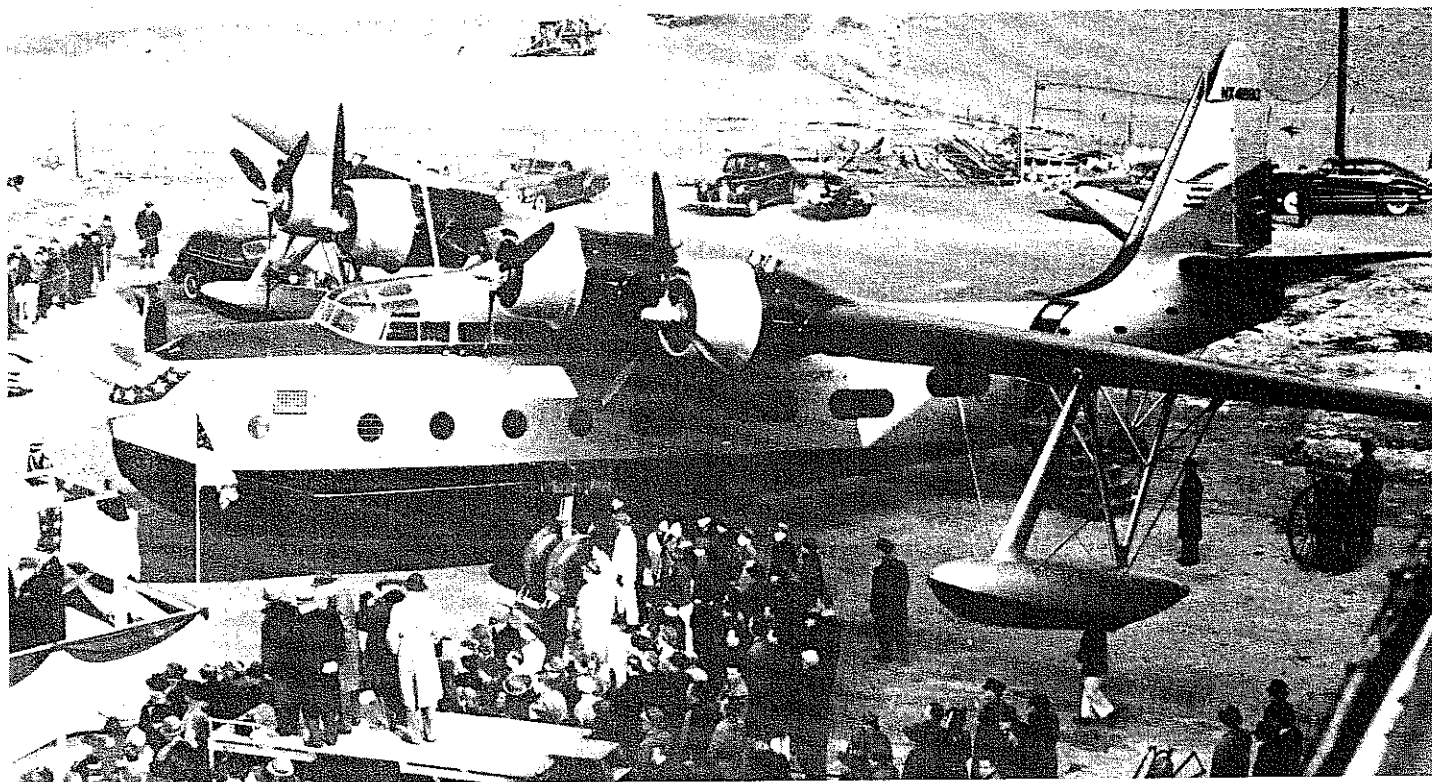


CAHA ACQUIRES SIKORSKY VS-44A



Christening ceremonies for the first Sikorsky VS-44A (Excalibur) on January 17, 1942.(CAHA)

Just as the large dirigibles held a popular mystique for aviation enthusiasts in the 1920's and 1930's, the large flying boat clippers were the ultimate of airline passenger luxury in the late 1930's and 1940's.

In 1935, Pan American Airways received the first of its clipper fleet, three Martin M-130's, the most famous of which was to be the "China Clipper." The last of these three M-130's was lost in 1945.

The next series of clippers in the Pan Am fleet were twelve Boeing 314's, the first of which went into service in 1938. All were gone by 1951.

While never to serve with Pan Am, the Sikorsky VS-44A was a clipper, nevertheless. "Excalibur", the first of three built, first flew in 1942. Capable of carrying 26 passengers, the VS-44A had a non-stop range of more than 5,000 miles. The

first VS-44A, NC41880, was closely followed by the next two, "Excambian" (NC41881) and "Exerter" (NC41882).

Shortly after the first flight, the VS-44's were requisitioned by the U.S. Navy for use throughout the war for military transport. During this period, they bore the markings of American Export Airlines (who had ordered the flying boats) and had a civilian crew. The sole purpose of this was to have access into neutral countries.

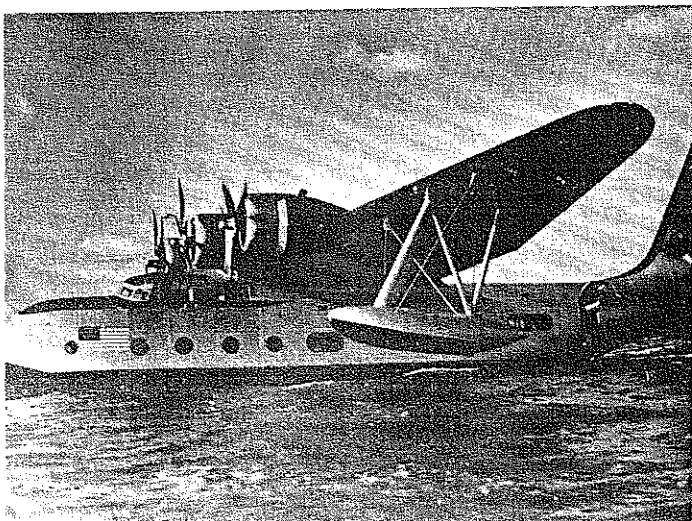
A number of records were established by the VS-44A's: the trans-Atlantic record between the U.S. and Europe, 3,328 miles in 14 hours and 17 minutes with no stops; the fastest nonstop flight between Europe and New York, 18 hours and 5 minutes; the fastest flight between Europe and the U.S. with a refueling stop in Newfoundland, 12 hours and 45 minutes; and, the first non-stop flight between New York and Lisbon.

"Excalibur" was lost during a night landing in South America in 1942, and "Exerter" during a take-off at Botwood, Newfoundland, in 1947.

After the war, "Excambian" was moored in the port at Baltimore for a number of years when it was purchased for back taxes in 1950 for use in freight transport to and from Brazil. After this use and a second long period of idleness it was saved from a rusty end by Wilton Probert, president of Avalon Air Transport (later to become Catalina Air Lines) who found the plane in Ankon Harbor, Peru, in 1957. After much money and effort the flying boat was made air-worthy once again and flown to California. There it was modified to carry 47 passengers on hops from Long Beach to Catalina Island. It had been christened (incorrectly) "Excalibur."

It remained in service there for about ten years, carrying thousands of passengers on the twelve minute flight, until it had to be withdrawn from service because of a lack of pilots and crew specifically trained to fly multi-engined seaplanes.

Again "Excambian" was sold, this time, in January 1968, to Charles F. Blair, former Sikorsky test pilot who had flown the prototype in 1942,



and used by the Antilles Air Boats Company in the Virgin Islands. Once more the plane served faithfully until one day Blair struck an underwater obstruction while taxiing in the harbor at St. Thomas, tearing a hole in the hull below the water line. Not willing to undergo the extensive repair necessary to fix the damaged hull, the VS-44A was beached and became a tourist attraction as cruise ships came and went from the harbor.

For a number of years, the Bradley Air Museum tried unsuccessfully to acquire the Sikorsky flying boat, which had become the last of the clippers and of particular interest to the BAM because it had been built in Connecticut. It was felt all was lost when Blair decided to donate the airplane to the Naval Aviation Museum in Florida, shortly before his death,

Authorities at the Naval Aviation Museum were sympathetic to our pleas for the airplane, but it wasn't until the tornado of October 1979, and our subsequent request for replacement display aircraft, that they offered the VS-44A to us, along with a Douglas A-4A Skyhawk, Vought F-8K Crusader and Lockheed T-33B. All were accepted.

Today, Sikorsky VS-44A "Excambian" still rests at the Pensacola base, awaiting the day when it can be brought home to Connecticut where loving and talented hands at the BAM will restore the seaplane to its former greatness. It will then become part of the most comprehensive and significant collection of Sikorsky aircraft on display at the Bradley Air Museum.

The inventory listing starting on Page 8 lists eleven Sikorsky aircraft in the CAHA collection, including the oldest surviving Sikorsky-built airplane, the S-39B. Unfortunately, the tornado completely destroyed the CH-37B.

THE VS-44A KEN DINEEN'S MEMORIES

In 1942, a young aircraft mechanic, Cornelius J. (Ken) Dineen of Brockton, MA, just graduated from Parks Air College, St. Louis, MO and went to New York where he found a job as a mechanic/flight engineer with the American Export Shipping Line. He was hired in a hurry to become acquainted with the shipping line's trio of Vought-Sikorsky VS-44A flying boats headed into WWII cross-Atlantic service. After war's end, he remained with the two surviving VS-44As in civil use going on to become one of three survivors of a dramatic crash of the "Exeter" off South America. Ken retired from United Airlines in 1984, after 35 years of service. He resides in Ivoryton, CT.

His experiences in the VS-44As were taped in an extensive interview; a full transcription is stored in the NEAM library.

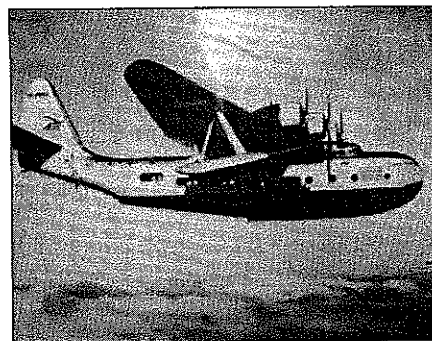
Ken began: "My first job on a VS-44A was to sleep overnight on 'Excalibur,' to make sure it didn't sink!

I trained on a PBY first, then worked up to the big Sikorsky. On my first flight, New York to Foynes, Ireland, we landed on the River Shannon. I opened the forward hatch and could smell the peat burning. God, I was thrilled!" (The homes of his father and his mother were nearby in the village of Ballyvourney and he could hardly wait to see where his parents came from.)

Ken explained: "The North Atlantic wartime route of the VS-44A began at La Guardia Terminal, NY, led to a refueling stop at Botwood, Newfoundland, and thence to Foynes. Trips across ran about 20 hours flying (on duty about 10 hours each) with a crew of six plus two engineers, all taking turns. We ran How-Goes-Its on fuel. Tanks were in the wings only. The center tank held 2,740 gals. and 100-gal. reserve was built in. There were two other wing tanks, about 450-to-490 gals. each. We took off with all tanks on.

"Once up, we switched to main

until it was down to about 300 gals. Then we went to the wing tanks until they were empty. If you had to go back to the main, you could run it to empty...and still have the 100-gal. reserve. We made Foynes easily. It never got hairy!" He described the flight. "On long range cruise, we'd start out at about 115 knots. By the time to descend, we were up to about 130-140 knots, running lighter. Non-pressurized, we flew at about 10,000 feet or below. We tried for favorable winds, sometimes down near the water; sometimes up among the clouds." An interesting landfall: "Then there was this flight non-stop, La Guardia to Foynes. Eddie Stewart was Captain. We had good tail winds but Foynes was socked in...heavy fog. We spotted the top of a high radio tower, circled around it and waited. Suddenly, there was a big hole in the fog. Eddie shouted, 'I'm going down!' Lucky! We landed in this body of muddy water, threw out the anchor and waited for the fog to lift. Out of nowhere, two Irishmen appeared in a dory. Eddie shouted, 'Where the hell are we?' One man yelled back, 'You're behind Coney Island.' Eddie replied, 'Don't give me that! Come over here and get on



board.' One man came aboard. We got out the charts., Sure enough, there was a Coney Island! The Irishman told us, 'stay here 15 minutes more and you'll be sitting on a mud flat.' So we started engines. I pulled up the anchor and let it drag to wash off the mud...we followed the men in the boat and moored near town.. Our launch came out to get people ashore. We had a crew and mechanic based at Foynes. Pan-Am and BOAC also had the same kind of operations."

The wartime routes?

"Generally, at Foynes, a flight crew would get off, then catch the next plane to Port Lyautey, French Morocco. If it was fall, we'd stay overnight to the next night. We flew only at night, unescorted, no lights of any kind. From Foynes, on the west of Ireland, the VS-44As kept their distance from the coasts of England and France and enemy territory. We usually carried about 52 persons, 46 passengers (military and government people) and a six-member crew. Crews rotated to different planes.

The wintertime route back to New York was from Port Lyautey, to Dakar, Africa, then over the South Atlantic to Belem, Brazil, to Port of Spain, Trinidad, and then on to La Guardia. At Port of Spain, another crew took the ship back to New York." Ken asserted, "at New York a 25-hour check was a very important project...we went over the

Continued on page 8

KEN DINEEN/VS-44A*Continued from page 7*

entire plane. Usually, problems were easily fixed...they weren't often bad."

Did you like the VS-44As?

Ken replied, "I feel it was the most reliable equipment you could have at the time. It wasn't always the most comfortable. The forward three compartments were nice, but the fourth could hold only four people. When the plane was set up for bunks, they'd have eight people in first...but it could only sleep four. The second and third compartments were the same. The fourth could seat four and sleep four.

The 44 was a good airplane. I think every pilot who flew them liked them. I recall after the war when we ran two 44s under Heustis Wells. American Export also was flying come 'Connies,' (Lockheed Constellations) and something happened to their pressurization systems. They had to fly at lower altitude. The 44s beat their schedules all over the place, even on round trips to Europe."

Did you have stewards and stewardesses at that time?

"Generally, one steward and one stewardess. Later one of the pursers was a stewardess.

I remember the stewardess waking people in the morning and preparing breakfast. They had a grille and stove right under the flight deck and would be frying eggs and the odors wafted up the steps right to the engineer's station. I had to get up and stand by the navigator's table, or sit on top of the APU (auxiliary power unit) just to get away from the tempting smells! I never heard of any fires on the planes...but I did hear that Johnny Anderson had one. I don't know anything about it.

Ralph Lightfoot was testing engineer and Charlie Blair was test pilot for the 44s. All tests were made in

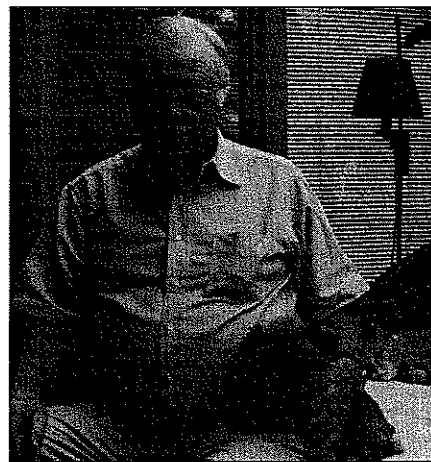
Jacksonville, FLA. I believe that the 44s were in Navy camouflage when they left the plant."

Layovers in Ireland?

Ken grinned. "There was a resort village on the Shannon at the ocean. We always stayed at a hotel on Main Street. Germans from the Dublin Consul office were staying across the street. Of course, Ireland was neutral. Military people with us were in 'civvies' when we pulled in. We took off for Africa and they were back in uniform when we landed there. On long layovers in Ireland, we'd go to dances in the village. And the Germans would be there, stern, unsmiling. For a while, when we took off from Foynes, we'd buzz the town at 500 feet, throw out a few rolls of toilet paper and shoot off red flares. A little show for the Germans! But the Irish government told us to cut it out!"

According to Ken, Heustis Wells, a former U.S. Army pilot from Shrewsbury, MA, owned and flew the remaining VS-44As after World War II. How did he fit in the picture? "Huey, we called him, had a fantastic history. In 1925, he was flying from Boston to Teterboro NJ, for Colonial Airlines with Juan Trippe... who founded Pan Am. He pioneered many air routes. Huey flew the first Pan Am air mail flight from Florida to Cuba in Oct. 1927...in a Tri-motored Fokker. Wells then took over the 44s and was interested in setting up airlines with them in South America. I went to Washington, DC with him to get his 'ticket' to fly the 44s. That was quite a story in itself!

In 1946, I was flight engineer on 'Excambian' with Wells, from La Guardia Field, NY to Lima, Peru. Pat Byrnes was co-pilot and navigator. Before we got to Panama, Pat decided to take a nap. Huey got the controls but Pat told me to keep and eye on him. 'If he climbs or makes a turn, wake me up.' It was nighttime.

**Ken Dineen**

Before long, Huey cranked in a turn to the right. I spoke up, 'I see you made a turn. What kind of navigation are you using?' He replied, 'Celestial navigation, by the stars. See this window overhead? He pointed up. 'As long as I keep that star in the corner of the window, I'm going where I want to go.' So I went below and woke Pat and told him that we were following a star in the corner of a window! He jumped up, raced in and chewed Huey out and told him to get his tail into the co-pilot's seat. Huey stayed there the rest of the flight."

Anyway, we kept on down the west coast of South America, beginning to run low on fuel. I kept Pat aware of it. He said not to worry until we got down to the reserve. It wasn't too soon when the engines began to splutter and I switched to the reserve. We carried about 1,400 rpm and 28 inches on the manifold...using about 24 gallons per hour, per engine. You could see the prop blades turning!

We came abeam of Chimbote, Peru, and spotted a beautiful, protected harbor. We landed, moored and a boat came out. We could get gas, 78 octane. So we carried it out in the boat, 5 gallon cans, 500 gallons total...climbing up over the bow, the cockpit and on the wing, to pour it in the tanks. Like spooning it out of a coffee cup! ✈

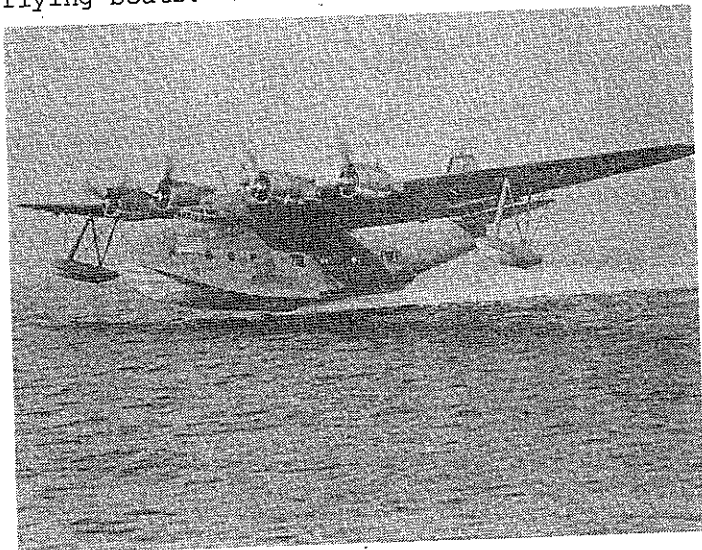
REMEMBERING THE EXCAMBIAN

by Capt. Mike Craig

One brisk winter day in 1984, I climbed through the fuselage of what some would consider little more than a geriatric mass of metal in a quiet corner of the Stratford (CT) Airport. It was, however, the last great American commercial flying boat. Originally built on order for the American Export Lines, the Sikorsky VS-44A EXCAMBIAN, carried Eleanor Roosevelt, Queen Wilhelmina, Humphrey Bogart, George Raft and USO troupes through the skies of World War II. Its corroded remnants are a reminder of an aviation era gone by and a frontier conquered.

Looking at EXCAMBIAN in its dismembered condition -- the wing resting beside the fuselage, engines elsewhere -- one recalls "all the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty together again." However, the Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association, Stratford-based United Technology's Sikorsky Aircraft and Hamilton Standard divisions, Pratt & Whitney in Hartford and hundreds of volunteers throughout New England plan to accomplish for the New England Air Museum what "all the king's men" might never attempt. Project Director Richard Deichmann of Sikorsky estimates restoring the EXCAMBIAN for static display will take more than five years. Their efforts will benefit generations of New Englanders and visitors to Connecticut.

Earlier than winter day, I reminisced with Sergei Sikorsky about the Connecticut of 1942 when his father, Igor, had taken him to the Stratford plant to see the finishing touches put on the three VS-44A four-engine flying boats. At noon on a clear, crisp Janu-



A Sikorsky VS-44A in the markings of the Naval Air Transport Service during WW-II. (CAHA)

ary 17, several thousand employees of Vought-Sikorsky stopped work to join dignitaries. Mrs. Henry Agard Wallace, wife of the vice-president of the United States, after several tries, broke a recalcitrant bottle of champagne across the bow of EXCALIBUR, EXCAMBIAN'S older sister ship.

The following day the ship eased down the Vought-Sikorsky ramp and into the ice-rimmed Housatonic River for its first flight. At the controls was American Export Airline's Capt. Charles F. "Charlie" Blair. Although the first test flights were conducted at lighter weights, later tests were flown at the maximum takeoff weight of 59,225 pounds.

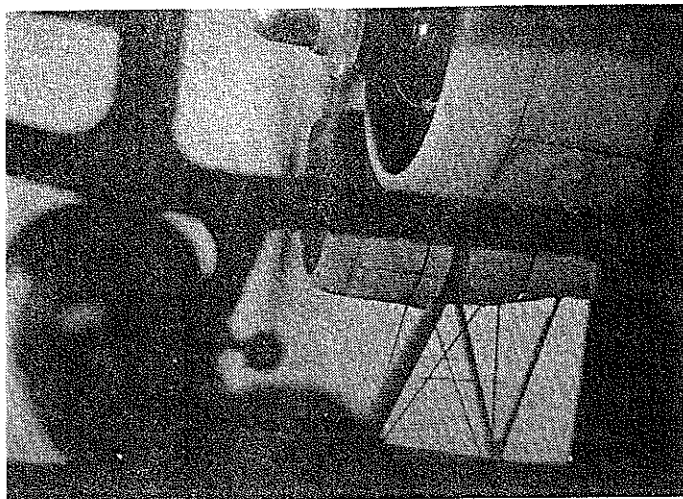
Blair described one such takeoff: "The hull (was) so deeply submerged that the passenger windows were only inches above the water. . . at the beginning of the takeoff, a huge wave flared out from the bow to enshroud the ship so heavily with spray that only the wingtips and top of the tail were visible." Aeronautical engineering genius Igor Sikorsky, watching one of these takeoffs, is rumored to have said, "That is not a takeoff. That is a stunt."

During the summer of '42, I watched my father, Jim Craig, who succeeded Blair as chief pilot of American Export Airlines, and the eight other original captains complete their training on Long Island Sound. Although they were still in their 30s, others in the young airline affectionately referred to them as "the nine old men" -- the title inspired by President Roosevelt's comment about having nine "old old men" on the Supreme Court. The nine "old pilots" relative affluence, mobility, and potential for promiscuity, although exaggerated, did, however, enhance their image. All had been hired away from their Eastern and United Airlines twin-engine DC-3s by the American Export Steamship Lines to fly the transatlantic routes, previously the sole domain of Pan American Airways.

When American Export approached the Vought-Sikorsky Aircraft Company with specifications for three flying boats with transatlantic range, Vought-Sikorsky immediately went to work at the Stratford plant using their already proven PBS-1, built for the U.S. Navy as a prototype. By the time the U.S. entered the war in December 1941, the three ships, collectively called the Flying Aces, were almost finished. Although they were built for commercial flying, the Naval Air Transport Service soon put them to work carrying high-ranking military and government personnel across the submarine-infested Atlantic Ocean.

Individually, the ships bore the names EXCALIBUR, EXCAMBIAN, and EXETER. The Naval Air Transport Service changed their original color to an inconspicuous blue, with large

25



The above photo, taken by Ken Willard who was weather officer assigned to General Eisenhower's staff to forecast the sea in preparation of the North African landings, shows the starboard engines of a VS-44A in flight over the Atlantic. (Willard)

American flags emblazoned on the port and starboard bows to warn over-zealous Allied fighter pilots. Although the low-flying aircraft were fired upon by Nazi vessels several times, they escaped damage.

In October 1942, at Botwood, Newfoundland, disaster struck one of the trio. An impetuous pilot attempted a takeoff in EXCALIBUR with landing flaps incorrectly selected. As the aircraft gathered speed on the water, it simply buried its nose deeper and deeper. Rather than reduce power, the captain tried to manhandle the ship into the air. Pressure on the hull finally overcame the flight surfaces, and with a whale-like sound, EXCALIBUR stalled in the air, then crashed into the water. A thunderous plume of water briefly marked its grave. Half of the passengers and a highly respected flight engineer, Mike Doyle, died.

The first group of men to copilot the two remaining Flying Aces included some of the first American aces home from the war with Japan. In their P-40 fighters with the Walt Disney-designed shark's mouth painted on the nose, a number of Flying Tigers had soon become aces, including George T. Bugard, one of the few double aces, and Robert H. Neal, the only triple ace among the Flying Tigers. Their courage and skill as pilots resulted in a ratio of 8 Flying Tiger planes lost to an estimated 1,500 enemy fliers. As the American Export crews, there were second to none.

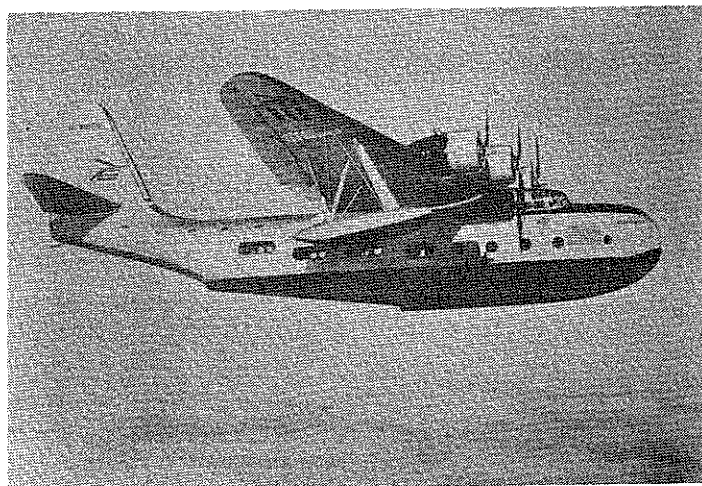
The first non-stop commercial crossing of the Atlantic Ocean aptly proved the skill of the American Export crews and the dependability of their aircraft. On the westbound leg

of the inaugural flight, a mist over Newfoundland turned into a milky fog that closed all refueling ports. The options available to the crew were to attempt a landing on the open ocean or to press on in the direction of the United States. They pressed on. The elastic hours, at first shortened by the excitement of the flight, seemed to lengthen as the tension grew. Twenty-five hours and 40 minutes after liftoff from Foynes, Ireland, the plane landed in Flushing Bay adjacent to LaGuardia Field. The aircraft had scarcely enough fuel left to taxi to the ramp.

On board the record-setting flight was Dorothy C. "Dottie" Bohanna, who became during the round trip the world's first transatlantic air stewardess and the first woman to fly as an air crew member on the commercial over-ocean flight. Dottie, like the other stewardesses in those pioneer days, had to be a registered nurse and more. On one long crossing with five new mothers traveling with their infants, while the ensemble of four Pratt & Whitney 1,200 hp engines droned on for many hours, the diapers ran out. The solution: wash them out and dry them on a line strung from stem to stern in the cabin.

Paul Echardt, another EXCAMBIAN crew member, described the days before in-flight movies. Westbound flights were normally flown at 1,000 feet at night and 500 feet in the daytime due to the higher-altitude head winds. The passengers and crew often had memorable flights viewing such sights as seals bathing in freshwater pools atop icebergs a scant few hundred feet beneath their windows. The ever-changing ocean surface, the fishing boats, the victory ships, and the vessels of war could be viewed intimately.

Throughout the war on hundreds of Atlantic crossings, EXCAMBIAN and EXETER set num-



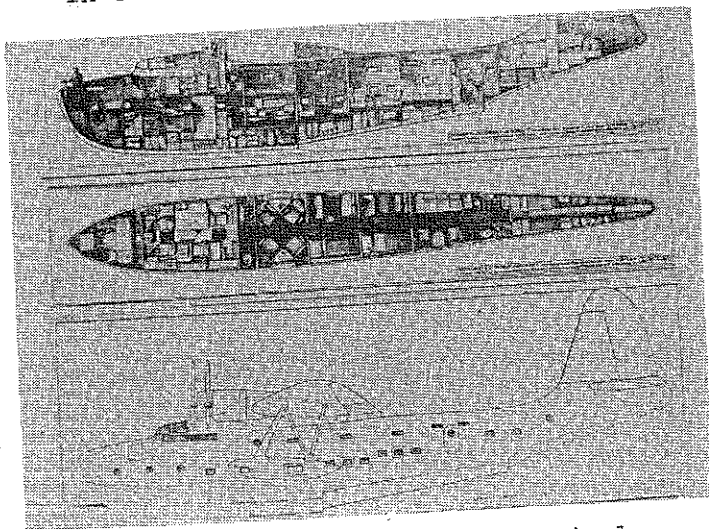
The VS-44A EXCALIBUR in the colors of American Export Airlines prior to being taken over by the Navy. (CAHA)

erous aviation records: the first nonstop from New York to Lisbon; the first nonstop from Bermuda to North Africa; the fastest flight from the U.S. to Europe (14 hours, 17 minutes); and the fastest return flight (18 hours, 5 minutes). Retired Pan Am Captain Chuck Spencer, who had flown EXCAMBIAN, recalled that he flew the first eastbound land plane flight across the Atlantic on the same day as the last westbound VS-44A Atlantic flight. The era of trans-ocean flying boats ended in October 1945.

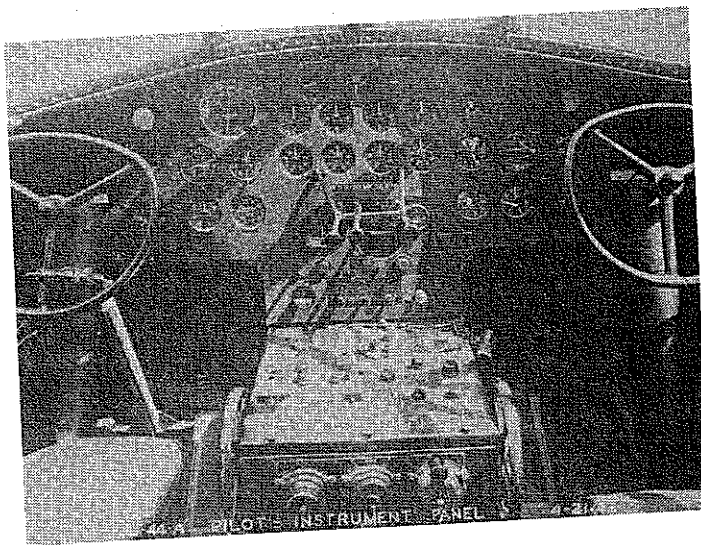
After the war, EXETER flew to South America, where it crashed in the Rio de la Plata near Montevideo, Uruguay, while carrying contraband for rebels. Curious divers, with no reclamation plans, recently visited the site and found it intact except for one missing wing. The deterioration of EXETER exempts any consideration of removing parts for restoring EXCAMBIAN, which was also flown to South America, but had the good fortune of having a few uneventful flights before being parked on a ramp in Lima, Peru, for almost two years.

Dick Probert, who owned Avalon Air Transport (later named Catalina Airlines), purchased EXCAMBIAN in Peru, intending to ferry it back to Long Beach, CA. The perilous journey began at Ancon Harbor, where, during the takeoff run, one wingtip snagged the water, knocking off the float and damaging the flight controls. This near fatal event necessitated a landing at Acapulco, Mexico, for temporary repairs. There, the aircraft was refueled with 1,800 gallons of gasoline stored in 50-gallon drums. Mexican youngsters accomplished the task, vying for a \$5 prize promised to the "champion" who could pump a drum dry the fastest.

In California, Probert modified the air-



Cutaway drawings showing the original configuration of the VS-44A. Upper and lower berths were for up to 16 passengers.



Instrument panel of the VS-44A. (CAHA)

craft interior to accommodate 47 passengers for the short flights between Long Beach and Catalina Island. Carrying as many passengers per trip as five of the smaller Grumman Gooses in Probert's fleet, EXCAMBIAN was dubbed "Mother Goose" during its 10-year tour with Catalina Airlines. The alias, EXCALIBUR, however, was painted in bold script across the port and starboard bows.

In April 1959 MGM leased EXCAMBIAN for its movie debut in the James Cagney-Robert Montgomery production, "THE GALLANT HOURS," about Admiral "Bull" Halsey. It then enjoyed a leisurely vacation while the studio and then Catalina Airlines personnel attempted to remove, over a period of weeks, the navy blue swimming pool paint that had been its uniform during the filming. In March and April 1961, the aircraft added Scripps Institute of LaJolla to its aviation resume, carrying equipment, scientists, and such notables as Ernest Hemingway during their Mohole Project to drill through the ocean bottom to obtain earth mantle samples. This service earned a congratulatory letter from President John F. Kennedy.

Probert sold the aging EXCAMBIAN in 1968 to Charlie Blair, the first VS-44 pilot, for his Antilles Airboat Airline. Based on the U.S. Virgin Islands, this was a "Fantasy Island" operation run by Blair and his wife, movie star, Maureen O'Hara, and backed by such notables as pianist Victor Borge.

EXCAMBIAN's last fling, under the Blair aegis, was measured in months. After an accident during taxi, it was beached. Before it was repaired, Blair was killed in the crash of a smaller seaplane. Saved from the fate of being a hot dog stand on the beach in St. Thomas, this sole surviving VS-44A, now looking rather shabby, was donated to the

Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, FL, because of its similarity to the Sikorsky PBS-1. The U.S. Navy, finally realizing that EXCAMBIAN's history was essentially commercial, placed it in the New England Air Museum on permanent loan.

As a Pam Am 747 captain who has logged over 1,000 ocean crossings in aircraft descended from the EXCAMBIAN, I was reminded that brisk winter day in Connecticut of our aviation legacy: we pilots and passengers who enjoy the precision and dependability of aviation today and hop off to romantic places flying high above the weather at eight miles a minute, are the beneficiaries of past triumphs. Our reliable high-altitude jets now ply the skies around the world thanks to the achievements of retired crews and aircraft like EXCAMBIAN, whose low-altitude rumble is silent forever.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article first appeared in the March 1985 issue of "Airline Pilot," the magazine of professional flight crews. Mike Craig is one of our most enthusiastic supporters, and it is with his permission that we are proud to present this article for the entertainment and information of all of our members.

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RESTORING THE VS-44A

As of the date of this publication, restoration activities on the Sikorsky VS-44A have slowed considerably from the original fervor which promised swift and early completion of the massive project.

Unfortunately, Sikorsky Aircraft was temporarily forced to revise their plans. The hangar which was to be used for the restoration project was urgently needed for Sikorsky production requirements, and the large hull and wings of the VS-44A were forced to remain outside. Sikorsky is still anxious to aid in the restoration effort, but a suitable location for the project is now questionable.

The engines have been moved up to Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and the propellers to Hamilton Standard in Windsor Locks. Both of these United Technologies divisions have agreed to continue with their restoration efforts.

In an effort to speed up this project and aid in the restoration effort, the New England Air Museum is embarking on a relatively ambitious program to allow qualified members work on the smaller components in their home workshop. For example, the rudder, flaps, ailerons, and other small components require restoration and they do not need much area to work on. When completed, these components will be stored at the Museum waiting for the

day when the VS-44A can once more be assembled.

Those interested in aiding in this effort are urged to contact Mike Speciale at the Museum for further details.

The hull and wings probably will take much longer than originally anticipated, but this restoration WILL be completed, and the New England Air Museum will one day proudly exhibit the Sikorsky VS-44A, the last of the large flying boats.

BY-LAWS CHANGED

With the recent change of the name of our Museum as well as the change in the management structure, a change to our corporation By-Laws was necessary. A By-Laws Committee was formed from members of the Board of Directors to review the entire By-Laws with the intent of bringing them up to date. This committee consisted of Igor Sikorsky (Chairman), Moe Condon, Fritz Freund, Cliff Niemann, Tom Rudder and Bob Stepanek.

The most logical changes were the Museum name and management changes; replacing all references to the Bradley Air Museum with the New England Air Museum; and replacing all references to "Museum Director" with "Executive Director." But after the Committee started their review, a number of additional changes were recommended.

A significant change recommended was the wording in the paragraph dealing with the composition of the Board of Directors. Whereby the old By-Laws limited the number of Directors-at-Large to 16, the wording was changed to "not more than 20 but not less than 16." This was done to increase the flexibility of the Board by allowing possible additions without forcing an existing Board member to give up his seat.

Another change was in the wording of the responsibilities of the Treasurer. As worded, the Treasurer has to have custody of all financial assets, write checks and collect all monies due the corporation. This was revised to more of a supervisory responsibility than direct action on his part.

The paragraph dealing with amending the By-Laws was also changed slightly, now requiring at least 100 members to submit ballots on any proposed change. This limitation had not been in place previously.

As per the By-Laws, the proposed changes (in this case, an entire set of By-Laws) was mailed to each member of record for their ballot. More than the necessary number of ballots were received by the Secretary and the new By-Laws were overwhelmingly accepted.