

Benjamin C. Barrett's, *The Spirit Behind the Spirit of St. Louis Harold M. Bixby*, recounts Harold M. Bixby's (1890-1965) contribution to commercial aviation, starting with financing Charles Lindbergh's 1927 transatlantic solo flight and continuing as a PAA executive (1933-1955).

Bixby joined PAA in 1933 as a Special Representative for East Asia operations based in Shanghai, China to stabilize PAA's new subsidiary, China National Air Company, and to secure permissions, rights, and routes needed to open transpacific commercial and mail service. Recalled to the US in 1938, he was named Vice President and oversaw PAA's Pacific and Alaska Divisions, and in 1939 shifted to directing PAA's Atlantic Division. In 1941 Bixby opened two new subsidiaries (Pan American Ferries, Inc., and Pan American-Africa, Ltd.), both of which masked contracts to build/expand military airlift capacity needed to support impending global war efforts and the airport facilities required to support such large-scale, long-haul aviation (see *Pan Am at War*). Bixby retired as a PAA Director, having served as Administrative Vice-President.

Barrett chronicles Bixby's life through an impressive collection of family sourced photographs, letters, telegrams, and other artifacts. Organized by decades, each section provides chronological summaries of key activities and events, most of which are explained by the photos and documents that follow. The 1930s section provides a trove of rare, primary information about obstacles overcome to make transpacific service an operational reality, to operate in China in the face of Japanese mainland incursions, and to evacuate PAA personnel and equipment. The 1940s section is less detailed and less rich, with more attention paid to Bixby-Lindbergh family correspondence, and less to Harold's PAA work assignments, which, given his involvement in classified war projects may explain the less-comprehensive paper trail.

What differentiates *The Spirit Behind the Spirit of St. Louis Harold M. Bixby* from other memorabilia-based aviation histories is the care with which the materials are arranged and contextualized: every photo is captioned, every letter is reproduced in easy-to-read size (no thumbnail size reproductions here) and, many of "Slim" Lindbergh's letters to Bixby spanning their 40-year friendship are transcribed to ensure reading accuracy. Barrett has worked for years on this project to ensure each timeline is accurate and that persons involved are identified. The addition of a biographical index provides useful context for recreational readers and researchers, as does the thorough index of the book's text and images. For PAA and Lindbergh fans, *The Spirit Behind the Spirit of St. Louis Harold M. Bixby*, can be enjoyed through multiple straight-through readings and random five-minute dips; for aviation historians and libraries, however, the book warrants consideration as a unique reference tool: the number of otherwise hard-to-locate primary materials it contains, and the high-quality of its production (thick, semi-gloss paper, tight binding, crisp image reproduction, etc.) justify its purchase.

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