pilot told an online pilots' forum: "It used to be a requirement in France to fly twin-engined at night, single-engine night flights were illegal. I assume this must not be a commercial flight or someone is breaking the rules." But the Civil Aviation Authority said changes to the regulations in the last few years meant there was "nothing preventing a single engine aircraft flying commercially at night". However, what constitutes 'commercially' has yet to be established in this case. Meanwhile, an audio WhatsApp message sent by Sala while on the plane was published in his homeland and suggests the aircraft was not in the condition it should have been. Sala is believed to have said; *"Anyway guys, I'm up in this plane that feels like it's falling to pieces, and I'm going to Cardiff... If in an hour and a half you have no news from me, I don't know if they are going to send someone to look for me because they cannot find me, but you will know... Dad, I'm scared!"*

Comments online, suggest that Piper Malibu N264DB, built in 1984, took several attempts to take off from Nantes and may not have been equipped for icy conditions. With a freezing level on the day of the accident at about 3,000ft and intermittent precipitation there was likely have been a significant problem with icing at 4,000ft so a descent to 2,300ft sounds plausibly like a descent into warmer air. It is unclear whether Ibbotson was qualified to use instruments, but his credentials will form part of the investigation. It is reported that at Nantes Atlantique Airport, the pilot had written in a Facebook comment just before the flight that he was "a bit rusty with the ILS (Instrument Landing System)". Could it be therefore that the pilot, became overwhelmed by icing, bad weather, and unfamiliarity with the aircraft and the stress of instrument flying at night?



Escape from France, the true story behind a stolen Bucker 131D - by Lawrence Hayward



Around 2004, the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden acquired a CASA built 'Bucker 131D' and painted it in the colours of a 'Luftwaffe' Bucker 131D Jungmann, that had been flown from Carpiquet, near Caen, to RAF Christchurch in April 1941 by two Frenchmen, Denys Boudard and Jean Hebert. This choice of colour scheme and markings I found a surprising, as the Bucker's flight to the UK was not well known to the public at large unlike the exploits of Michael Donnet (recorded in his book '*Flight to Freedom*') who had flown a hidden Stampe to the UK from Belgium the same year. It was also a delight to see GD+EG, as I was in contact with Denys Boudard, when researching the history of Christchurch Airfield.

When I informed Denys that his escape had been honoured with a recreation of his plane, he was overjoyed to say the least and via a friend of his in France, I suggested a visit to Old Warden as guest of honour for a suitable air show, which he and Old warden readily accepted even though he was aged circa 85. I then got on the phone to Old Warden and sent various emails with photos of the real aircraft to get them to sort out his visit. I even had a French colleague at work prepared to be a translator, but I guess that PA I dealt with at Old Warden, did not have the same urgency as me and after a lot of talk such as "that sounds like a good idea" or "I'll check and get back to you" I had to inform them that sadly Denys had died. At least he knew about the Bucker, which continued flying as GD+EG at Old Warden until 3rd July 2011 when it suffered engine failure and over turned on landing in a farmer's field, luckily without injury to the pilot. Consequently, the aircraft was rebuilt and is now on display at the Fantasy of Flight Museum, Polk City FL in the same markings. However, the real flight to the UK in 1941 makes interesting reading and I'm indebted to Denys Boudard for explaining how he and Jean Hebert came to escape from occupied France at great risk to themselves and potentially their families they left behind.

Both Boudard and Herbert were friends and were born and brought up in Normandy; Boudard in Flers and Herbert in Caen. Pre-war both had been members of the *Aero Club du Caen et Du Calvados* and were keen of flying. In 1937, Denys Boudard learned to fly with l'Aviation Populaire and obtained his pilots wings on a Potez 60. Later they both enlisted in the *Armée de la Air*. By chance or design Jean Herbert and Denys Boudard were posted to *Ecole Elementaire n°21* at Bernay in early 1940 as student pilots after which they both went on to *Ecole Auxiliaire de Pilotage N°17* at Evreux-Fauvilleat airfield. However, due to the military situation *Ecole Auxiliaire de Pilotage N°17* moved to Lannion in Brittany on 21st May 1940, followed by another move of the unit to *Base Aérienne* near Bergerac where it was dissolved. Later Jean Hebert and Denys Boudard were posted to Algeria and travelled via Toulouse and finally Marseille where they embarked on a ferry to Oran in Algeria. Eventually they reached Blida, near Algiers where they were assigned to *Escadron GB 1/61* on 1st October 1940.



Above; a Potez 60 and above right; a Morane-Saulnier M.S 230 ET2 two-seater trainer which equipped *Ecole Auxiliaire de Pilotage N°17* in 1940 and almost without exception was flown by every trainee pilot in the *Armée de la Air* during the period.



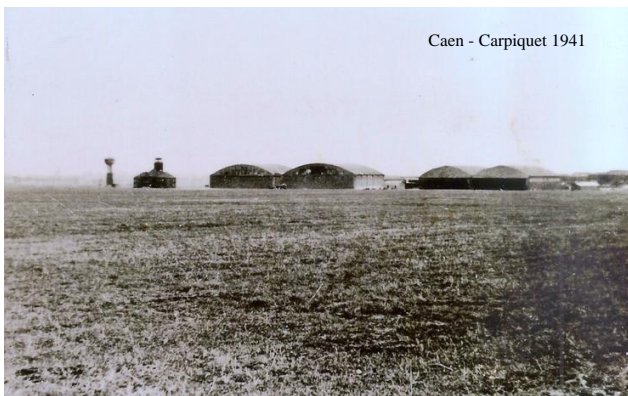
Escadron GB 1/61 was flying Bloch 131 twin-engined medium bombers but it was reported by Denys Boudard that many aircraft had been put out of action to stop pilots from defecting to Gibraltar, so it seems the two men had nothing to do and certainly didn't get to fly. However, it is known that they were granted permission to take some leave in Vichy France in February 1941 that was owed to them in advance of their demobilisation on 29th March 1941. Once back in France, they immediately made plans to join the Free French if possible, by stealing an aircraft in Northern France and flying it to England. At some stage they consulted Mr B. du Pouget, their instructor at Evreux. Consequently, it was decided that they would have to enter the occupied area of Northern France

illegally and travel undetected! To reduce the risk of arrest they lived rough and eventually after three and a half weeks on the road they reached Normandy which they understandably knew well as their parents also lived there. However, instead of staying with their families, they found lodgings 1 km south of Carpiquet with an old lady at 67, Grande Rue in Verson (pictured with arrow) to avoid any risk to their families if they failed in their attempt. After settling in for a few days they then decided to explore the nearby airfield at Carpiquet, which to their delight they discovered was completely unguarded around its perimeter!

On the morning of Tuesday, 29th April 1941 they entered the airfield and while walking about casually, they managed to look into one hangar where they saw a Bucker Bu 133 *Jungmeister*. However, this was no good to them as it was a single-seater aircraft. Conscious that they were being observed, they found some French workers and asked where they could find work. Interestingly it is recorded that the Germans employed 895 French workers in and around the airfield on various tasks, so it's not surprising that when they were directed to a German, who simply provided them with blue overalls and told them to report for work the next day and to bring their papers with them.



They then left the airfield by the same route as they had entered. Overnight the old lady at their lodgings helped them dye their overalls black, the same colour as those worn by German mechanics. As they seemed to be the only young men in the village, they felt very conspicuous and they decided not to stay too long. Feeling that it was their golden opportunity to escape, they planned to go to the airfield again the next day and enter by the same unguarded route. So, the next morning, Wednesday 30th April 1941 wearing their black overalls they were able to walk around without looking too out of place and shortly afterwards they were overjoyed to see a two-seat Bucker Bu 131D Jungmann (Werk Number 4477) in one of the hangars. This Bucker actually belonged to the *Luftdienst Kommando Westfrankreich* based at Quimper and was by chance only at Carpiquet for the day. *Luftdienst* in German means air service and as such it was not actually a Luftwaffe unit but more a support service. Its primary mission was to tow targets for the Flakartillerie and to a lesser extent target towing for fighters and for the students attending Luftwaffe Air Gunnery Schools. Occasionally, the *Luftdienst* units flew courier and mail flights and used Bucker 131D aircraft for such purposes.



Caen - Carpiquet 1941

Once near the hangar Boudard and Herbert saw a German mechanic hand-cranking another aircraft and brazenly, the two Frenchmen went over and offered to help start the engine. Once the engine had started, the German departed and they were able to wander into the hangar and inspect the cockpit of 'their' Bucker and identify the controls and fuel for starting. For the Frenchmen it was 'now or never' and after a short argument and the toss of a coin it was decided that Denys Boudard was going to fly it. Jean Herbert therefore got into the rear cockpit and Denys Boudard swung the propeller, which in itself was quite dangerous, as there were no chocks! The engine started and promptly died as Herbert had moved the

throttle the wrong way. They then noticed that some Germans were coming towards the area in a car and with great coolness they opened the engine panel and pretended to work on the engine until the Germans passed by.

However, their feelings of relief turned to dismay when they noticed that a Frenchman had placed a wheelbarrow at the entrance to the hangar. For a moment, they thought they had been betrayed, however he was persuaded to move it and another Frenchman agreed to act as look-out. They started the engine for the second time, and with Boudard safely aboard, they taxied out of the hangar, past a German machine-gun post. Taxiing for as long as they dared, to warm up the engine, they took off and headed inland, hoping to confuse anyone observing them and so as not to arouse any suspicions that might cause fighters to be scrambled. They also had to buzz the local Railway Station, as while at their lodgings, they had written letters to their parents and arranged for them to be posted by a friend who was working at the Railway Station.

The friend was advised that if they were lucky enough to steal a plane, they would fly very low over the Railway Station and so the friend would know to post the letters to their parents. When the friend posted the letters and it must have come as a shock to their parents as for all they knew their sons were still far away in Algeria! It is also thought that after signalling Boudard or Herbert's wife by buzzing the cottage where she lived, they flew to Caen for a repeat performance for their families and then headed out to sea on a heading for England. The sky was overcast and it was raining so Boudard, who had slightly more experience, took over the flying. To remain clear of cloud in the poor conditions they had to fly very low and their first landfall was at the Needles, IOW which caused some confusion. After zigzagging about for a bit, they coasted in at Southbourne; turning east, they flew over Hengistbury Head (where the Royal Artillery Gunners of 229 LAA Battery held their fire after seeing white scarf being frantically waved). They then saw aircraft in the Christchurch airfield circuit, so they dodged over the town very low and landed in the first field they saw which was unobstructed, not realising at first that it was the airfield. Despite landing downwind, Boudard made a good landing (as he said for the honour of France!). The Frenchmen then noticing a hangar, and taxied over to it and switched off. They had flown approximately 125 miles in just over an hour. F/Lt Frank Griffiths, a pilot with the Special Duty Flight at the time remembers the Frenchmen's arrival;



“Shortly after 11.00 hours on 30th April 1941 the air raid warning sounded over Christchurch and as usual the pilots of the SDF ran out from the Crew Room to the few fighter aircraft we had on strength, armed, refuelled, and parked nearby. I climbed into a Spitfire, started it up and waited for the word to ‘go’ but no sooner there was a flurry of excitement as an aircraft, with black crosses on it, suddenly appeared overhead. At first everyone ducked for cover, thinking they were about to be ‘strafed’ but everyone’s rush for shelter soon stopped, when it was apparent that the aircraft was a Tiger Moth sized training aircraft, which was about to land! After landing the aircraft taxied over towards the hangar and switched off. There was then a pause whilst

everyone regained their composure and hurriedly searched for someone with a gun! Eventually, an airman with a rifle cautiously advanced towards the aircraft. The two occupants immediately put their hands up and furiously waving a white scarf began shouting “We are French! We are French!” When at first there was no reply, they thought they had landed at a place that spoke some strange English dialect! An RAF officer then appeared with a pistol, which the two Frenchmen were pleased to note he did not point at them. After a while, Flight Sergeant Pritchard arrived and the two young men, were relieved to discover that he spoke good French as he had been brought up in Belgium where his father had been employed by the Imperial War Graves Commission. Soon the Bucker was surrounded by a crowd of RAF personnel eager to learn how the two Frenchmen had stolen the aircraft from under the noses of the Germans. Just how daring they had been, only came to light later during their interrogation!’



Douglas Fisher, a young photographer from the Telecommunications Research Establishment at Worth Matravers was in the Crew Room waiting to fly on a radar trials flight, when he heard a commotion and going outside, saw the two Frenchmen. He quickly realised what was going on and took several photographs, otherwise the event would not have been so well recorded. SDF fighters that were on standby were then released for take-off and although they did not get into any combat, it was reported that they saw six yellow-nosed Messerschmitt Bf 109s over the Channel which were possibly looking for the stolen Bucker Jungmann. Fortune certainly favoured the brave that day.



By flying low, the Bucker Jungmann had also avoided detection by the British radar until the last moment. Furthermore, the Bucker Jungmann had also flown right over several Royal Artillery anti-aircraft positions beside the airfield, one commanded by 2nd Lieutenant Graham and the other by Sergeant Gill. In each case, the Battery Commander decided not to open fire, seeing that it was a training aircraft and apparently trying to land, though they kept it in their sights just in case! Initially, this earned them a reprimand, though later it was decided that they had used their discretion in a common-sense manner. The two young Frenchmen were later given lunch at the 'Country Club' at Capesthorpe House, near Avon Beach (since demolished) that was used by RAF Christchurch and later in

the evening they were entertained at the "King's Arms" in Christchurch. In the morning, they set off for London by train, escorted by Flight Sergeant Pritchard, for interrogation by the Free French Forces (to ensure they were not double agents). After proving their bona fides, they were presented to the General de Gaulle as well as to Winston Churchill. While the Frenchmen were taken to London, the Bucker stayed at RAF Christchurch. Howard Hill, who was stationed there at the time remembers what happened next;

"Once we had the aircraft all to ourselves, the pilots at RAF Christchurch immediately took turns to fly it. It was very popular with them and was judged "a delight to fly". Next the Bucker was painted in RAF training colours and I painted the roundels and the serial number on it. I was very pleased with the result. However, within days an Air Ministry signal arrived which directed that it should be returned to its original state for display in London for "War Weapons Week". Consequently, we had to repaint the Bucker in a great rush back to its original colour and markings, after which it was taken by road to London. Understandably I was very disappointed."

After being sent to London, the Bucker Jungmann was presented by General Valin of the Free French Air Force to the people of London and put on display, with an inaccurate information board stating the flight to the UK took place on 21st May 1941. Photographs of the aircraft on display show it without its wings and eventually it was picked clean by souvenir-hunters. Some accounts suggest the Bucker was also put on display in Great Yarmouth. In August 1941 the aircraft was returned to the SDF at RAF Christchurch but on receipt the CO, Wing Cdr GK Horner wrote to the Air Ministry to state that the damage was so great, that it was judged beyond repair, and that subsequently it was scrapped.



After being feted for their escape, both pilots were assigned first to the Free French Assembling Centre at Camberley until 29th July 1941. From there Denys Boudard was sent to N°10 Initial Training Wing at Scarborough, then to the N°10 Elementary Flying Training School at RAF Stoke Orchard and then to the N°3 Elementary Flying Training School. Denys then joined the RAF College SFTS at Cranwell and then went to N°61 OTU at RAF Rednal. At the satellite station for 61 OTU at RAF Montfort Bridge, Denys flew Spitfires Mk I & Mk II. On 1st July 1943 he was assigned to 340 Squadron 'Ile de France' at RAF Perranporth. Denys Boudard was involved with the invasion of Normandy, and on D-Day he took off from RAF Merston for a patrol off Ouistreham flying a Spitfire

Mk IX, marked GW-D (*see below*). On 13th June 1944, Denys landed his Spitfire Mk IX on Advanced Landing Ground B.3 at St. Croix-sur-Mer, near Crépon, which was one of the first ALGs built after the landings. Finally, on 14th August 1944, while 340 Sqn was based at RAF Tangmere, he feigned engine trouble in his Spitfire in order to become the first Allied aircraft to land at Carpiquet just after it was liberated from the SS by the Canadian Army. Denys was therefore the last Frenchman to take off from Carpiquet and now he was the first to return there, alas alone. After RAF Merston his Squadron went to B.8 at Sommervieux, then to B.29 Bernay, then B.51 Lille and then Belgium and finally Germany.



Denys Boudard later flew with the *Armée de la Air* in Indochina. On his return to France, he was assigned to the CEV (Flight Test Centre) at Istres. This assignment to CEV was at the time when France received its first jet aircraft from the Americans, such as the F-84G Thunderjet. After being demobilized in 1960s, Denys Boudard returned to his native Normandy where he was once again involved with l'Aviation Populaire, and so he decided to start a flying school, *Les Ailes du Calvados*, at Carpiquet airfield! He revisited Christchurch on 21st April 1985 almost 44 years after he first arrived, but sadly I didn't know so was not there to greet him.



As for Jean Herbert (left) his pilot training in the RAF very much matched that of Denys but sadly, he was killed on 9th June 1943 in a flying training accident while doing flying training at RAF College SFTS at Cranwell, so he never saw operational service with the RAF. On the day he was killed Jean was flying a Miles Master Mk II like the one in the attached photo. The accident was recorded in the Operational Record Book as follows;

9th June 1943, RAFC, Miles Master II, DL412, F/Sgt J Hebert FAFL, 30725, Killed Training, RAF Cranwell, Took Off 13:45 hrs. Flew into sea in fog off Filey, Yorkshire. It was considered that the accident occurred when the pilot descended to establish his position, F/Sgt Hebert had also deviated from the agreed exercise. At 3.3 pm (sic) the coastguard reported that a British aeroplane had crashed into the sea off Reighton Gap, and at 3.20 pm the motor life-boat 'The Cuttle' was

launched. The weather was foggy, with a light easterly wind, and a slight sea. The life-boat found that the aeroplane had been smashed to small pieces, and there was no sign of any survivors. She picked up pieces of the aeroplane, a wheel, the first-aid kit and other things, and returned to her station, arriving at 4.45 pm, for which a reward of £9 6s. 6d was paid to the crew.



Interestingly, the late Air Vice Marshal James 'Jonnie' Johnson and one of his comrades on a visit to Carpiquet in 1994, said that Jean Herbert was shot down by mistake by two Canadian pilots of 401 Sqn based at RAF Catterick, while the Squadron was under Johnson's command in 127 Canadian Wing. It is claimed he forgave the pilots for their mistake and so no official enquiry was carried out. It's unlikely the truth will ever be known but the names of Denys and Jean 'live on' as Free French heroes in local roads named after them, near Caen/Carpiquet and on a commemorative plaque laid in their honour in 2016.

Footnote: Denys Boudard and Jean Herbert were not the first Frenchmen to defect to Christchurch; on 24th June 1940 three Frenchmen, 2nd Lieutenant Daniel Neumann, pilot, his observer-navigator, Lieutenant André Jacob and Sergeant Marcel Morel, the radio operator-machine gunner took the opportunity in heavy rain to leave for England in their Potez 63-11 bomber reconnaissance aircraft of Group de Reconnaissance GR 1/14, based at Bergerac airfield.

Other notable French escapees to other UK airfields included James Denis, who had made a daring escape from France in a Farman 222 with nineteen others onboard in June 1940. James Denis joined the RAF and later found his way to Egypt, then Greece and eventually the Western Desert, where he was attached to No 73 Sqn. With them, in one month of combat (May 1941) over Tobruk, he downed nine aircraft, all confirmed. One, a Bf 109E which crash-landed on 23rd April, was flown by Ofw Hans-Joachim Marseille, the German's highest scoring ace. Another French pilot in the RAF, Jean-Francois Demozay, better known by his nom de guerre 'Morlaix', was discharged by the French soon after call-up in 1938 as being unfit for military service. A civil pilot, at the outbreak of war he served as an interpreter with the RAF. After the collapse, and discovering an abandoned Bristol Bombay in France in June 1940, which he flew along with fifteen troops, to England. Claiming to be a fighter pilot, he joined the FAFL, then No 1 Sqn RAF, and proved to be precisely that. A report of his activities on 9 August 1941 read, 'A magnificent example of courage and skill. On 12th July 1940, descending to low level he attacked and destroyed an enemy aircraft over northern France. On 17th July he fired at and sank enemy mines. On the 26th he shot down his seventh enemy aircraft. 31st July, off Dunkirk, he engaged three Bf 109s in combat. He shot down two and damaged the third for his eighth and ninth kills'. Sadly, after service in FAFL HQ and in France after D-Day, he was killed in a flying accident near Buc on 19th December 1945. At the time of his death he had 21 officially confirmed kills and two probables, most while serving with No 91 Sqn. Not one was shared.

Boeing Stratocruiser (Part 2) by Brian A. L. Jones

The original purchasers of new Boeing Stratocruisers were listed in Part 1 of this article, however SILA (SAS) decided not to operate the type and their order was transferred to BOAC.

American Overseas Airlines (AOA)

The eight (out of an original order of ten) AOA Stratocruisers which were delivered to the Airline from 13th June 1949 differed from others by having circular upper deck windows with rectangular lower deck windows and Curtiss Electric propellers. However, AOA Stratocruiser fleet changed hands when, as result of a new agreement concerning spheres of influence with Pan American, their fleet was absorbed into that of the latter Company on 25th September 1950.

Aero Spacelines Guppy conversions

Parts from four ex-BOAC Stratocruisers were incorporated into various Aero Spacelines Guppy conversions. That Company eventually purchased twenty-seven Stratocruisers and Stratofreighters for use in the Guppy programme.

British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC)

Initially ordered six Stratocruisers in October 1946. It added the four SILA (SAS) aircraft to its fleet by a purchase in April 1949 and one of those was the first to enter service on 6 December 1949 from Heathrow to New York via Prestwick. Six additional Stratocruisers were later purchased from United and one from Pan American. After nine years use, the entire BOAC fleet of fourteen Stratocruisers, was traded to the Boeing Airplane Company in 1958 against an order for fifteen Boeing 707s, via Babb and Co of New York as an intermediary. With the exception of G-ALSA, every one of the BOAC Stratocruiser fleet had completed more than one thousand Trans-Atlantic crossings.

Linea International Area SA (LIA)

A single ex-Pan American was obtained by this Ecuadorian Company in 1960. Despite having US CAB authority to operate HC-AGA on a route linking Miami with Quito, it was not operated and the aircraft was scrapped in 1965. (Unfortunately, I have not been able to source a photo of the aircraft only a computer simulation)

Northwest Airlines

This Company was so intent on early publicity for their order for ten Stratocruisers, placed in March 1946, that their artist portrayed a picture (reproduced below) one of the original military prototypes fitted with the small B-29, fin overlaid with cabin windows and in Northwest livery. Northwest introduced the Stratocruiser into service in August 1949 on the Minneapolis – Chicago route, the first use of the type on domestic trunk operations in the USA. The airline sole loss from its fleet was N74608, which ditched into Puget Sound in April 1956. It subsequently floated for 15 minutes but, while all on board had been issued with life jackets, one crew member and four passengers drowned before the remaining five crew and twenty-eight passengers were rescued. Northwest were apparently renowned for the standard of service which they provided to their passengers. The Stratocruisers continued to operate until September 1960. Northwest was the only passenger Stratocruiser operator to fit C-97 style chin mounted radars, as seen in the photos above (from zoggavia.com).

RANSA (Rutas Aereas Nacionales SA)

While this Venezuelan airline purchased ten ex-Pan American Stratocruisers for freight operations, it only ever operated three, including the first production aircraft. They were modified with a large starboard forward freight door. The first flight was flown from Miami to Caracas on 5 October 1961. The Company failed in September 1966 and the four aircraft remaining at Miami were broken up three years later. A Stratocruiser operated by RANSA was illustrated in Part 1)

Transocean Air Lines

Originally founded by an ex-United Air Lines captain as a company to undertake ferrying of war surplus aircraft in 1946, the Company purchased four Stratocruisers previously operated by BOAC in 1958 and fitted them with high density seating for up to 112 passengers. Further purchases in 1959 brought the total fleet up to twelve. However, the US legislation applied to non-scheduled airline operations overwhelmed the Company and it failed in 1960, having only used four Stratocruisers.

United Air Lines (UAL)

UAL ordered seven Stratocruisers on 6 August 1946, with the intention of using them only on San Francisco to Hawaii services. The inaugural service to Honolulu was operated on 13 January 1950. The airline was the first to lose a Stratocruiser when one, N1230, one crashed into the Bay in October 1951 on a training flight while making an ILS approach to San Francisco Airport, killing the three crew. United's use of Stratocruiser was the shortest of major operators, with first service in January 1950 and the fleet transferred to BOAC in 1954.

References – *Boeing Stratocruiser* – Robert Hewson – Airline (2001) and extensive reference to Web sources.



Left; G-ALSA, Cathay, one of the Stratocruisers originally ordered by SILA (SAS) was delivered to Heathrow on 12 October 1949. The SILA aircraft had circular windows on both decks and central galleys.

The initial batch of BOAC ordered aircraft had rear galleys with square upper deck windows.

This aircraft was lost at Prestwick on Christmas Day 1954. BOAC's only fatal accident with the type, 4 out of 11 crew and 24 of the 25 passengers were killed.



Above Left; Two Stratocruisers from the BOAC order – note the Square upper deck windows – G-AKGJ is in the foreground. The size of the Union Flag on the fin is noteworthy. Above Right; An early post card showing the internal layout of G-AKGH.



Above Left; Showing a nose-wheel low, massive flaps fully extended, final approach this BOAC Stratocruiser is about to pass the foul-smelling animal products factory in the background. (Airliners photo). Above Right; G-ANUM, formerly Pan Am N1027V, was the first Stratocruiser from the BOAC fleet to be sold, on 5 August 1958. It was re-sold by the Babb Company to Transocean Air lines and reverted initially to its previous registration N1027V and was then re-registered N401Q. Sold at auction in 1960, it was subsequently scrapped. (Airliners photo)



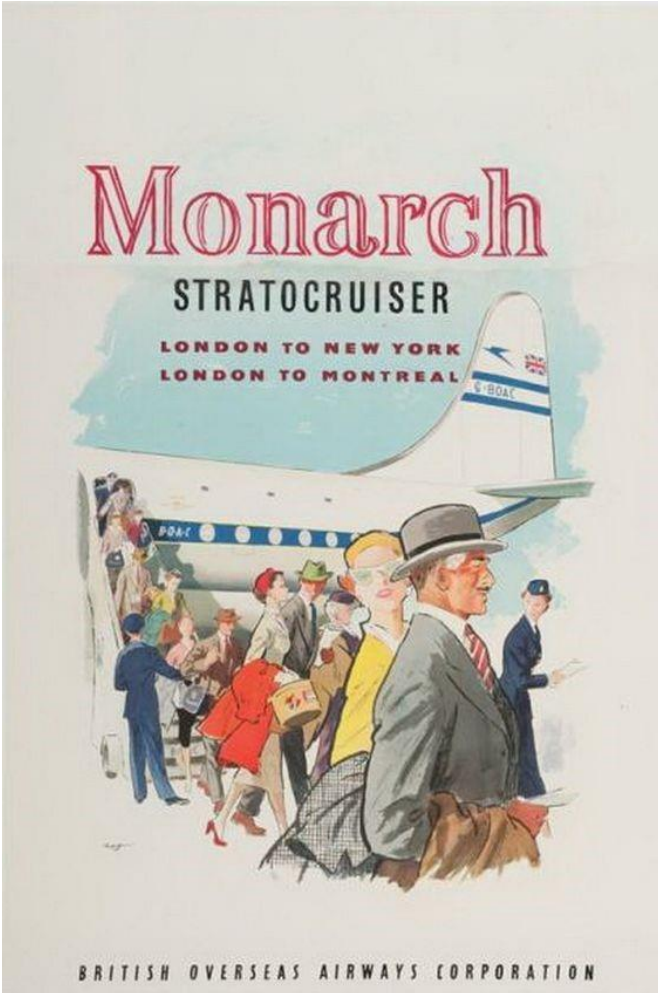
Left; A Rootes publicity photo showing one of the small Commer BF coaches used to transfer BOAC crews to and from their aircraft and the operations centre.

It is likely that this photo dates from 1957, and in any case before the Stratocruiser left BOAC service in 1958.



Left; The fin on this aircraft is not damaged. In fact, the fin has been folded, as it was designed to allow Stratocruisers such as this to be manoeuvred into or out of a hangar.

Older readers may remember the tours for spectators operated by Ministry of Aviation coaches, which were sometimes allowed to drive through the hangars.



Left; Stiff upper lip, with coats and hats carried against bad weather at the destination, typify the passengers which BOAC expected to generate revenue on its Monarch services.



Above; Long serving Captain OP Jones added to the prestige offered on BOAC's Monarch Trans-Atlantic routes.



Above Left; G-ANTX is seen engineless at Mojave after sale via Babb & Co. to Aero Spacelines, who scrapped it in 1964. Evidence of its previous lease to Nigeria Airways is provided twice on the cabin roof. Another airline which benefited from leases was Ghana Airways (Airliners - Gary R Nice). Above Right; A reminder that the civil Boeings did not have exclusive use of Heathrow's Northside Apron. Paul W Major's photo shows one of the two USAF YC-97J Stratofreighters fitted with Pratt and Whitney YT-34-P-5 turboprop engines being handled on 30th January 1956.



Left; An evocative above the clouds view of G-ALSD in the final BOAC livery. This aircraft passed to Transocean as N86Q and was finally broken up in 1963. (via Jim Bohannon). Right; This Boeing pre-delivery photograph, with Mount Rainier in the background shows the all rectangular window layout adopted by Northwest (Airliners.net photo)



Above Left; A Northwest Airlines publicity postcard. This Company was so intent on early publicity for their order for ten Stratocruisers, placed in March 1946, that their artist portrayed a picture of one of the original military prototypes with the small B-29 fin overlaid with cabin windows and Northwest livery. Above Right; With good connections to West Coast departure airports from its domestic route network, United's Stratocruisers provided a comfortable prestige services to the Hawaiian Islands for wealthy holiday makers.



Above Left; Northwest introduced the Stratocruiser into service in August 1949 on the Minneapolis – Chicago route, the first use of the type on domestic trunk operations in the USA. The airline sole loss from its fleet was N74608, which ditched into Puget Sound in April 1956. It subsequently floated for 15 minutes but, while all on board had been issued with life jackets, one crew member and four passengers drowned before the remaining five crew and twenty-eight passengers were rescued. Above Right; Northwest was the only airline to employ the C-97 style chin mounted radar on this type, which rather spoils its nose shape!



Above Left; Another shot of a Northwest Stratocruiser fitted with a C-97 style chin mounted radar. Above Right; A nice colour shot of a Stratocruiser from United Air Lines, with the port inner engine running. Note the red white and blue tail stripe.

HIGH
Relax in air-conditioned comfort... as you fly high above the weather in Northwest's Stratocruiser, world's most luxurious airliner.

WIDE
"Stretch out all you like in the wide, soft seats... enjoy a delicious complimentary meal... or stroll around the huge Stratocruiser cabin."

AND HANDSOME
Enjoy your favorite beverages in the lower-deck club lounge. Only Northwest gives you Stratocruisers Coast to Coast, Alaska, the Orient.

NORTHWEST Orient AIRLINES

DECEMBER 6, 1954

Now! DIRECT SERVICE VIA LOS ANGELES TO HAWAII

United Air Lines Mainliners

United's new direct route via Los Angeles is in addition to our San Francisco-Honolulu route. Now you can go by way of one city and return via the other at no extra cost! Leave the East by noon, be in Hawaii for breakfast. Or leave in late evening, be there for dinner! Enjoy the luxuries of the world's finest Stratocruiser*. For reservations, low-cost Hawaiian vacations, or a sea-air holiday (one way by Mainliner, the other by Matson or American President ship), call or write United Air Lines or see an Authorized Travel Agent.

* Mainliner Stratocruiser from California. DC-6 Mainliner 300s from the East and Midwest. Stratocruiser berths or stateroom at slight extra cost.

9 1/4 hrs. CALIFORNIA to HAWAII

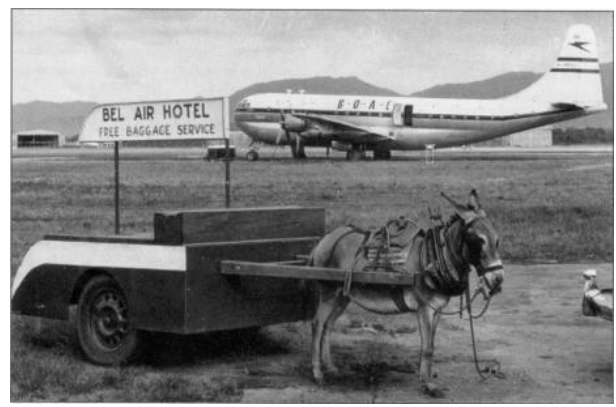
UNITED AIR LINES \$160

LOS ANGELES to HAWAII

Above Left; Northwest were apparently renowned for the standard of service which they provided to their passengers. The Stratocruisers continued to operate until September 1960. Above Right; An equally colourful poster for UAL advertising direct flights from LA to Hawaii.



Far Left; a UAL Strat in typical UAL colours, flying over the ocean and just in sight of land. Left; a Transocean Stratocruiser. Sadly, legislation of non-scheduled Airlines ruined TAL, so the company went out of business in 1960.



Above Left; Linea Internacional Area SA (LIA) of Ecuador, obtained a single ex-Pan American in 1960. No photos have been found, but this computer-generated image shows the colour scheme used on their aircraft registration HC-AGA. Above Right; No doubt BOAC didn't commission this photo for their Stratocruiser flights to Trinidad so perhaps the Bell Air Hotel did, to promote their free baggage service, which presumably did go to that hotel, unlike my baggage on some of my holidays! Four legged friends on airfields were common right up to the 1960s at more 'exotic' locations. Aden Airways a subsidiary of BOAC had their Argonauts attended by a bowser pulled by a camel!

A new home for a KLM Boeing 747 by John R. Roach



A former Air France-KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Boeing 747-400 has commenced its final journey after being retired from commercial operations. Nothing surprising there at first glance. After all, airlines all over the world have been gradually withdrawing the iconic aircraft in favour of modern alternatives that are cheaper to operate and better for the environment. Except the 747-400 PH-BFB is not headed to the deserts of North America for a well-earned rest under sunny skies after almost three decades in service. Instead, the aircraft, named *City of Bangkok*, will be the star attraction in the gardens of the Corendon Village Hotel in Badhoevedorp in Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

The distance between Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and the hotel is about five kilometres as the crow flies. However, the journey will take about five days and involve the aircraft crossing 17 ditches, a major highway, and a provincial road. A transport company, Mammoet, began moving the aircraft on a Tuesday evening using a self-propelled trailer to take the PH-BFB off Amsterdam Schiphol Airport's grounds and to a nearby meadow where it remained for two days. During this time, the aircraft was hidden from passing vehicles to avoid distracting drivers. The next stage – and what Corendon describes as the most spectacular part of the transport – got underway at midnight on Friday, when the former *City of Bangkok* crossed the A9 motorway. Corendon said about 9,000 people had applied online for a ticket to watch the crossing of the A9 in person. However, it was only able to offer tickets to 6,000 people for safety and logistical reasons. The company set up a live stream on its YouTube channel for world to follow the progress of the aircraft.

Following the A9 crossing, and some 57 traffic movements later, the aircraft arrived at the Corendon Village Hotel in the early hours of Sunday morning. Corendon said the aircraft would be “converted into the Corendon Boeing 747 Experience” and expected to be open to visitors by the third quarter of 2019. The Boeing 747-400 was delivered to KLM in June 1989 and has only flown with the airline. Its last commercial flight for Air France-KLM was on Monday November 26 2018, when it touched down at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport as KL602 from Los Angeles. The aircraft featured 35 business class, 36 premium economy, and 337 economy seats.

A brief history of the Slovak Air Force in WW2 by Lawrence Hayward (with thanks to Jason Long)



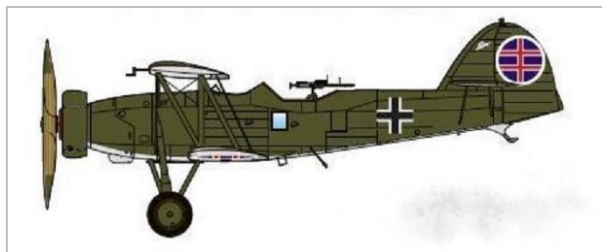
Occasionally, whenever someone suggests having a general knowledge quiz, I suggest rather ‘tongue in cheek’ that they should include the following question; which country or countries invaded Poland in September 1939? This suggestion is usually met with laughter and comments that “everyone knows it was Germany”, to which I say that’s the wrong answer! Someone with a bit more historical knowledge usually says “and the Soviet Union” to which I say, is still the wrong answer. The reason? Slovakia also joined the Germans in their invasion of Poland but no one seems to know!

The First Slovak Republic, otherwise known as the Slovak State, existed between 14th March 1939 and 4th April 1945. Its creation was a by-product of the trouble that had been brewing for 20 years ever since the Czechoslovak Republic emerged from the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in October 1918. The democratic ‘two nation’ state (the only one in Central Europe at the time) consisted mostly of territories inhabited by Czechs and Slovaks, but also included areas containing majority populations of other nationalities, such as Hungarians and Germans (living in Sudetenland). The Czechs centred around the capital Prague and its industrial areas, were considered to be elitist by the Slovaks who resented being governed by them, whereas the Czechs considered the Slovaks to be rather provincial. Czechs believed in a united Czechoslovakia but many Slovaks believed in autonomy. The language was the same, however one was easily distinguishable and recognizable because of pronunciation, which only reinforced the stereotypical view that Czechs had about Slovaks and vice versa. All this did not result in a happy union. * See Footnote

Consequently, when Adolf Hitler came to power and set his sights on the Sudetenland and later all of the Czech lands for his *lebensraum*, those in power in Slovakia jumped at the chance to become independent. Slovak independence was questionable, as at best it was a client state of Nazi Germany and did what it was told including rounding up Jewish population in WW2. It controlled the majority of the territory of present-day Slovakia but without its current southern and eastern parts, which had been ceded to Hungary in 1938. However, the feeling at the time was that the creation of their own land meant that Slovaks would have their own Slovak Republic and could supply Germany with goods and farm produce and be protected from their stronger neighbour, Hungary, which resented giving up so much of its own territory in 1919. The Slovak Air Force *Slovenské vzdušné zbrane*, or SVZ was formed immediately on independence in 1939 and was equipped, understandably with many ex-Czech aircraft. These were primarily assigned to Letecký Pluk (Air Regiment) Number 3 and comprised of 79 Avia B-534 (*shown above*) similar in performance to a Gloster Gladiator and 11 similar Bk-534 biplane fighters, plus 73 Letov S-328 observation biplanes, and 15 Aero A-100 and Ab-101 biplane reconnaissance aircraft plus a miscellany of trainers and other minor types. However, it also had three bombers, a Bloch MB-200, a Fokker F.VII and an Avia B-71, a Czech license-built copy of the Russian SB-2 light bomber. Because so many Czechs personnel left the Air Force after Slovakia was formed, that the Slovaks were forced to reduce the numbers of squadrons to more sustainable levels. The original five fighter Pletky (Squadrons) were reduced to three; numbers 11, 12, and 13 while the seven original reconnaissance and observation Pletky were consolidated into three, numbered 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Markings on SVZ aircraft initially consisted of a double blue cross, edged in white on a red circle, painted on the upper and lower wings and uniquely on the tailplane rather than the fuselage sides.

One of the SVZ's first air battles was in the short Slovak–Hungarian War in March 1939 in which Hungary reoccupied Carpathian Ruthenia and parts of southern Slovakia. The Hungarians attacked Slovakia proper on 23 March 1939 after occupying Ruthenia against minor resistance. The SVZ could only muster some 20 Avia B-534 & Bk-534 fighters and 20-odd Letov S-328 observation aircraft to oppose the invasion. Even those numbers were generous given the struggle to create the SVZ. But a number of Czechs volunteered to delay their departure to defend Slovakia which proved crucial to the ability of the SVZ to put aircraft in the air, even if the results were less than satisfactory. The Slovaks flew a number of reconnaissance and attack sorties over the advancing Hungarians on the first day at a cost of two escorting B-534s shot down and five additional aircraft damaged by anti-aircraft fire. The first aerial encounters occurred the next day as the Slovak aircraft were intercepted by Hungarian Fiat CR.32bis biplane fighters. These didn't go well for the SVZ as it lost five B-534s and two S-328s shot down and a number of additional aircraft damaged. The Slovaks claimed 2 CR.32s shot down, but the Hungarians claimed zero aircraft lost for nine shot down. The Hungarians stopped their advance on the 25th March after Germany's guarantee of Slovakia's borders became effective, but some 400 square miles of southern Slovakia were ceded to Hungary.

The reason Slovakia joined Germany's attack on Poland in September 1939 was to recover the territory lost in 1938 that the Poles had annexed during the Munich Crisis (a matter equally forgotten in post-war history). For this invasion it raised the Slovak 1st Infantry Division 'Janošík.' The SVZ provided ground support to the Slovak units and escorted German Stukas. Two B-534s were lost, one to Polish Army anti-aircraft fire and another to a mechanical fault with one pilot killed. To aid identification



German crosses were added to the sides and wings of SVZ aircraft. While Slovak aircraft were engaged in bombing of Polish troops there wasn't much air to air combat so only one Polish aircraft was shot down, a RWD-8 liaison plane. The following year Hitler invaded the Soviet Union on 22nd June 1941 but did not initially need Slovak help. Consequently, the Slovak Fast Troops Group *Kalinčiak*, only took part in 'Barbarossa' from July 1941, under Army Group South, as part of the Slovak expeditionary force. To aid recognition, SVZ national markings were updated to be the size and shape of a German *Balkenkreuz*, but in white and blue (rather than black), with a red dot in the centre, carried on the tail and wings. Later wing tips were painted yellow, and a yellow band round the fuselage, was added to match the Luftwaffe.



When the SVZ participated in the invasion, virtually all of its forces were deployed in the East, including 11, 12, and 13 Letky with B-534 fighters and 1, 2, and 3 Letky with S-328s as well as a liaison flight. These mustered 33 B-534s and 30 S-328s between them. All of these moved into the Soviet Union starting on 7th July with the exception of 11 Letka which remained behind to provide a modicum of air cover for Slovakia itself. They supported the operations of the ground forces with reconnaissance and ground attack missions. The fighters also escorted German Stukas and reconnaissance aircraft. Serviceability and the supply of the special BiBoLi (an alcohol, benzol, and petrol mixture) fuel used by the Slovak machines quickly became a major problem and 2 Letka gave up half its machines to the 1st and 3rd Letky before returning home on 25th July. 13 Letka followed suit on 15th August. 3rd

Letka did the same two days later, apparently to help with the harvest. This left only 1st and 12th Letky to support the army. They remained in Russia until the end of the campaigning season on 26th October 1941 with the withdrawal of the remaining three Letov S-328s (*shown left*) and four B-534s. The SVZ claimed to have shot down three Polikarpov I-16s, two so-called 'I-17s' and one 'Curtiss' in 3,275 sorties without loss in aerial combat, though one B-534 may have been shot down by an 'I-17', but the surviving records are unclear. Indeed, only one pilot was killed by anti-aircraft fire while escorting S-328s. But the paltry number of aircraft that returned to Slovakia indicates a high attrition rate to anti-aircraft fire and accidents; it seems that the pilots managed to get back to friendly territory. However, at least twice, B-534 pilots were rescued from enemy territory by other B-534s. The rescued pilots were forced to cling to the wing struts as there was no room in the cockpit for them! The SVZ departed again for the front on 13th June 1942, but in numbers considerably reduced from its previous deployment. The 1st Letka mustered only six S-328s and the 11th had a dozen B-534s. Due to their obsolescent aircraft they weren't committed to the front line, but were deployed in support of the Slovak Security Division's anti-partisan operations. 1 Letka withdrew in October 1942, but the 11th remained till August 1943. Morale wasn't high and the crews of a Letov S-328 and a B-534 deserted to the Soviets.



Above; A Russian based SVZ Avia B-534. Right; A Savoia-Marchetti SM.84 Bis, one of six acquired by the SVZ as their only bombers. The two Heinkel He III H-10s (seen on the next pages) were used for transport and paratrooper drops. Other transports included two Ju 52s, and ten Caudron Goelands. The Slovaks had five Ju 87D Stukas but used these only against partisans and not the Soviet forces.

In 1941 the *Deutsche Luftwaffenmission in der Slowakei* realised that more modern aircraft would have to be furnished to the Slovaks if they were to continue to participate on the front line. 27 well-used Bf 109E *Emils* were provided by year's end. Well-used appears to be a bit of a misnomer as one machine was recorded as suffering a total of nine crashes and accidents and some were veterans of the Battle of Britain. They were accepted only after considerable pressure was exerted and the resignation of the SVZ chief of the purchasing commission in protest! On 25th February 1942, nineteen pilots were sent to Karup airfield in Denmark for conversion training to the Bf 109. This was complete by 1st July and nearly all the pilots went to 13 Letka. However, they weren't deployed to the Kuban area of Russia, east of the Crimea, until October 27th with an initial strength of seven aircraft. Five more *Emils* were



delivered in early November. Interestingly the SVZ 13 Letka was not committed in support of the Slovak forces, but was incorporated as part of JG 52 as its 13. (Slowakei) Staffel. The Bf 109Es of 13/JG 52 retained Luftwaffe markings except for the spinner in Slovak colours and made its first aerial claims on 28th November when a pair of its Bf 109s encountered nine Polikarpov I-153 biplanes. The Slovaks claimed three of the obsolescent fighters without loss, but these were not confirmed. Despite such successes the Bf109E was getting a bit long in the tooth against first-line Soviet fighters like the Yak-1 and La-5. Thus, the Germans loaned a number of Bf 109Fs beginning in January 1943 followed by Bf 109Gs in March to 13 Letka. Many of the Bf109G *Gustavs* had the R-6 modification of 2 underwing 20mm gondolas. This greatly increased firepower at the expense of manoeuvrability, but it was probably just the thing for *Sturmovik* hunting! 13 Letka didn't suffer its first loss until 2nd January 1943 when Josef Drlicka failed to return from a mission. He'd escorted a Fw 189 on a reconnaissance mission when a flight of MiG-3s was encountered. He was last seen chasing a MiG-3 at very low altitude in a narrow valley near Tuapse. The next loss was Jozef Vincúr who had a wing collapse at low altitude after taking hits from an I-16. He'd been returning to base after a *frei jagd* (free hunt) when half a dozen I-16s bounced him and his wingman on 17th January. On the 31st January 1943 one pilot spotted a group of circling Soviet fighters over Kropotkin airfield in what appeared to be a landing pattern. He decided to try and join in the circuit and shoot them as they were landing. However, he was too 'cocky' for his own good and a trailing Soviet fighter shot him down.



The last loss was on 29th March when Jozef Jancovic, who had claimed two of those I-153s on 28th November, intercepted some Il-2s over a German-held port. He made the common, and usually fatal, mistake of focusing too much on trying to shoot his target down and not enough on looking out behind him. The bullets of a Soviet escort forced him to crash land, though he was able to get over friendly territory. He landed roughly and hit his head on the gunsight with great force. He died the next day, never coming out of his coma. The Slovak pilots were flying up to four sorties a day to provide air cover for the beleaguered Axis forces. This began to hinder the unit's effectiveness as the surviving pilots had little time to recuperate. Training began of a relief group of pilots on 1st April. Training progressed very slowly until 13 Letka's

commander, Major Dumbala, returned to Slovakia to expedite matters! Their lack of commitment was probably a result of the shattered faith in the Germans as the result of the destruction of their 6th Army at Stalingrad. At any rate the new group of pilots reached the front on 5th July, but their morale was quite low. They preferred to protect themselves rather than engage the enemy. A number were noted by the Germans as actively avoiding any aerial battles. Two pilots deserted to the Soviets after the Fw 189 reconnaissance plane that they were to escort failed to arrive on time on 9th September. They seized the opportunity and headed east. Three days later another Bf 109G deserted with a mechanic in the fuselage! Faced with such evidence of Slovak treachery the Germans ordered them to return home. By late October they had gone. 13 Letka had flown some 2000-odd sorties and claimed approximately 216 kills for the loss of only four pilots (excluding the three deserters). The degree of activity of the two group of pilots is graphically illustrated by the fact that the first group claimed 155 victories while the second only claimed 61.

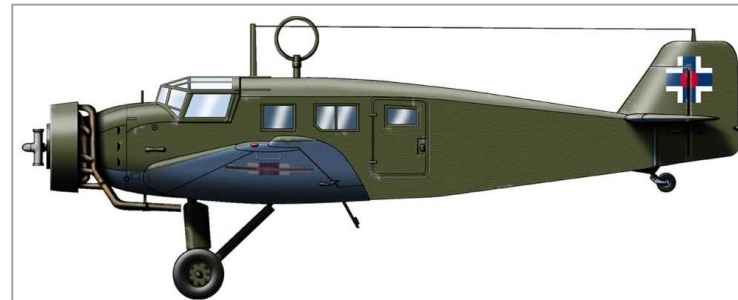
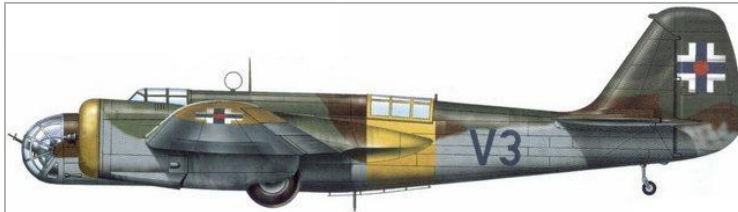
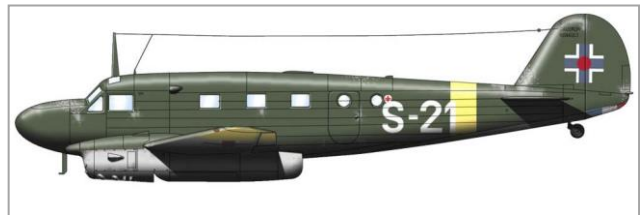
The claims were admittedly inflated for propaganda purposes, but most of the documentation didn't survive the war and the subsequent communist government. The leading ace was Ján Reznák with 32 confirmed victories and an additional two unconfirmed. Izidor Kovárik trailed with 28 confirmed (and one unconfirmed) victories. Upon its return to Slovakia 13 Letka was equipped with the 11 survivors of the original 27 Bf 109Es as well as 2 B-534s and a Bk-534. It was deployed in Western Slovakia for the defense of the arms factories located in that area and the capital of Bratislava under the control of the German *Jagdfliegerführer Ostmark* (Fighter Leader Austria). The Slovaks realized that these weren't suitable to fight the more modern American aircraft and began negotiations to purchase better fighters. Fifteen Bf 109G-6 fighters were purchased, but only fourteen were delivered in late January/early February 1944 from Messerschmitt's Augsburg factory. The last plane was taken over by the Germans when it developed an engine problem on its delivery flight. Two old Bf109Es were on a training flight over Southern Slovakia on 13th March 1944 and encountered a German Bf 110G whose rear gunner thought they were hostile, despite the lack of any attacks. He opened fire and Rudolf Bozik of the SVZ lost his temper and did the same with greater effect as the Bf 110G crashed into a tributary of the Danube after the rear gunner bailed out, leaving the pilot dead at the controls. Bozik claimed it was a 'B-24 Liberator' he had destroyed, while the Bf 110 rear gunner claimed that he had been engaged by P-51s! The arrival of Soviet forces on the other side of the Carpathians in April 1944 caused the Ministry of National Defense to conclude that the Allies were bound to win and it wished to conserve all its forces for later use against the Germans in the meantime. Therefore, the Americans weren't to be engaged and the Slovaks began planning to switch sides at the earliest opportunity. 13 Letka had its first opportunity for action on 16th June 1944 when the Apolo refinery in Bratislava was attacked, but following this policy, the Slovak pilots merely observed the action. This enraged the Germans who thought the Slovaks too cowardly to fight. Stung by this accusation, and with the squadron commander ill, the Slovaks attacked the American heavy bombers on 26th June as they approached Vienna. Eight Bf 109G-6s intercepted the bombers, but only managed to shoot down a B-24 and damage two others as well as damaging a B-17 before the P-51 and P-38 escorts intervened. Only one Bf 109 survived undamaged with five being shot down and two others damaged. Three pilots were killed in the action, including the intemperate acting commander. This ripped the heart out of 13 Letka and it was sent east on 3rd August to join 12 Letka as part of the SVZ Group defending the Carpathian passes. This consisted of virtually all the aircraft that could be scraped together, but excluded the Bf 109s of 13 Letka and the last two Bf 109Es. The only combat machines even worthy of mention were the twelve S-328s of 2 Letka and the five B-534s and one Bk-534 of 12 Letka. The four surviving Bf 109Gs were quickly reduced to two through accidents within days of their transfer east. The Slovak high command intended to open the passes to the Soviets, but the Germans caught wind of this and pre-emptively occupied Slovakia beginning on 29th August and began to disarm the Slovak military. Unlike the German attempts to occupy its former allies, the Slovaks resisted and the so-called Slovak National Uprising began in late August. The Germans had an advantage over the Slovaks in that



they were semi-prepared for resistance (seeing as many of their other allies had switched sides) while the Slovaks had to move swiftly so as not to be trapped in areas held by the Germans. Much of the SVZ Group defected to the Soviets on 31st August 1944. Notably they included the two Bf 109G Gustavs, the two surviving Bf 109Es, four B-534s, one Bk-534, and seven S-328s, but a few aircraft remained behind. When it became clear that the Germans weren't going to overrun Tri Duby airfield in the near future, a number of the

defecting aircraft flew back there on 6th September 1944, but the lack of ammunition, fuel, and spares severely hampered operations. These aircraft received new 'national' markings (*as shown above*) similar to the pre-war Czechoslovakia markings so as not to appear German. The Bf 109Gs flew only sparingly and claimed three victories, namely a Ju 88 bomber and two Fw 189s. The Emils flew even less and made no claims at all. The B-534s got one kill, and the world's last by a biplane fighter, when a Hungarian Ju 52 blundered directly over Tri Duby on 2nd September and was promptly shot down and the crew captured. The ex-SVZ aircraft were only used occasionally after the Soviet equipped 1st Czechoslovak Fighter Regiment arrived on 17th September with their La-5FNs. All of the surviving SVZ aircraft were burned when the insurgents evacuated Tri Duby on 25th October as the German forces approached. This marked the end of the SVZ.

* **Footnote:** The Slovaks did not embrace the concept of Czechoslovakism, which was advocated by Czech leaders after 1918. Although many appreciated economic and educational assistance that the Czech lands offered during the first republic (and before), they were critical of the patronizing attitudes of many Czech leaders and the unwillingness of Czech political elites to grant Slovakia more autonomy. The Czechs, on the other hand, never forgot what they saw as a betrayal on part of Slovakia in 1939, when Slovakia formed a state of its own under Nazi protection. Later, the fact that after WWII the Slovaks did not show enough gratitude for not ending up on the list the defeated nations—because Slovakia was included in Czechoslovakia again—was also occasionally criticized. During the era of communism, many Czechs believed that the Czech lands were paying—through huge transfers—for the economic development of Slovakia. Many also did not see the creation of the Czechoslovak federation in 1968 favourably. Common wisdom had it that the Slovaks were punished much less after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and that, in fact, Slovakia benefited from the invasion. The era of normalization was closely associated with Gustav Husak, a Slovak. A political asymmetry was created in the form of the Slovak Communist Party that had no counterpart in the Czech Republic. The Slovaks, on the other hand, complained of 'Pragocentrism' which did not diminish even during the communist era. In the 1992 elections, political parties that described themselves as centre-right prevailed in the Czech Republic, while leftist and nationalist parties were the winners in Slovakia. It became virtually impossible to create a functioning federal government. Consequently Czech Republic and Slovakia split on 1st January 1993. However, they both joined the EU on 1st May 2004. Credit <http://www.pehe.cz/prednasky/2004/the-split-of-czechoslovakia-a-defeat-or-a-victory>



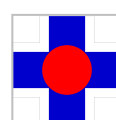
Left, top to bottom; Bf 109E of the SVZ were rather outdated by 1942. Next; An Italian made Savoia-Marchetti SM.84 Bis bomber. Next; A Heinkel He111H-10 a few of which the Slovaks received. Next. An Avia B-71 a license-built Czech copy of the Russian SB-2 light bomber. The SVZ only had one and it later defected to the Soviets; Bottom Left; A Junkers W34 transport, which was a forerunner of the Ju 52 trimotor.

Right, top to bottom; A Czech built Aero A100 relegated to training and liaison. Next one of five Junkers Ju87D Stukas, which strangely carried civil registrations. Next; A French built Caudron Goeland transport. Next; A Focke Wulf 189 Reconnaissance aircraft. Bottom Right; A Fieseler Fi 156 Storch.

In addition to the aircraft shown above and the Avia B-534s and Letov S-328s the SVZ also had a multitude of biplanes and odd transport and training types, some dating from 1920s which made the provision of spares very difficult.

Slovak Markings in WW2;

Left to right; 1939-40, 1941-44 & late 1944 Uprising



Armistice Air Power – the RAF, as of November 1918. Part Two by David Kennedy.

James J. Halley produced an epic work called The Squadrons of the Royal Air Force & Commonwealth, 1918-1988. Using his data, I've covered the types in use October/November 1918. It's notable how much reconnaissance was occurring –look at all the RE8 'Harry Tate' biplanes. This continues a rundown with squadrons 51 onwards. Again, various theatres including Ireland.

Sqn no	Type(s)	Remarks
51	F.E.2b	From Sep 1916 to Nov 1918
	Camel	From Oct 1918 to June 1919
52	RE8	From May 1917 to Feb 1919
53	RE8	From Feb 1917 to Oct 1919
54	Camel	From Dec 1917 to Feb 1919
55	DH4	From Jan 1917 to Jan 1920, latterly mail carrying to forces occupying Germany, DH9 & DH9A's added during 1920
56	SE5A	Jun 1917 to Jan 1920, (when succeeded by Sopwith Snipes)
57	DH4	From May 1917 to May 1919, (when succeeded by DH9A)
58	HP O/400	From Sep 1918 to Feb 1920
59	Bristol Fighter	Apr 1918 to Aug 1919 (in Germany from Spring 1919)
60	SE5A	From Jul 1917 to Feb 1919
		Reformed as a transport squadron Wildenrath 3.2.69. Several of their Pembrokes & Andovers were later based at Northolt – I remember them well
61	Camel	From Oct 1918 to June 1919 (having replaced SE5A's)
62	Bristol Fighter	From May 1917 to Jul 1919
63	RE8	Sep 1917 to Feb 1920
	Martinsyde G.102	Sep 1917 to Aug 1919
Based in Mesopotamia from August 1917, based at Basra, Samarra, and then Baghdad until disbandment 20.2.20. During 1919 Bristol M1c monoplanes, Camels & SE5A's were also used.		
64	SE5A	From Mar 1918 to Dec 1919
65	Camel	From Oct 1917 to Oct 1919
66	Camel	From Oct 1917 to Mar 1919, based Italy from Nov 1917 fighting against the Austrians
67	(Bristol Fighters)	Re-titled No 1 Sqn Australian Flying Corps Feb 1918.
68	(SE5A)	Re-titled No 2 Sqn Australian F.C. Jan 1918
69	(RE8)	Re-titled No3 Sqn A.F.C. Jan 1918, disbanded Jan 1919
70	Camel	Jul 1917 to Feb 1919, (augmented by Snipe from Dec 1918)
71	(Camel)	Re-titled No 4 Sqn A.F.C. Jan 1918
72	Spad S.7	From Mar 1918 to Jan 1919, this Sqn was in Mesopotamia
	Martinsyde G.100	From Mar 1918 to Nov 1918
	Bristol M1c Monoplane	From Mar 1918 to Feb 1919
	SE5A	From Mar 1918 to Feb 1919
73	Camel	From Jul 1917 to Feb 1919
74	SE5A	From Mar 1918 to July 1919. This Sqn was formed at Northolt 1.7.17 with Avro 504Ks & other types
75	Avro 504K	From Aug 1918 to May 1918
		Believed also flew Camels & Bristol Fighters on Home Defence
76	Avro 504K	Aug 1918 to Jun 1919, a Home Defence Sqn
	Bristol Fighter	Nov 1918 to Jun 1919
77	Avro 504K	Jan 1918 to Jun 1919, Scottish Home Defence Sqn
78	Camel	From Apr 1918 to Dec 1919, Home Defence Sqn
	Snipe	From Nov 1918 to Sep 1919
79	Sopwith Dolphin	From Dec 1917 to July 1919, fighter & ground attack
80	Camel	From Aug 1917(formation), to Dec 1918
81	Nil	Training unit but had disbanded 4.7.18

82	Armstrong Whitworth FK.8	From Aug 1917 to Feb 1919, was a corps reconnaissance unit
83	FE.2b & FE.2d	Dec 1917 to Feb 1919, was a night bomber Sqn
84	SE5A	From Aug 1917 to Aug 1919
85	SE5A	From Aug 1917 to Feb 1919
86	Nil	Disbanded 4.7.18
87	Sopwith Dolphin	From Dec 1917 to Feb 1919, fighter & ground attack
88	Bristol Fighter	From April 1918 to Aug 1919
89	Nil	Would have had Dolphins
90	Avro 504K	From Aug 1918 to Jun 1919
91	Sopwith Dolphin	From Jul 1918 to Jul 1919
92	SE5A	Jan 1918 to Aug 1919, Sqn formed at London Colney 1.9.17 with various types before relocating to Western Front July 1918
93	Dolphin	Probably saw no service before disbandment 21.11.18
94	SE5A	Jun 1918 to Jun 1919, believed never operational
95	Nil	Disbanded (had been intended to have Martinsyde F.4)
96	Nil	`disbanded (it had been intended to have Salamanders)
97	HP O/400	From July 1918 to Apr `1919 (when replaced by DH.10)
98	DH.9	From Feb 1918 to June 1919
99	DH.9A	From Sep 1918 to Apr 1920
100	HP O/400	From August 1918 to Sep 1919
101	FE.2b & FE.2d	From Jul 1917 to Mar 1919, night bomber sqn
102	As above	As above
103	DH.9	From Dec 1917 to Oct 1919
104	DH.9	From Sep 1917 to Feb 1919
	DH.10	From Nov 1918 to Feb 1919 (not received at Armistice date)
105	RE.8	From April 1918 to Dec 1918, was based in Ireland
106	RE.8	From Sep 1917 to Oct 1919, was based in Ireland
107	DH.9	From May 1918 to Jun 1919
108	DH.9	From Nov 1917 (formation, at Stonehenge) to Feb 1919
109	Nil	Disbanded July 1918
110	DH.9A	Jul 1918 to Aug 1919, did mail-runs in occupied Germany
111	SE5A	From Oct 1917 to Feb 1919, was based in Palestine in WW1
112	Camel	From Mar 1918 to Jun 1919, home defence

(To be continued...)

Aviation News by David Kennedy

‘Swallowing the Anchor’ (slang term for someone retiring from the Navy). I was alarmed last year to hear that the Royal Navy Historic Flight is to be disbanded in March. However, the plan is to transfer these various prop & jet types to civilian ownership by way of a new umbrella organisation called Navy Wings, a registered charity. Consequently, the RNHF aircraft will pass from RN regulatory regime to the Civil Aviation register. According to Commodore Jock Alexander (Retd) the Chief Executive of Navy Wings, this organisation is for airworthy naval aircraft and comprises of the RNHF, Fly Navy Heritage Trust (FNHT), and Naval Aviation Ltd that owns the Sea Fury T.20 and the Sea Vixen XP924, plus the Navy Wings Associates collection of privately-owned naval aircraft. Any aircraft that are not airworthy at the moment, but should be after suitable repairs, such as the Sea Vixen will be retained. However, once an aircraft is life expired or unable to fly again will be passed over as a static museum exhibit. At this point in time the RNHF consists of two Fairey Swordfish, a Hawker Sea Fury FB.11, Hawker Sea Hawk and a DH Chipmunk, but with the other groups of Navy Wings will have access to three Avro 504Ks, a Bristol Scout, a Tiger Moth, a NA Harvard, three Seafires, a Stinson Reliant, and examples of the following Westland helicopters; Wasp, Gazelle, Whirlwind Wessex and Sea King, and the potential for two Sea Harriers, all of which will be airworthy! Obviously, all this is dependent on donations, since those bean counters at the MOD have decided to concentrate on the future not the past. In time the same ‘charity status’ for the BBMF will come about! Watch this space!

The last of BA’s Boeing 767 fleet has been retired. They have been ferried to St Athan where they will be parted-out. G-BZHA & G-BZHB had both made final commercial flights from Larnaca to Heathrow on 25 & 24 Nov respectively. They were then ferried to St Athan on 26 Nov as BAW767A & BAW767B, the latter being the last to touch down. BA’s last 767 G-BNWB, was delivered to the airline 8th Feb 1980. More Boeing 787 Dreamliner continue to appear.

RIP to Bob Richardson who frankly deserves an edition of this mag all to himself. Amongst various careers including Royal Navy (HMS Montcaire – a supply ship for our submarines), out in the Pacific. He never learnt to swim figuring a quick death in wartime was better than a lingering one. He also served a brief time in Wormwood Scrubs jail, back in the 1950's. In company he would glaze-over when aviation was ever mentioned, preferring boxing & supporting Millwall in the E. End of London –his home turf. I'm sorry I wasn't alerted to his death –in time to smarten-up & attend his send off. Attending his 90th birthday we all were sure he would so make 100.

An Irish Oddity. Some years ago, I saw reference that both EI- & EJ- were allocated to Ireland for civilian registrations. Until October 2018 however no EJ- registrations have existed. I was surprised, therefore to see EJ-IOBN has been allocated on 12.10.2018 to an ERJ-190 (Embraer Regional Jet), con number 19000632), the owner given as Gain Jet Ireland Ltd. Note too that EI-reggies are followed by three letters but this machine has FOUR following letters. This may be to ensure no EI-registration will be duplicated by an EJ one. Credit Air-Britain News Nov 18. The number doubled on 10.12.18 as a Gulfstream VI became EJ-ADMI on what ABN now calls the Irish business jet register. I don't plan to list others.

Leicester City FC Aviation Tragedy. Last year's AW169 helicopter crash evening Oct 27, since blamed on a failure of the tail-rotor control system; a pedal controlling the tail rotor became detached. All died; Leicester City FC owner Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, and two of his assistants. Also killed, the 53-yr-old pilot Eric Swaffer and his partner & co-pilot Izabela Roza Lechowicz. The helicopter had lifted off the pitch, as was customary after home matches, TV commentators quipped that it was a shame they couldn't hitch a lift. Such humour was swiftly ended when news of its destruction in the adjacent carpark came through. Onlookers rushed to help but were then driven back by an explosion and fire. Added to this is the sad loss of Emiliano Sala, recounted elsewhere in this issue.

An older crash. Metro Jan 8 said the wreck of a C-130 Hercules has been found. Lovesick US mechanic Sgt Paul Meyer stole the plane from RAF Mildenhall, Suffolk in 1969 after being refused leave to visit his wife Jane in Virginia. A diving group called Deeper Dorset have found the plane in the English Channel.

Boeing 747. As stated on the cover of the Jan/Feb issue of Airwords, the 747 made its maiden flight on 9 Feb, 1969. Having lost out to Lockheed for a huge USAF transport design, the Galaxy. Boeing revised the concept, switching to a low wing and pitched it as a civil airliner. The first documentary I saw in 2019 finished at 06.00am Jan 1st –so I didn't think members would appreciate my alerting them. Many retired Boeing personnel were included in the BBC News film, and included one of the first BOAC 717 captains, cue excellent coloured film, including air-air footage of the type in BOAC livery. We were told that the first three of their fleet had sextants fitted as BOAC didn't fully trust the modern American navigation systems. Also a long retired pilot was offered a simulator practice landing of a BA 747-800 variant, which remains in service but not for many more years; he landed the simulator perfectly! He said one of the hardest things to get used to was how high up you were when the 747's wheels made contact, he used to literally enjoy looking down on those in smaller (narrow-bodied) airliners. A piece on BBC Breakfast 9.2.19 marked the anniversary date and said no American airlines fly 747 passenger variants any longer. I seem to recall from Air-Britain News last year that the final US 747 passenger route was actually a curious one as it was flown by Qantas. Their 747s landed at a Southern US destination but then carry on with a service to (probably) New York. Apparently, the type didn't sell that quickly and some airlines such as Eastern and cargo carrier TMA (Lebanon), soon retired the type as too large. Pan Am of course was the first customer but the destruction of the example over Lockerbie, by bomb explosion marked the death knell of this historic carrier. In recent years smaller but far more fuel-efficient types have replaced the 4-jet Jumbo. The programme expressed the commercial risk Boeing took, giving up on supersonic airliners (the 2707 era), as such Concorde became the choice of the wealthy, but arguably the 747, after initially gradual sales became a transport for the masses & a lowering of airfares. Another item in the Jan 1st programme, said the inaugural Pan Am flight to Heathrow had problems. After take-off an engine failed (molten metal was later found in the tailpipe). This necessitated a swift return and Pan Am readied their reserve 747 including changing its name apparently. Several passengers refused to reboard the replacement and some likened it to the Titanic. Tempting fate!

Airline news from the press. Wizz Air profits fell 87.7 % in the twelve weeks to Dec 1st from £12.8m to £1.6m due to rising costs. However, being granted a post-Brexit licence to fly has helped future-proof the carrier. (It is a Hungarian airline equipped with Airbus A320's). Talking of Brexit an exercise involving large numbers of HGV lorries was conducted at what was described as 'the former' Manston Airport.

Thomas Cook is looking to sell off its airline business to 'mitigate risk' in other parts of the firm. The travel giant has 103 planes carrying 20m people a year but has been hit by flight disruptions & the summer heat wave.

New images of the **Shoreham Hunter crash 22nd August 2015** have emerged as the court case continued at the Old Bailey late January this year. Eleven died. The pilot was injured but survived. Some of the witness statements are too unpleasant to repeat (in the Editor's opinion). One picture showed the Hunter seconds before impact.

At the end of January, **Ryanair** announced that they'd taken over full control of LaudaMotion, an Austrian airline founded by former racing driver Niki Lauda.

Drones; The problems associated by drones encroaching into Gatwick and Heathrow airspace made all the headlines at the start of 2019 however a twist appeared in Metro Jan 22. Prof Rob Richardson of the University of Leeds claims flocks of drones could be deployed at night which when they spot 50p-size cracks in UK roads can then spray them with 3D-printed asphalt. He hopes to have them in use and says they will roam like urban foxes. His grand aim is for cities to be self-repairing by 2050. The same paper and TV news reported a vandal had sprayed white paint on the Bomber Command memorial in London, a statue of Winston Churchill and the memorial to murdered WPC Yvonne Fletcher.

Laszlo Bíró was a Hungarian Jewish newspaper editor. Fed up with leaking fountain pens he invented the ballpoint pen which bears his name still. The biro was made with the help of his brother Gyorgy and machinist Andor Goy. The prototype appeared in 1931. In WW2 he escaped to Argentina, took out patents in the USA and later allowed licensed production for the RAF of over 30,000 biros, as unlike fountain pens, they didn't leak at altitude. In 1945, Marcel Bich bought the patent from Bíró for the pen, which soon became the main product of his BIC company, which has sold more than 100 billion ballpoint pens worldwide. I believe Bíró had a business connection to post-war Miles Aircraft?

Fastest Car? The Bloodhound a £55m British project to build a supersonic car was set to be scrapped after spending £33m. Its sponsors including Rolls-Royce and Rolex, whilst the MoD lent a Eurofighter jet engine, but they decided not to stump-up the extra £25m cash injection required. In 2017 200mph was reached during testing at Newquay Airport. This was from a detailed report in Daily Mail which included an action photograph. I believe a Yorkshire businessman agreed to pay to keep the project going with a target of 1000mph. The Bloodhound project director Richard Noble and driver Mr Green set the current record in 'Thrust' supersonic car in the Nevada desert, USA 1997.

'Local' News. Main shocking news in late January was that the 174-year-old Fuller Smith & Turner brewery from Chiswick has been sold to Japanese drinks giant Asahi for £250m. Only the brewing side will be affected, the family-run firm will continue to concentrate instead on their pub & hotel chain. Best known for London Pride, many experienced real cask ale enthusiasts fear changes may occur but only time will tell. The Proper Cornish Pasty factory in Bodmin Cornwall has a new landlord reported Metro, Feb 8. This is the Torbay council –which of course is in DEVON! Came across Winsor & Eton Hurricane session IPA in late January. It's made from Kentish Target Hops, is 4.5% ABV.



I was gutted to hear that **The Airman** public house (left), Enterprise owned, on the boundary of the former Hanworth Airpark closed in December after expiry of lease by Greene King. The *London Drinker* free magazine says its future is uncertain. Rarely good news if you like pubs. The school, in nearby Browells Lane, used to host aviation fairs each May & November. RIP also to Brian Stainer, trading as Aviation Photo News for whom The Airman was his local.

A depressing survey by Transport Focus which saw over 25,000 train passengers surveyed had concluded overall customer satisfaction was 79%, the lowest figure since 2008. Only Chiltern Railways and the

Heathrow Express were judged to have significantly improved since autumn 2017. Twenty-Five different train companies were involved. I include this only as these lines are the ones most likely to be used by the majority of our members!

Meanwhile the RMT are now considering strike action over the issue of red vests for TFL staff, as somehow, they claim they are demeaning! Previous strikes have been over the fact that a salary of over £52,000 per year isn't good enough, disputes over drivers dismissed for going through red signals, or drivers tested positive for drugs, or spilt cups of tea etc.

However, an earlier protest strike from yesteryear (pictured on the right) did win the approval of your Editor!



Ryanair has been granted a UK air operator's certificate (AOC) and has registered its first aircraft in the country as European carriers move to shore up their post-Brexit operations ahead of the UK's planned departure from the European Union (EU) in March, or April or May 2019, 2020 or 2021 etc.

The magic of Herb Kelleher (founder of **Southwest Airlines**), who died Jan. 3 aged 87, was that there was no magic. It's simply the story of an extraordinarily smart lawyer spotting a market opportunity, working relentlessly hard to turn it from a cocktail-napkin idea into a highly successful business, and adhering to genuinely-held principles of being a decent, kind human being.

Norwegian said it has been unable to service a Boeing 737 MAX 8 that landed in Iran more than three weeks ago because US sanctions on the country made it difficult to obtain the required spare part.

Russian regional jet manufacturer Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Co. (SCAC) has said attempts to gain US approval to export its SSJ100 **Superjet** to Iran have met with no response from the US government, despite placing a request more than a year ago.

Airbus has confirmed it "achieved 800 commercial aircraft deliveries" in 2018, thus concluding the year in a close finish against Boeing, which handed over 806 commercial aircraft.

Heathrow Airport has opened an eight-week consultation on its planned expansion that includes a proposal to add up to 25,000 additional flights a year through more efficient use of its two existing runways, ahead of the opening of a third in 2026.

US-based Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) and its co-shareholders have passed control of **London Gatwick Airport** to French company Vinci Airports.

Delta Air Lines has ordered 15 more Airbus A220 aircraft, bringing to 90 the total of the type the Atlanta-based carrier has on order.

Air France-KLM has confirmed it will close down Joon, the LCC hybrid sister airline to Air France, and absorb its employees and aircraft into the mainline carrier.

UK regional carrier **Flybe** will be rebranded as Virgin Atlantic under a £2.8 million (\$3.5 million) in the proposed takeover deal announced Jan. 11 by a consortium comprising Virgin Atlantic Ltd, Stobart Group and Cyrus Capital. Flybe plans to raise £4.5 million (\$5.8 million) from a London Gatwick Airport slot deal with Spanish LCC Vueling, boosting the Exeter-based airline's funds immediately after announcing a change of ownership.

Rolls-Royce says it has certified a redesigned intermediate pressure (IP) compressor blade for Package C variants of the Trent 1000 engine that powers the Boeing 787.

TUI Group's UK airline has launched an investigation into an incident in which three passengers with paid tickets, seat assignments and boarding passes had to sit on the aircraft floor because their seats did not exist.

Icelandic LCC **WOW Air** has disclosed that US private equity firm Indigo Partners is looking at an initial 49% investment, although this could be increased at a later date.

International Airlines Group's (IAG) Vienna-based LCC Level will take over the Amsterdam base from Spanish LCC Vueling, starting in the spring of this year, with three A320/321 to be based at the Dutch airport.

The UK's **Manchester Airport** has detailed plans to create a private-jet style terminal for commercial airline passengers traveling on any type of ticket, with prices starting at £50. Construction work has already begun on the PremiAir terminal, which is scheduled to open in mid-2019. The new facility will be "entirely separate" from Manchester's existing three terminals, located on the airport site, just two minutes' drive from the nearby M56 motorway.

Irish lessor **SMBC Aviation Capital** has switched 15 Airbus A320neos from an existing order to the larger A321neo, as well as announcing a firm follow-on order for 50 A320neos and 15 A321neos with a list-price value of \$7.4 billion.

International Airlines Group (IAG) has ruled out making a further offer for LCC **Norwegian** and announced plans to sell its existing stake. Norwegian has announced plans to raise NOK3 billion (\$353 million) through a rights issue in an attempt to increase liquidity in the absence of a strategic investor.

Ryanair has gained complete ownership of LaudaMotion with the acquisition of the 25% stake in the Austrian LCC held by its founder, former Formula 1 driver Niki Lauda. On the heels of Ryanair's acquisition of Austria-based LaudaMotion, the Irish LCC sees the potential to add more airlines to its current group of three carriers.

Istanbul New Airport, which replaces Istanbul Ataturk Airport, is set to begin full operations on 3rd March. The airport, began partial operations on 29 October 2018.

Supersonic transports (SSTs) under development could produce substantial noise pollution throughout projected global route networks and pose major challenges for aviation carbon-emissions reduction efforts within two decades if new environmental standards are not introduced, an International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) study concludes.

The undelivered aircraft from **Iran Air's** order for 20 ATR 72-600 turboprops have all been placed, ATR CEO Stefano Bortoli said Jan. 31. The Franco-Italian manufacturer delivered 13 of the aircraft over 2017-18, the last in a batch of five that made a last-minute ferry-flight dash to Tehran in August 2018, just 24 hours before renewed US sanctions blocking trade with Iran were imposed.

German leisure carrier **Germania** filed for bankruptcy Feb. 4 and halted flight operations the same evening following months of increasing financial difficulties. The airline is seeking the possibility of being refinanced in the hope of restarting operations.

Delta Air Lines on Feb. 7 became the first airline in the Americas to debut the Airbus A220, operating flights between New York LaGuardia (LGA) and both Boston Logan and Dallas-Fort Worth International (DFW).

Qantas has cancelled its remaining eight Airbus A380 orders, after stating for years that it did not intend to take delivery of these aircraft.

United Airlines has unveiled a major increase to its premium-cabin inventory that includes introducing reconfigured Bombardier CRJ700s as 50-seat, two-class aircraft that the airline sees as ideal, scope-clause-compliant replacements for its 50-seat regional jets.

The European Commission (EC) has approved a transatlantic joint venture agreement among Air France-KLM, Delta Air Lines, and Virgin Atlantic that will see the Franco-Dutch airline group acquire a 31% stake in Virgin Atlantic.

Airbus announced Feb. 14 it is terminating the Airbus A380 program in 2021, after Emirates cut back the last major order to just 14 A380s, instead of the 53 it had on firm order.

Etihad Airways is in talks to drop large parts of its orders for Airbus and Boeing widebodies, in an effort to reduce growth and stem losses.

EasyJet has confirmed it is in talks with US carrier Delta Air Lines and Italian Railway Company Ferrovie dello Stato over the possibility of a joint investment in bankrupt Alitalia.

Both the **European Union (EU)** and the UK have announced measures designed to smooth air transport connections. The agreement – which will take effect if the UK leaves the EU without a post-withdrawal deal – extends the validity of such certificates for nine months, and potentially further if necessary.

Malaysia Airlines Group (MAG) officially launched a pilgrimage airline, Amal, on Feb. 13, after seeing a large market for Umrah and Hajj pilgrimage flight services in Southeast Asia

Loganair stepped in 17 February to secure three key air routes from Aberdeen to Bristol, Oslo, and Esbjerg after East Midlands-based **British Midland Regional**, which operated as flybmi, announced late on Saturday it had ceased operations and was filing for administration. Both companies are of part of Airline Investments Limited (AIL), whose major shareholders are Stephen and Peter Bond. Ryanair has swooped to encourage flight personnel from collapsed BMI Regional to join the budget carrier.

New UK legislation will enter effect on 13th March which will extend the restrictions on drone use in the vicinity of airports, putting in place a ban on flights within 5km of runway ends.

Ryanair will open a new base at Toulouse as part of its winter 2019 schedule, stationing two Boeing 737-800s there and more than doubling the number of routes it operates from the southwestern French city.

Science students in the US are getting a daily dose of inspiration from a retired **United Airlines** McDonnell Douglas DC-8-52 aircraft (N8066U, msn 45850) which has been lovingly restored with coatings supplied by Akzo Nobel. After flying more than 18 million miles in 14 years, the plane – named “The City of Los Angeles” – was donated by United Airlines to the California Science Center in 1984. It's now on static display by the entrance to the Dr Theodore T. Alexander Jr. Science Center School.

UK regional carrier **Flybe** has been sold to the Connect Airways for £2.8 million on 21st February together with Stobart Air.

Airbus A319 (registration G-EUPJ) will be painted in the **BEA "Red Square"** livery which was used predominantly on domestic and European routes between 1959 and 1968. While the top and bottom of wings in the original scheme were red, the A319 may only have red lower wings and the upper surfaces will remain grey to meet current wing-paint reflectivity requirements.

London Heathrow Airport has posted a £267 million adjusted pre-tax profit for 2018, 23% up on the prior year, based on a 2.7% increase in passenger numbers and higher retail spending. Heathrow CEO John Holland-Kaye described 2018 as the airport's “best ever year,” with record passenger volumes and lower costs.

Air Boeing 767-375 ER N1217A has crashed into Trinity Bay near Houston. The freighter was en route from Miami to Houston (IAH) as flight 5Y 3591 when it went into a steep dive. The aircraft was being operated for Amazon Prime Air. There were three crew members on board.

Plans for a joint transfer of operations to Terminal 8 at New York JFK Airport have been unveiled by **American Airlines and British Airways**, with the two investing \$344m (about £260m) in the facility over the next three years to prepare for the move in 2022.

BA's 100th anniversary and their Boeing 747-436 G-BYGC

As members may have seen, as part of the celebrations to mark BA's 100th anniversary their Boeing 747-436 G-BYGC has received the retro livery that BOAC's first Boeing 747-136s wore when they entered service in April 1971. Jim Davies has kindly sent the under mentioned photos of GC as she made her first appearance last Monday, 18th Feb 2019 at Heathrow on her arrival from Dublin where she had been painted, and at Kennedy Airport, New York, on her arrival there on Tuesday, 19th Feb 2019 having flown her first commercial service in BOAC's livery!



1969.

March 1 The U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) begins Operation Massachusetts Striker, a helicopter-borne assault against North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam's A Shau Valley. It will continue until May 8

March 2 – First flight of the BAC-Aérospatiale Concorde from Toulouse (registration F-WTSS), the first prototype is now preserved at Paris Le Bourget.

March 3--The United States Navy establishes its Fighter Weapons School at Naval Air Station Miramar, California, to improve its fighter pilots' dogfighting skills. The school will become popularly known as "TOPGUN."

March 5 – Black Panther Party member Anthony Bryant hijacks National Airlines Flight 97, a Boeing 727 flying from New York City to Miami, Florida, robs several passengers, and forces the airliner to fly to Havana, Cuba. Unknown to him, one of his robbery victims is a Cuban intelligence operative, from whom he steals US\$1,700 in cash in a briefcase, and as a result he is imprisoned for 11 years in Cuba before returning to the United States in 1980, claiming that his superiors in the Black Panther Party had ordered him to hijack the airliner as part of a mission to arrange for the purchase of bazookas.

March 8 – President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser formally announces the beginning of the War of Attrition with Israel, although the war in reality has been in progress since July 1, 1967. It largely will consist of combat between Israeli Air Force aircraft and Egyptian surface-to-air missiles.

March 11 Two explosions occur in the tourist-class passenger compartment of an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 707-379C (registration ET-ACQ) while it is on the ground at Frankfurt International Airport in Frankfurt-am-Main, West Germany, injuring several cleaning women. The Eritrean Liberation Front claims responsibility, saying the explosions are retribution for the transportation of Ethiopian troops into Eritrea aboard Ethiopian Airlines aircraft.

March 11 A male passenger hijacks SAM Colombia Flight 600, a Douglas C-54A-15-DC Skymaster (registration HK-757) with 38 people on board, during a domestic flight in Colombia from Medellin to Barranquilla and demands that it to fly him to Cuba. While the plane is on the ground at Cartagena, Colombia, to refuel, a passenger attempts to overpower the hijacker and in the ensuing struggle a mechanic is killed & the hijacker suffers injuries and is subdued.

March 11 The original Golden West Airlines ceases operations. Aero Commuter acquires several of its assets, including its name, and becomes the new Golden West Airlines.

March 16 Viasa Flight 742, a McDonnell Douglas DC-9-32 (registration YV-C-AVD), is unable to gain altitude after take-off from Maracaibo, Venezuela, strikes power lines, and crashes into the La Trinidad section of the city, killing all 84 people on board and 71 people on the ground. San Francisco Giants pitcher Néstor Chávez is among the dead. The combined death toll of 155 makes it the deadliest aviation accident in history at the time.

Shortly after take-off from San Andrés, Colombia, for a domestic flight to Barranquilla, a passenger hijacks Aero Cónдор Flight 131, a Douglas DC-6(registration HK-754) with 45 people on board, and forces it to fly to Camagüey, Cuba.

March 17 – First flight of the Aérospatiale SA 315B Lama

March 18–19 – The Royal Air Force airlifts 300 troops to Anguilla in response to the civil unrest that had broken out on the island.

March 19 – To celebrate his 26th birthday, Douglas Alton Dickey draws a 0.22-calibre pistol aboard Delta Air Lines Flight 918 – a Convair CV-880 flying from Dallas, Texas, to New Orleans, Louisiana, with 97 people on board – and demands that it fly him to Cuba. He agrees to allow the passengers to disembark at New Orleans first. As they do, one of them, a U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, overpowers Dickey and arrests him.

March 20 – A United Arab Airlines Ilyushin Il-18D (registration SU-APC) crashes and bursts into flames while attempting to land in blowing sand at Aswan Airport outside Aswan, Egypt, killing 100 of the 105 people on board and injuring all five survivors.

April First flight of the Bell UH-1N Twin Huey

April 1 – Air Jamaica begins flight operations.

April 2 – LOT Polish Airlines Flight 165, an Antonov An-24V (registration SP-LTF), crashes during a snowstorm on the northern slope of Polica mountain near Zawoja, Poland, killing all 53 people on board.

April 14 – Three hijackers commandeer a SAM Colombia Douglas C-54G-1-DO Skymaster (registration HK-1065) with 29 people on board, during a domestic flight in Colombia from Santa Marta to Barranquilla and force it to fly to Havana, Cuba.

April 15 – A North Korean MiG-17 (NATO reporting name "Fresco") shoots down a U.S. Air Force EC-121M Warning Star reconnaissance aircraft over the Sea of Japan, killing all 31 men on board.

April 16 – First flight of the Let L-410 Turbojet

April 27 – President of Bolivia René Barrientos dies when his helicopter strikes high-tension lines and crashes in the canyon of the Arque River near Arque, Bolivia.

April 28 – Concentrating excessively on their flight director instrument and using it incorrectly, the flight crew of LAN Chile Flight 160, a Boeing 727-116 (registration CC-CAQ), neglects to check its instruments and fails to notice that the aircraft has descended below its intended glidepath. The aircraft strikes the ground near Colina, Chile, and is destroyed in the crash that follows, although all 60 people on board survive.

April 30 – A Seaboard World Airlines Douglas DC-8 with 219 passengers and 13 crewmembers lands by mistake at South Vietnam's Marble Mountain Air Facility when it had actually been cleared to land at the nearby Da Nang Air Base. After fuel & passengers are offloaded, the plane is towed to the north overrun & departs five hours after landing.

1979.

March 9 – First flight of the Dassault Mirage 4000

March 10 – The United States Air Force sends Boeing E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft to monitor the civil war in Yemen.

March 14 A CAAC Hawker Siddeley HS-121 Trident 2E (registration B-274) on a training flight crashes into a factory in Beijing, China, during its initial climb after take-off from Beijing Xijiao Airport, killing all 12 people on the plane and at least 32 people on the ground, although some sources estimate that up to 200 people are killed.

March 14 After two missed approaches at Doha International Airport in Doha, Qatar, Alia Royal Jordanian Flight 600, the Boeing 727-2D3 City of Petra (registration JY-ADU), attempts to divert to Dhahran International Airport in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. While climbing away from Doha International, the airliner stalls at an altitude of 750 feet and crashes, striking the ground at a speed of 170 knots. It breaks into three pieces, killing 45 of the 64 people on board.

March 17 – After receiving a false warning of a fire in its No. 1 engine shortly after take-off from Vnukovo Airport in Moscow, an overloaded Aeroflot Tupolev Tu-104B (registration CCCP-42444) flown by an inexperienced pilot attempts to return to the airport. On approach, the airliner strikes a power line transmission tower, bounces off a hill, passes over a highway, and crashes in a frozen ploughed field, its wings and cockpit separating from its fuselage. The crash kills 58 of the 119 people on board.

March 22 – First flight of the CP-140 Aurora (Canadian version of the Lockheed Orion)

March 25 – QANTAS retires its last Boeing 707 and becomes the world's first airline with a fleet made up exclusively of Boeing 747s.

March 26 – An Interflug Ilyushin Il-18D cargo plane (registration DM-STL) attempts to abort its take-off from Quatro de Fevereiro Airport in Luanda, Angola, after its No. 2 engine fails. The plane strikes the instrument landing system localizer antenna, breaks up, and burns, killing all 10 people on board.

March 31 – 550 senior officers of the Iranian armed forces, many of them Iranian Air Force and Iranian Army generals, have been killed or driven out of military service since the Iranian Revolution deposed the Shah of Iran on 11 February.

April Retired Formula One world motor racing champion Niki Lauda establishes Lauda Air. The airline will begin flight operations in 1985.

April 19 – First flight of the Learjet 55 (registration N60XL).

April 23 – SAETA Flight 11, a Vickers 785D Viscount (registration HC-AVP) disappears during a domestic flight in Ecuador from Quito to Cuenca with the loss of all 57 people on board. The plane's wreckage will be discovered in 1984 at a location 25 nautical miles (29 miles) off course on high ground in Ecuador's Pastaza Province.

1989.]

March 10 – Unable to clear trees beyond the end of the runway due to ice and snow on its wings, Air Ontario Flight 1363, a Fokker F28-1000 Fellowship (registration C-FONF), crashes 15 seconds after take-off from Dryden Regional Airport in Dryden, Ontario, Canada, killing 24 of the 69 people on board and injuring all 45 survivors.

March 19 – First flight of the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey (serial 163911)

March 22 – An Antonov An-225 Mriya sets a total of 106 world and class records during a 3-hour, 30-minute flight. Its total weight at take-off is 508,200 kg (1,129,370 lb).

March 26 – The airline Binter Canarias, a subsidiary of Iberia, begins flight operations.

April Vietnam Airlines is established as a state-owned enterprise of the Government of Vietnam. It becomes the national airline of Vietnam, replacing the General Department of Civil Aviation in Vietnam in that role.

April 1 – Burma Airways is renamed Myanmar Airways. It eventually will become Myanmar National Airlines.

April 12 – A BA Concorde loses a large piece of rudder on a flight between Christchurch, NZ and Sydney, Australia.

April 21 – USAF Lockheed SR-71A Blackbird (serial 61-7974) outbound on an operational sortie from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, suffers an engine explosion and total hydraulic failure. Pilot Major Dan E. House and reconnaissance systems officer Captain Blair L. Bozek both eject safely. It is the final Blackbird loss before the type is withdrawn from service.