

LETTERS . . .

opinion, completely justified. May I add a couple of comments?

Reference your data on the Convair 880-990 series and the deliveries and orders for these big jets: it gives considerable food for thought that—so far as the big jets are concerned—the Convair 880 and 990 have, to date, the best record for non-fatal accidents. With the sole exception of Delta Airlines CV-880 N8804E which crashed on a training flight on May 23, 1960, killing six crew, no passengers have been seriously injured or killed in Convair jetliners. At December 1, 1963, a grand total of 93 CV-880/990 series were in airline service throughout the world. Not listed by you is the one 990A which went into service with Aerolineas Peruanas on December 1, 1963, flying between Lima and Miami, and Mexico City and Buenos Aires. This 990A has been leased for seven years to the Peruvian non-IATA carrier.

For the record, the 880 series went into service in May 1960, the 880M series in June 1961 and the 990 series in February 1962.

Nairobi, Kenya

DENNIS M. POWELL

Is Spotting a Danger to Security?

SIR,—Front-page news in many Dutch newspapers recently was the fact that *Cockpit* magazine published a little booklet for spotters to collect their aircraft registrations (a booklet similar to the *Cockpit Logbook* is *Aerologbook*, published in England by Ian Allan Ltd). It was stated in these sensational news columns that aircraft spotting is a dangerous hobby and that Hugo Hooftman, in promoting this "mystifying hobby" and publishing military aircraft registrations in *Cockpit*, "was dangerous to the state."

A contemporary Dutch magazine, which started all this ballyhoo, said that logging aircraft registrations was "childish" and "a military danger" and it wondered why the air attachés of Holland's NATO partners had not yet complained to the Dutch authorities. The Royal Netherlands Air Force asked *Cockpit* magazine officially to cease publishing military aircraft registrations "as the U-2 secret came to light because of a 15-years-old spotter in Japan."

I wonder what the reaction to all this will be among Air-Britain fans? Their many publications full of military aircraft registrations must be a great danger to the British Commonwealth. According to Dutch opinions, at least . . .

Maarn, Holland

HUGO HOOFTMAN,
Editor, "Cockpit"

Spitfire at Eindhoven

SIR,—On Thursday, January 16, a Spitfire Mk IX (clipped wing) was officially mounted upon a steel and concrete pedestal in front of the Officers' Mess at the RNethAF base at Eindhoven. Although the aircraft's operational life seems to have been rather brief, its post-war adventures must surely lead the field for all preserved machines.

The recorded history tells us that this aircraft was originally delivered to the RAF in March 1944 and that it joined 485(NZ) Sqn in April and operated until September 1944 mainly on fighter-bomber operations over Normandy and the Low Countries, and as escort to bombers. In August 1944, it was on a French airfield and the last recorded sortie was September 30, 1944, when it crashed somewhere between Arnhem and Nijmegen. It was eventually recovered and restored by the RAAF and in September 1955 was presented to the RAF at Eindhoven to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Apparently it was found behind a technical building as scrap but pilots of 315 Sqn, RAAF, led by Capt Walraven and Lt Fiering, scoured the country for spares and, before it was handed to the RAF it stood for a time in front of the 315 Sqn hut.

When the aircraft first left for the RAF side of the camp, some of the 315 Sqn pilots took a poor view of the idea and mounted a night "op" to recover the machine. In the early hours as they were lifting the Spitfire over the gate of the RAF camp, their base commander appeared on the scene



The RAF Spitfire IX at Eindhoven (letter from Mr Leslie Hunt)

and ordered them to leave the Spitfire with the RAF. In 1961 the machine was officially returned to the RAAF. The serial number was said to be MK 732 but is in fact MJ 289. The present squadron markings, VL, are interesting because these were allotted to 167 Sqn which, on June 12, 1943, became 322 (Dutch) Sqn at Hornchurch, though their code then changed to 3W. Perhaps the new markings (and RAF camouflage) are a tribute to Dr Bram van der Stok, shot down when flying with 41 Sqn, RAF, and one of the three men who made a successful return to England after the great mass escape from Stalag Luft III. Although portrayed, for some inexplicable reason, as an Australian in the film, Flt Lt Van der Stok, after his fantastic journey to freedom, commanded 322 (Dutch) Sqn and, following his release, qualified and now practices medicine in New Mexico.

I am greatly indebted to Maj Smitshuysen of the Netherlands Air Staff for the picture and much of the background detail.

Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

LESLIE HUNT

For NY read LA

SIR,—Your caption writer will upset the airport authorities at Los Angeles International when they see what he has said on page 84 of your January 16 issue. To be really informed on the world's major airports your writer should obtain a copy of the definitive work on the subject, *Great Airports of the World*, to be published on March 1 and written by

London NW6

ROY ALLEN

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 6 British Interplanetary Society: "Man's Survival Equipment in Space," by P. W. Fitt.
- Feb 6 RAeS Education evening; discussion introduced by Sir Willis Jackson, Sir David Anderson and B. P. Laight.
- Feb 6 RAeS Southend Branch: Film and Discussion evening.
- Feb 6 RAeS Belfast Branch: "RAF Rescue and Survival—Medical Aspects," by P. Whittington.
- Feb 7 Association of British Aero Clubs and Centres: Annual dinner.
- Feb 7 RAeS Man-powered Aircraft Group: "Man-powered Aircraft," by B. S. Shenstone.
- Feb 10 Institute of Transport: Brancker Memorial Lecture, "Progress with the Concord," by Sir George Edwards.
- Feb 11 RAeS Boscombe Down Branch: "Rotorcraft Work at the A&AEE," by J. Poole.
- Feb 11 RAeS Bristol Branch and British Institute of Radio Engineers: "Redundancy Techniques in Aviation Electronics," by R. K. Barltrop.
- Feb 11 RAeS Luton Branch: "Modern Production Methods," by G. Wilkinson, and film "Wings of Yesterday."
- Feb 11 RAeS Prestwick Branch: "Air Cargo," by M. D. Morrissey.
- Feb 12 Kronfeld Club: "Gliding in the French Alps," by Peter Hearne.
- Feb 12 RAeS Air Law Group: "Administration of Airports," by B. F. Collins and G. S. Hill.
- Feb 12 RAeS Chester Branch: "Service in the Skies," by a BOAC stewardess.
- Feb 12 RAeS Merthyr and Treforest Branch: "Test Flying—its Origin and Growth," by J. Lankester Parker.