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# An Uneasy Life of A Flying Writer

空飛ぶ作家の居所のない人生

Atarashi Toshiharu

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## I. Introduction

### A. Aim of the thesis

Saint-Exupéry was always looking for a place in the world, a place of his own, a place for himself. For one to discover such a place and to actually obtain it is no easy task. He chased her mother as a child; he studied hard for his naval academy entrance examination; he made himself a pilot; he flew postal planes; he landed safely and crash-landed; he spent years abroad; and volunteered to fight in WWII. Finally, he went into the unknown of the ever-after. Did he eventually find his place of peace?

Even while staying in the relative safety of the United States during the French Occupation, he did not feel at ease. That is likely why he insisted on returning to Africa. Something in the air must have enticed Antoine de Saint-Exupéry to live quite differently from other people, for he seemed to find no place fit for himself on the ground. Thus, his life may perhaps be seen as a search for a place of his own. He was born in the symbolic year of 1900, and embraced the twentieth century by taking to the air. Yet, we do not possess sufficient clues to tell us why he made this choice.

For most of us Saint-Exupéry is above all the author of *The Little Prince*, which has been translated into dozens of languages and widely read and reread throughout the world. However, that a literary work is famous does not necessarily mean that its author, too, is well known: Saint-Exupéry's personal life seems to remain obscured. Today, his name is closely associated with one literary work; however, it was his other stories that made him the most well-known Frenchman in the United States.

People do not necessarily contribute to the

world in the way they originally intend. For example, in the case of England's Lady Diana she intentionally and effectively sought mass media attention regarding global humanity issues. Her most significant contribution being her campaign against landmines.

Yet, she is probably most commonly remembered as a blue-blooded star unhappily married into the British royal maze.

Saint-Exupéry was also a nobleman, but he lived in a way even commoners did not. He flew, fought and disappeared.

Part of Saint-Exupéry's complexity was his passion and role in the development of aviation. Aviation was a new and dangerous field in the early 20th Century, so it seems ill-fitted to a writer from an old and noble family. The following is an attempt at clarifying the relationship between Saint-Exupéry and aviation at large in his lifetime, which spans between 1900 and 1944. Saint-Exupéry was an interesting and complex historical figure. Is there any way to reconcile the image and true conditions of early aviation with the man Saint-Exupéry?

In this Thesis I would like to try to answer two questions that I have been personally haunted by for some time: (1) Why Saint-Exupéry became a pilot in spite of his noble origin; and (2) Why he dared to volunteer to make reconnaissance flights over German-occupied France rather than staying in the United States during the early part of World War II.

### B. Historical background

Anniversaries abound, yet the centennial anniversaries of Saint-Exupéry's birth on June 29, 2000, was unprecedented in joviality. The anniversary was celebrated throughout the world including France, his home country, the

United States, which sheltered him during the war, and Japan, which has the world's only museum dedicated to him. If blessed with a special fortune, Saint-Exupéry could still be alive in the year 2001. Saint-Exupéry set foot on and flew over all six continents except Australia. He was born in Europe, was assigned to work as airfield chief in Africa, visited Asia, directed an airmail company in South America, and was exiled to North America. Today such travel is common, but during Saint-Exupéry's lifetime air travel did not exist in a comparable way. It was closer to an astronaut's adventurous mission in that it was always dangerous, even fatal, to board a flying machine.

It seems appropriate to divide Saint-Exupéry's life into seven periods according to key central events in his life. This is something no biographer of Saint-Exupéry has done:

#### 1. Young Days (1900-1920)

Birth in Lyon—the Wrights' successful flight—father's death—move to Le Mans—experienced first flight—WWI—passed “baccalauréat”—brother's death—not accepted in the Naval Academy—Beaux-Arts.

#### 2. An Intermezzo (1921-1926)

Joined air force—pilot's licenses—skull fracture—engagement (later broken)—unsuccessful automobile salesman—literary debut with *L'aviateur*.

#### 3. Flying in Full Swing (1926-1931)

Employed Latécoère—postal flights—Charles A. Lindbergh (New York and Paris)—airfield chief at Cape Juby (Western Sahara)—*Southern Mail* published—Buenos Aires (operations manager)—Great Depression—married Consuelo—

demoted to pilot.

#### 4. A Flying Novelist (1931-1939)

*Night Flight* published, awarded Fémina Prize—Air France formed, not admitting Saint-Exupéry—flew to Saigon, Moscow—met Léon Werth—lost in the Libyan Desert—Spanish Civil War—failed takeoff in Guatemala—*Wind, Sand and Stars*—Novel Grand Prix of the French Academy—best seller in U.S.—Mr. and Mrs. Lindbergh—back to France.

#### 5. The War Years (1939-1940)

World War II—reconnaissance flights—Phony War—*Blitzkrieg*—Arras—Armistice—*Citadel*—Vichy

#### 6. De facto Exile in the U.S. (1940-1943)

New York—*Flight to Arras* (best seller)—U.S.'s entry into war against Axis—commenced on *The Little Prince*—U.S. landed on North Africa—Germany occupied Vichy France as well—left the States for liberated North Africa.

#### 7. Return to Volunteer Reconnaissance Flying (1943-1944)

Algiers—Reconnaissance Group 2/33—recalled to ground mission—Operation Overlord—took off for final reconnaissance mission, never returned—Paris liberated.

## II. Saint-Exupéry and Civil Aviation

That of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is a story that spans three centuries. He was born in the final year of the nineteenth century and the twenty-first century began shortly after the centennial anniversary of his birth on June 29, 2000. We have just seen the turn of a new century and millennium, but the change from the 1890s to the year 1900 was no less impor-

tant. Queen Victoria's death after reigning the British Empire for six decades signalled the death and birth of a new century.

The 'gourmet capital' of Lyon, France, used to be on the boundary with Savoy in the middle ages. It was a town famous for its *grand marché* and publications. It was in this city that Saint-Exupéry was born in 1900<sup>1</sup>. Tokugawa Yoshinobu was still alive, and Natsume Sōseki was to sail across the English Channel several months later.

There are three major categories of civil aviation, namely, 1) mail, 2) passenger, and 3) cargo. Saint-Exupéry was primarily engaged in mail transportation. Passenger flights did exist in those days, however, it predominantly belongs to the contemporary era. Because of the cost of air transportation, cargo also remained rare.

#### A. First flight as a boy

Saint-Exupéry was born in the modern bourgeois' society as a count. Nevertheless he made himself into a pilot, a profession even a commoner did not choose in the times of fragile flying machines. There undoubtedly were a number of contradictions between his noble birth and the fast developing *métier* of flying.

His father, Count Jean de Saint-Exupéry, worked in an insurance company following service in the army. There he met Marie de Fonscolombes in 1890 and married her. In 1904, however, Jean suddenly died of cerebral infarction though he was only 41 years old and Saint-Exupéry was not yet four years old. His mother, only twenty-eight years old and with little social experiences or job skills, was left to take care of her five children. Fortunately, her parents and then the Countess de Tricaud, Marie's great-aunt, took care of the Saint-

Exupéry family.

Shortly, the large six member family moved to the château of Saint-Maurice-de-Rémens in the vicinity of Lyon. This is where Saint-Exupéry spent most of his childhood, and this château protected him as a boy. Even after Saint-Exupéry became an adult, he would remember its attic as a spiritual haven and want to return there.

During his youth in the château, Antoine learned to play the violin and the piano. He began to write poetry at around seven and regardless of their attitude he would often make his family wake up at midnight and listen to his poems. He was the middle of the five siblings. His sister Simone recalled that since their father had died while her brothers Antoine and François were young, no one could easily bring them under control<sup>2</sup>. Antoine seemed to be fit into his place within the family during this period, however, the problem with childhood is that everyone grows out of it.

#### (1) Moved to Le Mans

After losing his father, Saint-Exupéry lived in Provence but moved regularly according to the seasons. In 1909, the family moved to Le Mans to send him to the same prestigious school from which his late father had graduated. At Le Mans he developed a stressful relationship with his grandfather who was still alive, and he did not do well at school.

Similar to the Internet today, aircraft during Saint-Exupéry's childhood were developing at a remarkable pace. Records were being broken with each new achievement and technological breakthrough. Saint-Exupéry, who was fond of playing with machinery, tried to make his own early contribution by trying to fly his remodeled bicycle launched from a slope. In 1908, in front of a large number of spectators

from all over Europe, Wilbur Wright made some astonishing demonstration flights in Le Mans. Based on these stunningly superior flights, French aviators' confidence in themselves was crushed. They were effectively children compared to the American flyer-inventor. Antoine's heart was full of longing to fly an airplane himself.

## (2) Baptized to aviation

During the summer holidays of 1912, Saint-Exupéry frequented the runway near Saint-Maurice-de-Rémens and had a local pilot give him his first flight and he was charmed. It was the beginning of a life-long career.

In 1914, World War I broke out. Saint-Exupéry's mother, who had a nurse's qualification, was appointed chief nurse at a field hospital in Ambérieu. In February of the following year, he transferred to a boarding school in neutral Switzerland with his younger brother. He did not do well at school, and his classmates teased him, but he showed interest in airplanes, philosophy, and literature. He was also a devoted football player. While in Switzerland he grew to be over 180cm tall.

In July 1917, at the Swiss school his brother became sick and was sent back to the château in Saint-Maurice-de-Rémens.

The frail juvenile passed away at the age of fifteen. He left a will as if he had been an adult. Years later Saint-Exupéry would recall his younger brother's death in *Flight to Arras*.

After passing the baccalauréat and following a family council, Saint-Exupéry moved to Paris to prepare for the Naval Academy's entrance examination. Of the two branches of the armed forces, Saint-Exupéry opted for the navy, because he was attracted by the danger of the sea, even though the casualty rate was lower for the navy than the army. At this

moment, the air force option did not exist outside of a novelist's imagination. In the capital Saint-Exupéry concentrated on higher mathematics but was not able to pass the entrance examination before he reached the age limit after three years.

Had he passed in the examination, then he might not have become the great writer for which he is remembered today.

## B. Civil pilot license

### Pilot licenses

Saint-Exupéry first acquired civil aviation license which he followed with a military license and finally with an airlines pilot qualification. He started his aerial life in 1921 as a conscript in the air force, however, after being discharged he was at a loss to find a place of his own in the world.

### (1) Troubled years

Through friends at Parisian lycées he got to know the de Vilmorins, a Parisian noble family living in a stately residence in the heart of the capital. Eventually this led to his engagement to their twenty-year-old daughter, Louise. The wedding, however, was opposed by her mother, which seems understandable given Saint-Exupéry's penniless status and premature balding. The greatest obstacle for Saint-Exupéry to be the husband of this wealthy noble woman, however, was his dangerous profession. In fact, during the engagement he had a crash at Le Bourget airfield just north of the city and fractured his skull. Thus, it is completely understandable that relatives might object to such an inherently dangerous occupation. Eventually, unable to resist his fiancée's charms, Saint-Exupéry made the painful concession of giving up his life's passion of flying.

Following this Saint-Exupéry found work

with a tile production and sales company based on a recommendation from the de Vilmorins. But in the end the engagement was canceled. This of course allowed Saint-Exupéry to return to his pilot's life.

Because he revealed himself to be an incompetent clerk in the first company, Saint-Exupéry got a new job at a truck dealer in November 1924. He worked there for a year and six months, but since he was able to sell only a single truck he quit. The only reason he had not been dismissed earlier was that his superior had a weakness for men of letters, as he was one himself.

Saint-Exupéry was a lavish spender even when he was living on a small income. As a result, he would habitually ask his mother to send money when he found himself short. He did not seem to try to earn money; instead he simply relied on his mother.

#### (2) Publication of his debut work

Saint-Exupéry's debut appeared in the April 1926 issue of a monthly literary magazine *Le navire d'argent* under the title of *L'aviateur*. It was an extract from his longer work *Jacques Bernis*. As if to coincide with Saint-Exupéry's own life full of ups and downs the magazine soon failed. Part of the longer work was also inserted in *Southern Mail* as it appeared originally. This work alone, however, certainly did not promise him any recognition as a writer, though it was a successful debut.

### C. Airmail pilot

#### (1) Entering Latécoère Company

The first postal line Saint-Exupéry flew was owned by a company named Latécoère, founded by a president of the same name.

On July 5, 1926, Saint-Exupéry was qualified as civil transportation pilot. This was

followed by a series of fortunate events. First, with the introduction of his old teacher Father Sudor of the École Bossuet in Paris, he was employed by an airline company on a part-time basis. Then, interviewed with Compagnie Latécoère, the leading postal air mail carrier company in the world then, for a permanent position. Latécoère is perhaps one of the most important events of Saint-Exupéry's life, for he would spend his arguably most fulfilled days in life in this company.

On October 12, taking Father Sudor's letter of introduction, Saint-Exupéry visited Beppo de Massimi, a nationalized French man of Italian origin, in his office in Paris. During the interview he stated he had no other wish but to fly. De Massimi arranged another occasion to examine this twenty-six-year-old applicant at the company's headquarters in Toulouse in the southern part of France between Bordeaux and Marseilles. There he was interviewed by operations manager Didier Daurat, a legendary strict man. Daurat was universally feared and would not tolerate any cancellation nor delay. This attitude was justifiable given the frail aircraft of those days where a seemingly minor mistake could lead to an accident, injuring both flying personnel and the company's reputation.

At the interview Daurat had some doubt about Saint-Exupéry's aptitude, but decided to give him a trial period. From early morning the next day, Saint-Exupéry was hired to work as a mechanic, not a pilot. After some time he earned trust within the company and passed a flying test.

There was no satisfying the perfectionist Daurat. A cool-headed manager was indispensable to making sure mail was delivered without fail and everyone's safety was guaran-

teed during those early days of flight. Had it not been for Daurat, the age would have found another person of a similar temperament for the job. Saint-Exupéry later immortalized him as Rivière in *Night Flight* (1931).

In those days only limited working loads were possible. So, the only viable aerial business in the private sector was transportation of light and urgent items, e.g. air mail. Given the primitive nature of communications, carrying ordinary mail at an unprecedented speed was a great business opportunity. Even though the Breguet 14 used for postal flight in those days had a cruising speed of only 125km/h, surface vehicles and vessels were much slower. Before the introduction of transatlantic air mail service, it took more than two weeks for a letter to be delivered to South America from Paris.

Following WWI there was a large surplus of military aircraft and pilots. How should a businessman make use of such unharnessed opportunities? Pierre Latécoère was one man to rise to the challenge. He had been manufacturing pursuit aircraft (fighter aeroplanes) during the war, but with the decline in demand after the war he launched into one new field of postal service.

Latécoère foresaw great potentials for aerial business and the volume of postage handled by his company soared. This swift development reflected the pace at which the entire world was integrating itself into a single unit of the global economy.

He first established a route between metropolitan France and her colonies in Northern Africa. Later his air routes reached from Toulouse, to Rabat, Morocco, to Senegal, and to Argentina.

A lot of young and reckless former fighter

pilots joined the business, opening up new air routes and flying postal flights in adverse weather conditions. Accidents were unavoidable daily occurrences, and more than one hundred pilots sacrificed their lives during the history of the company alone. It was said that Latécoère did not go bankrupt as other rival companies thanks to the rigid management by Daurat.

Saint-Exupéry was mainly charged with mail flights between Casablanca and Dakar from about February 1927. This route was over a Spanish territory, and the company needed the government's permission to fly over it. Further, the Breguet easily overheated over the scorching desert and was often forced to make emergency landings. In these cases the pilots ran the risk of being attacked by the Moors who either slaughtered them or demanded large ransoms. The safety measures of the company seemed insufficient.

## (2) Airfield chief in the desert

Saint-Exupéry was among the pioneering pilots who developed the extensive postal lines in Africa and South America flown today. He did not simply establish those lines by directing his men to fly on his behalf and gain credit for its achievement. Instead, he actually flew them himself.

Because airplanes in those days had only a short range, it was imperative to open a refueling base somewhere between Casablanca and Dakar, the capital of French Western Africa. One such station was Cape Juby. Shortly after Charles A. Lindbergh's historical transatlantic flight from New York to Paris, Saint-Exupéry was assigned to work on this hot and arid strip of land on the Atlantic coast of northern Africa as air field chief. Cape Juby was a Spanish fortress between the Atlantic coast and the

desert and outside its wall was Latécoère's relay base which consisted of an oblong building and a hangar built side by side.

Saint-Exupéry was sent there in October 1927, and would stay for a year and a half. Daurat saw through Saint-Exupéry's concealed talents, and Saint-Exupéry himself felt reborn by the heavy responsibilities. There were no fanfares accompanying his departure across the Mediterranean from France, yet the experiences accrued there would transform this twenty-seven-year-old novice into a man of letters.

Sand and wind tormented the personnel stationed in Cape Juby. The sand mercilessly penetrated the buildings and everyone's mouths even to the point of threatening people with near-suffocation. At one time the buildings were almost totally buried during an overnight sandstorm.

Under such unfavorable conditions Saint-Exupéry performed the triple function of pilot, diplomat, and explorer. As a pilot, he flew postal airplanes with Henri Guillaumet and other pilots. As a diplomat, he successfully established friendly relations with the Spanish government. As an explorer, he flew over hostile regions making topographical maps. Furthermore, he established a good relationship with the Moors. His predecessors had been unsuccessful in this mission. He acted reliably and even tried to learn some Arabic which led the Moors to come to trust him.

The natural environment in Cape Juby was severe, but the daily duty was short, thus enabling Saint-Exupéry to write. Little by little he would develop into a writer in the simple barracks under the sand storms. In the summer of 1928 he completed the manuscript of *Southern Mail* which would be his first hard-

cover novel in France.

### (3) Return to France

In March 1929, Saint-Exupéry returned to France. Prior to joining Latécoère he had been acquainted with famous men of letters in a Parisian salon. That acquaintance advanced the publication of *Southern Mail* by Gallimard in around June of this year.

In a 1939 interview article, he was asked which was more important to him, flying or writing. He replied that they were completely equal.

The most important aspect of the publication of *Southern Mail* was that through it he was now regarded as a flying writer, not simply a pilot. The work itself did not earn much appreciation. His message did not necessarily fit the form of a novel and after this his works strayed from the novel structure.

### (4) To South America

In September 1929, Daurat transferred Saint-Exupéry across the southern Atlantic to Argentina. On arriving in Buenos Aires by sea, he found the new and important assignment of operations manager of Aeroposta Argentina awaiting him.

At this time, Latécoère was in financial trouble and had been transformed into another entity — Aéropostale. Saint-Exupéry's new employer was its subsidiary. He was responsible for opening new routes on the continent and developed postal connections among the major cities as well as establishing a 2,500km route between Fuego Island and the capital of Argentina. In Argentina he would write *Night Flight*.

At the same time a breakthrough was made in transcontinental postal transportation. Of the three constituent sections between Paris and South America, the central one between

Senegal and Brazil was completed by boat. Thus, even if Toulouse and Dakar and Natal and Buenos Aires could be covered by airplane, the overall time required for sending mail between France and South America remained unsatisfactory. In May 1930 though, the transatlantic air link was established, realizing a much faster delivery.

The following month Henri Guillaumet, a colleague of Saint-Exupéry's, made a heroic recovery from an emergency landing. He walked through the Andes for five days fighting not to fall asleep in the cold winter weather and worried his widowed wife would not be able to collect fully on his life insurance.

He struggled to march on in order to save a person who seemed safe, not to save himself. Saint-Exupéry inspired by this impressive tale included it in his subsequent *Wind, Sand and Stars (Terre des hommes)*.

(5) Encounter with "Tropical Sheherazade"

The Argentine job also provided Saint-Exupéry with a high annual income of 225,000 francs, which corresponded roughly to twenty million yen in 1990.

At this time Saint-Exupéry, who was now thirty, also met a woman named Consuelo from El Salvador<sup>3</sup>. The two met for the first time at a party organized by the Alliance Française in Buenos Aires where she was learning French. Her parents ran a huge coffee plantation. She had been widowed twice and had a sizeable amount of inheritance from her second marriage. There is some dispute as to her age, but she was undoubtedly a few years younger than Saint-Exupéry.

Given Saint-Exupéry's noble and catholic background his marriage to an exotic Latin American woman undoubtedly raised a few eyebrows. Consuelo was said to display a

habit of falsehood and self-centeredness, yet Saint-Exupéry remained attracted to this woman he called Sheherazade, a tropical bird.

Shortly before the expiration of his term, Saint-Exupéry's mother visited him in Buenos Aires, and the two went back to France. In April 1931, Consuelo and Saint-Exupéry were married in Nice. From Cape Juby he had brought back *Southern Mail*; from South America he brought a new story, *Night Flight*, and a rose from a mountainous country. Consuelo would inspire Saint-Exupéry to produce the eternal character of the self-important and difficult rose in *The Little Prince*. Thus, perhaps, this world best-seller could never have been born without Saint-Exupéry's stay in Argentina where he encountered Consuelo.

(6) An internal trouble within the company

The month before Saint-Exupéry's marriage, his company Aéropostale was on the verge of bankruptcy. As the air business was very important in public welfare, it was imperative to maintain airlines from a national strategic point of view. This led the minister of air to negotiate secretly with Daurat. But news of the meeting was leaked within the company and Daurat was rebuked. He had developed a number of adversaries within the firm based on his strict principles, and in spite of protests by Saint-Exupéry, Guillaumet, and others, he was fired. At the same time, Saint-Exupéry was demoted to simply a pilot.

(7) *Night Flight*

To add fuel to the fire, *Night Flight* was published with its undeniable resemblances between the character Rivière and Daurat and thus more antipathy arose against Saint-Exupéry. The book won a favorable reception though, including the Prix Fémina. It is a short book about the management of three postal lines. If one

of the lines is delayed, the whole enterprise loses its comparative advantage over land transportation. Therefore, no delay can be tolerated. In spite of the loss of a plane, Rivière, manager in Buenos Aires, continues despatching the mail carried by the two remaining machines to Europe.

The book itself was a great success, but it caused his position in the company to suffer, because it showed his firm support and admiration for Daurat. Thus, when the major airlines of France forged to form Air France, Saint-Exupéry's application was rejected and it was only after some time he was able to secure a position, though not even as a pilot.

#### D. Flying journalist/adventurer

##### (1) Wasteful life and abortive adventure flight

Both Saint-Exupéry and his wife were lavish spenders. They liked a luxurious way of living, but they no longer had money. By purchasing an expensive automobile and other luxury goods, they had spent what his books had earned him. Thus, Saint-Exupéry was forced to take whatever kind of work he was offered. For example, he gave lecture tours and flew to Moscow as *Paris Soir's* correspondent on May Day in 1935.

Nevertheless, he continued to spend buying a Caudron Simoun 630, an impressively fast plane, with borrowed money.

Since the couple was always short for money, Saint-Exupéry decided to try to win a 150,000 franc prize posted for shortening the time required to fly to Saigon. He even made a contract with a newspaper about serializing his trip on the assumption that he would be successful.

Lindbergh was careful. He had prepared for his historical New York - Paris flight over

several weeks. Saint-Exupéry was not so meticulous. While a challenger normally had to leave at least one hundred hours before the deadline, Saint-Exupéry left with much less than this. Still worse, he removed his radio equipment to load more fuel and he did not sleep for forty-eight hours before his departure. He ended up making a fiasco of the adventure: his plane crash-landed in the Libyan desert.

As Guillaumet had been saved by walking east of his crash site in Argentina, Saint-Exupéry and his colleague decided to head east, too, and were saved after three days. However, after he returned to France, rumors circulated that did not mention his escape from the desert and in fact suggested he had not attempted the trip and simply hid.

During the mid 1930s after Hitler had seized power in 1933, Saint-Exupéry came to be known as a reporter as well, deepening his interest in social and political issues. Spain was in the midst of a civil war. In France, his own country, the Popular Front was in power.

##### (2) Another accident in Central America

A natural pilot Saint-Exupéry could not even stand still after the Libyan accident. He wanted to make a distance record by flying from New York to the southern tip of South America in his newly purchased Simoun. On February 15, 1938, he took off from New York. Up until landing in Guatemala there was no problem. However, when he and his crew tried to take off from the airport the plane could not get off the ground because too much fuel had been loaded. The unsuccessful takeoff resulted in serious injury to Saint-Exupéry. Some of the injuries would persist until the end of his life. His surgeon even told him that he needed to amputate one of his arms. But thanks to a fervent protest by his wife, who could speak

with the doctor in Spanish, Saint-Exupéry was able to save his one arm.

Recovery was expected to take a long time, so he made wise use of it writing *Wind, Sand and Stars*. Unlike his former published works, it was made up of various components. It was in a way a compilation of reflections and episodes, rather than a single story. The writing was so vivid that after reading the book Sartre commented that though he knew nothing of flying he felt nostalgic to it<sup>4</sup>.

(3) Visit to Germany, Awarded the French Academy's Novel Grand Prix

*Wind, Sand and Stars* proved a great success, especially in the United States where it was published in English. He was invited to New York where he saw his photograph in every bookstore's window. The book sold well and he was able to overcome his fiscal concerns. After this he had an opportunity to visit Germany and see inside the Nazi movement. In Pomerania, he was shown around a Nazi school for 'cadres' with Henri Bordeaux, a member of the Academie française whom he had not previously met. Bordeaux was deeply impressed by Saint-Exupéry's personality and decided to recommend his recent work for the Academie's Novel Prize. The Academy agreed and Saint-Exupéry was awarded his second major prize following the Fémina.

(4) Léon Werth and Saint-Exupéry's best day in life Léon Werth to whom Saint-Exupéry dedicated *The Little Prince* was a Jewish writer twenty-two years Saint-Exupéry's senior. One spring day Saint-Exupéry was invited to Werth's villa near Saint-Maurice. It was a pleasant outing and Saint-Exupéry would later remember it as symbolic of peace.

(5) To the United States

Saint-Exupéry was invited to accompany the

crew aboard the *Lieutenant-de-Paris*, a flying boat, to New York. He accepted the offer and they made a record for the longest non-stop flight by a civilian plane (28 hours and 30 minutes). While in the United States, he promised to write a foreword for Mrs. Lindbergh's book, but it took him some time until he finally produced it. Saint-Exupéry often would not write unless really pressed, usually passed the promised deadline.

(6) Lindbergh

In New York, Saint-Exupéry received a call from Mrs. Lindbergh and was invited to dinner, which he accepted. Since he did not speak English, she spoke French. If everyone else in the United States had been like her, he might not have later returned to the French theater in 1942.

The Lindberghs had just settled on the northern coast of Long Island. Saint-Exupéry handed a copy of the promised foreword to Mrs. Lindbergh. During the train trip from Pennsylvania Station in downtown New York to their house, the two talked about various subjects. Saint-Exupéry stressed the importance of rhythm. At the Lindberghs' house the Lindberghs and Saint-Exupéry talked about the influence machinery exerts on human being.

This meeting of two aerial giants — one American, the other French — allowed for a sharp contrast to their respective attitudes toward the U.S.'s role in world politics. After WWII had broken out, Saint-Exupéry argued the U.S.'s entry was necessary to liberate Europe from totalitarianism. But Lindbergh advocated isolationism for his country.

He flew reconnaissance flights over Arras in May 1940. After being discharged from the air force he went to the United States, where *Wind, Sand and Stars* had won an annual book

prize and sold 250,000 copies.

Saint-Exupéry firmly believed only America's entry would save his country and now he had the platform on which to advocate his position to American citizens.

Saint-Exupéry's American publishing company invited him to come to New York. Léon Werth agreed that he should, and advised him to use the opportunity to lobby the American public since fighting against the Nazis was not only France's mission alone, but it constituted a duty for all of humanity.

One could board a boat to the United States from Lisbon because Portugal remained neutral. Thus, Saint-Exupéry left from there after seeing his old comrades of the 2/33 squadron in Algiers. Because the ocean liner was full of people evacuating from Europe, he was put into a small cabin with another passenger who turned out to be Jean Renoir, son of the Impressionist painter. Jean was a movie director known for his work *The Great Illusion* (1937). The two fleeing French celebrities made good friends. They reached the other side of the Atlantic on December 31, 1940.

Political rivalry was fierce among the exiled French in the United States. Since Saint-Exupéry was the most well known Frenchman staying in America, he was naturally made a target of those political groups. But he did not join any of them. He stood on his own. However, for Saint-Exupéry life as an exile in a foreign country was like being in a pot with insufficient soil to take root in.

The Vichy government set up a National Council including his name without his knowledge, still less his approval. He protested that he was not a member. Even after this, he still felt uncomfortable as if he had been used as a puppet.

Language was another reason for not staying in the States for a prolonged period of time. He simply did not like English. Until much later during his stay in America it even did not occur to him to learn the language with any serious intention. He made a pretext that he had not yet finished learning his native French. His publishers earnestly wished he would master English. Yet, he chose to talk in French rather than being misunderstood in a foreign language. This suggests his uncompromising attitude.

It was inconsistent, however, for Saint-Exupéry to seek to lobby the United States on the one hand, but refuse to learn English on the other. Before leaving France under its divided occupation he had told friends that he would stay in the States for three to four weeks and then return. He stated the trip was only a mission to persuade the U.S. government to enter the war in Europe. Nevertheless, his stay was prolonged.

Unlike Saint-Exupéry, Jean Renoir made the States his home. The movie director suggested Saint-Exupéry also should move to Hollywood. He did. In California he continued to write though, as was his custom, at night which caused quite a bit of bother for his hosts. But, Saint-Exupéry did not seem to care about the inconvenience he caused. In Renoir's residence Saint-Exupéry almost completed *Flight to Arras* and then returned to New York.

His final published work in the United States, *The Little Prince*, was born from a suggestion one of his editors had made. He recommended to Saint-Exupéry that he should write something about the character that he often doodled on napkins and such. Once committed to this project, it had a favorable effect on Saint-Exupéry's health because it distracted

him, even temporarily, from his other worries. In April 1943, *The Little Prince* was published in English and French. But, its author boarded a military transport vessel for North Africa. Thereafter Saint-Exupéry did not return to civil aviation, and his only commitment to flying would be military.

#### E. Involvement in WWII

As an officer noted in 1938: "Military organization which has the most efficient reconnaissance unit will win the next war<sup>5</sup>."

Almost all aircraft may be used for both civilian and military purposes. The line between the two is often blurred, especially in this age of total war. During WWII the use of airplanes had become crucial and civil aircraft too had to put to military use with and without disguise. This section looks at Saint-Exupéry and military aviation, which for our purpose is limited to reconnaissance flying.

In spite of his hatred of parliamentarism, Hitler seized power through the ballot as he needed popular support to emasculate the Treaty of Versailles. A German air force was prohibited under the Treaty of Versailles. However, an air force was essential to modern defense, thus, Germany circumvented this restriction.

##### (1) Photo reconnaissance

The first use of aviation for military purposes in a larger sense dates to the late eighteenth century when the French successfully spotted the Austrian positions by balloons that they had hoisted in the air<sup>6</sup>. Balloons were also used successfully in the American Civil War. Count von Zeppelin's dirigibles first succeeded in 1900, the year Saint-Exupéry was born, and were a great success for both military and non-military uses. After the Wrights' first flyer, airships

and aeroplanes coexisted for some periods, but the latter were to prevail during the years to come.

During the nineteenth century France was the first to realize powered airship, and also the first to start experimentation with aerial photography. Britain set up a school of ballooning after the War Office ordered an assessment of the practicality of balloons for military uses. Americans had had a wealth of experience in balloon reconnaissance during the Civil War. For a prolonged period after the Wright's success, America's official indifference to aerial reconnaissance persisted. The French were more open-minded to this field. When Louis Blériot flew across the English Channel in 1909, the British still could not grasp the significance of heavier-than-air flight for military uses.

In April 1909, the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers was formed with three roles in mind: artillery spotting, reconnaissance, and aerial photography<sup>7</sup>. Military aviation was of course still lagging behind and inferior to ground forces. In 1912, when Saint-Exupéry first flew, the British War Office encouraged skilled and experienced photographers to apply for the Royal Flying Corps. This was the first specialized unit for aerial photography.

At the outbreak of the Great War many of the Royal Army's senior officers clung to the idea that gentlemen's chivalry would not permit air reconnaissance over enemy positions.<sup>8</sup> They were mistaken. Every side had to fight to the end in this new kind of war, and information obtained and obtainable only from high in the sky over hostile regions soon proved vital in determining the movements and operations of the other parties. In the autumn of 1914, shortly after the start of the war, the British began to fly over German troops to determine their

formations. Their planes were crewed by a pilot and an air observer. Interestingly, written reports of the aerial observers, rather than photographs, were more relied upon. However, the British were soon obliged to change their mind: a clear and detailed map provided by French air crew convinced British high commanders of the decisive advantage of tactical reconnaissance.

All parties quickly learned lessons concerning this new art of aerial observation, but they were also quick in forgetting them, once an armistice was reached. Thus, during the inter-war years aerial reconnaissance was not provided with the due attention that it otherwise deserved. Neither the commanding officers nor the politicians capitalized on the hard-won experiences of the Great War.

In April 1918, Great Britain set up the RAF. It was a far-sighted decision in light of the present and anticipated German threat. One year before Hitler's and Stalin's invasion of Poland, RAF units succeeded in photographing the Italian military buildup on both sides of the Italian peninsula from the sky. Another success was made by a covert mission flying a 'civilian' airplane that observed the German fleet just months prior to the war. Britain's air force still remained meager when compared to its army and navy; Furthermore, its photo reconnaissance role was neglected within that branch of the service.

At the beginning of WWII the RAF's main reconnaissance platform was the obsolete Blenheim IV. It was soon replaced by the Spitfire and the Hurricane, formidable aerial rivals against their German counterparts, notably the Messerschmitt Bf109s and the Focke Wulff.

Unlike the French, the British were able, just barely, to counter the Germans in its over-

all national defense capabilities by September 1, 1939. Photo-reconnaissance was an integral part of their efforts. By the end of the following year the RAF photo-reconnaissance squadrons were provided with sufficient aircraft for their mission. Without them there would have been no defense against the invading Messerschmitts nor path-finding missions to air-raid Germany. Once WWII started, photo-reconnaissance missions of both the USAAC and the RAF underwent remarkable transition to catch up with Germany.

The Allied Forces' invasion of mainland Italy was aided by the successful landing of Sicily in 1943<sup>9</sup>. This success was in fact made possible by the discovery of a small, seemingly unimportant white speck on a print supplied by an RAF photo reconnaissance squadron several months before the planned invasion. The speck showed that the Italians were trying to refloat a large merchant ship that had sunk to the bottom of Tripoli's shallow harbor. Italy hoped to block the harbor entrance with the resurfaced ship. The harbor was important for its strategic use in launching an invasion of Sicily and eventually mainland Italy. In response to raise the ship, Allied bombers struck again to sink it definitively.

In Operation Overlord (June 6, 1944), it was necessary to destroy German early warning radar installations along the Atlantic coast of France. P-51s and P-38s brought back invaluable photographs of German defenses prior to D-Day.

Photographic interpretation played an equally vital role as did reconnaissance pilots, for without proper equipment and devices coupled with sufficient specialized training, photographs will be useless. The interpretation staff analyzed the minute details of every pho-

tograph of the enemy.

In war speed is imperative. So, interpretation of photographs usually is done according to the urgency of the particular set of photographs. The photo-reconnaissance camera equipment had its own history of development<sup>10</sup>.

Neither the British nor the U.S. leaders sufficiently recognized the significance of photograph reconnaissance. It is suggested Britain obtained information concerning the likelihood of Pearl Harbor's attack and informed Washington<sup>11</sup>, however, the latter could not make use of it, ending up being actually assaulted by the Japanese. This was primarily due to the lack of long range photograph reconnaissance in the States. Both countries learned a lesson from this failure.

The Allied air forces rapidly modernized their PR units, while their adversary wasted time. In spite of the initial lead, the Germans lost aerial superiority from 1942. Among the greatest failures of the *Aufklärungsgruppe* (reconnaissance group) was its inability to accurately cover the preparations for Operation Overlord. By a simple assumption the Germans guessed that the Allied forces would most probably invade France through Calais, the closest landing point from southern England. In fact, this was a simple deception by the Allies.

#### (2) Saint-Exupéry's reconnaissance missions

The war that broke out in summer 1914 did not come to a cease-fire by Christmas as many people had hoped. It was an unprecedented war in that it involved civilians far from the fronts in its atrocities: the distinction between the front and the rear had disappeared. Before 1914 most wars used to be two-dimensional. With the increasing participation of aeroplanes,

war evolved into three-dimensions. The war precipitated the development of aircraft and each country swiftly put out better aerial weaponry with varying performances. To this day the names of aces, or *Experten* in German, including von Richthofen the "Red Baron" are referred to with awe. But casualty rates for pilots ran higher than those for army and navy servicemen.

In 1918 subway stations were turned into air-raid shelters, curfew was imposed, and Saint-Exupéry living in Paris was raised by bombardments at midnight<sup>12</sup>. The Luftwaffe bombed the capital seventy-seven times before the end of the war.

An air force was less costly to establish and maintain than an army or navy. As the British Empire had grown to excessively far-reaching extents, it came to rely on its air wing after 1919 to decrease defense costs.

In 1918, armistice was reached and WWI was over. France had lost 10% of its work force. However, Saint-Exupéry was unable to simply welcome peace as his purpose in life was suddenly lost. He was unsure of what he should do in the future.

In April 1921, Saint-Exupéry was drafted for a two year period and assigned to the Second Fighter Group in Neuhoef in the vicinity of Strasbourg. The air field here had been constructed by the Germans. It was here that Saint-Exupéry obtained his first pilot license with money he received from his mother.

During his early career as a pilot Saint-Exupéry flew a Breguet 14. When he was preparing for the reserve officer's examination he used to fly among three points extending 150 miles. He would sortie covering all of his face except for the eyes. It was fiercely cold at 7,000ft; he would warm up his hand in his pocket

for twenty minutes till he could produce a map out of it. For a period he was assigned to Rabat, Morocco, from where he returned to the mainland in February 1922. Thereafter he was transferred to Avord, central France. Since the air force itself had scarcely branched off from the conventional arms of the military there were no uniforms available.

In August he was sent to Versailles for land drills. As he was doing well he was allowed to choose his next base. He chose the closest one to the capital: Le Bourget, just north of Paris. During this period he flew the Nieuport 29. While he was stationed there he found a fiancée, but the engagement was broken off. Until the outbreak of WWII, his military aviation career was limited within the bounds of reserve duties. During his own version of 'interwar' years, arguably his happiest years after he left his château, he would predominantly be flying airmail over three continents.

In 1935 France's lead in the air force was about to be lost to Germany. In the eight years between 1930 and 1938, France was in political turmoil and there were as many as nine air ministers. Since France had nationalized its aircraft industry, experts had to be invited from Britain and America to fill the gap left by lack of French commitment. Thus, France's failure to create a modern air force effectively ensured its defeat even before the actual outbreak of the next war.

To check fascism and the menace of a possible war, a popular front government was established with the cooperation of the Socialist and Communist Parties in 1936 much to the dismay of the conservative and right wing portions of the nation. Friends and acquaintances of Saint-Exupéry's also made their political beliefs clear. Jean Mermoz, one of his

closest colleagues since his Toulouse days, became deputy chief of the Croix de feu, an extreme right organization. Another friend, André Gide, favored communism, but he was disillusioned by Stalinism after visiting the Soviet Union.

Saint-Exupéry himself, however, did not side with any ideology. He did not familiarize himself with any thought of the modern times because of his chivalry deep rooted in his mind. He even hoped the revival of monarchy. Also contributory to his political, or apolitical, posture was his having learned to view humans by a cosmic measure. To him every political institution was a failure.

In July 1937, Saint-Exupéry was arrested by the Hitler Jugend for flying over Germany without permission. He later was released by the office of the ambassador. France remained utterly numb to the drastic changes in international politics in *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe); it did not oppose the Wehrmacht's march into the Rhineland nor the annexation of Austria (*Anschluss*). An immediate and resolute joint counterattack of Germany by Great Britain and other nations might well have crushed Hitler's political ambitions.

The French of course were informed of the invasions, yet the country remained noncommittal sharply polarized among political forces. Further, deep in their consciousness lay the bloody memories of Marne, Somme, and Verdun from the Great War. They firmly believed the Maginot Line would suffice against another attack from across the Rhine. The problem with France at that time was that not only the general public but even the generals nonchalantly felt assured of their immunity in a coming war. Such an attitude was severely criticized by De Gaulles, but few people listened to

him.

*Paris Soir* dispatched Saint-Exupéry to Spain during the civil war and some of the reports he sent from there would constitute an integral part of *Wind, Sand and Stars*: Most importantly, he witnessed a real war from up close.

It was during the Spanish civil war that the Luftwaffe deployed a whole set of newly developed aircraft. The Condors were there, so were the Stukas. It is therefore likely Saint-Exupéry heard the shrieking sirens of the gull-winged diving bombers at least at two different battle fields: first in Spain and then over Arras in May 1940.

The ability to test their aircraft in Spain undoubtedly contributed to the success of the Luftwaffe during the early campaigns against Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France.

After a brief stay in the United States, Saint-Exupéry returned for home on August 20, 1939 as the European situation appeared dire. After signing a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union on August 23, Germany invaded Poland in the early morning of September 1, 1939. Two days later France and Great Britain declared war on Germany.

The principal long-range reconnaissance aircraft of the RAF in 1939 was the Blenheim IV. Large numbers of these were lost during daylight missions over the Third Reich, however, as they were inadequate for their assigned role. Thus, the Blenheim IV was gradually replaced by newer models. The “Mozzie” or the de Havilland Mosquito was ideally suitable for PR. A version of the Halifax carried H2S ground-mapping radar, which contributed greatly to improving bombing accuracy.

Fortunately for the lovers of *The Little*

*Prince*, it seems likely Saint-Exupéry did not shoot a single bullet against a hostile military plane during his aerial missions. This is because he was flying reconnaissance flights, or ‘recce’s in the jargon of British pilots. The times in which Saint-Exupéry lived was not an age of satellites. It was therefore necessary for a reconnaissance plane to actually fly over a hostile position to assess the enemy’s strength. It was a hazardous mission.

Penetration by enemy reconnaissance aircraft cannot be tolerated in war. Yet, because of the vitality of the information gathered, these aircraft had to fly whatever obstacles they encountered, increasing the difficulty of their mission.

Therefore, photo reconnaissance in WWI was fatally dangerous. It took bravery to fly alone, unarmed, and over enemy-seized territories simply to bring back photographs. It was an easy game for enemy ground fire, all the more so because even during WWII a reconnaissance plane was generally unarmed. This was true as well for the P-38 F5 version, flown by Saint-Exupéry. The P-51 Mustangs were exceptions to this rule; they had full armament.

Firing at recce was a game for ground artillery unit given their high success rates. Furthermore, reconnaissance units were discriminated against within their own armed forces because they tended to be among the most obsolete aircraft.

It should be noted that part of the reconnaissance photographs remaining today were acquired through fatal missions. The survival rate for a reconnaissance airman in 1941 was estimated to be 31%. Saint-Exupéry was at first among the fortunate minority, but finally he too was included in the remaining 69%.

In May 1940, Saint-Exupéry’s reconnais-

sance plane for his flights over Arras was a Bloch 174. This obsolete machine was even still in use by his old squadron when Saint-Exupéry returned to Algiers in May 1943. But, he was soon moved up to the double-fuselaged Lockheed P-38 F5 equipped with four cameras on its nose.

There are three major islands in the west of Italy: Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. It was in this order that Saint-Exupéry was stationed to fly reconnaissance flights over Provence as the joint efforts of the Allied forces accelerated. Originally Italy was thought to be the 'underbelly of Europe' by Churchill, but its defenses, including the Gustav Line, proved tougher than expected. Even a tiny Monte Cassino was more resistant than had been estimated by photo reconnaissance flights beforehand.

When German troops invaded France in May 1940, Saint-Exupéry sought an active role. But he disliked flying bombers because of the potential to cause injury to non-combatants and thus hoped for a fighter assignment. The army surgeon, however, disapproved of such an assignment on the grounds that he was too old and that his old accidents could cause trouble for his flying. Had he flown a fighter, he likely would have been easy game for the superior Luftwaffe fighters. Thus, he was assigned to teach instead. This, however, proved dissatisfactory since he wanted to share the burden of defending France's independence. Undoubtedly other pilots with the same beliefs simply and grudgingly accepted their assignment. Saint-Exupéry, however, was different. After extensive negotiations he was able to rejoin the 2/33 squadron, stationed in Orconte, Champagne, east of Paris.

He was promoted to major and flying the

Bloch 174. He made seven flights during the period May to June 9, 1940, of which all but one were high-altitude photographic missions. One of them was to be eternized in *Flight to Arras (Pilote de guerre)*. On May 23, he took off from Orly with fighter support and followed a route over German-occupied Cambrai to Arras. Historically, the town was famed for its lace-works, but it had been overrun by both hostile and friendly troops because of its vital geopolitical location. This was where the British Expeditionary Force commander Lord Gort had counterattacked two days earlier trying to slow the advance of the Panzer Gruppe HOTH which included Rommel, the Desert Fox. Over Arras, Saint-Exupéry encountered massive ground fire, but he managed to make a safe return. Two of the escorts, however, were shot down. This experience over Arras would become the masterpiece of war literature: *Flight to Arras (Pilote de guerre)*.

One of the wonders of history occurred on May 24, 1940. In spite of the incredible success of the *Blitzkrieg*, or the Lightning War, in invading France through the Ardennes, Hitler ordered General Guderian to halt progress of his tank troops, which gave the British and the French time to evacuate en masse. For the following week an evacuation operation was carried out in Dunkirk transporting 400,000 soldiers to Great Britain.

Paris fell, and an armistice was reached. France was divided into two major regions. De Gaulles who had scarcely fled to Britain from Bordeaux aired a message to his compatriots over the wireless to unite and fight against the German Occupation. Saint-Exupéry was ordered to make another reconnaissance flight over Arras, but it was of little

use, because the commanders had fled and the country was on the brink of chaos.

During his mission over Arras, he remembered his childhood, indulging himself in philosophical reflections.

In June 1940 Saint-Exupéry was ordered to evacuate to Algiers. He accomplished this in a four-engined Farman loaded with as many servicemen and equipment as possible and sent them by air. When he returned to France by boat he met his mother and sister Gabrielle at Agay. Because of the Armistice, he no longer had to fight. In the meanwhile the defeated France had been obliged to cede the region facing the English Channel and Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. Moreover, all of its northern territories on the Atlantic, including the capital and three-fifths of mainland, were under direct occupation. A collaborative regime had been formed in Vichy under General Pétain, and Italy had seized the possessions of Savoy and Corsica. While staying in Agay for two months he decided the only way to liberate France was to get the U.S. to enter the war. Fortunately he had enthusiastic readers in the States. Thus, he set off for the U.S. via Lisbon, but with only the intention of a short stay.

Saint-Exupéry visited his old 2/33 squadron in Vichy before departure for Lisbon. To his old comrades he said that he would be back in a month.

In Lisbon he had to wait for sometime for permission to sail for the United States. While he was waiting on November 27 he received the news that his close friend Henri Guillaumet had been lost over the Mediterranean while carrying the newly nominated high commissioner to Syria aboard a Farman cargo plane. His final communication to the base was that his plane had been shot. It was speculated that he was

involved in a fight between the RAF and the Italians over the Mediterranean. Saint-Exupéry has become the last survivor of the pilots who used to fly the Breguet 14 on the Casablanca-Dakar postal line. In a letter he wrote to a friend he said he was aging too early and that he felt very lonely for having lost someone with whom he could talk about the days past.

Finally he was given the permission to clear port. It turned out that his cabin mate Jean Renoir had also had flying training back in Ambérieu and that he too flew reconnaissance flights during WWI. The two had something very close and rare in common.

Contrary to his wishes he could not return to France. As he did not associate with the exiled French or learn English, he drove himself even further into solitude.

Saint-Exupéry spent days and weeks groaning at his inability to do anything to get the U.S. to enter the war. But one December afternoon, he heard a sad but fortuitous news. Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. This was the beginning of an end. While the publication of *Flight to Arras* was delayed, the political situation changed fundamentally in Saint-Exupéry's favor.

*Flight to Arras* was a timely publication. It appeared two months after Pearl Harbor. The war was now totally global and readers worldwide wanted to read about how it was fought in France.

Ultimately it may be said Saint-Exupéry's time in the U.S. was well spent. After the publication of *Flight to Arras* he wrote *The Little Prince*. He left for Africa shortly after that. When he landed in Algiers it was a center of hot politics. Its key figure, General de Gaulles, arrived shortly after Saint-

Exupéry's arrival. His political foe, General Giraud, was openly preferred by the United States, however, he was a poor politician and no match for the shrewd strategist from London.

In Algiers, Saint-Exupéry met his old comrades. Their squadron was now subdivided into two, one of which was provided the P-38 F5 Lightnings, but the other one was still using the outdated Bloch 174. As he stated in an open letter to Frenchmen he wanted to take part in a real fight. But the maximum age for a pilot of a P-38 was set thirty-five, and he was forty-three. Even though he had crammed higher mathematics in youth, he could not deduct his age. But here again, he found a hole to get through and eventually he was allowed to fly in this new machine.

This gave him arguably his last opportunity to see the region closest to his old home. But soon after that he had an accident-landing and was ordered to ground duties. The eight months that followed was the darkest period in his life. But the persistent Saint-Exupéry again persuaded the military leaders to grant him permission to fly. This time it came from General Eaker who set a limit of up to five sorties after which he should not fly. Even after the five flights, however, he continued to fly. On July 31, 1944, he left for what was supposed to be his last flight. In fact, his superiors had intended to disqualify him from flying further missions upon his return by exposing him to general top secret information. It proved unnecessary as he never returned.

### III. Conclusion

This Thesis sought to address the following two questions: Why did Saint-Exupéry become a pilot in spite of his noble origin and why did

he dare to volunteer and leave the safety of the United States?

Concerning the first question, my estimation is simply that the excitement of flying far exceeded any difference in social standing. Moreover, such distinctions were gradually dying out. Regarding the second issue, I suggest the following: To Saint-Exupéry France and northern Africa were closely connected, because they were both under the Tricolor. Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians all spoke his language. Yet, in the States he was surrounded by a different culture and language. Thus, he was alienated there exposed to a cold, unfriendly and competitive world. It was like an unheated room on a cold winter morning. In order to get the stove burning, he had to get out of bed.

To Saint-Exupéry, North America was like this kind of cold room. It was only a necessity, and if conditions allowed, he wanted to venture to escape from it at the first chance.

He always felt ill at ease in the United States, even though it had given him shelter for two and a half years. He had not liked United Kingdom either when he visited it earlier in his life. No one wanted him to return to Europe while a war was being fought. He should simply stay in New York, argued a lot of people around him. Yet, he did leave after publishing *The Little Prince*, first in its translated English version to be followed shortly by the original French version, both complete with the author's own water color illustrations.

Two books seem to suggest what Saint-Exupéry wanted to do. It was a simple but earnest desire to return to France. In *The Little Prince* the prince disappeared from the desert and he came to realize that by a personal attachment an object might become unique. In

*An Open Letter to Frenchmen Everywhere* Saint-Exupéry sought to inspire his countrymen<sup>13</sup>. So, Saint-Exupéry left the States and was the first civilian to be allocated a cabin aboard a military vessel heading for North Africa. In those days Algeria was still an integral part of France. So, though not directly returning to metropolitan France, Saint-Exupéry was nevertheless coming closer to where he belonged and wanted to return. Combined with his dislike of or indifference to things American, there was no particular reason to stay in the United States. Originally he had planned to stay only for a short time. His was a stay out of necessity. With the U.S. fully engaged in war efforts to defeat Germany, his objective had long been met.

During the campaign to invade and liberate the Axis territories, Allied soldiers left graffiti "Kilroy was here". But Saint-Exupéry did not leave similar signs. Thus, in order to follow his progression one must read between the lines of the limited number of pages he left. This ideally requires a working knowledge of French. But there is another way for anyone living where he used to live, stay, or visit: Look up in the sky and close your eyes. In your imagination you can see a clear vapor trail mildly jagged and swayed by the movement of uneven winds. If you have a good eyesight at heart, you will surely see for yourself to where he has flown and disappeared. "What is essential is

not visible to the eye." (*The Little Prince*). Questions will remain behind disappearing contrails in the sky, each awaiting a convincing answer.

- 1 Stacy Schiff, *Saint-Exupéry - A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1994) at 31. This Thesis relies heavily on this book, which is a well-recognized authoritative biography, thus, detailed citation is omitted herefrom.
- 2 Saint-Exupéry, *Santegujuperi Chosakushū Bekkan "Shōgen to Hihyō"* (Tokyo, Misuzu Shobō) at 8-9.
- 3 Paul Webster, *Consuelo de Saint-Exupéry, la Rose du petit prince - Biographie* (Paris: Éditions du Félin, 2000) at 19.
- 4 Stacy Schiff, *supra.* at 312.
- 5 Edited by Chris Staerck, *Allied Photo Reconnaissance of World War II* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 1998) at 139.
- 6 Chris Staerck *supra.* at 6.
- 7 Chris Staerck *ibid.* at 7.
- 8 Chris Staerck *ibid.* at 8.
- 9 Chris Staerck *ibid.* at 140.
- 10 Chris Staerck *ibid.* at 12.
- 11 Chris Staerck *ibid.* at 138.
- 12 Stacy Schiff, *supra.* at 70.
- 13 Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *War Time Writings 1939-1944* (Orlando, Harcourt & Brace, 1986) at 90-96.

Acknowledgment: The year 2000 marked the centennial of the birth of Saint-Exupéry and many Internet sites popped up to feature it. I consulted some of these in preparing this Thesis, however, many are no longer accessible. Portions of this Thesis relied on some of those sources.

(あたらし としはる 北海道大学法学研究科博士後期課程)