

Reviewed by Richard R. Blake for Reader Views (10/10)

"Aerial Aces of the Universal Newsreel" is the fourth book in the Historic Footage Project. Earlier books include: "Battlefilm," a guide to U. S. Army Signal Corps motion pictures of the Great War, "War Wings," a guide to films of the first air war, and "America's Film Vault," a reference guide to the motion pictures held by the U. S. National Archives. Phillip W. Stewart has subtitled his current book in the project "A Researcher's Guide to the Aviation Related Stories Released Nationally by Universal Pictures 1929 - 1931." This subtitle aptly describes the contents and purpose of the book.

Stewart writes with a goal of raising the awareness of the excellent educational motion picture resources available through the National Archives and to increase their use. As in his other books Stewart provides a comprehensive listing (catalog) and descriptive narrative on the stories available.

The book is made up of 219 stories of notable aviation personalities, places, and events as covered by Universal Newspaper Newsreel during the years of 1929 - 1931. Each entry includes a fascinating storyline, action descriptions, and scripts which bring the pictures to life. Stewart also identifies the title, reel number, event date, location and length. A comprehensive title and subject index are included within the appendix.

Over ten pages of still photo shots add to the value and historic importance of Stewart's work. The pictures included are noted with both numeric and title references for easy access to the published articles and news paragraphs included in the narrative.

Stewart's career matches many of the "Aerial Aces" introduced in his book. His painstaking research and untiring efforts have produced an invaluable reference guide and historic contribution for aviation historians, writers, producers, hobbyists, model and real airplane builders, and aerial enthusiasts. The attractive cover, quality binding and distinctive format of the book make it ideal for gift giving, for your personal library, or as a conversation opener on your coffee table. "Aerial Aces of the Universal Newsreel" is an outstanding work.