

ARMY FLIERS TO TRY 8,690-MILE AIR TRIP

Flight in Four Planes Will Essay Flight to Nome, Alaska, and Back.

START FROM HERE JULY 15

Map Uncharted Wilds by Photography—Postal and Commercial Benefits Seen.

A flight from New York City to Nome, Alaska, on Bering Strait, and return—a distance of 8,690 miles, of which about two-thirds is practically virgin flying territory—will be attempted next week by army fliers, according to an announcement made yesterday by the War Department.

Four De Havilland 4-B planes, fitted with Liberty motors, will be used for the flight, the purpose of which will be a demonstration of the feasibility of opening up new transcontinental lines of communication, which would aid materially in the growth and economic development of the country. One of the possible results of the expedition is the development of commercial and postal air service over the route laid out for the army fliers. An immediate purpose is the mapping by airplane photography of hitherto uncharted Alaskan wilds.

To Start from Mitchel Field.

The start will be made on July 15 from Mitchel Field, Garden City, L. I. The trip to Alaska is expected to take fifteen days and a schedule of daily stages has been mapped out by the War Department. The first four days are expected to take the fliers to Portal, N. D., on the border of Saskatchewan. From Portal the expedition will take an almost direct northwestern course to Wrangell, in Southern Alaska. Then the course will be due north to Dawson and from there northwest to Nome. This is the schedule for the trip out:

	Miles.
New York to Erie, Pa.	350
Erie to Grand Rapids, Mich.	300
Grand Rapids to Winona, Minn.	310
Winona to Fargo, N. D.	320
Fargo to Portal, N. D.	290
Portal to Saskatoon, Sask., Can.	280
Saskatoon to Edmonton, Ab.	300
Edmonton to Jasper, Alb.	200
Jasper to Prince George, B. C.	200
Prince George to Hazelton, B. C.	220
Hazelton to Wrangell, Alaska.	210
Wrangell to White Horse, Yukon, C.	300
White Horse to Dawson, Yukon.	250
Dawson to Fairbanks.	275
Fairbanks to Ruby.	240
Ruby to Nome.	300

Captain Howard T. Douglas, of the Army Air Service, left Washington on June 5 to arrange for landing stations and supplies. He is going through to Nome to make a reconnaissance of the territory through which the route has been laid. Captain Douglas will make full reports, covering not only the stations, but the situation of emergency landing places and general information regarding the country.

Preliminary reports from Captain Douglas show that expected difficulties in finding proper landing places in the Far North are being rapidly overcome. The route as first planned is being generally followed and it is close to the most direct air route possible.

These officers and non-commissioned officers make up the personnel of the expedition: Captain St. Clair Street, commanding officer; First Lieutenant Clifford C. Nutt, Second Lieutenant Eric H. Nelson, Second Lieutenant C. H. Crumrine, Second Lieutenant Ross C. Kirkpatrick, Sergeant Edmond Henriques, Sergeant Albert T. Vierra, M. E. Joseph E. English.

The four planes have been specially selected and fitted for the expedition. They will carry 117 gallons of gasoline and twelve gallons of oil, providing them a cruising radius of from four and a half to five hours. The planes will bear insignia, with a polar bear as the central figure, painted on the side of the fuselage.

Weather Bureau to Aid Fliers.

Elaborate plans have been made by the United States Weather Bureau for making special weather reports accessible to the fliers along the entire route. In addition, the commanding officer of the expedition will receive special local weather reports. The Canadian Weather Bureau will co-operate in the undertaking by furnishing daily weather forecasts.

The maps for the expedition have been carefully arranged and prepared by the Information Group of the United States Army Air Service. Much of the territory over which the fliers will pass has not been adequately mapped and photographs taken during the expedition are expected to furnish accurate data for mapping some of the sections of Alaska, hitherto inaccessible.

"The feasibility of such an expedition," says a statement from the War Department, in which the plans for the expedition are described, "has been very carefully considered and even preliminary estimates of the route and landing facilities indicate the excellent possibilities of successfully carrying out the flight. With this definite information in hand permission was given by Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, to make the flight. The Canadian Dominion Government welcomed such a flying expedition and gladly gave its authority for this expedition to fly over such parts of Canada as were necessary. The route that will be flown is the most direct air route possible.

Cite Expedition's Advantage.

"There are many advantages that will accrue from this expedition. One in particular will be the fact that following this effort both commercial and mail aircraft may utilize this route so that the scenic wonders and natural resources and the many advantages of Alaska, which have hitherto been forbidden to all but these courageous pioneers who were willing to cope with the hardships incident to such a trip, will in the future be obtained with a few days' travel in luxury and comfort.

"Where the mail at present from the interior of Alaska is thirty days or more in reaching the United States it will become a matter of a few days to bring this mail from the very heart of Alaska to the very heart of the United States. Ranchmen and others along the line of the route have co-operated magnificently with those in charge of the preparations for this expedition and are awake to the tremendous possibilities and advantages to be derived from contact between their small local communities and the great metropolitan centres of the United States. A successful culmination of this expedition will mean the closest sort of co-operation between the Air Board of Canada and the Army Air Service to the end that the North American continent may be served by commercial aircraft from one end to the other.

"A second reason which indicates the utility of this expedition is the co-operation of the Army Air Service with the Engineering Corps and the Geological Survey for the purpose of photographing inaccessible areas in Alaska which have heretofore not been mapped. One area in particular which the Geological Survey especially desires to have photographed from the air comprises 8,500 square miles lying north of the sixty-sixth parallel, between Fort Hamlin and Circle. This area includes the upper Yukon flats and is a district which can only be surveyed by ground methods with extreme difficulty. Representatives of the United States Geological Survey have estimated that it would cost \$10,000 and would take one surveying party at least three seasons, which would mean three years to accomplish this work by the present ground methods, and it would then only be partially accurate. Allowing for a 50 per cent. overlap of the photographs from the air this area can be photographed from one airplane in ten hours of flying, or approximately three days' time, at a cost of about \$1,500, and the data assembled from such a photographic map would be more accurate than could be obtained from the ground in the short time available each year.

"Cameras will be used by the expedition for taking ground views at the

stops, and obliques and vertical views while en route. In addition camera and films are to be provided for the photographic mapping of the area north of parallel 66 degrees, which includes the Yukon River where it crosses the parallel between Circle and Fort Hamlin. The photographic phase of this expedition will utilize Fairbanks, Alaska, as a base of operation for its photographic work. Fairbanks will also be used as a base for all major repairs to airplanes for the Alaskan end of the flight."

Overseas Veterans in Command.

Concerning the crews of the four planes, the War Department's announcement says:

"Captain St. Clair Street will pilot Ship No. 1, and his passenger, Sergeant Edmonds Henriques, will be his mechanic. Captain Street is eminently qualified to command a flight of this kind. Since he is a flier of long experience. He was one of the first American fliers overseas, and was stationed most of the time at the great American training centre at Issoudun, France. His work overseas was of very high character, and of such merit that he was given a citation for his good services by General Pershing. Sergeant Henriques, mechanic for Captain Street, is one of the most experienced mechanics in the service, being a specialist on the Liberty 420 H. P. motor.

"Ship No. 2 will be piloted alternately by First Lieut. Clifford C. Nutt, who is second in command of the expedition, and Second Lieut. Eric H. Nelson, who will be engineering officer. These two pilots have perhaps had more experience on the DH-4 Liberty-motored plane than any other pilots in the American Air Service. They have had approximately 600 hours' flying in this type of machine, and are thoroughly conversant with all details of this type of ship.

"Ship No. 3 will be piloted by Second

Lieut. C. H. Crumrine, who will act as photographic officer on this trip. He will be accompanied by Sergeant Albert T. Vierra. Lieutenant Crumrine is a veteran pilot of much experience. He has done a great deal of instructing and has had a vast amount of experience in cross-country work. Lieutenant Crumrine, stationed at Carlstrom Field, Arcadia, Fla., practically all of the time since he began his flying; has had experience over the wide and uncharted Everglades of Southern Florida. He was one of the officers who was directly responsible for the finding of Lieutenant Niergarth, when he was lost in the Everglades a short time ago. Mechanic Albert T. Vierra is no doubt one of the very best Liberty motor mechanics in the Air Service.

Ship No. 4 will be piloted by Second Lieut. Ross C. Kirkpatrick, who will act as information officer of the expedition. He will be accompanied by Master Electrician Joseph E. English, who will act as mechanic. Lieutenant Kirkpatrick is an old flier with several hundred hours' flying to his credit. He took part in the recent transcontinental reliability and endurance test, in which he made a good showing. He flew a DH-4 in this test, and was obliged to fly under adverse weather conditions throughout the entire flight.