

# The Sun.

## MAGAZINE SECTION

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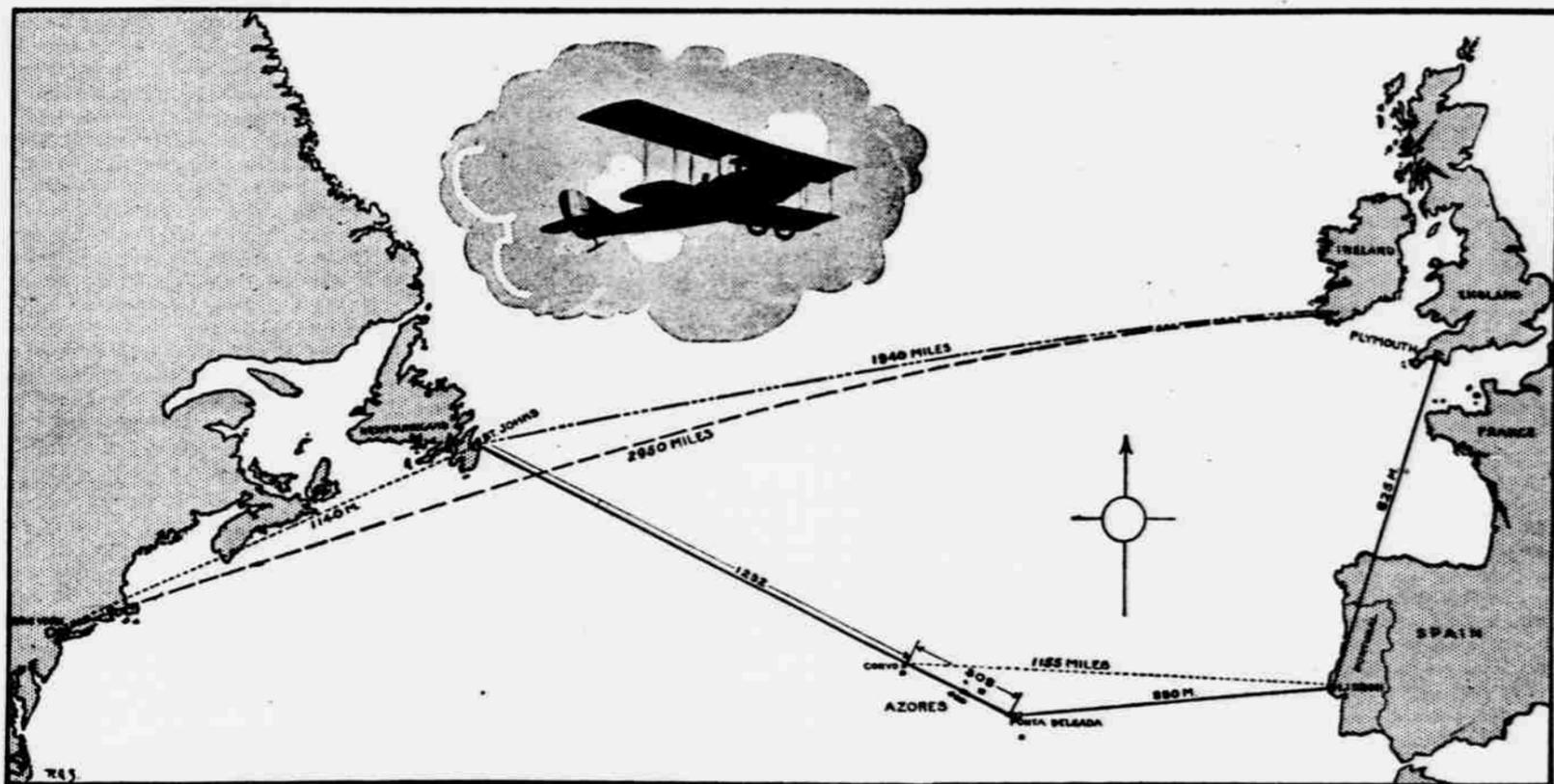
NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 21, 1918.

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# The Aerial Route to Europe

## American Fliers Eager to Put Their Planes to the Supreme Test That Might Prove to Be Decisive Factor in the War



Suggested routes for the probable transatlantic flight.

By ROBERT G. SKERRETT.

THE war in Europe has made transatlantic flight possible. Indeed it might reasonably be said that there is need for a performance of that sort. Transatlantic flight should certainly be attempted at the earliest practicable moment, and there is no insurmountable mechanical obstacle in the way of such a demonstration.

Such is the view of an authority whose interest in the proposal is entirely free from any commercial connection. Continuing he said:

"Success might easily mean more than most people realize toward helping to win the war. A test of this nature would be convincing evidence of the present climax in the building of aggressive fighting airplanes, and aircraft of this kind may yet prove the deciding factor in turning the tide of battle conclusively in our favor.

### Great War Value of Overseas Flight.

"Aerial supremacy will in the end hinge upon the radius of action of the battling flying machine. There is manifest need of aircraft capable of bearing aloft great weights and able to travel very long distances without replenishment of operative supplies. The potentialities of a type of airplane tested by a transatlantic flight would be indisputable, and the tactical or strategic value would be well nigh incalculable.

"Finally, what one machine could do hundreds, yes, thousands, could imitate, and just think of what this would mean in the way of delivering speedily a large number of these fighting craft 'Over There.'"

But for the war the transatlantic flight might have been made before this time. In 1914 Glenn H. Curtiss was getting ready to make an attempt at it with his double engined flying boat America, which was then deemed to be little less than an aerial giant. His plans were brought to a halt through the outbreak of the war and the recall to England of Lieut. John Cyril Porte of the British navy, who was to have navigated the Curtiss airplane.

Since then the necessities of conflict have compelled revolutionary developments in airplanes of all sorts, and the demands for sustained flight and

bomb carrying capacity have brought in their train the evolution of the Russian Sikodsky, the British Handley-Page, the Italian Caproni and the well known Curtiss types of fliers. Each one of them has brought transatlantic flight nearer, and to-day the Handley-Page people, with a machine recently constructed at Elizabeth, N. J., are ready to attempt the long aerial journey across the Atlantic.

The better part of a year ago Major R. Perfetti, then in the United States, proposed that a Caproni triplane, equipped with three powerful motors, should fly from Italy to the United States, starting from Genoa and landing first in Spain, then flying to the Azores and thence across the Atlantic to Halifax. To-day the Caproni people are just as keen to span the Atlantic, but by beginning from a point on our eastern coast.

The fact that manufacturers and designers are now confident that such a trip is practicable is convincing evidence of the tremendous strides made in the art within four years. The America was, when built, a novelty in many particulars. When loaded she weighed 5,000 pounds and had a maximum wing spread of seventy-four feet. In still air it was estimated that the craft would make anywhere from sixty-two to sixty-five miles an hour.

To-day, according to published figures, the giant Handley-Page and the great Caproni bombing and fighting planes have wing spreads from twenty-five to sixty-five feet greater than that of the America! Not only that, but their speed ranges between 100 and 125 miles an hour.

### Claim Non-Stop Run of 150 Hours.

Further, their powerful engines make it possible for them to lift astonishing loads. The Langley, the 1915 pattern of the Handley-Page type, weighs when loaded 12,090 pounds and is said to be able to carry a crew of three and 1,600 pounds of bombs! So nearly perfect is mechanical workmanship of both that the Caproni and the Handley-Page people claim a straightaway running life of 150 hours before there is need of overhauling the motors.

A working period of 150 hours, especially at the speeds possible with either of these types, is far in excess of that called for in a transatlantic flight. According to the experts the total service likely to be demanded would not exceed forty hours, and

this would represent a tuning up period, certain preliminary flying and the actual journey from America to Europe. This leaves a margin safety of 110 hours.

But this reserve has another significance, for it can be converted into terms of military activity when once a machine of this sort has reached the other side. From a desirable point in the British Isles to Kiel, for instance, the distance is in the neighborhood of 375 miles, and assuming actual progress of ninety miles an hour, a raid upon Germany's naval stronghold would involve an outward and a return journey of 750 miles, or, allowing for some contingencies, a total flight of 8.3 hours. Therefore, even after crossing the Atlantic, an airplane of this character would be able to perform thirteen raids on Kiel and drop ten tons of bombs.

### Must Strip It of Military Gear.

But while such are the ultimate offensive possibilities of the 1915 Handley-Page model as typified by the Langley, still to cross the Atlantic the machine would have to be stripped of its military features and supplied in their stead with an extra tank for fuel. On the other hand, the 1918 model of the Handley-Page super bombing plane, a design already in service abroad, would make the trip to Europe with its complete military load and effect the flight to the Azores in from three to six hours quicker time than the 1915 pattern. It would carry four times the weight of bombs, three times the number of guns and twice the number of men possible with the Langley and would arrive "over there" ready for aggressive work.

The purpose of crossing the Atlantic in flight is not to provide a spectacle, but to serve the very practical end of getting to the other side of the ocean in the shortest possible time hundreds of big bombing airplanes. It has been urged that we build between now and the first of May next year 10,000 Handley-Page machines and deliver them at or near the western front by that time.

Manifestly, apart from the problem of quantity production, delivery would involve a great task in the way of water transportation. According to some estimates 3,250,000 tons of shipping would be required to carry 10,000 airplanes of this type, or the equivalent of 325 10,000 ton steamships. This is not so much because of the weight involved as