

Trans PACIFICAN

Vol. VII, No. 35

JANUARY 7, 1953



**Hippity-Hopping
The Atlantic**
see page 8

Trans-Pacific takes pride in reprinting from Pegasus, magazine of Fairchild Engine and Airplane Corporation of Hagerstown, Md., this report of a great MATS accomplishment—the historic first trans-Atlantic helicopter flight. Permission for its use was granted through courtesy of Pegasus' editor William C. Key.

(See Front Cover)

They took off, and were turned back. They waited out the weather a day and took off again, but were turned back. They took off again next day and were turned back, to land in the wilderness near an Eskimo village. They waited two more bad days on weather and took off again, and this time they made it—across the grim stretch of wasteland from Goose Air Base to the Labrador east coast, over the stream of icebergs that lie off-shore, over the hundreds of miles of deathly frigid ocean to the rocky outpost islands of the fjord-approach to Greenland's southern air base, Narsarssuak.

Thus two Sikorsky H-19 helicopters, with three former PACD officers (Capt. Vincent H. McGovern and Harry C. Jeffers, and Lt. Harold W. Moore, all formerly with 3rd Air Rescue) aboard, started the initial over-water leg of the first trans-Atlantic flight by rotary-wing aircraft. Eight days

later the two helicopters were delivered in Wiesbaden, Germany, and two days after that were flown on an actual emergency rescue mission to the scene of a bomber crash.

Courage and confidence of the four pilots was exemplified by their enthusiastic yells as they slid open their cockpit windows after each landing—"NO SWEAT!"—a fitting expression brought across the world from their Korean experience. Westover to Presque Isle to Goose to Narsarssuak to Keflavik to Prestwick to Schiphol to Wiesbaden—"NO SWEAT!"

To fly a helicopter across the Atlantic under its own power had not even been dreamed of in Air Force circles—until Captain McGovern, operations officer in Hq. Air Rescue Service thought of it and started making plans.

OK From The Top: McGovern, a WW II veteran, had flown smaller Sikorsky H-5s with 3rd Rescue in Japan and Korea, was excited by the tremendously great capabilities of its successor, the H-19. He talked about it to his boss, Maj. George E. Halsey, who mentioned it to Col. Richard T. Kight, the man who built Air Rescue from a squad to a great life-saving organization flung clear around the world. "Let's study this to the last detail, and if it looks good let's do it," he said in effect.

From then until takeoff from Westover AFB at 9 a.m. July 15, an enormous mass of detail was

Hippity-

By Maj. Al



FIRST TO FLY 'CHOPPEL
L to r, Rescuemen McGov

TRANS-PACIFICAN



HOPALONG OVER CANADA'S FORESTS
Speed slow, altitude low

Hopping the Atlantic

on T. Sawyer



ACROSS THE ATLANTIC
Moore, Hambrick, Jeffers

January 7, 1953

anticipated, planned, executed. Captain McGovern was appointed pilot of the lead helicopter, named "Hop-a-long," as was the project. He also was designated flight commander. He chose as his co-pilot an old associate from Korean days, Captain Jeffers, also of Air Rescue Hq. operations. Co-pilot of the second aircraft, Capt. George O. Hambrick of Plans Directorate at headquarters, formerly with 6th Air Rescue Squadron in Labrador, volunteered eagerly for the flight in which his northern experience proved most valuable. Pilot of Whirl-o-way was Lieutenant Moore, the other 3rd Rescue veteran, had ferried the first UN truce negotiators into North Korea by helicopter.

Long before takeoff target date, the best helicopter mechanics assigned to ZI rescue units were ordered to Westover to accompany the overseas flight in the C-54 which MATS commander Lt. Gen. Joseph Smith had assigned to carry project personnel and spares for two H-19s. In this aircraft rode Maj. Richard B. McVay, project commander, Maj. Albion T. Sawyer of Hq. ARS, Edward M. Benham and Harry H. Hleva of Sikorsky, two photographers from MATS' Air Photographing and Charting Service, and the mechanics.

Two new H-19s were flown from Sikorsky's plant in Bridgeport, Conn., to Westover, stripped of everything spareable. Extra radio and three 100-gallon fuel tanks were installed in each, giving 480-gallon fuel capacities. Despite



DFC'S PRESENTED
By Air Chief of Staff



CAPT. MCGOVERN
It was his idea

stripping, overweight caused slow speeds and low altitudes in early stages of each leg.

Invention: Droning along the 379 miles from Westover to Presque Isle, the pilots were low enough to see people waving to them. Weather forced a day's layover in Maine. There the pilots produced one of the flight's scientific achievements—a length of broomstick with graduation marks cut along it, which they used to measure fuel in their tanks.

Next leg was 570 miles to Goose Bay, included a fairly long water hop across the mouth of St. Lawrence. To Goose Bay was an easy eight hour hop. Getting from there to Greenland was harder. Goose had the greatest snowfall in its history last winter (182 inches,) its hottest weather on record this summer (between 90 and 100,) while Greenland was producing its own form of record in unpredict-

Hippity-Hopping The Atlantic

By Maj. Albion T. Sawyer



FIRST TO FLY 'CHOPPERS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC
L to r, Rescuemen McGovern, Moore, Hambrick, Jeffers



THE COLD, WET ROAD TO EUROPE

"No sweat," said the flyers

able weather. The two Rescue helicopters required four passes at the world's biggest island in the next 10 days before they made the crossing. On their third and last, turnback they had to land at the Canadian range station at Cape Harrison because of strong head winds. No conventional aircraft had ever landed at Cape Harrison as there is no landing strip. The helicopters landed on a rubbish dump much to the amazement of the Canadians there.

Just as surprised were occupants of range station on BW-3 three days later when they picked up voices out of the mist over their heads asking the best place on their tiny rock island to set down a couple weary flying machines. None of the residents had ever seen a helicopter. So thrilled was the range station crew that they carried a dory across their island, rowed over to get the helicopter crew, feasted them on fresh salmon. Meanwhile the support C-54 had to return to Goose Bay, was greeted with jeers by the helicop-

ter crews when they rendezvoused at Narsarssuak the following day.

Old Ice: Although only one night was spent at Narsarssuak, Green-

land, it was memorable. For at the desolate out-of-way air base, the airmen looked busy and chipper, officers bragged about their newly painted homes, their B.O.Q. mess, and the glacial ice in their cocktails claimed to be a million years old.

The 840-mile hop to Keflavik was longest yet for the helicopters. They had to fly down the fjord, around the southern end of Greenland before swinging eastward to Iceland. It took nine hours and 50 minutes. The first stages down the fjord and along the coast offered some of the world's most awesome scenery—fierce rocky coast bitten jaggedly down to the ocean by the fangs of the towering glacier and the grim icecap behind it.

At Iceland, the helicopter project personnel were introduced to Edward B. Lawson, United States minister, entertained by Icelanders, taken on tours. Where Greenland is ice and rock, Iceland is hot springs, dead volcanos, streams full of trout and salmon, great flatlands of rotten volcanic rock and ash that will produce wonderful agriculture in a thousand years.

Iceland had excellent officers quarters—a real hotel with carpeted bedrooms and shining bright



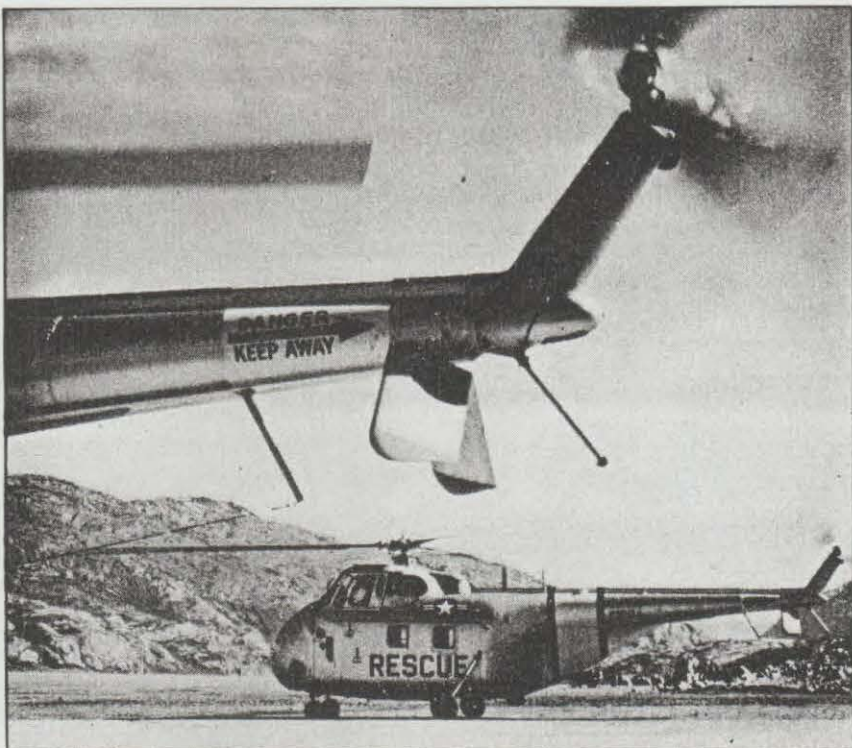
ARRIVAL AT PRESTWICK
This flight broke records

tile bathrooms with tubs and showers.

Hopes that Captain McGovern had entertained to try for an endurance record from Keflavik, for instance, to Manston, England, in confidence that the two helicopters could go 1,000 miles or more, had to be set aside. Civilians of importance in the British aviation world and high Air Force officers were planning to greet the helicopter crews on their arrival in the British Isles. It became desirable to select the landing site on the other side before Keflavik departure. Prestwick was selected.

10 To Prestwick: The flight was made uneventfully in a little more than 10 hours for the 937 statute miles, and the helicopters were met by Maj. Gen. Francis H. Griswold, Commanding General of 3rd Air Force, Col. L. J. Mantoux, Prestwick base commander, Col. Lloyd C. Humphreys, CO of 9th Air Rescue Squadron, officials of Westland Aircraft, Sikorsky British licensee.

Meanwhile, orders from ARS Hq directed the project to a landing



PREFLIGHT TESTS AT NARSARSSUAK
770 miles of open water were ahead

at Ypenburg Airport, The Netherlands. Here the two helicopters

landed on the grass field at 3:05 p.m. Sunday to open the ILYA air show, later flew to the Schiphol Airport near Amsterdam.

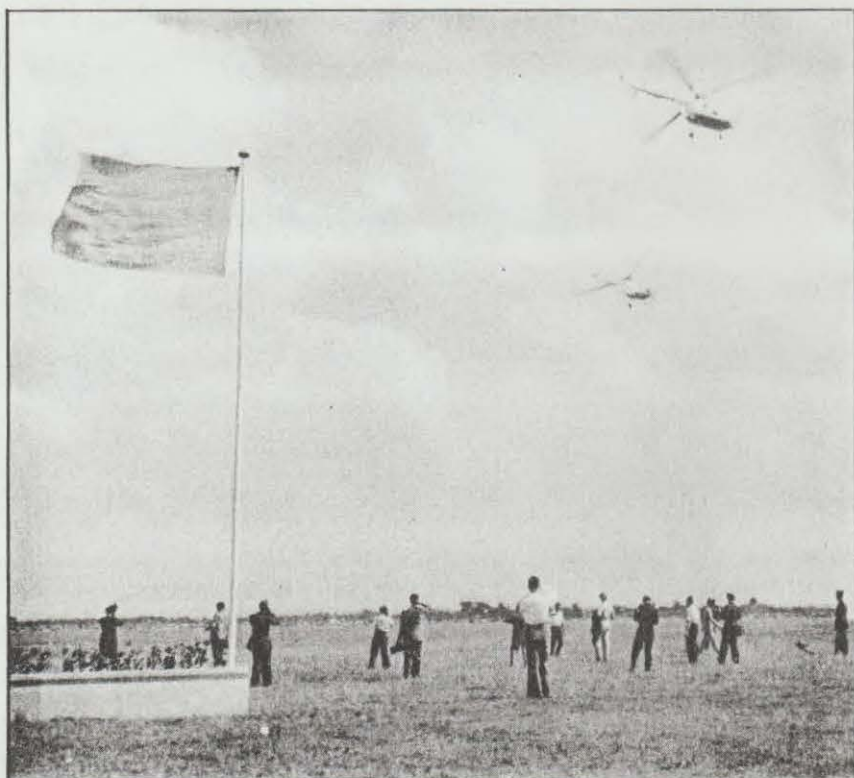
At 4:25 p.m. local time August 4 the helicopters took off from Schiphol on the last leg of their long hop. They were set down at 7:15 p.m. on the grass near the hanger of Flight D, 9th Air Rescue Squadron at Weisbaden, Germany, were turned over to their new organization. Two days later both were airborne on rescue A mission.

Captain McGovern and the three other pilots who volunteered to fly this first helicopter trans-Atlantic mission thus proved it can be done, that helicopters can go operational soon after delivery. So it seems more than likely that while this mission was the first of its kind, it will not be the last.

RELIGION

Native Christmas

Once each year MATSmen stationed at Kwajalein have the opportunity to see a unique and fas-



GREETED BY NETHERLANDERS
Ready to land at Ypenburg