

The Aero Historian



Volume 39 Number 6

Website: <http://www.aerohistorians.org>

June 2005



Captain Harold E. Fischer with his F-86 "Paper Tiger". Harold Fischer scored 10 victories before being shot down and captured on April 7, 1953. At the time he was flying a different aircraft, F-86F, 51-2852. This photo was taken from him in captivity.

Korean War I

June is *Commie Aggressor* month. On June 25 1950, peaceful North Korean with ten fully-equipped infantry divisions, an armored brigade, and two about 150 combat aircraft were brutally attacked as they invaded the South by seven understrength South Korean divisions and half a dozen T-6 trainers.

On the first day of the war an American C-54 transport committed aggression by trying to evacuate US diplomats and civilians, and was destroyed on the ground by Yak-9s. The next day USAF F-82Gs are committed combat, claiming their first kills the day after that. On June 27, F-80C Shooting Stars join the action.

The UN Security Council sup-

ported military action to repulse the invasion by the "Forces of Peace"

Within three months the UN forces had been pushed almost out of Korea, and General MacArthur had made his strategic landing at Inchon and the North Korean army is virtually destroyed. Within two more months, MacArthur's forces have moved almost to the Yalu, and Chinese ground forces have intervened.

At the beginning of November 1950 the first MiG-15 jets entered combat, flown by Russian pilots. After a series of back-and-forth offensives, a stalemate developed near the original border, which remained until the end of July 1953, when combat ceased.

From an aerial perspective, the Korean War was a transitional con-

flict, with modern jet fighters dominating the action on both sides, but the majority of aircraft still propeller-powered, many of them World War designs, F-51 Mustangs, F4U Corsairs, B-26 and B-29 bombers. And on the other side Yak-9 fighters, Il-10 shturmoviks, and Tu-2 bombers, and even Po-2 biplane night bombers.

This war proved that the day of the jet had arrived, and that propeller aircraft, even the B-29 could operate only at their own hazard.

The defeat of the B-29 by the MiG-15 forced both the USA and the USSR to reevaluate their strategies.

The Russians learned that their new Tu-4 would be as helpless as the B-29 it copied.

(Continued on page 4)

TCAH Officers

President, Ken Hornby
651-552-0888
Vice-President, Steve Macey
651-735-4334
Secretary, Johannes Allert
763-213-0370
Treasurer, Tom Norrbohm
612-881-5763
Historian, Tom Norrbohm
952-881-5763

Newsletter Info

Article Submission Deadline: 22nd of each month.

Editor

George Mellinger
(stogramov@earthlink.net)
5212 West 47 Street, Apt. 2
Sioux Falls, SD 57106
H:605-362-5603

Distribution Editor

Rick Schmierer
1852 E. 39 Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-721-8787
rschmierer@mn.rr.com.

Send articles to:

Via E-mail: stogramov@earthlink.net

Via Snail-mail:

George Mellinger
Attn: TCAH Newsletter
5212 W. 47 Street, Apt.2
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Send Change of address notice to:

Tom Norrbohm
9936 Columbus Ave. S.
Bloomington, MN 55420

TCAH This Month

The monthly meeting will be held Saturday June 11, at Fleming Field, South St. Paul, beginning at 1:30 PM. Vendor baiting will begin about 12:30, so come early. June is the anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War, the transitional air war, in which propeller and jet combat aircraft were equally prominent.

We also hope to have as a guest speaker, Dick Wiessner, a former P-47 pilot who will update us on the status of the Air Guard Museum, and maybe talk about his own war.

General Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2005
by Johannes Allert

President Ken Hornby called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. New guest included Brad Butler and TCAH has a new member Bill Reid. Welcome all!

Old Business –

TCAH Golf Shirts are in. Any member who has ordered one please see Ken Hornby. Cost \$35.

After action Report on the Smithsonian Annex in Was. DC – Overall a good time had by all. Poor lighting for photos.

TCAH Kit Donation Overseas – John Roll collected models from Members & plans to ship with the rest of the Hobby Supplies donated from Club Funds.

New Business –

Model Build Off Contest – Dave Pluth explained a new idea for a contest, but needed at least 8 members to make it work. Only 3 signed up so the idea was dropped. Anoka County Historical Research – Don Stauffer is gathering historical information For Anoka County regarding their private airports. Anyone with information please contact him.

“Texas” Terry Love received Life Member Award – Terry was presented with a plaque by TCAH Members as “Honorary Life Member”. Terry and his wife plan to relocate to Kansas City after his retirement from NWA this summer. June Featured Speaker – Dick Wiessner a former P-47 Pilot who served in Italy during WW II will be next months speaker. He also will speak about the future plans for the MN Air Guard Museum.

Raffle and show and tell followed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45pm.

Treasurer's Report

May 2005
by Tom Norrbohm

We still have money! Our balance as of 5-23-05 is \$6475.14. Also welcome new member Bill Read of St. Louis Park. Welcome aboard Bill!

Business Meeting

May 14, 2005

In attendance were: Ken Hornby, Steve Macey, John Dumphy, Tom Norrbohm, Fletcher Warren, Jeff Fries, Axel Kornfurher, Larry Donovan, Johannes Allert, Merrill Anderson

Nordic-Con Contest in September Vendor Tables – 6 left. August is deadline for vendors wishing to buy tables at Contest. Contact Johannes Allert.

Table covers and Rope dividers – Steve Macey to check out Party Store for high quality paper covers. Larry Donovan to check his store for dividers. Deposit has already been placed with local company to deliver tables Friday evening prior to contest.

Wipair & CAF – In doubt for trophy sponsorship or organized tour. Ken Hornby to contact both again later this summer. CAF will be open day of contest so participants can possibly take an informal tour of facility. TCAH still needs to contact Civil Air Patrol for possible set up of food stand.

Trophies – 90 general awards will be handed out based of forecasted participation. 90 for 270 entries..breaks down to 20 First Place, 30 Second Place and 40 Third Place awards. As far as Special Awards go, they are as follows: “Best RAF” – Roll Models along with 1 trophy package.

“Best Japanese Aviation Subject” – Dennis Strand

“Best 1/32 Scale Luftwaffe Subject” – Roger Graulty along with 1 trophy package.

“Best Luftwaffe Subject” – Axel Kornfurher & Jeff Fries

“Best USMC Subject” – Steve Macey & Johannes Allert

“Best Soviet Subject” – Johannes Allert

“Best US Armor Subject” – Johannes Allert

RPM to also sponsor and award – TBA

Registration Forms – Steve Macey to create and have Webmaster (Dave Pluth) post on Website Business Meeting Adjourned at 3:30pm.

From the President

By Ken Hornby

Usually at this time of year I make an allusion to the balmy days of summer, but as I write this its 58 degrees and pouring rain outside. Maybe summer will get here eventually. I've just returned from Blaine Aviation Days and to say it was a washout might be too severe, but it wasn't much fun due to the weather. The only thing I could find open was the pancake breakfast area and the American Wings Museum. I know they had a tough time with weather last year so I can only wish them better luck this year.

For TCAH summer generally means a smaller turnout each month due to our limited amount of decent weather this time of year. I realize everyone (including me) would like to get outside while the gettin's good, but I've got a couple of reasons to show up this summer. At this time, I still don't have a firm commitment but we are hoping to have Mr. Richard Wiessner as a guest speaker in June. Mr. Wiessner is a Board Member of the Minnesota Air Guard Museum and a veteran of some 80 missions over Italy during World War II as a "Jug" pilot. He has prepared a short film presentation showcasing the Museum and its plans for the future. I've asked him to show this film and give us an update regarding the Museum. We may be able to twist his arm and also get him to talk a bit about his experiences flying the P-47 over Italy. If he can't make it in June, we will certainly try to have him at one of our future meetings.

For July we are trying to get permission to hold our meeting at the MN Air Guard Museum. I've been told it shouldn't be a problem, but again, we're still waiting to get the go-ahead. Sorry I don't have more definite information, but having to write this column several weeks before the meeting can have its drawbacks.

Preparation for NordiCon continues apace. We now have a handful of special awards promised, with others in the pipeline, but we can always use more. We still need a good number of "worker bees" to help throughout the day. These include persons to help with set-up and break-down, registration, and to function as "model escorts" to help entrants place their models on the

contest tables. Otherwise, things seem to be coming together.

Our donations to the military modeling clubs will have been shipped out by now. John Roll thoughtfully suggested we include several disposable cameras in each of the three packages so we may get some interesting photos back.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our newest Life Member, Terry Love. Terry has always embodied a spirit and enthusiasm for aviation and the Aero Historians that will be missed. Luckily for us, the information age being what it is, (unless he gets too busy in his retirement), Terry can still contribute his Airline Chatter column to the newsletter! It's been an unfortunate coincidence that over the past year I've presided over the "loss" of both Noel Allard and Terry Love, two of our most prominent members, due to household moves. At least we've been able to honor their contributions to aviation history and TCAH with Life Memberships. Here's hoping that both Noel and Terry will be able to visit us often.

There will be a business meeting after the general meeting this month, the primary topic being NordiCon planning.

On The Show Table

May 2005

Aircraft		
Frank Cuden		
Testors Box Scale	C-131 x2	
John Dunphy		
Tamiya 1/48	P-47	
Tamiya 1/48	P-51	
Steve Erickson		
Hasegawa 1/48	P-40E	
Tamiya 1/48	D-520	
Steve Hustad		
Hasegawa 1/72	Ki-49 I Helen	
Bob Maderich		
Academy 1/72	Ju-87G	
Mike Ronnie		
Monogram 1/48	P-47D	
Dennis Strand		
Battle Axe 1/48	Bloch 174	
By unknown members		
LTD 1/48	D-520	
Revell/Germany 1/32	He-162	
Armor		
Bob Maderich		
?? 1/35	Deuce & half truck	
Bill Read		
Tamiya 1/35	M-1026	
Tamiya 1/35	HumVee mod.	

TCAH Calendar

July - A hot month so bring jets of the Middle Eastern wars, Israeli, Syrian, whatever.

August - A vacation Month - So we recognize the airliners that take us there.

September - Contest Month. No theme.

October - School is under way, so this month we focus on trainers

November - Club auction & elections - No theme.

December - Another chilly month, so naturally, Aircraft of the Cold War.
Merrill Anderson Fokker Challenge.

January - Tired of Winter? Its summer in Australia. So we'll honor Australia & New Zealand's Air Forces.

February - Ski-equipped aircraft.

March - The Spanish Civil War. Polikarpovs. Fiats, Heinkels....

April - Bloody April! Bring your World War One models.

Blue Angels 2005 Schedule

11-12 June	Janesville WI
18-19 June	North Kingstown RI
25-26 June	Evansville IN
2-3 July	Pensacola Beach FL
9-10 July	Fargo ND
16-17 July	Milwaukee WI
23-24 July	Muskegon MI
30-31 July	Kalispell MT
6-7 August	Seattle WA
13-14 August	Grand Junction CO
27-28 August	Indianapolis IN
3-4 Sept.	Patuxent River MD
10-11 Sept.	Brunswick ME
17-18 Sept.	Oceania VA
24-25 Sept.	Gainesville FL
1-2 October	Millington TN
8-9 Oct.	San Francisco CA
15-16 Oct.	Miramar CA
22-23 Oct.	Point Mugu CA
29-30 Oct.	Chatanooga TN
5-6 November	Jacksonville FL
11-12 Nov.	Pensacola FL

Contest Calendar

- 7/20-23-05 IPMS National Hosted by IPMS/Metro Atlanta Cobb Galleria Convention Center Atlanta, GA www.ipmsusa2005.org
- 9-10-05 NordicCon Twin Cities AeroHistorians South St. Paul, MN www.aerohistorians.org
- 10-1-05 The Show XI IPMS Will Cook James Hart Cafetorium 18211 Aberdeen Street Homewood, IL 60430 Contact: Ed Mate 915-478-4432 obvi-ouschoice@juno.com
- 3-18-06 LOCON 2006 IPMS Fort Crook Mid-America Center Council Bluffs, IA Contact: Mike Cavil 402-493-9669 mcavil@tconl.com
- 3-18-06 11th Annual Show Mad City Modelers Radisson Inn 517 Grand Canyon Dr. Madison, WI 54719 Contact: Jim Turek 608-329-7222 jjtmodel@yahoo.com

(Korea Continued from page 1)

Both powers realized that the day of mass bomber formations had passed. And while individual bombers flying at high altitude could destroy a city, they probably could not survive meeting an interceptor.

So both sides moved toward jet bombers, and low level penetration. The Soviets began to turn to ideas of long range ballistic missiles, and all that led to.

Ultimately it also led to stealth as another solution to the problem.

But we sure do miss those magnificent mass heavy bomber formations, blazing away at attacking interceptors. Unless we happen to be poor, godforsaken tail gunners.

The Master Builder Lights!

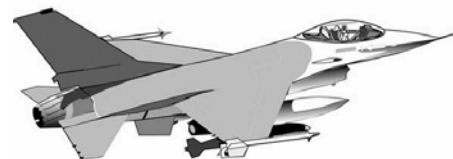
By Frank Cuden

I'm sure that most everyone knows about a modeling product called "M.V. Lenses." If you don't, check out the model railroad section of your hobby shop. Railroad modelers use them for marker lights and head lights on their rolling stock. They come either two or four to a pack and are available in various sizes. Clear works for taxi and landing lights. They also come in red, green, blue and amber, so they can be used to replicate formation and position lights on model aircraft. All the modeler has to do is to drill an appropriate-sized depression (it's not necessary to drill a complete hole), add a little white glue and drop in the lens. Should you not have a model railroad section or hobby shop in your area, I've found a place that is quite reasonable and pleasant with which to do business. It's name is Discount Models (www.discountmodels.com) They have a toll-free number which is: 1-800-728-5054. It's a Mom and Pop operation and they are very nice people and will call you back, should they not be there when you call. They have a complete stock of the lenses. But I digress. Currently, I'm in the process of finishing up two of the odd-scale Hawk/Testor's C-131 Samaritans. Placing a landing light (M.V. Lens) on each underwing was no problem as I was working with a flat surface. Research indicated that each engine cowling had a very small light mounted at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions about half way back on each one. They were there to illuminate the upper wings during night flying exercises. The problem I encountered was that the curvature of each cowling at that point made it almost impossible to get the little beggars in place, using tweezers. (There's that word again!!!) I had many hit and misses but I was smart enough to have a hankie spread out on my bench to prevent them from bouncing off into oblivion each time I dropped one. Not wanting to handle the model at that point, I was trying to get each one

attached in that fashion and the holes closest to the fuselage at the 2 o'clock position were proving to be quite challenging. I'd fill the depression with white glue and each attempt to insert the lens failed. At that point, lightning struck. Using a bit of modeling clay mounted on the end of a round toothpick, I was able to place the little lights exactly in the depressions, having first filled them with white glue. All I had to do was barely touch the "light" with the clay to get it to stick. Once placed in the white glue, the lens let go from the clay and stayed put. Letting the white glue dry a bit is a good idea in this case. So, just like that, the task was done. I plan to have both models at the May meeting so you can see the results firsthand. Again, just a little trick that came to mind. Good Modeling to you!

Thunderbirds 2005 Schedule

11-12 June	Smyrna TN
18-19 June	Lacrosse WI
24-25 June	Davenport IA
2 July	Tinke AFB, OK
3-4 July	Battle Creek MI
9-10 July	Pittsburgh PA
16-17 July	Dayton OH
23-24 July	Terre Haute IN
27 July	Cheyenne WY
30-31 July	McChord AFB, WA
13-14 August	Abbotsford SC
20-21 August	Chicago IL
27-28 August	Westfield MA
30-31 August	Atlantic City NJ
3-5 September	Cleveland OH
10-11 Sept.	Portland OR
16-17 Sept.	Reno NV
18 September	Mountain Home ID
24-25 Sept.	Fort Worth TX
1-2 October	Salinas CA
8-9 October	Little Rock AR
15-16 October	Travis AFB CA
22-23 October	New Orleans LA
26 October	Guatemala
29-30 October	El Salvador
2 November	Acapulco
5-6 November	Randolph AFB, TX
12-13 November	NellisAFB, NV



Airline Chatter

By Terry Love

All Chinese airlines are owned by the Chinese government. The Chinese government ordered 30 Airbus airliners - five Airbus A-380 super jumbo airliners for China Southern Airlines, and 25 Airbus A-320s, 15 of which are going to China Eastern Airlines. Total cost is about \$3.2 Billion.

Northwest Airlines was recently awarded some more cargo frequencies to China. Since NWA has 12 Boeing 747 freighters, they already are fully committed. So NWA is having 2 Boeing 747s converted into freighters in Israel. But NWA needs them NOW, so NWA is leasing 2 Boeing 747 freighters for one year from Kalitta Airlines to fill the vacancy until the 2 "new" freighters are delivered from Israel.

Air Canada ordered 18 Boeing 777s and 14 Boeing 787 Dreamliners for a deal worth \$6 Billion. Air Canada also obtained options for 18 more Boeing 777s and up to 60 Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

Mesaba Airlines will obtain 15 Bombardier CRJ-2--s starting in September. They also have an option for 20 more.

Copa, the airline of Panama, ordered 15 more Boeing 737-800s. They cost about \$50 million each, Copa presently had 21 Boeing 737-800s.

Airbus A-380, the super jumbo jet airliner, had its maiden flight on Wednesday, April 27th.

Air India bought up to 50 airliners from Boeing for about \$7 Billion. This is a HUGE deal.

Boeing delivered the final Boeing 757 to Shanghai Airlines on April 28. That ended the 23 year production run with 1050th delivered. 1030 are still in active service. There were 55 customers worldwide for the 757. Frankfurt, Germany airport spent \$19 million to adapt to the Airbus A-380 operations.

World Airways bought North American Airlines for \$35 million. North American had eight aircraft - 3 Boeing 767s and 5 Boeing 757s. World Airways has 16 Douglas DC-10s and MD-11s.

Northwest Airlines ordered 18 con-

firmed Boeing 787-800s Dreamliners for May 5, 2005 for approximately \$2.2 Billion. Also NWA obtained options for 50 more, of which most, if not all, will be converted to from orders over the years. Six airplanes will be delivered during 2008, 2009, and 2010 each year. NWA is the first United States airline to order the Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Douglas DC-9-31, N960N, fleet number 9910, was involved in a ramp accident on May 5 at Minneapolis. A fuel tanker truck crashed into the nose and nose gear area of this DC-9. NWA decided to scrap it, since the airframe had 88,292 hours on the airplane, and 99,562 cycles. At 100,000 cycles, it must be scrapped, so it had only a few for flights left on the airframe.

JAL, the Japanese airlines, ordered 30 Boeing 787 Dreamliners and 30 Boeing 737-800s. JAL also has an option for 20 more 787s and 10 more 737-800s. The 787 will replace JAL's Boeing 767s and Airbus A-300s. Value of the Boeing deal is about \$5.3 Billion.

Air India ordered 4 Airbus A-330-200s for its international operations. Sky Europe, the airline of Slovakia, ordered 16 new Boeing 737-700s for \$880 million.

U S Airways and America West Airlines will merge. The U S Airways name will survive.

Air France is converting 3 of their Boeing 747-400s airliners into freighters. Boeing is to do the conversions. This makes 33 Boeing 747-400 conversions to freighters done by Boeing. Apparently the excess capacity of some airlines can earn money when converted to freighters, which is much more profitable than carrying passengers. Continental Airlines lost \$184 million in the first quarter of 2005. American Airlines lost \$162 million in the first quarter of 2005. American West Airlines earned \$33.6 million in the first quarter of 2005.

U S Airways lost \$282 million in the first quarter of 2005. U S Airways is parking 10 more aircraft and pulling out of Caribbean and certain cities in Florida.

Russian SIGNALS

By George Mellinger



According to a report on Moscow TV, The Russian Air Force will receive its first production Sukhoi Su-34 Platypus by the end of this year. This is a long-awaited event. Development of the Su-34 began in the early 1980s, based on the Su-27 Flanker. Essentially it is a Su-27 with a new forward module with side-by-side seating and a flat, duck-bill nose. There are also a large tail-stinger unit and pods on the wingtips containing electronic equipment.

Originally the Su-34 was intended to replace the Tu-16 and Tu-22 intermediate range bombers, and the Su-24 frontal bomber. Of course, the two former bombers were retired several years ago. The Su-34 can carry the most advanced Russian precision munitions, and as a cousin of the Su-27 has a performance and maneuverability equal or superior to many of the fighters, including the F-15 under some situations. However, its avionics are probably still behind US standards.

Flight testing began in 1990, and by the mid 1990s the aircraft was a staple at airshows and appears to have been ready for limited production. However, at that time Russia had no money for production of new aircraft. They were barely able to maintain what they already had, and so the Su-34 languished.

Now that Russia's economy has been energized by the rise in oil prices and Putin's tax reforms, the state again can buy a few of the planned aircraft, and the SU-34 is at the head of the list.

Unfortunately, series production will be slow. The first batch is only 5 aircraft, with the first scheduled to arrive at the end of the year.

This is the root of the problem, At 5 aircraft a year, by the time the Russians have enough aircraft to equip a first regiment, the aircraft will have ceased to be cutting-edge technology.

A Close Look at The North Vietnamese Air Force

A Book Review

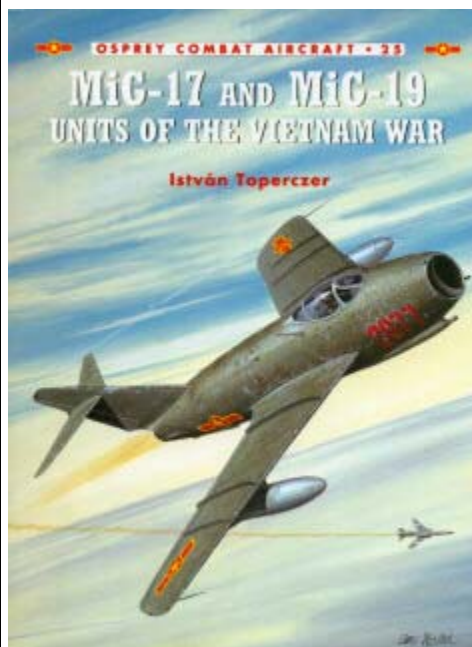
By George Mellinger

In any war it is always difficult to get accurate information about the enemy until years after the war has ended. Today we take for granted exhaustive knowledge of the German Luftwaffe, but it was almost two decades before large amounts of detailed information began to emerge. For countries with strange scripts or paranoid governments, it has taken even longer. So we should not be surprised that information about the Vietnamese Air Force has been unavailable for so long.

During the war American intelligence was able to listen in on North Vietnamese radio transmissions, but language problems often made it difficult to get exact information about names, particularly since in the Vietnamese language, the "same word" pronounced with different tones becomes different words with totally different meanings. And US intelligence sources of course have not been anxious to reveal what they knew or how they learned it. After the war Hanoi saw no reason to help our historians by providing any valid information, and much to gain by dissimulating. Consequently, for almost three decades, publicly we have known neither the units, nor the names of their successful pilots, nor much of anything else. This includes the mysterious "Colonel Tomb", who did not really exist, but was a composite of several other, real Vietnamese pilots.

Fortunately, this situation is beginning to change. A major agent for opening the Vietnam War air history is Dr. Istvan Toperczer, who began publishing a few articles in the West in the late 1990s. Dr. Toperczer is a flight surgeon in the Hungarian Air Force, and earlier in the Hungarian Communist Air Force. Some time during his career he established contacts with the North Vietnamese which have allowed him extensive research access to the archives in Hanoi, and

interviews with Vietnamese pilots. His early published articles appeared to be written entirely from a Vietnamese official perspective and were flawed by a politicized tone. Just a bit too much "Yankee Air Pirate" and "Heroic Proletarian" for my taste. And also a bit short on detailed information, even if he did reveal more than we previously knew.



However, in 2001 Dr. Toperczer wrote two books published by Osprey Press, *MiG-17 and MiG-19 Units of the Vietnam War* and *MiG-21 Units of the Vietnam War*, numbers 25 and 29 respectively in the *Osprey Combat Aircraft* series. Recently I acquired these books and a few weeks ago sat down to read them, half dreading another dose of agitprop. I was pleasantly surprised to find that these books had been depoliticized, and I was delighted to discover that they contained large amounts of new, and detailed information, available nowhere else in the West. In one instance, Toperczer notes a Vietnamese claim that one of their fighter pilots who had ejected was strafed in his parachute by the Americans, but in the next sentence evenly notes that this accusation was strongly rejected by the Americans.

The first VPAAF aircraft were a couple of pre-WWII trainers seized in 1949. The first Vietnamese pilots

were sent to China and Russia in 1955, to begin training on transports and Tu-2 propeller-driven bombers, and on MiGs from 1957. The first Vietnamese fighter pilots returned home in 1962 with by a few MiG-15UTI trainers and some MiG-17F trainers. Toperczer's research seems to establish conclusively that single-seat MiG-15s were never acquired by the VPAAF. And photos seem to demonstrate that VPAAF aircraft used the yellow star with flanking red bars from the beginning, and the simple yellow star with a red outline is purely a fantasy of Western model kit manufacturers. In September 1963 a Laotian T-28A defected and was put into service. In February 1964, this aircraft shot down a C-123 flown by the South Vietnamese.

There is a particularly interesting chapter about the problems of training Vietnamese peasants in Russia. In general these peasants with no background were quite difficult students, who cause their Soviet instructors no end of trouble, frequently getting lost and needing to be "herded" back to base. Later in these books, Toperczer reports a number of instances of MiGs being lost when their pilots ran out of fuel during sorties over their own district.

Toperczer also mentions that from the beginning the Vietnamese had greater regard for the Chinese than for the Russians, and the first MiGs received were Chinese copies of the MiG-17. Evidently ideological solidarity trumped historic ethnic rivalries until 1978. So much for fashionable academic theorizing to the contrary.

Though the VPAAF fighters were on alert from the Spring of 1964, their first combat sorties came only in August 1964. Sustained combat would begin only in April 1965. Discussing the actual air war, Toperczer is at his best, demonstrating that in addition to his Vietnamese sources he has also consulted American accounts and archives. Some of the engagements are related in the words of the Vietnamese pilot, others the American, and occasionally both. In totting up the

(Continued on page 7)

(VPAAF Continued from page 6)

victory claims, he is scrupulous in noting discrepancies between one side's claims and the side's admitted losses. Though I have not bothered to do a statistical comparison, it appears that American claims were much more realistic, though there were occasions when American fighters made claims but all the MiGs got home safe. However, Toperczer relates a number of occasions when the Vietnamese recorded (sometimes multiple) losses but no US victory claims were made. There were even occasions when no encounters were reported by the US to correspond with VPAAF losses! And of course MiGs were sometimes shot down by their own SAMs.

On the other hand, the Vietnamese frequently enough made victory claims which were not corroborated by the Americans. However, there was one significant problem with American testimony. It seems that on numerous occasions when Vietnamese pilots claimed air victories, American records admit the losses but insist the aircraft fell victim to a SAM or to flak. This is not a unique phenomenon; many air forces seem far more willing to admit a loss to flak than to another fighter. Some of these instances appear to me entirely possible that the Vietnamese could have been right. If a pilot not see the fighter which puts the AAM up his exhaust pipe, or catches a burst of 37mm in his belly from a MiG-17 hidden in his blind spot, he may well presume it was ground fire. But Toperczer also relates the testimony of an American pilot who was tortured until he (falsely) admitted that he had been shot down by a fighter and not a SAM, after which the abuse eased.

When serious air combat began, in 1965 the VPAAF adopted tactics evocative of the Viet Cong. Instead of challenging the Americans directly and in strength, they adopted tactics of hit and run, seeking more to inflict disproportionate losses than to defeat attacks, though on occasion they were able to force the F-4s and F-105s to jettison their bombs. But just as the ground forces later came to fight in large

sized regular army units, so too did the VPAAF, particularly in 1972.

During the first period of the air war, until the 1968 bombing halt, The MiG-17 carried the major share of fighting. But from the resumption of the air attacks in 1972, the MiG-17 played a secondary role, replaced as the primary fighter by the MiG-21PFM, and also a new regiment of MiG-19s, which seem to have performed indifferently. A few MiG-17s also were equipped, and their pilots trained as fighter-bombers, and in 1972 these aircraft made a few attacks on naval units on Yankee Station. Toperczer informs us that the Vietnamese were trained for their attack missions by a **Cuban** advisor.

This last point evokes another topic of major interest, the question of foreign participants in the VPAAF. Toperczer dances around this issue, admitting that Soviet, and obviously Cuban pilots were present as instructors and advisors, but noting that officially they were not permitted to fly combat missions. However, in view of persistent rumors that Soviet advisors did fly officially unauthorized missions, and that kills claimed by them were attributed to the Vietnamese, this question remains unsettled. The Soviets officially never flew in Spain, or in China 1938, or China 1950, or Korea either. There are also rumors of Korean "advisors"

In the appendices, there are lists of all the VPAAF air victories, using different type faces to distinguish between those found in Vietnamese archives, American sources, and in both places. Date, location, and the type of aircraft and the names of the crew for each side. Of course there are also lists of the Vietnamese official aces and of units. Perhaps one of the best surprises is the list of Aircraft side number blocks for each type. For both historian and modelers, this is invaluable, establishing the quantities of aircraft received, and their markings. Incidentally, it appears that the VPAAF received only 12 of the MiG-17PF variety, with the remainder being the pure day fighter type. Among the MiG-21s, it appears that far fewer of the MiG-21PF were flown,

and far more MiG-21PFM Fishbed-Fs. There were also a number of MiG-21F-13 Fishbed-Cs flown early in the war. During 1972, significant numbers of MiG-21MFs were used, quite a few of them rushed from Soviet units in Central Asia, and still bearing their original Soviet camouflage colors, with numbers and insignias hastily painted over before application of Vietnamese insignias. In this context, the one significant, unanswered question is the possibility that there may be some missing serial blocks not known to Toperczer, particularly since some of the MiG-21s rushed from the USSR appear not to have sported numbers.

There are fewer color side views than usual for Osprey, but they seem to be sufficient to cover the topic. MiGs flew mainly in either metal or pale gray color, though there were also numerous examples painted dark green on the upper surfaces. Both MiG-17 and MiG-21 aircraft also were painted dark green on the upper surfaces, sometimes mottled with lighter green, or with gray, or earth patches. All the MiG-17PF radar-equipped fighters are believed to have been painted pale gray. Some MiG-19s wore a finish of dark green fields painted across the metal finish in a pattern evocative of RAF camouflage. Most unusual were MiG-21MFs transferred from the USSR, some of them had camouflage of tan, dark brown and green bands, with Russian blue undersides, and the former insignias and number overpainted with green.

The books compensates with color photos of preserved MiGs, and pages of colored maps. The colored maps seem to me a bad idea. Black & white would have been clearer, but the color photos are much nicer. As for the gray-tone pictures gracing these books, they are mostly new, well-captioned, and a worthy compliment to the text.

Anyone interested in the Viet Nam air war needs to acquire these books. They provide a fair and balanced look at the air war, and if still incomplete, have made a major advance in our knowledge.

Directions to the Club Meeting Location

Where: South St. Paul Municipal Airport, a.k.a. Fleming Field, located on the southern extremity of South St. Paul, south of I-494, west of Concord Street and East of Highway 52.

If coming from the western Twin Cities going east on 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn right (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left there will be a McDonald's; to your right front there will be a Walgreen's.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .6 miles. Along the way you will encounter three more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2

miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

If coming from east Twin Cities on westbound 494:

- Exit at the 7th and 5th Avenue exit (Exit No.65)
- Turn left (South) on 7th Ave and go approximately .6 miles to a 4-way Stop sign. This is South Street W. To your left front there will be a small strip mall; to your right there will be an Amoco station.
- Turn left (East) at the 4-way Stop onto
- South Street W and go approximately .4 miles. Along the way you will encounter two more Stop signs—the third Stop sign (Henry Avenue) will be a "T" intersection. At the "T" intersection on your left will be homes and on your right softball fields.
- Turn right (south) onto Henry Ave. and go approximately .2 miles toward the Fleming Field airport terminal building.

The terminal is on the right with parking available.



The Internet Model Shop!
Great Stuff!
Great Prices!
Great Service!

John Roll
Vice President
john@rollmodels.com

2709 Vale Crest Rd.
Crystal, MN 55422-3427
Bus: 612/545-0399
Fax: 612/545-0899

RICHFIELD 866-9575 LITTLE CANADA 490-1675
HUB HOBBY CENTER
OPEN: MON-FRI 10:00-9:00, SAT 9:30-6:30, SUN 12:00-5:00
Model Railroading Radio-Control Plastic Models
Science Projects Kites Rockets Road-Racing Videos
Richfield 6416 Penn Ave. S. Richfield, Mn 55423 (1 blk S of LUNDS)
Little Canada 82 Minnesota Ave. Little Canada, Mn 55117 (Hwy 36 & Rice St.)

HobbyTown USA
Over 150 Franchise Stores Nationwide!

GEORGE ASADOURIAN
OWNER

Valley Creek Mall
1750 Weir Dr. Woodbury, MN 55125
Phone (651) 702-0355
Fax (651) 702-0610
www.hobbytown.com

Twin City Aero Historian
Rick Schmierer
1852 E. 39 Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Return address requested

The Aero Historian is published monthly by the Twin City Aero Historians, Inc., a joint chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society and International Plastic Modelers Society/USA, for members and readers as part of their annual dues or fees.

The group is open to aviation enthusiasts from teenagers on up who are interested in aviation modeling, photography, collecting, art and writing. For more information contact Ken Hornby at 651-552-0888

The Twin Cities Aero Historians (TCAH) meet the second Saturday of every month at 1:30pm.

See above for the new meeting locations and directions.

Mail Newsletter material and address changes to the treasurer.