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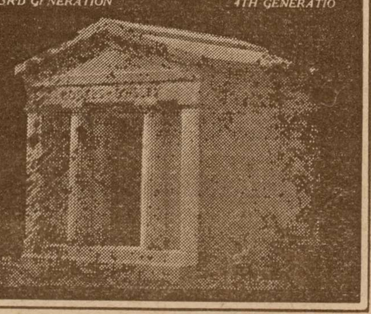

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'ROUND THE GLOBE BY U. S. ARMY PLANES.

The greatest aerial expedition in the history of aviation is getting under way at various air ports of the United States Army. In March, possibly, or in May at the latest, four big air-cruisers, manned by Army men, will start to encircle the globe. The planes, American-designed biplanes of unusual power and efficiency, have been built, the route has been marked out, and is now being investigated by Army officers who are traveling over the various sections. Supply stations have been located, and supplies are going forward. The Army has not advertised its attempt very widely, but several air specialists who have looked into the preparations, and the spirit behind the whole enterprise, predict that it will certainly succeed. To the cross-Atlantic record, America, the land in which aviation was discovered, is expected to add the distinction of the first air-circumnavigation of theglobe. It is recalled that a British attempt was made last summer, which ended disastrously before half the journey had been completed, and that other attempts, British, French and Portuguese, are scheduled for this summer. So the Army plans to get an early start and be prepared to keep going after the start is made.

Possibly, says a writer in The Slip Stream (Dayton), commenting on the undertaking:

The most spectacular event in the recent history of aviation is the Non-Stop Transcontinental Flight of the Air Service Transport T-2, and there is a tendency now for the public to look forward to a successful round-the-world flight as a normal step forward for the near future.

It is only until we look into the stupendous outlay of preparation necessary for the successful carrying out of such a project that we are able to appreciate the confidence, ambition, and ability o four Air service engineers, who are hoping to put such a plan through.

At the present time there are several foreign countries preparing to attempt round-the-world journeys with airplanes. Captain Cacadura Cabral and Admiral Gogo Coutinlo, of the Portuguese Government, are soon to start upon such a mission with Fokker seaplanes, while France and England are hoping to be the first to accomplish this feat. However, since one British expedition has already failed, and France is attempting to perform the journey with the use o fbut one plane, it is thought by the U. S. Air Service officials that America bids fair to maintain her position as first in this latest demonstration of the airplane's standard of perfection.

The Secretary of War approved the project early in December, records the Aeronautical Digest (New York), after he had been presented with evidence that it had an excellent chance to succeed. As for the plan itself, "outrivaling in importance the navigation of the globe by Magellan," continues The Aeronautical Digest:

It was conceived by Maj.-Gen. Mason M. Patrick, Chief of Air Service, who has been instrumental in obtaining the approval of the Secretary of War for an increase in the present Air Forces, and who has during his term of office created nation-wide interest in the future of aeronautics by sponsoring the participation of Army Air Service officers in various aeronautical events, thus bringing to the United States for the first time in history the distinction of holding every world aeronautical record of value, including world records for high speed, altitude, endurance an ddistance.

The type of equipment to be used has been determined upon, and it is expected that about four airplanes, American designed, and built by the Douglas Airplane Company at Santa Monica, California, and equipped with Liberty engines, will leave the United States about the first of April, 1924, at Seattle, Washington, flying Northward along the coast of Canada and Southern Alaska; across the Aleutian Islands; down through the possessions of Japan ;along the shore of China, French Indo-China, Siam and Burma; across India, up the Persian Gulf; across Turkey and Europe to England; thence North through the Faroe Islands to Iceland; thence to Greenland and Southward along the Eastern shore o fthe continent to Cape Farewell, Greenland, from which point a direct flight will be made to Hamilton Inlet on the Labrador Coast; thence Southward along the Canddian shore and up the St. Louis River to Quebes and Montreal, from which point the flight will proceed South to Washington, D. C., which was its original point of departure. Such an itinerary will, it is hoped, enable flyers to dodge the rainy seasons in the United States and India, and insure their passage through Iceland and Greenland during August and September.

The flight will be made by four officers and four enlisted men, well qualified for the long and arduous voyage. As for the machines:

The four Douglas world cruisers will be equipped with pontoons at Seattle, Washington, and will make water landings in sheltered harbors along the Coast of British Columbia, Alaska and through the Aleutian Islands, down to Japan. The present plan contemplates the removal of the pontoons and the use of landing-gears from Tokyo, Japan, or from Calcutta, India, depending upon the conditions which the flight encounters en route. Landing-gears will be used across Asia Minor and Europe, as far as Hull England, where pontoons will again be placed on the airplanes and used until the flight reaches Montreal or Keyport, New Jersey, at one of which points the pontoons will again be replaced by landing-gears, and the flight completed in this manner.

The existing airway facilities in the United States, as well as in Southern Japan, and between India and London, will be utilized. The intervening sections of the route will be given further study by the advance officers, who will proceed over the route prior to the arrival of the flight.

A pathfinding expedition of two officers was sent out some time ago. One officer, Lieutenant Clarence E. Crumrine, is at the present time in Greenland ,investigating facilities for aviation in that country, and it is expected that diplomatic arrangements with Japan will shortly be consummated for the travel of First Lieutenant Clifford C. Nutt, now in the Philippine Islands, through Japan to make preliminary arrangements for that flight. Both of these officers were members of the successful Alaskan Flying Expedition in 1920.

A detailed study of the route is being made in the office of the Chief of Air Service, which is working in close co-operation with the Coast Guard obtaining data on facilities between Seattle, Washington, and Attu Island in the Aleutian Group, which is the point of departure of the flight from the United States possessions.

Lieutenant Erik H. Nelson, Air Service, has been for the past two months assigned to duty at the Douglas airplane factory at Santa Monica, California, supervising the construction of a special airplane for this flight. Lieutenant Nelson was the engineering officer o nthe Alaskan flight, and also on the last year's flight of six Army airplanes from San Antonio, Texas, through the West Indies to Porto Rico and return to Washington, D. C. Through his efforts a very successful around - the - world cruiser, capable of remaining in the air for over twenty hours, has been built.

In order to assure every possible facility being available for the use of this flight, continues the writer:

Special attention is being given to the weather conditions throughout the route, and the personal selected for the flight will make an intensive study of this matter for aerial navigation on the route. The proposed airway around the world has been subdivided into six divisions: 1st division beginning at Washington, D. C., and ending at Attu Island in the Aleutian Group; 2nd division, ending at Nagasaki, Japan; 3rd division, ending at Calcutta, India; 4th division, ending at Constantinople, Turkey; 5th division, ending at London (Hull), England; 6th division, ending at Washington, D. C. One advance officer will cover each section of this route, obtaining detailed information on landing and seaplane facilities, transportation, airways, meteorological and climatic conditions, etc., and will make arrangements for the passage of the flight through territory to which he is assigned. Supplies will have to be shipped from the United States to various points on the route several months in advance of the flight, and for this purpose each division has a main depot with one or more subdepots where major items of supply will be alloctaed. Gasoline and oil and smaller articles of supply will be placed at practically all stops. The longest hop which is necessary, according to present plans, will be from Attu Island to Paramishiru Island, in the Northern part of the Eurile Elands Group, a possession of Japan. Other long hops will be necessary over the Atlantic Ocean between the Faroe Islands and Iseland; between Iceland and Greenland, and between Greenland and Northern Canada; the longest of these being about 700 miles.

Several previous attempts to encircle the globe by air have been made by the British and French, but without success. The accomplishment of a flight of this nature by the United States will, therefore, bring to the United States the honor and distinction of being the first nation to encircle the globe and would be quite in keeping with the present rapid development of aeronautics in which our country leads all nations of the world, in spite of the small appropriations available for experimentation and research in this new science.

Lieutenant C. E. Crumrein, of the American Army Air Service has returned to Copenhagen after a four weeks' visit to Greenland to make a survey of a possible route for an airplane flight around the world. He was satisfied that the West coast of Greenland afforded plenty of excellent landing-places, and he believed a stretch of the Eastern coast could be employed, thus making possible a flight across the continent.

The American flyer will leave for Iceland and the Faroe Islands to examine their suitability as links in the chain of landing places.

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HEALTH.

The National Health Council in an effort to lengthen life, has started a campaign to interest every American to have a health examination on his birthday.

They claim that about two-thirds of the population of this country has physical defects that may be detected by an examination and prevented from becoming serious.

Forty-two million persons lost thirty-five million working days annually through illness. Five hundred thousand working people die each year. The National Health Council believes that at least one-half of this loss may be prevented or postponed by medical supervision.

The health examination campaign is intended to reach the great number of Americans who believe they are in good of serious diseases or death behealth but who are in danger of serious diseases or death because they do not realize their real physical condition. It is claimed that ninety-five per cent. of the people examined are ignorant of their condition.

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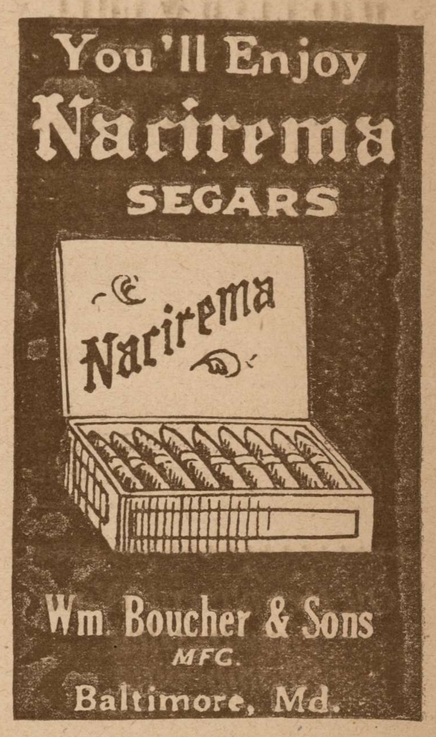

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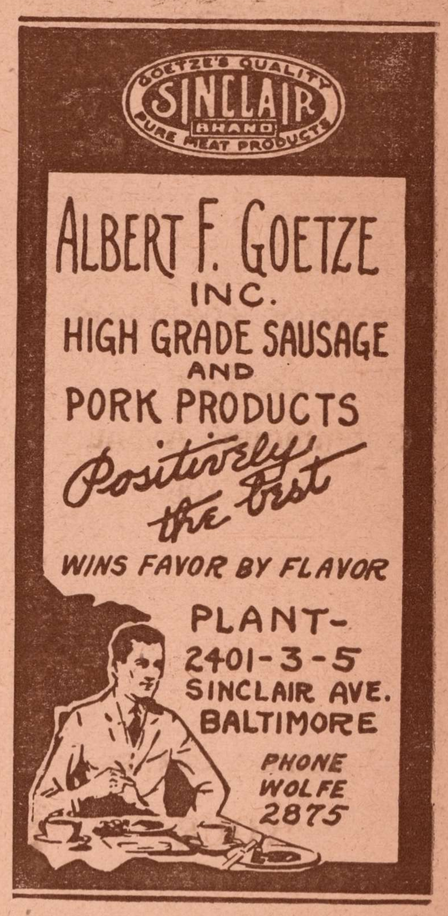

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